

Ref: FOI/00475/CMICB
21 July 2023

Dear,

**Re: Freedom of Information Act 2000
Intrauterine insemination (IUI) for Same Sex Couples**

Thank you for your information request indicated in bold below, which has now been considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 by NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB). I am able to provide you with the following information and responses.

Please note from 01 July 2022, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) were disestablished, and their statutory functions and responsibilities inherited by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

Your Request:

The Women's Health Strategy (updated 30 August 2022) published by the Department for Health and Social Care outlines priority areas that require targeted action: [Women's Health Strategy for England - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/114222/women-health-strategy-for-england-2022.pdf) (www.gov.uk)

Of these key priority areas, section 12 includes fertility, specifically, unequal access to fertility services for same-sex female couples: "We will relieve those additional burdens, so that there is no requirement for self-funding and the NHS treatment pathway for female same-sex couples will start with 6 cycles of artificial insemination, prior to accessing IVF services if necessary."

When will the Cheshire and Merseyside ICB implement the guidance surrounding funded IUI for same-sex couples as per the Women's Health Strategy?

Our Response:

Please find listed below links to the current assisted fertility policies for all patients registered in each of the former CCG areas that now make up NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB, which are publicly available and detail the type of fertility treatment available to patients who meet the listed eligibility criteria.

Cheshire (Eastern/South/Vale Royal)

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/htpl5pa/subfertility-policy-2017-18-east-south-cheshire-may-2018.pdf>

Cheshire (West)

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/yski4uqj/subfertility-policy-2017-18-vale-royal-may-2018.pdf>

Halton

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/sgxmllhi/subfertility-policy-2014-15-halton-21-10-2015.pdf>

Knowsley

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/uvbfkpck/subfertility-policy-2014-15-knowsley-21-10-2015.pdf>

Liverpool

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/mwxp1bq1/subfertility-policy-2014-15-liverpool-21-10-2015.pdf>

South Sefton

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/lwmme4hn/subfertility-policy-2014-15-sefton-21-11-2014.pdf>

Southport & Formby

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/ja3mlegd/subfertility-policy-2014-15-southport-and-formby-21-11-2014.pdf>

St Helens

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/gqvvhloy/subfertility-policy-2015-16-st-helens-may-2015.pdf>

Warrington

<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/media/fxnplce4/subfertility-policy-2014-15-warrington-21-10-2015.pdf>

Wirral

<https://www.wirralccg.nhs.uk/media/yski4uqj/subfertility-policy-2017-18-vale-royal-may-2018.pdf>

Please note that that the above former CCG assisted fertility policy acknowledges the right of patients to be treated according to the obligations set out in the NHS Constitution and the Human Rights Act, specifically with regard to age and sex discrimination.

NHS Cheshire & Merseyside ICB is currently in the process of reviewing all former CCG policies, including the above listed assisted fertility policies. However, at present there is not specific date for when this will be completed.

Further information regarding the current application of the inherited former CCG commissioning policies in operation across the Cheshire & Merseyside area can be found on our website via the following link:
<https://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk/about/how-we-work/commissioning-policies/>

Should you require any further information or clarification regarding this response or do not feel that your request has been answered as you would expect, please contact us to discuss.

We also wish to take this opportunity to inform you that, where you are not satisfied with the response to your request for information, a formal complaints and internal review process is available.

This can be formally requested by emailing foi@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk and must be done within a reasonable time period (3 calendar months) from the date this response was issued.

Where you remain dissatisfied with our review under the Freedom of Information Act or the Environmental Information Regulations, you may apply directly to the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) for a review of your appeal decision. Generally, the ICO cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our complaints procedure. The ICO can be contacted at;

*The Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF
www.ico.gov.uk*

Should you need any further clarification or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us quoting the above FOI reference.