



Fertility Policy

This policy applies to all Channel 4 employees and does not form part of an employee's contract of employment. We may amend it at any time.



Fertility Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this fertility policy is to provide guidance and support for individuals seeking to manage their fertility journey whilst balancing their work commitments. The policy aims to ensure that all employees & managers have access to equitable and inclusive resources related to fertility and an overview of how Channel 4 will support individuals through their journey. We recognise the physical and emotional stress that having fertility treatment can have on employees and are genuinely committed to providing support where we can.

Scope

This policy applies to all Channel 4 employees and does not form part of any employee's contract of employment, we may amend this at any time.

Under this policy, fertility treatment includes:

- any form of assisted reproduction carried out by a registered medical practitioner or registered nurse (for example in vitro fertilisation (IVF), intrauterine insemination (IUI) and intracytoplasmic sperm injection (ICSI));
- any treatment carried out by a registered medical practitioner or registered nurse for the purpose of preserving fertility (for example freezing eggs, sperm, embryos or reproductive tissue); and
- any medical examination or treatment in connection with the treatment mentioned above (for example blood tests, ultrasound scans, egg collection, sperm collection, embryo transfer).

Why is this policy important?

This policy is designed to create a supportive workplace that respects diverse family planning choices and removes barriers to reproductive healthcare, while also fostering a culture of understanding and empathy.

Fertility treatment refers to medical interventions or procedures aimed at helping individuals or couples who are having difficulty conceiving a child naturally. These treatments can address a variety of issues related to infertility, which can arise from factors affecting either partner or which are unexplained. Fertility treatments range from simpler methods like medication to more complex procedures like assisted reproductive technologies (ART).

Our commitment to you

Channel 4 are committed to ensuring that all employees and line managers are provided with guidance so that they are able to support individuals receiving fertility treatment. Channel 4 have additionally appointed designated Fertility Champions to offer guidance, resources, and emotional support to employees undergoing fertility treatment, ensuring a consistent and confidential point of contact. More details on how to contact our Fertility Champions can be found on [\[redacted\]](#)

Requesting support

We understand that working while undergoing fertility treatment can be incredibly challenging. If you are finding it difficult to cope at work while you are undergoing



fertility treatment, you are encouraged to speak to your line manager. If for any reason you are unable to approach your line manager, you can speak to your People Partner or another member of the People Team.

We urge you to be as open as possible about any particular issues that you are experiencing or adjustments that you need to ensure that you are provided with the right level of support while you are receiving treatment.

Examples of support that you may require can include:

- Flexible working hours and days.
- Flexibility with hybrid working arrangements (where the role permits).
- Flexibility with travel into the office or for work related purposes.
- Time off for medical appointments that can't be scheduled outside of work hours (please see the section under 'time off in line with this policy' below).
- Temporary adjustments to your role and responsibilities during and immediately after treatment.
- Deciding how much, if anything, you'd like your colleagues to know.

Any health-related information disclosed by you during discussions with your line manager or a member of the People Team will be treated sensitively and in strict confidence.

Time off in line with this policy

We understand that you may need to take time off at short notice to attend your appointments. We also understand that the amount of time that you may need off for each appointment will depend on the nature of the appointment and the type of treatment that you are receiving and therefore we will remain flexible.

We understand that taking time off during fertility treatment can be a sensitive and challenging experience. While we encourage open communication with your line manager, we also recognise that this may not always feel comfortable. To support you, Channel 4 offers up to 10 days of paid leave, to support you with any appointments, commitments, or personal matters during your fertility journey to give you the space you need during this time. This pot of leave can be taken at different times, and for different periods of time e.g. a half day, or 3 different days over a 3 week period.

In the event that you utilise this policy we would suggest you speak to your manager about attending a confidential /medical appointment in confidence. If you do not feel comfortable in speaking with your line manager, we encourage you to speak with a member of the People Team.

If you do require further leave over the 10 days, please liaise with your manager or a member of the People Team in order for Channel 4 to accommodate any adjustments that you may need during this process.

We recognise the emotional impact that unsuccessful fertility treatment can have on individuals and their families. In the event that fertility treatment is not successful, employees are entitled to take paid time off as compassionate leave to grieve and process the experience. This time off will be granted without the need for a formal sick note, recognising the emotional nature of the situation.

If you experience illness due to fertility tests or treatment, either physically or emotionally, it's crucial that you follow medical professional's guidance. You may prefer the structure of continuing to work with modifications, while alternatively, you might require time away. If you are unable to work during or following treatment, the regular sickness absence procedures should be followed, ensuring



that you follow the steps outlined in our Sickness & Absence policy under the section 'Managing Medical Appointments'. This includes consultations, treatment sessions, and recovery periods.

We encourage employees to seek support from their line manager, the People Team, or appointed Fertility Champions during this time. Any requests for further assistance will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and care.

Time off to accompany a person receiving fertility treatment

We recognise that families come in all shapes and sizes, sometimes these are referred to as your chosen families. If you have a qualifying relationship as set out below with a person receiving fertility treatment, we will grant you paid time off to accompany that person to their appointments.

For the purpose of this policy a qualifying relationship, would include, if you are the spouse or civil partner of the person receiving fertility treatment or you are living with the person receiving fertility treatment. We also understand that if required that you may be accompanying a chosen family member to a fertility appointment too.

If you need time off to accompany someone to a fertility treatment appointment, as with all leave, you should let your line manager know. While we encourage open communication with your line manager, if you don't feel comfortable giving the reason for your absence, you don't need to. We suggest simply saying that you need to take some time out for a confidential appointment. You may be asked for proof of the date and time of the appointment however we will not ask for the reason for appointment.

In addition, you will be eligible for the time off if you are the parent of any child born as a result of the treatment, or you expect to become the legal parent of any child which may be born as a result of the treatment under a surrogacy arrangement.

The fertility treatment appointment must be made on the advice of a registered medical practitioner or registered nurse.

You should give your line manager as much notice as possible of when you need the time off. However, we understand that you may need to take time off at short notice. We also understand that the amount of time that you may need off for each appointment will depend on the nature of the appointment and the type of treatment that the person that you are accompanying is receiving and therefore we will always remain flexible.

Working flexibly on a temporary basis

We recognise that for individuals receiving fertility treatment, the option to work flexibly on a temporary (rather than permanent) basis may be appropriate. For example, this could include working from home, hybrid working or changing your start and finish times. This is not a definitive list.

If you feel that you would benefit from a temporary change to your working arrangement on an ad hoc basis because you are undergoing fertility treatment, you should discuss and agree these with your line manager, or alternatively reach out to your People Partner.

We will try to facilitate temporary flexible working arrangements wherever this is possible and will continue to review these to ensure that they meet your needs.



If fertility treatment is unsuccessful, individuals have the option to work flexibly during this difficult time.

Quiet place to work

If you need a quiet space to take private calls or a place to take medication during working hours, more information on wellbeing rooms across the Channel 4 offices can be found on [REDACTED]

Medication

We recommend that any medical procedures or treatments, such as daily hormone injections, be administered at home rather than in the office. If you need to take medication during working hours, please coordinate with your line manager to adjust your schedule accordingly.

Sickness

We understand that there may be times in the course of undergoing fertility treatment when you may be unwell. There is no expectation on you to work if you are unwell because of side effects related to your fertility treatment.

Unless otherwise set out in your contract, if you are sick and unable to work, you should follow the process set out in our Sickness & Absence policy.

You do not have to disclose that your absence is connected with fertility treatment if you wish to keep this private. However, we want you to feel that you can be open about the reason for your leave in order for us to discuss any adjustments that you may require.

Implantation

From the point of implantation of a fertilised ova, an employee is considered pregnant and has a statutory right to paid time off for antenatal appointments. For further information, please refer to our Maternity policy.

Further Support

Help and support is also available through our employee assistance programme (EAP). You can use our EAP to speak to an independent adviser on a confidential basis for any on-going emotional support or any issue that is troubling you. To access the EAP please call EAP: [REDACTED]

To speak to [REDACTED] about what is available under Channel 4's private medical cover, please call the [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Channel 4 have partnered with Hertility, to provide hormone tests for all employees. This can be accessed [REDACTED] All Channel 4 employees are eligible for a Hertility Hormone and Fertility Test (also available to partners, children and loved ones). Test includes:

- Comprehensive online health assessment
- Government-regulated and approved at-home blood collection kit
- Your own private gynaecologist to analyse your results
- A clinical care plan created just for you

External sources of help

There are various organisations that provide help and support to those who are undergoing fertility treatment, including:



- Fertility Network UK, which provides a wide range of resources, including information on funding for those affected by infertility;
- British Infertility Counselling Association, which provides information about specialist fertility counsellors; and
- Fertility Friends Support Forum, which is a forum community dedicated to infertility and fertility support.

I'm an employee, what do I need to know?

As an employee, it's important to be aware of the fertility policy and understand your rights, responsibilities, and the support available to you.

If you are undergoing fertility treatment or considering it, you are encouraged to inform your manager or the People Team. This ensures that you receive the appropriate support and any necessary accommodations, such as flexible working hours or time off for medical appointments. All information disclosed will be handled with the utmost confidentiality.

In the event that you utilise this policy and the 10 days of paid leave without the need for explanation, we would suggest that you do manage expectations with your line manager by informing them that you are attending to a personal matter or a confidential/medical appointment. You will not be expected to clarify on the reason behind your appointment.

Fertility treatment can be a highly sensitive and stressful experience. It's important to be mindful that colleagues may be going through this process, even if they haven't disclosed it. Avoid making assumptions or asking intrusive questions about someone's family planning or medical history. Be sensitive and respectful in conversations, particularly when discussing topics related to pregnancy, children, or family life.

Channel 4 has a zero-tolerance policy for derogatory comments or jokes related to fertility, infertility, or medical treatments. Such behaviour is not only unprofessional but can also be deeply hurtful. If you witness or experience any inappropriate comments or behaviour, report it to your line manager, a Safe Space Supporter or a member of the People Team. Channel 4 will always take appropriate action to ensure a supportive and respectful working environment for all employees.

I'm a manager, what do I need to know?

As a manager, it's crucial to understand the fertility policy and support employees undergoing fertility treatment. If an employee discloses their treatment or their partner is going through treatment, ensure confidentiality is maintained. Work with the individual who is undergoing treatment & the People Team to provide necessary accommodations like flexible hours or time off and encourage open communication to help individuals balance treatment with work. There are some key elements that as a manager you'll need to be aware of:

- Treatment schedules are often unpredictable, as they depend on the menstrual cycle and individual response to medication.
- Frequent clinic visits, sometimes daily, may be required, with some procedures causing discomfort.
- Those undergoing IVF will need at least one day off for egg collection under general anesthesia, followed by an embryo transfer, per cycle which is difficult to schedule in advance.



- Treatment can be emotionally demanding on an individual, especially if it's cancelled midway or during the waiting period for results or if it is unsuccessful.
- After embryo transfer, IVF patients are protected by pregnancy legislation, which may require additional considerations, more information can be found in our Maternity Policy.

Be mindful that discussions about pregnancy or family can be sensitive, even if employees haven't disclosed their situation. Maintain a zero-tolerance policy for derogatory comments about fertility and address any inappropriate behaviour, more information about addressing inappropriate behaviour can be found on [\[redacted\]](#), through our Code of Conduct. Alternatively, please reach out to a Safe Space Supporter or your People Partner.

Data protection

When dealing with any request under this policy, we will process any personal data collected in accordance with our data protection policy / policy on processing special categories of personal data. In particular, we will record only the personal information required and keep the information only for as long as necessary.