

Our Ref: ID 1765

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## **Re: Freedom of Information Request - Assisted Conception Services during COVID-19**

Thank you for your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which was received into this office on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

### **You Asked for:**

Any information regarding NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) approach to patient eligibility for assisted conception services, in cases where:

1. Under normal circumstances, there exists an upper age limit for access to assisted conception services.
2. Delays related to the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in (or may result in) patients exceeding that limit.

### **Our Response:**

1. NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG's) current subfertility policy details any upper age limits for treatment. I have included the link below for your information: <https://www.wirralccg.nhs.uk/media/1254/subfertility-policy-wirral-2017-18.pdf>
2. NHS Wirral CCG has patient level information for when activity has been carried out but information about patients waiting for activity is normally at an aggregate level based on hospital specialty, and not at procedure level. Therefore, NHS Wirral CCG is unable to answer this question.

### **Additionally:**

Online and several documents suggest that Office of Population Censuses and Surveys (OPCS) Classification of Interventions and Procedures codes of Q13 and Y96 should represent intrauterine insemination and in vitro fertilisation respectively. These would be the best codes to try and use to look at assisted conception. There is no inpatient activity using these codes on 2020/21 and only one case in 2019/20.

There have been 2 outpatient attendances using these codes in 2020/21 (both during June or July 2020). In comparison there were 24 attendances in April – July 2019 and 49 attendances from April – July in 2018. Due of the drop in activity between 2018 and 2019 it is hard to forecast what the activity should have been in 2020 under normal circumstances.

The outpatient dataset has a number of fields that are not mandatory. As such, the only field that gives patient age in this extract showed both patients seen in 2020 were less than 35 years old.

The upper age limit of patients seen in 2018 and 2019 was over 40 years old. Please note, this does not mean there was an upper age limit in place, just that this was the oldest patient age reported.

We hope this information is useful, however if you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact a member of the Corporate Affairs Team (contact details at the top of this letter)

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