

## Authority Paper

<b>Committee:</b>	Authority meeting
<b>Meeting Date:</b>	21 February 2007
<b>Agenda Item:</b>	Item 12
<b>Paper Number:</b>	HFEA (21/02/07) 361
<b>Paper Title:</b>	Timeline for the multiple births project
<b>Author:</b>	Dr Charlotte Augst, Policy Manager
<b>For Information or Decision?</b>	For information and decision
<b>Resource Implications:</b>	Significant resource implications for ongoing communication work and implementation of decision – included in both the 2006/07 and the 2007/08 business plan
<b>Recommendation to the Authority:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Note and adopt the attached timeline for the remainder of the multiple births project</li> </ul>

### **1. Introduction**

At its October meeting, the Authority heard the evidence and analysis concerning multiple births after IVF collated by the independent Expert Group in its report 'One child at a time'. At its November meeting, the Authority decided to open up the options for regulation identified by the Report for public consultation.

In the meantime, the Executive has drafted a consultation document, which has been discussed and approved by the Authority's Regulation Committee and was considered by the Authority at today's meeting.

The consultation will now be launched at the end of March.

### **2. Public consultation**

The consultation period will run until the end of June, with two consultative meetings taking place during this period. One of them (probably based in Manchester) will have more of a patient focus, the other one (in London) will focus on clinicians' and practitioners' views.

### **3. Opinion research**

The Executive has commissioned qualitative opinion research to achieve a more in depth understanding of patients' views on multiple births after IVF. Apart from reviewing patients' positions, it aims at analysing what arguments or conditions might change patients' perception of the issue (i.e. clinicians' advice, NHS funding, having experience of twin families and so on).

#### **4. Working with stakeholders**

Some of the contributions towards solutions for the problem of multiple births after IVF lie outside the remit of the HFEA. This is why the HFEA is keen to work with stakeholders on joint ways forward and on finding practical solutions that would work for the UK sector.

To this end, a stakeholder workshop was organised by the Executive which took place in January. At this workshop, all the professional bodies (RCOG, BFS, ACE, RCN, RCPCH), all the patient groups and all the NHS representatives (both commissioners and public health experts) agreed to draft joint position statements outlining their commitment to the need for change and arguing that the continued use of two embryo transfer for virtually all fertility patients can no longer be considered safe practice.

The HFEA will continue to work jointly with all the relevant stakeholder groups and has invited them to make use of HFEA speakers at meetings and conferences.

#### **5. Next steps**

The Authority decision reviewing the outcomes of the public consultation will be made at the October Authority meeting. Following that meeting, in case guidance was to be changed, new guidance would have to be drafted and its implementation prepared together with the regulation team. Because significant changes to clinical practice (including cryopreservation) might be required, clinics will have to be given sufficient time to adapt to change. No new policy could therefore take regulatory effect before 2008 (with lengthy transitional arrangements, for example for embryos that are already stored in batches of two).

#### **6. Timeline**

The remaining work on the multiple births after IVF project is summarised in the timeline attached as Annex A to this document.

#### **7. Recommendations to the Authority**

The Authority is invited to

- Note and adopt the attached timeline for the remainder of the multiple births project

Charlotte Augst, Policy  
February 2007

## Timeline multiple births project

### 1. Consultation

#### 1.1 Document

21 February

Authority to discuss and agree consultation document

28 March

Press Launch

Consultation period runs until 30 June

#### 1.2 Public meetings

Two public meetings, one more aimed at patients (Manchester), one more aimed at professionals (London) in May and June

### 2. Focus group work

Three focus groups/ deliberative workshops with fertility patients and parents of young twins, one of them in Scotland conducted by opinion research company.

Middle of June

Write-up of research results to Executive

September Authority

to hear presentation of results

### 3. After consultation closes

July – October

Analysis of responses and research and writing of report

17 October 2007

Authority meeting Discussion and possible adoption of a multiple births policy (might need two meetings)

Afterwards

Working out detailed guidance to/ standards for clinics and their implementation, involving the sector (licensed centres panel and professional bodies)

Early 2008

Issuing of new guidance and detailed transitional arrangements (e.g. embryos already frozen in batches of two and so on)