

South Central Criteria for Access to IVF and Related Fertility Treatments

- 1.1 South Central Specialised Commissioning Group (SCG) will fund one fresh cycle of IVF treatment per eligible couple.
- 1.2 All couples will be expected to have gone through the primary and secondary care pathways as defined in the NICE Clinical Practice Algorithm appropriate to them before eligibility for IVF is considered.
- 1.3 One cycle of IVF treatment is defined as one fresh cycle including ovulation induction, egg retrieval, fertilisation and implantation, and includes appropriate diagnostic tests, scans and pharmacological therapy. South Central SCG will not fund any subsequent frozen cycles using stored embryos.
- 1.4 These criteria for access will be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 1.5 It is anticipated that, rarely, patients who are not eligible for treatment because they do not fulfil these criteria may, by virtue of their personal circumstances, be considered an exceptional case for NHS funding. If this is thought to be applicable, the patients' GP or Hospital Consultant may contact the relevant PCT Case Review Panel which is responsible for considering funding for individual cases.
- 1.6 Couples within the eligible age range for treatment under the former Thames Valley and Hampshire & Isle of Wight policies will cease to be eligible from 1st December 2009, on age grounds. Any such couples must therefore commence their cycle of treatment prior to 1st December 2009. This means that couples referred too late to meet this deadline cannot be offered NHS treatment
- 1.7 Referrals of couples eligible under the new South Central policy may be received prior to 1 December 2009, but no such couple can commence their cycle of treatment prior to this date

	Title	Criterion
1	Age of woman at time of cycle starting	The time of the cycle of IVF starting for the first time should be after the female's 30 th birthday and before the female's 35 th birthday. Transitional arrangements are in place for women aged 35 or 36, provided that treatment commences within one calendar year of the implementation date of the new policy (i.e. provided treatment commences no later than 30.11.10).
2	Age of woman at time of referral to tertiary care from secondary care	The age at referral should be after the female's 30 th birthday and before the female's 35 th birthday. Women approaching the age of 35 years must be referred in time to be able to commence treatment before their 35 th birthday.
3	Age of male partner	No upper age limit for male partner (as per adoption laws).
4	Previous infertility treatment	Any previous NHS funded IVF/ICSI treatment will be an exclusion criterion. People who have previously self-funded treatment are eligible for one NHS-funded cycle as long as they have not already received more than 2 self-funded cycles.
5	Women in same sex couples/ and women not in a partnership	<p>Sub fertility treatment will be funded for women in same sex couples or women not in a partnership if those seeking treatment are demonstrably sub fertile.</p> <p>In the case of women in same sex couples in which only one partner is sub fertile, clinicians should discuss the possibility of the other partner receiving treatment before proceeding to interventions involving the sub fertile partner.</p> <p>NHS funding will not be available for access to insemination facilities.</p> <p>In circumstances in which women in a same sex partnership or individuals are eligible for sub fertility treatment, the other criteria for eligibility for sub fertility treatments will also apply.</p> <p>Women in same sex couples and women not in a partnership should have access to professional experts in reproductive medicine to obtain advice on the options available to enable them to proceed along this route if they so wish.</p>
6	Egg donation	IVF using donated eggs from UK clinics licensed by the HFEA will be commissioned.

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7	Transfer of frozen embryos	If a couple has had frozen embryos transferred as part of earlier self-funded treatment the frozen cycles will <u>not</u> be counted as previous cycles, when assessing eligibility for NHS funded IVF. The transfer of frozen stored embryos from previous cycles of IVF will not be funded. Couples eligible for NHS IVF can have only fresh embryos from their NHS funded cycle transferred with NHS funding.
8	In vitro maturation	IVM will not be funded, due to limited evidence of effectiveness
9	Intra uterine insemination	IUI will not be funded in 2008-9, but the evidence will be reviewed for 2010-11.
10	Gamete storage	Sperm storage will be funded for post-pubertal males under the age of 55 years who are about to undergo medical treatment which is likely to result in long-term sub-fertility. Subsequent assisted conceptions procedures using the sperm will not be funded unless the other eligibility criteria are met. . Oocyte (egg) preservation and ovarian tissue preservation are still experimental treatments, and will not be funded. However, the evidence will be kept under review.
11	Storage of surplus embryos following a fresh cycle of NHS funded IVF	Freezing and storage of viable embryos from NHS funded IVF will be funded for up to 3 years (or the female partner's 40 th birthday if this is sooner) so that couples have the option to use stored embryos at a later stage if they choose to do so.
12	Specific diagnosed causes of infertility	Couples with a diagnosed cause of absolute infertility which precludes any possibility of natural conception, and who meet all the other criteria, will have immediate access to IVF on reaching the eligible age range. All other couples must have infertility of at least 3 years duration.

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13	Blood borne viruses and sperm washing	Sperm washing for the prevention of transmission of blood borne viruses will not be funded, due to limited evidence of clinical and cost-effectiveness. However, the evidence will be kept under review.
14	Surgical sperm retrieval	Surgical sperm retrieval will be commissioned in appropriately selected patients, provided that the azoospermia is not the result of a sterilisation procedure or the absence of sperm production.
15	Childlessness	Treatments for sub fertility will be funded if the couple does not have a living child from their relationship or from any previous relationship. This includes a child adopted by the couple or in a previous relationship. It is estimated that 66% of all couples attending out patient clinics with fertility problems are both childless. One partner is childless in a further 16% of couples attending sub fertility clinics. Once accepted for treatment, should a child be adopted or a pregnancy leading to a live birth occur the couple will no longer be eligible for treatment.
16	Sterilisation	Fertility treatment will not be available if the sub fertility is the result of a sterilisation procedure in either partner. In addition, the surgical reversal of either male or female sterilisation will not be funded except in exceptional circumstances. If the individual's situation is thought to warrant such consideration, the patients' general practitioner should contact the relevant PCT so that such an application might be made.
17	BMI	Women must have a BMI of between 19.0 and 29.9 inclusive for a period of 6 months or more before receiving any treatment. They should be informed of this criterion at the earliest possible opportunity in their progress through infertility investigations in primary care and secondary care. GPs are encouraged to provide unambiguous and clear information about BMI criteria to infertile couples.

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18	Smoking	<p>Only non-smoking couples will be accepted on the IVF treatment waiting list. They must be informed of this criterion at the earliest possible opportunity in their progress through infertility investigations in primary care and secondary care. GPs are encouraged to provide unambiguous and clear information to infertile couples.</p> <p>A statement should also be issued at the time of publishing the eligibility criteria, emphasising the importance of an active, healthy lifestyle and highlighting the dangers of smoking and passive smoking, obesity, alcohol and caffeinated beverages as important causes of infertility.</p>
19	HFEA Code of Ethics	<p>Couples not conforming to the HFEA's Code of Ethics, will be excluded from having access to NHS funded assisted fertility or other treatment. This includes consideration of the 'welfare of the child which may be born' which may take into account the importance of a stable and supportive environment for children as well as the pre-existing health status of the parents.</p>