

MISSION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS DIVISION

A World Without Down's Syndrome?

Speakers

Sally Philips (BBC Documentary 'A World Without Down's Syndrome')

Dan Scorer (Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Mencap)

Heidi Crowter (Self-advocate living with Down's Syndrome)

Chair

Rt Revd James Newcome (Lead Bishop for Health Issues)

Facilitator

Revd Dr Brendan McCarthy (National Adviser: Medical Ethics & Health/Social Care Policy)

1.00pm Friday 9th February 2018

Harvey Goodwin Suite, Church House SW1

The place in our society of people living with Down's Syndrome has been brought into sharp focus with the introduction and prospective wide-spread use of a recently developed prenatal screening technique (NIPT)

Evidence from other countries such as Iceland and Denmark where NIPT has been universally available for some time suggests that the numbers of children being born with Down's Syndrome might plummet if NIPT were to become routinely available in the UK unless accompanied by comprehensive, unbiased information and counselling.

This raises grave issues not only for the fate of unborn children diagnosed with Down's Syndrome, but also for children who might be born with the condition as well as for women who choose to continue with their pregnancies or who choose not to be tested. Children with Down's Syndrome are as much bearers of God's Image as anyone else, but are uniquely vulnerable if NIPT is not properly utilised. How we treat these vulnerable children and their families is a test of our own humanity as well as of our discipleship.

In this meeting we will hear first-hand accounts from parents as well as from a Down's Syndrome self-advocate.

If you would like to attend please reply by **Monday 22 January**, indicating whether you would like lunch and whether you have any special dietary requirements, by email to alastair.callcutt@churchofengland.org