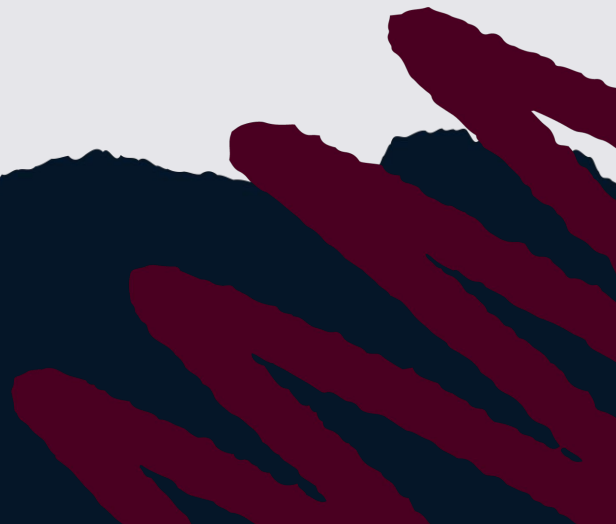




**PAID LEAVE  
FOR FERTILITY  
TREATMENT  
GUIDE**



## WHAT IS FERTILITY TREATMENT?

Fertility treatment refers to medical procedures designed to help individuals or couples conceive a child. These treatments can involve a variety of techniques, including:

- In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF)
- Intrauterine Insemination (IUI)
- Hormone Therapy
- Surgery

The number of appointments women need for IVF can vary significantly, but as an example, UK National Health Service (NHS) guidance on IVF notes there are usually six main steps to each cycle of IVF treatment. IVF treatment can also involve other appointments such as consultations and counselling.

Fertility treatments can be a complex and emotionally demanding process. Offering paid leave demonstrates the significant impact fertility treatments can have on employees and their families.

## WHAT IS THE LEGAL POSITION?

Many countries have legislated to provide a right to time off work for fertility treatment, including Greece, Japan, Malta, Portugal, Italy, and Ukraine. In France, employees undergoing fertility treatment have a statutory right to unlimited paid time off for the necessary medical procedures.

In some countries, including the UK and Ireland, legislation along these lines has been under consideration. In Spain, the courts have ruled that employers cannot dismiss employees for repeated absences due to fertility treatments.

## WHY OFFER PAID LEAVE FOR FERTILITY TREATMENT?

Fertility treatments can be physically and emotionally demanding. Offering paid leave demonstrates a commitment to employee health and well-being, as well as supporting employees who may face unique challenges related to fertility. Offering such benefits can also make an organisation more attractive to prospective employees, particularly those in certain demographics.



A study carried out by Totaljobs in partnership with the Fawcett Society in 2023 found that one in five workers who had undergone fertility treatment quit their jobs because of the way their employers treated them during the fertility treatment process. A further third (33%) said they had considered leaving their place of work due to the treatment they had received during this time.

3.5 million people in the UK are thought to be affected by infertility, and fertility rates have reached a critical low in some countries across the globe. The average age at which women have their first child is also rising.

## KEY CONSIDERATIONS

**Eligibility:** Define who is eligible for paid fertility leave, such as full-time employees, partners/spouse, or individuals undergoing specific treatments.

**Duration:** You may wish to specify the maximum number of days or weeks of paid leave allowed per treatment cycle.

**Types of Treatment:** Indicate whether the policy covers a range of fertility treatments, including In Vitro Fertilisation (IVF), Intrauterine Insemination (IUI), or others.

**Additional Benefits:** Consider providing paid time off for medical appointments related to fertility treatments such as counselling, and ensure that your health insurance plan covers fertility treatments and medications.

## BRINGING YOUR POLICY TO LIFE

- + Develop clear written policies covering paid leave for fertility treatment that are easily accessible. These can be added to contracts and/or included in your Employee Handbook.
- + Ensure that employee information related to fertility treatments is handled with confidentiality.
- + If your organisation operates in multiple countries, be aware of local laws and cultural norms regarding fertility treatments.

