Topic Guide: Counsellors

# Your role

* What does your role as a counsellor involve on a day-to-day basis?
* Where are you based?
* How long have you worked here? And as an infertility counsellor overall?
* What do you see as the remit of infertility counsellors?
* To what extent, and how, does your work involve working with sperm and egg donors or their families?

# Regulations

* In your view, what are the key regulations and policies relevant to your work?
* How do these impact your practice day-to-day?
* Has your work changed as a result of changing regulations over the years? If so, how?
* Do you agree with recent policy changes and is there anything you believe should or will change in the future?
* Would your role involve discussing or communicating these regulations to donors? If so, how do you do this exactly? (prompt for examples)

# The donor counselling session

* What proportions of donors are offered/take up counselling sessions?
* How many sessions do they attend and when can/do they happen in the process?
* What do you see as the aim of these sessions?
* Do you take a particular approach in these sessions? (And in your counselling work generally?)

# Experiences with donors

* In your experience, why do donors donate?
* What kinds of questions and issues do donors raise during counselling?
* Have donors usually told, or do they plan to tell, others about their donation? If so, who, and how do they tell them? What reasons do they give for *not* telling?
* To what extent do donors appear to have considered the long-term consequences of donation prior to your sessions?
* How do donors discuss the potential for contact with offspring?
* What impact do you think your counselling sessions have for donors?

# Information/advice conveyed

* In your role as counsellor, is there any information or advice you would usually give to donors? Probe for details.
* Are there any plans or ways of thinking that you would discourage from donors or which might concern you? (probe in relation to attitudes towards offspring or recipients, disclosure decisions with own family, issues around motivation, known donation)
* Why would these situations be problematic and how do you respond?
* Have you ever found it necessary to exclude, or advise against, a person donating?
* What advice or information, if any, do you offer donors about telling their own children and/or other family members? What about telling friends or colleagues?
* What advice or information, if any, do you offer donors about their role in relation to potential donor offspring?
* What vocabulary do you use to discuss the children who may be conceived from a donor’s donation? And the donor’s role in relation to them?

# Donor’s families

* To what extent are donor’s family members offered/take up counselling? (Probe for which specific family members)
* How are they referred? (By donor? Self-referral? Your suggestion?)
* How involved do you think donor’s family are in the decision to donate? (Probe for who specifically)
* Where they do attend sessions, what kinds of questions/issues do family members raise? (probe for differences between different family members/gender/types of donation)
* How would you respond to these?
* What impact do you think counselling sessions have for donors’ family members?

# The Research

* Is there anything that I have not asked you about which you think is important in relation to this research project?
* As you know, we will be interviewing donors and close kin as part of this project. Is there anything you would particularly like to find out from those interviews and/or any knowledge which would helpfully inform your own work?
* Discuss whether any particularly sensitive aspects of interview which should not be quoted.

# Thank you and wind down

* Thank participant for their time
* Direct them to website if they are interested in finding more about the project and ask if they would like to be kept updated with project outcomes and events.