

**Press release**

**Strictly embargoed until 00.01 on 11 February 2014**

**Before considering surrogacy overseas do your research, advises FCO**

*Foreign and Commonwealth Office urges prospective parents considering surrogacy overseas to get legal advice*

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is today encouraging prospective parents to seek professional legal advice before entering into surrogacy arrangements abroad.

British Embassies and High Commissions are dealing with an increasing number of people who are choosing international surrogacy as an alternative route to parenthood, with more and more parents heading to the US, India, Ukraine and Georgia to enter into surrogacy arrangements.

The FCO has launched new guidance to give these parents information about the process (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/surrogacy-overseas>) to help inform them of the sort of issues they may face when embarking on a surrogacy arrangement in a foreign country. The new guidance urges prospective parents to ensure they are fully aware of the facts and are well prepared before starting what can be a long and complex process.

Daisy Organ, Children's Policy Advisor at the FCO said:

"Many couples are choosing to enter into surrogacy arrangements overseas to build and grow their family. The legal processes around international surrogacy are complicated and the procedure for getting passports and confirming nationality for the child can be complex and take a long time. We want to help inform prospective parents about what to expect right from the outset – so that they are prepared, get the right advice and they don't run into unexpected difficulties."

Anne-Marie Hutchinson, Co-Chair of the IAML Surrogacy and ARTS Committee and Founder of The International Surrogacy Forum, commented:

"I cannot emphasise strongly enough how important it is that prospective parents seek legal advice before beginning the international surrogacy process. Every country has different laws and the intricate legal requirements can be very difficult to navigate. For example, there are different processes for obtaining British nationality for your surrogate child depending on whether the surrogate mother is married or single. It is also important for

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parents to be aware that they need to apply for a parental order once back in the UK, and that there is only a short, fixed period in which you can apply for this.”

In particular, the FCO is urging prospective parents to be aware that:

- the process for getting your child back to the UK can be complicated, can take several months to complete and may vary depending on whether the surrogate mother is married
- UK travel documents can take up to 6 months to process - check HM Passport Office's passport tool (<https://www.gov.uk/overseas-passports/y>) to find out details for the country where your surrogacy arrangement will take place
- there are often foreign visa requirements for individuals travelling for surrogacy
- surrogacy is only legal in a small number of countries – in some countries surrogacy may only be legal for opposite sex couples who have been married for some time
- as well as getting a passport for your child, you will also need to apply for a parental order in the UK to transfer legal rights from the surrogate mother to you and your partner
- it's vital that you research prospective surrogacy clinics and hospitals thoroughly to ensure you are dealing with a safe, responsible and reputable organisation

**Ends**

**For further information please contact the Know Before You Go team on 020 7478 7840 or [fcoteam@grayling.com](mailto:fcoteam@grayling.com)**

### Notes to Editors

1. The FCO's Know Before You Go campaign targets a number of audiences for travel safety information, from gap year students to package holidaymakers; sports fans to older travellers and people visiting friends and family abroad, as well as helping to highlight FCO guidance on other overseas issues such as child abduction, forced marriage and surrogacy. The campaign works with over 300 travel industry partners to communicate its messages. For more information visit <https://www.gov.uk/knowbeforeyogo>

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