



# Emotional and Ethical Implications Counselling

## Patient Information

### What is implications counselling?

You have been asked to attend an Implications Counselling appointment. This is something that HFEA requires all licenced fertility clinics to provide to any patients having treatment using donated sperm, eggs or embryos, and also to those patients who are donating their sperm, eggs or embryos so others can try for a baby. The HFEA, or Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority, is the body that regulates all licenced fertility clinics in the UK.

These appointments are provided to ensure that before consenting to treatment, you are fully informed and understand the ethical and emotional implications of what it means to be trying for a baby using donated genetic material. Likewise, if you are a donor, you also need to be aware of the implications of what it means to be donating your genes so others can have a family.

The appointment will be a confidential structured conversation with one of our specialist fertility therapists. A range of topics will be covered which are intended to help you focus on and explore a variety of issues which may directly or indirectly impact you, your relationship and your family – or, anyone else who may be affected by your treatment or donation, either in the present or in the future.

### Why do we invite you to attend?

The decision to use donor gametes (eggs and sperm) can be emotionally challenging. Implications Counselling enables you (and your partner if you have one) to discuss how you feel about this and to explore the associated issues in a way that you may not have previously experienced. In couples, fear about expressing your individual feelings can sometimes lead to an uneasy agreement to undergo treatment for which you are not prepared emotionally.

For those of you pursuing solo motherhood, it can be helpful to review what it means for you to be having a family this way.



Likewise, we ask all donors to attend one of these appointments to ensure you are fully aware of the implications for you and any partner or children you may have or intend to have in the future. It's not only your wellbeing that we're here to support; it is also that of your potential child. As a donor-conceived child, your child will have various rights when he or she gets older, i.e., to find out who their donor is if they wish to know.

For those of you pursuing solo motherhood, it can be helpful to review what it means for you to be having a family this way.

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## Confidentiality

The Counselling service is confidential and separate from your medical investigations, tests and treatments – unless serious safeguarding concerns are raised during the appointment which can not be kept confidential.

In your implications Counselling session the Counsellors will not be assessing or evaluating you, but rather will be helping you think through and explore what it means to you to be undertaking this course of action.

## Some of the topics that will be covered

### For those using donated eggs or sperm to create a child

- Your thoughts and feelings about parenting a child conceived through donation
- Family support and who knows of your plans to try and conceive a child this way
- Telling your future donor-conceived child about the nature of their conception, when the time is right
- Your feelings about your donor-conceived child wishing to find out about, or contact their donor when they turn 18
- Your views and feelings about your child wanting to find out about any other people born using the same donor and the possible impact on you if they decide to make contact with donor-conceived sibling (if these consent)
- What your donor can - or rather cannot - know about your child
- The impact of genetic ancestry testing, social media and possible changes in the law

**For those donating their eggs or sperm**

- Your feelings and view about donating your genetic material so others can have a child
- Family support and who knows of your plans to donate your eggs or sperm so others can try for a baby
- Telling the children you have - or may have in the future - about your donation
- Your feelings about being contacted at some point in the future by any donor conceived offspring
- Your rights and responsibilities as a donor
- The impact of genetic ancestry testing, social media and possible changes in the law

**How many appointments will I need?**

BCRM offers one Implications Counselling session, which lasts an hour.

Two sessions may be needed, if both egg-sharing and sperms donation are involved in your treatment, or if your situation is more complicated. This will be discussed with you at the time, if needed.

**Is there a charge for Implications Counselling?**

Yes, if you are self funding your treatment. Please refer to our current price guide or speak to a member of the Team for more information.

If you are NHS funded the Implications Counselling appointment will be included in your treatment package.

These appointments are free for donors.



**Wendy Martin**  
Treatment Support Therapist



**Francine Blanchet**  
Treatment Support Therapist

## Ongoing Patient Support

In addition to the Implications Counselling appointment, you can see one of our Counsellors as often as you need to and BCRM offers complementary Counselling sessions:

For NHS patients, BCRM provides one complementary Counselling appointment for each NHS funded IVF or ICSI egg collection cycle.

For self-funding patients, BCRM offer one complementary Counselling appointment prior to starting treatment, then, once treatment has started, you can have up to three complementary Counselling sessions with each treatment cycle.

These appointments can be accessed individually or together with your partner (if you have one).

Additional sessions are available and chargeable in line with our current price guide. Using a donor is a very special way to have a family and, equally, donating your genetic material so others can have a baby is also an incredible gift, but in both cases, there is a lot to consider, so please make the most of the Counselling service that BCRM provides.

**Address**

BCRM - Bristol Centre for Reproductive Medicine  
135 Aztec West  
Almondsbury  
Bristol  
BS32 4UB

**Telephone**

0117 259 1159

**Email**

[Contact@BCRM.clinic](mailto:Contact@BCRM.clinic)