

Item 9: Assistive Reproductive Technologies (ART) Policy Review - written update

By: Kay Goldsmith, Scrutiny Research Officer to the Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee

To: Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee,
28 September 2020

Subject: Assistive Reproductive Technologies (ART) Policy Review – written update

Summary: This report invites the Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider the information provided by Kent and Medway CCG.

It provides background information which may prove useful to Members.

It is a written briefing only and no guests will be present to speak on this item.

1. Introduction

- (a) Assistive Reproductive Technologies (ART) are medical procedures that are primarily used to assist infertility. An example is in vitro fertilisation (IVF).
- (b) NICE guidelines (CG156, section 1.11 “Access Criteria for IVF”¹) recommend that the NHS funds up to three full IVF cycles for women aged under 40.
- (c) Across Kent and Medway, there is a single policy relating to ART and it entitles eligible patients two IVF cycles.
- (d) In order to achieve financial sustainability, CCGs nationwide have been considering whether to reduce the number of funded IVF cycles available to eligible patients. One such review was underway in Kent & Medway. The proposal presented to JHOSC in October 2018 was for a maximum of one full IVF cycle per each eligible patient. East Kent CCGs decided not to progress with the review.²
- (e) At its meeting on 12 October 2018, the JHOSC had expressed grave concerns about the potential for different levels of provision for IVF cycles across Kent and Medway.³

¹ <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg156/chapter/recommendations#access-criteria-for-ivf>

² *ibid*

³ Kent County Council (2018) ‘Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (12/10/2018)’, <https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=757&Mid=8154&Ver=4>

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2. Joint scrutiny

- (a) The Medway Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HASC) determined that the ART Policy Review was a substantial variation in the provision of health services in Medway on 18 January 2018.
- (b) The Kent Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) deemed the policy review to be a substantial variation on 26 January 2018, in the provision of health services in Kent.
- (c) In line with Regulation 30 of the Local Authority (Public Health, Health and Wellbeing Boards and Health Scrutiny) Regulations 2013⁴ the Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) was convened and has met to discuss ART services on two occasions (12 October 2018 and 10 September 2019).

3. Next Steps

- (a) The Kent and Medway CCG and Medway Council (who commission the service on behalf of the CCG) informed Kent County Council's Scrutiny Research Officer on 24 August 2020 that the ART Review had been suspended.
- (b) There remains a single schedule of policies in place across Kent and Medway, which includes two cycles of IVF for eligible patients. This element of ART provision has not changed.
- (c) Part of the review had been around including Donated Genetic Material (DGM) in the ART schedule of policies. It has been confirmed that this was agreed, and that the routine procurement of the service now includes this.
- (d) Whilst the review is not currently progressing, the Kent and Medway CCG will continue to monitor the service and propose changes as and when necessary.

4. Recommendation

RECOMMENDED that the Committee suspend their scrutiny of Assistive Reproductive Technologies until the Kent and Medway CCG decide to restart their review.

⁴ When NHS bodies and health services consult more than one local authority on a proposal which they have under consideration for a substantial development of or variation in the provision of health services in the local authorities' areas, those local authorities must appoint a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (JHOSC) for the purposes of the consultation.

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Background Documents

Kent County Council (2017) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (24/11/2017)*',
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=7533&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2018) '*Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (26/01/2018)*',
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=112&MId=7639&Ver=4>

Medway Council (2018) '*Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee (18/01/2018)*',
<https://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=131&MId=3727&Ver=4>

Kent County Council (2018) '*Kent and Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee (12/10/2018)*',
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=757&MId=8154&Ver=4>

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