

Prenatal Paternity Testing in the Family Courts



Casey Randall, Head of Genetics at AlphaBiolabs, discusses the benefits of Non-invasive Prenatal Paternity testing for the timely resolution of family disputes

Uncertainty regarding paternity can delay child welfare decisions and heighten conflict in family law cases. However, advancements in DNA testing mean it is now possible to determine a child's paternity from as early as 7 weeks into pregnancy, allowing the courts to act swiftly in the best interests of the child.

Non-invasive Prenatal Paternity testing (NIPP testing) offers a completely risk-free way of establishing paternity and only requires a blood sample from the mother and a cheek swab from the alleged father.

Expert geneticists then extract the baby's DNA profile from foetal DNA found in the mother's bloodstream and compare this with the DNA profile of the alleged father. The biological father will share DNA with the baby at every tested marker. If the tested man is not the biological father, this will not be the case.

Benefits of NIPP testing

NIPP testing is commonly used by social workers to streamline complex cases, particularly in safeguarding scenarios, where the unborn child's safety is paramount. Determining paternity early means they can focus on assessing a parent's capacity to care for the child and explore alternative care arrangements where necessary.

This includes placing the baby into a guardian's care immediately after birth if needed, reducing the number of moves between care settings.

For family law professionals, NIPP testing is an equally valuable tool in cases where paternity is contested, ensuring decisions about parental responsibility can be made without undue delay.

By recommending a NIPP test, family law solicitors can ensure paternity questions are resolved quickly, reducing the emotional strain placed on families during prolonged disputes.

When should NIPP testing be considered?

NIPP testing should be considered in scenarios where:

- ▶ There are early disputes over paternity that could influence custody, visitation or child maintenance.
- ▶ Questions surrounding paternity could impact care planning or safeguarding processes.
- ▶ Resolving parentage promptly could support mediation or foster cooperation between the parties involved.

Finding out the truth about a child's paternity during pregnancy can aid dispute resolution in a variety of ways, including:

- ▶ **Facilitating mediation:** Removing ambiguity around paternity that can otherwise dominate discussions allows all parties to focus on child-centric outcomes, and can mitigate the adversarial nature of disputes.
- ▶ **Reducing court intervention:** Enabling families to reach agreements outside the courtroom spares all parties the stress of prolonged, contentious litigation.
- ▶ **Improved communication:** Clarity around a child's paternity can open the lines of communication, leading to quicker resolutions for other issues. This benefits the child and supports the parents in building a foundation of trust and cooperation.

NIPP testing from the UK's No.1 DNA lab

AlphaBiolabs' NIPP testing represents the gold standard in prenatal paternity testing, analysing up to 153 DNA markers for unparalleled accuracy, and making it possible to confirm paternity as early as 7 weeks into pregnancy.

With over 20 years' experience providing DNA testing for legal matters, we are fully equipped to support family law professionals throughout the process, providing a dedicated Case Manager to handle all aspects of the instruction, including:

- ▶ Coordinating sample collections (mother's blood sample and father's cheek swab sample) at convenient locations within 24-48 hours of case registration
- ▶ Ensuring chain of custody procedures are followed, for legally admissible results
- ▶ Ensuring timely delivery of results, in accordance with court deadlines

More reasons to choose AlphaBiolabs:

- ▶ The only UK laboratory with UKAS ISO 17025 accreditation for NIPP testing
- ▶ Rapid results guaranteed
- ▶ 100% safe for mother and baby
- ▶ Sample collections from any location within 24-48 hours of instruction
- ▶ FREE legally-instructed sample collections from our 21 walk-in centres across the UK & Ireland
- ▶ All pricing within Legal Aid Agency rates
- ▶ Ministry of Justice approved to carry out parentage testing
- ▶ **Price Promise:** we will beat any like-for-like quote by a further 10%
- ▶ Expert Report included, for no additional fee

For more information, contact our New Enquiry team on 0333 600 1300 / testing@alphabiolabs.com or visit <https://www.alphabiolabs.co.uk/legal-test-forms/> and we will be happy to discuss the requirements of your case.

Casey Randall, Head of Genetics at AlphaBiolabs

Casey joined the AlphaBiolabs team in 2012 and heads up both the DNA and Health testing teams.

An expert in DNA analysis and a member of the International Society for Forensic Genetics (ISFG), Casey holds an MSc with Distinction in DNA Profiling and a First-Class BSc with Honours in Forensic Science. Casey is responsible for maintaining the highest quality testing standards, as well as looking for ways to further enhance the service that AlphaBiolabs provides and exploring new and innovative techniques in DNA analysis.



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