



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER FOR LIFE

27 October

Hope overcomes fear

A note from Both Lives UK lead, Dawn McAvoy:

Since the early 1990s, thousands of Christians across the UK have come together on 27 October to pray for life. The National Day of Prayer for Life takes place on 27 October each year to mark the date the 1967 Abortion Act was passed in the UK. This legislation liberalised abortion law in England, Wales and Scotland, and has led to the loss of over 10 million lives.

In contrast, the Abortion Act did not apply to Northern Ireland. For over 50 years both lives in pregnancy continued to be protected in law and over 100,000* babies were born who would not have been. But in October 2019, new abortion legislation was imposed on Northern Ireland by Westminster.

This month now carries a deep weight across all parts of the UK. It reminds us of the lives lost, the women and families affected, and the urgent need for prayer, compassion and action rooted in love and truth.

We are honoured to now host the National Day of Prayer for Life and carry this legacy forward by inviting the church once again to stand together in truth, compassion and hope. This is a call to Christians across denominations to unite in humble, heartfelt prayer. Together, we lift up the unborn, women, and families in crisis, and all those carrying the weight of past decisions. We ask God to stir compassion, bring healing and renew a culture that truly values life at every stage.

Dawn McAvoy
Both Lives UK lead

Theme for 2025: Hope overcomes Fear

The inspiration for this year's National Day of Prayer for Life is found in the promise and prayer of Romans 15:13; "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Both Lives has the privilege of sharing and giving voice to the experiences of women and men who, when facing pregnancy crises, have considered whether to continue or terminate their pregnancy. Their stories, contrary to the societal and cultural messages of "choice" and "agency", tell us that too many abortion decisions have been driven by fear and a felt reality of no choice - other than abortion.

We know that every pregnancy decision directly involves at least two lives, the woman and unborn. We recognise that whatever decision is made others are impacted too, including the man who fathered the unborn life, family and friends, and the healthcare workers connected through the pregnancy or abortion outcome. The information and prayer points below have been provided by individuals and organisations who work with or represent each of those parties.

Prayer points

Advocacy:

Laws matter because laws that protect life and restrict abortion save lives. Nearly 60 years of increasingly liberalised abortion access has led to the highest rates of abortion ever recorded in England, Wales and Scotland. Five years after abortion was decriminalised and a new abortion framework implemented in Northern Ireland, abortion rates have tripled.

The cultural impact of pro-abortion choice legislation is less tangible, but it's fair to say that attitudes have changed significantly. Abortion, once regarded as a rare and tragic exception in the hardest of cases, is now normal and commonplace, and demanded as a human right.

The implementation of abortion via telemedicine; self-managed with pills provided through the post, have not only contributed to those rising statistics but have also led to over 50,000 women presenting at hospital with post abortion complications.

The introduction of Buffer Zones around the UK has criminalised individuals who offer help and/or protest (even silently) outside abortion clinics.

Pray for:

- Advocacy organisations and legislators who are working to highlight the harms of pro-abortion legislation.
- Parliament to reject all attempts to decriminalise abortion.
- Parliament to protect the Right to Life and reject attempts to promote abortion as a human right.
- A repeal of telemedicine regulations and a re-introduction of in-person consultations.
- Legislation that will protect both lives in pregnancy and create better pathways of care for women facing pregnancy crises.

From a service provider:

Pregnancy can be a very anxious time – even for those who wanted to become pregnant. But for those for whom the pregnancy is unexpected, there can be all sorts of fears: around finances, whether they are in a stable relationship, or whether they will be supported. Do they have somewhere to live? Is their health (physical and mental) in a good place? Those reliant on medication for mental health disorders or neurodivergence are facing months without it and are fearful they will not manage. Others might be fearful of remaining connected to the partner in the pregnancy.

In pregnancy, expectations can shift suddenly, responsibilities crowd in, everyone around seems to have a view. For those who grew up not completely backing themselves to make good decisions, or who didn't have a safe experience at home, or in subsequent relationships, becoming pregnant can also bring a complex web

of terrifying thoughts and feelings. Fears about not being ‘up to the job’ of being a parent, not wanting to be the same as their parents, and not knowing how they’ll cope.

For others, their initial excitement is dampened by a parent, a partner, a friend saying, ‘it’s not a good idea,’ or ‘this isn’t the right time.’ Maybe even subtly suggesting they too do not think the woman carrying the pregnancy can face the future she has ahead. Some are faced with outright coercion, and the fear is of violence and control.

Pregnancy is statistically a much more dangerous time for someone who is experiencing abuse (which is 1 in 4). In addition, one in five experience higher levels of anxiety and depression in pregnancy – antenatal depression is less well known than postnatal depression but can cause all sorts of fears around not being able to care for a baby, and feelings ranging from hopelessness, to anger, guilt, and not being able to make decisions.

Pray for:

- Policies to support women and families to parent well.
- Good research into women’s health and an understanding of the fragility of this time in women’s lives.
- Women facing this situation to feel the reassurance and confidence that comes from knowing God (whether they know Him or not!).
- Partners/boyfriends/husbands to truly support the women in their lives – to not let their own fears get in the way of taking on their own responsibilities.

From the Christian Medical Fellowship: :

Many Christian healthcare professionals and students experience fear when their convictions about what is best for women and their unborn children come into tension with colleagues or supervisors. A resident doctor recently shared their concern about being seen as “difficult” if they declined to sign abortion forms. A student midwife was even suspended (later reinstated) from her course after expressing pro-life views - rare cases like this can amplify fears in others.

Yet the more persistent fear is not opposition itself, but that when a critical moment comes, we may lack the wisdom to respond well. How will I navigate complex conversations with grace? How can I uphold the dignity of both mother and child? How do I stand faithfully without compromising relationships or professional integrity? In such moments, Christian healthcare professionals long for God's wisdom, and for fear to be replaced with courage expressed through both clarity and compassion.

Pray for:

- Christian healthcare professionals and students to be filled with God's wisdom, so that in critical moments they may respond with both clarity and compassion.
- Courage to stand faithfully for the dignity of both mother and child, while showing grace in relationships with colleagues and supervisors.
- Protection over students and professionals who express pro-life convictions, that their training and careers would not be unfairly jeopardised.
- Christian medics who would be a gentle but persuasive voice for life within healthcare, helping to create a culture where women are better supported and fewer feel driven towards abortion. Pray that through their influence, more mothers and babies would experience hope instead of fear, and life instead of loss.

From The Post-Abortion Course:

We often see that fear of being judged by others can be a major reason women go ahead with an abortion, even when their deepest desire is to continue the pregnancy. One of the saddest situations is when a woman feels pressured into abortion because she dreads how her parents might react, and then later carries the heavy burden of a secret she cannot share with them.

Another heartbreaking — yet all too common — situation is when a woman chooses abortion out of fear of losing her relationship, only to find that the relationship breaks down anyway.

Pray for:

- Women to be freed from fear of others' opinions, and instead experience such a deep awareness of God's love that they find the courage to make the choice their hearts truly long for.

From a church leader:

Many church leaders are convinced theologically that abortion is wrong but feel both unsure or uneasy about addressing it in their congregations. Part of the reason behind this is concern about causing additional harm and shame to those who have had abortions. There may of course also be a self-protecting side to the chosen silence which is fearful about causing offence and receiving pushback. As a result, church leaders are often silent on the issue, which leaves their flocks ill-equipped theologically and unsupported pastorally.

As a result many under their care simply imbibe the prevailing unbiblical worldview of our culture and those seeking support feel unsure of where to turn.

Pray for:

- Church leaders will have courage to speak out, compassion to speak well, and wisdom about how to best move forward.

Contributors include:

We're deeply grateful to all those who contributed to this resource — including The Post Abortion Course and the Christian Medical Fellowship — for their insight, care, and commitment to upholding the value of every life. Your prayerful leadership and faithful witness continue to inspire and equip the church to respond with both conviction and compassion.

**Christian Medical Fellowship
(CMF):**
www.cmf.org.uk/



Both Lives
bothlives.co.uk



The Post Abortion Course:
postabortioncourse.com/



Additional information:

Abortion law and practice across the UK

Legislation:

England & Wales:

The Abortion Act 1967 created legal defences for abortion up to an implied 28 weeks, based on the Infant Life (Preservation) Act 1929, which prohibited destroying a child “capable of being born alive.” The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 reduced the general limit to 24 weeks in recognition of improving survival rates for premature babies. It also allowed abortion up to birth in cases of “severe” foetal disability or serious, permanent risk to the mother’s health.

In 2024 laws to implement abortion safe access buffer zones were introduced in England and Wales, to create "safe access zones" around clinics.

In June 2025, MPs in Westminster voted to decriminalise women in England and Wales if they terminate their own pregnancy, at any stage up to birth. If this change becomes law, it means that a woman could self-induce her abortion outside of any medically regulated framework of care. MPs also rejected a basic safeguard by voting against NC106, which would have re-established face-to-face medical consultation before abortion pills are prescribed. The Crime and Policing Bill continues to proceed through Parliament.

Scotland:

Abortion was devolved under the Scotland Act 2016, yet Scotland continues to operate under the 1967 Act, mirroring England and Wales.

In 2024 laws to implement abortion safe access buffer zones were introduced in Scotland (The Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) (Scotland) Bill) to create "safe access zones" around clinics.

Northern Ireland:

*In 2017, Both Lives Matter compared abortion rates, taking into account a whole range of factors, including the numbers of women who travelled to Great Britain from Northern Ireland for abortions. They were able to estimate that more than 100,000 people were alive in Northern Ireland specifically because the 1967 Abortion Act or similar legislation was not introduced.

Until 2019, abortion was only permitted to save the mother's life. The Executive Formation (Northern Ireland) Act 2019 decriminalised abortion and introduced a new framework:

- Up to 12 weeks: For any reason.
- 12–24 weeks: For undefined “physical or mental health” reasons.
- Up to birth: For disability (undefined, including minor conditions).
- The Abortion Services (Safe Access Zones) Act 2023 established “buffer zones” criminalising any act intended to influence anyone entering an abortion facility.

Current Statistics:

England & Wales (2022):

- 252,122 abortions – the highest since records began.
- 86% were chemical (pills).
- 41% involved women with at least one prior abortion.
- 82% were to women recorded as single.
- 260 abortions took place after 24 weeks.

Scotland (2024):

- 18,710 abortions, the highest ever recorded.
- Rates in the most deprived areas were double those in the least deprived.
- 232 abortions occurred after 18 weeks.
- Repeat abortions have doubled since 2015.
- In 2023, 98% were carried out under Ground C (“risk to mental health”), with 89% citing “unwanted pregnancy.”

Northern Ireland (Apr 2023 – Mar 2024):

- 2,792 abortions took place.
- Since 2020, over 8,000 abortions have been carried out under the new regulations.

Pills by Post:

Before 2020, women were required to take the first abortion pill (mifepristone) in a clinic. During COVID, emergency measures allowed both pills to be taken at home after remote consultation — the “pills by post” model. This was made permanent in England and Wales in August 2022. Scotland operates under its own approvals. Northern Ireland does not allow postal provision; at least one in-person appointment is required.

Since 2020, well over 100,000 women across Great Britain have used home-use abortion pathways.