



MIDWIVES
FOR CHOICE

Press release – for
immediate release,
Thursday 28 January

Midwives launch pro-choice campaign advocating for repeal of 8th amendment

A pro-choice campaign led by health care professionals, Midwives for Choice, will launch on Saturday 30 January.

The campaign will represent midwives and consumers of maternity services across Ireland who share its aims and objectives of safe, high-quality reproductive, maternal and newborn health care.

Says **campaign spokesperson Philomena Canning**: 'The eighth amendment has failed in its objective of fetal protection from abortion. While undermining the human rights of women by denying access to safe, free and legal abortion in Ireland, the eighth amendment also has damning implications for choice across the spectrum of pregnancy and childbirth, evidenced by its exclusion of all pregnant women from the National Consent Policy.

'Denying women a role in decision-making about their care in pregnancy and childbirth undermines the safety and welfare of mothers and babies. In the name of fetal protectionism, the eighth amendment provides for the enforced compliance of healthy women in childbirth with routine intervention – without medical necessity and contrary to best practice. As a consequence, physiological birth is increasingly becoming a vestige of the past, as the trend in the national Caesarean section rate, currently at 30 per cent, continues to rise. While the increase in surgical birth has not resulted in more live babies, the upward trend in Ireland's maternal mortality rate is a pattern shown elsewhere to correlate with rising Caesarean section rates.

'MfC welcomes the recognition by the just-published **National Maternity Strategy** of the need for an overhaul of maternity services incorporating midwifery-led care as the default model for best outcomes for healthy women and babies. However, we assert that the required reconfiguration

identified by the Strategy can only be implemented by repeal of the eighth amendment, to enable meaningful woman-centred maternity care, contingent on pregnant women exercising full and informed consent and refusal.'

Says launch keynote speaker **Elizabeth Prochaska, UK barrister and founder of Birthrights**: 'Midwives for Choice represents a significant breakthrough in reproductive choice activism in Ireland. As the campaign towards a referendum on the eighth amendment of the Irish constitution gains momentum, the voice of front line health care professionals – the guardians of women's rights – cannot be underestimated. Birthrights welcomes Midwives for Choice to the growing international movement working towards improved human rights for pregnant women.'

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Launch venue: Alexander Hotel, Fenian Street, Dublin 2

Talks: 11.30am-1.30pm

PRESS PHOTOCALL: 1.40pm

Inaugural members meeting: 2.30pm

web: midwivesforchoice.ie twitter: @midwives4choice



MIDWIVES FOR CHOICE

*Promoting women's human rights in pregnancy and childbirth
contingent upon repeal of the 8th amendment*

Join us for our official launch

Keynote speaker

Elizabeth Prochaska, UK Barrister-at-Law and founder of
Birthrights London

Also speaking

Aja Teehan, complainant in Teehan v HSE
Ailbhe Smyth, Convenor, Coalition to Repeal the Eighth Amendment

When

Saturday 30 January, 11.30-1.30

Members' AGM: 2.30-3.30

Membership open to those who share the values and aims of
Midwives for Choice

Where

O'Callaghan Alexander Hotel, 41-47 Fenian Street, Dublin 2

This is a **free of charge** ticketed event via
Eventbrite.ie: <http://bit.ly/1RUu8rJ>
Booking advised as places are limited

www.midwivesforchoice.ie

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