**Employee sickness absence as a result of undergoing IVF treatment**

At any stage of the IVF process, an employee may be absent from work due to the effects of the treatment, with it affecting people in different ways. This could be either due to the physical or mental effects (including depression or stress). If this arises, the employee will be regarded as being on **sick leave,** and will report their absence in the normal way. The manager will undertake a Return to Work Discussion on the employee’s return to work after each absence, in line with the Maximising Attendance policy at which the opportunity can be taken to explore whether any support can be given within the workplace. If there are any concerns regarding the employee’s emotional wellbeing, consideration can be given to referring the employee to the occupational health service and/or to making them aware of the contact details for the counselling service (timefortalking).

Where a sickness absence trigger point is met under the Maximising Attendance policy, the employee will be managed normally under that policy. However, it is emphasised that any absences related to IVF treatment that occur from the point of removal of the ova will not be considered for management action (as this could amount to sex discrimination). Also, any absences related to IVF treatment that occur from the point of implantation of the fertilised ova until pregnancy is determined, will be managed separately as pregnancy related absences (see Maximising Attendance guidance notes for further details). If the employee’s implantation does **not** result in pregnancy, any IVF related absences from this confirmation will not be considered pregnancy related.