



Information for Clients



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“I believe that there is a donor out there who would be perfect for you. My task is to help find her.”

Introduction

If you are reading this, you will presumably have been told that the best option to enable you to have a baby is to consider the use of donor eggs. This news has probably come on top of years of trying unsuccessfully for a baby and is not at all what you wanted to hear.

It might be that you are now feeling anxious and fed up, not knowing what you can do or how to go about the difficult task of finding your way through the various options. We are here to help with one very definite avenue that you can pursue – that of finding an altruistic egg donor.

We have tried to anticipate some of your questions and have answered them here:

Who we are

Altrui is run by Alison Bagshawe, who previously worked for over 20 years in the Assisted Conception Unit at Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital, as well as in a number of other notable clinics. During this time she spent innumerable hours counselling, meeting and assessing donors and recipients.

Having witnessed directly the anguish of couples who were reluctantly forced to consider egg donation, and the difficulties they had with finding a donor, she determined to set out to make this all much easier and simpler. She was also dismayed to learn that, because of an apparent shortage of donors in the UK, many couples were being told that their only option was to go abroad for treatment.

Having previously been able to find UK donors for recipients relatively quickly, it seemed an obvious solution to create a first class service to help recruit altruistic egg donors in the UK and to guide and support them going through treatment. She left Guy's to start up Altrui in 2010 and since then the service has steadily expanded to work with an increasing number of UK Licensed Centres.

Alison is dedicated to finding the right donor for any couple wishing to find a UK altruistic egg donor, and to keep looking until a suitable donor comes forward. She knows how to approach donors in a manner that makes it much more likely that they will consider donating, knowing that they will get all the support that they need.



Your options

Unless you manage to find a friend or a member of the family who is willing to donate, and you wish to pursue donation, you have these options:

1. Find your own altruistic egg donor in the UK through Altrui. We help you to find an anonymous altruistic donor in the UK who will donate her eggs to you exclusively. We believe that this represents the very best option for you, as we will explain later.
2. Join an egg-sharing programme (sometimes misleadingly called egg donation). This is available at a number of licensed clinics throughout the UK. You pay for a cycle of IVF for someone who needs this treatment, and in exchange receive a share of the eggs collected. This may also be in conjunction with a third person who needs donated eggs as well. Egg sharing does not, of course, give you the same benefits as an exclusive altruistic egg donor, but this route may be preferable if you want an egg donor from Asia, India or other ethnic minority group as egg donors from these groups can take longer to find.
3. Go abroad for egg donation. Many couples are going to Europe or USA to find an egg donor, often in the mistaken belief that there are no egg donors in this country. We have proven that this is absolutely not the case and, since we started, many amazing women have come forwards and donated their eggs through Altrui. It is therefore only necessary to go abroad if you have a good reason, or a desire, to do so. If you wish to have the protection afforded by UK legislation and to enable any future child the right to identifying information about their donor, then either option 1 or 2 may be preferable for you.

How we help find a donor

We understand the stress that you might feel and we do our best to take as much of the strain off your shoulders as we can. We offer a programme for you that provides highly experienced and knowledgeable professionals who will help find and recruit an egg donor for you alone. There are two principal strands to our recruitment which make it so effective:

Our reputation for looking after donors attracts many women who contact us via email, telephone or through our website, which often enables us to match you with a donor very quickly. People often ask how long it takes, and although it is difficult to pinpoint, we usually find a donor for someone within 3 months. We continually raise the profile of the need for donors through our own marketing and advertising, involving the press, media and everyone and anyone who can increase the public awareness of what donation really means to people like yourselves.

If you wish to advertise, or want a donor with specific characteristics or heritage, or time is of the essence, we can set up an appeal to potential donors through a focused advertising drive protecting your identity. This may be a short advertisement, a poster which we will design for you or an article which we will write and you edit. Given that you may not have the time or energy to dedicate to a search on your own, or the emotional reserves to cope with a campaign if it were not successful, we think that this removes the necessity and discomfort of having to approach friends and family and opens up every possible avenue to finding a donor.

In both events we then assess, screen and support all the potential donors so that they understand exactly what is involved in the process, appreciate the commitment and are suitable.



🌀 How we help with advertising

If you wish, or need, to do any additional advertising, we will guide you on exactly how, where and when to place an effective advertisement to attract quality responses from well motivated potential donors. This will include:

- 🌀 Identifying your ideal target audience
- 🌀 Provide a comprehensive information pack and examples of advertising
- 🌀 Buy your chosen image and put together, using a professional art worker, a poster which can be used as an advertisement
- 🌀 Writing a bespoke advertisement or article aimed to get the maximum response
- 🌀 Helping you select the best places in which to place advertisements
- 🌀 Providing details of the appropriate contact in the selected media
- 🌀 If there has not been an adequate response to your initial advertisement we will guide you through another advertising round if necessary, up to an agreed limit.

The cost of this advertising is not covered in our fee. This is because we believe that you should have the complete freedom to advertise wherever you want and as much as you want. For that reason, although we guide and support you completely, we leave you free to contract separately with whichever media you like and pay them directly for the level of advertising that you feel suits you. This ranges from free placements to relatively expensive insertions, depending on where and how often you advertise. It is entirely dependent on your preferences and budget.

We are the point of contact in any advertisements for potential donors which means that you open up the opportunity of reaching a wide audience without compromising your identity or having to ask anyone directly yourself. We will take all that off your hands.

🌀 How we assess and prepare the donor

There is a huge amount of work involved in taking a woman from the point where she is expressing an early interest as a potential donor to the position where she is fully prepared to be an actual donor – ready, committed, suitable and aware of what to expect. The way that we manage this, using our combined expertise, is the massive underlying quality of Altrui and probably where our true value lies.

It requires a combination of skill, judgement, knowledge, sensitivity, time and tenacity to gently encourage someone who is 'thinking about it' to say 'yes'. This takes years of experience to do well and is what we refer to as 'due diligence'. Done well, we will have a great donor for you who is unlikely to withdraw from the cycle or be turned down by the Licensed Centre for being unsuitable. It usually takes up to eight weeks to take a person through this process to the point of being able to offer her as a donor.

🌀 How we match you with a donor

We understand that an important part of undertaking donation is that you feel that care is taken to match you with a suitable donor with whom you would feel comfortable. The fact that the donor will almost always be anonymous to you makes it even more important. To help us do this, we will ask you for a photograph of yourself and we will do the same with those women who offer to go through the donation process. This allows us to see physical similarities as well as differences



between you. It is more important for us to have a photo of the female partner, less so for the male, as we lean towards matching the women.

Both partners will have given us their physical characteristics on the registration form. We try and match the females through:

- ♀ General build
- ♀ Height
- ♀ BMI
- ♀ Eye Colour
- ♀ Hair colour
- ♀ Skin tone
- ♀ Ethnicity & Heritage
- ♀ Your backgrounds, including:
 - Education, Qualifications and Occupation. We ask donors their level of education, including further training, degree or professional registration. Some of our donors are young mums who instead of a professional training or degree had children early, and we take all this into account when matching, once we understand them in their wider family context.
 - Interests and Hobbies.
 - A subjective assessment. This will be based on the commonalities of personality and character. Attributes such as sense of humour, love of animals, life experiences etc.

Please note that the information we utilise is based solely on that provided by the donor and is not verified by any documentation.

♀ Information that you get about the donor

Initially we will send you all the same information about the donor that we use for matching, except for her photograph. However, if it is possible we also give you a photograph of her as a baby or child up to the age of 6, but she is under no obligation to provide one if she prefers not to.

If you would like any further information about your donor, that is reasonable and non-identifying, you may put any questions to her into an email and send it to us. We will then forward this on to the donor using our email address, to protect your identity, and relay any response back to you.

♀ Thanking the donor

All Altrui donors are altruistic and anonymous, and many are mums themselves and have children. They have chosen to donate to you and not to a general bank which, although anonymous, makes it a very personal donation.

We have found that donors like to know a little about who they are helping and why their help is needed, and to know that any child conceived through their donation will be wanted and loved. To ensure that they feel valued and appreciated for what they are doing, we suggest that you may like to write something for them at some point. We will guide you in this as not everyone wants to either give or receive this. However, it makes the whole process far more personal and some donors feel a real sense of commitment and purpose, for although they don't know who you are, they create a mental picture for themselves.



🌀 Meeting us

Generally there is no need for us to meet you personally. Everything is managed at your convenience via the telephone or electronically. A meeting is not necessary because this level of contact will be sufficient for us to get the job done well for you.

🌀 How long it takes to find a donor

This is very difficult to say. Sometimes it is very quick, but at other times it can take several months, however we can usually find a donor within 3 months. It is dependent on many factors which will be discussed with you at the first phone call if you wish to have our help.

🌀 Why this is most likely to be the best option for you

A donor that is selected from those that come forwards donates to you alone. You do not need to share the eggs with other recipients as with most donation in the UK and abroad.

There are many reasons why having one donor is in your best interests, for instance:

- 🌀 She donates exclusively for you and you do not have to share the eggs collected.
- 🌀 The best embryos can be selected for replacement, which gives you the optimal chance of a pregnancy.
- 🌀 If you do not get pregnant with one fresh IVF cycle, you may have the potential of using frozen embryos from the same donor and not have to start all over again with a different donor.
- 🌀 If you do get pregnant, you may have the opportunity of having further children who will be genetically and biologically related to each other.
- 🌀 It is the most cost effective option for you. With having one exclusive donor you could potentially have up to four opportunities of becoming pregnant. This is considerably less expensive than having the same number of cycles with all the associated costs anywhere else.
- 🌀 Any child will have access to identifying information about the donor in the future.

By finding a donor through Altrui, you can undergo treatment in the knowledge that your donor has been through fully regulated screening. You do not need to travel outside the UK, so you will have the full protection of UK law as well as ongoing care. It gives you the best possible chance of becoming pregnant and starting a family.

🌀 What makes Altrui different

There is no other organisation, agency, company or clinic that offers exclusive one to one altruistic donation with the level of matching that we do. We will give you very detailed and significant information about a donor, including a photograph of them as a child, and you can request any other information through us, provided that it is reasonable and non-identifying.

We are passionate about the value and principle of one donor for one recipient, giving you the very best chance of starting the family that you long for.



The Next Step

We would love to help you find a donor. If you would like our help, the next things for you to do are:

1. Please note that in order to register with us the egg recipient must be less than 47 years old.
2. Make sure that you have read and understood our terms and conditions, as registering with us is taken as acceptance of these.
3. Register with us, by:
 - a. Following the instructions on the registration document.
 - b. Signing the agreement (unless you return it electronically) and returning it to Altrui.
 - c. Arranging for the payment to be made directly.
 - d. Sending us a current photograph, either electronically or through the post.

Please note, that we cannot begin to start until we have received all the above.

4. Information that we need from you:
 - a. We will need to know at the outset which Licensed Clinic you propose to go to for treatment. If you are not already registered with a licensed clinic in the UK, then you will need to do so before registering with us and have completed the initial consultation and counselling.
 - b. Make sure that you have your Unit/Clinic number to hand. We need to know this in order to coordinate with the clinic.
5. We rely on you to give us open and honest information about yourselves that will help us to match you with the right type of donor. You can be assured that any information that you give us will remain confidential and will not be disclosed to anyone other than the treatment centre of your choice without your permission.
6. Once registered, we will arrange a telephone call to discuss how we will start helping you find a donor.