

## ARC welcomes launch of study to evaluate new prenatal test for Down's syndrome

ARC is a co-applicant on the study into non-invasive prenatal testing (NIPT) being launched today by Professor Lyn Chitty and her team at Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) and we are very supportive of its aims.

In the last year, we have seen a dramatic increase in calls to the ARC helpline regarding NIPT for Down syndrome. Many women are keen to access such testing as it gives a more accurate result than NHS screening tests currently available and can help them avoid diagnostic tests such as CVS or amniocentesis which carry a risk of miscarriage. At present NIPT is only available in the private sector at a cost ranging from £600 - £850.

ARC welcomes the GOSH study as it will examine how NIPT might improve the national screening programme for Down's syndrome and how it can be implemented into the NHS in an equitable way. The study will also look at attitudes of women and health professionals to the test to help ensure that women are able to make an informed choice whether or not to take up NIPT.

Jane Fisher, Director of ARC, says

*'It is inequitable that the most accurate form of prenatal screening for Down's syndrome is only available to those who can pay. We welcome the launch of the GOSH study which will evaluate NIPT in an NHS setting and explore how we might implement such testing into NHS services. We are also supportive of the study aim to ensure that women are helped to make an informed choice about whether to have NIPT.'*

**Antenatal Results and Choices (ARC)** provides non-directive information and support to parents throughout antenatal testing and its consequences.

Press contact:

Jane Fisher

[jane@arc-uk.org](mailto:jane@arc-uk.org)

0207 713 7356

07875480076

ARC

345 City Road

London

EC1V 1LR

[www.arc-uk.org](http://www.arc-uk.org)