



PRESS RELEASE

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Progress Educational Trust welcomes long overdue consultation on surrogacy reform

Sarah Norcross, director of campaigning charity Progress Educational Trust, said: 'PET welcomes this consultation to improve the UK's outdated surrogacy laws. Allowing intended parents to become legal parents when the child is born (subject to the surrogate retaining a right to object for a short period after the birth), rather than following a lengthy court process, is a massive shift in position and very significant legally. Removing the requirement for intended parents to have a genetic link to the child is also positive.'

Ms Norcross added: 'The lack of certainty with current surrogacy arrangements has been a major problem; what these reforms will hopefully deliver is certainty for all parties, intended parents and surrogates, and put the child's best interests at the heart of the agreement. However, for the new legal situation to work for everyone, issues around affordability and ease of access to NHS treatment need to be considered too.'

Baroness Liz Barker, who has been arguing for a change in surrogacy law, said: 'I welcome this thorough review of the law governing surrogacy. As Baroness Warnock herself conceded, the current law is flawed and fails to protect children, intended parents and surrogates. I've provided a strong basis for legal change and I urge the Government to bring forward a Bill as soon as possible.'

Dr Kirsty Horsey, reader in law, Kent Law School and author of the reports of the Working Group on Surrogacy Law Reform, said: 'I welcome the Law Commission's detailed and timely review of the UK's outdated laws on surrogacy – something I have been campaigning for a long time for. In particular, I am glad to see its recommendations that intended parents are recognised as the legal parents from birth, and that a national register of surrogate births be created. Both of these aspects are indicated by my previous research, which has shown not only that accurate data on surrogacy arrangements is hard to find, but also that the vast majority of both

surrogates and intended parents believe that legal parenthood should rest with the intended parents, and not the surrogate, as is the case under the existing law.'

Natalie Smith, chair of the Surrogacy UK Working Group on Surrogacy Law Reform, said: 'As a parent through surrogacy, I'm thrilled to see the Law Commission launch its public consultation and start the process of a root and branch reform of the UK's outdated surrogacy laws. In particular, I welcome the proposal for a new surrogacy pathway that would enable intended parents to be recognised in law at birth, and that would end the legal limbo that children born through surrogacy currently experience. As someone who has built my family in this way, it is critical that any change to the law protects the positive culture and values of surrogacy in the UK, and that there is no move towards a profit-making model.'

ENDS

Notes for editors

For media interviews, contact head of communications Catherine Hill: 07305-091466 chill@progress.org.uk.

1. The reports of the Surrogacy UK Working Group on Surrogacy Law Reform are:

Horsey, K. (2015). *Surrogacy in the UK: Myth busting and reform* available [here](#), and Horsey, K. (2018). *Surrogacy in the UK: Further evidence for reform* available [here](#).

2. The Progress Educational Trust (PET) is a UK charity working to advance public understanding of, and engagement with, science, law and ethics in the fields of human genetics, human reproduction, embryology and stem cell research. Funded by grants and public donations, PET aims to improve the choices for people affected by infertility or genetic conditions. <https://www.progress.org.uk/>

3. PET organises free-to-attend events debating the responsible application of reproductive and genetic science and publishes BioNews, a free comment and news service. Subscribe to BioNews at <https://www.bionews.org.uk/subscribe>