

# HOW TO MAKE FERTILITY A CORE PART OF INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE WELLBEING

From Francesca Steyn, Anya Sizer and Anna Cotgreave.  
Produced by Peppy.



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## Your questions, answered

**Why is it important to support people through other pathways to parenthood, including surrogacy and adoption?**

**Francesca Steyn**

Often people will have already been on a huge journey when they reach the stage of growing or starting a family through surrogacy or adoption. This means they may need more practical support with time off for their surrogate's appointments, court hearings etc. They have also been on a long emotional journey to get to this point so will need extra support with their emotional wellbeing.

Often we see that the LGBTQ+ community look at surrogacy and adoption as a route to parenthood so they will also have been on a huge journey to get to that stage. It may have included talking about their sexuality and coming out to people for the first time.

You might find these links helpful:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/having-a-child-through-surrogacy>

<https://www.gov.uk/child-adoption>

**How much time off would you recommend workplaces to allow staff going through fertility treatments?**

**Francesca Steyn**

A treatment cycle can take up to 6 weeks to complete and the amount of time someone needs off is different for everyone. I would suggest that once the egg collection and embryo transfer has taken place and they are waiting to hear the results - which can be the most stressful time - a weeks compassionate leave might be helpful. I would also suggest flexible working patterns during that whole 6 week process to allow for appointment and symptoms/side effects of the medication and procedures.

**Do you have much experience with parents who have been able to conceive before, but then have later fertility issues?****Francesca Steyn**

This is referred to as secondary infertility and we see it a lot. It affects approximately 1 in 20 couples. If you have been trying for a while without success then it's a good idea to see your GP as they can arrange some fertility investigations to see if there is anything going on.

Check out this NHS resource: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/infertility/>

As Director of Fertility Services at Peppy, we offer support to everyone in their fertility journey, no matter what stage of life they are at. Not one experience is the same, which is why giving people access to personalised support is so important.

**Anya Sizer**

Secondary infertility is a very real and ever increasing problem for people. It is often very misunderstood; people are often being told they should feel grateful for even having a child and yet for the person facing secondary issues the desire for another child can easily run parallel to the gratitude felt for already being a family. It's important to seek support from people who understand, so at Fertility Network UK, we have a specific support group for people facing this issue and we will always campaign as a charity for better understanding for this group.

**What key areas would you say to include in a policy - obviously one policy does not fit all but for some organisations with strong union bases we require a policy on this.****Anya Sizer**

I would say the key overall themes are flexibility and compassionate support. Treatment is always an unknown to a large extent so factoring in an expectation of flexible working as standard is really essential. We always recommend 6-8 flexible working days per cycle and this includes 2 full days for egg collection and embryo transfer. Treatment appointments often over run and there is a need for flexibility around this also

In terms of compassionate support checking in with the individual at the start and as appropriate once treatment has started is essential. What do they need and how can the workplace be supportive? It will vary from one person to the next so support should be individualised rather than one size fits all.

Practically also there may be a need for a place to store medication and or to self inject so do check in with them if any reasonable adjustments need to be made, again with an assumption that this is to be expected

## Do you find people talk more openly about it now that you have a support function in place?

### Anna Cotgreave

I've definitely had more conversations about fertility with colleagues since we've launched with Peppy and amended our private medical scheme – people seem to feel more comfortable to share their personal experiences. However, this is just amongst people I'm speaking with regularly, I cannot speak for the whole business on this.

By keeping fertility on the agenda and in our internal comms we've shown employees that it is genuinely an important topic to the firm as an employer too, and hopefully that has helped employees struggling with any fertility issues.

## Useful resources

The following resources are provided by [Fertility Network UK](#).

### [Employment issues](#)

A helpful resource for your people when they need support from their employer.

### [Families, parents, friends and colleagues](#)

Tips for how to help when someone shares their fertility problems.

### [Male fertility problems](#)

Information about male fertility.

### [Stress and infertility](#)

How stress could be impacting someone lifestyle, and how they can manage it.

### [Coping strategies](#)

General advice as well as suggestions for looking after yourself and others when things are tough.

**Did you know, you can now support your people through fertility with Peppy – a digital healthcare benefit?**

**To learn more, get in touch:**

**[hello@peppy.health](mailto:hello@peppy.health)**

