

Spring 2014 Issue 67 FREE

lifeneews

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Life
LOVING LIFE, OFFERING HOPE

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FINDING HOPE

Helpline Campaign

**Join our
campaign**

and help women like Ella

www.lifecharity.org.uk/findinghope

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FINDING HOPE 

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Editor Mary Lubrano

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Further copies available from:

admin@lifecharity.org.uk

or phone 01926 312272

Chairman's message

So the powers-that-be now admit that the abortion 'industry' is out of control. And they don't mind.

Yes, the Chief Medical Officer has stated categorically that gender-selection abortion is unlawful. But of course she knows that unborn girls will continue to be killed simply for being girls. Doctors performing these abortions will say that many women living in this country have to produce sons and so will qualify for abortion on 'mental health' grounds.

And now Health Minister Jane Ellison has explained that, though the Abortion Act requires that two doctors certify 'in good faith' that an abortion meets the requirements of the Act, neither is legally bound to see the women – though it is 'good practice' one should.

And presumably that single doctor would normally be the one who is just about to do the abortion, having never previously seen – let alone examined – the woman.

Not that having two doctors actively involved would make much difference. They'd be there precisely because they were ready to say yes every time.

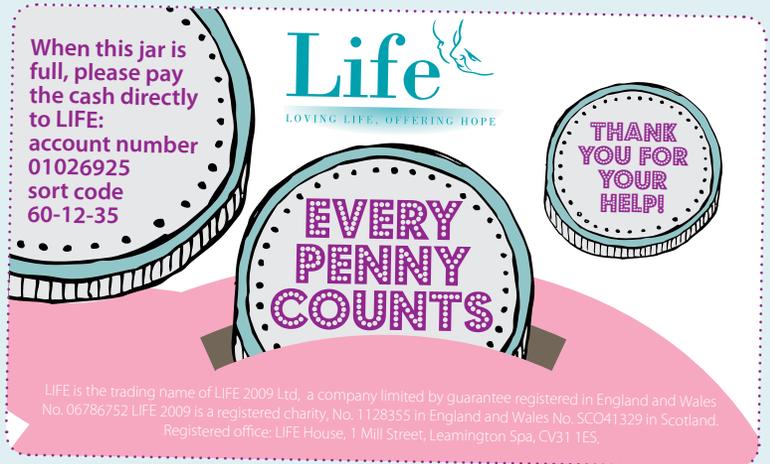
Shocking, isn't it?
But we must fight on – yet harder.
And enjoy this issue of LIFE News.
There's much here to lift spirits!

Prof Jack Scarisbrick



EVERY PENNY COUNTS

Do you want to save on mending the holes in your pockets? Or make it easier to clean your bedside table? Perhaps you hate the shapeless lumps in your jacket? Then again, would you like to lighten the weight you are carrying around in your handbag? These are everyday problems that we can help solve for you.



Simply donate your loose change to LIFE!



The label above is for you to cut out and stick onto a convenient jar. The bigger the jar, the better – and it will have the benefit of saving on your shoe leather walking back and forth to the bank! When it is full, please take it to any NatWest branch and pay it into our account. Our bank details are on the label.

You'll be amazed at how much you can raise for the vital work of LIFE without really noticing it. It's really gratifying to see how many friends and relatives are happy to put some coins into the jar as well – particularly if you ask them!

**Thank you for helping.
Every penny counts.**

And the #notblinkered campaign winner was...!

Harriet Turner (pictured) was the lucky recipient of a brand new Roberts Revival Radio thanks to her super-creative photo uploaded onto the #notblinkered microsite which received 39 votes in total. **Well done Harriet!**



Thank you The recent Christmas Appeal has raised a magnificent sum of just over £87.5k. Thank you, all of you, very much indeed!

FINDING HOPE

Building upon the success of LIFE's first awareness campaign – #notblinkered – Spring 2014 sees the launch of *Finding Hope* which addresses a serious and urgent problem.

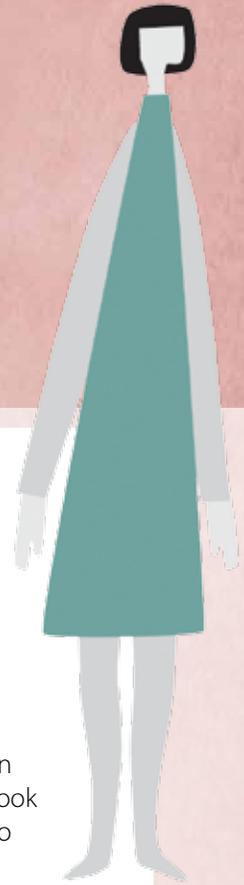
New research has revealed the shocking statistic that **one in four women who seek an abortion is a victim of domestic abuse.** Senior LIFE PR Officer, Anne Scanlan says, "The association between abortion and violence towards women is strong and it's an issue we urgently need to tackle. An estimated 50,000 abused women seek an abortion every year in the UK; these women are simply not receiving the support they need."

Women in violent relationships can be drawn into a **cycle of abuse:** pregnancy – violence – abortion – violence, as women who see no other option than abortion can become self-destructive and remain in, or seek out, abusive relationships as a form of self-punishment which leads on to repeat abortions.

Additionally, it has been found that **a third of all domestic abuse begins in pregnancy.**

"Pregnant women can be at their most vulnerable and to imagine that this increases their risk of being exposed to violence at the hands of their partner is abhorrent", says Anne. "These findings from recent research are appalling and it is a tragedy that the topic has received such little attention.

"For at least a quarter of women seeking abortion, they are not doing so freely but from a position of fear. They have the abortion and are then returned to the abusive situation where, for many women, the cycle of abuse continues."



Finding Hope

LIFE has just launched its first animated film – Finding Hope – which tells the story of Ella, a woman in an abusive relationship who finds herself pregnant and thinks abortion is the only way out of her situation.

The campaign's purpose is to fund LIFE's National Helpline which provides support and compassion to women like Ella, giving them the opportunity to disclose the abuse they are suffering and find a way out

of their situation. In the film, Ella turns to LIFE and finds hope – someone who listens to her, doesn't judge her and gives her the space to explore all her options.

We hope people will be affected by the film, and moved enough to share it on social media sites like Facebook and Twitter, and, of course, to donate to LIFE's Helpline.

How you can get involved

- Visit www.lifecharity.org.uk/findinghope to watch Finding Hope
- **Like and Share** on Facebook, Tweet about it on Twitter and help spread the word among your family and friends. Thousands of women urgently need our help – the more people you tell
- **Donate to LIFE's Helpline.** Simply text ELLA25 + £10 to 70070 to donate £10 now. Alternatively, complete the form at the end of this magazine and return in the freepost envelope. Thank you.

£10 will fund the National Helpline for one hour, helping us reach and support more vulnerable women.

fundraising

Stratford Music Concert

Congratulations to Stratford LIFE group for organising a sell-out music concert on 29 November. Stratford Town Hall hosted the magnificent choir and 170 guests in the spectacular chandelier-lit hall.

The evening raised £1,700 – including £400 from the evening's raffle. Stratford LIFE have used these funds, along with additional amounts raised from holding regular stalls, to support the National Helpline for one year.

Doncaster LIFE's Sponsored Walk

A team of 13 walkers from Doncaster's LIFE Group took part in the annual sponsored walk raising £1,310 – a magnificent amount. The scenic path was enjoyed by all, with particular thanks going to Liz Richards for planning this year's route. Longstanding members of Doncaster LIFE, Bob & Dinah Bestwick (centre left) deserve a special mention for their continuous support of the group, and for bringing cheerfulness and encouragement to the walk once again.



London 10 Bridges Walk – 11 May 2014

LIFE's annual London 10 Bridges Walk will take place on Sunday 11 May 2014 – so make a note in your diaries and prepare your walking boots for what is sure to be an inspiring fundraiser. The walk will begin at Tower Bridge at 2pm and finish at Lambeth Bridge, with further details of the complete route being circulated closer to the event date.

If you are interested in taking part in the walk or would like to steward a specific bridge please contact Thérèse Walker at dwalker@visuals.plus.com who would be delighted to hear from you. Please contact your local LIFE group or HO for copies of sponsorship forms – good luck!





Spirit of the Blitz

London's recent fundraiser, a 1940s Blitz Party held on Saturday 22 February in the beautiful crypt of St. Etheldreda's, was a roaring success with over 120 guests getting into the "swing" of the evening!

Homemade 40s inspired cakes, Spitfire ale and 40s cocktails were enjoyed alongside a fabulous swing dance performance by Tango professionals.

Catherine Anderson, London's Development Officer, organised the event with a team of

dedicated volunteers and said, "I couldn't be more pleased with how the evening went – everything ran smoothly and it was brilliant to see so many people dress the part. Thank you to everyone who was involved in the planning process and the volunteers on the night."

The Blitz Party raised just over £4,500 and will go towards setting up a new Care Centre in London, alongside a charity shop.



Wolf Run April 2014

LIFE's Shops Finance Administrator (and dedicated

LIFE fundraiser!) Thomas Gower will be taking part in the Wolf Run on 26 April 2014 along with LIFE's FertilityCare Coordinator, Ira Winter.

The Wolf Run is part of the latest Wild Running trend, a hardcore 10 km run across raw natural terrain, including open ground, woodland, lakes and thick mud. The run encompasses tough obstacles designed to test the mental and physical strength, skill and stamina of those taking part. Both Tom and Ira will need to climb, jump, wade, crawl and swim their way to the end of the course.

If you would like to support Tom and Ira please spread word of their bravery or sponsor them by:

Visiting www.justgiving.com/thomas-gower or www.justgiving.com/ira-winter

Texting "TOMG98 + £5" or "IRAW98 + £5" to 70070

Thank you

COSATTO
baby stuff with personality

The company Cosatto, a designer and provider of funky baby equipment, has very kindly donated a brand new high chair, travel cot and a baby bouncer. These items will be welcomed by LIFE's Care service, which will distribute them to women in need.

housing

No two days are the same

LIFE Housing Support Workers do an amazing job, dealing with a range of issues. Tasks vary from supporting tenants' education to calling in pest control for a wasps' nest; delivering vital Life Skills to fixing broken lamps! We asked Clair Wright, Support Worker at the Woking LIFE house, how her day was.



I came to the house this morning worried as I haven't seen one of my tenants all week which is unusual for her. She's newly pregnant with her second child and I know she's finding this stressful. I have called and left a couple of messages on her mobile this week but she didn't respond so I called her mother today who is very supportive. One hour later the tenant walked into the house. We had a long conversation over a cup of coffee about how she was feeling and what support she would like. It was a positive chat and the tenant said she felt a lot better about her situation afterwards.

The next job of the day was to clean the fridge out as there was some off chicken in there! We cleaned the fridge as a Life Skills activity, discussing how it would have been better to freeze the unused chicken to avoid waste. Lots of Life Skills are done like this; often a 'hands on' approach works best. We then went around the house with a can of WD40 to spray on the squeaky doors.

Later I talked to two tenants who are about to move out of the house and on to independent living. We went through Woking Borough Council's new move-on process, and discussed privately rented accommodation in the area. Moving on is an important step for the girls and we give them all the support they need.

I then helped a tenant fill out a bursary application for £30 per week for college items she will need. I've spent some time securing the college placement for this tenant and, working with other agencies, arranged a childminder for her.

In Group Life Skills, the girls decided that, with the money they've saved recently, they would like to buy a playpen and baby walker for the house. We looked online and the tenants chose the items they wanted.

No two days are the same in this role which I like. Some days can be more challenging than others but it is so rewarding to see the tenants and their children succeed here, often turning their lives around.

Thanks for food donation

Tenants at the Slough LIFE house want to say a huge thank you to their local LIFE group, Chalfont St Peter, for their kind food donations.



New mums Jodie Webster (left) and Jade Kalia (right) receive the food donations.

Special delivery at Haywards Heath LIFE House

“This day at the Haywards Heath house was like no other!” said Anne Willis, LIFE Support Worker.

“One of the tenants, Kirstie, was in labour, with me and the girls supporting her as best we could. She was doing really well. Then, suddenly, Kirstie began having an overwhelming urge to push; we all went from calmly counting contractions to being on high alert!

“I immediately rang the labour ward of the local hospital and an ambulance while the other tenants rallied round getting towels and pillows. But it became obvious the baby was coming – and coming fast!

“Luckily the ambulance crew arrived just in time to deliver the baby – a perfect little girl. They were both taken off to the hospital to check all was well. Kirstie handled the experience amazingly, keeping calm and focused throughout.”

Kirstie said: “When I suddenly went into labour I had no idea what was going on. I was scared. Giving birth to Olivia on the bathroom floor was never something



I planned or thought about. Without the help from the ambulance crew, my Support Worker Anne and the girls in the house I couldn't have done it.

“So thanks girls – it's nice to know that we're all there for each other – no matter what the situation!”

Helping tenants to feel at home with their finances

Slough residents Sophie Butler, Jade Kalia and Jodie Webster took part in a “Feel at home with your finances” course run by Shelter and the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Support Worker Karen Newman explains: “The course is funded by the Big Lottery Fund for five years so we are looking to sign all our tenants up in that time. The eight modules, each tailored to the individual needs of the client, include budgeting, paying rent,

dealing with debt, opening and using a bank account, saving, paying bills and even loan sharks and payday loans. The tenants found all aspects of the course valuable and useful.”



A trip to the seaside...

Support Workers and tenants from three of the West Sussex LIFE houses met at the Littlehampton house for lunch and a trip to the beach late last summer.

"We were nervous about meeting so many new people," said Chantelle Kenard from the Worthing LIFE house. "But it was good to see another house and have a lovely lunch in their garden. Everyone was so friendly."

...and a Winter Wonderland!

Tenants from both Slough LIFE houses enjoyed a group Life Skills trip to the Winter Wonderland in Hyde Park, London in December.



Tenants and Support Workers enjoy the sunshine on the seafront



James cuddles up to mum Lauren



Getting excited on the train there – Jordan Grant (left) with her son Rhys and Maria Nolan (right) with her son Maximillion

"It's a great way for tenants to meet other women in similar circumstances and to see the differences and similarities with the other LIFE houses."

Regional Manager, Tracy Norman

The Women's Institute – Inspiring Women

Chertsey LIFE House tenants recently welcomed the Women's Institute (WI) to their home to run a free, six-week cookery course. "The girls were given a recipe book, bag and apron at the start of the course and could choose what they wanted to learn to cook. At the end they got a certificate," explains Tina Millhouse, Senior Support Worker at the house. "We want to

say a massive thank you to the WI ladies – the tenants loved it and learnt so much! It's a great example of partnership working; LIFE houses can contact their local WI and see if they run similar courses in their area."

Tenants (left to right) Mia, Beth, Chloe and Elisha proudly show off their certificates with the ladies from the WI.



Supporting those who have slipped through the net



**by David Bennett,
Head of Communications
and Fundraising**

LIFE is committed to helping as many pregnant women as we can to a

better life and equipping young people with the facts about Life Issues, such as conception, birth and abortion, and empowering them to develop good, healthy relationships.

But what if they are off the radar when it comes to getting help and support? Perhaps a parent or partner has thrown them out on the street because they are pregnant, or they are sleeping on a different friend's floor each night. How do they find help?

That's where LIFE can now make a difference. Thanks to a generous grant from the Charles Plater Trust, we are able to implement our latest programme designed to pull together our care and education skills to benefit a wider range of people – many of them marginalised and without other sources of support.

One of the most important parts of our Housing service is equipping tenants for

independent living through our Life Skills training programme, covering issues such as cooking & nutrition, budget setting, maintaining a tenancy and work & careers.

LIFE also delivers a huge education programme on Life Issues to schools, reaching some 35,000 students last year alone. We plan now to use the Charles Plater Trust grant to provide Life Skills and Life Issues training via local statutory agencies like Sure Start to reach a wider group of needy and often disadvantaged people.

We will start in three selected areas – in the North, Midlands and South – with a team of trained volunteers.

The recipe is simple: take our Education work and Life Skills training, mix thoroughly and add the skills of our Care staff who can then help people, many of whom have slipped through the net, to re-engage with society and make a better start in life for themselves and their children.

Manchester LIFE group needs you

Put your pro-life views into action. Spread the LIFE message locally, help in our Shop and Care Centre, the Toddlers' group we run or just support us with your ideas. Call our shop on **0161 902 9022** or email **judithone2@gmail.com**

Visit www.supportlife.org.uk/northwest for latest Manchester news.

care

“I made the right decision for me”

I was taking the Pill and had no intention of having a baby. I'd only been with my boyfriend for three months, and couldn't believe I was pregnant. Disaster... I had plans for further education, even university. I couldn't possibly have a baby.

My boyfriend didn't want to know and blamed me. He just walked away.

In desperation I phoned a Helpline just wanting someone to arrange an abortion for me. I rang LIFE thinking an abortion could be easily arranged. But instead the counsellor explored the situation with me, gently getting me to express my feelings and think about the way forward.

We looked at possible help and support if I decided to keep the baby. BABY! That freaked me out....surely it wasn't a baby...yet. By this time I was 12 weeks pregnant and frantically pretending that I wasn't.

A school friend had had an abortion and was very upset about it. Abortion had always been described as a simple little operation, but now that it was me I needed to know what was going to happen.

The Helpline counsellor talked me through the

various methods of abortion. She was gentle, compassionate and non-judgemental. She suggested that I take time to think calmly about the whole thing before making my mind up. It was all such a disaster that I hardly knew what to think or feel. She told me that I could ring again whenever I wanted.

After a week of mulling things over I rang the Helpline again and the same counsellor listened carefully. I decided that after a lot of consideration I wanted my baby after all. My mum and dad were understanding and even my boyfriend had calmed down enough to offer to support me and the baby.

It started out as a total disaster but because I was given the opportunity by a LIFE counsellor to think things through carefully, without feeling pressured, I made the right decision for me.

I now have a beautiful little girl. Her dad and granddad are thrilled to bits with her and so am I.

Vicki, 19, studying at FE College

The Challenge Network

The Challenge Network, a charity working to build a more integrated society, recently raised £185 for Walsall LIFE. “Challenge work on a local level, running community programmes which bring diverse groups of people together,” says Liz Lloyd, LIFE’s Care Supervisor. “The Manager of our local Sure Start centre recommended us as we’ve worked with them closely and outsourced some of our courses to them. Just shows what positive networking can achieve!”



The kids and team from Challenge Network

Minister refuses enquiry into abortion/breast cancer link

Health Minister Jane Ellison has rejected an appeal by LIFE to set up an independent enquiry into the link between abortion and breast cancer, claiming on the authority of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG) that the link does not exist.

'This is a refusal to face unwelcome facts,' says LIFE National Chairman Jack Scarisbrick. 'There is overwhelming evidence from around the world for the ABC (abortion/breast cancer) link, climaxing in a most impressive meta-analysis from China published recently which confirmed the findings of a 1996 meta-analysis of literature on the subject.

'Breast cancer rates have risen in England and Wales in the last four decades to over 50,000 new cases every year. Our opponents claim that this is due to earlier detection and factors such as binge-drinking and obesity. Certainly these are risk factors – because they increase levels of the female hormone oestrogen, which in turn causes a multiplication of breast cells.

'But oestrogen levels rise far higher in the first months of pregnancy and trigger a proliferation of breast cells which later become milk-producing. If the pregnancy is cut short by abortion or premature delivery, those undifferentiated cells are vulnerable to carcinogens, i.e. cancer. This is especially true if the abortion is 'nulliparous' (there has been no previous full-term pregnancy) as is the case with most UK abortions.

'So there is a clear biological explanation for the ABC link. And notice that it is induced, not spontaneous, abortion which is the risk factor. Indeed, pregnancies usually fail spontaneously precisely because oestrogen levels are too low.

Conversely, there is clear evidence that full-term pregnancy followed by breast-feeding protects against breast cancer.

'Of course we are not saying that every woman who has an abortion will contract breast cancer or that every woman who has that disease must have had an abortion. No, the argument is simply that induced abortion is a significant (i.e. serious) risk factor for the disease – and that there is worldwide evidence to support this.

'Yes, there are some studies which deny it. But these are almost always seriously flawed and often fail to distinguish between 'nulliparous' and 'parous' abortions or spontaneous and induced abortions. The RCOG relies on a 2004 Oxford study which claimed to be a definitive 're-working' of all existing literature, but it was not. It cherry-picked its evidence and then used a bizarre method of assessing it. Instead of comparing the breast cancer rates of women who had had induced abortions with those of women who had not, it compared the breast cancer rates of abortive women with what those rates would have been 'if they had never had such a pregnancy' – which is truly absurd.

'The RCOG has to deny the ABC link and shelter under such spurious 'science' because its members are committed to abortionism and would face colossal damages if they confessed to the ABC link.

'It is the Minister's duty to seek out the truth from an independent source so women can be warned. Informed consent is a hallowed principle of good medicine. LIFE is seeking ways in which this conspiracy of silence can be brought to a speedy end.'

shops

By Eireann Marshall Janssens,
Retail Development/Operations Manager

New Shops

Our new Wolverhampton shop opened last December and, ably led by experienced Shop Manager Catherine Ward, took £2700 in their first two weeks' trading.

We are also opening a new shop in Doncaster in March. The new shop manager, Paul Warren (pictured with volunteer Lorraine) comes from the Derby LIFE Shop and is working hard to get the shop customer-ready for the opening.

Exciting plans for further LIFE shops are in the pipeline in Sheffield, Winchester, London, Bristol and Leeds.



Shop Peer System

We now have six shops in the Midlands, all within an hour of each other, and three shops in the North West, which are also about an hour apart.

In the near future, we are hoping to have three more shops in Yorkshire. This means that shops are increasingly able to support each other. Most big national charity shops warehouse their stock, which enables them to get a constant supply of new stock, but at the moment we don't have enough shops to make this work. In addition, charities have Area Managers which support and monitor Shop Managers. We are offering a new vision – Shop Managers peer mentoring each other and exchanging stock to make sure shops look fresh. Instead of warehousing stock, groups form communities which support the shops with stock. This means that our shops really are locally supported and are more cost effective.



Auction Your Donations!

The LIFE shops supported the London Blitz fundraiser on February 22 (see p7) by donating items for auction.

Michael MacDonald (pictured) who used to work for Christies, and who set up Antique Vaults (the UK's first independent free online antique service), valued and auctioned the items, including an early signed photograph of Roy Keane. Michael not only auctioned these for London but is going to value – for free – any items donated to the shops. He will also sell anything worth more than £200. If there are any collectible items anyone would like to donate to LIFE, please contact me – eireannjanssens@lifecharity.org.uk

Thank you.

Gift Aid

All of our shops in England are now Gift Aiding. Some shops have increased their income by almost 10% through Gift Aid.

Manchester has raised an additional £1000 profit in the last three months purely from Gift Aid. This is a great way of raising money for nothing, so please, get donating!

Drinking during pregnancy – will it become a crime?

A fascinating case is shortly to be heard by the Court of Appeal: that of a woman whose heavy drinking during pregnancy caused serious brain damage to her unborn daughter and is now charged with a criminal offence.

The case is being brought by an unnamed council in north-west England against the decision of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority not to pay compensation to the victim, now a six-year-old who was adopted soon after birth, on the ground that an unborn child is not a legal 'person' and therefore could not be awarded damages.

Lawyers in the case are said to be representing 80 other children afflicted by what is called 'foetal alcohol spectrum disorders' – that is, injuries caused by maternal drinking, which include facial disfigurement, learning and behavioural problems, epilepsy and liver damage. All the mothers had apparently been warned of the dangers of drinking heavily during pregnancy.

It is reckoned that some 7000 children a year are victims of alcohol exposure in utero. For the ordinary citizen this is a shocking fact

and requires urgent action. But for the pro-abortion lobby things are rather different. It is caught in a nasty dilemma. On the one hand it must be seen to deplore such behaviour. On the other, it must insist that that decision not to award damages was the right one, i.e. that an unborn child is not a legal person.

So it is now for the Appeal judges to decide. No doubt the case will end up in the Supreme Court. Which way will their lordships jump? The non-personhood of the unborn child is a laughably out-of-date doctrine. It belongs to a time when little was known about prenatal life: the ovum had not yet been discovered, modern genetics was in its infancy and prenatal scanning, of course, not invented. Only recently have we begun to appreciate fully the astonishing complexity and independence of pre-born human children.

The law must keep in step with scientific advances. Moreover, the English courts have to be aware of decisions of other jurisdictions, such as the act recently passed by the US Congress which makes it a crime to injure an unborn child, e.g. in a motor accident or assault on the mother, even if the latter was not seriously harmed. It is an independent offence.

So will our judges have the courage to follow common sense and justice? One fears that they will not. If they do, and the case is then taken to Europe, what will happen there? The prospects are not good.

For the pro-abortion lobby the stakes are very high. As one pro-abortion journalist observed, to grant legal personhood to the unborn child could have 'enormous implications'

Indeed.



education



Supporting pro-lifers at Westminster

By Niall Gooch, LIFE Research & Education Officer, London

Since 1 February I have been seconded, on a half-time basis, from LIFE to the Pro-life Research Unit (PLRU) attached to the All-Party Parliamentary Pro-life Group (APPPLG). The PLRU is a joint project of LIFE, the Right To Life Charitable Trust and CARE. At the moment it consists of me and one other person – Luke de Pulford – an experienced and well-connected parliamentary operator who has previously worked with Lord David Alton. We are both working for the unit on a half-time basis, but the steering group is looking to recruit a full-time executive officer to direct and co-ordinate the day-to-day work.

The APPPLG wants to revitalise and reinvigorate its work, and especially to capitalise on recent setbacks for pro-abortion forces and the abortion industry – notably the revelations about illegal and unprofessional practices in abortion clinics and the sex-selective abortion scandal – and build on successes, like last year's parliamentary report into abortion for disability.

To this end, Luke and I will be working closely with Fiona Bruce, the chairman of the Group with whom we meet weekly, to provide political and research support for

MPs and peers, and to help craft a long-term strategy. This involves drafting Parliamentary Questions (one of the main ways to apply pressure to, and obtain information from, the government), writing speeches, preparing briefings, meeting with allies and potential allies, and generally giving all the help we can to pro-lifers at Westminster.

With a general election looming in little over a year, we will also be planning ahead, gathering information on the likely make-up of the House of Commons after the next election. We hope to create a website with as much information as possible about the views on life issues not only of sitting MPs, but of parliamentary candidates.

Luke and I attended a meeting with the whole of the APPPLG early in March, ahead of an important House of Lords debate on assisted suicide. Later in the year the Lords will once again be debating an attempt to legalise assisted suicide, while sex-selective abortion, abortion counselling and three-parent embryos are all likely to find their way on to the parliamentary agenda.

It looks like being a very busy 2014!





Helping young people to make good choices

By Stuart Cowie, LIFE's Head of Education

The work of the Education department remains as urgent as ever. Young people are increasingly uncomfortable about growing up in a society that seems content to devalue human life, especially human life inside the womb. One of the main reasons cited by pollsters for this discomfort is the wide availability and advanced technology of ultrasound scans which make it difficult to deny the humanity of an unborn child.

We continue to speak out in schools, encouraging young people to 'go against the grain' – to think for themselves on key issues such as abortion, euthanasia, relationships, sexual health and reproductive technologies. And it's working. 96% of teachers asked would invite us back for more talks and 88% of our talks are return visits. We asked teachers why they keep inviting LIFE Education Officers to their schools and they said: -

- Our programmes are useful and appropriate
- Our speakers are knowledgeable, engaging and tailor delivery to each class
- Our content is relevant, updated and covers a range of crucial issues

So far this academic year, our nationwide team of Education Officers has given over 230 talks to 13,000 students. We asked young people what they thought about LIFE Education and they told us: -

- "You made us think about what we really want and not just follow the crowd" (Yr 12, Manchester)
- "I learnt how I want to be when I am older" (Yr 10, Yorkshire)

"The session made me realise that I can say 'no' to things" (Year 9, Birmingham)

- "I think the speaker made valid points from her pro-life perspective. She did not make a point without using evidence and she was very engaging" (Yr 11, London)
- "Some of my personal views of abortion have been challenged" (Year 10, Surrey)
- "The LIFE talk has helped me to make good choices" (Year 8, Nottingham)

Young people are less accepting of today's value-free culture than their parents. Their innate views about dignity, rights and equality are often validated when they take part in one of our programmes.

If you are interested in learning more about our education work, schools programmes, or would like to book a speaker for an event, please do get in touch.

Thank you for your continued support and goodwill – we really do rely on it.

www.lifecarity.org/education

Abortion clinic de-regulation

Towards the end of last year the government announced a consultation on the proposed new regulations for abortion clinics – the so-called “Revised Standard Operating Procedures”, or RSOPs. The RSOPs cover almost every aspect of how clinics operate, providing guidance on how they ought to treat women, what information must be given to them, the abortion reporting procedures, and the mechanisms for making sure the law is followed (insofar as they actually exist).



This revision of the procedures was particularly controversial because it tried to sneak in certain quite unacceptable recommendations, most notably that neither of the two certifying doctors need to have actually personally met or examined the woman seeking abortion.

It has long been an open secret that in practice many certifying doctors do not bother with a personal consultation and this is not specifically illegal (although it raises questions about the “good faith” with which doctors are making their decision). These RSOPs codify what can only be described as a severe breach of the spirit of the 1967 Act.

LIFE published a detailed response to the RSOPs, which you can read on our website: www.lifecharity.org.uk/lifeneewsconsultationresponsefeb2014.

As you will see, our concerns focused on the lack of provision for proper informed consent for women undergoing abortion, the ambiguity over the meaning of “good faith” in the abortion context, the lack of guaranteed good aftercare for women, and the failure to respond appropriately to recent revelations about abuse and circumventing of the abortion authorisation process.

The government will issue its own proposals in response to the consultation later in the year.

In Loving Memory In the last issue of LIFE News we reported the sad death of **Frank O'Brien**. We mistakenly said that he lived in Sutton. Mr O'Brien lived in Bromley. Apologies to his family for this error. | **Richard Cooper**, Treasurer of the St Albans LIFE group. | Grateful thanks to lifelong supporter **Connie Harper** whose generous bequest to LIFE we have just received.

Useful numbers and contacts

Head Office:

LIFE House, 1 Mill Street,
Leamington Spa,
Warks CV31 1ES

Tel: 01926 312272

Fax: 01926 336497

Email: sam@lifecharity.org.uk

National Helpline: 0808 802 5433

Text LIFECARE followed by
your message to 88020

Visit www.lifecharity.org.uk

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“We hope you enjoy this issue
of LIFE News”

Prof Jack Scarisbrick