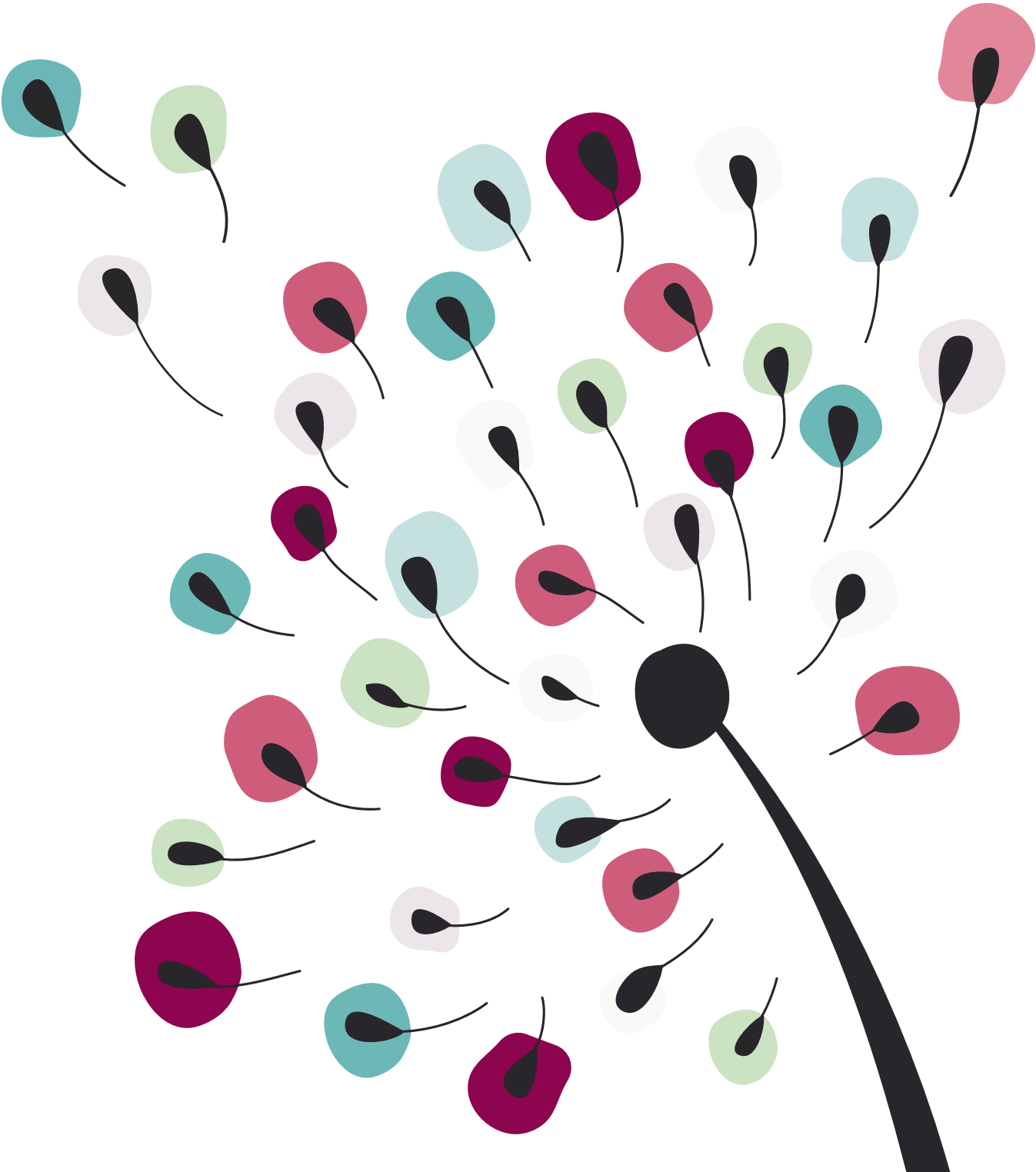


Level 2 FAQs



Referral process

How can I be referred to Bourn Hall Clinic NHS services?

You will need to see your GP for referral to our clinic via the NHS pathway. At present this requires you to have been trying for a pregnancy for one year, unless there is a known reason why you cannot fall pregnant. Your GP may need to perform additional tests or investigations in order to complete the referral. A full list of tests required are outlined in a separate question below.

What does the Level 2 Fertility Service involve?

'Level 2' refers to fertility investigations. The aim of the Level 2 service is to see whether there is an underlying cause for delay in conceiving - although, unfortunately, a cause is not always found. The Level 2 service can also include Ovulation Induction treatment (if deemed appropriate). The 'Level 3' fertility service refers to other fertility treatment (such as IVF). Specific criteria need to be fulfilled to qualify for this referral, which are assessed as your progress through the Level 2 service. Bourn Hall Clinic also offers Level 3 NHS services.

What test results do I need to have to be referred to Bourn Hall Clinic?

As part of your Level 2 Fertility referral, we require the following from your GP:

- Rubella status to confirm if you have been immunised and/or are immune to Rubella
- Chlamydia urine test, within nine months of the date of your referral
- Most recent cervical screening (smear) result. This must be up to date.
- Sometimes a timed Progesterone blood test, to assess ovulation
- For heterosexual couples, a semen assessment result from within the past twelve months

Your GP will also complete an assessment for welfare of the unborn child, which should be included in the referral.

Following my GP referral what can I expect?

Once your referral has been processed and accepted, you will be contacted by our patient services team. You will be asked to complete a pre-consultation questionnaire including Zika Virus and Ebola Virus declarations. After this, you will be sent an appointment for a diagnostic consultation with a fertility midwife or nurse.

How long is the wait for an appointment?

We aim to see all GP-referred patients within six weeks of receiving their completed referral. This is for your initial diagnostic consultation. The wait-time for management

consultations can vary, depending on availability. Please know, we will always offer the earliest appointment available. What to expect from each type of consultation can be found in the questions below.

I am not a UK Citizen, am I eligible for referral to the Level 2 NHS service?

You will be eligible to be referred to our Level 2 NHS Service. However, additional charges may be applicable if you are not a British citizen. This is the same for access to Level 3 NHS services. Our patient services and finance team will be able to advise you on the specifics of these charges once we have received a referral.

I am in a same-sex relationship, or I am a single female, am I able to be referred?

Yes; however, the criteria for this referral include having completed six cycles of intrauterine insemination (IUI) without success. This is on a self-funded basis, unless there is a diagnosed cause for not falling pregnant. The criteria for progression to Level 3 services would otherwise still apply.

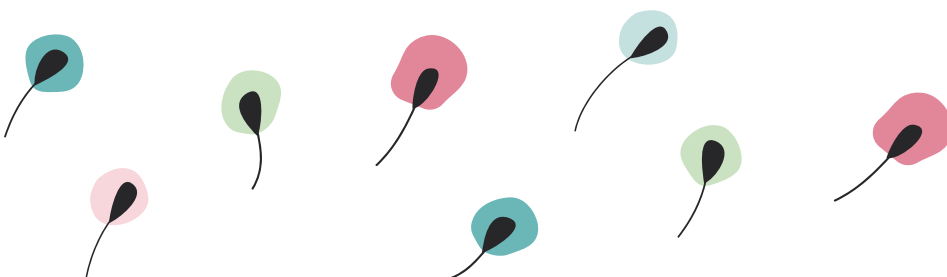
Consultations

What can I expect at my first appointment?

Your first appointment with us is a Level 2 diagnostic consultation with a fertility midwife or nurse. We offer both remote and face-to-face consultations at our Norwich Clinic. We will discuss your medical history, review your pre-consultation questionnaire answers with you, provide lifestyle recommendations, and review any tests and investigations results already completed. We will then perform individualised investigations based on your history and fertility journey so far. This appointment may include an internal scan and/or blood tests. We will also outline your next steps and what you can expect following this appointment. The eligibility criteria for referral to Level 3 fertility services may also be discussed. Following these investigations, a management consultation may be arranged. We may advise couples to optimise certain lifestyle factors before arranging this next appointment.

What can I expect if my diagnostic consultation is a remote appointment?

We advise, where possible, that your diagnostic consultation is face-to-face, but we sometimes have to arrange this appointment as a remote consultation. If your diagnostic consultation is a remote appointment, we will review your history (as outlined above) and make arrangement for necessary investigations face-to-face



afterwards, if they are required. If your appointment is remote, we do still require you both to attend the appointment together (if applicable).

What can I expect at my management consultation?

This appointment will be with either a specialist fertility doctor or specialist fertility midwife or nurse. This will be arranged once your individualised investigations are completed, and results are available for review. During this appointment, all investigations will be discussed in detail with you and your partner (if applicable). Based on this comprehensive review, a possible cause for delay in conceiving will be explained and the clinician will make recommendations for appropriate fertility treatment options, tailored to your individual circumstances. This could include further investigations, such as tubal patency testing, non-invasive treatments on the Level 2 service (such as Ovulation Induction), or suitability for referral to Level 3 NHS services.

Do I need to bring anything to my appointments?

No, nothing specific is required. However, if you have had any recent tests via your GP (or privately), which are not included in your referral, bringing them to your appointments can be useful. This may include up to date cervical screening (smear) results completed after your referral. Please be aware we do not have direct access to results from the hospital or GP. If we do require any specific results, we are required to request them separately.

Diagnosis and treatment

What tests and investigations will I be offered?

The investigations advised will depend on your individual circumstances. This will be discussed, and plans made to complete, during your diagnostic and/or management consultation.

Some of the additional tests could include;

- A transvaginal ultrasound scan (internal scan). This provides information on the ovaries, endometrial lining, and uterus.
- Anti-Mullerian Hormone (AMH) blood test. This is used as an indicator of ovarian reserve.
- Additional hormone blood profile tests, especially if your cycles are absent or irregular. These can also be considered if you experience specific symptoms (such as excess hair).
- Repeat progesterone blood test, especially if this test performed at time of your referral is indeterminate. This can help us assess if you are ovulating.
- Repeat semen analysis. This may be done if previous semen analyses are more than one year old or they have shown parameters below recommended range.

- Sometimes, male blood tests are required if low sperm values have been seen in the semen analysis.

What does my Body Mass Index (BMI) need to be?

NICE guidelines indicate that you have a higher chance of conceiving if your BMI is between 19 and 30. However, it is important to note that individual factors and medical history can play a significant role in determining the ideal BMI for fertility treatment. If your BMI is raised, your journey through the Level 2 pathway may vary, as individualised investigations and consultations will be offered.

Please note that, as part of the eligibility criteria for NHS-funded Level 3 fertility treatment, your BMI must be below 30. For self-funded fertility treatment, your BMI is required to be below 35. For certain investigations (i.e. tubal patency testing) and ovulation induction treatment on the Level 2 service, the BMI criteria is also below 35.

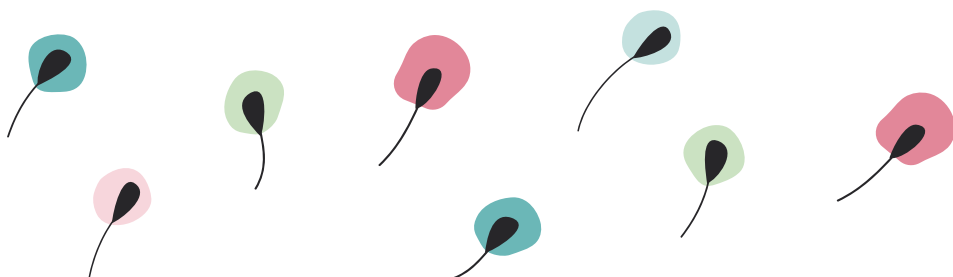
Do I need to take Folic Acid?

The optimum time to start taking folic acid is three months prior to conceiving, continued into the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. We therefore recommend that you start this as soon as possible, if you haven't done so already. The usual dose, which can be purchased over the counter, is 400 micrograms (mcg) daily. However, if you have a higher chance of having a baby with neural tube defects you are required to take a higher dose of 5 milligrams (mg). This has to be prescribed, so you would need to see your GP for this. Other reasons for requiring higher dose of Folic Acid can include: if your BMI is >30; if you are taking certain medications or have certain medical conditions (such as epilepsy and diabetes); if you have a personal or family history of Spina bifida.

I have been booked for a Hystero-Contrast Sonography (HyCoSy) - what do I need to know?

We will send you a detailed patient information leaflet when a HyCoSy is being booked or considered, and you will be provided with relevant instructions before your appointment. Please ensure you read this carefully to understand the procedure. You will also sign a consent form with the doctor on the day of the procedure.

If your HyCoSy has not yet been scheduled, please contact us on Day 1 of your next menstrual cycle. If this happens on a Saturday or Sunday, please contact us on the following Monday. From the start of your period, please do not have intercourse leading up to the procedure. We will also complete a urine pregnancy test when you arrive at your appointment. If you do have intercourse, we will not be able to continue with the procedure during that cycle, even if your pregnancy test is negative, as there is still a chance of pregnancy. If you have irregular periods, we may need to give you medication to induce a bleed, in order to arrange the HyCoSy. Our team will be able to advise if this is required.



When do I count Day 1 of my menstrual cycle?

A menstrual cycle lasts from the first day of your period (menstrual bleed) until the first day of your next period. Day 1 of your cycle is the first day you experience fresh red bleeding.

Level 3 referrals

What are the eligibility criteria for NHS Level 3 referral?

This can be discussed in more detail during your consultations – and, specifically, your management consultation. We can advise and help you to navigate the referral process. The eligibility for NHS funding for fertility treatment varies throughout the country. Our local ICB (Integrated Care Board) is Norfolk and Waveney, which sets our eligibility criteria. Firstly, a reason for delay in conceiving needs to be considered. Other characteristic criteria can include: age being >23 years old and <42 years old (please note, when aged 40-42, funding entitlement can vary); BMI 19-30; AMH above certain criteria; being a non-smoker for more than three months; both patients not having children from current or previous relationships (including adopted) - but this is not an exhaustive list.

What can I do if I do not qualify for NHS Level 3 funding?

Although NHS funding can sometimes be obtained, there are many circumstances, unfortunately, when patients are not eligible for funding. We can advise you on the next steps of your fertility journey in these circumstances, during your management consultation, and offer guidance on navigating self-funded fertility treatment, if this is something you would wish to pursue. Some services on the Level 2 pathway may still be of benefit when considering your next steps.

I have been assessed as being eligible for NHS Level 3 funding. What can I expect next?

We will complete your referral in-house through our dedicated team. This can sometimes require repeat investigations, for example, if previous tests have expired. Our team will contact you if there is anything further needed to process your referral. Once this has been completed, please allow up to 12 weeks for the funding application to be processed. Our Patient Services team will then contact you to arrange an appointment. This will be for a Level 3 initial consultation, to discuss IVF further and plan your treatment. The time frame for these appointments will vary depending on our availability.

Housekeeping

What is the clinic's address?

Our NHS Level 2 Service is based at our Norwich Clinic, in Wymondham. The Norwich clinic address is Bourn Hall Clinic, Unit 11, Farrier Close, Wymondham, NR18 0WF. Directions can be found here: <https://www.bournhall.co.uk/tests-treatments/faqs/>.

Please be aware, our satellite King's Lynn Clinic has now closed.

Is there parking available?

Yes, we have ample free of charge parking spaces, directly outside our clinic, for Bourn Hall patients. These include designated disabled car parking spaces.

What are your opening hours?

Our opening hours for our Norwich clinic are Monday – Friday 8.00am – 16.00pm. Please note, bank holidays may alter these opening times. Please check our website or social media platforms for further information at these times.

What if I require an interpreter?

If you require an interpreter for your appointments, please let us know as soon as possible. We will then arrange for an interpreter in your required language to be present. Please be aware, if you do require an interpreter, we are unable to offer remote appointments.

Can I attend my appointment alone if my partner can't make it?

Unfortunately, no. It is part of our NHS contract that all couples must be seen together otherwise you risk your appointment being cancelled and rescheduled. If your appointment is remote, you must also both be present together for the consultation.

What if my circumstances change?

Please do not be concerned if your circumstances change during your referral or while progressing through the Level 2 service. We ask you to contact us immediately to discuss this change of circumstances with us, so we can advise you further.

