

United Kingdom

Laws

The United Kingdom has no laws in place that protect fetuses with Down Syndrome, instead there is the Abortion Act of 1967 also called the Human Fertilization and Embryology Act 1990, which states that an abortion is legal even after 24 weeks (6 months) of pregnancy if it is done by a medical professional. This type of abortion can occur if the mental health of the mother can possibly be damaged by the baby and if the mother or the baby is at risk of suffering from physical or mental abnormalities (Bishop, Down's Syndrome Association). However, there are several laws in the United Kingdom that protect individuals with Down Syndrome once the individual has been born. These laws are Equality Act 2010, which states that every individual with any mental or physical disability has to be treated with equality in a work setting, educational setting or public setting. Education Act 1981 provides special education with the resources needed, therapist and teachers' assistants so special education can function. The Children and Families Act gives support to those children who are vulnerable such as orphans, in a divided family or have special needs (Government UK). In the Imagine

89%-97% of women who get screened and test positive for down syndrome decide to terminate the pregnancy.

Medical Professionals

In the United Kingdom the opinion of a medical professional also has an impact on the decision of the parents, "It is not so much the parents who intend this twenty-first century holocaust, but the medical professionals who intentionally manipulate the decision making" (Reilly, 241). Having a child with Down Syndrome brings many different challenges for the parents and many of the professionals direct the parents towards termination, which makes screening a way to weave out the "imperfect society." An English healthcare professional that conducts screenings for Down Syndrome clarifies, "the uptake is influenced by the information that is available and how the screening is offered and how it is brought across by healthcare professionals" (Crombag et al.). The healthcare system of England does not inform parents about the different disabilities and does not provide them with an overview of what it is like to raise a child with Down Syndrome. And they do not have a law like the Down Syndrome Information Act in the United States. Instead parents only receive the different options that a parent has when given a positive Down Syndrome diagnosis which is to terminate the pregnancy, put the child into adoption or have the child. When a mother in the UK decides to terminate their pregnancy Anna Farmer states that there are officers in the abortion centers to establish "safe areas" so that unborn babies can be killed and not be disturbed by offers of help concerned individuals (Farmer, 1). This is shocking because we can clearly see that the system of the UK encourages and protects the mothers when they decide to terminate a Down Syndrome life.



Boris Johnson- Prime Minister of UK

The Genocide of Down Syndrome in the United Kingdom and United States



The world population is increasing each day as more families are growing and people are having more children. However, when comparing and contrasting the birth rate and abortion in two developed countries of the world which are the United States and the United Kingdom, we are able to see similarities between the countries that are ending the genetic disorder - Down Syndrome. The number one way of ending Down Syndrome is through the termination of the pregnancy once the results come back positive. This is a worldwide genocide that is not being addressed or talked about, because many individuals are not well informed of what actually is Down Syndrome or how people with Down Syndrome live. With the development of several different screening tests that can identify whether the fetus has a chromosomal disorder there has been a rapid increase in the termination of fetuses with Down Syndrome in both the United Kingdom and United States that has skyrocketed almost to a 99% termination rate. In this research paper there are many factors contributing to the increasing rate of Down Syndrome terminations when exploring the laws that protect disabled people, medical opinions, and societal norms within the United Kingdom and United States.

	United Kingdom	United States
Healthcare system	National Health Service	No universal health program like other countries. Medicare, Medicaid, the Children's Health Insurance Program, and the Veterans Health Administration.
Funding of Healthcare system	General taxation	In 2013 the US government paid for 63% of the health care, the rest is paid by the individual.
Organisation healthcare system	Stated owned hospitals and general practitioners have contracts with NHS	Most hospitals are non-profit which are owned by several individuals.
	Strong influence of state: SSS Minister of Health responsible for budget	The for-profit hospitals are owned by the government.
Legislation Regarding equality for individuals with disabilities	Equality Act (2010)	Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), The Individuals with disabilities Act, Americans with Disabilities.

Parents: The parents stated that they feel pressure from various groups. These groups consist of pressure from prenatal information given, pressure from own preconceptions, pressure from health professionals' expectations to terminate and pressure to terminate from family and friends. Many fathers describe that there is a link between receiving a positive prenatal diagnosis of Down Syndrome and an undesirable life with a child that will not be seen as successful in life by society just because of their disability. (How et al., 296). Parents want to celebrate the accomplishments and recognition of their children because in developed countries such as the UK and the US parents and society have high expectations for their children with academics, sports and life. Many parents want their children to be the "star", and many believe that a child with Down Syndrome will not be able to have many accomplishments. A well-known English ethologist and evolutionary biologist named Richard Dawkins said in a tweet to a pregnant woman expecting a child with Down Syndrome that she should terminate her pregnancy and try again. To Dawkins it would be immoral to bring that child into the world (Press Association). This shows an educated person telling a woman in society to terminate her pregnancy on social media, people in today's world lack the value of every life because they view the life of individuals with disabilities as worthless and incapable, which is completely false. People with Down Syndrome can have an education, a job and live independently just like any other person. Yes, they might take longer, yes, they might encounter more challenges, but it is possible.

United States

Laws

Due to the increasing rate of termination of individuals with Down Syndrome there has been a group of organizations and supporters that have pushed for an enactment to help alleviate the high increasing termination rates in the United States. In 2014 the state of Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Louisiana, Ohio, Massachusetts, and Florida passed the Down Syndrome Information Act; and in 2016 more states joined and passed the law, such as Indiana, Illinois, Texas and Minnesota and throughout the years more states, but not all have enacted the law (Caplan, 2). The Down Syndrome Information Act provides parents who are expecting a child with Down Syndrome with what medical professionals call a "fact sheet" from the National Society of Genetic Counselors. This sheet contains information about the health problems and conditions that a person with Down Syndrome can potentially have as well as all the research and medical support that is provided to them. There is a section that talks about the education programs and the Individualized Education Plan that is provided to support their learning and academics and the opportunities to attend colleges that offer programs for individuals with intellectual disabilities. And the last section provides facts, examples and stories of individuals with Down Syndrome who are living independently and are employed, have friends and intimate relationships just like any other person (Leach, Fact Sheet)

1. Rehabilitation Act, this law prohibits any form of federal discrimination towards an individual with a disability.

2. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act demands all public schools to be accessible and to be equipped with the correct material and professionals to work with individuals with disabilities.

3. Americans with Disabilities Act forbids the discrimination on the basis of disability in employment, public accommodations, transportation or telecommunications (Americans with Disabilities Act).

Medical Professionals

In the United States, the professionals at the hospitals that interact with pregnant women consist of family physician, counselor, obstetrician and gynecologist. All of these professionals give their opinion and insight to the parents about having and raising a child with Down Syndrome; this puts pressure on the family due to all of the medical problems (Dixon, 8-9). In Dixon's article it is stated that about 90% to 100% percent of the mothers nationwide terminate the pregnancy once the screening test comes positive for Down Syndrome. There is no specific percentage number because not every abortion is done legally or documented. Medical professionals state that when the test results show that the fetuses are expected to have a disability, they have to offer all of the alternative actions such as abortion, adoption or therapies that are available for the parents. Many parents do not have knowledge on Down Syndrome and take the options given by the medical professional because they might feel disoriented, emotional and vulnerable, but that is why many states have implemented the Down Syndrome Information Act.