

Meet Sophie Lewis: the 30-year-old hoping to have a womb transplant

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She has a condition that meant her womb never developed, but may be selected to take part in transplant trial

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Sophie Lewis was 16 when she received the news that she would never be able to carry a child of her own.

Lewis, whose periods had failed to start, was told she had Mayer-Rokitansky-Kuster-Hauser (MRKH) syndrome, which meant her womb had never developed.

The condition is thought to affect one in 5,000 women and the only options for having a family are usually surrogacy or adoption.

“I don’t think it really sunk in at the time, I was doing my GCSEs and I was having fun with my friends,” said Lewis.

“I was upset, but I think it was easier to take on board because I was quite young.”

But as she got older, the concern over whether she would have children grew stronger.

Now 30, she is preparing to marry her long-term partner Tilden Lamb, 38, a recruitment consultant, next year.

“We have been together five and a half years now and he feels the same as I do,” said Lewis, who works in e-learning, and is hoping to be one of the 10 women taking part in the trial for womb transplants.



Sophie Lewis, who is hoping for a womb transplant. Photograph: Linda Ny Lind/The Guardian

“I was always open with him from day one and we have discussed surrogacy and adoption. We are very much ‘what will be, will be’, but he is excited about the opportunity offered by a transplant.

“When I was 16, I was told that I would never have children or that I would need to use a surrogate or look at adoption. But then this whole other opportunity opened up to me.”

Lewis is mindful of the fact a womb transplant is still relatively experimental, but puts her faith in the doctors leading the clinical trial.

“It’s a huge operation, but it’s very exciting to be given this opportunity,” she said. “To be able to carry my own child would be amazing.

“If I don’t get picked, then we will go down the surrogacy route.”

The news last year that a baby had been born in Sweden using the same technique left her in tears.

“It was a very exciting time, I was so emotional, I did not know what to do,” said Lewis.



Sophie Lewis and her partner Tilden Lamb. Photograph: Sophie Lewis/PA
“It was a massive shock but it was an amazing thing to see and hear. I took a lot of comfort from the fact that there’s a chance it might work.”

Lewis’s parents are very supportive, although her mother worries about the implications of the surgery.

“She’s worried because it’s a big operation,” said Lewis. “But then on the other side she understands why I would want to do it.

“I think carrying your own child would be amazing. With a surrogate, you wouldn’t feel the baby kick or move around. To be able to feel your baby move must be amazing.

“I want to experience the love you have for your child. It makes a family really.”

The free press is under attack from multiple forces. Media outlets are closing their doors, victims to a broken business model. In much of the world, journalism is morphing into propaganda, as governments dictate what can and can’t be printed. In the last year alone, hundreds of reporters have been killed or imprisoned for doing their jobs. The UN reports that 85% of the world’s population experienced a decline in press freedom in their country in recent years.

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