



Results: Time out of work poll

Summary

How should employers respond when a woman requests time out to become an egg donor?

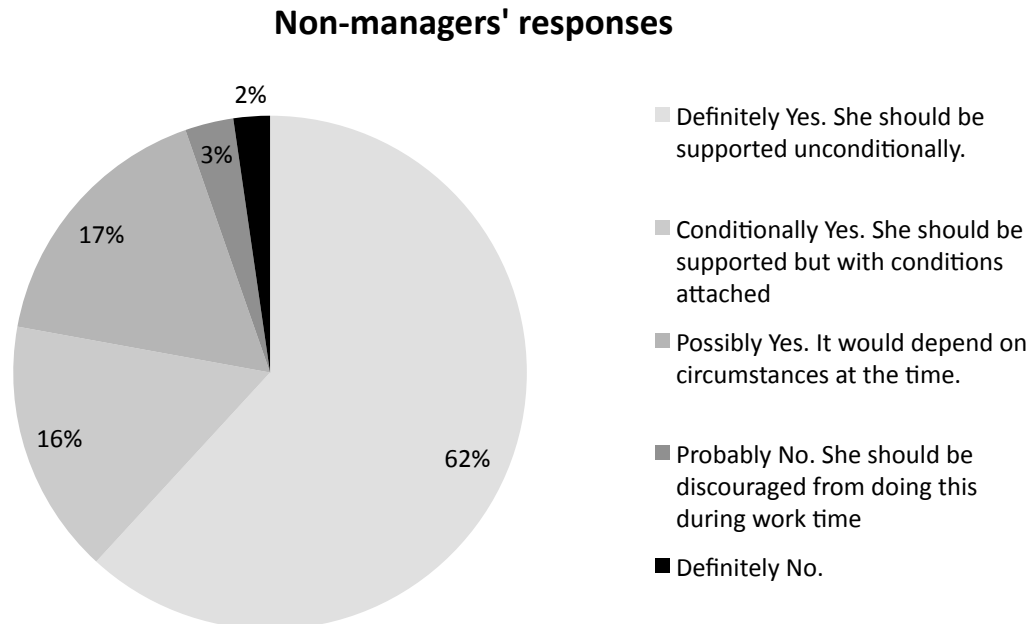
To find out, Altrui ran a survey in October 2013. It was publicised through our wide network of contacts in the business world, and on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. There were 206 respondents.

71 (35%) of these were managers while the remainder were non-managers. Four respondents did not identify which they were.

Three quarters of respondents were supportive to women being given the time off, though often with conditions such as arranging it around busy times for the business.

Non-manager responses

135 (65%) respondents were not managers. Out of these, 62% said that employers should support women unconditionally if they wanted to become egg donors.



Three respondents (2%) said that women should become donors in their own time and four respondents (3%) said that women should be discouraged from donating during work time.

16% of respondents said that women should be able to donate during work time but with conditions attached. Most of the conditions related to discussing arrangements to take time out with their line manager and giving advance notice of the required time out.



Appointments should be taken where it causes least disruption to the working day and travel to/from the hospital may factor in as a 30 minute appointment could easily develop into 2-3 hours.

It's a woman's choice to become an egg donor, this choice shouldn't have a negative effect on her work, although I would hope that employers could be 'flexible' with working patterns to allow more women to become donors.

17% said that whether women donated during work time should depend on circumstances at the time. In particular the respondents were conscious that for the employer, feasibility may depend on how much time off is needed, whether the donation can be timed to avoid busy times of year for the business, whether the work can be covered within a small business or the positive attitude of the employee to their job.

I would love to say definitely yes but ultimately this is a personal choice rather than a medically necessary procedure for that person and so the same policy would apply as if they were taking elective surgery for any other reason. I would expect that the shorter appointments would probably be made up with the full day being taken as sick leave potentially.

Others would prefer to keep the donation private so would arrange holiday to cover time out of work.

Personally, I would not make the request as this is a personal and private matter I would not want it known by all of my colleagues as to my absence, but request the time/day as holiday as do not always like other people knowing my personal business although I do think that anyone who offers to become an egg donor should be praised.

Manager responses

38% of managers said that women who needed time out of work to become egg donors should be supported unconditionally. Only one person gave a reason:

I feel that when someone is being as selfless as this they should be supported.

34% of respondents who were line managers said that conditions should be placed on women who are donating during working hours – managers were twice as likely as non-managers to respond this way.

Appointment times should be scheduled at convenient times for both parties. I'd probably expect the employee to plan out the schedule with the manager. This isn't a medical problem but volunteering time and I'd expect it to be treated the same as any reasonable time off for volunteering.

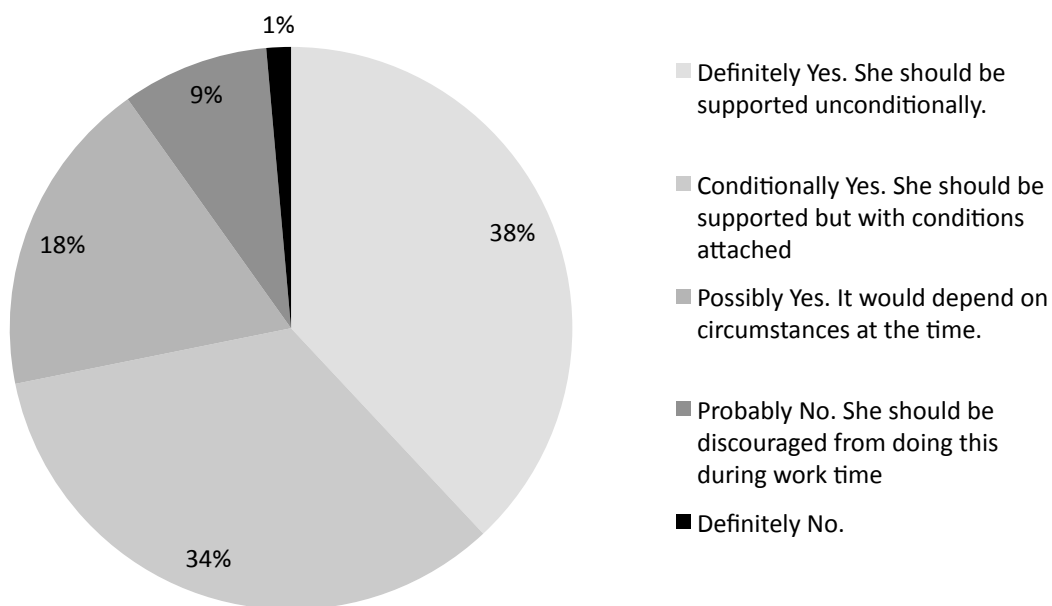
Some respondents were supportive, but the nature and timing of their profession made it very difficult to be flexible with employees.



As someone hoping to have eggs donated to me, I would be supportive and consider giving time off to a donor. It is a great thing they are doing. However I also run a very busy team of 20. We have had our short schedule shortened, and I myself am working 12+ hours a day [...] Television production is particularly unforgiving as we always have tight deadlines.

Although a 30 minute appointment may not sound like much, once you've factored in travel and hospital waiting, you're probably talking about losing at least half the working day each time, so 4 to 6 appointments in 10 working days is non trivial disruption.

Managers' responses



The same proportion of managers as non-managers thought that it would depend on circumstances, and they gave similar kinds of reasons. One specific issue that was mentioned several times was that of payment for the time. Usually, time off could be arranged but non-essential, voluntary medical treatment should not incur expenses to the employer.

A woman should be given time off **ONLY** if she is donating eggs on an unpaid, altruistic basis.

This shows how important it is for donors to receive compensation that covers time off work and related expenses. A number of managers who responded considered donation to be a personal choice rather than a medical condition and said the donor should not be paid for it.



One line manager who had been a donor pointed out that in the worst case scenario, the egg collection could require more than one day off work.

Managers were more likely to say that women should be discouraged from taking time out of work to donate (10% as compared to 5%).

As an egg recipient and line manager I think it should all be done in personal time, especially as donors now can be remunerated.

If it was a one off I would not oppose it but 4-6 times over a two-week period might be quite key and have consequences for the workload of the member of staff.

Conclusions

90% of respondents were supportive of women who wanted to become egg donors even if this would mean taking some time out of work. However, many respondents thought it would be reasonable for conditions to be applied. These included:

- Being clear about how much time out of work will be needed, based on appointment times and travel to and from the clinic, and approximately when the full day off will take place.
- Negotiating the timing of the donation cycle with their employer to give as much notice as possible, to ensure that the workload could be covered and the employer and colleagues did not suffer as a result.
- Taking time out of work as holiday leave, sick leave, or unpaid, covered by the donor herself: it should not cost the business anything.
- Employers should be open to arranging flexible working hours at least during the period of the donation, so that time lost through appointments can be made up without loss of pay to the employee or time to the employer.
- As far as possible managers should treat donors in the same way that they treat other employees who need non-essential time out of work.

Alison Bagshawe
Director, Altrui Egg Donation

Appendix 1

This is a summary of all responses taken together.

54% of respondents think that employers should support female staff unconditionally if they want to become an egg donor. An additional 39% thought staff should be able to do this, but that conditions should be applied to the donation, in particular that it should be discussed with managers in advance and planned around the needs of their job.

Only 2% thought that women should not donate during work time while 5% thought women should be discouraged from taking time out of work to donate.

All responses

