

## **FERTILITY (IVF) SUPPORT POLICY**

### **Purpose and scope**

This policy aims to support colleagues who are undergoing fertility treatment and clarifies the support and leave that is available. The company recognises the emotional and physical challenges which may arise from undergoing fertility treatments, and our aim is to support colleagues wherever possible who wish to undertake fertility treatment.

### **Eligibility and entitlement**

Investigations regarding infertility, consultations exploring treatment options and medical interventions aimed at assisting conception should be regarded as medical appointments, and entitlement to time off to attend such appointments is covered in the company's Absence Management Procedure.

In addition, if you have worked continuously for the company for 12 months or more, and are personally undergoing fertility treatment, you are entitled to up to three working days of paid IVF leave. This might be used, for example, to allow you some time to deal with the physical or emotional effects of fertility investigations or for rest following interventions or implantation.

### **Attending appointments**

The company supports you to take reasonable time off work with pay to attend appointments, including scans.

If your appointments, including waiting time and travelling time to and from appointments, fall within your normal working hours, you will be paid for the time you take off. You are not required to make up any working time lost through attendance at appointments.

Your line manager may ask to see an appointment card to confirm the dates so they can schedule your time off and arrange cover. They will also ensure you are paid correctly for appointments. It is important to let your line manager know as soon as you are aware of any appointments you need to attend. You should make every effort to attend your shifts before or after your appointments whenever possible.

### **Requesting leave**

You are encouraged to discuss your situation with your line manager or with a member of the HR department. Managers should treat such information with sensitivity and confidentiality.

In common with other leave options, you should request leave in advance where possible. The company recognises that you may require unforeseen time off before or after fertility treatment. Whilst the normal arrangements concerning absence notification will apply, you may request retrospectively that up to three days' absence is treated as paid IVF leave upon your return to work. Leave for fertility treatment is designed to be flexible, and managers are advised to discuss the leave options available with you, and to grant leave at their discretion and with sensitivity. Managers should bear in mind the usual Health and

Safety procedures associated with colleagues who are or who may be pregnant, and should follow the company's guidance on this.

You may wish to combine the three days' paid IVF leave with other types of leave to suit your needs. This may include annual leave or unpaid leave to assist you with structuring your leave for the purposes of undergoing fertility treatment.

### **IVF support**

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) recommends that counselling should be considered before, during and after IVF treatment, regardless of the outcome.

NHS IVF Support <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ivf/support/>

Fertility Network UK <https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/>

The company also provides colleagues with the following support:

A.F. Blakemore Human Resources [Sharedservices@afblakemore.co.uk](mailto:Sharedservices@afblakemore.co.uk) or 0121 568 2905

Mental Health First Aider [reachout@afblakemore.co.uk](mailto:reachout@afblakemore.co.uk)

GroceryAid Confidential Counselling <https://www.groceryaid.org.uk/> or 08088 021 122