



Human  
Fertilisation &  
Embryology  
Authority

# Our strategy

**2017–2020**

[www.hfea.gov.uk](http://www.hfea.gov.uk)

# Our vision is high quality care for everyone affected by fertility treatment

Patients, donors and donor-conceived people are at the heart of our strategy, and our work. We want them all to receive high quality care and support, at every stage in their journey through fertility services.

## What do patients and others need?



**Starting out**  
They need information and advice to help them understand their options.

**Before treatment**  
They need more detailed information to help them make decisions about treatment and prepare for it.

**During treatment**  
They need good support and a deeper understanding of particular topics relating to their care.

**After treatment**  
They need both emotional support and information beyond treatment.

## To meet these needs, we will focus our efforts on the following areas:



**Safe, ethical, effective treatment**


**Standards**  
High quality, safe care

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**Evidence**  
Effective evidence based treatment and treatment add ons that are well explained

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**Research**  
High quality research and responsible innovation



**Consistent outcomes and support**

**Access**  
Access to treatment and donation

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**Outcomes**  
The best possible treatment outcomes

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**Value**  
Value for money

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**Support**  
Support before, during and after treatment



**Improving standards through intelligence**

**Data**  
Data and feedback used for improvement

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**Regulation**  
Targeted regulatory interventions

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**Feedback**  
Increased use of patient feedback

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**Efficiency**  
A reshaped HFEA, to use our data well

# How we will achieve our vision

Our strategic objectives describe how we will work towards our vision, focusing on people's needs throughout their fertility journey.



## Safe, ethical, effective treatment

### Objective 1: Ensure that all clinics provide consistently high quality and safe treatment.

Aim: Patients know clinics provide a high quality, consistent, safe service.

#### We want:

- patients to know clinics are safe
- fewer non-compliances and incidents in clinics.

#### We will:

- define 'good performance'
- help clinics to be more compliant
- encourage clinics to become more consistent
- incentivise effective, safe, ethical services.

Standards

### Objective 2: Publish clear information so that patients understand treatments and treatment add ons and feel prepared.

Aim: Increase patients' understanding of the science and evidence base behind treatments and added extras known as add ons, and of their safety and effectiveness.

#### We want:

- people to turn first to us for clear, unbiased and trusted information
- patients to know whether there is evidence of efficacy and safety for a treatment or add on
- patients to be able to make informed choices about the most effective treatment for them.

#### We will:

- publish information about new developments, and say which add ons are effective and safe
- encourage clinics to offer add ons in a responsible way
- improve the presentation of our published data in response to feedback
- respond to science stories and correct misperceptions.

Evidence

### Objective 3: Engender high quality research and responsible innovation in clinics.

Aim: Improve the quality of treatment, by encouraging world class research and clinical trials.

#### We want:

- clinics to be more research-focused, with proper testing of new techniques before they are offered to patients
- a larger, higher quality evidence base, leading to improved outcomes
- patients to be aware of research they could take part in, and to understand the benefits of research
- accurate consent reporting by clinics
- easier patient donation of embryos for research, and research centres to have access to those donated embryos.

#### We will:

- encourage an enquiring culture and responsible innovation in clinics, leading to more scientific and clinical research
- explain embryo and data research projects and their outcomes
- encourage clinics to enable more patients to participate in data research and donate embryos
- check on inspection that clinics report consent accurately.

Research



## Consistent outcomes and support

### Objective 4: Improve access to treatment.

**Aim:** Provide advice and information about access to treatment and improve access to donor conception treatment.

#### Access

**We want:**

- people to understand, and feel prepared for, treatment and donation
- people to easily find information on our website to inform their next steps
- an increase in UK-based donors.

**We will:**

- publish advice and information about accessing services, including for donors and recipients, and those considering using unlicensed services
- explain how to access services in the UK rather than abroad
- work with other bodies to improve the availability of donor sperm and eggs.

### Objective 5: Increase consistency in treatment standards, outcomes, value for money and support for donors and patients.

**Aim:** Higher birth rates, without adverse outcomes.

#### Outcomes

**We want:**

- the chances of a birth to be maximised
- patients to understand the risks of multiple births
- a sector-wide understanding of success rates
- evidenced success factors which improve outcomes.

**We will:**

- involve our stakeholders in defining and establishing the factors that lead to successful outcomes
- analyse outcome data, identify areas for improvement, and publish our findings
- review how clinics publish success rates on their own websites.

**Aim:** Patients and NHS commissioners receive good value fertility services.

#### Value

**We want:**

- patients to pay what they expect to pay
- less variation in the price of treatment
- the NHS to pay a fair price for fertility services.

**We will:**

- ask patients whether they paid what they expected
- share benchmark data with NHS commissioners.

**Aim:** Improve the emotional experience of care before, during and after treatment or donation.

#### Support

**We want:**

- clinics to acknowledge how emotionally difficult infertility and treatment can be, and act on this
- an improvement in the experience of treatment, with minimal emotional harm
- better support for donor conception treatment
- support from the clinic after treatment to become the norm.

**We will:**

- define 'good support', including for donor conception treatment
- make excellent support a core message
- focus more on support at inspections
- seek feedback on the quality of support and the emotional experience of care.



## Improving standards through intelligence

### Objective 6: Use our data and feedback from patients to provide a sharper focus in our regulatory work and improve the information we produce.

**Aim:** Use our data and intelligence to drive quality improvements for patients.

#### Data

**We want:**

- to publish more high quality data from our Register
- donors, parents and donor-conceived people to understand how their information is stored and how they can access it
- patients to have confidence in their clinic and the HFEA as life-long information guardians
- better outcomes from NHS treatment.

**We will:**

- develop an information strategy on how we will analyse, publish and use data
- ensure we have the analytical capability and capacity to extract more value from the data we hold
- use our data to improve the information we publish
- use our data to improve the quality of NHS commissioning decisions.

**Aim:** Targeted and responsive regulatory interventions in the interests of quality and consistency.

#### Regulation

**We want:**

- the ability to make earlier and more responsive regulatory interventions
- regulatory compliance to be more consistent across the inspection cycle.

**We will:**

- apply the intelligence available to us to improve the quality and consistency of clinic performance
- enable clinics to have access to a wider range of feedback about their performance.

**Aim:** Increase insight into patient experience in clinics and encourage good practice based on feedback.

#### Feedback

**We want:**

- patients and donors to feel listened to
- the quality of services and support to improve as a result of patient feedback.

**We will:**

- collect high quality patient feedback
- analyse and use this intelligence
- share the feedback with professional stakeholders
- use patient feedback to help focus inspections.

**Aim:** Work more smartly with our resources, and capitalise on recent systems improvements.

#### Efficiency

**We want:**

- to make best use of our new website and Register
- to ensure we have the right resources and skills
- stakeholders to see the HFEA as a good value regulator.

**We will:**

- re-shape our organisation so that the people and skills we need are in place
- continue to be a good value regulator for all of our stakeholders.



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