



It's what we do

# Our Fertility Treatment Policy

**How managers can support colleagues through  
fertility treatment**

# Supporting colleagues through fertility treatment

**Role of the manager:** You're not expected to be an expert in fertility treatment. Your role is to acknowledge your colleague's needs in a sensitive way; make it clear how you will support them and to outline what support is available from the Co-op. If you haven't already, make yourself aware of the Co-op [Fertility Treatment policy](#).

## Did you know?

- Infertility impacts 1 in 6 couples in the UK ([Fertility Network UK](#))
- Approximately 50,000 people go through fertility treatment each year with many more affected by the issue who don't seek treatment ([HFEA](#))
- Fertility treatment is not just about IVF (in vitro fertilisation), there are [other types of treatment](#) and our Co-op policy also covers intended parents conceiving through a surrogate and those who are surrogates themselves
- Fertility treatment provides same sex couples and solo parents the opportunity to start a family as well as supporting those with identified fertility issues
- The treatment will vary dependent on a range of factors, including the fertility issue(s) faced, availability and funding options of treatment in different areas of the country, and overseas and choices of the individual or couple undergoing treatment.
- Experiencing fertility struggles can impact physical, mental, financial and emotional wellbeing
- Levels of distress associated with fertility treatment are likely to be reduced if workplaces are supportive and colleagues are more likely to be productive and remain in work ([Fertility Network UK](#))

# Supporting colleagues through fertility treatment

## What can I do to help?

- Offer reassurance – your colleague may be reluctant to discuss their fertility challenges with you. Reassure them that you are there to support them. Make sure that they have read the [Co-op policy](#)
- Be open to flexible working practices. Everyone’s treatment will be different, and your colleague will need flexibility to be able to attend appointments, scans, medical procedures or administer medication. Due to the nature of some types of treatment these may be scheduled or changed at late notice. Discuss what your colleague needs and do what you can to accommodate their needs where it is reasonably practical.
- Remember that our Co-op policy also supports the partner of the person undergoing treatment including same sex partners, intended parents, surrogates and colleagues who have a surrogate or co-parent undergoing treatment.
- Make sure your colleagues knows what support is available. Familiarise them with sources of support offered by Co-op and signpost to external agencies if relevant.
- Be mindful of downplaying the experience of fertility treatment if it is not successful. Bear in mind that everyone’s journey will be unique.
- Be aware that, if your colleague has been undergoing fertility treatment and has had the last part of the IVF process (embryo transfer) they will have pregnancy rights.
- Check in regularly with your colleague. Fertility treatment can be emotionally and physically draining and exhausting. Keep the lines of communication open to make sure your colleague feels supported.

If you need any more advice, contact ER Services [Contacts - Co-op Colleagues \(coop.co.uk\)](#)