

Fertility clinics' compliance with consumer law: findings published

- CMA secures changes from fertility clinics to improve consumer law compliance, following guidance and a review of practices
- CMA and ASA send open letter to all UK clinics to promote compliance across the sector and ensure patients are not misled
- CMA will work with the sector to explore a standard approach for what is included in the headline package price for a single cycle of IVF

In February 2020, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) [raised concerns about some practices by fertility clinics](#), such as providing unclear price information and advertising misleading success rates. It also identified a general lack of awareness that consumer law applies in the sector. To help combat this, the CMA published guidance in June 2021 to make clear clinics' legal obligations to treat patients fairly, and a video and guide to help IVF patients understand their consumer rights.

Following publication of guidance, the CMA committed to review compliance, and the findings of this review – which looked at clinics providing around 40% of self-funded IVF cycles in the UK – have been published today.

The report sets out that:

- compliance issues were found with the majority of clinics reviewed, albeit in some cases the concerns were relatively minor
- the provision of accurate, clear and transparent information upfront is critical for patients, particularly regarding prices and success rates
- the way in which patients fund their treatment varies widely, from using their savings, gifts from parents, loans from siblings, personal loans, credit cards, inheritance, or redundancy pay-outs to re-mortgaging their house – or often a combination of these
- most patients buying fertility treatment for the first time carry out a shortlisting process, primarily online using clinic websites, and mainly factoring in clinics' location, prices and success rates
- significant differences exist between what clinics include in their package for a single cycle of IVF making it very difficult for patients to compare prices when shortlisting clinics

The CMA has written to certain clinics to highlight specific issues such as failing to provide key price information, advertising misleading success rate claims (including making unsubstantiated superiority claims) and failing to provide important information about treatment add-ons.

All clinics contacted by the CMA following the review have now made changes to their practices to benefit patients. The CMA welcomes their constructive response and calls on all clinics to review their practices and ensure they comply with the law.

As part of its next steps, the CMA plans to hold roundtable discussions with clinics and the sector – including the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) – to explore the feasibility of developing a standard approach for what is included in the headline package price for a single cycle of IVF so patients can meaningfully compare clinics.

In addition, the CMA and the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) have published a [joint open letter](#) to ensure clinics comply with consumer law. If they fail to comply the CMA could take enforcement action.

Louise Strong, Director, Consumer Protection at the CMA, said:

Buying fertility treatment can be stressful and is very expensive, with each cycle costing several thousand pounds. It's crucial that people have all the information they need upfront when they are comparing options so they can make decisions that are right for them, so it's encouraging to see positive changes from clinics as a result of our work.

But clinics cannot be complacent. All clinics must get up to speed now to ensure they are on the right side of the law or risk action from the CMA.

Further information on the CMA's IVF work is available on the [Self-funded IVF consumer law guidance case page](#), including the findings report with recommendations.

1. Media queries should be directed to: press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
2. The [Advertising Standards Authority's enforcement notice](#) issued in June 2021 relates to the way information is displayed on clinics' own websites. The enforcement notice instructs clinics to review their advertising to ensure compliance with the Advertising Code or face enforcement action.

[Foreign Secretary statement to the UN Security Council on Ukraine](#)

Madame President, Mr Secretary General, Mr Khan, Thank you.

77 years ago, UN members agreed solemn principles in the UN Charter, vital for international peace and security.

They undertook to refrain from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity, or political independence, of any state.

Yet seven months ago, President Putin invaded Ukraine illegally and without justification he ignored the resounding pleas for peace that I heard in this Council on the 17th February.

Since then, Ukrainians' spirit of defiance, in defence of the protection of their country, continues to inspire free peoples and nations.

Every day, the devastating consequences of Russia's invasion become more clear.

UN agencies have confirmed more than 14,000 civilian casualties so far – and the actual total likely to be much higher more than 17 million Ukrainians in humanitarian need; 7 million displaced within Ukraine and more than 7 million Ukrainian refugees in Europe.

We see the mounting evidence of Russian atrocities against civilians.

Including indiscriminate shelling and targeted attacks on over 200 medical facilities, and 40 educational institutions and horrific acts of sexual violence.

We see from the reports of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights that in parts of Ukraine currently under Russian control civilians are subjected to torture, arbitrary detention, and forced deportation to Russia.

And we have seen more grisly discoveries in Izyum.

It is not just Ukrainians who are the victims.

President Putin's war has spread hardship and food insecurity across the globe plunging millions of the world's most vulnerable into hunger and famine.

And once again, as we've seen here today, Russia has sought to deny responsibility.

It has tried to lay the blame on those who have rightly imposed sanctions on President Putin's regime in response to his illegal actions.

To be clear we are not sanctioning food. It is Russia's actions that are preventing food and fertiliser getting to developing countries.

It is Russia's tactics and bombs that are to blame for destroying Ukraine's farms, infrastructure, and delaying its exports.

I sat here in February, listening to the Russian representative assuring this Council that Russia had no intention of invading its neighbour. We now know that was a lie.

And today I have listened to further instalments of Russia's catalogues of distortions, dishonesty, and disinformation. He has left the Chamber. I am not surprised, I don't think Mr Lavrov wants to hear the collective condemnation of this Council but we saw through him then and we saw through

him today.

We have information which means that we know that Russia is about to hold sham referenda on sovereign Ukrainian territory with no basis in law, under the threat of violence, after mass displacements of people in areas that voted overwhelmingly for Ukrainian independence. We know what Vladimir Putin is doing. He is planning to fabricate the outcome of those referenda. He is planning to use that to annex sovereign Ukrainian territory. And he is planning to use it as a further pretext to escalate his aggression. That is what he plans to do.

And we call on all countries to reject this charade and refuse to recognise any results. We are used to seeing Russia's lies and distortions.

But let us listen to the testimony of Ukrainians who tell us about the reality of President Putin's war.

Dr Olena Yuzvak, her husband Oleh and their 22-year-old son Dmytro, were abducted by Russian forces from their home in Gostomel, near Bucha, in March.

The soldiers shot Oleh twice in the legs, before they were all blindfolded and bundled into an armoured personnel carrier.

I want you to hear Olena's story in her own words:

"First, they took us to a bombed-out house. The Russian soldiers kept saying they were going to kill us. My husband was left for hours lying on the floor in a pool of blood. I don't know why. We'd done nothing wrong. Then they took my son away from us. I don't know where. I don't know if we'll ever see him again. I just want my boy back."

Olena's story, and those of many others, tell us the truth, the real truth.

This is a war of annexation. A war of conquest.

To which President Putin now wants to send even more of Russia's young men and women, making peace even less likely.

Mr Putin must understand the world the world is watching and we will not give up.

As members of the Security Council, we must unequivocally reject Russia's attempts to annex Ukraine's territory. We must make clear to President Putin that his attack on the Ukrainian people must stop, that there can be no impunity for those perpetrating atrocities and that he must withdraw from Ukraine and restore regional and global stability.

If he chose to, he could stop this war, a war which has done untold damage to the Ukrainian and the Russian peoples.

His war is an assault on Ukraine, an assault on the UN Charter, and an assault on the international norms that protect us all.

So we stand with our Ukrainian friends for as long as it takes.

Because Ukraine's fight for freedom, is the world's fight for freedom. It is our fight for freedom.

And if Ukraine's sovereignty and territory are not respected, then no country is truly secure.

These are the reasons why Ukraine can, and must win.

Thank you.

UK-EU Specialised Committee on Participation in Union Programmes consultations meeting, September 2022: UK statement

Press release

Following the UK government's request for consultations, the second meeting of the Specialised Committee was co-chaired in Brussels by the UK government and European Commission.



UK statement following the UK-EU Specialised Committee on Participation in Union Programmes consultations meeting on 22 September 2022:

The second meeting of the Specialised Committee on Participation in Union Programmes was held today in Brussels, co-chaired by officials from the UK Government and European Commission. Representatives from the devolved administrations and EU member states also attended.

The meeting followed the UK's [formal request for consultations](#) on 16 August 2022. Consultations are a mechanism in the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement (TCA) to resolve issues between the UK and the EU.

The UK is seeking to implement the mutually beneficial TCA agreement to participate in EU programmes (Horizon Europe, Euratom Research and Training, Copernicus, and access to services from the Space Surveillance and Tracking programme) to the benefit of researchers and businesses across the UK and the EU.

At today's meeting, the UK once again requested that the EU fulfil its obligation to finalise the UK's association to EU Programmes after 16 months of delays. It is regrettable that the EU continues to decline this request.

The UK has been clear that our preference remains association to EU programmes and that the EU's persistent delays to finalising UK association amount to a breach of the TCA. We have set out that delays are causing considerable uncertainty for our research and business community and undermining scientific cooperation in both the UK and EU member states.

The UK government is now urgently considering next steps. Our priority is to support the UK's world leading R&D sector and we have already outlined potential options for doing so.

Published 22 September 2022

[COP26 President Alok Sharma's keynote speech to Columbia University World Leaders Forum](#)

Good morning everyone.

And can I first start by thanking President Bollinger and Alex for the very warm welcome I've had today.

I am now into the final weeks of my time as President of the 26th United Nations Conference on Climate Change, or COP26.

It has been a near-three year journey in the thick of international climate politics and the maelstrom of wider geopolitics.

And it remains an absolute privilege to have opportunities like this one,
to speak as part of your World Leaders Forum,
and to celebrate Columbia's pioneering climate school, the first of its kind
in the United States.

Your school has had an auspicious start.

Not least with your roundtable, at COP26, with President Obama.

I understand the former President, and of course Columbia alumnus, noted the
energy, and remarkable potential, of participating students.

That is coming from a man who knows what it means to mobilise, and to inspire
action.

I have felt that same force when I've met youth climate activists around the
world over the past few years.

And I do understand the anger of young people.

It is your future most at risk.

You and your generation will have to live with the consequences of the
actions, or inaction, of current world leaders.

I have been directly challenged by young people on the need to push the world
to go a lot faster to tackle global warming.

I convened an international meeting for ministers, on implementing the
Glasgow Climate Pact, in Copenhagen in May. We saw youth protesters make
their feelings and frustrations plain.

Every Minister saw that as they came into the meeting.

And at the end of the meeting, I encouraged Ministers to leave the meeting
with the voices of those young people ringing in their ears.

Hearing those voices every time they made government decisions affecting the
future of the planet.

And that brings me to the focus of my address.

You all know this, but it sometimes needs to be repeated.

We are facing a climate crisis.

The scientific evidence is absolutely clear, it's unequivocal.

We know that we are running out of time to avert catastrophe.

The reality is that if we do not bend the curve of global warming downwards,
in this decisive decade – eight and a half years left – we will go beyond the

limits of our ability to adapt.

Around the world, we are already seeing what that future could look like.

And that future is absolutely terrifying.

For some people across the world, it is here right now.

In recent weeks, an area the size of the United Kingdom has been flooded in Pakistan.

A monster monsoon bringing in its wake death, destruction and displacement of millions of people.

Hurricane Fiona has barrelled through the Caribbean.

This summer we have seen the US experience its worst drought in over a thousand years.

Europe has experienced its worst drought in 500 years.

And China its worst ever drought, as record temperatures have dried up key parts of the Yangtze River.

I could go on.

You will all have examples as well.

I was with the new UNFCCC Executive Secretary Simon Stiell earlier this week, and he made the point that the reality of these events is a cycle of disaster, rebuild, disaster, rebuild, for millions of people around the world.

We need to do better.

And we also know that the increasing frequency, and ferocity, of these extreme weather events is set to worsen.

So, in the context of the pressing need for more urgent climate action,

I want to talk about my role, and the COP Presidency.

Our drive to implement the outcomes of the Glasgow Climate Pact.

The ability of global coalitions of the willing, including the United States, to deliver change.

And, most importantly, the capacity of the young climate leaders in the room this morning to hold governments and businesses to account.

The primary role of the COP President is to oversee a COP Summit, deliver a negotiated outcome, and then drive its implementation in the post-summit Presidency year.

I am proud that, when the world came to Glasgow last November, the UK Presidency shepherded nearly 200 countries to forge the historic Glasgow Climate Pact.

But the outcome of that Pact was not an inevitability.

There was huge scepticism in the international community at the start of the UK Presidency about whether we really could make progress on the road to, and at Glasgow.

And personally, COP26 was my very first COP – I had never been to one before.

But because of that, very early on, I sought the advice of past COP Presidents.

And from my very first day as COP President Designate, I sought to meet world leaders, ministers, chief executives, youth and civil society groups, and communities on the front line of climate change, around the world.

This was all about ensuring an open and neutral Presidency.

Underpinned by the principles of transparency, inclusivity, consistency of message and trust,

And trust, I have to say to you, is an incredibly fragile commodity in climate negotiations.

I wanted to ensure that those four principles would be the foundation on which we built an ambitious COP26 outcome.

But, having spent two years talking to governments around the world, trying to craft the key elements of the Glasgow Climate Pact, we almost fell short in the final hours of COP26.

We had an opacity in those one-minute-to-midnight negotiations.

China and India raised objections to key language on coal and fossil fuel subsidies.

We went behind the stage to negotiate.

As we negotiated, I wrote out word-by-word the minimum changes which China and India could accept.

I can tell you it was fraught.

I still have the marked up piece of A4 paper at home on which we wrote out the text.

For me, that is an eternal reminder that things could have turned out very differently.

Because there were critical moments in those final hours when I was really concerned that a global deal, effectively two years in gestation, was about

to collapse.

For anyone watching, you will have seen me crossing the plenary floor, showing the proposed revised text to the Chairs of the UNFCCC negotiating groups.

Yes, I did become emotional, when I put the final text to the floor.

I was disappointed that, after such effort to run a transparent Presidency, the COP26 negotiating process was ending in hushed and rushed conversations.

But I was, and continue to be, incredibly proud of what my UK COP Presidency team achieved in delivering the Glasgow Climate Pact.

Our overall goal, right from the start, was to garner enough commitments to ensure that we were keeping alive the prospect of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

And we achieved that goal.

Prior to the Paris Agreement, scientists were telling us that the world was on course for 4 degrees of global warming by the end of the century.

Post-Paris it was 3 degrees.

After Glasgow, we were able to say with credibility that we had kept 1.5 alive.

And whilst 1.5 degrees was our North Star, we made critical progress on adaptation, on finance, on loss and damage, on empowerment, and on so many other issues.

In fact the Chair of the Climate Vulnerables Forum recognised the steps we had taken “on all the priorities of the most climate threatened nations”.

Yes, we achieved a Pact.

But frankly, the Pact is nothing but words on a page.

The pulse of 1.5 will remain weak until the Pact, every element of it, is implemented in full.

And we have to be frank that implementation is very challenging.

First, we did all sign up to an ambitious programme of work.

And second, the world has changed markedly since last November, overshadowed by the Putin regime’s brutal and illegal war in Ukraine.

Countries around the world are facing perilous economic and geopolitical conditions, and threats to energy security.

We are grappling with soaring inflation, rising debt, and food insecurity.

For many, climate has not been front of mind.

But I do truly believe there remains cause for hope.

I see climate leaders doing remarkable work.

Take for example the Prime Minister of Viet Nam, who I saw again last month.

He is utterly relentless in driving his country's economic transformation, based on clean energy.

And we as a G7 nation, and other developed nations, are supporting that effort with Viet Nam's Just Energy Transition Partnership, which can be the gold standard for sustainable economic growth for developing countries around the world.

Businesses and financial institutions are radically reimagining what it means to be a responsible, 21st century company.

Bill Gates, who I spent time with earlier this week, rightly noted that COP26 was the COP where businesses came in force.

And you will have seen, just last week, the founder of Patagonia, dedicating his company's fortune to the climate cause.

Now, where are we in this process?

We will get a clearer sense that when the UNFCCC publishes its latest Synthesis Report.

The deadline for countries to make submissions on their 2030 emissions reduction targets is tomorrow.

I am sure that the report will make clear that the job is far from done.

I was in Indonesia earlier this month at the G20 Climate, Energy and Environment Ministers Meeting.

Unbelievably, our negotiators had to fight to simply restate commitments we have all previously signed up to.

Inexplicably, there were debates about the unequivocal science of the IPCC reports.

Some countries sought to push against language from the Glasgow Climate Pact, agreed just ten months ago, and the foundational Paris Agreement, on which that Pact is built.

And there was even rowing back on the collective agreement that was reached by G20 leaders last year to lead on climate action.

So my message here in New York this week has been frank.

The Glasgow and Paris language must be the baseline of our ambition.

We cannot retreat from that.

And this is a critical moment to redouble our efforts, resist backsliding, and ultimately go further, and faster.

Collectively, the world's richest countries, and the biggest emitters, have looked too many climate vulnerable countries and communities in the eyes, and promised too much action, to step back now.

To do so would be a betrayal.

And the United States is a key player in all of these discussions.

It is the second biggest emitter, and the largest by capita.

The US therefore has a responsibility to lead on climate action.

In all my travels as COP President, and all my time speaking with the world's most vulnerable countries and communities, that is a firmly held view.

They want to continue to see the US leading.

Thankfully, the US also has unparalleled resources, and expertise.

That was evident, as we all watched, with a mixture of hope and trepidation, the machinations surrounding the Build Back Better Bill,

and the ultimate passage of the Inflation Reduction Act,

the largest climate spending package in US history.

I congratulate President Biden, and my very good friend John Kerry for their roles in securing that historic achievement.

So now, I urge the Senate to now press home the advantage.

Match the domestic ambition with international action.

In particular, deliver the billions of international climate finance being asked of Congress for the coming years.

Finance, my friends, is a key ask of climate vulnerable countries and we must all, including the United States, deliver on our promises.

I want to turn now specifically to the role of the students in the room.

I know there is much talk of the midterms right now, and of the partisan nature of climate policy at federal level.

In fact because of this,

I encourage you to run towards the heart of the climate debate, on both sides of the aisle, at national and subnational level.

Of course I know that many of you will be considering the 30-minute hop on the 1 train, to Wall Street.

That work will be pivotal too.

All of the climate action I have talked about today, all the promises that have been made, has one thing in common: it requires us to turn the billions currently flowing in climate finance, into trillions.

We need advocates like you in the boardrooms and on trading floors here in New York, and around the world.

And there are similarly catalytic roles in civil society, particularly recognising climate justice is completely interlinked with economic and social justice for so many people around the world.

In all of this work, I am heartened to know that you will be joined by colleagues from the increasing number of climate and sustainability schools, in the US and around the world.

From the students who hosted me just up the coast at Tufts in March, to those I met last month at Can Tho University, in the Mekong Delta of Viet Nam.

I had the privilege of attending on Monday, the State Funeral of our Late Monarch, Her Majesty the Queen.

In a moment of quiet reflection in Westminster Abbey, I thought back to Her Majesty's words, delivered to world leaders attending COP26.

She said:

"It is the hope of many that the legacy of this summit – written in the history books yet to be printed – will describe you as the leaders who did not pass up the opportunity; and that you answered the call of those future generations."

That history is still to be written.

And I hope that the leaders of today, in my own country, in the United States, and across the world will heed the late Queen's wise words.

To those of you setting out on your own leadership journeys.

Make them count.

And whilst my formal role ends at COP27, I will be there with you, continuing to champion the cause of climate action, which is so vital.

Thank you.

Human rights in Russia: OSCE's Moscow Mechanism expert report, joint statement

I am delivering this statement on behalf of the following 38 participating States that invoked the Moscow (Human Dimension) Mechanism on 28 July: Albania, Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Professor Nußberger, on behalf of the invoking States I wish to thank you for your work as Rapporteur under the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism. We are most grateful for your professional and meticulous approach to your mandate, for the thorough methodology that you have applied and for the substantial report which you have produced. Your integrity and dedication to human rights and fundamental freedoms are evident in your report. We hope that all 57 participating States to the OSCE will do justice to your report by considering carefully your findings and recommendations, which are addressed not only to the Russian Federation but also to OSCE participating States and the wider International Community.

Mr Chair, we invoked the Moscow Mechanism because we identified the situation in the Russian Federation as a particularly serious threat to the fulfilment of the provisions of the OSCE human dimension as set out in various documents. The mandate provided was substantial, reflecting the scope and severity of the alleged human rights violations and abuses.

It is clear from the report that we were right to be concerned. The report is based on in-depth analysis of Russian Federation legislation, extensive documentation, including decisions by the European Court of Human Rights, opinions by the Venice Commission, statements by the autonomous institutions of the OSCE and other international organizations, and reports and testimonies by civil society. Regarding the legislative changes in the realms of freedom of association, freedom of expression, and freedom of peaceful assembly, the report concludes, "Russian legislation is obsessed with restricting these rights more and more. [...] Russian legislation in this area is clearly incompatible with the rule of law. On the contrary, the multitude of detailed provisions gives the authorities wide discretionary powers and thus provides the basis for arbitrariness." The report goes on to shed light

on the correlation between peaceful protest and repressive legislation, “Whenever there were mass protests [...], new restrictive laws followed.”

The report provides us with some answers as to why the Russian Federation clamps down on human rights and fundamental freedoms. “Ultimately, it is about integrating civil society into the vertical of power.”

Silencing civil society puts Russia’s authorities in a position in which they deem themselves free from answering to citizens. In addition, with its clampdown on human rights and fundamental freedoms, the Russian Federation has helped prepare the ground for its war of aggression against Ukraine. The report outlines Russian government thinking: “restrictive measures are considered necessary in order not to be disturbed during the preparation for war or after it has started. This explains the wave of repressive measures in Russia immediately before, but, above all, after 24 February 2022.”

Mr Chair, the Russian government and administration not only excessively limit human rights and fundamental freedoms, but actively work to their detriment to propagate the war. In that context, the report analyses speeches delivered by President Putin that call civil society the “fifth column” and de-humanise those considered to be enemies, thus revealing “an attitude of deep-seated hatred”.

The report also cites several astonishing examples of pressure in opinion formation, for instance towards students and artists, and of excessive violence against critical civil society activists, journalists, and other media actors, such as the case of Grigory Yudin, political scientist and sociologist. “On 24 February 2022, he was arrested during an anti-war protest in Moscow and severely beaten in a police van, until he lost consciousness. Many more cases have been documented by human rights organisations who claim that the degree of violence has considerably increased – many interviewees drew a parallel to the violent suppression of protest in Belarus.”

Not all violence is committed by state representatives, the report points out, but it goes on to state that “[t]he Russian State implicitly supports this development through its lack of protection and its ineffectiveness in freedom-of-speech related cases.”

Freedom of expression is also particularly affected by the war. “Especially the extension of espionage [...] and therefore of “high treason” [...] under [...] the Criminal Code [...] makes journalistic work during the ongoing war of the Russian Federation against Ukraine impossible.”

Importantly, the report sheds light on the specific ramifications for women and members of the LGBTQI+ community. For instance, the report describes gender-based violence against women protestors. Women “are in an especially vulnerable position, especially if they are detained alone. Sexualized violence is a relatively new phenomenon, more noticeable since February 2022.”

Mr Chair, colleagues, “repression on the inside and war on the outside are connected to each other as if in a communicating tube.” May this conclusion

of the report be a lesson and warning to all of us. It is a timely reminder of one of the cornerstones of the 1975 Helsinki Final Act on the universal significance of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for which is an essential factor for the peace, justice and well-being. What is at stake is nothing less than the OSCE concept of comprehensive security. It is our common duty to properly defend the values and principles of this organization.

Once again, I offer our sincere thanks to Professor Nußberger.

Thank you.