

My name is Ivanna Holub

I am from Ukraine, I was gestational carrier or surrogate for an Irish couple in 2019

I highlight gestational carrier as even though I carried the babies they are not genetically link to me in anyway. They are not my Children. There has been a lot of talk lately about birth mothers and I feel surrogacy is been likened to adoption, you simply can not compare the two in my mind as the babies were not mine from the very start I was only ever minding them for their family. I do not wish to recognised on the birth certificate as to me it be a lie because I am not the child's mother. I went in to the surrogacy arrangement fully knowing and embracing what my role would be, it truly is a privilege to carry a child and I am proud of my bodies ability to do so but equally I feel a woman should not be condemned because her body can not.

Let me tell you about my journey to becoming a surrogate.

I had two children, I loved being pregnant I felt and still do that a baby is god gifts to the world. When I heard about couples who could not receive this gift due to medical reasons I was inspired to help these families feel the joy that I do from the my own children. Once I started to research it the whole process took six months to be excepted as a surrogate . I choose a clinic that I could trust as I had to make sure that I would be ok for my own families sake I went in to this with my eyes open. I went through medical checks, family history checks, physical and mental assessment. I received legal advice and time to review the contracts before I was eventually signed up as potential surrogate.

Yes I would receive remuneration for being a gestational carrier, and rightly so I do not see anything wrong with helping my family whilst also helping an other woman to have her family, but all the money in the world would not make me under take this journey if it was something I didn't want to do in my heart.

I hear about exploitation of surrogates because of payment and I think the very opposite The dictionary describes exploitation as an action or fact of treating someone unfairly in order to benefit from their work. Yes it was my job to carry the pregnancy but it would have been my job whether I was been compensated or not. Women who make the decision to be surrogates are not being treated unfairly in my opinion as we make an informed decision to proceed and are compensated for our time fairly, the total opposite of exploitation. It is about informed consent and where I come from or my economic background should not automatically mean I am not able to make a informed decision and chose what is best for me.

I was supported every step of the way on my surrogacy journey. The laws in my country ensured I was protected. I received constant monitory medically through out the pregnancy and after the children were born. I was given the option of counselling after the birth and in the months that followed but I choose not to except as nothing would provide me more solace and reassurance if it was needed then seeing the children I grew, in their own mothers arms .If you could bottle that feeling ,the pride, the joy and the emotion you could sell it as medicine for the soul.