

PE2146/C: Allow the use of privately sourced donor eggs in NHS funded IVF treatment

Scottish Government written submission, 9 June 2025

Thank you for your letter of 28 April 2025 in relation to public petition PE2146: Allow the use of privately sourced donor eggs in NHS funded IVF treatment calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to allow couples and individuals to purchase altruistically donated eggs from private clinics for use in NHS funded IVF treatment and instruct NHS Scotland to create a clear clinical pathway to support those using private donor eggs. I note from your letter that the Committee is asking for a more detailed response to the petition, in particular to the suggestion that those facing a significant waiting list for donor eggs should be able to use an altruistically donated, privately purchased donor egg for NHS treatment. This response will address the following points:

- what data is available to support the information about NHS waiting times for couples who require an altruistic egg donor.
- whether the waiting time can exceed four years and, if so, what the longest waiting time is
- whether the Scottish Government believes NHS Boards are currently meeting the needs of couples who face a significant waiting list for donor eggs that could prevent them from receiving treatment in time to have a biological child.

However, I would like to begin reiterating that the Scottish Government expects NHS Boards to meet the needs of couples who are eligible for NHS fertility treatment and require donor gametes (eggs and sperm) for that treatment and we have always been clear that couples who are eligible for NHS fertility treatment should not pay for any aspect of their treatment, including the purchase and use of donor gametes (eggs and sperm). None of the four NHS Fertility Centres based in Aberdeen, Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow purchase donor eggs from within the UK or overseas to treat their patients, this applies to both the NHS and self-funded patients.

I would also like to clarify that whilst each of the four NHS Fertility Centres provide self-funded treatment, the only fully private fertility centre in Scotland is GCRM Fertility in Glasgow.

I note from your letter that the Committee is keen to understand what data is available to support the information about NHS waiting times for couples who require an altruistic egg donor. Public Health Scotland (PHS) provides quarterly statistics on how long eligible patients wait from referral to a screening appointment for in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment by the NHS in Scotland, the most recent publication was issued on 27 May 2025 - IVF waiting times in Scotland - Quarter ending 31 March 2025 - IVF waiting times in Scotland - Publications - Public Health Scotland. The Local Delivery Plan Standard is for 90% of eligible patients to be screened at an IVF Centre within 52 weeks of receipt of a referral from a secondary care/acute

consultant. This has been met since the standard was first measured in March 2015. However, this data does not include the wait time for patients who require donor gametes for their NHS fertility treatment as this patient cohort is excluded from the need to meet the Local Delivery Plan Target National Infertility Group Report 2013, page 27, Section 7.2, paragraph 144. All assisted reproduction treatment is excluded from national patient waiting targets, The Patient Rights (Treatment Time Guarantee) (Scotland) Regulations 2012, Section 7.

NHS Boards collect their own data in regards to the waiting times for couples requiring an altruistic egg donor. However, I can advise that the Fertility Centre with the longest wait time is currently Glasgow Fertility Centre who advised that couples who require an altruistic egg donor may wait between three to four years for treatment. All of the waits at the other three Fertility Centres are below this time.

As mentioned above, the Scottish Government expects NHS Boards to meet the needs of couples who are eligible for NHS fertility treatment and require donor gametes (eggs and sperm) for that treatment and all four Centres have advised that they intend to run local campaigns in 2025 to reduce the waiting times for patients using the Scottish Government/NHS Scotland resources that were developed for the national donor gamete recruitment campaigns in 2021, 2022 and 2023. The Scottish Government therefore believes that as far as possible, NHS Fertility Centres are meeting the needs of couples who require donor gametes, including donor eggs, for their NHS fertility treatment.

Children and Families Directorate