

Counselling Service



Information for Patients and Partners



# What is counselling?

Counselling offers a skilled way of listening and responding to enable you to have a clearer understanding of how infertility has affected you individually, and then helps you find ways to cope while you go through treatment.

Counselling is clearly distinguished from and very different to the giving of information, the process of assessment, or the normal relationship between you and clinical staff involved in treatment.

Common reactions to infertility include:

- Depression
- Feelings of isolation, loneliness
- Feelings of failure
- Guilt, anger, shame, despair
- Relationship difficulties
- Fears of partner leaving

Counselling can help by

- Giving the opportunity to explore thoughts and feelings
- Naming the fears, anxieties, and emotions
- Exploring different coping strategies
- Helping to recover your own resourcefulness
- Increasing your capacity to communicate

Infertility is usually a painful and complicated emotional experience and can affect individuals in many different ways. It is a medical and social condition which threatens peoples' expectations, identity, challenges your continuity in the generations, and your place and role in society now.

The staff of the Leicester Fertility Centre are aware that infertility is an ongoing form of grief and bereavement for many and try to understand that when you are here at the Clinic having treatment.

## Who can have Counselling?

Anyone who has been seen in the Assisted Conception Unit, who is either considering having treatment, is in the process of ongoing treatment, or has had treatment can see the counsellor.

Anyone who is thinking of being a donor of eggs, sperm, or embryos, must have at least two counselling sessions. This is to make sure that all the implications of doing this are fully understood.

## Implications Counselling

The purpose of implications counselling is to enable the individual to reflect upon and understand the proposed course of action for that individual, their family and children born as a result and anyone else affected by the donation or treatment. It is distinguished from implications *advice* or *guidance* provided by other members of the multidisciplinary team. Legal parenthood is also explained and fully discussed so that informed choices about parenthood are made prior to commencing treatment.

## Support Counselling

The purpose of support counselling is to give emotional support at times of particular stress. This may occur at any stage before, during or after treatment or donation e.g., when there is a failure to achieve a pregnancy.

## Therapeutic Counselling

The purpose of therapeutic counselling is to assist people in developing successful coping strategies for dealing with both the short and the long-term consequences of infertility and treatment. It includes helping people to try to adjust their expectations and to come to terms with their particular situation. Therapeutic counselling may be an ongoing process and can be continued, or take place for the first time, after the course of treatment has been completed. The duration of therapeutic counselling will be determined by the individual's needs. Therapeutic counselling may include discussing the advantages and disadvantages of continued treatment after failed attempts.

## How to contact the Counsellors

To make an appointment with the Counsellor, you can either telephone 0116 2585922 or leave a message with any member of the team when attending a clinic appointment.

We offer face-to-face and remote counselling appointments. The most appropriate choice for you can be discussed when making the appointment. You can see the Counsellor together as a couple, or either or both partners can attend alone.

Alternative counselling services, if required, can be accessed through the Counselling Directory, a comprehensive database of UK counsellors and psychotherapists, with information on their training and experience, fees, and contact details. You can also search for an accredited counsellor through the British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA) website. Please refer to the useful addresses provided below.

## Confidentiality

Anything that is discussed during counselling is confidential, unless the safety of yourself or another person is at risk. Nothing will be discussed with other members of the team.

## Further information

In the useful addresses section, below, you can find contact details for organisations which offer many services for patients, including information, support and contact with others in a similar situation.

### [Leaflets for donors and their families to prepare for possible contact with donor-conceived individuals](#)

Professionals from organisations across the fertility sector have developed five leaflets which provide information for donors about the possibility of contact from any donor-conceived people born from their donations. Links to these leaflets are provided below:

[‘Preparing you and your family for the possibility of contact’,](#)  
[‘Donor FAQs’,](#)

[‘Important information for people who have donated eggs, sperm or embryos in the past’](#),

and also stories about what is it like to be contacted by donor-conceived adult children, from the [donor](#), and [relative of a donor](#), perspectives.

Alternatively, you can access the leaflets via the HFEA website using the following URL:

<https://www.hfea.gov.uk/donation/>

## Our commitment to patients

We are constantly striving to improve our services to patients, and we will welcome your comments or suggestions for improvement.

### Leicester Fertility Centre Contact Details

**Tel:** 0116 2585922

**E-mail:** LFCinfo@uhl-tr.nhs.uk

**Website:** [www.leicesterfertilitycentre.org.uk](http://www.leicesterfertilitycentre.org.uk)

### Useful addresses:

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority [www.hfea.gov.uk](http://www.hfea.gov.uk)

NICE guidelines: [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk)

NHS - Response line: [111.nhs.uk](http://111.nhs.uk) / 111

NHS - Smoking Helpline: 0300 123 1044

Fertility Network UK [www.fertilitynetworkuk.org](http://www.fertilitynetworkuk.org) / 0121 323 5025

You can use these links to access support from former fertility nurses via Fertility Network UK (5 days per week):

- <https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/access-support/support-line/>
- <https://fertilitynetworkuk.org/about-us/contact/>

Mensfe, the mens fertility forum [mensfe.net/forum](http://mensfe.net/forum)

DONOR Conception Network [www.dcnetwork.org](http://www.dcnetwork.org)

Counselling Directory <https://www.counselling-directory.org.uk/>

British Infertility Counselling Association <https://www.bica.net/>

# Do you feel that you are at risk of verbal or physical abuse? If so, you may find the following numbers useful:

Domestic Violence Helpline:

United against violence & abuse (UAVA)

Helpline: 0808 802 0028

Email: [info@uava.org.uk](mailto:info@uava.org.uk)

Text support: 07715 994 962



*This information was correct at the time of printing. While the Trust makes every reasonable effort to keep its information leaflets up to date, very recent changes may not be reflected in the guidance, and you should discuss this with the clinical staff at the time of your appointment.*

# Questions

If you have any questions write them down here to remind you what to ask when you speak to your consultant.

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## Today's research is tomorrow's care

We all benefit from research. Leicester's Hospitals is a research active Trust so you may find that research is happening when you visit the hospital or your clinic.

If you are interested in finding out how you can become involved in a clinical trial or to find out more about taking part in research, please speak to your clinician or GP.

**If you need information in a different language or format, please call the number(s) below or email [equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk](mailto:equality@uhl-tr.nhs.uk)**

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی اور زبان میں درکار ہیں، تو براہ کرم مندرجہ ذیل نمبر پر ٹیلی فون کریں۔

على هذه المعلومات بلغة أخرى، الرجاء الاتصال على رقم الهاتف الذي يظهر في الأسفل  
જો તમને અન્ય ભાષામાં આ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, તો નીચે આપેલ નંબર પર કૃપા કરી ટેલિફોન કરો

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

Aby uzyskać informacje w innym języku, proszę zadzwonić pod podany niżej numer telefonu

**0116 258 4382 or 0116 250 2959**