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National Fertility Awareness Week 30 Oct -5 Nov 2017

#IVFis40 #FertilityFellas #TalkFertility

It's a week until National Fertility Awareness Week 30 October - 5 November, don't miss these highlights:

Mon 30 Oct: we reveal the best and worst places to live in the UK if you're hoping to access NHS IVF, and for the first time provide the data in a league table of 17 ranked positions.

Tue 31 Oct: on 10 November 1977, IVF worked and nine months later Louise Joy Brown - the world's first IVF baby - was born. Since then more than a quarter of a million UK babies have been born via IVF. We commemorate #IVFis40 by revealing what IVF means to the 1 in 6 couples whose lives have been affected by it - for better and for worse.

'It is very strange to think that those cells dividing in a petri dish 40 years ago became me! Patrick Steptoe and Bob Edwards suggested my middle name "Joy" because they said IVF would bring joy to so many people. That joy is still spreading today. My heart also goes out to those for whom it has not been successful.' Louise Brown.

Wed 1 Nov: the first ever qualitative survey of men's experiences of infertility. Is men's experience of fertility problems similar to women's? How does it differ? #FertilityFellas

Thu 2 Nov: #FertilityEtiquette: revealing what to say, what not to say and how best to support anyone experiencing fertility issues #TalkFertility

#FertilityEtiquette What Not To Say: just relax and it will happen #TalkFertility

Fri 3 Nov: #IVFGoldStandard Scotland offers the #IVFGoldStandard: 3 full IVF cycles for women under 40 and access if one partner does not have a biological child, join our Thunderclap campaign calling for #IVFGoldStandard across the UK
<https://www.thunderclap.it/projects/57902-ivfgoldstandard-across-the-uk>

Susan Seenan, chief executive of Fertility Network UK said: "This National Fertility Awareness Week is a deeply significant one as we commemorate 40 years of IVF - celebrating the babies born as a result of this life-changing technology, and remembering everyone whom IVF could not help. We are focusing on men and their experience of

infertility because all too often they are left out of the fertility equation, despite being very much half of it, and we are looking at #FertilityEtiquette suggesting what to say and what not to say to anyone facing fertility issues.'

'Importantly, we are highlighting how inequitable access to NHS fertility treatment is in the UK. Scotland provides the #IVFGold standard - 3 full IVF cycles for women under 40 and access if one of a couple has a child from a previous relationship. In contrast, in England, it is your postcode and your pay packet, and not your medical need, which are now the key determinants of whether you will be able to try IVF.'

'The focus of National Fertility Awareness Week is threefold: to get the message out regarding fertility issues; both the prevalence and how people are affected. We aim to challenge perceptions of infertility too and, very importantly, provide support for anyone struggling with fertility problems; you are not alone, we are here to help.'

Award-winning all-female trio The Beatrix Players are working with Fertility Network during National Fertility Awareness Week and are available for interviews and to perform. The group's recently released single *All That Thinking* is a song about the difficulty of having a child and the blame that goes on between partners.

Commenting on her experience of fertility difficulties, Beatrix Players' vocalist and songwriter Amy Birks said: 'I hope that *All That Thinking* helps in some way to lift the lid on a subject that is so often hushed into embarrassment, a subject that causes conflict and so much pain, where you feel totally alone, but as I say each time before I sing this song; *All That Thinking* is for anyone that has suffered. It is for the 1 in 6.'

View the video for *All That Thinking*, produced in association with Fertility Network UK, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ggJHlbfY>

National Fertility Awareness Week: providing support, improving awareness, raising funds and changing perceptions

www.nfaw.org.uk

Notes to editors:

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- National Fertility Awareness Week 30 Oct- 5 Nov seeks to change perceptions, improve awareness, raise funds and provide support for everyone struggling with fertility issues. www.nfaw.org.uk
- National Fertility Awareness Week culminates in The Fertility Show 4-5 November 2017 at Olympia, London - the biggest and best-attended fertility show in the world. <https://www.fertilityshow.co.uk/>
- Fertility Network UK provides practical and emotional support, 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. www.fertilitynetworkuk.org

- Fertility Network UK provides a free and impartial Support Line 0121 323 5025
- Fertility Network UK supports people. We rely on voluntary donations to continue our vital work. You can donate now by visiting www.justgiving.com/infertilitynetwork

Do you know the top 5 fertility myths?

1. Myth: don't worry about female fertility until after 35
Reality: female fertility is falling from age 28 or earlier

2. Myth: IVF is for women who have left it too late
Reality: most women having IVF started trying for a baby in their early 30s or sooner

3. Myth: IVF will work for me
Reality: IVF fails 75 per cent of the time.

4. Myth: fertility issues are a female problem
Reality: male fertility problems are as common as female ones

5. Myth: if you need medical help to conceive, NHS services are available
Reality: 6 out of 10 people with fertility problems pay for their own treatment

We asked: 'What does IVF mean to you?'

'IVF gave me my world.'

'IVF ruined my life, my marriage, I'm over the fact I'll never have children but I'm still angry, resentful and bitter... every day I wonder what if... why me???'

'Wish I could afford IVF, nearly 40 and TTC for nearly 15 years; feels like my dream will never come true.'

'So glad we kept going: 3 rounds and we were only given a 10% chance. Due in February.'

'IVF was the worst thing I have ever put my family through for absolutely nothing but heartbreak.'



'Being born as a result of IVF is something we've known all our lives. Our parents told us at a young age that our mother had to undergo a special procedure in order to have us. So, it's fairly simple to imagine what my world would be like had it not been for the help of the doctors and nurses, we wouldn't exist!' IVF twins, Elliot and Kate Wright.

'Over the last 24 years I have watched our science and our profession grow but even now I still get that shiver down my spine every time I transfer an embryo. I would still describe my job as the best job in the world when it works and the worst in the world when it doesn't. '

Stephen Harbottle, embryologist.