

Fertility in the Workplace



WRITING YOUR FERTILITY POLICY

Recognising the impact infertility and fertility treatment has on those going through it, understanding how to support employees and colleagues facing such challenges and offering flexibility to those undergoing treatment are all key when it comes to being a fertility friendly workplace.

In this document we have set out some key things to consider to help you become just that, we have also produced an example policy available to download that you can tailor and adapt to suit the needs of your organisation and employees.

Tiny Seeds will be on hand if you need any support. We can arrange to meet with you to discuss how your organisation can improve on what it is currently offering, talk through ideas for what to include in your own policy and we can help to raise awareness and understanding of fertility along with its associated struggles and impact within the workplace.

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IT IS IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND THAT...

- Infertility is defined as a disease by the World Health Organisation, one that affects both men and women
- As many as 1 in 6 couples or 1 in 7 individuals of working age will face a fertility struggle of some kind and as many as 1 in 4 pregnancies ends in loss. Sadly there will be people who find themselves navigating both circumstances and it is important to also be aware of what pregnancy loss support and policies your organisation has in place when writing your fertility policy
- Infertility is not the only reason for fertility treatment. Same sex couples and solo parents may also undergo fertility treatment to help build their families
- Studies show that those going through a fertility struggle regularly experience feelings of depression, anxiety, isolation and even suicidal thoughts associated directly with the challenges they are facing

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THINGS TO CONSIDER

- How easy is it to find your policy? It is a good idea to make this somewhere easily accessible e.g. in your staff handbook but avoid embedding it within other policies i.e. maternity.
- Do you make your employees aware of the policy? It is important that staff are aware this policy exists and what they are entitled to, this may be for personal use or to allow them to support their colleagues. This will also help alleviate any concerns surrounding disclosing their situation.
- Can you offer any practical support that could help ease any concerns or barriers to being at work whilst undergoing fertility treatment? For example, could you install a separate fridge for the sole purpose of storing medication, or provide a quiet area or room for answering sensitive phone-calls? These make people feel more comfortable being in the office whilst having treatment.

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A COUPLE MORE THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Does it recognise everyone that may require support? Is it inclusive of LGBTQ+ community, partners and those embarking on solo parenthood?
- Is it inclusive of all paths to parenthood? I.e. those going through surrogacy or adoption



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FERTILITY TREATMENT AND LIVING IN JERSEY

When considering your fertility policy, it is important to note that in Jersey higher level treatments, such as IVF, are only available off island. In the weeks leading up to IVF egg collection and fertilisation procedures, there are frequent monitoring appointments on island between the hours of 8am-5pm. Note that there is no flexibility in appointment times and in addition, these appointments can be longer than anticipated and very emotional.

Taking the above into consideration we would recommend:

- Flexible working hours to accommodate appointments
- Allowing employees to work from home where possible and if this is their preference

It is within these appointments that couples will be advised when they will need to travel off island, this is last minute and can be particularly stressful, therefore accommodating short notice leave requests is important.

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FERTILITY TREATMENT AND LIVING IN JERSEY

Couples may need to be in the UK for up to 6 days for egg collection, sperm production, fertilisation, embryo development and implantation.

Whilst away from the island, there will be days in-between clinic appointments, if remote working is an option, employees may wish and be able to continue working during this time. However, this can be a very stressful and emotionally draining experience, therefore being open to employees taking the time off is encouraged.



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OUR RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 12 days leave per year for higher level fertility treatment
- Flexibility to attend on-island appointments, this covering both lower and higher-level fertility treatments
- The option to work from home, where available, during the treatment period for both higher and lower-level fertility treatments
- That the policy covers heterosexual couples, LGBTQ+ community, partners and those embarking on solo parenthood
- Incorporating your policy into the new joiner's process
- Provision of training to empower employees to support colleagues going through fertility treatment (Tiny Seeds can support with this)
- Provision of a quiet room for private phone calls

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TEMPLATE POLICY

We have developed a template fertility policy that can be adapted and tailored to suit the needs of your own organisation.

To request this policy, for any further queries, or to discuss how Tiny Seeds can support you with becoming a fertility friendly workplace please email hello@tinyseeds.je