



Easy  
Read

**NHS**

Cheshire and Merseyside

# Changing our rules about treatments that help people to have a baby

What do you think?



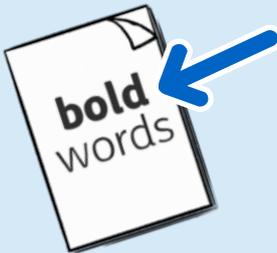
# Easy Read



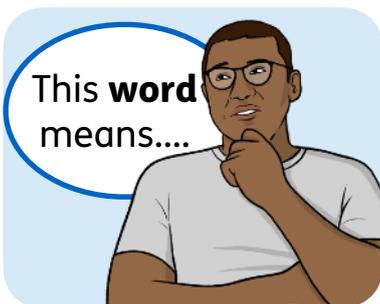
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

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# About this booklet



This booklet is from NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB).

We are in charge of planning health services in the Cheshire and Merseyside area.



This booklet is about **fertility treatments**.

**Fertility treatments** are treatments to help people get pregnant and have a baby.



We want to change our rules about fertility treatments.

We want you to:

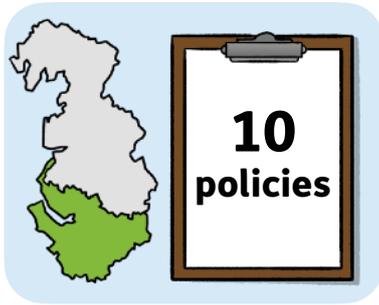


- Read this booklet to find out about the changes we want to make.



- Tell us what you think about these changes.

# About the rules



In Cheshire and Merseyside, there are 10 areas that have their own rules about NHS fertility treatments.

These rules are called **policies**.



This means that the area where you live can affect what fertility treatment you can get.

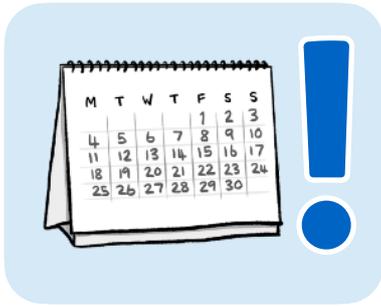


We want to have 1 policy for all the areas, instead of 10 different policies.



We are making some of the changes to follow rules from the **National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE)**.

**NICE** is an organisation that gives advice about how health services should work in England.



The new policy will last for a limited amount of time.



This is because NICE is planning to share new rules about giving fertility treatments soon.



When we see the new rules, we will look at our policy again to make sure that we are following the rules.

We are also making some of the changes so that:

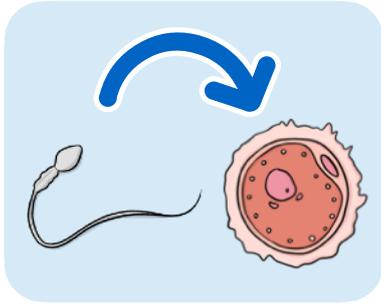


- We can help the NHS save money.



- Everyone in Cheshire and Merseyside can get the same fertility treatment.

# Change 1: Rules about IVF cycles



**IVF** stands for **in vitro fertilisation**.

**IVF** is a fertility treatment where eggs and sperm are put together outside of the person's body.

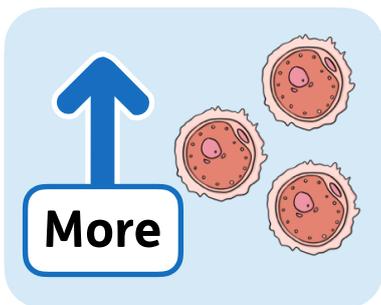


An **IVF cycle** is what we call 1 round of IVF treatment.

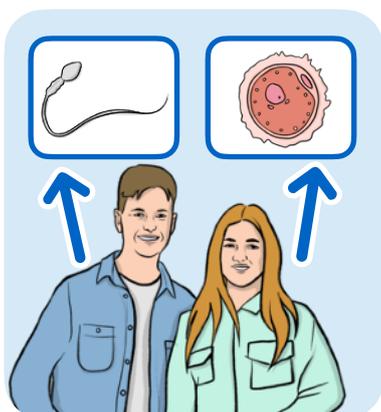
It includes 5 main steps.

## About IVF cycles

An IVF cycle includes these steps:



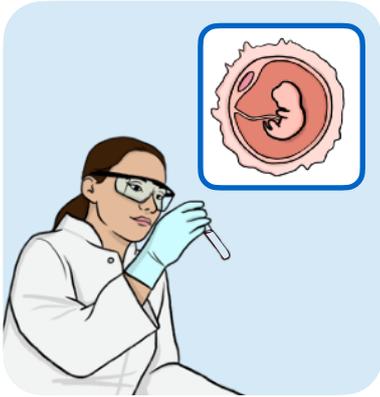
1) The person who wants to get pregnant takes medicine to help their body make more eggs than usual.



2) Doctors collect the person's eggs and collect sperm from their partner or **sperm donor**.

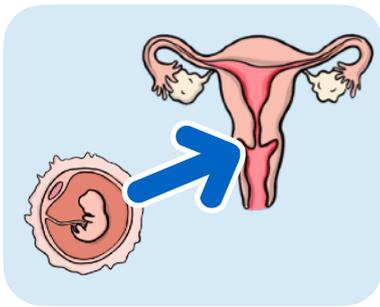
A **sperm donor** is someone who gives their sperm to help someone else make a baby.

An IVF cycle also includes these steps:

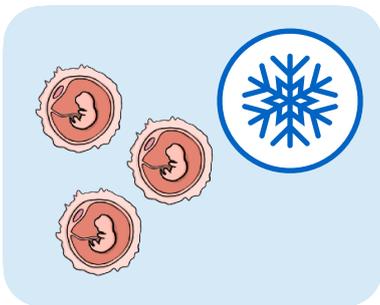


- 3) The sperm and eggs are put together outside the body in a lab. This makes an **embryo**.

An **embryo** is an egg after it has been put together with a sperm. A healthy embryo can grow into a baby.



- 4) 1 or more healthy embryos are put into the person's womb. This is called an **embryo transfer**.

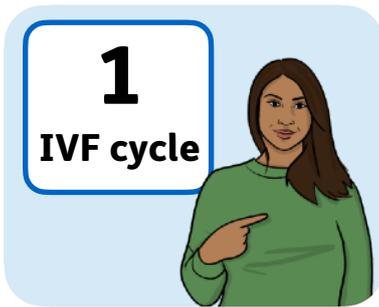


- 5) Any healthy embryos that are left over are frozen so they can be used later.

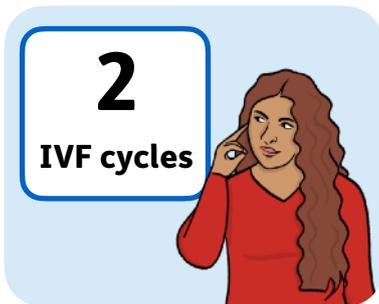


An IVF cycle will only end when a baby is born alive or when all the healthy embryos have been put in the womb.

# What happens now

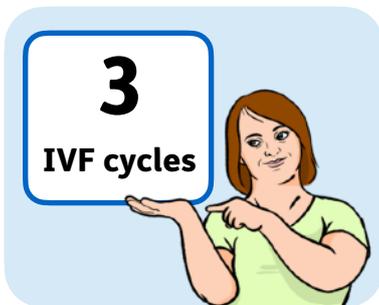


You can usually get up to 1 IVF cycle paid for by the NHS if you are under 40 and live in Cheshire East.



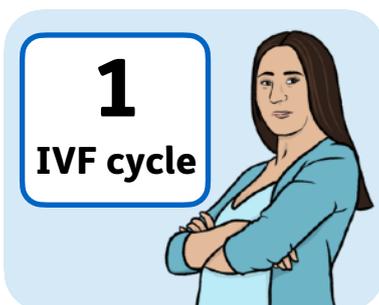
You can usually get up to 2 IVF cycles paid for by the NHS if you are under 40 and live in 1 of these areas:

- Cheshire West
- Liverpool
- St Helens
- Wirral



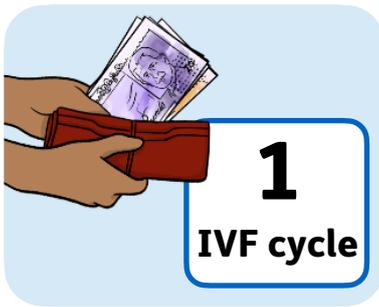
You can usually get up to 3 IVF cycles paid for by the NHS if you are under 40 and live in 1 of these areas:

- Halton
- Knowlsey
- Southport and Formby
- South Sefton
- Warrington



You can usually get 1 IVF cycle paid for by the NHS if you are aged between 40 and 42 and live in Cheshire and Merseyside.

# About change 1



**Change 1** is to change the rules so that NHS Cheshire and Merseyside only pays for people to have up to 1 IVF cycle each.



If we made this change, it would save more than £1 million for the NHS every year.



But it would mean that most people under 40 will get fewer IVF cycles paid for by the NHS.

We want to make this change because:



- We need to spend less money on IVF treatment.

This will help us keep offering IVF treatment and other services that people need.



- We want everyone in Cheshire and Merseyside to have the same fair chances to get IVF treatment.

# Change 2: Rules about BMI



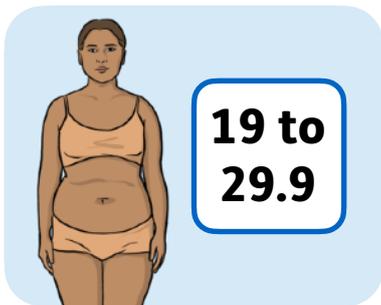
**BMI** stands for **Body Mass Index**.

Your **BMI** is a way to measure if you are a healthy weight for your height.

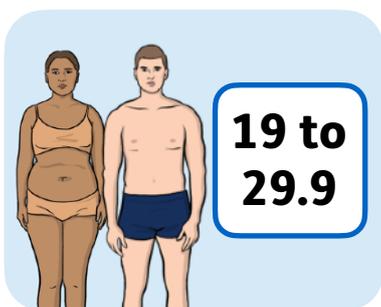
## What happens now



A woman's BMI usually affects whether she can get fertility treatment through the NHS or not.



In most of Cheshire and Merseyside, a woman's BMI must be between 19 and 29.9 before she can get fertility treatment.



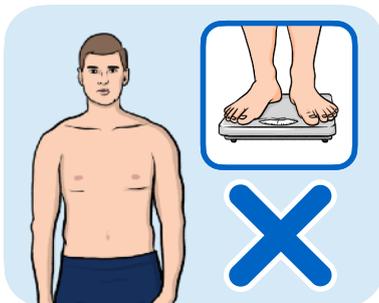
But in Wirral, the man in a couple must also have a BMI between 19 and 29.9.

## About change 2

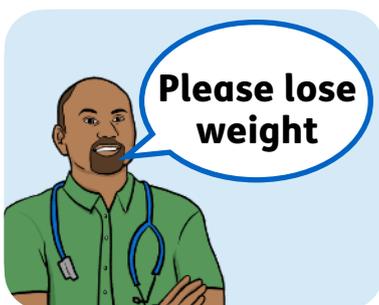
Change 2 is to change the rules for everyone in Cheshire and Merseyside so that:



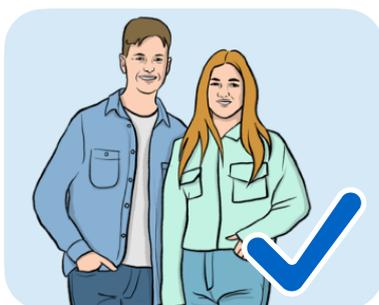
- Women must have a BMI between 19 and 29.9 before they can get fertility treatment.



- The man's BMI does not stop the couple from getting the fertility treatment.



But if a man's BMI number is 30 or higher, health professionals should ask him to try to lose weight to help with the treatment.



This change would mean that couples in Wirral have the same chances to get fertility treatment as everyone else.

# Change 3: Rules about smoking



NICE says that if you smoke or breathe in smoke from someone else, this can make it harder for fertility treatment to work.



This is true for men and women.

## What happens now



In Cheshire and Merseyside, couples can only get fertility treatment if the woman does not smoke.



But in some areas, the rules say that couples can still get fertility treatment if the man smokes.

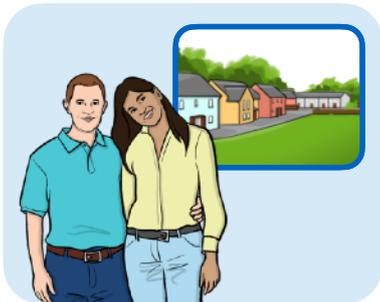
## About change 3



**Change 3** is to have a rule that says couples can only get fertility treatment from the NHS if neither of them smokes.



This would include not smoking e-cigarettes and vapes.



This change would only affect couples who live in Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton and St Helens.



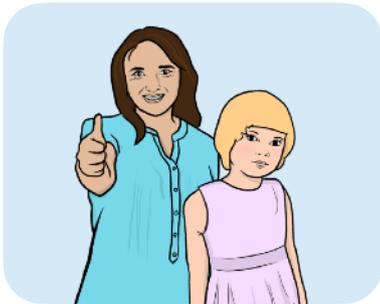
This is because other areas already have this rule.

# Change 4: Rules about people who have children

## What happens now



In most of Cheshire and Merseyside, the NHS only pays for IVF treatment for people who do not have living children.



This includes adopted children or children from other relationships.



But in Cheshire East and Cheshire West, people who started an IVF cycle before becoming parents may still be able to have embryo transfers after having a child.

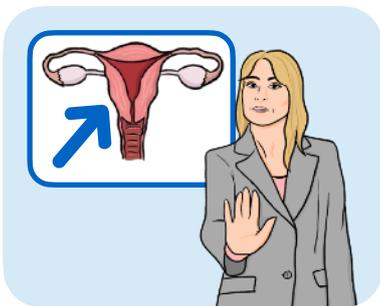


This means they could have the chance of having more than 1 child.

## About change 4

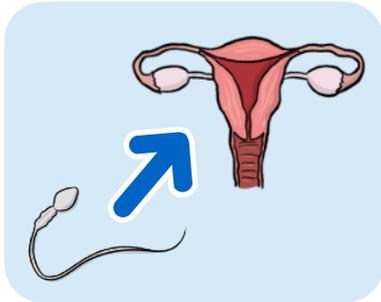


**Change 4** is to have a rule that says the NHS will not pay for a person's IVF treatment after they become a parent.



This means that people in Cheshire East and Cheshire West will stop having embryo transfers after they get pregnant or give birth to a living child.

# Change 5: Rules about IUI treatment in Wirral



**IUI** stands for **intra uterine insemination**.

**IUI** is a fertility treatment where sperm is put into a woman's womb.

## What happens now?

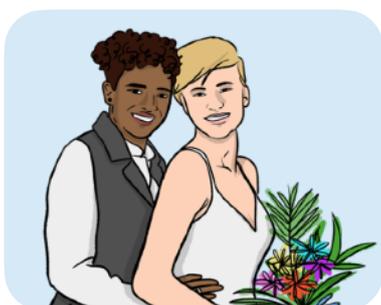
In most of Cheshire and Merseyside, the rules say that only these groups of people can get IUI treatment:



1. People who have a disability or mental health condition that makes it difficult for them to have sex in the vagina.



2. People who have a health condition that means they need to have children in a different way from having sex.



3. Couples in a **same-sex relationship**.

A **same-sex relationship** is when you are in a relationship with someone who is the same sex as you.

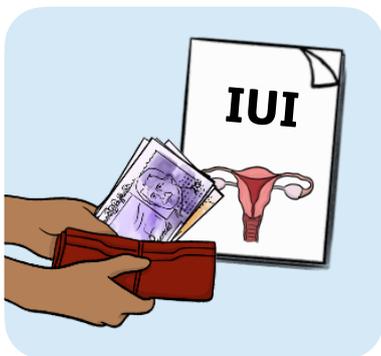


In Wirral, the rules say that IUI treatment is not usually offered to people.



These rules do not match the rules in other places nearby or follow the advice from NICE.

## About change 5



**Change 5** is to change the rules so that the NHS pays for IUI treatment for people in Wirral.

This would only be for the groups of people on page 17.



This means that all the areas in Cheshire and Merseyside would offer UIU treatment in the same way.



**9 IUI treatments**

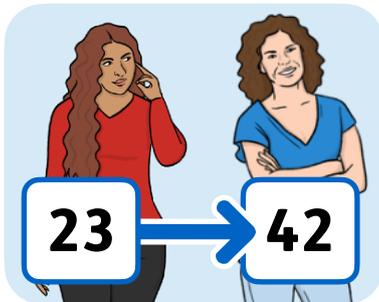
The NHS only pays for around 9 IUI treatments at Liverpool Women's Hospital each year.



So change 5 will not affect many people.

# Ages for treatment

## What happens now



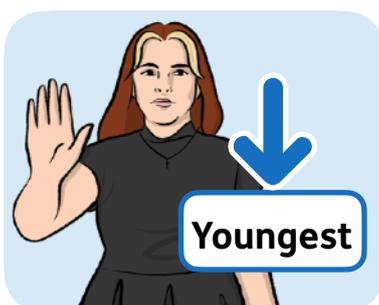
In Cheshire and Merseyside, the rules say that the NHS should offer IVF treatment to people aged between 23 and 42.

## Being clearer about ages



We want our new policy to be clearer about what age people must be to get fertility treatment.

We want our policy to:



- Not include a youngest age for when people can start getting fertility treatments.

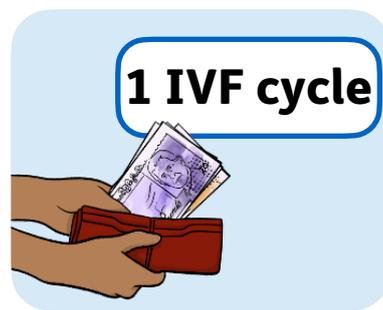


- Say that people can be offered fertility treatment until they turn 43 years old.

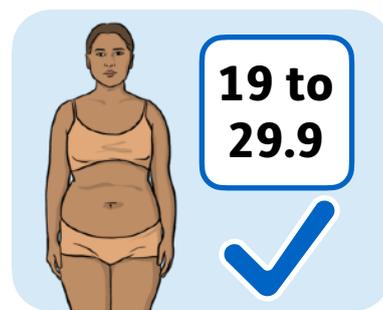
# Our 5 changes



Here is a list to help you remember our changes and how we want our policy to be clearer about ages.

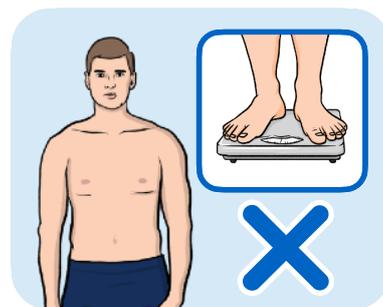


**Change 1:** Have a rule that says the NHS will only pay for up to 1 IVF cycle per person.

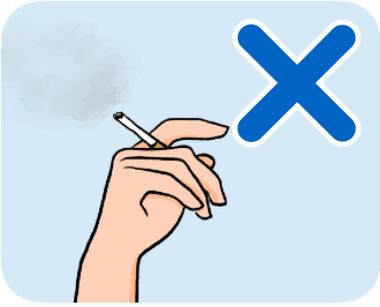


**Change 2:** have rules that say that:

- Women must have a BMI between 19 and 29.9 before they can get fertility treatment.



- The man's BMI should not stop the couple from getting fertility treatment.



**Change 3:** Have a rule that says couples can only get fertility treatment from the NHS if they do not smoke.



**Change 4:** Have a rule that says the NHS will stop paying for a person's IVF treatment after they become a parent.

**Change 5:** Have rules that say the NHS only pays for IUI treatment for these people in all of our areas:



1. People who have a disability or mental health condition that makes it difficult for them to have sex in the vagina.



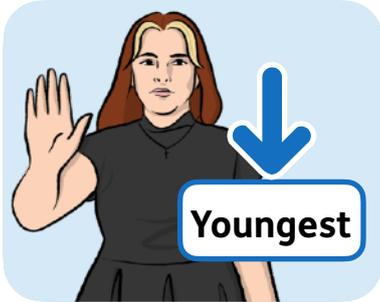
2. People who have a health condition that means they need to have children in a different way from having sex.



3. Couples in a **same-sex relationship**.

A **same-sex relationship** is when you are in a relationship with someone who is the same sex as you.

**Ages for treatment:** Have a clearer policy that:

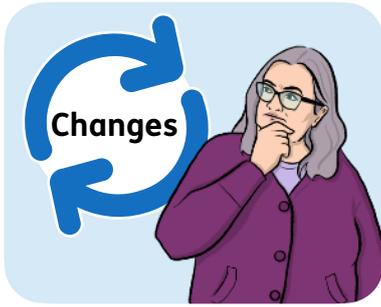


- Does not include a youngest age for when people can start getting fertility treatments.



- Says that people can be offered fertility treatments until they turn 43 years old.

# Telling us what you think



We want to know what you think about our 5 changes and how we want our policy to be clearer about ages.

You can tell us what you think about these changes by:



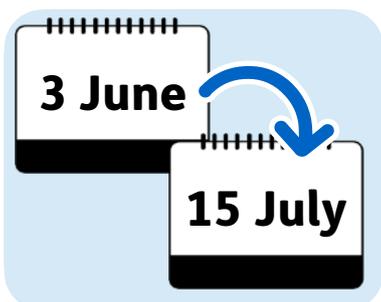
- Filling out this survey on our website:  
[Survey about the changes](#)



- Using the contact information on the next page.



We will use your answers to help us make a decision about the new policy.



You must send your answers between 3 June 2025 and 15 July 2025.

# Find out more



You can look at our website here:  
[www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](http://www.cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

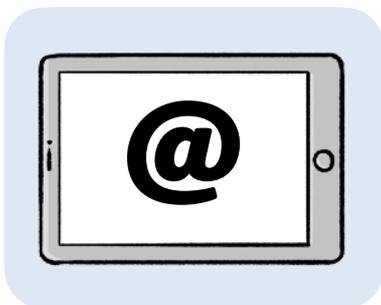
If you need help with answering the survey, you can contact us by:



- Phone: 0151 295 3052



- Post:  
NHS Cheshire and Merseyside  
No 1 Lakeside  
920 Centre Park  
Warrington  
WA1 1QY



- Email:  
[engagement@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk](mailto:engagement@cheshireandmerseyside.nhs.uk)

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