

# Naming of sperm donor by family court judge highlights 'need for clearer regulations'

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A family court judge naming a sperm donor to protect vulnerable women has highlighted the need for clearer regulations, according to Aysel Akhundova, senior associate at UK law firm Dawson Cornwell.

The judge, Jonathan Furness KC, named Robert Charles Albon, who calls himself Joe Donor, as the donor who claims to have fathered over 180 children all over the world, according to reports.



Mr Albon advertised his services online and in an article in *The Daily Mail* in 2023.

His advertisement stated he would allow the mother of any of his children to decide if he is able to see the child.

However, Mr Albon sought parental responsibility after offering his services to one couple.

Mr Albon also applied to the court to be named on the child's birth certificate and to change the child's name.

The legal proceedings took almost two years and the final judgement - which was recently published - was made in 2023.

The judge determined Mr Albon claimed he wished to "protect the welfare" of the child when he was really "wholly self-centred", according to reports.

While Ms Akhundova said naming Mr Albon was the right decision, it is only "the tip of the iceberg".

"The facts of this case highlight the really serious issues of unregulated sperm donation, both legal and ethical. Vulnerable women seeking to start families should not be left to navigate a system that fails to protect them from coercion, control and legal battles over their children," she said.

Ms Akhundova has called on clearer regulations and greater awareness to help protect women from exploitation.

She added: "Often these women do not have access to legal advice, and are not aware of the serious and far reaching implications of using a sperm donor in a private arrangement."

Not only does the situation "threaten" the family unit but it can also impact the relationship the parents choose to have with the sperm donor.

"It can impact the decisions parents take in relation to allowing a known sperm donor access to a child to try and diminish the risk of an application being brought, despite that not being what they actually want to do."

Ms Akhundova concluded: "The long-standing and ongoing risks following informal sperm donation should not be underestimated."