

Description

Understanding Surrogacy; Strengthening Maternity Services

Instagram: officialmysurrogacyjourney

Linked In: my-surrogacy-journey

Summary

All4Maternity have partnered with My Surrogacy Journey to look at how maternity services can be strengthened when it comes to implementing care for intended parents via surrogacy. My Surrogacy Journey is the UK's most successful surrogacy agency. Founded by two dads, Michael and Wes, My Surrogacy Journey is committed to providing tailored balanced support to those embarking on a surrogacy journey. Understanding all aspects of surrogacy is key for creating a maternity service that fits this type of journey to parenthood. My Surrogacy Journey is hosting a learning event which is dedicated to helping midwives understand the intricacies of a surrogacy journey. The event will take place in Birmingham, UK in March 2024.

As a midwife, you'll know that preparing for every eventuality is part of your job. No two days, or indeed two families are the same. Every birthing situation is unique and should be treated as such. Yet, one commonality that should be extended to all is feeling welcome and, perhaps most crucially, informed at all steps of the process. That includes those using maternity services and those working in them. Using inclusive language and being aware of every birthing woman or person and their accompanying support network is key; and this is especially true for those embarking on their parenting journey via surrogacy.

The Laws and regulations surrounding surrogacy In March 2023, the Law Commission published its long-awaited final proposals for reform of the law relating to surrogacy in the UK. If the right conditions are met, it would allow intended parents to become the legal parents of the child from birth, (providing everyone was supported by a Regulated Surrogacy Organisation – RSO) subject to the surrogate's right to withdraw her consent. The new system would improve the current process, which involves a sometimes complex and lengthy journey through the courts after the child has been born, resulting in some people/ couples waiting up to a year after birth before they become legal parents of the child.

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Equally, surrogates are overwhelmingly not comfortable with being the child's legal parent from birth, the new pathwayto legal parenthood takes into account these eventualities too. The final bill also details additional preconception compliance checks and welfare of the child assessments which in the new pathway replaces CAFCASS. This allows any safeguard check to be completed proud to the child being born, unlike the current parental order process. CAFCASS will still play a role for those surrogacy cases that do not qualify for the new pathway to parenthood, namely internationaland independent surrogacy.

New law in 2008 eased the way for gay cis-men to become legal parents too. This followed the implementation of the final piece of the 2008 Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act. This reform in 2008 was aimed at helping same-sex and unmarried couples who seek to have surrogate children and allowed them to secure legal parenthood in a new, simplified manner. This made the surrogacy process more streamlined and removed lengthy adoption processes for LGBTQ+ intended parents. However, NHS policies and general care approaches still have a long way to go when dealing with different family dynamics. There is always room to improve and learn as society expands and accepts its definition of what family truly means.



Why choose surrogacy?

Intended parents opting for surrogacy as their pathway to parenthood can have varying reasons for choosing this method. Surrogacy is growing in popularity year on year, particularly within the LGBTQ+ community and is an almost default choice for those who identify as or are born male who would like to have biological children.

Who is behind My Surrogacy Journey?


Mike & Wes Johnson-Ellis, Founders of My Surrogacy Journey

Founders of My Surrogacy Journey – a UK based non-profit surrogacy organisation – Michael and Wes Johnson-Ellis are committed to improving the support offered to everyone on their parenting journey. Speaking from experience as two dads who became parents via surrogacy they have a great passion for educating midwives and the wider fertility medical field on all the intricacies of surrogacy.

Michael and Wes were inspired to create My Surrogacy Journey after embarking on their own parenting journey and

finding that the support and resources for everyone involved in surrogacy were simply not good enough. With a dynamic and skilful team of over twenty-five staff, My Surrogacy Journey has thought of every aspect of surrogacy steps and what support and advice is needed throughout. Michael and Wes, and the rest of the My Surrogacy Journey team, know that by educating midwives with support and first-hand experience they can help to improve and strengthen patient care overall.

Improving NHS surrogacy policies

They have already helped to shape and improve surrogacy policies for all NHS trusts in England by giving constructive feedback regarding their own experience when welcoming their two children via surrogacy. As a couple, Michael and Wes have worked hard to improve NHS policy surrounding the treatment of surrogates and intended parents. Michael and Wes are committed to removing stigma surrounding same sex parenting and UK surrogacy and are keen to help midwives and the NHS as a whole recognise that the intended parent(s) should be treated as such. This came after their own first experience of surrogacy when they were told that their much-anticipated and beloved baby would be handed over to them off site, in the carpark. Intended parents deserve to be present for the birth of their baby and to feel just as included in the process as the birthing surrogate too.

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Learning event hosted by My Surrogacy Journey

My Surrogacy Journey is hosting a learning event dedicated to helping to strengthen surrogacy understanding and awareness within the midwifery field with the first one taking place in Birmingham on Wednesday 13th March 2024. The vibrant and packed day is designed to support midwives, understand all the components and take advantage of My Surrogacy Journey's extensive network. Hear from other midwives, surrogacy lawyers, parents through surrogacy, surrogates, fertility nurses and specialist fertility counselors.

Tickets for the event are available at Eventbrite and are on sale now. Click here to purchase.



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