



## Supporting IVF Policies

### Introduction

- There are a number of sample policies provided to act as a reference point for 30% Club members when forming their Diversity & Inclusion policies.
- These policies have been provided by some of our member companies.
- Within the policy bank, we have divided these policies into similar themes.
- This section includes 1 sample policy on implementing supports for IVF

### Top 5 things to include in an IVF Policy

1. Links to existing policies that already apply and could be cross referenced – e.g. sick leave policy, compassionate leave, agile working, bereavement leave, other
2. Reflection of the needs of both potential parents
3. Guidance for people leaders/supervisors
4. Links to wellbeing supports already in existence including any EAP services
5. Clarity on what is covered and what isn't, presented in a sympathetic accessible format



## IVF Policy – Sample 1

### Fertility Treatments

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For anyone working through the process of fertility treatments, it is a physical and emotional roller coaster, where help and support can make all the difference. It is also a very personal matter where sometimes it is just too difficult to talk about it at work, or something you want to keep to yourself. We recognise that, and we want to help, so we hope some of the supports outlined in this document will help to make a difference.

The first thing that we would actively encourage you to do is to talk to your People Leader. If we know what is happening, it is much easier for us to help. By talking to your People Leader as early as possible they can provide you with the appropriate levels of support and jointly you can put a plan in place for help during this time. Any conversations will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and discretion. Our intention is to offer all reasonable support to our employees and their partners undergoing treatment such as IVF, IUI and ICSI.

### Balancing treatments with work

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We appreciate that this period of time can be very stressful, as well as physically challenging in terms of time off or just general flexibility. By working through a plan with your People Leader on what is feasible across your team, there are a number of various options that could be considered. For example

- Up to 5 additional unpaid Annual Leave days are available under the Annual Leave Policy - these can either be taken as a block or used to reduce your working week.
- Our Agile working policy can be used to facilitate you in working from home where that can be helpful and if it is feasible for your role and works for the team.
- Agreeing locally to flex your working hours/start and finish times (such as starting earlier or later to facilitate time off for time critical treatments).
- Considering if any changes to your duties would help during this time, for example; putting supports in place so that you are not carrying heavy weights or standing for long periods or reviewing/flexing your break times if needed to allow time away from your desk during the working day.
- Our flexible working policy offers reduced hours contracts for periods from 1 month, again where it makes sense in the context of your role.

### Attending medical appointments

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This document has been prepared as a suggested aid for any organisation on their Diversity journey. It has been developed by 30% Club members as a suggestion rather than as formal advice. We hope you will find it useful on your journey

Under the Sick Leave policy we provide for

- Paid time off to attend clinical appointments for both partners, where the medical appointment can't be scheduled outside of working hours – we would ask that you give us at least 48 hours' notice when attending clinic appointments so that we can make arrangements to cover your role. If you then need extended time off for follow-up appointments, please let us know so we can plan around it. Appointments should last no more than a half day.
- If there is a medical procedure required or if you are experiencing any side effects from fertility treatments, this is treated as sick leave once medically certified.
- A few things to be aware of
  - Our Sick Leave policy allows for up to 6 months full pay and 6 months half pay in any 24 month rolling period.
  - Any sick leave taken post implantation should be recorded as "pregnancy related" sick leave
  - It is more likely that a full day off would be required for egg retrieval and implantation due to the nature of these treatments (as sedation is required) and if this is the case, then we treat this as sick leave once medically certified.

### Options available, depending on what happens next

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- **Where the treatment is successful** you will be covered by the protections of our Maternity Leave policy after egg implementation.

### Sadly, treatment is not always immediately successful, in which case you have access to

- **Compassionate Leave** – this policy has been created to support employees in difficult times, and at minimum it allows for 3 paid days within any 12 months period and is subject to a max 5 paid days in a 36 month period.
- **Emergency Family Leave** – this policy is available for partners who may be needed for support during this time, our Emergency Family Leave policy is there to support families in crisis. It allows for 3 paid days within any 12 months period and is subject to a max 5 paid days in 36 month period.
- **Other options for time off** - In addition to the provisions under our Annual Leave Policy, Our special absence break allows for unpaid breaks for a periods of 1-6 months.
- **Certified sick leave** – where your doctor recommends a short period of certified sick leave, this is covered under our sick leave policy.

### Advice for People Leaders

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As a people leader what can you do to actively support a team member going through fertility treatments?

1. Be open to a conversation and be sensitive to the fact that your team member may be feeling very vulnerable
2. Confirm that all conversation are strictly confidential.



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3. Listen, act fairly and consistently in a manner that is sensitive to their needs, you may need to put in place different supports at different times and your approach may differ based on individual cases.
4. Agree a plan that can be put in place during the treatment cycle that works for both your team member and your wider team deliverables

You have a number of options available at your discretion which you can sanction, including;

- 5 additional unpaid Annual Leave days are available under the Annual Leave Policy in addition to base annual leave entitlements. These days can be taken either as a single block or can be used to reduce the working week for a short period.
- You could consider if the role can be carried out from home for parts of the time, and if so remote access may be an option.
- It might help to flex hours of work/start and finish times for a period, to help them to attend appointments or manage treatment schedules which are often time critical.
- If possible considering if any changes to their duties could to help them during this time, for example; putting supports in place so that they are not carrying heavy weights or standing for long periods. Consider reviewing/ flexing break times if needed to allow time away during the working day<sup>1</sup>. The best way to know what's needed is to ask
- Flexible Working contracts are also available for short periods.

If the treatment is unsuccessful, then every effort should be made to arrange a couple of days off for physical and emotional recovery. This can be managed in a number of ways, either through compassionate leave or annual leave. Occasionally depending on individual circumstances, it may also involve certified sick leave.

### **Records**

No formal records are required as this is a local arrangement. It might be worth keeping a note of what was agreed, in case future rounds are requested or you have a similar request again.

### **Keep in Contact**

Keep the lines of communication open, don't be afraid to check in occasionally.

### **Support**

Should you need our support during this period then please contact HR Direct

### **Other Supports Available**

The Employee Counselling service is a free independent counselling service available to all employees and their families. It is available through an external provider, and they are bound by confidentiality and never disclose any of their contacts. They can also refer you to services that offer specialist advice in this area.

Most fertility clinics including SIMS offer a counselling service as part of their treatment plans – see [www.sims.ie](http://www.sims.ie)

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<sup>1</sup> Break options agreed should be in keeping with the minimum requirements as set out in the working time act.