



Happy couple: Annette Bening and Julianne Moore as gay parents in *The Kids Are All Right*

Reform our surrogacy laws

THE face of parenthood is changing: since April, gay surrogacy has been legalised. But our surrogacy laws evolved as an adjunct of our donor conception laws leaving a poor fit, with a surrogate couple (where married) treated as the parents, and the intended parents like egg and sperm donors until a parental order is granted.

Commercial surrogacy is prohibited here but there's no guide to what constitutes acceptable payment for pregnancy related expenses. Single people can't apply for a parental order, though anything from a fatal accident to a break-up could intervene between conception and granting an order; and there are growing numbers of people single by choice or circumstance who wish to become parents.

All these obstacles lead people to seek foreign surrogates, but legal differences between the UK and other jurisdictions mean children are born to fulfil such an arrangement risk ending up stateless and parentless. There are clear practical advantages for intended parents of having a UK-based surrogate mother, such as being there for the birth on time. Our current surrogacy laws need careful review.

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