

Fertility Treatment Policy

The Bristol Methodist District. (Charity Number 1134873)

First Issued	January 2025
Last review	January 2025

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the time off that we grant to employees who are undergoing fertility treatment and explains the support available to them. Under this policy, fertility treatment includes:
- 1.1.1 any form of assisted reproduction carried out by a medical practitioner or nurse, for example in vitro fertilisation (IVF), intrauterine insemination (IUI) and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI);
 - 1.1.2 any treatment carried out by a medical practitioner or nurse for the purpose of preserving fertility, for example freezing eggs, sperm, embryos or reproductive tissue; and
 - 1.1.3 any medical examination or treatment in connection with the treatment mentioned above, for example blood tests, ultrasound scans, egg collection, sperm collection, embryo transfer.
- 1.2 We are committed to providing an environment where staff feel supported.
- 1.3 We recognise the physical and emotional stress that having fertility treatment can have on employees and are genuinely committed to providing support where we can.
- 1.4 The policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we reserve the right to amend it at any time.

2 Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to employees employed by us. It does not apply to workers, contractors, consultants or any self-employed individuals working for the organisation.

3 Our commitment to you

- 3.1 We are committed to ensuring that all line managers are provided with adequate training so that they are able to support individuals receiving fertility treatment.

4 Requesting support

- 4.1 We understand that working while undergoing fertility treatment can be challenging. If you are finding it difficult to cope at work while you are undergoing fertility treatment, you are encouraged to speak to your Line Manager.
- 4.2 If for any reason you are unable to approach your Line Manager, you can speak to a senior manager.
- 4.3 We urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing or adjustments that you need to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support while you are receiving treatment.
- 4.4 Any health-related information disclosed by you during discussions with your Line Manager will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

5 Time off if you are receiving fertility treatment

- 5.1 To make a request for time off to attend a fertility treatment appointment, you should contact your Line Manager.

- 5.2 You should give your Line Manager as much notice as possible of when you need the time off and, wherever possible, arrange your appointments outside your core hours or as near to the start or end of the working day as possible.
- 5.3 However, we do understand that you may need to take time off at short notice to attend your appointments.
- 5.4 We also understand that the amount of time that you may need off for each appointment will depend on the nature of the appointment and the type of treatment that you are receiving and therefore we will remain as flexible as we are able, considering business needs.
- 5.5 We may ask you to provide proof of the date and time of your appointment.
- 5.6 If you need additional time off to attend any further appointments, this will be treated in the same way as other medical appointments.
- 5.7 You may take the time off as annual leave, unpaid leave or, in some cases, we may agree a flexible working arrangement so that you can make up lost time by working additional hours at another time.

6 Time off to accompany a person receiving fertility treatment

- 6.1 If you have a qualifying relationship as set out below with a person receiving fertility treatment, we will grant you reasonable unpaid time off to accompany that person.
- 6.2 This could be you if you are the spouse or civil partner of the person receiving fertility treatment, or you could be living with the person receiving fertility treatment in an enduring family relationship, as long as they are not your parent, grandparent, sister, brother, aunt or uncle.
- 6.3 In addition, you will be eligible for the reasonable time off if you are the parent of any child born as a result of the treatment, or you expect to become the legal parent of any child which may be born as a result of the treatment under a surrogacy arrangement.
- 6.4 The fertility treatment appointment must be made on the advice of a medical practitioner or nurse.
- 6.5 To make a request for time off to accompany someone to a fertility treatment appointment, you should contact your Line Manager.
- 6.6 You may be asked for proof of the date and time of the appointment and to complete a declaration to confirm that you are eligible for time off under this policy.
- 6.7 You should give your Line Manager as much notice as possible of when you need the time off and, wherever possible, ensure that any appointments are arranged outside your core hours or as near to the start or end of the working day.
- 6.8 However, we do understand that you may need to take time off at short notice.
- 6.9 We also understand that the amount of time that you may need off for each appointment will depend on the nature of the appointment and the type of treatment that the person that you are accompanying is receiving and therefore we will remain as flexible as we are able, considering business needs.

7 Working flexibly on a temporary basis

- 7.1 We recognise that for individuals receiving fertility treatment, the option to work flexibly on a temporary rather than permanent basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include working from home, hybrid working or changing your start and finish times.

7.2 If you feel that you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis because you are undergoing fertility treatment, you should discuss and agree these with your Line Manager.

7.3 We will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet your needs.

8 Quiet place to work

8.1 If you need a quiet space to take private calls or a place to take medication during working hours, you should speak to your Line Manager who will try their best to accommodate this.

9 Access to a fridge

9.1 If you require access to a fridge during working hours to store medication, you should speak to your Line Manager who will try their best to arrange this.

10 Sickness

10.1 We understand that there may be times in the course of undergoing fertility treatment when you may be unwell. There is no expectation on you to work if you are unwell because of side effects related to your fertility treatment.

10.2 Unless otherwise set out in your contract, if you are sick and unable to work, you should follow the procedure set out in our Short-Term Sickness Absence Policy.

10.3 You do not have to disclose that your absence is connected with fertility treatment if you wish to keep this private. However, we want you to feel that you can be open about the reason for your leave.

11 Implantation

11.1 From the point of implantation of a fertilised ova, an employee is considered pregnant and has a statutory right to paid time off for antenatal appointments. For further information, please refer to our Maternity Leave Policy.

12 External sources of help

12.1 There are various places that provide help and support to those who are undergoing fertility treatment, including:

12.1.1 [Fertility Network UK](#), provides a wide range of resources for those affected by infertility;

12.1.2 [British Infertility Counselling Association](#), provides information about specialist fertility counsellors;

12.1.3 [Fertility Friends Support Forum](#), a forum community dedicated to infertility and fertility support.

13 Data protection

13.1 When dealing with any request under this policy, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our Data Protection Policy. In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.

14 Review

14.1 This policy may be reviewed at any time at the request of any member of staff, but it will be automatically reviewed two years after initial approval and thereafter on a biennial basis unless organisational changes, legislations, guidance, or non-compliance prompt an earlier review.

15 Definitions

15.1 The Bristol Methodist District ("we", "us", "our")

15.2 The Employee ("you", "your")

Document control box

Policy title:	Fertility Treatment Policy
Date approved:	January 2025
Version:	1.1
Supersedes:	NA
Next review date:	January 2027
Lead contact:	District Policy Committee