



Lincolnshire
Integrated Care Board

Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board

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FREEDOM OF INFORMATION – DECISION NOTICE

Dear Requester

FOI Reference Number: 71751

I refer to your email of 19 October 2023 requesting information in relation to unstimulated intrauterine insemination.

I can confirm on behalf of NHS Lincolnshire Integrated Care Board (ICB) and in accordance with S.1 (1) of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) that we do hold the information that you have requested. A response to each element of your request is detailed below.

I had a quick question about [Lincolnshire's policy on IUI](#).

It states that "unstimulated intrauterine insemination should be considered as a treatment option in the following groups as an alternative to vaginal sexual intercourse:

- **Couples who are unable to, or would find it difficult to, have vaginal intercourse because of a clinically diagnosed physical disability or psychosexual problem who are using partner or donor sperm;**
- **Couples with conditions that require specific consideration in relation to methods of conception (for example, after sperm washing where the man is HIV positive);**
- **Couples in a same sex relationship."**

However, it then goes on to say that:

"Same sex couples who have not become pregnant after six cycles of privately funded donor insemination undertaken in a clinical setting should be referred for an NHS subfertility assessment and possible treatment, following the local subfertility pathway."

I was hoping you could clarify:

Is this policy stating that the ICB will fund intrauterine insemination for same sex couples?

If it does: how many cycles will it fund for same sex couples, and will it only fund them after a couple has self-funded 6 cycles?

We can confirm that the ICB's IUI policy specifically advises the following – the bullets identify the key groups who may benefit from IUI:

Who might benefit from IUI?

NICE Guideline CG156 'Fertility problems: assessment and treatment' provides guidance for the NHS treatment of fertility problems (NICE, 2013a). The guideline is intended to assist in the treatment of people of reproductive age who have problems conceiving and identifies key groups who might benefit from IUI including:

- *people who are unable to, or would find it very difficult to, have vaginal intercourse because of a clinically diagnosed physical disability or psychosexual problem who are using partner or donor sperm;*
- *people with conditions that require specific consideration in relation to methods of conception (for example, after sperm washing where the man is HIV positive);*
- *people in same-sex relationships.'*

The ICB policy does stipulate the following in relation to same sex couples

'Same sex couples who have not conceived after 6 cycles of privately funded donor insemination, despite evidence of normal ovulation, tubal patency and semenalysis, should be referred for NHS fertility testing and follow the existing subfertility clinical pathway.'

The ICB's policy states the following on the last paragraph of page 3:

Current policy for the provision of NHS-funded IUI in Lincolnshire is to provide up to three cycles of IUI (if a live birth results from the first or second cycle, no further cycles will be funded) to couples that meet certain eligibility criteria (LCC, 2016).

In answer to the question:

Is this policy is stating that the ICB will fund intrauterine insemination for same sex couples? Yes – as advised above within the section of who will benefit from IUI.

If it does: how many cycles will it fund for same sex couples, and will it only fund them after a couple has self-funded 6 cycles?

The ICB will fund 3 NHS-funded IUI, after 6 self-funded cycles of IUI have been completed. Please note, the policy advises:

'Given that there are a number of risks of at-home methods of donor insemination (e.g. the safety of donor sperm) the CCGs require that these 6 cycles should take place at a registered fertility clinic to ensure patient safety through the reproduction process.'

I hope that this answers your queries with the information we currently hold, but if I can be of any further assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to

Arden & GEM Greater East Midlands Commissioning Support Unit
FOI TEAM/Corporate Communications Team
1st Floor, St John's House
East Street
Leicester
LE1 6NB

If you are not content with the outcome of your complaint, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted the complaints procedure provided the ICB.

The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: telephone 0303 123 1113,
email icocasework@ico.org.uk and <https://ico.org.uk/global/contact-us/>

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Yours faithfully

Lindsay Parker
Senior Freedom of Information Officer

**On behalf of
NHS Lincolnshire ICB**