



Assistive Reproductive Technologies: Update for Kent & Medway Joint HOSC August 2019

Background

Discussion relating to Assistive Reproductive Technologies (ART) took place at the Kent & Medway NHS Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 12th October 2018.

At this meeting, commissioners outlined proposals relating to a potential consultation to reduce the number of NHS funded IVF cycles for eligible couples from two to one, and to amend the associated policy to enable the use of ART using donated genetic materials.

The chair of the Joint HOSC then wrote to commissioners to express the concern of the committee in relation to the potential for different levels of service provision across Kent and Medway, given the decision of East Kent CCGs to prioritise their focus on other areas of health.

Update

On receipt of the letter from the Chair, NHS Medway CCG shared this with all CCGs and discussed it at governing body or subcommittee meetings of each CCG.

At present, CCGs are waiting for a suitable time to consult with the public regarding the number of cycles of IVF for eligible couples. Given the priorities of CCGs across Kent and Medway, it is expected that this is unlikely to be in the current calendar year. NHS Medway CCG will keep the Committee informed when a suitable time for consultation is agreed.

Work relating to the use of donated genetic materials in NHS-funded ART provision has progressed. A detailed policy review has taken place, and all CCGs have now agreed to a revised schedule of policies which allows the use of donated genetic materials for NHS-funded patients in this provision. This change is currently being implemented with existing specialist fertility providers through development of revised contracts, which will be completed shortly. The contracts bring in the new schedule of policies, and this positive change will take effect when they are signed.

Furthermore, NHS Medway CCG is leading a procurement of specialist ART services on behalf of Kent and Medway CCGs, with a market engagement event taking place at the beginning of September. This will also be based on the new schedule of policies and will include the use of donated genetic material across the life of the future contract(s). Providers will be advised of the potential for consultation relating to the number of IVF cycles for eligible couples, and the contract will hold the possibility to reduce this if required.

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