

Note of ACU Leads extraordinary meetings on Tuesday 14 December 2021 and Tuesday 21 December 2022

Present:

{REDACTED} (co-chair) and {REDACTED} – Aberdeen

{REDACTED} {REDACTED} {REDACTED} – Edinburgh

{REDACTED} and {REDACTED} - Dundee

{REDACTED} {REDACTED} {REDACTED} and {REDACTED} – Glasgow

{REDACTED} NHS Ayrshire and Arran

{REDACTED} NHS Lanarkshire

{REDACTED}– Fertility Network

{REDACTED} (co-chair) and {REDACTED}– Scottish Government

{REDACTED} and {REDACTED}– NSS Scotland

Apologies:

{REDACTED} {REDACTED} {REDACTED}

Extraordinary meeting:

An extraordinary meeting of the Assisted Conception Units Leads group was called on 14 December 2022 as a result of the letter from John Burns, Chief Operating Officer in Scottish Government who wrote to all Health Board Chief Executives with an instruction to step down all non-urgent activity and non-urgent essential services. A further meeting was called on 21 December to discuss further.

Additionally, Boards were being asked to step up arrangements to stop all non-essential clinical and non-clinical activity and deploy that capacity and capability to critical areas.

Following discussion, it was clear that there was no immediate impact in Centres but they expected that there would be discussions around this over the coming days and weeks.

Treating patients who were not fully vaccinated for COVID-19 was raised as a critical concern by clinicians on the group, there was much discussion around the huge concerns that clinical colleagues had at present but had felt for some time. The lead clinicians felt it was indefensible to continue to treat unvaccinated patients. It was felt that if patients don't want to be vaccinated their treatment should be temporarily deferred as clinicians cannot justify treating unvaccinated patients at this time.

These concerns were based on consideration of the evidence of increased levels of morbidity and risk of severe illness amongst unvaccinated pregnant women from previous variants of the virus, particularly the Delta variant, and the ongoing uncertainty around the impact of the highly transmissible Omicron variant on pregnant women, which reinforced the views of lead clinicians of the critical

importance of recommending that fertility treatment should be deferred in unvaccinated patients on a temporary basis with immediate effect.

Agreement and actions:

- The lead clinicians agreed that all fertility treatment for patients unvaccinated against Covid-19 should be recommended for deferral on a temporary basis with immediate effect.
- It would be recommended that unvaccinated patients who have their treatment deferred will have the deferral time added back on to their treatment journey.
- The Strategic Fertility Network advised they would meet with Leads of Secondary Care Centres to discuss if they were in agreement with the recommendation.
- Next steps included Scottish Government officials drafting a letter for clearance by Senior Medical Officers, the Deputy Chief Medical Officer and the Chair of the National Infertility Group for Chief Medical Officer signature.
- FAQ document to be drafted by lead clinicians and Scottish Government officials.