

# Choosing the right clinic

Things to consider



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## Choosing the right clinic: **Starting the process**

Choosing the clinic for your fertility treatment is an exciting step in your path to parenthood! There are many factors to take into consideration when choosing a fertility clinic, and with over 100 clinics in the UK to choose from, knowing where to start can sometimes feel overwhelming.

That's why we've put together some key recommendations to keep in mind when starting the process:

### **Define your priorities**

A good place to start is mapping out your priorities and non-negotiables. We go into more detail throughout this guide, but you should consider factors such as location, prices and treatment options. Fertility treatment is unique and personal, so it's okay to have non-negotiables!

### **Take your time**

Choosing a fertility clinic is a really significant, important step in your path to parenthood. So, take as much time as you need researching your options! By following our guide below, you'll be able to make the best decision possible for your treatment, overall experience and ultimately reaching your goal.

# Location, Location, Location

One of the most important factors to consider when choosing a clinic for treatment is location. Remember, the clinic you choose lays the foundation for your entire treatment experience. Here's why location & accessibility matters:

## Proximity to home & work

When searching for the perfect clinic to begin your fertility journey, it's natural to be excited and willing to travel far and wide to review clinics and get a feel for their services. But it's important to keep in mind that soon, your fertility treatments will become a part of your daily or weekly routine. Choosing a clinic close to your home/workplace can significantly reduce any logistical challenges. Selecting a clinic that is easily accessible can reduce the stress of travelling, especially during sensitive appointments. Less travel time gives you more time to relax and focus on your path to parenthood!

## Expert care

Accessibility and convenience don't mean compromising on quality! Clinics are strategically located in areas that are accessible for a range of patients, offering expert care for a complex range of needs, at a location that best suits your needs.

## Comfort & peace of mind

It's important that your choice provides you with comfort and peace of mind throughout your treatment. Knowing that your clinic is close by and easily accessible offers a sense of security during your treatment pathway. There can sometimes be situations that require prompt action, so knowing you can easily reach your clinic gives you one less worry.

## Support from loved ones

One of the most important things you can do during your fertility journey is to have a support system. Support comes in many forms: friends, family and fellow patients can help make you feel less alone and more supported. Choosing a clinic that is close by makes it easier for your loved ones to accompany you to appointments and be there when you need it the most.

## Waiting times

Waiting times are an inevitable part of any fertility treatment. While it's natural to want a quick treatment pathway, understanding and managing waiting times is essential when choosing your clinic. Deciding on a clinic with shorter waiting times but a longer commute isn't always the best option. You may start your path to parenthood quicker, but the added stress and logistical challenges of travelling to your appointments can impact your well-being in the long term.





# Treatments

Patients looking for a fertility clinic fall under one of the following:

- ✓ **New to fertility**
- ✓ **Returning to treatment**

Remember, fertility is unique to you, it's not a one size fits all approach! Having access to a variety of treatment options means you'll be able to find a solution that works for you and your needs, no matter how complex. Keep an eye out for:

## Tailored plans

Having tailored treatment plans not only acknowledges that all fertility journeys are unique, but they also provide personalised solutions that are personal to you. Most clinics will conduct initial tests and assessments to get to know you, your health and your goals better. They will work closely with you to create a tailored treatment plan, designed around your individual needs.

## Expertise

The clinical expertise of the medical team is a factor that all patients should keep in mind when choosing a fertility clinic. Whether you're new to fertility or a returning patient, there are a lot of emotions when seeking fertility treatment, but one thing expertise brings is confidence and trust. Choosing a clinic whose team brings a wide range of knowledge, skills and experience will only better your experience. It can impact the chances of success, quality of care and your overall experience, so it's a really important factor to consider when making your decision.

## Eligibility

Take time to research each clinic's eligibility criteria. There will be certain criteria set by the HFEA (UK fertility regulator) to ensure all treatments are carried out safely, efficiently and responsibly. Taking time to understand these will provide you with more context when making a decision.

# Financial Considerations

When you're thinking about IVF, funding your treatment is often one of your most important considerations. There's a number of financial considerations you should factor into your decision:

## Treatment costs

Understand each clinic's costs, as this will differ from clinic to clinic. If a clinic is transparent about their prices, you'll be better placed to access against the budget you have in mind. Remember, it's not just treatment costs you need to factor in. Speak to them about pre-treatment costs, treatment costs and any additional costs your path to parenthood may need.

## Multi-cycle programmes

Most clinics will offer a Multi-Cycle Programme. These programmes are designed to increase the chances of achieving a successful pregnancy, where a single round of IVF may not be sufficient. These tend to be offered at a fixed, discounted rate, resulting in a more cost-effective option for the long term. Speak to each clinic about what's available and the criteria, as this will differ between clinics.

## Funding your treatment

It's crucial to map out what you can afford and how you'll fund your treatment. Most clinics in the UK offer funding packages for treatment to help make treatments costs more manageable. Speak to clinics about the cost savings, payment terms, criteria and what's included – don't be afraid to ask questions! This information will allow you to make an informed decision you feel confident in.

## NHS funding

NHS funding for fertility treatments varies by region across the UK. Whether or not you can have NHS funding to finance your IVF or fertility treatment is ultimately decided by your local integrated care boards (ICBs). Your local GP will confirm the criteria for this funding but speak to clinics about the NHS contracts they have. If your region is not available, raise this to them to understand the next steps.

## Tech

Laboratories are where the magic happens, so it's important they're the very best they can be. Technology is at the heart of fertility treatment, positively impacting every stage of treatment from diagnostic tests to treating the most complex of cases. Most clinics across the UK are home to state-of-the-art reproductive technology that enhances every aspect of fertility, so take the time to research these and understand how they can help you.



# Reputation & Results

- ✓ Use success rates as a rough guide, not a prediction
- ✓ Focus on clinics that are consistent with national rates
- ✓ Look for clinics that excel in all areas - not just success rates

Among many aspects, a clinic's reputation and success rates tend to be one of, if not the, biggest priorities for patients. We recommend taking the above tips from the HFEA (UK fertility regulator) into consideration when short-listing your top clinics.



Anyone going through fertility treatment will want the best possible chance of success, it's completely understandable! Here's how we'd recommend factoring these into your decision:

## Understanding the data

When you look at success rates, it is good to remember that they can have their limitations when you compare them with your own experiences or diagnosis.

## Patient testimonials

Data is great, and data-driven decision making is an important factor when choosing a clinic. But remember, behind every success rate is a personal story. Not only are these stories a source of hope, but they also offer a realistic insight into treatment options and overall experience. Use these stories with the data, it'll help you get a better understanding of all aspects of each clinic's path to parenthood.

## Comparing results

When comparing results between clinics, keep the metrics in mind. There's a lot of terminology to digest, so it's really important to understand the specific metrics that are being presented. Clinics will always share how they've calculated these results and what they're based on, so take time to look into these for better insight and understanding. Most importantly, don't be afraid to ask the clinical team about these and what they mean! Feel comfortable and confident about approaching clinics to discuss their success rates. You want to feel empowered and well informed when deciding, and who better trust than the professionals?

# Communication

Choosing the right fertility clinic is a significant decision, and effective communication plays a key role throughout your journey. From your initial research to the day you finish your treatment, finding a clinic that communicates clearly and compassionately is crucial.

Good communication builds trust and understanding, which is especially important during a time that can be overwhelming. When evaluating a clinic, check their website and social media.

Do they use language that feels inclusive to you and your unique needs? Have they created a safe space where you can confidently share your thoughts and ask questions?

Consider how easy it is to reach medical professionals and how responsive they are to your enquiries. Do they use any apps to help keep communication easy and organised? Remember, the fertility journey can bring challenging and stressful moments, so understanding a clinic's communication style is essential.

A clinic that values transparency, honesty, and dedicated support is more likely to provide a comforting and reassuring environment, both within and outside the clinic.



## Patient support

Anyone going through fertility treatment will want the best possible chance of success; it's completely understandable! Here's how we'd recommend factoring these into your decision:

### Counselling

All licensed clinics in the UK should offer counselling throughout your treatment. These sessions aren't always hosted on-site at the clinic, so double check this with the clinic. Find out if these sessions are included in the treatment costs or if these are an additional cost.

### Educational resources

Starting fertility treatment can sometimes be overwhelming, there's a lot of information to digest. Take a look through the clinics resource hub, do they have additional guides and resources for your needs?

### Forum

Patient forums are a really valuable factor you should keep in mind when choosing a clinic! It's an opportunity to chat with other patients going through a similar journey to your own. It's a great way to share experiences, find reassurance and access recommendations based on real-life experiences. A lot of fertility forums create a sense of community, a safe space where patients can support each other. Speak to clinics and find out what forums they have available, what the rules are and how patients register.



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