



Formerly known as: The Assisted Conception Unit

The Centre for Reproductive & Genetic Health

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UNIT POLICY IN ASSESSING THE INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

It is the policy of the CRGH that “a woman shall not be provided with treatment services unless account has been taken of the welfare of any child who may be born as a result of the treatment (including the need of that child for a father), and of any other child who may be affected by the birth” (HFEA Act 1990 Sec.13(5)). To that end a formal assessment will be carried out at initial consultation to decide on the appropriateness of possible courses of action.

Information will be imparted to the prospective parents to enable them to make informed and considered decisions. In addition counselling services will be made available to the couple. If taken up, counselling will occasionally highlight areas where some courses of action might not be appropriate and additional counselling may be required to obtain a clearer insight into the issues raised.

The Unit has an ethical duty to consider the implications of providing treatment whilst at the same time providing a fair and unprejudiced assessment of the prospective parent's situation and needs. They should be given a fair opportunity to state their views before any decision is made and to meet any objections raised to providing them with treatment.

Before making a judgement about whether or not to offer treatment the Unit will make a formal assessment of the interests of any child born as a result of, or affected by, the treatment. The Unit will also consider the likely conditions of the child's birth and upbringing and will only reach a decision after giving careful consideration to all the information gained and any information that was not obtainable.

Prospective new patients will be given a questionnaire for completion at their first consultation. In addition to providing basic information, i.e. ages, occupations, health, etc. about the prospective parents, the form also asks specific questions about the circumstances into which a child might be born and the effect of a new baby or babies upon any existing child of the family.

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At the first consultation all relevant issues should be discussed with the prospective parents and an Assessment Form completed. This form should be used as an aide memoire to ensure that all issues have been adequately discussed with the couple. All information which has been taken into account when considering the welfare of the child or children, should be carefully recorded in detail in the notes. The record should reflect the views of all those who were consulted in reaching the decision, including those of the potential parents.

The HFEA Act further requires the Unit to clarify, as far as possible, who would be the legal parents of any child born as a result of treatment and who it is intended will be bringing him or her up. Where circumstances arise which might complicate this issue full details must be recorded.

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