

# **GREATER MANCHESTER ASSISTED CONCEPTION AND FERTILITY TREATMENT SERVICES REVIEW Q&A**

May 2021



# INTRODUCTION

Commissioners (the people who buy NHS services on your behalf) are reviewing all NHS funded assisted conception provision across Greater Manchester to ensure that services remain sustainable for the future. Commissioners are reviewing the whole patient journey from initial referral to treatment, these stages are often referred to as a patient pathway. Commissioners and clinicians will also be reviewing how clinical processes can be improved upon and made more effective to benefit patient outcomes.

The review covers all Greater Manchester Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) areas: Bury, Bolton, Manchester, Oldham, Heywood Middleton & Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Trafford, Tameside & Glossop and Wigan.

Commissioners want to understand the patient experience from the start of the referral process, right through to receiving treatment so they can identify where patient experience can be improved. The review will also include the experience of patients who have more complex fertility issues, for example, people who have been diagnosed with cancer, lupus or have another long-term health condition.

In order to do this review, it is important that commissioners understand what works well now and what needs to be changed to improve assisted conception and fertility treatment service provision. During May–July, commissioners are undertaking a listening exercise with patients, staff and the public (more details are provided on page 5).

## Who is overseeing this review?

An Oversight Group, made up of partner organisations who provide NHS funded care and those organisations who commission your care are working together to review and develop potential solutions to improve and sustain assisted conception and fertility treatment services now and in the future.

The Oversight Group is not a decision-making group, its role is to oversee the process which involves:

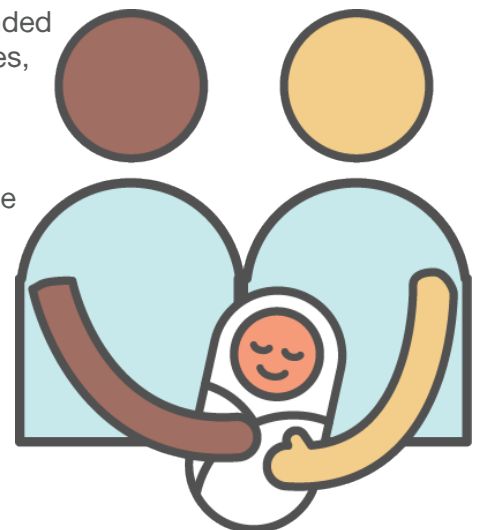
- reviewing all NHS funded Assisted Conception and Fertility Services from referral to treatment
- consider feedback from the staff, patient and public engagement exercise
- to inform potential solutions that will improve and sustain services now and in the future
- ensuring that the NHS commissions the most effective service from referral to treatment (also referred to as pathways of care)
- making the best use of the existing buildings and facilities across Greater Manchester

## What do we mean by Assisted Conception and Fertility Treatment Services?

Assisted conception is a collective name for treatments designed to lead to conception by means other than sexual intercourse. Local commissioners are responsible for funding services across Greater Manchester for people who seek treatment to aid conception.

Infertility in heterosexual couples is usually defined as the failure to achieve a pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse. This definition does not apply to single women and couples in same sex relationships. However, single women, couples in same-sex relationships and transgender people may need fertility evaluation and treatment to aid conception. If a cause of infertility is diagnosed, or if infertility persists despite appropriate treatments

and recommended lifestyle changes, a referral to an assisted conception services may be appropriate.



## What is the review not about?

**This review does not include or change the number of cycles of IVF that people may have.** This has already been agreed locally and is not affected. However, understanding the experiences of patients using assisted conception/fertility services (which IVF for some people is part of their treatment plan) has been included in this review. Commissioners need to understand the patient experience from the start of the patient referral process to being treated.

## Who buys the NHS funded Assisted Conception and Fertility Treatment Services?

Every year commissioners outline the services they plan to buy based on their local allocated budget and the needs of people living in their area. Greater Manchester commissions Licensed Assisted Conception Services to help couples and individuals with fertility.

## Who provides the Assisted Conception and Treatment Fertility Services?

There are a range of NHS contracted providers, namely:

- St. Mary's Hospital (who are also the Greater Manchester provider of the most specialist elements of the service)
- Fertility Fusion, Wrightington Hospital
- Hewitt Fertility Centre, Knutsford
- Hewitt Fertility Centre, Liverpool
- CARE Fertility, Manchester
- Create Fertility, Wilmslow
- Manchester Fertility, Cheadle



## Who does this review involve?

This review process involves all key stakeholders, including existing care providers of services.

**Staff** – workshops will be held with NHS and independent sector partners, referring clinicians, GPs, primary care colleagues, estates and finance teams to review the feedback and consider potential service improvement areas to include, clinical pathways, system processes such as IT, admin, finance, workforce and estates. Staff will continue to be engaged by their own provider organisation.

**Patients/public** – all patients who have received care in the past 12 months will be contacted by their relevant care provider and encouraged to participate in the online survey and/or focus groups. The public involvement opportunities will be promoted via Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership (GMHSCP), CCG and Trust communication and engagement channels as well as linking in with community and voluntary sector partners to raise awareness and expand reach at a community level.

**Equality groups** – an initial equality and health inequality analysis has been undertaken by Manchester Health and Care Commissioning (MHCC) to consider where there are opportunities to improve outcomes for different people and to reduce the chance of negative impacts if service changes are made.



## How will patient and public feedback help to shape our thinking?

We fully recognise that being referred to assisted conception/fertility services can be a highly stressful and emotional time for people which can continue during and beyond treatment. We want to continue to improve patient experience, but we need your help to advise us where we can do even better.

We are seeking views from patients who have received a service from each of the care providers above in the past 12 months to ensure your experience and views on what matters to you is heard and can be considered by commissioners.

**Please note:** due to the Covid-19 pandemic, all but NHS emergency treatment was paused. As a result, the number of people who were referred into the services may be lower than previous years. Therefore, the survey responses from the listening exercise will reflect this.

Your views are to inform and shape how services are delivered. It is important to note that changes to clinical processes and procedures, such as medication, can only be determined by clinicians.

We also want to engage with people who may need to use the services in the future, we want to understand what would be important to you and we are doing this via public awareness raising working in partnership with the NHS, local authority, Healthwatch, and the wider range of community and voluntary sector providers in Greater Manchester.

## How will we plan to identify how improvements can be made?

Commissioners want to ensure they improve services, so services continue to be clinically safe, high quality, sustainable and that they make best use of the existing resources (e.g. buildings, workforce) across Greater Manchester.

For commissioners to thoroughly undertake the review from referral to treatment, we need to consider the feedback from representative members of staff delivering the services, including primary care colleagues across Greater Manchester via a workshop. Feedback from patients receiving care from the range of providers outlined above, as well as the general public who may require this service in the future, will also be an integral part of this process.

We still have a way to go before we can make any changes. No decisions have been made about future service provision or will be made at this stage. It is important to note that this is a listening exercise and not a formal public consultation.

## What are the engagement timescales and next steps?

The engagement activity timescales are detailed below. At the end of the engagement period, we will consider what we have learned from the listening exercise and we will publish a feedback report. The findings will be shared with commissioners to help inform their discussions on future plans.

Commissioners intend to continue to engage patients, staff and the public in any options development activity. However, we are not at that stage yet and this stage is to listen, learn and inform.

April	May	June	July	August
Staff delivering these services will continue to be engaged within their own organisation.				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public engagement - online survey, focus groups, telephone surveys</li> <li>Engaging with people who are all under protected characteristic groups some of whom are often under-represented.</li> </ul>			
		Workshops with NHS and independent sector partners, referring clinicians, GPs, primary care colleagues, estates, and finance.		

# HOW CAN PATIENTS AND MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC SHARE THEIR VIEWS?

Commissioners are undertaking a listening exercise with patients and the public. Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 restrictions, all engagement activity will have to be undertaken virtually which is detailed below.

## 1 Online survey

We are launching a patient and public engagement online survey which will commence on 28 May and close on 27 July 2021. We recognise this may seem impersonal to some people, so in addition we will be holding focus groups and telephone interviews for people who prefer not to respond to a survey.

**Please note:** you will not be asked to provide any personal identifiable information by completing the survey. We can reassure you that your healthcare provider will not have access to your individual responses. The survey responses will be completely confidential and anonymous and led by an independent partner. Your healthcare provision will not be affected in anyway.

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please can you identify who this organisation is so we can ensure this is highlighted in the feedback summary report.

If you want to complete the patient and public online survey, please use the following link <https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/ACFTPUBLIC/> or alternatively copy and paste the link into your web browser.

## 2 Focus groups

As well as the online survey, online focus groups will be held throughout June and July. The group discussions will specifically focus on people from the following communities/groups:

- LGB • Transgender community • Cancer patients
- Ethnic minority communities • Disabled people (including those with a long-term condition)
- General focus group

You may identify with a number of these groups and you are welcome to join as many of the focus groups that you feel are relevant to you. The focus group questions will be the same for each group but your responses may differ, depending on your personal circumstances.

## 3 Telephone interviews

Some people may not feel comfortable talking in groups or responding to surveys online, therefore we will provide a telephone interview as an alternative approach to allow those individuals to share views in a more comfortable environment that meets their needs. If you are deaf or hard of hearing please let us know how best to support you.

### How to ask for help or register to join a focus group

If you would like to join a focus group discussion or require support to complete the survey, we can provide a telephone interview to support you.

If you require any of the information in another format or language, or in easy-read format, audio, etc., please telephone the NHS engagement team on either of the numbers below and leave your contact details so we may call you back to help meet your individual needs.

The contact numbers are:  
**07717 691 617** or  
**07841 685 639**

The phonenumber will be available between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday. Alternatively, email: [caroline.allport@nhs.net](mailto:caroline.allport@nhs.net) or [lindsey.brook@nhs.net](mailto:lindsey.brook@nhs.net)



## Our commitment to protecting your privacy

The online survey is securely hosted by Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership which is compliant with 2018 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), this is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information from individuals.

All feedback is confidential and will be anonymised. There will be no patient identifiable questions involved. Your feedback will be summarised in a report and shared with the commissioners and providers of your healthcare.

**Thank you for your time and for sharing your views.**



If you need this information in another language, please contact 07717 691617 or 07841 685639. The phonenumber will be available between 10am and 4pm, Monday to Friday.

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، يرجى الاتصال بهاتف رقم 07717 691617 أو 07841 685639. سيكون خط الهاتف متاحًا بين الساعة 10 صباحًا و 4 مساءً، من الاثنين إلى الجمعة.

আপনার যদি এই তথ্যটি অন্য ভাষায় প্রয়োজন হয়, তাহলে অনুগ্রহ করে 07717 691617 অথবা 07841 685639 এ যোগাযোগ করুন। ফোনলাইনটি সোমবার থেকে শুক্রবার, সকাল 10 টা থেকে বিকেল 4 টার মধ্যে উপলভ্য থাকবে।

Si necesita información en otro idioma, póngase en contacto en los números 07717 691617 o 07841 685639. La línea de teléfono está disponible de lunes a viernes de 10:00 h a 16:00 h.

Si vous avez besoin de ces informations dans une autre langue, veuillez contacter le 07717 691617 ou 07841 685639. La ligne téléphonique sera ouverte entre 10h00 et 16h00 du lundi au vendredi.

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ 07717 691617 ਜਾਂ 07841 685639 ਉੱਪਰ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ। ਫੋਨ ਲਾਈਨ ਸਵੇਰੇ 10 ਵਜੇ ਅਤੇ 4 ਸ਼ਾਮ ਵਜੇ ਦੇ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ, ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਸ਼ੁੱਕਰਵਾਰ ਉਪਲੱਬਧ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।

Dacă aveți nevoie de aceste informații în altă limbă, vă rugăm să dați telefon la numerele 07717 691617 sau 07841 685639. Linia telefonică este disponibilă de luni până vineri între orele 10:00 și 16:00.

Haddii aad u baahan tahay in aad macluumaadkan ku hesho luqad kale, fadlan la xiriir lambarka 07717 691617 ama 07841 685639. Khadka telefoonku waxuu furnaan doonaa inta u dhexeysa 10ka subaxnimo iyo 4ta galabnimo, Isniinta ilaa Jimcaha.

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات دوسری زبان میں درکار ہوں تو براہ کرم پر رابطہ کریں۔ 07717 691617 یا 07841 685639 فون لائن پیر تا جمعہ، 10 بجے صبح اور 4 بجے شام کے بیچ دستیاب ہوگی۔

如果您需要以其他语言接收该信息，请致电07717 691617 或07841 685639。 上班时间：星期一到星期五，上午10点到下午4点。

Aby uzyskać informację w innym języku, należy skontaktować się z numerem 07717 691617 lub 07841 685639. Linia telefoniczna będzie dostępna w godz. 10:00 – 16:00 od poniedziałku do piątku.