

CHILDREN'S VOICES IN SURROGACY LAW



Children/Young Person's Information Sheet

My name is Kirsty Horsey. I am a researcher from the University of Kent. I am doing research on surrogacy with Katherine Wade and Zaina Mahmoud. We are inviting you to join in a research study.

Before you decide if you would like to join, it is important to understand what the study is about, why we are doing it and what it would involve for you. Please read this leaflet and talk to your friends and family about it if you want to.

What is the research study?

We are collecting the views of children and young people on surrogacy.

We are asking children and young people who have been born through international surrogacy, i.e., surrogacy that took place in another country outside the UK.

Why are we doing this research?

People want to change the legal rules for surrogacy in the United Kingdom. We want to know what young people's views are on:

1. Their own experience of surrogacy;
2. The current legal rules;
3. Whether the legal rules should be changed.

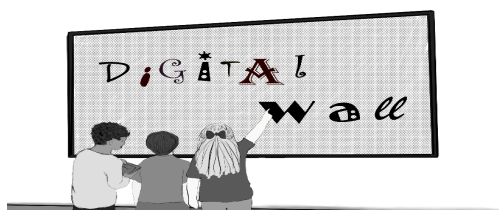


How will we do the research?

1. We will do “focus groups” or interviews, where we will ask you your views in small groups or by yourself. You must be aged 8-18 to take part.



2. We will collect artwork from you to make an exhibition (online and in-person). The theme is “What surrogacy means to me”.



Why have I been invited to take part?

Because you are a young person, aged between 8-18 years who has been born through international surrogacy.

Do I have to take part?

No – it is up to you.

You can only join in if your parent/carer has agreed and signed a consent form.

How do I get involved, if I want to?

We will ask you to sign a consent form.

You can ask as many questions as before choosing whether you want to join in.

What will happen if I take part?

You can agree to take part in (a) the focus groups/interview and (b) the collection of artwork.

You can agree to take part in both or one of these.

Even if you have signed the consent form, you can stop taking part at any time without giving a reason, by telling the researchers.

If you decide to stop, we will not use the information we already collected from you.

Focus Groups/Interviews

If you take part, you will either:

- be part of a group of 2-4 young people who will come together for about one and a half hours in a room in London, or
- take part in a one-on-one interview or an interview with your sibling(s).

Whether we will have focus groups or interviews depends on lots of things like numbers and how many people are available on the same day. You will be given a fake name for the duration of the focus group/interview. We will have an art corner at the start for you to do artwork if you wish. Then we will discuss issues about surrogacy using playing cards we had specially designed. The things we will talk about are:

- your views on what the rules should be for someone to be a parent;
- what contributions parents should be allowed to give to surrogates;
- information children should know about the surrogacy arrangement;
- your views about being born through surrogacy.

We will explain everything and you will do voting, sorting and circling games with the playing cards. You will have the opportunity to ask questions if there's something you don't understand. You don't have to answer any questions you are asked if you don't want to.

Collection of Artwork

If you take part, you will do some artwork on your own at home or at the focus group. This can be a poem, drawing, painting, collage, piece of digital media, animation. You will write your first name, age, and a short description on the back.

Do I receive anything if I take part?

If you take part in the focus group, we can pay for you and one parent/carer to travel to London and stay overnight if you live far away. We would also provide you with lunch. We'll also give you a small gift for taking part.

What will happen then?

We will gather all the information and write a report about children and young people's views on surrogacy. Everyone's views will be different, so we will be looking at whether certain themes and ideas can be drawn from the information. You will be given a "fake name" in the report, so no one will know it was you.

The pieces of art and media will be made into a digital exhibition that can be seen online and may also be shown at a public exhibition for people to see. Your real name will not be on the artwork. For example, it will be labelled: (Girl, 13), so no one will know it was you.

Will anything about the research upset me?

We do not plan to do anything that could upset you. But when we talk about your day-to-day experiences, maybe you could remember a difficult interaction that could make you feel upset. When we talk about the law, you might have very different ideas to someone else, which could make you feel frustrated or upset.

We will conduct the focus groups by reminding everyone to wait for their turn to speak and be respectful in expressing their views. If you do feel upset, you can tell the researcher during any stage of the process. Two of the researchers can escort you to another room/online meeting and we can have a chat with you in private and decide whether to have a chat with your parent/carer as well.

We can also offer you a form from the National Health Service with information about mental health support services that you can contact if you wish. You can find out more by clicking here: <https://bit.ly/3sAdOpk>

On this form, you will see that [The Mix](#) provides a free confidential telephone helpline and online service that aims to find young people help with any problem. [Kooth](#) is a free, safe and anonymous online mental wellbeing community. You can also contact [YoungMinds Crisis Messenger](#) and [SHOUT](#) 24/7 by texting YM to 85258 or SHOUT to 85258, if you felt like you were very upset.

If you would like to read books about being surrogate-born, you can find information here: <https://brilliantbeginnings.co.uk/surrogacy-resources-for-families/>

What happens to what the researchers find out?

When we collect information from you, we will keep it in a safe place and only the people doing the research, or helping with the research, can look at it.



Who is funding the research?

The University of Kent is paying for the research.

Who has reviewed the study?

Before any research can start, it has to be checked by a group called a Research Ethics Committee to make sure it is OK to go ahead. This study has been approved by the University of Kent's Law School's Research Ethics Committee.

What if there is a problem or something goes wrong?

Please tell us if you are worried about any part of this study, by contacting the lead researcher, Kirsty Horsey at k.horsey@kent.ac.uk

If you would prefer to speak to someone who is not part of the research team, please contact klsresearchethics@kent.ac.uk

Protecting your Personal Data

We will store and manage all information gathered during the research in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. This means:

- We will be clear about what we are doing with information.
- We will use all information fairly and accurately.
- We will keep it secure, and use it only in ways that are relevant to the project.
- We will replace children's/young people's names by fake names. The names will be stored securely in the university's Secure Computer Storage Service, and will only be available to the researcher. There will be no way for anyone else to identify children within the research. The names will be deleted 10 years after the project is finished.

Thank you for reading this. Please ask as many questions as you like! You can do this when we see you, or you can email the lead researcher on k.horsey@kent.ac.uk