

# DNA test company to open in Ireland

By Graeme Noll

**D**NA testing – as seen in TV talk shows to settle paternity disputes – is to be sold in Ireland for the first time.

A company specialising in the technology is planning to open offices in Dublin within the next few weeks and is expected to charge around €300 per test.

Dan Leigh of DNA Solutions, which provides tests for ITV's *Trisha* show, said that although the company had not yet secured premises, he was confident that the tests would be available before Christmas.

"We hope to open in Dublin within the next three weeks," he said.

DNA testing has hit the headlines recently with the controversy surrounding Britain's home secretary, David Blunkett.

Mr Blunkett is involved in a high-profile paternity case, with reports that tests had been used to confirm that he is the father of a two-year-old.

Actress Liz Hurley and tennis star Boris Becker are among

## AT A GLANCE...

Growing interest in paternity suits has prompted a firm which carries out DNA tests to begin operations in Dublin

celebrities who have also been involved in high-profile DNA testing cases.

Mr Leigh said the company, which has offices in Britain, Argentina, New Zealand and Holland, had decided to open in Ireland after receiving queries from Irish men.

"We served around 1,000 people last year," he said.

"There's quite a big market there, we think.

"The industry is becoming more and more popular because with the technology, companies can do the test quicker and more accurately. It's in the news a lot as well."

Advances in DNA technology have made the testing process considerably easier and results

can be had within five days.

"They [clients] can submit a blood sample if they wish but we could literally pluck out a hair and test it that way," Mr Leigh said.

"Most people choose to get a mouth swab."

However, a criticism levelled at the DNA testing industry is that it has contributed to the break-up of families.

While Mr Leigh admitted that there was a "lot of controversy" in the issue of paternity testing, he added that "we think that we do good work".

"At the end of the day we are providing a service that keeps everyone honest and equal," Mr Leigh said.

