

Policy  
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## Workplace support for employees experiencing fertility challenges, investigations or treatment

The CIPD has been championing better work and working lives for over 100 years. It helps organisations thrive by focusing on their people, supporting our economies and societies. It's the professional body for HR, L&D, OD and all people professionals – experts in people, work and change. With almost 160,000 members globally – and a growing community using its research, insights and learning – it gives trusted advice and offers independent thought leadership. It's a leading voice in the call for good work that creates value for everyone.

# CIPD Fertility Journey Policy

Here at the CIPD, we want to support our people who are experiencing fertility challenges, and/or are undergoing investigations and treatment. We understand it can be a really difficult time, not only emotionally but also physically, and often financially. We also know that sometimes people may need time off work to attend appointments for fertility treatment (including accompanying their partners) or to manage the demands of investigations or treatment. We want you to know that wherever you are in your fertility journey we will do what we can to ensure that you feel supported and that work is not another thing you need to worry about.

## **How we will support you**

We know that your fertility journey is personal to you and while of course there is no need to discuss it with anyone at work, do know that support is always available to you. We hope that you will feel able to discuss whatever you need to with your manager and they will handle things sensitively, confidentially and will signpost you to further guidance and advice as appropriate. They are also the best person to discuss, suggest and agree any reasonable adjustments that you may need.

If you would prefer not to, or don't feel that you can, discuss things with your manager, please speak to your HR Business Partner (however do be aware that if reasonable adjustments and/or time off work is needed your manager will need to be notified of this and the reason for it).

If you are struggling because of fertility challenges or coping with infertility you can also always speak to any of the CIPD's Mental Health Champions in complete confidence and the EAP (Employee Assistance Programme) is also always available and can put you in contact with a specialist counsellor if this is most appropriate in your circumstances.

## **Time off**

If you know you will need time off for fertility investigations or treatment, talk to your manager (or HR Business Partner) as soon as you can. Whilst there is no legal entitlement to paid time off for people who are having fertility investigations or treatment, we will give you up to 10 days' paid time off (per treatment cycle) to attend these appointments.

This also applies if it is your partner who is undergoing fertility treatment; you will be entitled to the same amount of paid time off to attend these appointments with them. We know it might be difficult to have control over the times of appointments but we would appreciate it if you try to arrange these outside your normal working hours if you can. Let your manager know as early as you can when your appointments are if you need flexibility or time off to attend them.

However, while people's fertility journeys will be different and individual to them, they are likely to be emotionally challenging; and any treatment, investigations and/or counselling or other support associated with it may leave you feeling drained or fatigued or upset, sometimes unexpectedly – you may not feel ready to return to work straight after an appointment for example. Wherever you find yourself, please speak to your manager (or HR Business Partner) if you need time away from work, even at short notice.

Please note that you will need to have completed your probationary period successfully in order to be entitled to take paid time off for fertility investigations, treatment, counselling etc. In the event that you have not completed your probationary period please use your holiday allocation or unpaid leave to attend appointments.

### **Reasonable adjustments**

Work with your manager (or HR Business Partner) to decide what type of support and reasonable adjustments would be best for you. For example, adjustments may include more regular breaks during the working day; a temporary change to start and/or finish times or moving to part time working temporarily. There may also be options to review or redistribute some work elements or responsibilities. We recognise that reasonable adjustments at work can be of benefit but that everyone's situation is different. Consider that what you may need may change over time, so do discuss what you need with your manager regularly and as often as you need.

### **Your Pregnancy Rights**

It is important to remember that if you are undergoing fertility treatment you have pregnancy rights immediately after embryo transfer (when the embryo is implanted in your uterus) or on becoming pregnant, even though you may not be confirmed as pregnant until a few weeks later.

You do not have to tell the People team or your manager at this stage, but if you decide to then you will be protected by pregnancy laws from this point onwards. This means that you are entitled to paid time off for antenatal appointments, and any relevant sick leave will be logged as pregnancy sickness (and this type of absence does not count towards any sickness absence triggers which are part of our regular Sickness Absence policy). If the transfer/treatment is successful and you discover that you are pregnant, your pregnancy rights continue. Please do not feel under any pressure to disclose whether the treatment has or has not been successful until you are ready – we can always amend sickness records retrospectively. We will always do whatever we can to support you, whatever the circumstances, and not solely because we have a legal obligation to do so.

Sadly, fertility treatments are not always successful, and it can be difficult to find out that you are not pregnant. If you are having fertility treatment, in the unfortunate event that you are told that the treatment is unsuccessful, those rights continue for a further two weeks.

You may have to repeat the process several times before it is successful. That means that your pregnancy rights may come and go over a period of time.

If you sadly suffer a miscarriage, we have a dedicated policy in place outlining the support that we will provide you with, available here.

**Further sources of support**

Your manager, HR Business Partner and the People team are here to listen and to support you. There are also lots of other organisations which offer support and advice:

**EAP**

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority – HFEA  
<https://www.hfea.gov.uk/>

**Fertility Network UK**

<http://www.fertilitynetworkuk.org/>

**NHS**

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/ivf/availability/>

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