Jane Hutt announces equal IVF treatment across Wales

From April 2005 all couples aged 23 – 39 in Wales who meet the clinical criteria established by NICE and any social criteria to be established by the Welsh Assembly Government, should be offered one cycle of IVF treatment on the NHS, Health Minister Jane Hutt announced today.

This will provide for a single policy, operating fairly throughout Wales and available through the NHS to all who qualify.

The Minister made the announcement on the day NICE published its guidelines on the provision of IVF by the NHS. The Department of Health has also made a similar announcement in England.

Jane Hutt said, "I welcome the publication of NICE’s guidelines and its recommendations for people with fertility problems.

"Infertility can bring great sadness and I am very aware that under the previous Health Authority system in Wales, the treatment available to couples depended on where they lived. NICE have examined the clinical evidence and have made their recommendations.

"I have decided that from April 2005 there will be common eligibility criteria across Wales for IVF and other specialised fertility treatments. To this end we will be looking to Health Commission Wales, who commission specialised services in Wales, to meet the provision of one cycle of treatment from April next year. In the longer term I would expect there to be continued progress in implementing the full NICE Guidelines

"To be eligible for treatment couples will need to meet the clinical criteria recommended by NICE and meet the social criteria which the Welsh Assembly Government will be developing and consulting on over the coming months.”

The policy to be developed by the Welsh Assembly Government will consider giving priority to those in greatest needs, such as those who have faced treatment for cancer.

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