

Our Ref: ID 1999

NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group
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Re: Freedom of Information Request - Fertility Treatment Queries

Thank you for your request for information made under the Freedom of Information Act 2000, which was received into this office on the 8th October 2021.

You Asked for:

- 1) Please can you share your local pricing schedule in relation to fertility treatment; I'm particularly interested in your local price with your provider for conventional In vitro fertilisation (IVF) but if you have the full schedule you could share this would be appreciated?
Noting we have been under national Covid-19 contracting arrangements if you would be willing to share this for 2019/2020, confirming whether this includes Commissioning for Quality and Innovation (CQUIN) or not that would be great?
- 2) Do you have a copy of your fertility policy you could please share? If this is available online please send a link.
- 3) Please can you advise your approach to applying the Overseas Visitors Charging Guidance for fertility treatment? (I've included further detail below with this question expanded with the highlighted).
- 4) If you are willing to provide a name and contact email for someone in your contact or finance team that may be interested, it may take me a few months to compile all the information from all the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG's), but I'm happy to share my findings with your CCG if this supports you address future commissioning issues around fertility.

Overseas Visitors – Additional Detail

As you may be aware the [Guidance of Implementing the Overseas Visitor Charging](#) (Department of Health; updated February 2021) was updated in 2017 to make it clear that:

- surcharge patients should pay for their share of the costs for assisted conception services;
- surcharges are to be 150% of the prices charged to the NHS (CCG's); and
- Patients who *are* eligible for NHS funded treatment must not be charged their share of fertility treatment (paragraph 5.25 p39).

We have been looking to implement in Sheffield and initial research indicates that there are differing positions regionally and nationally across CCG's about how the surcharge is applied. Despite attempts to get a national steer from the Department of Health, no additional guidance has been made available as to how to determine the percentage of the costs attributable to each individual partner, thus which is recoverable from the Overseas visitor. Initial research indicates that there are approximately 4 different options which may have been implemented:

Option 1) Some CCG's have deemed that one party being an overseas visitor deems the couple ineligible.

Option 2) Some CCG's have not yet implemented the Overseas Visitors Guidance and are allowing the couple to have treatment funded by the NHS whilst either clarity is gained nationally, or other local areas decide, allowing them a baseline to implement.

Option 3) There is an option to split the charge 50/50 on the basis that the outcome of the treatment is to enable a couple to conceive. The argument for this is that treatment should be outcome focussed, however, the argument against this is that an NHS patient could inadvertently end up paying for treatment done to themselves (i.e. if an NHS female patient needs 60% of treatment and an Overseas male 40%, the couple will be charged 50% and hence 10% of NHS entitled treatment has been charged).

Option 4) A split for the costs of treatment is broken down, assigned to either a male or female partner and this proxy is used to determine who pays for which percentage of the treatment:

- E.g. one Trust have chosen 60% female/40% male split with another 65% female / 40% male
- St. Bartholomew's Hospitals NHS Trust (Barts) in London have compared costs for male/female elements of the actual treatment since 2018 and concluded that a 65% female/35% male split.

To support this piece of work I was wondering if you would be able to share your approach to the Overseas Visitors Guidance for Fertility Treatment. i.e. did you implement any of the options or one we have not considered above, and if so how did you determine the split (i.e. with your providers, with engagement from patients, national guidance, regionally etc.)?

Our Response:

1. Please see the table below for further details.

Provider	19/20 Local IVF Tariff
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (COCH)	£4,294.00
Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (LWH)	£4,333.00

2. The Subfertility policy is published on the NHS Wirral Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) website. Please click on the link below for further information.
<https://www.wirralccg.nhs.uk/media/1254/subfertility-policy-wirral-2017-18.pdf>

3. Please can I suggest that you contact the provider, Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (LWH), directly? I have included their contact details below, should you wish to do so.
LWH - FOI@lwh.nhs.uk

4. Lucy Morgan is the Contracts Finance Manager for NHS Wirral CCG and can be contacted on WICCG.InTouch@nhs.net.

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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