

# Fertility Support

Republic of Ireland

May 2018



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## Introduction

Our aim is to be pro-active by recognising that some colleagues will undergo fertility treatment, and need support at this sensitive time. We will ensure that we live the Tesco Values by being flexible and sympathetic, and facilitating time off work when required as detailed below.

### 1. What type of leave I am authorised?

#### a) Hospital Appointments

In line with our Time-off policy, hospital appointments should be organised outside normal working hours (where possible). Colleagues should also have the option to shift swap, vary their working pattern in some way, or make up their hours for the time off that they need (hospital /clinic letters or appointment cards need to be provided).

#### b) Paid Leave

The Company will release the colleague for up to a maximum of 1 working week. This will be paid leave at contractual pay. This is pro-rata for part-time colleagues. The time is to cover procedures, scans and operations that form part of a recognised treatment programme, as well as rest and recuperation following treatment.

Time off can be granted for up to 1 working week per cycle, and can be granted 3 times over the course of a colleague's employment. A colleague would therefore be able to take a maximum of 3 weeks' paid leave (all of these may be within one calendar year).

The paid time off may be taken as a minimum of one day/shift or as a block of 1 week. Where this may equate to a part day for part-time colleagues, the colleague should be allowed the day off and to work back outstanding hours at a mutually convenient time.

Colleagues should be encouraged to give as much notice as possible of any planned appointments or anticipated time off work.

#### c) Unpaid Leave

A colleague can have unpaid time off under our Compassionate Leave policy as agreed with their Line Manager.

#### d) About partners

Paid time off for the partner of someone undergoing treatment, can be taken for a maximum of two days per treatment cycle (at contractual pay), if their attendance at the clinic or hospital is required as part of the treatment process. This is pro-rata for part-time colleagues.

If partners are not required as part of the process, but wish to accompany their partner undergoing treatment, they may take unpaid Compassionate Leave. Paid options such as holiday or shift-swap can be offered to provide a period of paid leave.

Some flexibility will need to be shown where a colleague needs to take a half-day off or a few hours off.

### 2. Am I eligible?

Length of Service	Leave and Pay Allowance	Partner's Leave and Pay Allowance
One year or more	Up to a maximum of 1 working week's leave of absence per cycle.*	Up to two days pro-rata. *
Less than one year	Supportive, understanding and flexible approach to individual. Unpaid leave available.	Supportive, understanding and flexible approach to individual. Unpaid leave available
No. of days contracted to work	Up to the maximum of days' leave shown below:	Up to a maximum of days' leave shown below:
5	5	2
4	4	1.75
3	3	1.25
2	2	0.75
1	1	0.50

\*Up to a maximum of 3 times over the course of a colleague's employment.

Colleagues on a Flexible Contract should have paid time off based on the number of 'core' days worked.

People Managers should fill in the Record of Leave Tracker and file in the colleague's personal file (Please see the Reference Library).

### 3. What happens if I'm an eggs/sperm donor

Some colleagues may decide to donate eggs/sperm. We would recommend that you use shift-swaps, or vary your working hours, or use your holiday entitlement.

### 4. How to absence an absence

Absence authorised under this policy should be coded as Planned Paid Authorised Leave.

## 5. If the treatment is successful...

If a woman who has had fertility treatment is absent for maternity related illness, she should be managed as any other pregnant colleague.

## 6. If the treatment is unsuccessful...

If the fertility treatment is unsuccessful, it can prove to be an extremely stressful time for the individuals involved. With their permission, and in the strictest confidence, you may want to discuss this with their Line Manager as the situation may impact the individuals' confidence or their performance. If the colleague is absent from work due to stress/depression resulting from unsuccessful fertility treatment, normal absence procedures should apply. This is not maternity related sickness.

## 7. What happens in the event of complications

In rare circumstances a small minority of patients undergoing fertility treatment become ill as a result of the drugs they are taking or the treatment. Some people may need to spend some time in hospital. This should be treated as sickness and coded as such, and not as maternity related sickness.

## 8. What is the role of the People Manager

It is important to remember that the People Manager's role is not that of medical advisor or infertility expert. The People Manager should provide support in terms of managing the amount of time a colleague will need away from the business whilst undergoing diagnosis and treatment.

Confidentiality, discretion and sensitivity will be essential. In some cases colleagues may not want Line Managers or their peers to know why they are having time off. The People Manager will need to decide with the colleague how to manage this.

The People Manager should initiate regular discussions with the colleague, in order to discuss the treatment schedule, and to try and plan working hours as much as possible in advance of any absence.

If in doubt as to what action or support to give, advice should be taken from the Occupational Health Advisor.

### Useful Websites

[www.nisig.ie](http://www.nisig.ie) National Infertility Support and Information Group  
[www.ivf-infertility.co.uk](http://www.ivf-infertility.co.uk)  
[www.lfc.org.uk](http://www.lfc.org.uk)  
[www.child.org.uk](http://www.child.org.uk)  
[www.issue.co.uk](http://www.issue.co.uk)

### Related Reading

Fertility Flowcharts 1 and 2  
Glossary of Terms  
Maternity Policy  
Paternity Policy  
Adoption Policy

### Policy information