



## **Welcome to Surrogacy UK: for Intended Parents**

A **very warm welcome** to Surrogacy UK.

We have put together this guide to explain our organisation and to describe how surrogacy could help you achieve your dream of having a child. We hope that you find it useful, and that it may be the first step on your **journey towards parenthood**.

You'll find full details on how to **join** Surrogacy UK, and there are contact details at the end.

Please **get in touch** with us if you have any questions you'd like to ask.



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## About Surrogacy UK

Meeting a surrogate is a difficult process that requires a degree of luck, a huge amount of trust and honesty, and an understanding of the emotional, legal and financial implications.

This is where Surrogacy UK comes in; our aim is to provide social events and an on-line community that **allow surrogates and intended parents to get to know each other**. We also provide a **network of peer support** that helps you to handle the ups and downs that are an inevitable part of any surrogacy journey.



At Surrogacy UK we firmly believe that surrogacy can be a wonderfully rewarding journey for everyone involved. When intended parents arrive at the decision to investigate surrogacy, it is often after many years of heartache and trauma. For those who are unable to have children by any other means surrogacy can be a light at the end of a very long tunnel.

We hope that Surrogacy UK will be a place for you to start a new journey.

### **Who are we?**

Surrogacy UK was founded in September 2002 by two surrogates, Carol O'Reilly and Liz Stringer. They wanted to create an organization that reflected their values and which allowed them to share their experiences of surrogacy with others: the pitfalls as well as the joys. Both are still active in the organisation. All Surrogacy UK members, past and present, and the many children born as a result of Carol and Liz's vision and compassion, owe them a deep gratitude for the enormous contribution that they have made.

**Whatever your reasons for coming to us, Surrogacy UK is a place to start a new journey**

Surrogacy UK is a not for profit organisation run by its members - each year we elect a committee to run the organisation and help it move forward. All the membership fees are used within the organisation for peer support, running the website, organising workshops, visiting surrogates and so on.

### **Some terms explained**

You'll find some terms used throughout the guide. "**Intended Parents**" (also called "**IPs**") are couples who are not able to have a child themselves, and who are considering surrogacy as a way to complete their family. We welcome as members anyone who is eligible to apply for a parental order: this is the legal mechanism by which IPs become the legally named parents of their child, and this includes **heterosexual and same-sex couples**, either **married or unmarried**. This means that for legal reasons we cannot accept membership



applications from single people. “**Surrogates**” are women who are interested in helping IPs fulfil their dreams to become parents by carrying a child for them.

## Why Surrogacy UK?

- ✓ **Our motto is ‘families through friendship’:** we believe that the smoothest surrogacy journeys are those that are based on friendship. In our experience a surrogacy journey has the very best chance of being a wonderfully positive experience for everyone if they invest the time upfront in getting to know each other and make time to discuss issues that may crop up during their journey.
- ✓ **We are founded and run by people with experience of surrogacy.** Our members are also the people who run the organisation, so we are constantly evolving to support new members in the best possible way.
- ✓ **We ensure that all our members – IPs and Surrogates – have a full understanding of what surrogacy involves and the legal background to surrogacy.** All our members have to undertake checks, criminal and medical, to join the organisation. We also require all potential Members to attend a Surrogacy UK information session.
- ✓ **Surrogacy UK offers expert advice and support:** Over the years Surrogacy UK has built up a vast amount of knowledge about surrogacy, and a sophisticated peer support structure: you can feel confident that in coming to Surrogacy UK you are in good hands. As a Surrogacy UK member you will receive the support and understanding of your fellow members, and will benefit from their wide experience through:
  - **Peer Support Workers:** Members have access to an assigned peer support worker who understands the ups and downs of a surrogacy journey, and will be able to help you through it. Usually your peer support worker will be a parent who has achieved their dream of forming a family through surrogacy.
  - **Information Sharing:** We take every opportunity to host workshops and information sharing sessions on topics of interest during the Spring Conference and the Annual General Meeting. Workshops throughout the day offer support and advice for everyone alongside support sessions for IP mothers, IP fathers, surrogates, and surrogates’ partners.
  - **Mediation Service:** Should a surrogacy arrangement run into difficulties, Surrogacy UK offers a mediation service. The aim is to help everyone involved to understand the others’ point of view, and help them to come to a mutually agreeable resolution, fully understanding their rights and responsibilities towards a child and each other.

**At Surrogacy UK  
you are in good  
hands**



- **Message boards:** You don't have to be a member of Surrogacy UK to join the message boards but Members have access to dedicated areas to discuss their surrogacy journey in private.

Surrogacy UK is recognised by the Department Of Health, the Human Fertilisation and Embryo Authority and the British Medical Association. All information held by Surrogacy UK is held in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

## Starting at the beginning: about surrogacy

### *What is surrogacy?*

Surrogacy is when a woman carries a baby for a couple who are unable to conceive or carry a child themselves.

Usually the intended mother cannot conceive, or else carry a child to term, due to a medical problem. Common reasons why Intended Parents may look at surrogacy are:

- Recurrent miscarriage in spite of all possible treatment
- Repeated failure of IVF treatment
- Premature menopause, often as a result of cancer treatment
- A hysterectomy, or an absent or abnormal uterus

Since April 2010 it has also been possible for same-sex couples to undertake surrogacy in the UK, and Surrogacy UK immediately reflected this legislative change in our membership rules.

### *Is surrogacy legal in the UK?*

Yes, but:

- No third party should be involved on a commercial basis – i.e receive fees for 'brokering' a surrogacy relationship
- Advertising for a surrogate is not allowed, nor is advertising to be a surrogate
- The surrogate can only receive payment to cover her expenses



## ***What are the types of surrogacy?***

There are two types of surrogacy, 'straight' and 'host'.

### **Straight (or traditional) surrogacy**

Straight surrogacy is the simplest and least expensive method. Also known as artificial insemination, the surrogate mother uses an insemination kit to become pregnant using the intended father's semen. The baby will therefore be conceived using the surrogate's egg.

**Insemination kits can be purchased through Surrogacy UK.**

Some people prefer to use a clinic for inseminations, but it can also happen at home and can therefore seem a more natural and less 'medical' way of becoming pregnant than host surrogacy. It can, however, be harder emotionally for both the surrogate and the intended parents.

### **Host (or gestational) surrogacy**

Host surrogacy is when IVF is used, either with the eggs of the intended mother, or with donor eggs. The surrogate mother therefore does not use her own eggs, and is genetically unrelated to the baby. It is physically more complicated and considerably more expensive than straight surrogacy, (although many IPs can have some costs covered by the NHS) and always takes place in a fertility clinic.

Some Surrogates prefer this method as they may not be comfortable with using their own eggs in surrogacy.

### **Host surrogacy with donor eggs**

Some IPs are not in a position to create embryos themselves, either for medical reasons, or because they are a male same-sex couple. While straight surrogacy is medically more straightforward, host surrogacy is possible if donor eggs are used. There are several options available:

- Known donor eggs. This is where a friend or relative of the IPs donates eggs in an IVF clinic. In some cases it is possible to meet a potential egg donor through SUK, and there is an egg donor list within the organisation. Please email [membership.secretary@surrogacyuk.org](mailto:membership.secretary@surrogacyuk.org) for further information.
- Anonymous donor eggs. Most IVF clinics have their own egg donors available, often with a waiting list. You would need to make your own enquiries about this with the clinic of your choice. In this case you will not meet the egg donor and would receive limited information about her, unless she had specifically chosen to remove her right to anonymity. In all cases however, children born through egg donation have the legal right to receive information about the egg donor when they turn 18.



- In the above cases it is illegal to make any payments to the egg donor apart from reasonable expenses. Commercial egg donation is available abroad, but it is not legal to bring commercially-obtained donor eggs or embryos into the UK. Your surrogate mother would need to travel to that country in order to receive her treatment.

## Some common questions

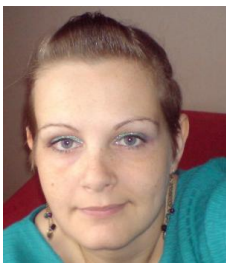
### *Is surrogacy for me?*

It is important to be up-front and say that the surrogacy process is often a demanding and emotionally taxing experience. The wait to find a surrogate can be especially demanding. Surrogacy UK will support you throughout this period but we cannot remove the uncertainty and the waiting inherent in the surrogacy process.

To be thinking about surrogacy you should be in a strong, supportive relationship. If you are approaching surrogacy because of infertility problems you need to be in a place where you have accepted these problems, and are ready to move on. You should not still be trying to become pregnant yourself if you come to Surrogacy UK. It is also useful to have fully explored other options like adoption before you decide that surrogacy is the path you wish to choose.

### *Why does someone want to be a surrogate?*

Most Surrogates feel great empathy for Intended Parents who, for whatever reason, cannot carry a child of their own. They know the great joy their children have given them and want Intended Parents to experience this joy too. It is usually just as simple as that: we know that sounds extraordinary, but it's true. We hope this is reflected in the following comments from some Surrogate members of Surrogacy UK:



"I joined Surrogacy UK two years ago after thinking about surrogacy for years. I knew there were many people out there who couldn't have children and, although I had finished having children for myself, everything still worked and that I could help someone have a family of their own. My husband was, at first, a bit reluctant but when my son climbed on his lap and said "Daddy, I love you" he looked at me and said that he would be behind me 100%, so we had a good look around and eventually decided that the "Friendship First" basis of SUK was what we wanted so we set off on the job of trying to help "bake someone's bun in our oven" (host surrogacy).

We have been very fortunate to have made some fantastic friends here and although our first partnership didn't have the blessed outcome, we now have firm friends for life and wouldn't have had that without Surrogacy UK." (Michelle)



“[Why did I decide to become a surrogate?] This is actually a really difficult question to answer! Surrogacy has been a subject that has interested me for a number of years. We had our first child in 2002, parenthood was such a fantastic experience, we treasured every moment. When we decided to try for a second child, we struggled to conceive. After many inconclusive tests and about 4 years later we finally

succeeded. Those were 4 very difficult years of not knowing if we would ever be able to have any more children. That is when the subject of surrogacy first entered my mind: knowing what we went through, and knowing that so many people are in the same situation.

We have since gone on (very easily) to have a third child. We have now completed our family, and are very happy. We feel it is now the right time to help others' dreams of children become a reality. I can understand the difficulty that some couples and families go through to become parents, having been in that situation. I feel that everyone deserves the right to experience the completeness that a child brings. Everyone deserves the opportunity to experience the joys of parenthood. This is my reason for wanting to be a surrogate.

Other people may have their own reasons but ultimately it is all about wanting to help others who, for whatever the reason, cannot carry their own child. After all, I am 28, I have had my family, my uterus is no longer of use to me, so why not let someone else use it??!! For me it is not an amazing thing to do, it's just the right thing to do. Our Intended Parents are so important to us, they are our best friends and family, and this makes our journey together that much more special.” (Jen)

In the UK it is not legal to make a profit from a surrogacy arrangement; expenses can only cover the cost that a pregnancy brings for a surrogate and her family. At Surrogacy UK we make sure that we talk to each potential surrogate to help them develop an understanding of what surrogacy involves and what they can expect in terms of the law and expenses.

So at Surrogacy UK, the motivation for Surrogates is not money.

### ***Will my surrogate want to keep the child?***

Surrogates never see the baby they are carrying for a couple as theirs – they have become involved in surrogacy because they want to help a couple have *their own* child. But it is important to realise that in the eyes of the law, the baby is not yours until the Parental Order has been issued after the baby is born: that means the surrogate could keep the baby if she chose to. That's why it is so important that surrogacy is based on friendship. No surrogate has ever tried to keep the baby for herself at Surrogacy UK and we firmly believe it is because we put such a strong emphasis on building a solid friendship first.

### ***Will a surrogate become emotionally dependent on me?***

Many successful IPs have formed a deep bond with their surrogate that will last a lifetime; however, this is not the same thing as an emotionally unbalanced relationship. Most



surrogates have a family of their own, their own friends and support system - and often work as well.

At Surrogacy UK we have a network of support workers who can help you find the right balance with your surrogate – the more you get to know each other beforehand, the more you will know if you are well suited to enter into surrogacy together.

### ***How long will it take?***

It's really not possible to answer this question and there are no guarantees. Much depends on your willingness to take part in the online community and attend socials, and there are plenty of opportunities to contribute to the running of Surrogacy UK itself. All of these things raise your profile, get you known, and may increase the chance that a surrogate mother will want to get to know you.

But above all, it's about you as a couple finding a surrogate mother that you click with: this is about the natural chemistry that exists between people. There's lots you can do as an IP to try and make this happen, but no-one can promise how long this will take, or indeed whether it will happen at all.

### ***How much will it cost?***

The law states clearly that no surrogate may receive any form of payment during or after a surrogacy agreement. However Surrogates must not be left out of pocket, and it is perfectly legal (and expected within Surrogacy UK) that IPs pay for all reasonable expenses incurred by the surrogate. How much these expenses come to will vary greatly depending on the surrogate's circumstances.

You need to consider the travel costs for when the surrogate and her family come to see you, and for her travel to and from the fertility clinic or hospital; loss of earnings may need to be paid; money for maternity clothing may be required and childcare may need to be arranged for when the surrogate mother is away from her own children. It is Surrogacy UK's policy that, if requested by the surrogate mother, her IPs should fund, to a reasonable extent, the costs of her accessing professional counselling. The purpose of this is to support her in resolving any issues that have arisen as a result of her surrogacy journey. Surrogacy UK's website links to various sources of skilled counselling expertise.

In our experience the costs for expenses range from around £7,000 to £15,000, but you should not use that to predict the costs in your own arrangement. Every situation is different, and how much may be needed must be discussed in detail before finalising a surrogacy arrangement.

You will also need to consider the costs you may incur if you are planning to use the services of an IVF clinic.

### ***How will my family and friends react?***

It's obviously not possible to give a definitive answer to this question. Many will be intrigued, and will want to know every detail of how the process works. Others will just be very, very,



happy for you, and pleased that you are about to start on a new journey that will hopefully allow you to fulfil your dreams and put your past pains behind you.

For understandable reasons many friends and family will also be worried for you – after all, they do not know how things are done at Surrogacy UK and they will be aware of the pain that has led you to considering surrogacy as a way forward. We have laid out some tips below that may help you:

- ✓ **Educate your friends and family:** talk them through why you are doing this and what it involves. It might be a good idea to share some of the information on surrogacy provided by Surrogacy UK and other sources.
- ✓ **Keep them involved:** it is easy to get swept up with surrogacy and it can be an intense experience. Don't neglect your friends and family: make sure you make them feel part of your journey too. You may even want to bring them along to some socials!
- ✓ **Be open and honest:** as with most things in life people find it easier to adapt to things if they feel you have been honest with them. The earlier you tell them about your plans the more they will have time to adapt, learn about your journey and share your experiences.

A parental order is the legal mechanism by which Intended Parents become the legally named parents

### ***How will I become the legally named parent of my child?***

At the moment of birth, the woman who gives birth to a child is regarded as the legal mother, regardless of the child's genetic origins. Her husband/partner, if she has one, is regarded as the legal father. If the surrogate is unmarried however then the genetic father can be named on the birth certificate.

Parental orders are there to address parenthood issues following surrogacy. Like an adoption order, a parental order reassigns parenthood, extinguishing the parental status of the surrogate parents, and conferring full parental status and parental responsibility on both Intended Parents.

For a Parental Order to be granted the following are all required:

- Both Intended Parents must be over eighteen
- At least one IP must be biologically related to the child
- At least one IP must be domiciled in the UK, Channel Islands or Isle of Man
- The IPs must be in a stable, long term relationship. Since April 2010, unmarried and same sex couples have been able to apply for a parental order.

In addition

- The conception must have taken place artificially (which can include home insemination)



- The child must have his/her home with the Intended Parents at the time of the application
- The surrogate mother and her husband must fully and freely consent to making the order. The surrogate mother cannot validly give her consent until the child is 6 weeks old.

No more than reasonable expenses must have been paid, unless authorised by the court. What constitutes reasonable expenses is different in each particular case. Although the courts have shown a reasonably broad-brush approach in the past, great care needs to be taken, and you must be able to justify each individual payment.

### ***Will I be entitled to maternity leave?***

It is very disappointing that intended parents through Surrogacy do not have the same rights to parental leave in the work-place as those who are able to have children naturally or become parents through adoption. Some employers do offer some paid leave but it is at their discretion and it varies enormously from company to company. Most companies have detailed adoption leave policies: some members have successfully argued that their employer should grant adoption leave arrangements following surrogacy.

### ***I'm gay – can I have a child through surrogacy in the UK?***

Yes. We now have several same-sex couples who are members of the organisation, and you are very welcome to apply for membership if you are in a gay relationship. You can contact Colin and Sam for more information by emailing [samesexcouples@surrogacyuk.org](mailto:samesexcouples@surrogacyuk.org)

### ***I'm part of a gay male couple – how do I chose who will be the biological father?***

There aren't that many Gay male parents to ask for advice, but we did ask those who are members of Surrogacy UK in the hope of listing the things they considered when making this decision:

- Think about who the main carer of the child will be. So that both fathers can feel a strong parental bond with the child, you may consider that one of you will be the biological father, and the other will stay home as the main carer.
- Think about making it as random as possible. In straight surrogacy it is not recommended to mix up the sperm from both intended fathers - there could be a chance of it "fighting" which can reduce the chances of pregnancy. But you could take turns, either within one cycle (e.g. you could each do the inseminations on alternate days), or on alternate cycles.

If you do take turns within a cycle you will need to have a DNA test done once the baby has been born as you need to establish who is the father for the parental order process. DNA tests are not performed or covered by the NHS so you'd need to organise this separately and pay for it.



In host surrogacy it is illegal to transfer embryos from more than one father in any one cycle. But if you both have embryos stored, you could use embryos from alternate fathers in alternate cycles.

### ***I am single, can I look for a Surrogate Mother to help me?***

Unfortunately not; legally in the UK you can only carry out a Surrogacy Arrangement if you can apply for a Parental Order, and a Parental Order is only open to couples in a long-term relationship.

### ***What is Surrogacy UK's age limit for intended parents?***

Surrogacy UK doesn't have an age limit- we take every case on its own merits. It's important to be up-front, though, and say that significantly older members of Surrogacy UK have, in the past, found it more difficult to find a surrogate.

### ***Can I be a member of Surrogacy UK and another surrogacy organisation?***

Surrogacy UK does not restrict you from joining another organisation - after all, the point of Surrogacy UK is to allow families to be created.

At the same time we do firmly believe that the Surrogacy UK way of doing things is the best way, and that there are avoidable risks in other ways-of-doing things. It is for this reason that once a Member enters a surrogacy arrangement with a non-member, it is not possible for them to maintain Member status. We would, though, welcome the non-member to join us if they so wished.

### ***We are a foreign couple and would like to work with a UK Surrogate - is this possible?***

This can only happen legally in the UK if you were to become domiciled within the UK. Surrogacy UK cannot help in an overseas surrogacy arrangement. The law regarding surrogacy/adoption varies from country to country. We strongly advise anyone contemplating such an arrangement to ensure that the intended parents contact a lawyer *before* treatment commences.

## **How Surrogacy UK works**



### ***Getting started***

Both IPs and Surrogates start out in Surrogacy UK as 'non-members' who have access to some sections of the on-line message boards (referred to as 'the boards'), and who can attend any of the social events and conferences. In this way you can meet IPs and surrogates even before you become a Member, as well as get to know a bit more about Surrogacy UK.



## **'The boards'**

The boards provide an online community for members and non-members to get to know one another. They are a place to share your journey, and to make and support new friends. They are a mine of factual information about surrogacy: practically any surrogacy question you can think of will be answered there! But more importantly, they allow both IPs and Surrogates access to a uniquely understanding group of people, and we believe this level of peer support is part of what makes Surrogacy UK so special. On the boards there are also dedicated, private, areas for Surrogates, IPs, and same-sex couples.

## **Surrogacy UK events**

Throughout the year Surrogacy UK holds social events – big and small, throughout the UK, and always child-friendly. These are well attended and really good fun, and the most telling thing is that time after time even people who have completed their surrogacy journeys return to the socials. They are a great opportunity to form lasting friendships and to be reminded that Surrogacy UK really works (not to mention being able to put faces to names on the boards!)



Our two big events are the spring conference and the Annual General Meeting in October. Again, these are an opportunity to make new friends and have some fun, but we also make sure that they provide another way for sharing information and providing support. You'll find workshops, expert talks, games, raffles and above all the chance to meet others and have fun.

We also have a buddy system in place for all new members going to their first social event. We have all been there and remember only too well just how nerve-wracking those first few steps into the world of surrogacy were. It is nice to have a chance to chat to someone beforehand and know that there will be someone there waiting for you when you arrive to help introduce you to others.

## ***Becoming a full member***

### **Intended Parents (IP) profiles**

When you become a Member you write a "profile" of yourself that only Member Surrogates can access. The IPs' profile explains what has brought them to Surrogacy UK, and why they want to have a child through surrogacy. It lets them show their personalities and interests, and gives surrogates an idea of which IPs they may click with. It's really important to write a profile that reflects you both as a couple: in many cases it's the first way that a surrogate learns about the IPs in the organisation.

### **Member boards**

Members have access to restricted parts of the board where they can, in a fuller and richer way, share the ups and downs of their surrogacy journey; keep diaries, chat to other IPs or



Surrogates and access the knowledge, support and compassion of the membership. People who are not Members of Surrogacy UK can never access these details about you.

## ***Forming a surrogacy friendship***

### **Contact being made – getting the phone call!**

Once a Surrogacy UK surrogate has decided that she would like to get to know a particular couple in more depth then she will contact her support worker. Someone from Surrogacy UK will then approach the couple on her behalf (only if they are Members) – this has become known to Surrogacy UK Intended Parents as ‘getting the phone call’. If the Intended Parents agree then contact details will be exchanged and the ‘getting to know you’ stage will begin. As you can imagine this is a wonderful period in the surrogacy journey– full of joy, excitement and hope.

### **The ‘getting to know you’ stage**

It is very important that a surrogate and her Intended Parents get to know one another well before they go ahead with any arrangements. Surrogacy is very much about personalities, and you will be spending a lot of time together both before and during a surrogacy pregnancy. Taking the time to get to know each other properly is essential, and Surrogacy UK insists that this period takes at least three months. If, at the end of three months, the relationship does not feel completely ‘right’ it would be a mistake to continue.

In the getting to know you stage take some time to talk through the details of surrogacy. There may be certain things you want or expect from one another. Would the surrogate mother be happy to have extra tests for abnormalities? If abnormalities were detected during the pregnancy, what action would you consider? Are there circumstances in which you would consider terminating the pregnancy? These topics can be difficult to talk about, but it is important to address them.

### **The agreement session**

To ensure that everybody has discussed, understood and reached sufficient agreement on all the relevant points relating to the surrogacy journey, Surrogacy UK expect our IPs and surrogates (and their partner if they have one) to have a formal surrogacy agreement session, in the presence of a Surrogacy UK representative.

After the agreement session, and once all the details have been formally agreed, then the IPs and the surrogate are ready for the next steps: trying to have a child!

## **How to Join Surrogacy UK**

The best place to start is by registering to use our message boards. Registration is free. You’ll be able to access all the “non-member” parts of the online community, and you’ll immediately benefit from the enormous experience and understanding of our members. You can ask questions, pick people’s brains, and start making friends. To register, just follow the link below and click on ‘register’ in the top right-hand corner:

<http://www.surrogacyuk.org/forum/>

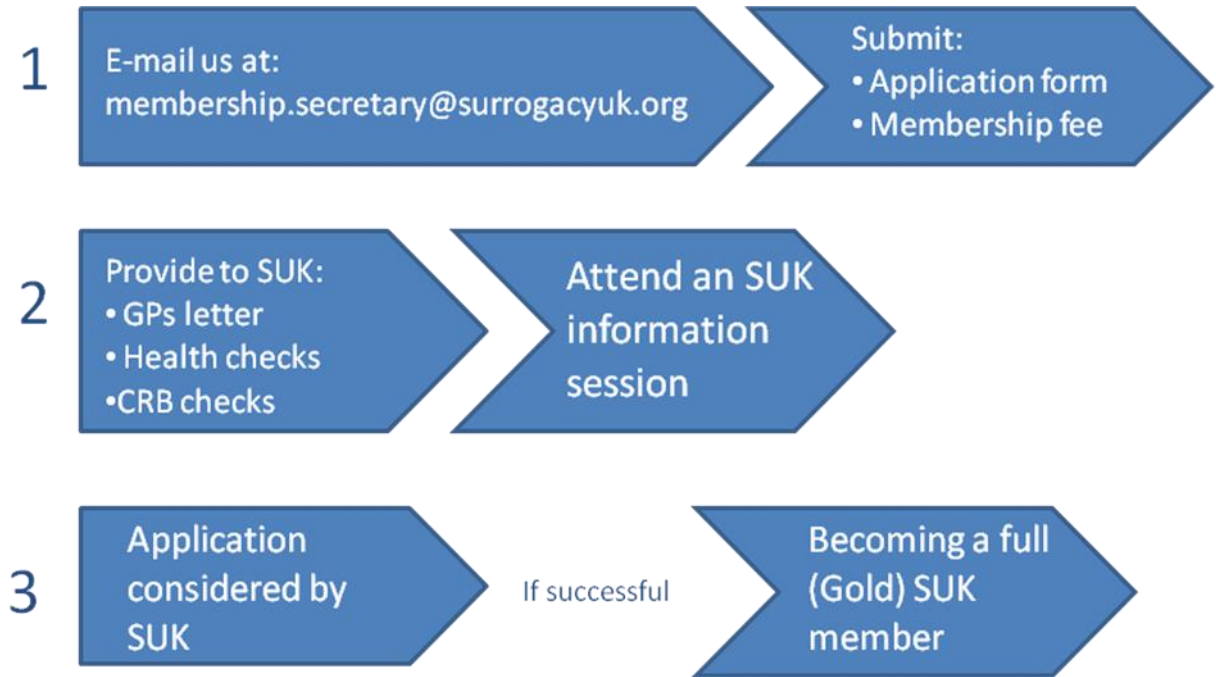


Surrogacy UK’s full rules and policies are set out in a separate document – Rules and Policies. Please make the time to review this important document.

### ***Becoming a Member***

To become a Member all please contact our membership secretary at [membership.secretary@surrogacyuk.org](mailto:membership.secretary@surrogacyuk.org)

The Surrogacy UK application process for Intended Parents is as below:



### ***More on the joining process***

#### **The application pack**

You can download our full application pack from the website. It asks for a lot of information about you both, and we ask these questions for a number of reasons. First, we have to gather some details for our records: how to contact you, where you live, and so on. Second, we need to ensure that you have had all the necessary checks and tests which are required for membership. And finally, we need to ensure that your hopes and expectations are realistic and in keeping with the ethos within the organisation.

#### **The Surrogacy UK information session**

You will see from this diagram that we require all prospective members to attend a Surrogacy UK information session. The purpose of the session is to explain all aspects of surrogacy and prepare those involved for the journey ahead. The information session is carried out by a Surrogacy UK representative. Intended Parents must both be present at this session. Information Sessions are arranged on receipt of the application form and membership fee by the membership secretary.



### GP letter and health checks

Surrogacy UK requires **both** Intended Parents to provide a medical report from their doctor. We will need to see the original document from your GP. The application pack contains a letter you can fill out and give to your GP, explaining what is required of them. If they feel it is appropriate they may ask for an assessment or report from another medical specialist. Please note that doctors are entitled to charge you for these reports, though many do not.

If you are hoping to carry out straight surrogacy, Surrogacy UK requires sight of the following original documents from **potential fathers** (the IVF clinic will undertake these tests for host surrogacy and so documents are not required in this case):

| Test  | Purpose  |
|---|--|
| Semen analysis  | Infertility affects men and women equally so it is essential that this test is carried out so that you know what course of action to take  |
| Mixed Antiglobulin Reaction Test (MAR)  | <p>The MAR test checks for sperm antibodies. If there is a presence of antibodies, the sperm may clump together and this could have implications on the quality of the sperm sample, even if the overall count appears to be within acceptable boundaries. MAR test is carried out it can be discovered that there are sperm antibodies. Depending on the severity of the antibodies it may be that IUI may be needed, IVF or even in some cases ICSI.</p> <p>The MAR test is not costly and can save couples many hundreds of pounds on wasted inseminations if this problem is discovered.</p> |
| STI checks:<br>Chlamydia<br>Gonorrhoea<br>Hepatitis B<br>Hepatitis C<br>Syphilis<br>HIV<br><br>Genital herpes | <p>To ensure that potential children or the surrogate are not affected by these STIs</p> <p><b>Please note that tests for Genital Herpes may not be routinely available.</b> If you have ever had an outbreak of genital herpes, please contact us to discuss your options. We reserve the right to cancel your membership if it is discovered that you have not declared this.</p>  |



To carry out the STI tests required by Surrogacy UK you may either:

- Ask your GP to carry them out. GPs may charge for tests with written results.
- Go to your GUM clinic. Tests are usually free of charge when carried out at a GUM clinic, however many do charge a fee for providing the results on paper
- Use a private fertility/IVF clinic. Clinic charges will apply.
- Use TDL (the Doctor’s Laboratory)

In straight surrogacy these tests need to be carried out prior to joining the organisation. In addition, Intended Fathers are required to **repeat the tests** prior to inseminations starting. Individual teams may agree that at this stage the Surrogate Mother is also retested, depending on the time elapsed since her original tests took place. It may also be agreed that the Intended Mother and/or the surrogate’s partner also undergo tests at this point. These decisions will be discussed at the **Agreement Session**.

We recommend that the following **optional tests** are also carried out:

| Test                             | Purpose   |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Cystic Fibrosis                  | Screening by blood test is recommended for this common and serious genetic disorder. 1 in 24 people in the UK are carriers; if both parents are carriers there is a 1 in 4 chance that the child will be affected.  |
| Ashkenazi Genetic Disease Screen | Tay Sachs is a fatal disorder in children (usually by age 5) that causes a progressive degeneration of the central nervous system. Both parents must carry one defective copy of the gene to be at risk for having a child with Tay Sachs<br><br>Carrier screening is recommended for any person of Jewish ancestry or for anyone who has a family history of the condition.              |
| Canavans                         | Canavans is a fatal disorder in children (usually by age 5) that also causes a progressive degeneration of the central nervous system like Tay Sachs. Both parents must carry one defective copy of the gene to be able to have a child with Canavans.<br><br>Carrier screening is recommended for any person of Jewish ancestry or for anyone who has a family history of the condition. |
| Fanconi anaemia (FA),            | An inherited anaemia’s that leads to bone marrow failure.   |
| Sickle Cell                      | Sickle Cell Disorders are a group of inheritable genetic conditions in which there is an abnormality of the haemoglobin.  |



## **Criminal records checks**

Both Intended Parents are required to provide criminal records checks. You may have had one done for your work (usually via the Criminal Records Bureau or CRB) and a CRB certificate less than 12 months old will be accepted for your membership. If you don't already have a CRB certificate, you can obtain a new criminal records check from Disclosure Scotland. Forms can be downloaded at [www.disclosurescotland.co.uk](http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk) or requested by telephone on 0870 609 6006. The type of form you need to ask for is a 'basic disclosure'. A small fee is made for this service, and it should take no longer than 6 weeks to receive the results.

Please send us the original document: we will note that it has been seen and return it to you.

## **Membership fees**

The membership fee for Intended Parents is £600 for the first year, and £50 per year thereafter.

Once you have had a child through a Surrogacy UK surrogacy agreement, you can maintain full membership for a reduced fee of £25 per year. If you then wish to start a second surrogacy arrangement (what we call a sibling project), you will be required to pay an update fee of £200.

## **Our stories**

We thought it would help you get a better feel for Surrogacy UK by asking some of our existing members to tell you a bit about their stories:

### ***Sabreena, Rob and Vanessa's story***



"Being born without a womb slightly scuppered Rob and my plans to have a large family. Knowing this from a very young age meant I had plenty of time to research my options. We liked Surrogacy UK because of the friendly atmosphere both in cyberspace and in real life.

We were lucky enough to meet the lovely Vanessa and her incredible family (the irreplaceable Kyle, the kids; Sean, Chad, Tali and super-nan and grandad Lucy and Alan).

The whole family worked as a great team to

help us complete our family in as smooth a surrogacy journey as you can possibly imagine. I had the best Mothers Day that year - my card consisted of an email photograph of three positive pregnancy tests (Vanessa wanted to be absolutely sure).

One of the best and worst moments of our surrogacy journey happened very early on. At ten weeks Vanessa called me to say that she had been bleeding on and off for a while. She had already made an appointment to go to an early pregnancy unit the next day. Rob had



been working all night and was devastated when he couldn't come with us. Vanessa and I sat in the waiting room quiet and anxious (we would not have been recognisable by anyone who knows how noisy we are normally). The ultrasound scan seemed to take ages. The technician then announced she could see two heartbeats. Tears of relief flowed down both our faces followed by looks of incredulity and more tears as we took in her comments that we were actually now expecting two babies! You cannot believe the joy Rob experienced when I sent him a text explaining we hadn't lost one baby but rather gained twins!

The pregnancy was very smooth for Vanessa thereafter, much to our relief. Nadia Vanessa and Yasmin Anastasia were born by caesarean section at 37 weeks. To this day Rob and I continue to be incredulous at our luck at having a biggish family despite me being born without a womb. Thank you SUK!" (Sabreena)

### ***Eileen's story***

"We joined SUK after having several miscarriages and stillbirths. My hospital was very anti surrogacy so encouraged us to keep trying ourselves and we were so incredibly lucky to eventually have a child after our sixth pregnancy. But then we tried to have a second child and had two more pregnancies both of which ended in still births. After the last one, which was twins, I was extremely ill myself so was told that I couldn't carry another pregnancy. It was at that stage we turned to surrogacy and found SUK.

What I realise now is that we could have been accepted for surrogacy earlier because of all our losses. In many ways I wish I had realised that sooner but we are so fortunate to have our little daughter and so there can be no regrets. She is our world.

I have found SUK to be such a wonderful friendly group. It is so comforting at times to be amongst others who truly understand the pain of infertility. I joined hoping to find a surrogate and we have been blessed in meeting a wonderful lady who is helping us now. But I have also met so many people who have become such good friends too. It is just a lovely place to be and I am so happy that I found SUK." (Eileen)



### ***Mark and Charlie's story***

"We started talking about having children 5 or 6 years ago. Like many people in SUK we looked at adoption first of all, but it didn't feel right for us, and after a bit of research we heard about SUK. We had read that the law was about to change so that gay couples could become parents through surrogacy, and we'll never forget that first conversation with Jayne when she told us that SUK would welcome us as members!

We joined in early 2009 and have met the most amazing people: intended parents, surrogates, and all around us the families that have been created through SUK. We've made some true and close friendships, and have shared so much over the past months.

Most importantly we've made friends with Dawn, Sian and Soo, and with their amazing families. Soo donated her eggs for us in early 2010, and this allowed us to create embryos that we froze. We can't begin to say how wonderful this felt, or how grateful we are for Soo's



friendship. Sian then made the incredible offer to be our Surrogate Mother but very sadly medical problems got in the way of our plans. She is now our official "Cheerleader"! Since then we have been lucky enough to meet and become close friends with Dawn, and we are now going through the next stages of our journey: trying to have a baby!

We were at the clinic recently, where they do a lot of surrogacy IVF for people from all over the country. The nurse said to Dawn: "Oh, surrogacy. It's nice that you know your IPs." We were totally stunned: the idea that you could go through all this without a deep and lasting friendship feels completely wrong. The motto "Surrogacy Through Friendship" seems to us the only way." (Mark and Charlie)

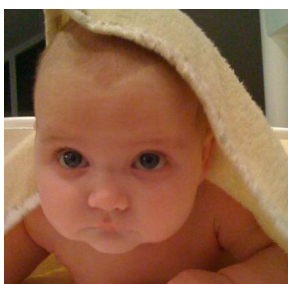


### Fiona and Andy's story

"When I'd been dating Andy for about 4 months, I finally plucked up courage to tell him that I have MRKH ([www.mrkh.org.uk](http://www.mrkh.org.uk)) and therefore can't carry children and that the only way I could have babies would be if someone else did it for me. Luckily for me, he didn't run the other way fast and we started looking into surrogacy a few months later. Like most people these days, I started by googling surrogacy, came across SUK and started by joining the message boards. Within weeks our evenings were transformed as, instead of watching telly or chatting over dinner, I'd be on the boards learning about how surrogacy works and bantering on msn with the friends I'd made there. The dramas and gossip were unbeatable (who needs EastEnders) and I was shocked to find that I was thoroughly enjoying myself.

More importantly, at our first SUK conference, we met Kate and Dennis; Andy had a few beers and a bit of a laugh with Dennis when they were in the same quiz team on the Saturday night. When I logged on after the conference, I was v. excited to find that Kate wanted to be my friend on msn. Six months and a thousand hours on msn later, we were all together in a country park just before our wedding and Kate gave us a hand-embroidered picture which she'd been working on for weeks. It was just typical of her kindness and it's a treasured symbol of our friendship..... but even that paled into insignificance when they gave us their other gift.... the offer to help us start our family. As someone who had expected to grow old without becoming a parent, I will never be able to thank them enough for the experience of going through my wedding knowing that I had every chance of being a mum within the first few years of marriage. It was a delicious secret which we kept to ourselves for a long time.

Eight months later, we started treatment and were lucky first time using embryos which we had frozen ahead of time. Hannah Christie was born eighteen months after we were married and has been hilarious and utterly adored ever since. I think the moment it hit home that I really was a mum was when she was about 9 weeks old and we were at a baby music class; I found myself singing "the wheels on the bus" in the middle of a church hall with tears streaming down my face because I had just absorbed the wonder of our good luck.



She's 18 months old at the time of writing and just loves the time we all spend with Aunty Kate, Uncle Dennis and their children – we are now an extended family and we don't know whether to be more



happy to have them in our lives or to be a family due to their kindness.

That's it, other than to say that the whole experience can't have been too bad for Kate and Dennis either, because they offered to help us again and (fingers crossed) we're now expecting a second baby in October 2010." (Fiona)

### ***Penny's story***



"Duncan and I wanted to have children but I had 4 miscarriages and emotionally could not go through another attempted pregnancy. We briefly looked at adoption but we realised that we couldn't give up on the idea of wanting a baby and accept an older child instead. A friend told me about surrogacy and we searched the internet. We came across SUK and as it was having a conference in a couple of weeks we booked and went along with open eyes and

ears. We met families who had become families because of surrogacy and we met surrogates who had helped couples.

We joined SUK and decided we wanted to try straight surrogacy. We went to regular socials and conferences where we absorbed all the information we could but also had support from other like minded couples in the same situation as ourselves. Other intended parents are the most valuable support as they know exactly what you are feeling. After 6 months we started chatting to a surrogate called Jo who was pregnant with a surrogate baby, we got along like a house on fire. We chatted for several months on the phone or at socials and met up with her and her family. When Jo actually offered to help us I burst into tears. There was hope.



We had our agreement and ensured that we had talked through every scenario, what tests we wanted, what we would do if a test was abnormal, what contact we would have, expenses etc and so we went into the real journey with no surprises. We had our first attempt at insems in December 2005 and later that month she gave us the best Christmas present ever - a gold box with positive pregnancy test inside!

We all met up regularly and I went to every midwife appointment. 23 weeks into the pregnancy when we were all at an antenatal scan we got the news that there was a possibility that the baby had Down's syndrome. We were all devastated and we were referred to a specialist hospital where after cardiac echo tests they gave us the good news that everything was normal. Jo was carrying our baby and she vomited every day of the pregnancy but she kept us totally involved. We bonded with the baby even before the birth. In August 2006 Jo gave birth to Jessica Faith and she was put straight into my arms. We went home from hospital a family. Jo amazingly offered to have a sibling for us and even though it took us 6 months of insems and she had an early miscarriage she gave birth to Stella in December 2008.

We have such admiration for Jo and her family as without all of them we would never have been able to become a family. They will always be a part of our lives.

SUK is an introduction into surrogacy, there is the possibility of meeting someone who can change your life. It also has a miraculous support network of intended parents and parents of



surrogate babies who understand all the reasons you are there and can support you on every step of your journey.” (Penny)

### **Jayne's story**

“Our first child, Abi was born via straight surrogacy after 10 long years of failed fertility



treatment thanks to our special friend Susan. The years of infertility were firmly in the past and we were enjoying life to the full. We hoped to have another child via surrogacy but despite 13 attempts of treatment with 2 different surrogate mothers it was not to be. However, a miracle happened and I became pregnant myself - not once but 3 times!

I joined Surrogacy UK in 2002 as a founder member to give support to other couples considering surrogacy. At the back of my mind I wondered if I could be a surrogate myself. One day, our daughter, Abi, who was born via surrogacy also suggested it, and this was just the push I needed to get started. Having my family at long last I just wanted to “pay back the gift”.

A few months later a couple, Lynne and Richard, who already had a child via surrogacy joined Surrogacy UK. I prefer to help couples who already have children as it is very fulfilling to help the child have a brother or sister as well as helping the intended parents have a much wanted second child.

It took 5 attempts of treatment to conceive Isaac, Lynne and Richard's boy. The pregnancy was uneventful. Everything went to plan and we had a wonderful surrogacy arrangement. Lynne and Richard came to all the scans and Lynne attended all the midwife appointments with me. We also met up socially at least once a month during the pregnancy, at SUK socials or in each other's homes. This is so important as it allows the intended parents to bond with their baby and the surrogate to bond with the intended parents.

Lynne was crying with happiness as baby Isaac came into the world. The midwife then asked her to cut the cord and she was handed her baby boy. It felt so good to see her joy. Isaac was born on Tuesday, 9th November, at 11.17 am, weighing 8lb 12 oz. Soon afterwards Richard was invited into the labour room to meet his baby son. We had pictures taken of us all and then I was handed Isaac so I could have a picture taken with him.

After the birth I received cards and flowers from friends and family and everyone said “what a wonderful thing I had done”. I never thought I would experience pregnancy, and not only have I been able to experience it for myself, I've been able to experience it for someone else too.

I've since helped another couple have a much wanted baby. Hector was born on the 6th January 2006.



Surrogacy UK

Sadly I then went on to have 2 miscarriages while helping a 3rd couple. At this point I decided to retire from surrogacy. I spent the next 2 years supporting others going through surrogacy and also had another baby of my own, Scarlet.

After Scarlet's birth, surrogacy was in the back of my mind again but I tried to resist and concentrate on my own family. However, I found I could not stand back and watch people struggle while there was a chance I could help them.

In 2009 I offered to help a 4th couple via a host surrogacy arrangement but sadly it did not lead to pregnancy. At the beginning of 2010 I offered to help another couple have a child via host surrogacy. So watch this space!"(Jayne)

## Surrogacy UK contact details

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- For queries about attending a Surrogacy UK event, please contact us at: [events@surrogacyuk.org](mailto:events@surrogacyuk.org)
- For questions on surrogacy for same sex couple please contact us at: [samesexcouples@surrogacyuk.org](mailto:samesexcouples@surrogacyuk.org)
- For media enquiries please contact us at: [awareness@surrogacyuk.org](mailto:awareness@surrogacyuk.org)