

**BOTH LIVES
MATTER**

Pro-women & Pro-life

INTRO- DUCTION

IMAGINE A PEOPLE AND PLACE THAT
VALUES THE LIFE AND HEALTH OF EVERY
WOMAN AND UNBORN CHILD, AND
PURSUES THE WELLBEING OF BOTH.

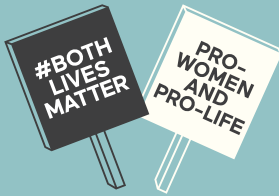
We face a critical
cultural moment.

*The Irish people are
being asked — do both
lives matter?*

We think they do. In fact, our starting point in every pregnancy is that both lives matter. This profoundly simple core value helps to navigate the difficult and sensitive landscape we find ourselves in.

Abortion is a sensitive issue. It touches upon our identity, relationships and beliefs — things we all care about deeply. It cuts to the heart of the ideas we hold about what it means to be human, free and equal.

Abortion policy is complex and increasingly shaped by opinions rather than evidence. However, the impact of a range of factors (medicine and biology, law wider culture, human rights, responsibility, education, economics, religion and philosophy, it cannot be ignored. The current public debate is hugely polarised and does not serve the complexity of the issue well, nor the women and unborn children more affected by abortion.



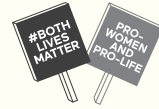
The current law seeks to protect both women and their unborn children as far as humanly possible. This referendum pits consumer choice against our common humanity and the voice of the voiceless.

We don't claim to have an easy solution to hard ethical dilemmas, but we do believe there is a better, more human way forward.

We hope this short booklet might help you with words and stories about a more human way to live and be together.

*To make the case
that keeping the 8th
Amendment is the
best way to ensure that*

**BOTH LIVES
REALLY DO MATTER.**



HUMAN BEGINNINGS MATTER

THESE DAYS THERE ARE A WHOLE RANGE OF APPS AND ONLINE RESOURCES TO HELP EXPECTANT PARENTS TRACK THE GESTATIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THEIR BABY.

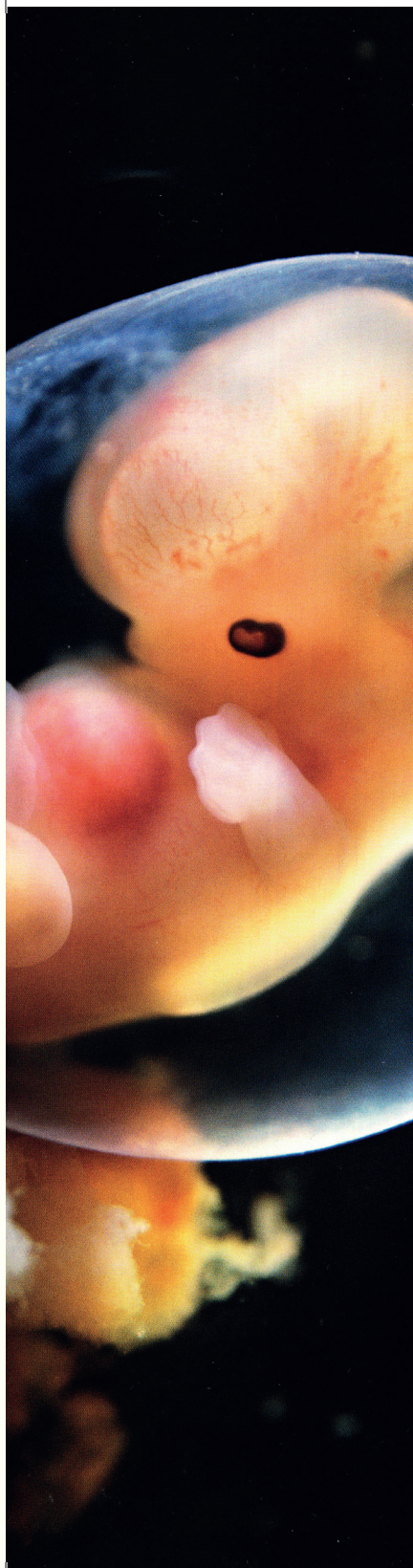
Pictures and videos show what is happening as a baby grows towards birth. It can be disturbingly easy to separate in our minds these longed-for babies from those which are unwanted, a 'problem' to be ended. Whether we call them babies, foetuses or 'products of conception'; whether they are wanted or not, we share with them the journey of human development.

Conception

Human life begins at conception. This is the point when fertilisation results in a new genetically and physically distinct human organism being formed.¹ The new human DNA created from the sperm and egg coming together is unique. It has never existed before and will never exist again. At this stage, the sex of the baby, hair and eye colour are determined. While people will argue about the value of this human life and when and whether it should be recognised and protected as a 'person', the existence of a new human life at conception is a fact which is not up for debate.

¹

Ronan O'Rahilly and Fabiola Mueller (2000) *Human Embryology and Teratology*, 3rd edn. New York: John Wiley & Sons, p. 8



3 *weeks*

The heart starts to beat.

6 *weeks*

The brain is sending messages around the body and the baby is already over one hundred times bigger than at conception.

8 *weeks*

Limbs and organs are now developing into place and the body is essentially complete.

10 *weeks*

The baby now has nails and unique finger prints and can make a fist.

12 *weeks*

The baby responds to touch. It is active, kicking and doing somersaults.

13 *weeks*

The baby is sucking and swallowing amniotic fluid to exercise the lungs.

16 *weeks*

The mother may feel the baby moving and the baby can hear the mother's voice.

24 *weeks*

With proper medical care babies born at this stage have a fifty to seventy per cent chance of survival. Some have even survived from 22 weeks.

26 *weeks*

Around this time babies start to open their eyes & blink.

33 *weeks*

The baby's brain and nervous system are fully developed and their bones continue to harden.

37 *weeks*

The baby is full term and ready to be born.



Disabilities & Life-limiting Conditions

Some babies do not develop the way most of us do. A whole range of medical conditions, including physical and mental disabilities, can begin to unfold as the baby develops in the womb. Some of these conditions are minor, such as cleft lip, while others can be so serious that the baby may not survive up to term.

Scientific developments now mean that testing pre-born babies for 'defects' and disabilities is routine. When the purpose is to treat the unborn child and to help the woman and family prepare for life with their child, these tests can be beneficial. However, in countries where legislation allows for abortion specifically for disability or for wide non-specific reasons, abortion becomes common and normalised in cases of disabilities of many kinds. For example, in Great Britain, nine out of ten babies are aborted when Down's syndrome (trisomy 21) is detected. It is difficult to see this as anything other than discrimination because of disability - something we consider unacceptable at any other time. In these instances screening can become a threshold for life.

Such diagnoses can have devastating consequences for mothers, unborn children and their families. Abortion does not solve the problem for the unborn child or woman. It is not a treatment for tragedy. In these moments, we stand in solidarity with the entire family — including the mother and unborn child. We must work to ensure that women facing these very difficult circumstances receive the best support services and personal pathways of care, including perinatal hospice care and ongoing support services for the child's lifetime, however short. Specialist support can be found from a number of peer support charities like Every Life Counts.





VALUES MATTER



RIGHT OR LEFT, RELIGIOUS OR NOT...

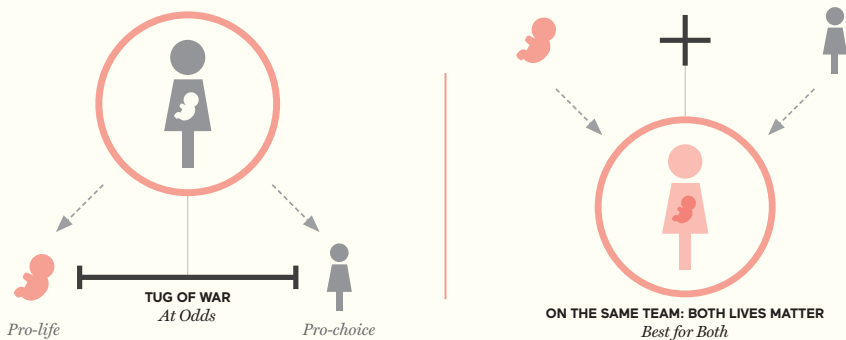
Abortion, the deliberate ending of an unborn baby's life, is always going to be controversial because it is literally a matter of life and death. Abortion raises questions about women's rights, bodily freedom/autonomy, care for the vulnerable, freedom and equality, justice and compassion, dignity and humanity. It is about human rights and responsibility, the tension between the obligation on the state to protect life and the limits of individual freedom.

When it comes to abortion, these values are increasingly presented as a simple tug of war, where women only win when unborn children lose their life's protection. The innate relationship between woman and unborn child is severed and they are pitched against each other in a battle of rights. It's tragic, but for some, abortion has become a symbol of freedom, progress and equality. Those who oppose it are portrayed as oppressive, regressive and anti-women. Some campaigns, led by those paid to carry out

abortions, paint the decriminalisation of abortion as the last battle in a long series of hard-won legal rights for women, like the right to vote and equal pay. This way of thinking tells women, 'you are only as free and equal as your decision to end the life of your unborn child.' Progress on women's rights is being strongly linked with the erosion of the right to life of unborn children.

This is a zero-sum game which is exposed as confused and dangerous when the practice of gender-selective abortions is considered which are largely used to terminate female babies.

But if Both Lives Matter then women and unborn children remain connected in our thinking – reflecting the biological and social reality. We believe that progress for women means progress for their unborn children too. When women thrive so do unborn children and vice-versa. This is an inclusive, creative and compassionate way of thinking about progress and equality. It stands in solidarity alongside both women and unborn children in these moments offering a more human vision of what it means to be and live together.



Christianity

In Ireland, if people hold a faith, it is overwhelmingly likely to be Christian.

Here are just a few of the reasons Christians from across the Churches seek to celebrate and protect both lives.

'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.'

JEREMIAH 1:5

'Your eyes saw my unformed body; all the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.'

PSALM 139:16

HUMAN BEINGS ARE CREATED IN GOD'S IMAGE

Human beings are God's idea and are endowed with intrinsic value. This is true regardless of how this life came into being. God formed humanity — abortion de-forms and de-creates, literally. It goes against the Bible and natural law.

HUMAN BEINGS WERE CREATED FOR RELATIONSHIP

God made people for relationship with himself and each other. Family and community are the primary home for identity and purpose. Children are a gift and a blessing, not a matter of convenience and choice. Personal autonomy is not the highest biblical or moral good, in fact submission to God and each other in Christ is what we are called into.

COMPASSION FOR THE VULNERABLE

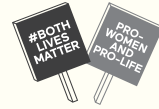
Christians should be driven by compassion, following Jesus in loving neighbours and enemies, the poor and marginalised, the oppressed and the weak. They see dignity in women in crisis and unborn babies who are profoundly disabled or unwanted.

JUSTICE AND MERCY

Christians want the best outcomes for women and unborn children individually and across society. Compassion does not equal abortion, even in the most difficult circumstances. We also need to speak clearly about the forgiveness, hope and redemption through Jesus Christ for everyone, including those who have chosen abortion.

ABORTION AND RESCUE

The early Church was known for walking around the rubbish tips on the edge of the city to look for discarded babies. They would adopt these unwanted babies and raise them as their own, mirroring their own spiritual adoption. While natural death is part of the fallen reality of sin and sickness, resulting in the tension of difficult heart-wrenching decisions, the movement of the Bible is from loss to rescue, despair to hope, and ultimately death to life.



WORDS MATTER

WE RECOGNISE THE AGONY OF THE SITUATIONS SOME WOMEN FIND THEMSELVES IN AND THE DECISIONS THEY MAKE.

We speak to build value in people, not tear them apart. We will not dehumanise our opponents, neither will we shy away from naming things truthfully.

Abortion dehumanises — literally. The language of some of those who seek to further abortion mirrors this physical reality. Words are used which make it easier to ignore the humanity of those involved. Women become ‘vessels’ or ‘life-support machines’, unborn babies become ‘parasites’ or ‘products of conception’. Words like mother and baby are only used when the baby is wanted, otherwise the baby remains a foetus/embryo – technically correct but relationally void.

‘Choice’ is used as a euphemism for the freedom to decide to end the life of an unborn baby. Those who oppose abortion are told to stop forcing their views on everyone else – the implication that any other belief or dissent is oppressive.

We seek to shift the narrative to life and flourishing. We deliberately speak of babies and tiny family members. We extend humanity and dignity to each baby whether or not they are wanted, using the inclusive language of family and community.





NUMBERS MATTER

- » The World Health Organization estimates that there are around 40 to 50 million abortions carried out each year around the world.
- » In the UK, since the 1967 Act, there have been over 8 million abortions in England and Wales. **That's more than the population of the island of Ireland.**
- » In 2016 in England and Wales there were 696,271 live births and 185,596 abortions, so for every four children born, one was aborted.
- » By the age of 45, one in three women in England and Wales will have had an abortion.
Abortion has been 'normalised'.
- » In the last ten years in England and Wales, out of almost two million abortions, only 16 were recorded as for the purposes of 'to save the life of the mother.' Overwhelmingly, most abortions are for socio-economic reasons.





100,000

A HUNDRED THOUSAND LIVES MATTER.

An independent actuarial report has found that over 100,000 lives have been saved by the eighth amendment in the past two decades. This equates to one in every fifty people in the Republic of Ireland or 2% of the population.

More than two hundred thousand people are alive on this island today because of our more balanced laws on abortion.

In the North, an independently verified report by Both Lives Matter found that more than 100,000 people are alive there today because the 1967 Abortion Act or similar legislation was not introduced. This is around one in ten under fifties or 5% of the total population in Northern Ireland.

These figures are already helping to change the story around abortion and the role of our laws on these islands.

People you know and love are here today because of the 8th amendment, which protects both women and children as far as humanly possible.

THIS IS
EQUAL
TO...

5%

*of the total population
of Northern Ireland
(100,000 lives saved 1967-2017)*

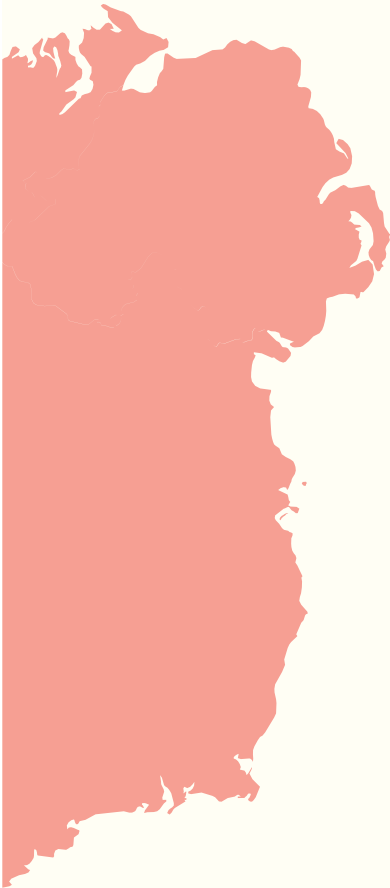
2%

*of the total population
of the Republic of Ireland
(100,000 lives saved 1983-2016)*

Reference: https://prolifecampaign.ie/main/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/ProLifeCampaign_Actuarial_Report_and_Commentary_7September2016.pdf



LAW MATTERS



- » The laws on this island have historically been based on a particular vision of the common good, which continues to place a high regard on personal freedom while limiting the deliberate ending of innocent human life. Protecting both women and unborn children as far as humanly possible is not backward and regressive. It is a compassionate, ethical and hopeful aim.
- » A dangerous idea has developed particularly in human rights law, that legal or indeed moral 'progress' on human/women's rights should be measured by our ability to end the lives of our unborn children. From the founding proclamation, 'we cherish all the children of the nation equally to the eighth amendment our laws protect women and children as much as possible.'

- » The Eighth Amendment states, *The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right.*

The Eighth Amendment strikes a very difficult and delicate balance between the life, health and wellbeing of the mother and that of her baby. The law in Ireland reflects the biological and relational reality that both lives are intimately linked.

The government want to change the law allowing:

- » Abortion up to 3 months for any reason
- » Abortion up to 6 months on vague 'health' grounds like the British model — essentially abortion on demand
- » Abortion right up to birth for babies with a severe disability.

LAW MATTERS

Allowing abortion on demand creates a demand for abortion. Voting 'NO' limits abortion to cases where it is absolutely necessary.

This should be complimented by policies delivering world-leading pregnancy healthcare and perinatal hospice care.





OUR STORIES

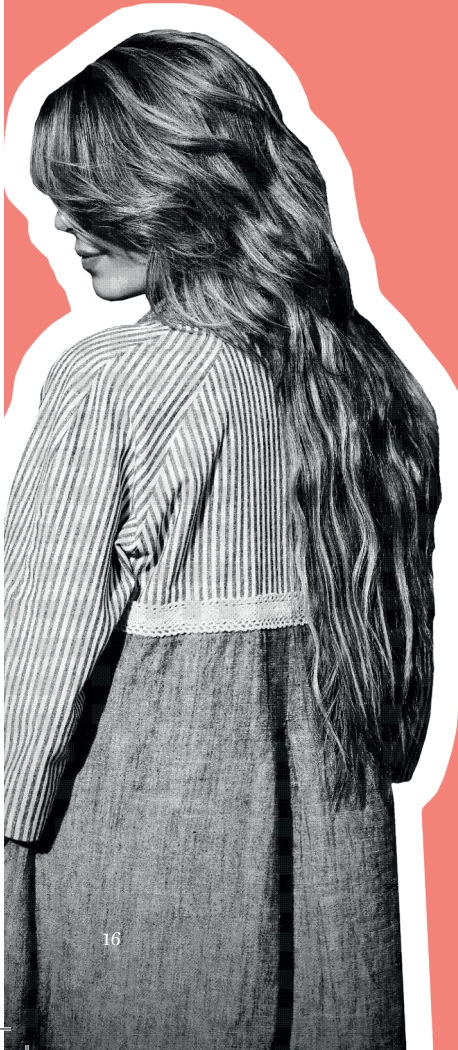
So many women have trusted us with their stories. With their permission we have shared them on our website. *Here is just one...*

REBECCA'S STORY

The 98%

IF YOU HAD ASKED THE TEENAGE VERSION OF ME GROWING UP, 'WHAT'S THE QUICKEST WAY TO RUIN YOUR LIFE?' WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT, I WOULD HAVE SAID, 'GET PREGNANT.'

My teenage judgements sound very extreme but if we are completely honest with ourselves, we all know the teen mum stereotype – chav tracksuit, no qualifications, hanging around the 'dole office'. Not to mention, it is automatically assumed that they are bad mothers. So, when I sat in that doctor's surgery at 3am, aged 18, and was told that I was pregnant... I stepped into my own living nightmare. The doctor gave me a look that said, 'Say goodbye to your gap year travels, your university place, your future.'



I was shocked. And I was devastated. On the drive home I simultaneously tried to convince my mum that I was still a virgin, but also that I was probably about 6 months on. (It had been a while since anything baby-making-related had happened). My head was spinning as I remembered all the things I had done recently; The nights out. The wine. The 'Jaegerbomb-Queen' title. The A levels. The failed driving test where I nearly killed a pedestrian. I was the last person this should have been happening to.

For the next three months I was constantly carrying another human, but I'd never felt so humanly alone. It should have been the happiest news of my life but people consoled me or avoided me. The amazing new life inside of me was overclouded by my young age. As a result, I think I only truly accepted that I was going to be a mum when I went into labour. Reuben's gigantic head was making its jolly way through my cervix and that's when I informed my mum, and the midwives, *'I don't think motherhood is for me.'*

But oh my. One look at that deliciously-beautiful yet hairy new-born of mine, and I knew it was so for me. He was so for me. The beauty of having a baby so young is that quite often that baby is your first real experience of true love. When I looked at Reuben, I wasn't a teen mum anymore. I wasn't a stereotype. I wasn't a statistic. I was just Reuben's mum. And I was going to give this motherhood thing everything

I had.

Of course, that hasn't been easy. I've been winging my way through motherhood. But, aren't we all? On top of googling what colour my new-born's diarrhoea should be, I was working part time, repeating A levels, and completing a counselling course to get into university... most of which was done whilst Reuben slept at night. But just because something isn't conventional, doesn't mean it can't work. I'm now 21 and Reuben goes to university crèche when I am in class or at the library and he is only ever 20 yards away.

Some would say stubborn and annoyingly head strong, but I prefer to say unwaveringly-determined. If ever there was going to be a single-teenagemum studying for a degree at university – I am your girl. But for this reason, I worry that people will look at me as the 'success' story. The 'minority' story. The 'exception to the rule'.

But in reality my story is the same as everyone else's. And the truth- the truth that I rarely tell anyone is, I didn't want the baby in my belly. I wanted what society told me was a quick fix. I wanted an abortion. Even after my beautiful Reuben was born, I still struggled to accept what had happened. I felt that people were waiting for me to fail and I couldn't help but notice the looks on the street. I began to believe the lies that were spoken over me – 'what a waste of potential', 'how could you make such a mistake?', and not to

mention the derogatory names that I'd receive from people I didn't even know.

Boy, am I glad that I didn't receive my news until I was 6 months on. The choice was taken out of my hands, and although my mum may have wanted to kill me – I am so thankful that I didn't have the option of doing something I'd regret. I wish I could go back in time and tell myself how full my life would be. I wish I could go back and tell myself that there was hope. I reluctantly joined a group for young parents, annoyed that I was expected to be friends with these people just because we all got knocked up before the culturally appropriate age. Little did I know, I would meet some of the most amazing girls who would become a massive part of my life. We were in this together.

I stopped believing that motherhood or Reuben was an unfortunate mistake that could have been avoided. I started believing that Reuben had a purpose – that I had a purpose. I was no longer a product of my circumstances. And in my darkest moment, coming face to face with the extravagant love of Jesus, I was enabled to love Reuben more than I knew possible.

I am no longer a teen mum and I'm no longer ashamed. I no longer stand under the labels of 'reckless', 'worthless', and 'failure'. I now stand under the labels of 'loved', 'strong', and 'valuable'. I wasted too much time mourning the life that I could have had, but that life was never actually mine to mourn. It

just robbed me of the time and energy to live, enjoy, and make the best of the life I have now. Admittedly, I'm still a little scared to go out in public with Reuben in my tracksuit bottoms for fear of looking like a typical teen mum. But sometimes I think of the quivering, uncertain mess I was during my pregnancy, and I think 'Girl, you did good'.

I am passionate about encouraging those women who are the same quivering, uncertain mess that I was. I wish it was my job to greet every woman who comes out of a doctor's surgery after receiving their news – and do you know what I would do? I **WOULD CONGRATULATE THEM!** I wish I could be the voice of strength and positivity when society tells them they've made a mistake. I want to empower women to pursue their dreams, and dare I say it – with their baby.

Getting pregnant at 18 didn't mean my life was over. It meant that I get to do life with Reuben. Of course I spend most of my time doing all of the dinosaur and Fireman Sam related activities...but I also still do everything I used to. I have pizza nights with friends, I go out in the evenings, I travel to new countries, I stay up way too late, I worry about money, I binge on chocolate... I do everything, but I do everything with Reuben. And I wouldn't have it any other way.



TAKE A STAND

1. VOTE NO

On the 25th May, the government is asking you to remove the 8th amendment and give politicians a blank cheque when it comes to abortion law.

Repealing the 8th amendment means:

- » Abortion for any reason up to 3 months
- » Essentially abortion on demand on 'health' grounds up to 6 months
- » Abortion right up to birth for babies with a severe disability.

**If you want to keep the 8th amendment,
If you want to protect women and their unborn
children, then vote NO.**

*Make sure you are registered to vote before 8th May
— go to www.checktheregister.ie*

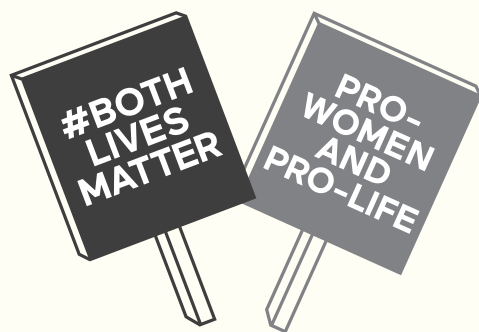
2. SPEAK UP

Now is the time to speak up for those without voice or vote. Talk about this life or death decision with family and friends and work colleagues. Be bold and get out and canvas on the doorsteps - don't wake up filled with regret on the 26th May.

Lots of people are still undecided, others are confused. Keep your message simple and clear - vote NO to save the 8th amendment.

3. WHAT NEXT?

- » Check you are registered to vote
- » Vote on 25th May
- » Who will you talk to next?
- » Who will you pass this booklet on to?
- » Who will you offer to take to the polling station?



Stand with us
BOTHLIVEMATTER.ORG