

# North Central London Fertility Policy Patient Leaflet



# Introduction

This leaflet is for people or couples living in north central London (Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey, Islington) who are worried about their ability to get pregnant (their fertility).

It summarises the **North Central London (NCL) Fertility Policy**, which comes into effect on 25 July 2022. The policy focuses on assisted conception treatments, which are medical treatments like in vitro fertilisation (IVF) that help you have a baby. It explains which of these treatments are funded by the NHS in NCL and who can access them.

## Contents

Introduction . . . . .	2	Can I get assisted conception treatment funded by the NHS in NCL? . . . . .	7
What should I do if I'm worried about my ability to have a baby? . . . . .	3	What are the eligibility criteria for different assisted conception treatments? . . . . .	9
What kinds of NHS-funded fertility treatments are available? . . . . .	4	Which assisted conception treatments are not funded by the NHS in NCL? . . . . .	13
Which assisted conception treatments are funded by the NHS in NCL? . . . . .	5	Further information. . . . .	14

# What should I do if I'm worried about my ability to have a baby?

Some people get pregnant quickly, but for others it can take longer. It's a good idea to see a GP for advice if you have not conceived after a year of trying or after six cycles of artificial insemination.

Women **aged 36 and over**, and anyone who's already aware they may have fertility problems, should see their GP sooner. They will go through your history (medical, social, family etc.) and fertility journey so far and may need to examine you. If you are in a couple, you should go together for the consultation.

Because most people will get pregnant in the first year of trying, your GP will usually only advise tests and investigations if any of the below applies to you:

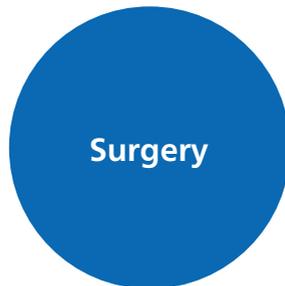
**1** You have already been diagnosed with a fertility problem or think you are at risk of fertility problems

**2** You have not got pregnant after one year of trying through regular (two to three times per week), unprotected vaginal sex or after six cycles of artificial insemination, which is where sperm is inserted into the vagina, cervix or womb with the aim of getting pregnant, or

**3** The woman or person trying to get pregnant is aged 36 or over.

# What kinds of NHS-funded fertility treatments are available?

The type of treatment you receive will depend on the cause of the fertility problems. There are three main types of fertility treatment:



which are the focus of the NCL Fertility Policy

# Which assisted conception treatments are funded by the NHS in NCL?



The assisted conception treatments below are funded by the NHS in north central London for eligible patients. Only a small group of people experiencing problems getting pregnant will need this kind of fertility treatment.

## **In vitro fertilisation (IVF)**

During IVF eggs are removed from the ovaries and fertilised with sperm in a laboratory. One or two fertilised eggs (embryos) are then put into the womb to try to grow and develop (embryo transfer). This is called a 'fresh' IVF cycle. If there are any remaining good quality embryos these will be frozen to use later in a frozen embryo transfer if the first transfer is not successful.

## **Intra-uterine insemination (IUI)**

IUI is where the better-quality sperm are separated and injected directly into the womb when the woman or person is ovulating (when an egg is released from one of the ovaries). Sometimes

fertility drugs are used to start ovulation or release more eggs. In NCL IUI is provided 'unstimulated', which means that fertility drugs are not used.

### **Assisted conception treatments using donated sperm**

Some people may need to use donated sperm which is not from a partner to try to get pregnant. Currently the NHS in NCL will fund the cost of IUI or IVF, but the patient will need to source and pay for the donated sperm.

### **IVF using donated eggs**

Some people who have certain medical conditions may need to use eggs from someone else to try to get pregnant. Currently the NHS in NCL will fund the cost of IVF, but the patient will need to source and pay for the donated eggs.

You can find out more about using donated sperm and eggs on the [HFEA website](#).

### **Sperm washing**

Sperm washing may sometimes be used where the woman or person trying to get pregnant is not living with HIV, but the sperm is from a partner who is living with HIV.

Sperm washing is where the healthy sperm is separated from the semen where the HIV cells are located preventing them being passed on to the woman or person trying to get pregnant and the baby. The washed sperm can then be transferred to the womb using IUI, or used to fertilise eggs in IVF.

### **Fertility preservation**

Fertility preservation usually involves freezing sperm, eggs, or embryos to use in assisted conception treatments at a later date.

# Can I get assisted conception treatment funded by the NHS in NCL?

Assisted conception treatments are funded for eligible individuals and couples with fertility problems. This is regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or relationship status.

To be eligible for NHS-funded assisted conception treatments most people who live in NCL will need to meet the criteria listed below:

- **Age:** The woman or person trying to get pregnant **must be aged under 43**. Assisted conception treatments are not funded for people aged 43 and over because the chances of a successful pregnancy are low.

If the woman or person trying to get pregnant is **aged under 40 they must not have already had three IVF cycles**. If the woman or person trying to get pregnant is **aged 40-42 they must not have already had any IVF cycles**. This includes cycles paid for privately. This is because the likelihood of getting pregnant decreases with the number of unsuccessful IVF cycles a person has had.

- **Ovarian reserve:** The woman or person trying to get pregnant should have an adequate number of good quality eggs in their ovaries (ovarian reserve). Ovarian reserve is a good indicator of a woman or person's ability to get pregnant. A woman's ovarian reserve declines with age. There are several blood tests and a scan that can help predict ovarian reserve. In NCL assisted conception treatments are not funded for people who have abnormal ovarian reserve tests because they are less likely to get pregnant using assisted conception treatments.

- **Weight:** The woman or person trying to get pregnant **must have a healthy weight**. This is measured by working out a person's **body mass index (BMI)**, which divides weight in kilograms by height in metres squared. **The person trying to get pregnant must have a BMI between 19 and 30**. This is because people who are either underweight or obese are less likely to get pregnant using assisted conception treatments.
- **Smoking:** The woman or person trying to become pregnant and the man or person providing sperm for treatment **must not smoke**. If you give up smoking you will become eligible. This is because people who smoke are less likely to get pregnant using assisted conception treatments.
- **Sterilisation:** People in a couple or individuals **must not have been sterilised**. This is because sterilisation is offered by the NHS as an irreversible method of contraception.
- **Existing children: Couples cannot already have a child together** and at least one person in the couple must not have a living child from a previous relationship. **Single people cannot already have a child**. This is because the NHS needs to focus its budget on patients who have the most need.

There are also additional criteria for the different types of assisted conception treatments, some of which are set out in the following sections of this leaflet.

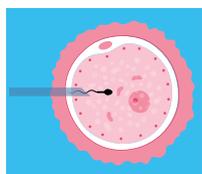
To check whether you are eligible for NHS-funded assisted conception treatment, and it is the right treatment for you, please speak to your specialist.

Even if you meet the criteria above you are not guaranteed treatment. The final decision to treat will be made by your doctor in discussion with you.

# What are the eligibility criteria for different assisted conception treatments?



We have set out the assisted conception treatments funded by the NHS in NCL and some of the criteria for accessing these treatments below. Please check with your doctor to see if you are eligible and if it is the right treatment for you.



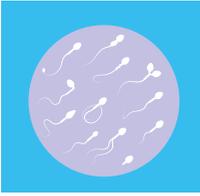
## **In vitro fertilisation (IVF)**

Locally, IVF is only funded for eligible people who either:

- have a medical condition that means IVF is the only treatment option for them,
- have not got pregnant by having sex regularly for two years, or
- have not got pregnant after 12 cycles of IUI.

For eligible women or people who are trying to get pregnant who are aged under 40, up to six embryo transfer procedures from a maximum of three fresh IVF cycles will be funded.

For eligible women or people who are trying to get pregnant who are aged 40-42, up to two embryo transfer procedures from one fresh IVF cycle will be funded.



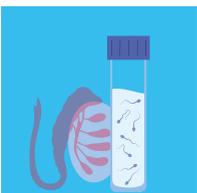
## **Intra-uterine insemination (IUI) using partner sperm**

Locally up to six cycles of unstimulated IUI using partner sperm are funded for eligible people who either:

- cannot, or would find it difficult to, have sex because they have a physical disability or psychological problem and have not got pregnant after six cycles of self-funded IUI
- have a medical condition that means they need IUI to get pregnant:
  - o people living with HIV who have had a sperm washing procedure
  - o people with spinal cord injury or other conditions that mean they need electro-ejaculation, a procedure which produces an ejaculation of semen.

People in the groups listed above may be eligible for IVF if they have a medical condition that means IVF is the only treatment option for them, or they have not got pregnant after 12 cycles of IUI.

Up to six cycles of unstimulated IUI may also be funded for some people who meet the eligibility criteria for IVF but have social, cultural or religious objections to IVF. If people have IUI in these circumstances, they would then not be eligible for any NHS-funded IVF.



## **Assisted conception treatments using donated sperm**

Some people may need to use donated sperm which is not from a partner to try to get pregnant.

Up to six cycles of unstimulated IUI using donated sperm is funded for eligible people who either:

- have no sperm in their semen or severe problems with the quality of their sperm (azoospermia)
- have a high risk of passing a genetic or infectious disease to their child or partner
- have a condition where there are severe problems with the compatibility of a couple's blood types (severe rhesus isoimmunisation)
- are trying to get pregnant using donor insemination but have not become pregnant after six cycles of self-funded IUI using donor sperm.

People in the groups listed above may be eligible for IVF using donated sperm if they have a medical condition that means IVF is the only treatment option for them, or they have not got pregnant after 12 cycles of IUI.

Currently the NHS in NCL will fund the cost of IUI or IVF, but the patient will need to source and pay for the donated sperm.



### **IVF using donated eggs**

People with certain medical conditions may need to use someone else's eggs to try to get pregnant.

IVF using donated eggs may be funded for eligible people who have either:

- a condition where the ovaries stop working normally before the age of 40 (premature ovarian insufficiency)
- a condition where the ovaries haven't developed normally (gonadal dysgenesis)

- had an operation to remove both ovaries (bilateral oophorectomy), or
- a high risk of passing a genetic disease to their child.

Currently the NHS in NCL will fund the cost of IVF, but the patient will need to source and pay for the donated eggs.



### **Sperm washing**

Sperm washing is funded for eligible couples where the woman or person trying to conceive is not living with HIV, but the sperm is from a partner who is living with HIV and is either unable to take their HIV medication regularly or has an HIV viral load that is too high.



### **Fertility preservation**

In NCL freezing of sperm, eggs, or embryos may be funded for eligible people who either:

- are due to have a treatment that might make them unable to have a baby in the future,  
for example chemotherapy for cancer and some treatments undertaken as part of gender reassignment.
- have a medical condition that will progress in a way that means they will be unable to have a baby in the future

People who need fertility preservation do not need to meet the eligibility criteria listed on pages 7 and 8 of this leaflet to have their sperm, eggs, or embryos frozen. However, they will need to fulfil these eligibility criteria to receive NHS-funded IUI or IVF using their frozen sperm, eggs, or embryos.

# Which assisted conception treatments are not funded by the NHS in NCL?

The following assisted conception treatments are not funded by the NHS in NCL (this list is not exhaustive):



**Natural cycle IVF:** This is IVF involving no fertility drugs. This is not funded by the NHS in NCL because the evidence shows that natural cycle IVF is less likely to lead to a pregnancy compared to IVF using drugs to stimulate the ovaries to produce more eggs.



**Assisted conception treatments involving surrogates:** Surrogacy is when someone carries and gives birth to a baby for another person or couple. Assisted conception treatments involving surrogates are not funded by the NHS in NCL because of the many legal and ethical risks involved. Also funding treatments using a surrogate may be unfair to people who cannot afford to pay the surrogate's expenses, which may be up to £20,000.

**Surgical sperm retrieval:** This is a technique for collecting sperm directly from a man's testicles or epididymis (a tube at the back of the testicles). Surgical sperm retrieval is funded by NHS England. The NHS in NCL will fund storage of sperm and IVF for eligible people who have had surgical sperm retrieval funded by NHS England.

# Further information

For more information about assisted conception treatment, please read:

**[NHS website's fertility page](#)**

**[Fertility Network UK](#)**

**[Patient.info](#)**

**[Trying to get pregnant](#)**

**[Human Embryology and Fertilisation Authority \(HFEA\)](#)**

**[The Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists](#)**

**[NICE fertility problems guidelines](#)**

**[Having a baby if you're LGBT+ - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](#)**

**[Frequently Asked Questions](#)**



This leaflet describes what is available to you from the NHS in Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington should you need help to get pregnant. It tells you what specialist fertility treatments, such as IVF (in vitro fertilisation), are available and what requirements you need to meet to receive them. If you would like this leaflet translated contact: [nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net](mailto:nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net)

গর্ভবতী হওয়ার জন্য আপনার যদি কোনো সহায়তার প্রয়োজন হয় তবে বার্নটে, ক্যামডেন, এনফিল্ড, হারিংগি ও আইলিংটনে NHS থেকে আপনার জন্য কী কী পাওয়া যাবে তা এই লফিলটে বর্ণনা করা হয়েছে। IVF (ইন ভিট্রো ফার্টিলাইজেশন)-এর মতো কোন কোন বিশেষায়িত উর্বরতার (ফার্টিলিটি) চিকিৎসা উপলভ্য আছে এবং এগুলো পতে আপনাকে কোন কোন পূর্বশর্ত পূরণ করতে হবে তা এতে বর্ণনা করা হয়েছে। আপনি যদি এই লফিলটে অনুদতি অনুলিপি পিতে চান, তবে যোগাযোগ করুন: [nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net](mailto:nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net)

تصف هذه النشرة الخدمات التي توفرها لك هيئة الخدمات الصحية الوطنية (NHS) في بارنت وكامدن وانفيلد وهارينجي وإزلنغتون إذا كنت بحاجة للمساعدة على الحمل. وهي تحدد لك أنواع علاجات الخصوبة المتخصصة، مثل التلقيح الاصطناعي (الإخصاب خارج الجسم - IVF)، المتاحة والشروط التي يجب أن تتوفر لديك لتلقي هذه العلاجات. إذا كنت تريد ترجمة هذه النشرة، فيمكنك التواصل عن طريق: [nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net](mailto:nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net)

Este folleto describe lo que le ofrece el Servicio Nacional de Salud (NHS) en Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey e Islington en caso de que necesite ayuda para quedar embarazada. Le indica qué tratamientos con especialistas en fertilidad están disponibles, como fecundación in vitro (FIV), y qué requisitos debe cumplir para poder recibirlos. Si quiere recibir este folleto traducido, escriba a [nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net](mailto:nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net)

Ta broszura opisuje wsparcie świadczone przez NHS w Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey i Islington dla kobiet mających problemy z zajściem w ciążę. Można się z niej dowiedzieć, jakie specjalistyczne metody leczenia niepłodności, takie jak zapłodnienie in vitro (IVF), są dostępne i jakie wymagania należy spełnić, aby z nich skorzystać. Jeśli chcesz otrzymać tłumaczenie tej ulotki, napisz na adres: [nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net](mailto:nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net)

Buug-yarahaan waxa uu sharaxaad ka bixinayaa waxyaabaha aad ka heli karto NHS-ta Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey iyo Islington haddii aad u baahan tahay caawimaad la xiriirta sida aad uur u yeelan karto. Wuxuu wax kaaga sheegayaa noocyada daawaynta takhasuska leh ee bacriminta, sida IVF (bacriminta vitro), ee la heli karo iyo shuruudaha aad u baahan tahay inaad buuxiso si aad u hesho. Haddii aad jeclaan lahayd in buug-yarahan ka turjummo la xiriir: [nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net](mailto:nlccg.fertility1@nhs.net)



North Central London  
Integrated Care Board