



PRESS STATEMENT

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Basildon & Brentwood CCG failing already vulnerable, distressed patients

Susan Seenan, chief executive of leading patient charity Fertility Network UK said: 'The prospect of facing life without the children you long for is a devastating, shattering experience, as our recent major survey reveals: 90 per cent of people not able to have a child without medical help report feeling depressed; 42 per cent experience suicidal feelings. Over 50 per cent feel out of control, frustrated, helpless, fearful, worried and sad nearly all of the time.'

'Basildon & Brentwood clinical commissioning group's (CCG's) decision to cut all NHS funding for fertility treatment is disgraceful; the CCG is failing already vulnerable and distressed patients.'

Fertility patient Lisa Strum, who had to pay privately for IVF, said: 'I live in Brentwood and was considered to be too old for NHS funding. I understand how important it is to feel like you've tried. Not just tried a little - but tried EVERYTHING. Covered every option. The decision by Basildon & Brentwood CCG will prevent couples from having this option. They will always wonder "*what if?*" It will turn having a child into an elitist option for anyone struggling to conceive.'

'Thanks to infertility, I live every day in a slight fog. I have become the consummate actress. I put on a "happy face" every day and attend functions when I'm required. I sob at department store Christmas adverts because they depict families - or happy children - or happy siblings - or a life I will not have by natural means. If we remove funding from the NHS for these treatments, what happens to those who cannot afford to self-fund? Will they have to feel like I do now, for every day, for the rest of their lives with no closure? Just because they did not have financial privilege? I am poorer for my IVF experience, but richer for having tried.'

Notes to editors:

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1. Key findings from *The Impact of Fertility Problems 2016* from Fertility Network UK with Middlesex University London:

- 90 per cent of respondents reported feeling depressed; 42% suicidal (in 1997 the figure was 20%)
- 54% had to pay for some or all of their treatment; 10% spending more than £30,000, some up to £100,000 (the average was £11,378; in 1997 the average was £3,466)
- 74% said their GP did not provide sufficient information
- 70% reported some detrimental effect on their relationship with their partner
- 75% noted the lack of a supportive workplace policy
- 75% would have liked to have counselling if it was free; only 44% did receive counselling and, of these, over half had to fund some of it themselves

2. The full report *Fertility Network UK Survey on The Impact of Fertility Problems, October 2016* by Dr Nicky Payne N.Payne@mdx.ac.uk and Prof Olga van den Akker is available to download at www.fertilitynetworkuk.org/news-media/news/

There were a total of 865 responses (from predominantly women). The average age of respondents when starting fertility treatment was 32.5; typically respondents had been trying to conceive prior to this for 4.4 years.

3. Fertility Network UK provides practical and emotional support, authoritative information and advice for anyone experiencing fertility issues. The charity works to raise the profile and understanding of fertility issues and to push for timely and equitable provision of fertility treatment throughout the UK.

4. Fertility Network UK provides a free and impartial Support Line 0121-323-5025