

# PRESS STATEMENT

1<sup>st</sup> March, 2017

## **Media Comment on the New Study from Scottish Learning Disabilities Observatory**

Down's Syndrome Scotland was very interested to read the press release from the SLDO today detailing the results of a new study on termination rates following a diagnosis of Down's Syndrome. We cautiously welcome these results but note that they cover the period 2000 – 2011 and would hope that a further study could be conducted when data is available, to ascertain if this trend is continuing.

We are delighted that people with Down's syndrome are now more visible in society today and welcome the inclusion agenda, policies and practices within Scotland; that see people with Down's syndrome attending mainstream schools, community groups and playing an active role in their community and hope that this is having a positive impact upon awareness. Down's Syndrome Scotland's awareness week running 20th -27th March actively encourages communities across Scotland to run awareness raising events more information can be found [www.dsscotland.org.uk](http://www.dsscotland.org.uk).

We know from our membership that there is good practice within Scotland where families are given up to date accurate information during pregnancy and are enabled to make informed choices about their pregnancy and then offered appropriate support. However in 2017 we are also still acutely aware that not all families have this positive experience and that some families are still faced with professionals who have outdated information and negative attitudes.

Therefore Down's Syndrome Scotland is keen to continue its call that at the time of screening/testing, easily understood and up-to-date information SHOULD ALWAYS be provided in a balanced way by well trained professionals. We believe the information given to parents should include:

- I. The accuracy of screening/test results and the associated risks of further screening and/or tests;
- II. The life prospects of people with Down's syndrome;
- III. The impact on families (challenges and joys);
- IV. The support available both from Down's Syndrome Scotland and in the community;

V. The offer of informed, broad and non-directive counselling from a suitable specialist.

- ENDS -

Further Information about Down's Syndrome Scotland:

- Down's Syndrome Scotland (DSS) is a parent led charity which was established in 1982.
- We are the only charity in Scotland dedicated solely to supporting people with Down's syndrome (Ds) and their carers.
- Down's Syndrome Scotland provides "all through life" support nationally across Scotland.
- We work to help people with Down's syndrome reach their full potential by providing information and support to them, their families, carers and professionals at whatever age and stage of life.
- We also work to influence government policy to ensure that the society in which we all live reflects the needs of people with Down's syndrome.

As an organisation we are very conscious about the language that we use and would appreciate if you are mindful of this, our Media Guidelines are attached for your reference.