

Pre Budget-Submission 2025



The **National Infertility Support and Information Group (NISIG)** was founded 28 years ago and is the only charity in Ireland focusing on infertility. We provide a range of services including support meetings, a helpline, live web chat, resources, workshops and information for parents and intending parents, and undertake advocacy on behalf of those experiencing fertility issues.

We are delighted the Health (Assisted Human Reproduction) Bill 2022, has been recently signed into law and look forward to seeing it commenced as soon as possible. This Assisted Human Reproduction (AHR) legislation reflects the modern European country that Ireland is, that cares for and protects all those who find themselves in the position of requiring access to fertility treatment. We look forward to continuing to work with NWIP and the Department of Health to ensure the new Regulatory Authority is up and running in as short a time frame as possible.

The rollout of Public Funding for IVF in Ireland was something we have campaigned for over 20 years. We view it as the first step towards a public fertility medical service based on medical need, not financial means. We hold the Minister to his promise that donor conception will be included, now that we have the legislation in place to support this.

Budget 2025

1. With the first phase of the public funding for IVF in place for almost a year now, it is timely that the **criteria be expanded**, and the next phase be significantly more inclusive to meet the demand for treatment. Ireland is now an open and modern society, and any medical treatment and access to it through the public system should of course reflect same. Infertility treatment must be based on a medical assessment only and not any kind of marital status, sexual orientation, health condition or financial assessment.
2. We have seen a noticeable increase in patients contacting NISIG about **long waiting times to see a consultant in some of the regional fertility hubs**. Waiting times when it comes to fertility treatment can have serious consequences, therefore increased resources need to be made available to ensure that for those receiving treatment, it is a time sensitive and planned process, with no delays for the patient.
3. Data records of fertility treatments in Ireland are difficult to obtain, this has been acknowledged by many who are working in this area and those researching it. While figures show the level of treatment activity, they do not tell us anything about the outcomes from that treatment. Individual clinics publish 'success rates' but it can be difficult to compare between them and there is no central, verified data source at present. We call for **detailed research into the number of people undergoing infertility treatment in Ireland to be undertaken**- the number of cycles, the success and failures of these cycles, the cost of these treatments (and all associated costs for each cycle). For the new Regulatory Authority to get up and running as soon as possible this information is important to ensure it is fit for purpose from the outset.

The research will require proper investment of resources which should therefore be included as part of Budget 2025.

4. Fertility is an issue that affects 1 in 6 couples, but it is not freely or widely spoken about in society today. We want to see that change in 2025. NISIG feels that from teenage years onwards, the issue of fertility should be part of the normal conversation and sex education in each person's life. **Knowledge is crucial, as is time, when it comes to fertility.** Therefore, we need to inform people about fertility early on in life and make information easily accessible. We call for the rollout a fertility awareness campaign in 2025 in tandem with the new legislation and setting up of the new Regulatory Authority.
5. NISIG believes it is key to continue to allow people continue to **reclaim tax benefit** on any privately undertaken fertility treatments in Ireland. We also believe that the drug **prescription medical card** must be kept in place long term to help alleviate the cost of prescriptions associated with AHR treatment.
6. Finally, NISIG as a charity organisation, receives no Government funding for the services we provide. We are the only charity that deals with the issue of infertility, offering peer support meetings, live website chat, a helpline, resources and advocacy. Demand for our services continues to grow, therefore **we request to have our services supported financially from 2025** and onwards to allow us to continue to provide these supports and increase our services where required. Currently we rely on one-off grants from various state sources, sponsorship and donations. This is not a sustainable model for us to operate within and severely curtails our ability to a provide nationwide 24/7 service.

We are happy to discuss this further with you at any point and indeed any other details of work NISIG do in providing support to those on their infertility journey in Ireland.

Yours sincerely,



Chairperson Caitríona Fitzpatrick
0879875003



Contact@nisig.com www.nisig.com @NISIG1 (Twitter) Nisig_ireland (Instagram)

