



FERTILITY POLICY

We understand that undergoing fertility treatment can be emotionally stressful and the Directors and Management Team wishes to support employees in these circumstances.

We acknowledge the importance of using inclusive language and where possible have used gender neutral language in this policy. For the purposes of this policy, “partner” refers to the partner of the person undergoing treatment and includes same sex partners, and colleagues who have a co-parent undergoing treatment.

This policy covers time off for attending appointments relating to fertility treatment, and to attend or accompany your partner to appointments specifically connected to the fertility treatment.

This policy applies to all employees, regardless of length of service. This policy does not form part of your contract of employment, and we may amend it any time.

Communication

We encourage you to discuss fertility treatment with your line manager at the earliest stage possible to ensure you can be supported before and during treatment. Conversations will be confidential, but your manager may ask permission to share information, if necessary, with HR and/or a Director.

Time Off

Please let your manager know the date and time of appointments as soon as possible. You may need to provide evidence of your appointment(s).

If you need to attend appointments relating to fertility treatment that you are undergoing yourself, you will be entitled to up to 3 days (22.5 hours) of paid leave in a 12 month period. Time should be logged on Toggl using the Personal Appointment code. For any additional time required, you may use annual leave or take unpaid leave. If added flexibility in your working pattern would be beneficial during your fertility treatment, please speak to your line manager.

If you need time off due to the side effects of treatment, or other symptoms, this will be recorded as sickness absence. Please refer to the Absence Through Ill Health Policy.

If your partner is undergoing treatment, and you wish to accompany them to appointments, you may have reasonable paid time off for up to 3 appointments in a 12 month period. Please let your manager know the date and time of appointments as soon as possible. You may need to provide evidence of appointment(s). You may also take a reasonable amount of unpaid time off during this time, with the prior approval of your line manager and preferably at least 4 weeks’ notice. If added flexibility in your working pattern would be beneficial during your partner’s fertility treatment, please speak to your line manager.

Embryo transfer

If you are undergoing IVF or frozen embryo transfer, the maternity policy will apply from the point of embryo transfer. Please refer to the Maternity Policy for more information.

If your IVF treatment is unsuccessful following embryo transfer, please refer to the Pregnancy Loss Policy for support and information.

Flexible working

At Aspire, our employees self-manage their time. However, if more flexibility is required due to fertility treatment (as someone receiving the treatment or their partner), you should discuss options with your line manager. These may include, but are not limited to:

- More breaks during the day.
- Earlier or later start/finish times.
- A request to reduce working hours on a temporary or permanent basis.

Support

In addition to extra flexibility and paid/unpaid time off for fertility treatment appointments, Aspire Scientific can also offer the following support:

- Access to our Employee Assistance Programme via Health Shield, which offers counselling and 24/7 GP appointments (optional benefit offered after completion of probation).
- Access to private medical insurance via Axa, which offers counselling and 24/7 GP appointments (optional benefit offered after completion of probation).
- Access to Aviva Smart Health, which offers 24/7 GP appointments and mental health support.
- Access to our trained Mental Health First Aiders (MHFA: Jo Chapman, James Keane).
- You are also welcome to talk to the HR & Operations Manager, or any member of the Management Team.
- Other health and wellbeing resources which can be found in Aspire Scientific Dropbox / Health & Wellbeing resources.

We encourage you to be as open as possible with your line manager to enable discussions about how we can support you. If you feel unable to discuss your fertility treatment with your line manager, you may speak to the MHFA, HR & Operations Manager, or a member of the Management Team.

Further information

Fertility Network UK

[Fertility Network \(fertilitynetworkuk.org\)](https://fertilitynetworkuk.org)

Fertility Friends

[Fertility Friends Support Forum](https://fertilityfriends.co.uk)

Human fertilisation and embryology authority

[HFEA: UK fertility regulator | HFEA](https://hfea.gov.uk)

Aspire Scientific HR

August 2024, Document reference: Fertility policy v2.0