

The Devastating Reality for Babies Diagnosed With Down Syndrome

A controversial new technique for screening unborn babies for Down syndrome is being considered by Public Health Wales (PHW).

Non-Invasive Prenatal Testing (NIPT), a type of blood test, is claimed to be 99 per cent accurate in diagnosing the condition.

Critics fear that it will lead to more abortions, and even to children with this syndrome being eradicated altogether.

92 Percent

Recent figures show 92 percent of babies who are diagnosed with Down syndrome in the womb are already being aborted in England and Wales.

Last November, the Westminster Government confirmed that NIPT will be made available on the NHS in England from 2018, despite strong opposition from campaigners.

The Welsh government has said it will make an announcement on the issue "in due course."

Dr. Sharon Hillier, acting director of PHW's screening division, said: "A project has been set up to scope and take this work forward for Wales."

'Too Negative'

Julian Hallett, from the Down's Syndrome Association in Wales, said there should be "no rush" to implement NIPT in Wales.

He cautioned that "women who receive NIPT results will be

placed in a position which may lead some to make a decision on whether they continue with their pregnancy. It's a life-changing decision.

"Many parents report the information they get from health professionals is too negative.

"We want to be able to ensure they balance that by giving positive information about the condition and explain the increased opportunities for children and adults with Down syndrome today."

'Image of God'

Head of Communications at The Christian Institute Ciarán Kelly has previously said that NIPT "has its roots in the idea that some people's lives have no value".

"All human beings are made in the image of God and have a special, intrinsic value regardless of how young, or how old, able-bodied or disabled that life might be."

Genetic screening in Iceland has led to almost 100 per cent of babies diagnosed with Down syndrome being aborted. {eoa}