

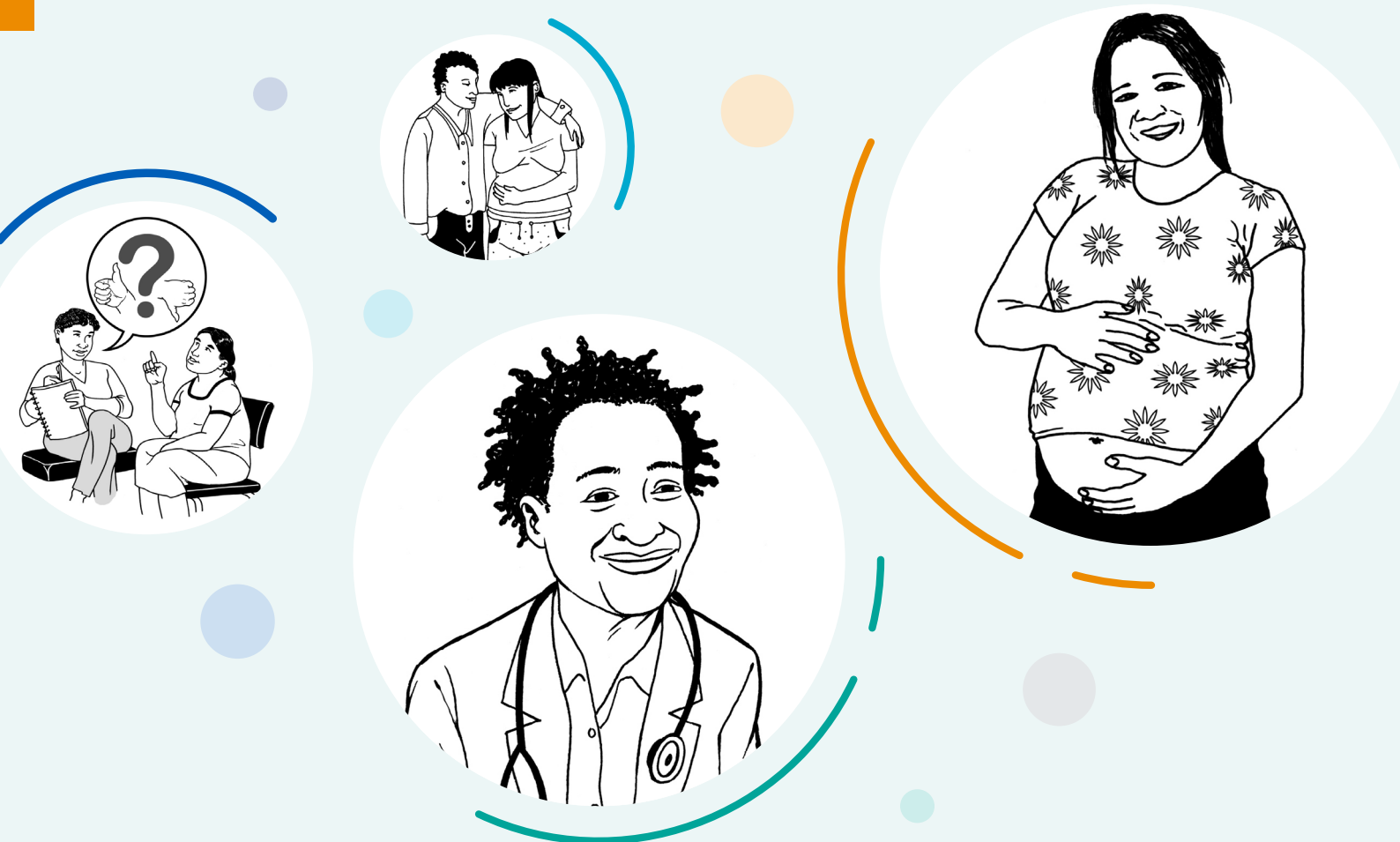
March 2023



**Staffordshire and  
Stoke-on-Trent**  
Integrated Care Board

# Assisted conception involvement

## Easy read leaflet



Please contact us if you need more information, need this in another format, or need help with the survey:



Call us:  
**0333 150 3069**

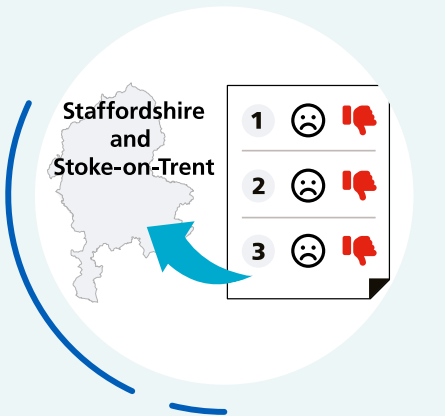


Email us:  
[mlcsu.involvement@nhs.net](mailto:mlcsu.involvement@nhs.net)

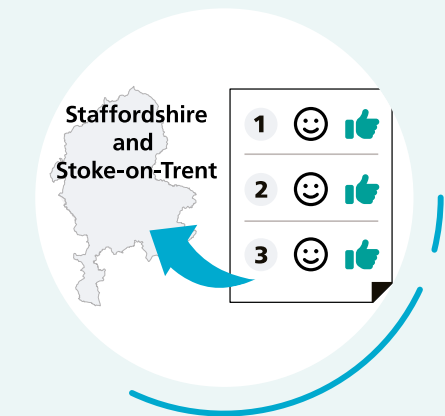
# What is this about?



We want to hear your views on our work about **assisted conception** (treatments to help you get pregnant).



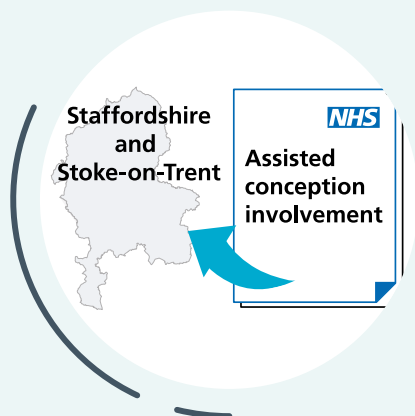
At the moment, the **criteria** (rules) for who can have assisted conception treatments are not the same across the whole of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.



We want to make the criteria the same for everybody across our area.



We know that there is going to be a bigger review of access to **fertility services** (treatments to help you get pregnant) in England. But this may take some time.



We have decided to develop an **interim** (temporary) policy for assisted conception while we wait for the results of the national review.



We have a survey and some events for you to share your views on our **draft** (not yet final) interim policy.



# What is assisted conception?

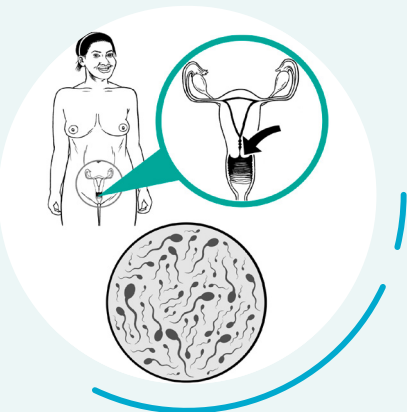


**Infertility** is when a couple are not able to get pregnant. This affects around 1 in 7 couples.

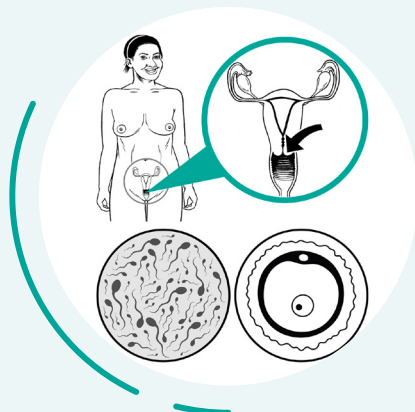
**GPs** (doctors) work with couples to work out why this might be happening. They look at **lifestyle changes** (like stopping smoking or losing weight) or medicines which could help.



**If these do not work, there are fertility treatments to help couples get pregnant. This is also known as assisted conception.**



**Intrauterine insemination (IUI)** is where the man's sperm is inserted into the woman's womb using a small tube. The fastest-moving sperm are chosen to give the best chance of pregnancy. IUI is also known as **artificial insemination**.



**In vitro fertilisation (IVF)** is when the woman's egg is removed and fertilised with the man's sperm outside of the body. The woman takes medicine which helps to make more eggs. The fertilised egg is put back into the womb to grow into a baby.

# Why are you suggesting an interim policy?

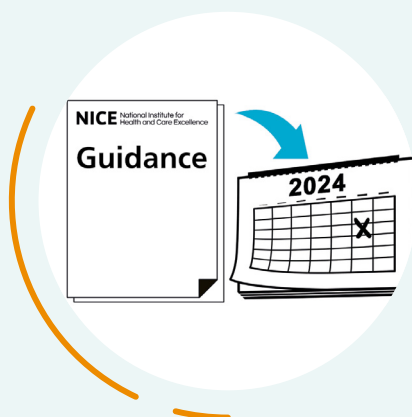


In 2020, we started talking to local people, patients and staff about making the criteria for assisted conception treatments the same across our area. We have been working on our **recommendations** (ideas) for this.

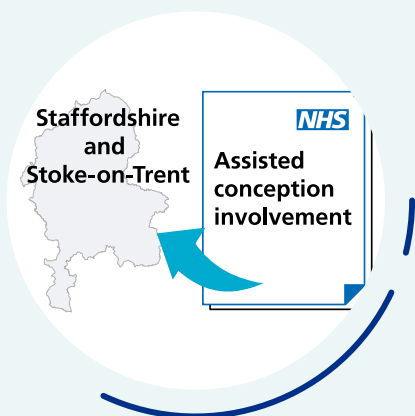


In 2022, a document called the **Women's Health Strategy for England** was published. The plans for the next 10 years include a **review** of fertility treatments across England (looking at the treatments and who can have them).

## [Read more about the Women's Health Strategy](#)

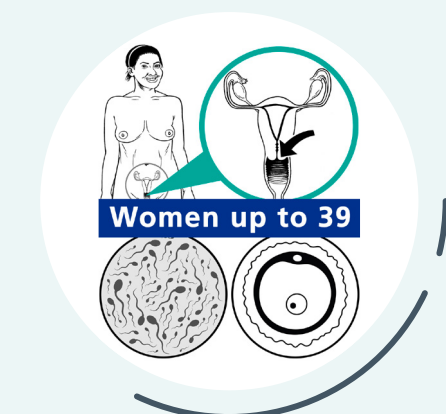
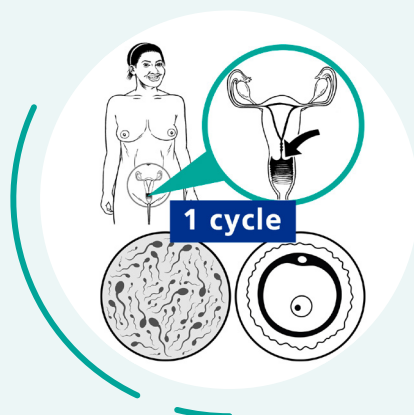
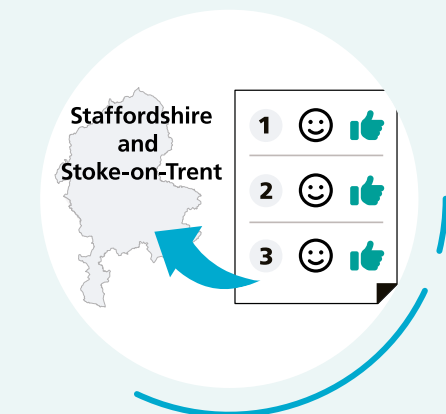
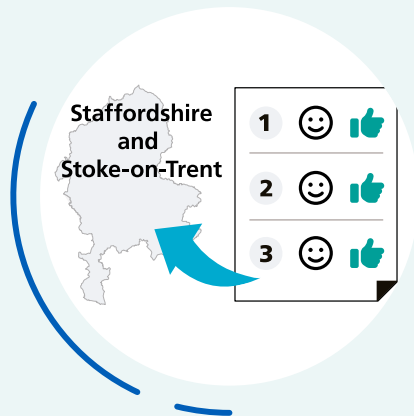


We also expect updated guidance from the **National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)** at the end of 2024.



We know that the current difference in access depending on where you live is unfair. We have decided to develop an interim policy so that this can change as soon as possible.

# What is the interim policy?



Our interim policy will make the criteria (rules) about who can have assisted conception treatments the same across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

At the moment, there are different criteria in 3 areas of Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This means depending on where you live, there may be some changes for you.

**At the moment, the main changes that we propose are:**

- **For 1 cycle of IVF to be offered.**

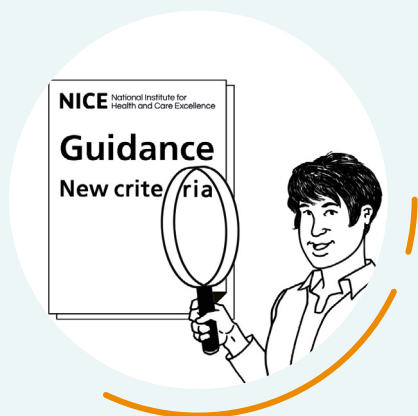
At the moment, 2 cycles are offered in Stoke-on-Trent, so this proposal would mean the number of cycles goes down in that area

- **For the upper age limit for women to be 39.** At the moment, the age limit in North Staffordshire is 35 for women, so the age limit would go up

- **For there to be no upper age limit for men.** At the moment, the age limit for men is 55 in North Staffordshire.



- **For IUI to not be offered.** At the moment, 3 cycles of IUI are offered in North Staffordshire if people prefer this to IVF.



We will look at any new criteria or recommendations when the national review has finished. We will then see if our interim policy needs to be changed in any way.

## How can I get involved?



We want to hear your views on our draft interim policy and any suggestions you have.

You can take part in our short survey on our [website](#). **The survey is open from 1 March to 22 March 2023.**



If you would like to use a paper copy of the survey, we can send one to you. Call us on **0333 150 3069** if you want a paper copy.





You can come to an online meeting to ask questions and share your suggestions.

The meetings will be on **Wednesday 15 March, 12.30 to 2pm** and **Monday 20 March, 6pm to 7.30pm**.



You need to register to join the meeting by filling in this online form:

<https://nhs.welcomesyourfeedback.net/s/k9j0wr>

Do this at least **2 days before** the meeting you want to join.

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