Surrogacy

Surrogacy is when a woman (the surrogate) carries and gives birth to a child for another person or couple (the intended parents). There are several reasons why someone may consider surrogacy: 1. women who are not able to get pregnant due to malformations of the womb or following hysterectomy. 2. women with certain medical conditions where pregnancy may be dangerous, and 3. male couples and single gay men wanting to become parents.

Types of surrogacy

Traditional, or 'straight', surrogacy is where the surrogate undergoes insemination with the intended father's sperm. The surrogate's own eggs are fertilised and so any resulting child will be biologically related to the surrogate.

Gestational, or 'host' surrogacy where the intended parents undergo IVF treatment to create embryos in a fertility clinic which are then transferred into the surrogate's womb. The surrogate is not biologically related to any resulting child. The intended parents may use their own eggs and sperm to create embryos or use donor gametes if needed.

Legal & Financial issues

In the UK, the woman who gives birth is the legal mother and has the right to keep the child as surrogacy arrangements are not legally enforceable, even if a contract has been signed. This, however, rarely is an issue and parenthood is typically transferred by parental order six weeks after the birth. Before embarking on any surrogacy arrangement you should seek legal advice and have an open and frank discussion about you and your surrogate's expectations. In the UK it is illegal to pay a surrogate, except for their reasonable expenses.

How do I find a surrogate?

You cannot advertise for a surrogate and so most couples use a surrogacy agency such as Surrogacy UK, Childlessness Overcome Through Surrogacy (COTS), or Brilliant Beginnings. Some people have a friend or family member act as their surrogate.

Useful links:

https://www.gov.uk/legal-rights-when-using-surrogates-and-donors/ overview
http://www.hfea.gov.uk/fertility-treatment-options-surrogacy.html#8
https://www.surrogacyuk.org
http://www.surrogacy.org.uk