

**Citizens' Assembly**

**Work Programme Item 1: The Eighth Amendment of the Constitution**

**Weekend 2**

**Detailed Conversation Starters: Facilitators and Note Takers**

**General Instructions for Roundtable Discussions following presentations:**

- Hear from everyone and as you do, enforce the groundrules, firmly and with good humour. In particular, encourage people to be respectful of others and to share the airtime.
- Remember that the speakers are available for any questions or clarifications if required during the discussion. The Secretariat is also available for any clarification.
- Spend the last 5-10 minutes recapping the conversation to ensure that the key points are captured for inclusion in the table summary.
- As members may still be nervous/ uncomfortable with speaking in the public Q&A session on this topic later, you should also capture the top 3 questions which emerge in the discussion, and should be prepared to ask them on behalf of the table if called upon to do so by the Judge.
- Complete the standard feedback template sheet based on the last 5-10 minutes of conversation. Retain the feedback sheet for collection at the end of the discussion.

**Saturday Morning**

**11.40am Foetal Abnormalities and Legal Issues**

The purpose of this round table discussion is to:

- help members understand the information they have heard
- embed that knowledge and to document key themes arising from the conversation.
- capture the key questions which emerge during the discussion.
- Remember to use the last five minutes of the session to recap the discussion and agree with the Members what keys you might ask on their behalf (if required)

You'll have **45 minutes** for this part of the meeting.

**Conversation Starters/ Suggested Questions to guide discussions:**

1. What is the incidence of major congenital abnormality in obstetric practice today?
2. Do you understand the various ways in which abnormalities can be detected during the antenatal period?
3. Do you understand the difference between anatomical and chromosomal abnormalities?
4. Following the presentations, what do you understand to be the international law impacts- if any- on the law relating to abortion in Ireland?
5. Given what you have heard, do you think that legislative change on the issue of abortion in cases of fatal foetal abnormalities is possible in Ireland?

**Saturday Afternoon**

**3.00 Ethical Perspectives**

The purpose of this round table discussion is to:

- help members understand the information they have heard
- embed that knowledge and to document key themes arising from the conversation.
- capture the key questions which emerge during the discussion.
- Remember to use the last five minutes of the session to recap the discussion and agree with the Members what keys you might ask on their behalf (if required)

You'll have 45 **minutes** for this part of the meeting.

**Conversation Starters/ Suggested Questions to guide discussions:**

1. When do you think that the moral status of the foetus begins?
2. What is the relevance of the moral status of the foetus for the discussions we will be having about the 8th amendment?
3. How should we deal with disagreement about the moral status of the foetus?

**Sunday Morning**

**09.50 How laws are made and changed: group work exercise**

You have received a separate briefing document for this section.

**11.30 Brainstorming on the issues in respect of which recommendations may have to be considered by the Assembly**

The purpose of this round table discussion is to:

- Hear from members on what their views on what issues might impact on the way in which they approach their recommendations on the Eighth Amendment.

You'll have **60 minutes** for this part of the meeting.

**Conversation Starters/ Suggested Questions to guide discussions:**

1. Do you think a right to life of the unborn child should continue to be constitutionally protected in the same way as now?
2. Do you think that the X case and the 2013 Act make abortion lawfully available in Ireland in too many circumstances?
3. Do you think that abortion should be lawfully available in Ireland in more circumstances than is currently the case?