
Meeting: Name of Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date: 15th December 2014
Subject: Specialist Fertility Services Local Criteria
Report of: Dr Gail Newmarch, Executive Member for Bedfordshire CCG
Summary: This paper presents the outcome of the formal Specialist Fertility Service (SFS) consultation undertaken by Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) along with the decision made by the Governing Body in respect of the local criteria.

Advising Officer: Dr Gail Newmarch, Executive Member for Bedfordshire CCG
Contact Officer: Angelina Florio, Head of System Redesign – Adults and Older People
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

1. This briefing note provides an update following the report Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG) submitted to the committee in August 2014. It presents the outcome of BCCG's governing body decision around specialist fertility services (SFS) including IVF in Bedfordshire.

Financial:

2. As a clinical commissioning group we are obliged to ensure we get the best possible outcomes for local people with the money we have available.

Legal:

3. No legal implication.

Risk Management:

4. Not applicable.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

5. Not Applicable.

Equalities/Human Rights:

6. The decision outlined in this paper does not alter the equality impact of this service.

Public Health

7. Public Health participated in the discussions held with the collaborative agreement.

Community Safety:

8. Not Applicable.

Sustainability:

9. Not Applicable.

Procurement:

10. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATION(S):**The Committee is asked to:-**

1. Note the decision made by the BCCG Governing Body.

Background

11. Until March 2013, specialist fertility services were commissioned regionally by the East of England Specialised Commissioning Group (EoE SCG) when individual Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) became responsible for commissioning these services. Since then, BCCG has been working with 19 other CCGs in the East of England to procure SFS through a collaborative agreement. This agreement currently includes common eligibility criteria for IVF developed by EoE SCG in 2011.
12. However, updated guidance on fertility services published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in February 2013¹ has encouraged BCCG and CCGs across the country to reconsider eligibility criteria for IVF. As a result BCCG's governing body has decided that from January 2015 BCCG will: **provide access to IVF after 3 years of unexplained infertility, offering 1 full cycle of IVF treatment for women aged 23 to 39 years.**

The governing body took account of the following in coming to this decision:
 13.
 - clinical evidence around the effectiveness of IVF
 - the outcome of a public consultation exercise conducted during the autumn of 2014
 - affordability – including the impact that increasing access to IVF might have on other services for Bedfordshire patients.

Current SFS in Bedfordshire

¹ CG156, February 2013

14. BCCG currently spends £799,000 each year on specialist fertility treatments. In 2013/14, BCCG commissioned 243 cycles of IVF across the whole of Bedfordshire. This equates to about 80 patients each year.
15. Hospital consultants at our local providers (for example, Bedford Hospital and Luton & Dunstable Hospital) refer Bedfordshire residents to specialist fertility providers including Barts and London NHS Trust, Bourn Hall Clinic, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust and Oxford Fertility Hospitals. They currently base their decision to refer prospective parents for NHS funded IVF based on an assessment against the East of England eligibility criteria. These criteria can be found in appendix 1; and include the following:
- 16.
- | | Waiting time for access to IVF | Age restrictions | Number of cycles |
|--|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| East of England SCG Policy 2011 | Access to IVF after 3 years of unexplained infertility | Aged 23 to 39 years | 3 full cycles of IVF |
17. NICE guidance for access to fertility treatment includes three suggested access criteria that have resource implications for CCGs:
- 18.
- Access to IVF after 2 years rather than 3 years with earlier access for women aged 36 or over.
 - Offer one cycle of IVF treatment to women aged 40-42 who have not conceived after 2 years providing they meet specific criteria.
 - Use of single rather than double embryo transfers.
19. If BCCG were to commission future specialist fertility services in line with the entirety of the revised NICE guidance, it would require an additional £289,000. This represents an uplift in funding for IVF of more than one third - 36.170%.

Clinical evidence

20. As a GP led commissioning group, BCCG has looked carefully at the clinical evidence for offering IVF and used that in its decision to alter the access criteria for these services in Bedfordshire.
21. IVF does not always result in pregnancy. In the UK, around 20-25% of IVF treatment cycles result in a birth.
22. The success rate of IVF depends on the age of the woman undergoing treatment as well as the cause of the infertility (if it's known). Younger women are more likely to have healthier eggs, which increases the chances of success. Success rates decrease dramatically in women over 40.

23. In 2010, the percentage of IVF treatments that resulted in a live birth (the success rate) was:
- 24.
- 32.2% for women under 35
 - 27.7% for women aged 35-37
 - 20.8% for women aged 38-39
 - 13.6% for women aged 40-42
 - 5% for women aged 43-44
 - 1.9% for women aged over 44
- (NHS Choices website)*

Formal consultation

25. While infertility affects a small cohort of the Bedfordshire population, the matter could be extremely emotive for those residents that are affected. While some CCGs have decided to decommission SFS altogether, BCCG decided to involve local people in the decision by undertaking a formal consultation process. We did this under the guidance and supervision of the Consultation Institute and by taking feedback from Central Bedfordshire and Bedford Borough Health Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
26. Appendix 2 provides a full report on the consultation which included pre-consultation activity, formal consultation and a consideration phase. As a result of feedback from Bedford Borough HOSC, the consultation phase was extended by four weeks to enable more people to respond.
27. A survey, which formed a key part of the process, gave local residents the opportunity to say whether they thought IVF should be available on the NHS at all. It also offered three possible options for changing the eligibility criteria for Bedfordshire residents.
28. Two hundred and fifteen (215) people responded to the survey – they included members of the public and local clinicians. The majority favoured retaining NHS funded IVF services by 4:1. Respondents also tended to support wider access to IVF as set out in option 1 below.

29.

	Waiting time for access to IVF	Age restrictions	Number of cycles	Cost per year
Option 1	Access to IVF after 3 years of unexplained infertility	Aged 23 to 42 years	2 full cycles of IVF treatment for women age 23 to 39 1 full cycle of IVF treatment for women aged 40-42	£650,000
Option 2	Access to IVF after 3 years of unexplained infertility	Aged 23 to 39 years	2 full cycles of IVF	£547,000
Option 3	Access to IVF after 3 years of unexplained infertility	Aged 23 to 39 years	1 full cycle of IVF treatment	£397,000

30. However, a significant minority of respondents expressed strong views against NHS funding for IVF. Several expressed the view that there was no societal need for IVF but there was a need for more adoption and fostering. Others felt the money could be better spent on other services including cancer care.

Ensuring affordability and value for money

31. As a clinical commissioning group we are obliged to ensure we get the best possible outcomes for local people with the money we have available.
32. When BCCG took the decision to consult, we made it clear that we favoured the more generous criteria offered in option one. Our understanding of our financial position at the time meant that we believed we could extend access to IVF to local people while remaining within budget. However, as explained in another paper to this committee, our financial position has considerably worsened since then. We are currently reporting that we are likely to end the financial year with a deficit of around £25m and are in what is called 'turnaround' to bring CCG finances back on track. This will mean taking some difficult decisions and as a result, it is likely that any decision to extend access to IVF would have a detrimental effect on other services.

BCCG Governing Body decision

33. At its meeting on 3 December 2014, BCCG Governing Body approved a change to IVF eligibility criteria as set out in Option 3 of the consultation survey.

34.	Option 3	Access to IVF after 3 years of unexplained infertility	Aged 23 to 39 years	1 full cycle of IVF treatment
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35. In doing so it took account of:

36. • The clinical evidence around the success of this form of fertility treatment. The governing body accepted that this was a life changing treatment for some families and wanted to continue offering the service to those most likely to benefit. We have also noted that several respondents to the consultation survey highlighted the importance of providing good quality counselling to prospective parents going through IVF.
37. • The views of local residents and clinicians – the Governing Body noted that there was considerable support for continuing IVF but not everyone believed it should be available for free via the NHS.
38. • Affordability and value for money – the Governing body noted that was vital that, as clinical commissioners, BCCG provided high quality, affordable care. It accepted that the decision not to extend IVF to a wider range of women was a difficult one but noted that it also had to consider the impact of funding more generous IVF eligibility criteria on other services for people in Bedfordshire

Recommendation

39. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to note the decision made by the BCCG Governing Body.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – East of England Fertility Policy



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Appendix 2 - Specialist Fertility Services Consultation Report



Consultation
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