

Glasgow Life

Guidance on Supporting Fertility Treatment

HR V02 September 2025
Review Date September 2028

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1. Introduction

This guide provides information relating to fertility treatment and time to attend fertility appointments.

We want to support employees undergoing fertility treatment. We understand it can be an emotionally stressful time and employees need support, especially if a cycle of fertility treatment is not successful.

We also know that sometimes employees may need time off work to go to appointments for fertility treatment (including accompanying their partners, surrogate, or co-parent).

2. Eligibility

This guidance applies to all employees of Glasgow Life.

3. Background

Infertility is when a couple cannot get pregnant (conceive), despite having regular unprotected sex.

This guidance is for use when infertility is being treated with assisted conception techniques:

- **IUI** – artificial insemination is a treatment for infertility, which involves directly inserting sperm into a person's womb.
- **IVF** – an egg is surgically removed from the person's ovaries and fertilised with sperm in a laboratory. The fertilised egg, called an embryo, is then returned to the person's womb to grow and develop.

Other forms of fertility treatment include medication and surgical procedures that may result in side effects causing sickness or recovery time following surgery. In these situations, the Support Attendance policy and Conditions of Service Sickness Absence and Pay will apply.

4. Legal Context

There is currently no specific legislative requirement to provide leave for colleagues to attend fertility treatment appointments. However, the Equality Act 2010 contains provisions on Sex Discrimination, Pregnancy and Maternity which can offer some protection during different stages of the fertility treatment. For example, once the embryo transfer has taken place during IVF treatment, the person is considered having protected pregnancy rights.

In situations where the IVF treatment was unsuccessful, the person is still protected by law against pregnancy discrimination for 2 weeks after finding out an embryo transfer was unsuccessful.

5. Arrangement for Employee Undergoing IVF/IUI Treatment

Employees should tell their manager as soon as possible that they are undergoing fertility (IVF/IUI) treatment and they wish to apply for time off for fertility appointments. Manager should be supportive of their employees and treat this information with sensitivity and confidentiality.

It is usual for a person undergoing fertility treatment to agree a scheduled plan with the fertility clinic and this can be used to talk about leave options and/or any adjustments needed with their manager.

Where possible, employees should arrange appointments out with their normal working hours, however where this is not viable options such as temporary Flexible working and/or reasonable paid time off to attend appointments will be granted.

Managers may ask to see the appointment confirmation prior to granting paid time off. Leave requests for fertility treatment should not be unreasonably refused.

6. Arrangement for Partner of Employee Undergoing Treatment

If your partner is undergoing fertility treatment, you may want to accompany them to their appointments. We will review options such as annual leave, flexi leave / time off in lieu (TOIL) or unpaid leave to accommodate this.

Where a medical appointment is needed for a partner as part of the fertility treatment process, this will be managed in the same way as for other medical appointments. For further information, please refer to the Company's [Conditions of Service – Leave provisions](#).

Managers may ask to see the appointment confirmation prior to granting time off.

7. Sickness Absence as a Result of Fertility (IVF/IUI) Treatment

Where an employee is unfit to attend work as a result of undergoing fertility treatment, Supporting Attendance Policy and Conditions of Service Sickness Absence and Pay will apply.

8. Counselling and Wellbeing support

Employees can access an independent, experienced counsellor from the Company's Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) provider, which is available 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. It is an independent and confidential service, with trained counsellors available to listen and support employees. You can find more information about our Employee Assistance Provider on our Colleague Information pages, [here](#).

If employees are looking for support with exercise, nutrition and making healthy lifestyle choices there is support available through our Colleague Wellbeing Pages, [here](#).

9. Useful Information

You may find it helpful to have a look at the following information, which is available on the Glasgow

Life Colleague Information pages.

9.1 Conditions of Service – Leave

This can be found under HR> Human Resources> Policy and Procedures> Conditions of Service.

9.2 Supporting Attendance – Policy and Procedure

This can be found under Colleague information Pages> HR Policy and Procedure> Supporting Attendance

9.3 Conditions of Service – Sickness Absence and Pay

This can be found under Colleague information Pages> HR Policy and Procedure> Conditions of Service Sickness Absence and Pay.

9.4 Employee Assistance Programme Information

This can be found under Colleague information Pages> HR Policy and Procedure> Employee Assistance Provider

Further information about infertility and the available clinical interventions is available from the NHS website: <https://www.nhsinform.scot/illnesses-and-conditions/sexual-and-reproductive/infertility/>