*Home Address*

*Address 1*

*Address 2*

 *Postcode*

[*Insert date*]

[Name] [Surname] MLA

Parliament Buildings,

Stormont,

Belfast, BT4 3XX

Dear Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms [*insert name of MLA*]

**Re: Full Implementation of the NICE Guidance on Fertility Treatment, 2013**

As one of your constituents, I am writing to you with grave concerns about the funding provided by the NHS in N. Ireland for fertility treatment. In comparison with other areas of the UK, the Department of Health in Northern Ireland is failing to fund the level of fertility treatment set out in the guidance provided by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE, 2004 and 2013).

In N. Ireland one NHS treatment cycle of IVF/ICSI is offered to those eligible i.e. a fresh cycle plus one frozen embryo transfer at a future date, if applicable. This means that couples who are unsuccessful during this one NHS IVF or ICSI cycle and wish to try again, have to find approximately £5000. This payment is the cost for the couple to transfer to a private fertility clinic to progress another treatment cycle, with no guarantee of success. There are a few facts about infertility that I would like to share with you:-

* **Infertility is a medical condition, which when left untreated, causes depression, marriage break up and isolation.**
* **Infertility has been ranked in the three most stressful things to go through, along with bereavement and divorce.**
* **Patients suffering from infertility deserve access to the medical treatment which can help treat them.**

You may be aware that NICE published an updated guideline on the 20th February 2013. The Department of Health recently endorsed the 2013 NICE Guideline on fertility. The Health & Social Care Board is now conducting a review into the affordability of the NICE recommendations within the context of the wider health budget in Northern Ireland. This is a welcome development and **this is a key time to try to encourage the Minister and his Department** to consider the needs of the 1 in 6 couples suffering from infertility (2,400 new patients per year in N. Ireland). Can you please ask the Minister to introduce a second NHS treatment cycle of IVF or ICSI treatment as soon as is possible?

In line with the new NICE Guideline, both Wales and Scotland have recently reviewed their policies with both funding two cycles and no cap on the number of frozen embryos transferred. They also fund one cycle to couples where the female is aged between 40-42 (provided they have never had IVF before and have an acceptable ovarian reserve).

I am sure that the importance of this issue, both for me and **the 1 in 6 couples in Northern Ireland suffering from infertility,** will not be lost on you. The issue of ‘postcode prescribing’ and localised inequalities in NHS-funded care have been highlighted on numerous occasions. I would be grateful if you could look into this issue without delay and respond to me at your earliest convenience.

Yours sincerely

Signature

[Insert name]