

Legal DNA testing: your questions answered



Casey Randall, Head of Genetics at AlphaBiolabs,
answers some of the most common questions
regarding relationship DNA testing for court

What are the different types of DNA relationship tests?

Relationship tests provide clarity where biological relationships are contested or unclear, for cases ranging from child custody disputes and inheritance claims to immigration and probate matters.

Parentage tests (eg paternity, maternity and prenatal paternity tests) are the most requested for legal purposes, providing irrefutable evidence of a child's parentage. These tests can play an important part in cases involving child maintenance disputes or questions of parental responsibility.

Where a biological parent is unavailable or unwilling to participate in a paternity or maternity test, other family members can be tested to verify a biological relationship. This is known as **complex relationship testing**. Examples of these tests include sibling, grandparent and avuncular (aunt/uncle) tests.

Y-chromosome testing can also be used to confirm paternity via shared paternal lineage, while extended family testing can help verify a biological relationship between more distant relatives (eg cousins).

At AlphaBiolabs, we analyse up to an industry-leading 153 DNA markers for our legal DNA testing at no additional cost. This is particularly beneficial for complex relationship tests, where the chances of obtaining a conclusive result will always be lower than the more straightforward paternity or maternity tests.

Is consent for DNA testing required from all parties?

Consent is a fundamental requirement for DNA testing.

Any person aged 16 or over must provide their own consent. When testing a child under the age of 16, consent must be provided by a person with parental responsibility for the child.

In cases where consent is withheld, the court may issue an order mandating DNA testing. AlphaBiolabs works closely with legal professionals, providing guidance throughout the testing process, and ensuring all testing complies with ethical and legal standards.

How is chain of custody maintained?

At AlphaBiolabs, we keep full, detailed records of the testing process and ensure we maintain chain of custody and sample integrity throughout, including:

- ▶ Checking identification during the sample collection appointment
- ▶ Recording answers on Electronic Consent Forms
- ▶ Sealing envelopes in the presence of the sample donor and using tamper-proof tape
- ▶ Returning samples to our laboratory via fast-tracked, secure courier
- ▶ Performing stringent viability checks once the DNA samples arrive at our laboratory

Can you perform a DNA test on someone who has passed away?

For most relationship tests, a cheek swab is rubbed quickly and painlessly on the inside of the cheek to collect cheek cell DNA.

To perform a relationship test on someone who has recently passed away, alternative samples such as the deceased's nail clippings (usually toenails) or less frequently, tissue or blood, can be used to

obtain a viable DNA profile for the purposes of performing a relationship test—provided next of kin give consent for testing.

These samples are typically collected by the coroner or funeral director who will complete a declaration form at the time of sample collection, maintaining chain of custody.

If a genetic profile can be obtained, a DNA relationship test can then be performed by comparing the DNA profile of the deceased person with that of a living relative to identify matching DNA markers.

The UK's No.1 DNA testing laboratory

With over 20 years' experience providing DNA testing services for the legal profession, AlphaBiolabs has earned its reputation as the UK's No.1 DNA laboratory for legal matters.

Why choose us?

- ▶ Next-day results as standard and same-day results available
- ▶ UKAS 17025-accredited laboratory
- ▶ All testing performed in the UK—so samples are never sent abroad
- ▶ 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
- ▶ Expert Report included, for no additional fee
- ▶ **Price Promise:** we will beat any like-for-like quote by a further 10%

For more information, contact our New Enquiry team on 0333 600 1300 / testing@alphabiolabs.com or complete our online quote form <https://www.alphabiolabs.co.uk/legal-test-forms/>.

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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