

# *Fertility Journeys*

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*e-on*

# Make new energy *work with us*



If you want to make a real difference, E.ON is the place for you. Here you're part of a brighter future making new energy work for everyone.

## **Find your purpose with us**

With us you're part of a new era of energy for UK and Europe, making energy accessible, affordable and sustainable for everyone. Through technology and innovation, we're transforming energy and delivering solutions for our customers' homes, communities, cities and businesses.

## **You'll grow and develop**

Our sustainable future needs new skills, innovation and new technology. Grow your skills, opportunities and career with us. Explore new paths within our learning organisation and build skills for life through our development networks, apprenticeships and digital learning tools.

## **Enjoy flexibility that fits your life**

Our flexible and hybrid ways of working empower you to be your best and support our diverse lives, challenging the stereotypes around flexible working. We're family friendly, wherever you are on your journey. From building your family to caring for loved ones, we offer market leading family friendly policies and flexible working from day one.

## **Market leading benefits to suit you**

Our flexible and award-winning package offers something for everyone, putting you in control to choose what matters most. Whether it's peace of mind, security or sustainability, with our benefits you can look after your physical, financial, mental and social wellbeing.

## **Better together**

At E.ON everyone is welcome and respected. Our diverse backgrounds and experiences help us to connect with our customers and put them at the heart of all we do, creating an inclusive energy future where everyone benefits. Our inclusive culture helps everyone to grow, thrive and be their best, winning together.



# Introduction

**Fertility Matters at Work** created this visual which highlights the negative but also very real impacts that lack of support at work can have.

**Please read on for details and support on how E.ON are changing this narrative.**



# Introduction

At EON, we recognise that the journey to becoming a parent is not always easy and will not be the same for everyone. We are committed to supporting all prospective parents, whatever their gender/gender identity, sexual orientation or family status.

Going through fertility treatment can be an exciting time but it can also have a significant physical and emotional impact on employees: from dealing with underlying fertility issues, navigating surrogacy procedures, the physical and psychological stress of treatment, the wait to see if the procedure has worked to the potential distress caused if it is unsuccessful.

This guidance is relevant to anyone going through a fertility journey. It also applies to line managers who are supporting them.

You don't have to tell us about your fertility journey but if you feel comfortable doing so, we'd encourage you to join the Fertility Forum and talk to your line manager at an early stage so that they can offer you support and discuss flexible options to support you throughout.

Any information shared with your line manager is confidential, unless agreed otherwise. You are welcome to share any information about your treatment with colleagues if you'd like to - that's entirely up to you. You may also want to access support from a Fertility Friend who will listen and provide a safe space for you to discuss your journey.



# Support

- We recognise that unsuccessful fertility treatment is extremely distressing for everyone involved. We offer our condolences to any employee affected by this.
- If you and your partner (or a surrogate parent who was helping you to have a baby) experience a pregnancy loss, you'll be entitled to time off under our Special Leave Policy.
- In other circumstances where you need time off, following unsuccessful fertility treatment, speak to your manager who may be able to grant Special Leave, or if you are unwell, you can take time off as sick leave.
- A successful pregnancy following a fertility journey may also come with additional worries, pressures and feelings, you should speak with your line manager or Fertility Friend who are best equipped to support you throughout your new journey.
- For anyone seeking financial support, you can call My EAP or visit My Benefits+ for practical guidance.

# Support Plan

**To ensure you have the right support and flexibility on your fertility journey; you might find it helpful to agree a support plan with your line manager. Nobody should feel guilty for having time off and every fertility journey is different.**

**Some of the considerations below may be a good starting point for creating your support plan.** (There will be points below that are relevant for anyone going through this journey, even if you're not having treatment).

- 1) Create a timetable of anticipated absences, recovery times and their likely duration. This can assist you and your manager when considering future work planning. Your manager can also make you aware of what time is available and how you will book your leave
- 2) Discuss expected timescales of any medical and surgical procedures, if known.
- 3) There may be a need for you to take (or make) any fertility related calls at short notice. You should agree a safe space to take calls and ensure your manager is aware you may have to leave certain work activities immediately in order to answer calls.
- 4) Talk to your manager about medication you will be taking and any side effects you anticipate.
- 5) It may be necessary for agreed changes/adjustments to be made to your role and duties before or after any treatment, for example, can hybrid, flexible, working from home or working closer to home be considered?
- 5) Do you want any aspects of your fertility journey to be shared with anyone? For example, colleagues who may want to know how to support you.
- 6) Will you be travelling abroad for any treatment? If so, your manager can speak to Employee Relations to discuss what options are available to you.
- 7) Make your manager aware if you start struggling with certain demands/role responsibilities. Your resilience is likely to be lower than normal so could there be some changes to allocation of work that would help during this period?
- 8) Agree the regularity and timing of one to one's to be held to support you throughout the journey.
- 9) To ensure only you have access to your medication, if onsite, we advise you to keep it in a cool bag. Speak to your manager/facilities about locating a safe, clean space to take medication/complete injections.
- 10) Link into [Fertility Forum](#), [myEAP](#) or a [Fertility Friend](#) for further support throughout.
- 11) Documenting your plan with your manager will help ensure the right steps are taken for the outcome. For example, if this results in a successful pregnancy, the detail could then be built on in your Expectant Mothers Checklist (a detailed risk assessment for expectant mothers).





# Time off and working flexibly

- For appointments, scans or treatment, paid time off to attend will be allowed and the absence will not be recorded as sickness (see [Fertility Leave](#) for further information).
- Alongside fertility leave, consider options that you have to work flexibly including split shifts, working location and working shorter days.
- Whilst working from home may be your preferred location during your journey, we appreciate not everyone can do this. Your manager will still support you to work flexibly during your journey. For example, working closer to home.
- We ask you to give your line manager as much notice as possible for any requests to work flexibly or time off required during your journey (whilst we recognise at certain points in your journey, you may need to attend appointments at short notice).
- If your partner or a surrogate parent helping you to have a baby is undergoing this treatment, you are also entitled to paid time off related to their treatment.
- If you are donating eggs or sperm to help another family to have a baby, you are also entitled to paid time off for these appointments and any procedures.

E.ON life





# Fertility Leave

- We want to ensure you have the space to take the time you need through your journey; therefore, we are offering fertility leave at full pay for:
  - Appointments (plus reasonable time either side)
  - Feeling unwell after fertility related medicine/having a surgical procedure
  - Emotional Support (time needed away from work during your treatment cycle to protect your mental health)
- Leave applies where your fertility treatment involves any type of Gamete Donation/Donor Conception, whether you are the Intended Parent or if you are donating your eggs/sperm.
- We generally anticipate around 5-7 days of fertility leave will be needed for each treatment cycle, but the amount of absence time for each cycle is flexible, as no two treatment cycles are the same. Fertility Leave can be booked by the hour giving you the added flexibility you need.
- We ask you to give your line manager as much notice as possible for any time off required during your journey (whilst we recognise at certain points in your journey, you may need to attend appointments at short notice).
- If your partner or a surrogate parent helping you to have a baby is undergoing this treatment, you are also entitled to time off related to their treatment.
- Fertility Leave should be recorded through SAP/Workday – in the same way you would make a holiday request (there will be a drop down for Fertility Leave).
- If your treatment requires you to travel abroad, you should speak with your manager who will arrange a call with the Employee Relations team to discuss how to offer you the best support in this scenario.



# Fertility Friend

**Fertility Friends are a network of colleagues available to support to-be and existing parents and their line managers specifically when there are fertility challenges present.**

- Fertility Friends will advocate and support colleagues in overcoming any challenges in accessing support provided by E.ON for those going through fertility journeys.
- They will listen and provide a safe space for colleagues dealing with fertility issues.
- They will support line managers to signpost support that is available.
- They will have an awareness of appropriate guidance and how to navigate through this guidance during the colleague's journey.
- They will not be there to judge. Only to listen, support, and advise where appropriate.
- Any information that is shared with a Fertility Friend is confidential.
- A Fertility Friend will not be there to try and provide expert counselling but will be an ally to those within E.ON who may be struggling.



# Fertility Forum

**A network supporting all prospective parents who may or may not be on a fertility journey, owned and run by colleagues who are passionate and knowledgeable about the subject.**

- There are already some personal stories from colleagues who have been through different fertility journeys and some advice on how E.ON can support you through yours.
- The network is open to everyone to join, and we'd love to hear from you.



# What a real journey might include...

**As we have already said at the beginning of this guide, not every journey to becoming a parent is easy and will not be the same for everyone. Here is an example of what a real fertility journey consisted of:**

- Phone calls from clinic/doctor to explain results of fertility tests.
- Hospital appointment to discuss fertility issues and proposed next steps.
- Hospital appointment for range of fertility tests.
- Counselling sessions where a donor is being used.
- Processing of consent forms and relevant legal documentation ahead of any treatment.
- HSG test at hospital/endometrial scratch.
- Pre operation assessment at hospital.
- Laparoscopy followed by recovery time (2-3 weeks).
- IVF injections at work.
- Progesterone pessary and then lie down for 20 minutes at certain points during the day (usually just morning and evening but can be middle of the day too).
- Painful and emotional outcome of an embryo not taking.
- Clomid protocol can include regular scans, consultant appointments and blood tests (sometimes last minute).
- Daily scans prior to egg collection to inform day of collection.
- Egg collection under general anaesthetic or sedation.
- Trigger injection ahead of embryo collection.
- Embryo transfer in the morning but embryos not developing well so had to wait until afternoon (last minute changes to expected appointments.)
- 2 week wait following embryo transfer.
- OHSS (blood tests and scans on consecutive days to monitor oestrogen levels as major OHSS risk).
- Medication to deal with sickness from OHSS.
- Blood test to check oestrogen levels had come down.
- IVF treatment abroad. Last minute notification meant take time off work at short notice to book flights and accommodation.
- Impact of ectopic pregnancy or miscarriage during the process.





# Key Terms of reference

## **IUI (intrauterine insemination)**

Also known as artificial insemination, is a type of fertility treatment in which the better-quality sperm are separated from sperm that are sluggish, non-moving or abnormally shaped. These sperm are then placed directly into the womb. Find further information [here](#).

## **Clomifene (Clomid) treatment**

Clomid is a fertility medication that helps stimulate the production of egg follicles. Doctors often prescribe it before they refer a couple to more specialized fertility treatments.

## **Gamete Donation**

This type of fertility treatment involves the use of gametes – eggs, sperm or embryos – donated by someone else to help conceive a baby.

## **Intended Parent:**

An individual or couple that is building their family through the use of third-party reproduction, which can include egg, sperm or embryo donation and surrogacy arrangements. The intended parents are the individuals that will become the child's parent once it is born.

## **IVF (in vitro fertilisation)**

One of several techniques available to help people with fertility problems have a baby. During IVF, an egg is removed from the woman's ovaries and fertilised with sperm in a laboratory. The fertilised egg, called an embryo, is then returned to the woman's womb to grow and develop. Find further information [here](#).

## **OHSS (Ovarian Hyperstimulation Syndrome)**

OHSS is an exaggerated response to excess hormones. It usually occurs in women taking injectable hormone medications to stimulate the development of eggs in the ovaries. OHSS causes the ovaries to swell and become painful.

## **Embryo transfer**

The process by which a narrow catheter is passed through the cervix to place one or two embryos resulting from IVF or ICSI treatment into the uterus to allow implantation to occur.

## **Egg Collection**

A woman is sedated, and her eggs are collected using a needle that's passed through the vagina and into each ovary under ultrasound guidance.

## **ICSI (intracytoplasmic sperm injection)**

It involves injecting live sperm into a person's eggs in a laboratory. This procedure can create an embryo (fertilized egg). ICSI is a form of in vitro fertilization (IVF). Healthcare providers most commonly use ICSI when male infertility affects a person's ability to conceive a child. Find further information [here](#).

## **Hysterosalpingogram (HSG)**

X-ray dye test that can help your provider diagnose fertility problems.

## **Endometrial scratching**

Lining of the womb (the endometrium) is 'scratched' using a small sterile plastic tube. The theory is that this procedure triggers the body to repair the site of the scratch, releasing chemicals and hormones that make the womb lining more receptive to an embryo implanting.

## **Egg Freezing**

Egg freezing is a method of preserving a woman's fertility so she can try and have children at a later date. Find further information [here](#).

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|---|--|
| Fertility Forum ( <a href="#">Connect</a> )<br><br>#fertility-forum ( <a href="#">Slack</a> )   | A network supporting all prospective parents who may or may not be on a fertility journey, owned and ran by colleagues who are passionate and knowledgeable about the subject.   |
| My EAP<br><br>Colleague Helpline: 0800 111 6387<br><br>Managers Helpline: 0800 111 6385<br><br><a href="http://www.my-eap.com">www.my-eap.com</a> username: eonuk | If you need someone to talk to, myEAP is there to listen - and help. It's free, it's confidential and it's there 24/7.   |
| My Benefits+ and employee discounts ( <a href="#">Connect</a> )<br><br><a href="#">My Benefits+</a> (Base)  | Benefits include:<br>My Legal Services - gives colleagues access to professional legal assistance.<br>My Digital GP - Counselling is available, as well as nutritional advice.<br>My Money Coach - available for financial coaching. |
| <a href="#">Working Families Network</a> ( <a href="#">Connect</a> )<br><br><a href="#">#WorkingParents</a> (Slack)   | A network for supporting to-be and existing parents and their line managers - a core part of E.ON life. This community is open to any 'parent' including guardians, foster, adoptive, co-parent, grandparent, step-parent.           |
| <a href="#">Champion Health</a> ( <a href="#">Connect</a> )<br><br><a href="#">Champion Health</a> (Base)   | An app available to all permanently employed colleagues. By completing a 15-minute questionnaire, you'll get a confidential, and personalised wellness plan. Access to a wide range of content including different parent journeys.  |
| <a href="#">NHS website</a>   | Help and support for treatment.  |
| <a href="#">HSE website</a>   | Help and support for treatment.  |
| <a href="#">Fertility Matters at Work</a>   | Fertility Matters At Work is a Community Interest Company (CIC) on a mission to educate and inspire businesses with an awareness of how fertility issues affects both their employees and their organisation.                        |
| <a href="#">Tommy's</a>   | A charity that provides information and support to those going through fertility treatment.  |
| <a href="#">Fertility Network UK</a>  | External network supporting those trying to conceive, going through fertility treatment, or living without children.   |
| <a href="#">Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority</a>  | The UK's independent regulator of fertility treatment and research using human embryos.  |

## **Documents ([Connect](#))**

- [Special Leave](#)
- [Flexible Working](#)
- [Personal Health Passport](#)
- [Parenting Journey](#)

## **Documents ([Base](#))**

- [Special Leave](#)
- [Personal Health Passport](#)
- [Parenting Journey](#)

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*Thank you*

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