

**CHILDREN'S
RIGHTS
ALLIANCE**

**Children's Referendum:
Campaign Toolkit for Members**

October 2012



The Children’s Rights Alliance is a coalition of over 100 organisations working to secure the rights of children in Ireland, by campaigning for the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It aims to improve the lives of all children under 18, through securing the necessary changes in Ireland’s laws, policies and services.

Vision

Ireland will be one of the best places in the world to be a child

Mission

To realise the rights of children in Ireland through securing the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

Membership

The Alliance was formally established in March 1995. Many of its member organisations are prominent in the children’s sector – working directly with children on a daily basis across the country. The Alliance’s policies, projects and activities are developed through ongoing collaboration and consultation with its member organisations.

Alcohol Action Ireland	Irish Traveller Movement
Amnesty International Ireland	Irish Youth Foundation (IYF)
Ana Liffey Drug Project	Jesuit Centre for Faith and Justice
Arc Adoption	Junglebox Childcare Centre F.D.Y.S.
Assoc. for Criminal Justice Research and Development (ACJRD)	Kids’ Own Publishing Partnership
Association of Secondary Teachers Ireland (ASTI)	Kilbarrack Youth Project
ATD Fourth World – Ireland Ltd	Lifestart National Office
Barnardos	Marriage Equality – Civil Marriage for Gay and Lesbian People
Barretstown Camp	Mary Immaculate College
BeLonG To Youth Services	Matt Talbot Community Trust
Bessborough Centre	Miss Carr’s Children’s Services
Border Counties Childcare Network	Mothers’ Union of Ireland
Catholic Guides of Ireland	Mounttown Neighbourhood Youth and Family Project
Catholic Youth Care	MyMind
Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway	National Association for Parent Support
Childminding Ireland	National Children’s Nurseries Association
Children in Hospital Ireland	National Organisation for the Treatment of Abusers (NOTA)
City of Dublin YMCA	National Parents Council Post Primary
COPE Galway	National Parents Council Primary
Crosscare Drug and Alcohol Programme	National Youth Council of Ireland
Crosscare Teen Counselling	One Family
DIT –School of Social Sciences & Legal Studies	One in Four
Doras Luimní	OPEN
Down Syndrome Ireland	Parentline
Dublin Rape Crisis Centre	Parentstop
Dun Laoghaire Refugee Project	Pavee Point
Early Childhood Ireland	Peter McVerry Trust
Educate Together	Psychological Society of Ireland
School of Education, UCD	

Enable Ireland
EPIC (formerly IAYPIC)
Focus Ireland
Forbairt Naíonraí Teoranta
Foróige
GLEN - Gay and Lesbian Equality Network
Headstrong - The National Centre for Youth Mental Health
Home-Start National Office Ireland
Immigrant Council of Ireland
Inclusion Ireland
Inspire Ireland
International Adoption Association
Irish Association of Social Care Workers (IASCW)
Irish Association of Social Workers
Irish Association of Suicidology
Irish Autism Action
Irish Centre for Human Rights, NUI Galway
Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU)
Irish Council for Civil Liberties (ICCL)
Irish Foster Care Association
Irish Girl Guides
Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO)
Irish Penal Reform Trust
Irish Preschool Play Association (IPPA)
Irish Refugee Council
Irish Second Level Students' Union (ISSU)
Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
Rape Crisis Network Ireland (RCNI)
Saoirse Housing Association
SAOL Beag Children's Centre
Sevenoaks Early Education Centre
Society of St. Vincent de Paul
Sonas Housing Association
Spunout.ie
St. Nicholas Montessori College
St. Nicholas Montessori Society
St. Patrick's University Hospital
Start Strong
Step by Step Child & Family Project
Súgradh
The Ark, A Cultural Centre for Children
The CARI Foundation
The Childhood Development Initiative
The Integration Centre
The Jack & Jill Children's Foundation
The Unmarried and Separated Families of Ireland
Treoir
UNICEF Ireland
Young Ballymun
Youth Advocate Programme Ireland (YAP)
Youth Aftercare Support Service (YASS)
Youth Initiative in Partnership
Youth Work Ireland

Contents

Foreword	3
Introduction to Referendum Campaigning	4
The Children’s Rights Alliance and Yes for Children Campaign	5
What can Member Organisations do in the Referendum Campaign?	6
Key Messages and Reasons to Vote Yes	7
Frequently Asked Questions	11
Working with Traditional Media	12
Working with Online Media	16
Example Opinion Piece	17
Press Release Outline	18
Template Press Release	19
Template Diary Notice	20
Template Photo-Call Notice	21
Template Letter to Editor	22
Children’s Referendum Wording	23
Summary of the Children’s Referendum Wording	24
Copy Deadlines for Local Newspapers	26
Child Population by County (CSO 2011)	27
Information for member organisations on the Standards in Public Office Commission	28
Useful Sources of Information	30
Key Children’s Rights Alliance Contacts	32

Foreword

The Children's Rights Alliance is a coalition of over 100 organisations working to secure the rights of children in Ireland, by campaigning for the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. We aim to improve the lives of all children under 18 years, through securing the necessary changes in Ireland's laws, policies and services. A founding objective of the Alliance was to amend the Constitution of Ireland to strengthen the rights of children.

The strength of the Alliance has always been its member organisations, which diligently support, and collaborate in, the work of the organisation to strengthen the rights of children in Ireland. Established in 1995, today's membership has now grown to over 100 organisations, many of which work directly with children on a daily basis.

The toolkit been developed to help member organisations in their campaigns to support a Yes vote in the Children's Referendum, which will take place on Saturday 10 November 2012. It includes the core communication messages and a suite of campaign tools, including template letters and press releases to support the active participation of member organisations to provide better protection for *all* children under the Constitution. It aims to be a practical guide for member organisations.

As well as this toolkit, the Alliance is also keen to offer to its member organisations a range of other services:

- Media training (including over the phone coaching)
- Attend briefings/speak at events
- Write articles, opinion pieces or briefings
- Provide communications support for press conferences or photo-calls
- Proof-read documents
- Add your event on the Alliance web site and publicise on social media

If you would like to access this support, please get in touch with Carys Thomas, our Communications and Public Affairs Director, on (01) 662 9400 or email carys@childrensrights.ie

While we are keen that as many member organisations as possible campaign and support the Yes campaign, we ask that you let us know of your campaign before using our logo or name, as we are unable to accept any responsibility for external campaigns, particularly if we are unaware of them. Thank you.

Best wishes,

Tanya Ward
Chief Executive



Referendum campaigns, by their very nature, are intensely political and involve a range of actors and approaches that challenge both advocates for change and those who would oppose the proposition. Voter behaviour in referendums, compared to general elections, is known to be volatile. Changing the status quo also puts the onus on reformers to persuade; if voters have doubts, they will vote 'no'.

Referendums are won in the grassroots; the Yes campaign must find one million votes to win. On the whole, it is important to concentrate on the centre ground, as this is where a referendum is won. This ground comprises floating voters (essentially, people who have not yet made up their mind and will vote based on information presented to them during the campaign itself). For example, many women are natural floating voters, and are deliberately pragmatic in their voting, which is based on what is best for their children and family. Conversely, 40% of people have already decided how they will vote and it would be a fool's game to try and persuade them otherwise (20% will vote yes, 20% will vote no).

Referendums are won by traditional media, particularly broadcast, which is considered to be one of the most useful sources of information by members of the public. An effective social media strategy is important – which was put to good effect during the victorious Obama presidential election campaign – but is no replacement for a more traditional media campaign. Face-to-face meetings also play an integral role in a referendum campaign's success.

This is backed up by the *Report on Reasons Behind Voter Behaviour in the Oireachtas Inquiry Referendum 2011*, compiled by Professor Michael Marsh, TCD; Dr Jane Suiter, UCC; and Dr Theresa Reidy, UCC, and published in January 2012. It uncovered that most people, overall, found print and broadcast media the most useful sources of information, with one third of all voters saying they were particularly useful. It also found that there should be more information provided to voters through a diversity of media.

Interestingly, the Report found that information should be provided from a wider variety of trusted sources and that voters wanted direct contact from political representatives. This clearly identifies an opportunity for Alliance members (all of which have close and trusted ties with their supporters) to add real value to the Yes campaign, in potentially three ways:

1. publicly show their support for constitutional reform;
2. raising awareness among their own supporters and disseminating campaign literature; and
3. organising events or activities with political representatives to help facilitate debate.

Alliance members can make a real difference to the success of this referendum campaign.

The Children's Rights Alliance has been campaigning for constitutional reform since 1995. In 2012, the Alliance developed a Campaign Plan and formed a Working Group of members to inform its activities around the referendum campaign.

Yes for Children

As part of its campaign, the Alliance has joined with Barnardos, the ISPCC and Campaign for Children as Yes for Children, to campaign for a YES vote. This national campaign was launched in Dublin on 24 September 2012. Yes for Children believes that this referendum is an historic opportunity to ensure that this and future generations of children in Ireland are better respected, protected and heard.



The Alliance is represented on its management group and its staff form part of the overall campaign team. The Yes for Children campaign will:

- undertake a national tour to encourage voters in communities throughout Ireland to support the referendum;
- have an active and visible presence at key events to increase widespread awareness about the importance of the referendum;
- put forward spokespeople to participate in set-piece discussions and debates about the referendum in the media and in other public fora; and
- have an active online presence about the referendum and the need to vote Yes on 10th November.

The national tour will visit 40 cities, towns and communities throughout the country. Some members have already agreed to take an active role on the Campaign Bus. If you'd like further information, please contact Rachel Duke, our Membership and Sustainability Officer, by calling (01) 662 9400 or emailing rachel@childrensrights.ie

As part of the Yes for Children campaign, a national coordinating committee has been established to bring together all those campaigning for a YES VOTE in the referendum. This meeting is designed for all those campaigning to share information and to plan activities for the campaign; it takes place every Saturday until 10 November 2012 from 1-3pm in The Alexander Hotel, 41-47 Fenian Street, Dublin 2.

If you would like to attend this meeting, you should contact the Alliance's Office Manager, Louise Dromey, on (01) 662 9400 or email louise@childrensrights.ie or Yes for Children directly, at: www.yesforchildren.ie

What can Member Organisations do in the Referendum Campaign?

The Children's Rights Alliance believes that member organisations could play an active role in campaigning for a Yes vote in three core ways: showing public support; raising awareness among their own supporters; and organising events to encourage debate.

Public Show of Support

It would be very beneficial to the referendum campaign if as many organisations as possible came out, showing their support for the amendment. Member organisations could do this by:

- Writing a press release, indicating its support for the referendum campaign
- Writing a letter to editor or opinion piece, supporting or refuting a newspaper article
- Organising a press conference or photo-call, announcing its active campaign for constitutional reform
- Take part in broadcast interviews explaining why they support the referendum
- Supporting the referendum campaign via social media and other online platforms
- Getting involved with the Yes for Children Campaign Bus on its National Tour
- Providing a link to the Yes for Children web site on its own web site

Raise Awareness about Constitutional Reform among its Supporters

- Disseminating the Yes for Children leaflets and merchandise to its supporters
- Developing its own information to distribute to its supporters
- Organising an internal event or briefing, like a coffee morning or brown bag lunch, to explain the referendum to its supporters

Organise an Event to Encourage Political Debate

- Organising a panel discussion with TDs, Senators or with the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Frances Fitzgerald TD, for supporters to engage with the debate
- Visiting TD Clinics outlining why you support the Yes for Children campaign

Key Messages and Reasons to Vote Yes

Good communication does not happen by accident, but depends on clarity and consistent messaging. Truly effective communication involves developing key messages, writing them down, and then organising any communication around them. Properly developed key messages will be short, concise and understandable – and pay huge public relations dividends in the end.

This section provides member organisations with core messages and reasons to vote ‘yes’, developed by the Children’s Rights Alliance and members of the Yes for Children campaign. Utilising these messages will make every communication process more effective, particularly when making speeches, providing presentations, or taking part in media interviews.

There are three key messages at the heart of this section, and a further five talking points corresponding to each of the five reasons why the People of Ireland should vote ‘Yes’ on Saturday 10 November 2012. After each ‘talking point’ there is a box of key statistics and cases to back up the reasons presented.

In organising the key messages in this way, it provides consistency in communication among the Alliance’s membership but also provides a solid structure for members to include additional information that is particular to their organisation.

Three Key Messages

1. Our organisation is campaigning for a YES vote on Saturday 10 November because we need to update the Constitution to better protect children.
2. I’m voting YES because:
 - (i) we’ll get a child-centred child protection system that will mean children are better protected and families are supported to avoid them reaching crisis point
 - (ii) up to 2,000 children will be finally given the opportunity to be adopted
 - (iii) judges will have to think about the best interests of children when deciding certain court cases
 - (iv) judges will have to listen to children before deciding certain court cases
 - (v) it will help us move beyond Ireland’s damning history of child abuse and set out how we value children today
3. It’s now time to update the Constitution so that Ireland respects, protects and listens to children.

Key Talking Points

- (i) Child Protection & Supporting Families
- (ii) Adoption
- (iii) Best Interests of Children
- (iv) Listening to Children
- (v) Move Beyond History of Child Abuse and Valuing Children Today

(i) Child Protection and Supporting Families

- All children deserve to grow up in a loving and caring family and, happily, this is true for the vast majority of Irish children. However, the sad reality is that, for some children, home is not a safe place.
- Voting yes in this referendum means the State will be able to better protect children who are at serious risk of harm.
- Voting yes in this referendum will allow the State to provide an equal level of protection to children regardless of the marital status of the child's parents.
- This referendum is about stepping in earlier to help families who are struggling, rather than waiting until crisis point – helping to keep families together wherever possible.
- This referendum is about giving each and every child equal protection within the child care system

Key Statistics and Cases (Child Protection)

- Roscommon and Kilkenny Incest Inquiries (in both cases, the State was late in stepping in to family life, leading to tragic consequences)
- In 2010, there were 1,557 child abuse cases confirmed by the HSE
- 80% of child sexual abuse is committed by someone close to the child (i.e. family members relative or family friend)
- Majority of cases reported to HSE are related to child welfare and neglect rather than abuse, which shows importance of early intervention supports for families

(ii) Adoption

- At the moment the Constitution is preventing some children from being adopted. Up to 2,000 children in long term foster care, many of whom have been effectively abandoned or their parents aren't in a position to take care of them, are currently not eligible for adoption.
- This leaves children in a legal limbo where they will never return to their birth family but equally cannot be adopted by their foster family, who has cared for them since a young age.
- In practical terms, it means these children feel like they don't belong, and their foster parents cannot make key decisions that many parents take for granted, like giving medical consent, applying for a passport or even giving permission to go on a school trip.
- Voting yes will give up to 2,000 children the opportunity to have a second chance at a stable, loving and permanent family.

Key Statistics (Adoption)

- Approximately 6,200 children are in care in Ireland
- Over 91% of children in care are in foster care
- Approximately 2,000 children in care are in long-term foster care (meaning over five years)
- Of these 2,000, there are potentially hundreds who are being blocked from being adopted even though there is no likelihood of them being returned to their birth families

(iii) Best Interests of Children

- Every day, the courts make life-changing decisions about children, but the Constitution doesn't always allow them to consider what is best for the child. Like the Baby Ann case *see box
- This can happen in child protection, custody, and access cases, leading to bad decisions for children.
- Regardless of the parents' marital status, any court decision affecting a child should centre on what is best for that child.
- Voting yes in the Referendum will mean that, in the rare circumstances where the best interests of the child does not lie with the family, the State will be allowed to step in and help decide what is best for the child.

Key Case (Best Interests)

- In the Baby Ann case, two of the presiding Supreme Court judges commented in their judgments that the current Constitutional provision did not allow them to consider what was in Baby Ann's best interest because of the place the family based on marriage has in the Constitution.

(iv) Listening to Children

- We know, from The Ryan Report and other reports, the effects of not listening to children. It is essential that, in the future, we guarantee that a child will be listened to when they talk about neglect, abuse and starvation.
- Currently, there is no obligation on any judge to consider the views of a child, when making life-changing decisions about him or her. It is at the judge's discretion. Practice differs across the country. This postcode lottery is wrong.
- Listening to children, bearing in mind their age and maturity, is critical if adults are to make good decisions for children, particularly in custody, access and care cases.
- Voting yes means judges will always have to consider what the child has to say, before making their final court judgment.

Key Statistics and Cases (Listening to Children)

- The Ryan Report was published in 2009 and catalogued the systemic abuse of children in industrial schools for decades – children had tried to complain but were not listened to
- In the Catherine McGuinness judgment in the Baby Ann Case, she said: 'the only voice not represented was that of the child'
- Roughly, only 35-40% of children involved in care proceedings have the support of a Guardian ad Litem to represent their view
- In 2011, the ISPCC Childline services received over 2,360 calls a day proving that children want to be heard.

(v) Move Beyond History of Child Abuse and Valuing Children Today

- You only need to look at the child abuse scandals that have dominated the headlines in recent years to know that we need to do more to protect and listen to children.
- On the whole, our Constitution is working well, but when it comes to vulnerable children it is letting us down and stopping us from making good decisions on their behalf.
- Voting Yes will mean that the Constitution will recognise that all children have rights.
- The Constitution was written in 1937, when children were 'seen and not heard'. This mind-set continues to dictate the way our courts treat children today and does not reflect the new way society values children.

Key Cases (Moving Beyond Child Abuse)

- 17 official reports, spanning 30 years, have documented the tragic history of child abuse in Ireland, including:
 - Independent Review Group into Child Deaths (Geoffrey Shannon & Norah Gibbons), 2012
 - The Cloyne Report 2011 (Murphy Commission)
 - The Murphy Report 2009 (Archdiocese of Dublin)
 - Report of the Roscommon Child Care Inquiry, 2009
 - The Ferns Inquiry 2005
 - Kilkenny Incest Investigation Report 1993
 - Kennedy Report (Reformatory and Industrial Schools) 1970

Isn't the Children's Referendum a waste of money? It would be better spent on services.

It is very important that services for children and families are adequately resourced. A range of structural and legislative changes are being introduced to improve the State's interaction with children, including publication of the new Children First Guidance and the planned establishment of a new Child and Family Support Agency. The lack of legal clarity for children at present means that, each year, the State engages in protracted and expensive court cases. This referendum may reduce the number and length of such cases, bringing possible savings to the Exchequer. Its potential impact on broken childhoods is also immeasurable. (Holding the poll on Saturday is also saving the State €600,000.)

Why are you voting YES when it won't change anything for children?

The Children's Referendum is going to make a big difference to the way we respect, protect and listen to children. We know it won't fix all ills, but the Constitution is our fundamental law, and is the basis for all our legislation, policies and services, so the referendum will naturally make a big difference, leading to better and more child-centred laws and judicial decisions.

Will the Children's Referendum make a difference to my child?

The Children's Referendum is about all children, and the need to respect, protect and listen to all children. True, the amendment will impact most on vulnerable children who are in need of protection, but while the child may not be yours, it may be your child's best friend or class mate. It will also reflect the way we value all children. It's also great to know that, if something happens to you, the State will be obliged to act in your child's best interests and to take account of the child's views.

Do children's rights weaken parents' rights?

Parents and families are central to a child's life. The vast majority of parents are 'children's rights champions', fighting tooth and nail to ensure their children's needs are met. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which Ireland ratified in 1992, clearly recognises the family as the "fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and wellbeing of [...] children". Strengthening the rights of children will help empower parents to ensure that the State upholds their child's rights.

Is this an attack on 'the family'?

No. There will be no impact on the definition of the 'Family' under the Constitution. The 'Family' will continue to mean only a heterosexual, married couple. And there will be no impact on the special protection provided to the 'Family' under Article 41.

I don't trust the State or the HSE, particularly given their poor history of protecting children.

There is no denying that the HSE and the State have made serious mistakes in the past concerning child protection. While there is still a distance to go, things are changing for the better, such as the establishment of the Child and Family Support Agency (which will take over the HSE's role in relation to child protection and supporting families into one dedicated agency). Amending the Constitution is a critical element of this reform.

Is this political correctness gone mad?

Not true. It is not political correctness gone mad: it is necessary to ensure that vulnerable children have access to the support and protection they need when they need it. A Scottish case often reported in the media, is used as an example of 'political correctness gone mad'. It was reported that these children were taken away from their parents because they were obese. However, the local authority in Dundee is on record as saying that a number of other factors would have to exist for children to be taken into care. These children were not taken into care because they were obese.

Introduction

When working with the media, it is very important to develop your network of contacts. Journalists are much more likely to respond to your 'story' if they know who you are and that they can trust you to provide them with interesting stories. When presenting a 'story' to the media, it is important to ask yourself how to make it as newsworthy as possible, so that you attract the attention of journalists immediately. Questions to consider are:

- Is it new?
- Is it topical?
- Is it unusual?
- Is it controversial?
- Does it include a celebrity?
- Is there human interest?

When responding to a live news story, such as the Children's Referendum, time is of the essence, so it is important to act quickly. With that in mind, it is always sensible to know the deadlines of your key media targets. You can do this by checking the latest edition of the Irish Media Contacts Directory (€80 excl VAT online) or calling each of the media outlets separately. For convenience, the copy deadlines for local newspapers in Ireland have been reproduced on page 26.

According to the *Joint National Readership Study 2011/2012*, 79.8% of adults in Ireland read a newspaper on a daily basis. It should be remembered that local media – both broadcast and print – are more popular than the more mainstream national media, and should play an integral role in any PR campaign. In order to fully engage with local media, it is important to think of a local angle, by using a specific case-study or statistic.

Ultimately, however, you need to think about your target audience, and to match the media to your target audience. For example, if you want to target young mothers, then concentrating on weekly women's magazines and parents' magazines and forums should be your key media targets.

Writing Opinion Pieces

The Children's Referendum offers the opportunity for member organisations, many of which work on a daily basis with children, to add value to the political debate. Op-ed submissions are always an effective way to add to a political debate. Things to remember are:

- Be **TIMELY** and relate your piece to current events and commentary
- It's important to be as **OPINIONATED** and **ARGUMENTATIVE** as possible, but do so respectfully
- Watch your **WORD COUNT** and keep your copy tight: between 300-600 words for tabloid newspapers and 800 words for broadsheets
- Remember to write for the readership of the newspaper - **YOUR AUDIENCE**
- When crafting your op ed, be sure to include **FACTS** and **FIGURES** to back up your argument
- Your op ed needs to be **EXCLUSIVE** to one paper, so don't approach a second publication until you've been declined at the first one
- **EMAIL** your opinion piece to the relevant person, including it in the body of your email
- Include your full **CONTACT DETAILS**, as papers will rarely publish an anonymous piece
- The newspaper will always **RESERVE THE RIGHT** to edit, condense or reject any contribution

Writing Press Releases

A press release is the best way to inform the media of your campaign or to make a response to a topical news story. Unless you have a template to follow, see page 19, here are some guidelines to catch journalists' attention – and keep it:

- Always be **CONCISE** and limit your press release to preferably one side of A4
- Find an **INTERESTING ANGLE** to grab a journalist's attention and include it in the title
- **LIMIT THE TITLE** to nine words
- Include the five 'W's in the first paragraph: **WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHERE? WHEN?**
- Use **1.5 SPACING** and at least a **11 POINT TYPEFACE** – this is useful in press conferences to give journalists space to underline important points or to make notes
- Add **CONTACT DETAILS** to the bottom of the press release
- Always send by **EMAIL** and copy and paste the text into the body of the email
- If sending your press release to multiple recipients, use the **BCC** field to protect your list of contacts
- Always follow up a press release with a **PHONE-CALL**

Writing Letters to the Editor

A Letter to the Editor is an excellent opportunity to contribute to the debate on the Children's Referendum. Writing a well-structured letter, which presents interesting information and ideas, is a sound way to reach important and influential audiences. If time is short, this is also a great alternative to a press release. Here are some guidelines for writing an effective Letter to the Editor:

- It is important to be **TIMELY**; if you're responding to an article in a specific newspaper, try to write your letter within a day of the article's date
- Keep your letter **CONCISE** and limit your word count to 200 words – the fewer words the better
- Always be factually **ACCURATE**
- Keep your points **INTERESTING** and use a local angle if writing to a local paper
- Be **RESPECTFUL**; avoid the temptation to be rude, as this will only serve to build barriers
- Always include **CONTACT DETAILS**, as very few newspapers will print anonymous letters
- **EMAIL** your letter and add it to the body of your email

Organising Press Conferences

A press conference is an excellent way to increase the visibility of spokespersons and interact with media in a way which can address certain questions, debates or misconceptions. The following steps can help to make your press conference a success:

- Organise a **SUITABLE LOCATION** that is convenient for journalists, with adequate seating, space and sound equipment
- Send out a **DIARY NOTICE** to newsdesks, preferably one week in advance for local media and three days for national media
- Include the five 'W's in the first paragraph: **WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHERE? WHEN?**
- Take time to **BRAND** the room, as it will feature in any photographs or broadcast footage. Yes for Children has merchandise that you could use, email info@yesforchildren.ie so that you can show your support for the Yes for Children campaign
- Issue a **PRESS RELEASE** under embargo or at the start of the press conference
- Stick to a **SCHEDULE** of speakers, keeping speeches brief with plenty of time for questions
- Prepare three key **MESSAGES, TALKING POINTS** and **FAQs** for your speakers
- If you have time, distribute a **PRESS KIT** with press release, relevant materials and contact details
- Hire your own **PHOTOGRAPHER** to send out their best shots to picture-desks
- Use **SOCIAL MEDIA** to update your key supporters and journalists about what happened

Organising Photo-Calls

When organising a photo-call for the media, you must always ensure that it is newsworthy and visually interesting. It is important to arrange as much as possible ahead of schedule, but remember that some of the best press and public relations' photos are spontaneous. Organising a photo-call is another angle for the media, and you will need to:

- Issue a PHOTO-CALL NOTICE to the picture desks and forward planning desks, allowing for one week's advance notice so a photographer can be booked
- Include the five 'W's: WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHERE? WHEN?
- Describe the PROPS you'll be using, so pre-arranged photo opportunities are on offer
- Brainstorm IDEAS for making the photo interesting and to summarise your 'story'
- Remember to ask if you need to SECURE PERMISSION to photograph at the location
- Also remember to get a PHOTOGRAPH CONSENT FORM from parents or guardians, if working with children
- TELEPHONE the day before the photo-call to check that the photo-call is in diaries
- Remember to contact PICTURE DISTRIBUTION AGENCIES who supply shots to media
- There are no guarantees, so book your OWN PHOTOGRAPHER and get him/her to send their best shots directly to picture desks as Free Repro, with a relevant caption. (If you need to source a photographer, the Alliance can provide you with a list of names.)

Media Interviews

The Alliance is working with a communications company to provide media training for member organisations campaigning for a YES vote in the Children's Referendum on Saturday 10 November. If you would like to avail of this training or to have a one-to-one telephone session, please contact Carys Thomas, the Communications and Public Affairs Director, on 087 7702845 or email carys@childrensrights.ie **Places are limited, so book early**

Below are some basic tips on radio and television interviews, provided by the Alliance.

Giving a radio interview

Rather than regarding radio interviews as an ordeal, you should view them as a great opportunity to promote your campaign, correct misinformation, give your point of view and raise awareness about your organisation.

Before the interview, find out:

- What sort of questions will you be asked and prepare answers.
- Is the programme live or recorded?
- Is anyone else being interviewed? If so, who?
- Will your interview be one-to-one or will it be a discussion? What are their standpoints?
- How long is the interview going to be?

Allow yourself time to prepare:

- Think about your three key messages
- Think about what questions you are likely to be asked and prepare answers
- You are the expert on your campaign, so read up
- Prepare some facts and figures that you can use, which will help illustrate your points

During the interview:

- Aim to sound confident and friendly
- Do not forget your three key messages
- Be brief and to the point: your time is limited
- Try not to get side-tracked by questions - move the interview back to what you want to say
- Take your time, but try to avoid 'ums' and 'ers'

- Never lose your temper
- Mention the name of your campaign as early as possible in your interview
- Use short, simple words and no jargon
- Do not assume that the journalist knows anything about you or your organisation

Giving a television interview

The general radio interview techniques apply to TV interviews, but there are some additional points to bear in mind.

Before the interview:

- Wear something comfortable, but not stripes or checks, as they have a stroboscopic effect
- Do not wear too much jewellery, as it can flash under studio lights, be noisy and distracting
- Look in the mirror to check your appearance (lipstick on teeth, twisted tie etc.)
- Do take make-up if it is offered, as the bright lights of a studio will make you look pale.

During the interview:

- Never look into the camera (unless specifically asked) and always look at the interviewer's eyes
- Be as relaxed as possible
- Contrast your facial expressions

The changing face of communications in the last decade has resulted in an increasing shift in focus from traditional media to online media, particularly in relation to social media platforms. This means that news stories are now breaking quickly and unexpectedly, and a variety of vehicles are now at the disposal of campaigners to increase awareness among the public and loyalty with key stakeholders, reduce communication costs and increase website traffic. When campaigning, it is worth drawing up an online media plan that deals with:

- the internet generally;
- social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter);
- multi-media/file sharing sites (YouTube, Vimeo); and
- blogs.

Target Audience

Some forms of online media will be more suitable than others for your organisation, and this largely depends on your target audience. The key to reaching the right audience is to define who you want to target: are they politicians, journalists or the general public? Once you have established this, then you can choose which vehicle will reach your target audience most effectively. For example, Twitter is used extensively by journalists and politicians, while a Facebook page reflects your core supporters. LinkedIn is great for fundraising.

Website

- Ensure that your website is listed in all your communications and develop a consistent e-signature for all staff, particularly when in campaign mode
- Sign up to Google Alerts for 'Children's Referendum' and other keywords that are most associated with your organisation. This allows you to access who is talking about your organisation and what they are saying, helping you to maximise any positive PR and to alleviate any negative opinions
- Try to develop a fluid relationship between your web site and other social networking sites, with widgets and plugins, such as Share/Like/Tweet/Follow Us buttons etc.
- A regularly updated blog on sites, such as Wordpress, linked to your website, will improve your SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) and are well worth doing if you have capacity
- Use Google Analytics to assess web site traffic to tweak your website accordingly
- When campaigning, be sure to include a link to relevant organisations, such as the Children's Rights Alliance www.childrensrights.ie and the Yes for Children website www.yesforchildren.ie

Social Media

- Try to attend training and conferences to fully explore social media opportunities for your organisation and to become aware of new developments
- Engage regularly with your chosen platform to keep sites fresh and ensure return visits; a good rule of thumb is at least once a day for Twitter and once a week for Facebook
- Follow key stakeholders, including journalists, and re-tweet and 'like' posts as much as possible – re-tweeting Yes tweets can get events or news stories trending
- TweetDeck allows you to time your tweets ahead of schedule and to keep abreast of what's happening hour to hour
- Include hash tags as much as possible; the Children's Referendum hash tags on Twitter are: #crrref #chref12
- Use back-end statistics and interactions to evaluate and capitalise on your engagement
- Consider advertising per click on social media advertising
- Explore new vehicles, such as AudioBoo that allows you to upload audio files on the move.

Example Opinion Piece

The Government has promised to hold the Children's Referendum on Saturday 10 November 2012. For anyone working with vulnerable children, this is long overdue.

This referendum is a chance to bring our laws in line with our values as a society – and how we now view children. This will help the courts and the child protection system work better, make better decisions on behalf of children and help Ireland move beyond its damning history of child abuse.

The Ryan Report, which exposed the systemic abuse of children in industrial schools, clearly shows the devastating consequences of institutions putting their interests first and not listening to children. For decades, vulnerable children tried to complain about neglect, abuse and starvation, but no one listened. In total, there are 17 official reports that catalogue the way Irish society robbed thousands of children of their childhoods. The Constitution has been flagged as part of the problem.

Written in 1937, the Constitution unintentionally undermines what is in the best interests of children and what will keep them safe. A judge, in a custody battle for example, doesn't have to put the interests of children first or listen to their views, when making life-changing decisions for the children involved. This can also happen in cases of child protection and access cases, leading to bad decisions for children. Listening to children, bearing in mind their age and maturity, is critical if our courts are to make good decisions for children. Yet, practice differs across the country, leaving us with a postcode lottery.

Overwhelmingly, the best place for a child is with their family. The Constitution reflects this. 99% of the time this is right, but the sad reality is that some families can be dangerous. With the Constitution placing greater emphasis on families, particularly married families, the State is unable to protect all of our children equally. This means that some children have been left in abusive families or made to go on access visits that damage them. The prominent Kilkenny Incest Investigation, back in 1993, backs this up, calling for a change to the Constitution to better protect vulnerable children. Despite being known to the authorities for a number of years, including the Gardai and schools, the State failed to step in to family life until after the father had repeatedly raped his daughter and fathered her child.

In the rare circumstances where the family is abusive to the children involved, the State should be allowed to step in and help decide what is best for the child. Court decisions affecting children should always centre on what is best for that child - regardless of whether their parents are married or not.

We can't take away the abuse of the past. And we can't protect every child from abuse. But we can draw a line in the sand and insist that our Constitution respects, protects and listens to children. Vote Yes on Saturday 10 November for our children, our families and for our country.

24 October 2012: For immediate release
Or Under Strict Embargo until: Midday 28 September 2012

Headline Here & Only Use Nine Words

The headline should be typed in bold and centered. Keep it short, snappy and to the point: 'Kilkenny Children's Association Voting Yes on Saturday 10 November'. The body of the email should be at least 11pt and have 1.5 spacing, which helps journalists to write notes in the margins when in press conferences. First paragraph must also include the 'five Ws: Who? What? When? Where? Why?'

For example: The Kilkenny Children's Association are holding a meeting with Kilkenny Council today (28 September), calling on representatives to support the Children's Referendum, to be held on Saturday 10 November, as it would better protect XXXX children in Kilkenny.

Always include a direct quote from a spokesperson. Remember to give the full name and job title. This is your opportunity to bring life to your 'news story'. For example: **Tanya Ward, Chief Executive** of the **Children's Rights Alliance**, says: 'It is unacceptable...'

Make your points in order of importance. The second paragraph should elaborate on the first. You are telling a story, so try to give as full a picture as possible, spell out the facts and give statistics.

___ ENDS ___

For more information, put your contact details here, including email and phone number:

Notes to Editor:

1. You can let journalists know where they can access a report or provide them with relevant web links etc.
2. List relevant details about the event, particularly start and finish times etc.
3. You can also clarify sources of statistics here.

Wednesday 10 October 2012: For immediate release

Vote YES for Children says XXName of OrganisationXX

XXName of OrganisationXX has called on the people of Ireland to vote YES in the forthcoming Children's Referendum on Saturday 10 November. With XXX of supporters, working with children in XXXX, this is further proof of a groundswell towards majority support for this important referendum that will make legal history for children.

Chief Executive, XXName of OrganisationXXX, says: "We strongly endorse the wording put forward by Government to update the Constitution to better protect children. After nearly 20 years of campaigning as part of the Children's Rights Alliance, we now call on the people of Ireland to vote YES..."

The XXName of OrganisationXX backs the Yes for Children campaign and believes that this is an historic opportunity for the People of Ireland to ensure that this generation of children, and future generations, are better protected, respected and heard. The XXName of OrganisationXX believes the Children's Referendum will:

- Ensure that the Constitution, for the first time, takes a child-centred approach to the protection of all children and allow the State to better support families who are struggling, rather than wait for a situation to reach crisis point.
- Allow up to 2,000 children, currently in long-term State care, the opportunity to be adopted and given a second chance at a loving, stable and permanent family.
- Ensure that judges in child care, adoption, guardianship, custody and access cases to now make decisions in the best interests of the child.
- Ensure that judges will listen to the views of children when making decisions in child care, adoption, guardianship, custody and access cases.
- Set out how we, as a country, now view and value children and move beyond the damning history of child abuse in Ireland.

Chief Executive, XXName of Organisation, says: "We all have a responsibility to ensure we create a society where children are respected, protected and listened to, and this Children's Referendum is a once in a generation opportunity to make a stand and help Ireland become one of the best places in the world to be a child. Vote Yes on Saturday 10 November."

__Ends__

For more information and interview bids, please contact:

Name, Role, Mobile, Email:

Notes to Editor:

- XXName of OrganisationXX is XXXX
- XXName of OrganisationXX is a member of the Children's Rights Alliance, which is XXX
- Visit www.yesforchildren.ie to find out more about the forthcoming referendum on children's rights

*****DIARY NOTICE*****

ATTENTION ALL FORWARD PLANNERS
& PICTURE DESK EDITORS

XXName of OrganisationXX Announces Support for Yes for Children

Press Conference, Location, Date and Time

The XXName of OrgansiatonXX is holding a press conference to announce its support of Yes for Children and will outline its plans to positively influence the outcome of the Children’s Referendum. Speakers include: XXXX XXXX and they will outline why the People of Ireland need to vote YES in the forthcoming referendum on Saturday 10 November 2012.

WHO? Name of Organisation, Key Personnel
WHAT? Press Conference to Announce Support of Yes Vote in Children’s Referendum
WHEN? Date and Time
WHERE? Location

WHAT’S ON OFFER?

- Interviews with XXX
- PHOTO OPPORTUNITIES ***PHOTOGRAPHER ON SITE (Name and Contact Details)***
- Refreshments etc.

For more information, call: XXX, Press Officer

Tel:

Email:

Web:

Template Photo-Call Notice

*****PHOTO-CALL NOTICE*****

XXName of OrganisationXX

Attention all Picture Desk Editors

XXName of OrganisationXX Call on XXXX to Vote Yes in Children's Referendum

When? XXDateXX, XXTimeXX

Where? XXLocationXX

What? Props illustrating why XXXX should Vote Yes on Saturday 10 November 2012. Oversized Constitution etc.

Who? In shot: Chief Executive, XXXX, with 7-year-old XXXX

Why? XXName of organisationXX has announced its intention to support the Yes for Children Campaign and is calling on its supporters to Vote Yes, a press conference will be held in nearby XXlocationXX at XXtimeXX

****NOTE: Photographer XXXX will be at the launch and photographs will be circulated for free reproduction****

For more information, call: XXX, Press Officer:

Tel:

Email:

Web:

Template Letter to Editor

Dear Editor,

Representing XXName of OrganisationXXXX in XXLocal AreaXX, I would like to confirm that we are supporting the Yes for Children campaign in relation to the forthcoming Children's Referendum on Saturday 10 November 2012. We urge the people of XXLocal AreaXX to Vote Yes for the children of XXLocal AreaXX. There are many reasons for this.

First, it is time for us to update the Constitution to better protect children, so that we finally get a child-centred child protection system that will mean fewer families will reach crisis point, before they get the help and support they so desperately need.

Second, up to 2,000 children, currently in legal limbo, will finally be given the opportunity to be adopted.

Third, judges, from now on, will have to base their decisions on the best interests of children and also listen to the views of those children, prior to making their final decision.

Finally, it will help us move beyond Ireland's damning history of child abuse. At long last, it will ensure that Ireland does what the vast majority of parents already do on a daily basis, which is to respect, protect and listen to all of our children.

Yours faithfully

XXXNameXXX
XXXAddressXX

Thirty-First Amendment of the Constitution

The Thirty-First Amendment to the Constitution (Children), if passed in the Children's Referendum on Saturday 10 November 2012, will introduce a new Article into the Constitution and will repeal (delete) an existing provision under Article 42 (Article 42.5). The new Article, Article 42A, entitled 'Children' will be a stand-alone article, which will sit between Articles 42 and 43.

PROPOSED NEW ARTICLE 42A

Children

1. The State recognises and affirms the natural and imprescriptible rights of all children and shall, as far as practicable, by its laws protect and vindicate those rights.
2. 1° In exceptional cases, where the parents, regardless of their marital status, fail in their duty towards their children to such extent that the safety or welfare of any of their children is likely to be prejudicially affected, the State as guardian of the common good shall, by proportionate means as provided by law, endeavour to supply the place of the parents, but always with due regard for the natural and imprescriptible rights of the child.

2° Provision shall be made by law for the adoption of any child where the parents have failed for such a period of time as may be prescribed by law in their duty towards the child and where the best interests of the child so require.
3. Provision shall be made by law for the voluntary placement for adoption and the adoption of any child.
4. 1° Provision shall be made by law that in the resolution of all proceedings -
 - i) brought by the State, as guardian of the common good, for the purpose of preventing the safety and welfare of any child from being prejudicially affected, or
 - ii) concerning the adoption, guardianship or custody of, or access to, any child, the best interests of the child shall be the paramount consideration.
2° Provision shall be made by law for securing, as far as practicable, that in all proceedings referred to in subsection 1° of this section in respect of any child who is capable of forming his or her own views, the views of the child shall be ascertained and given due weight having regard to the age and maturity of the child.

Summary of the Children's Referendum Wording

If passed, the Children's Referendum will insert a new Article into the Constitution. The new Article, 'Children', will be numbered Article 42A and will sit between Articles 42 and 43.

Article 42A.1 recognises that all children have rights and pledges to protect those rights by law. It allows the courts to identify rights for children on a case-by-case basis. It is the first time that the rights

of all children – those from married and from unmarried families – are brought together in the same place within the Constitution. This provision is essentially a signpost to the courts to develop new thinking in relation to children’s rights and to break with past decisions, some of which have resulted in bad outcomes for children.

Article 42A.2 contains two parts. The first part sets out how and when the State can intervene in family life to protect a child. The second part reforms our adoption laws to allow ‘abandoned’ children to be adopted in certain circumstances.

Article 42A.2.1 clarifies how and when the State can step in to protect children. It is an amended version of an existing Article in the Constitution (Article 42.5), which it will replace. It shifts the trigger of intervention from focusing solely on the parents’ failures to the impact of that failure on the children. It provides a strong constitutional foundation for our child protection system, by providing the State with power to act when the “safety or welfare” of a child “is likely to be prejudicially affected”. This new wording should encourage the State to intervene earlier in families that are struggling to offer them support and better protect the child. Importantly, it also contains safeguards to protect against over-intervention by the State, by including the phrases ‘exceptional cases’ and ‘proportionate’. It provides, for the first time, the same type of protection to children, regardless of whether their parents are married or unmarried.

Under the Constitution at present, the best interests of children from married parents are presumed to be found within the child’s family. This new wording could be used to challenge this presumption in cases where the child’s “safety or welfare” is at risk.

Article 42A.2.2 commits the Oireachtas to bring in a law to allow a child to be given the opportunity of being adopted, where their parents have met a high threshold of failure towards their child. This law must also set out the length of time that parents have failed in order for the child to be eligible for adoption. Critically, such adoptions can only take place where it is in the best interests of the child.

The Government has published draft legislation [<http://www.oireachtas.ie/documents/bills28/bills/2012/7812/b7812d.pdf>] to show what will change in the area of adoption, if the referendum is passed. Under the legislation, there must have been a continuous failure on the part of the parents towards the child for a period of 36 months (three years). There must also be no reasonable prospect of the parents resuming care of the child, and the child must have been living in the home of their prospective adoptive parents for a minimum continuous period of 18 months.

Article 42A.3 commits the Oireachtas to bring in a law that allows parents, either married or unmarried, to voluntarily place their child for adoption. At present, it is not legally possible for married parents to place their child for adoption, or consent to the adoption of their child.

Article 42A.4 contains two parts. The first part commits the Oireachtas to bring in a law in relation to the best interests of the child. The second part commits the Oireachtas to bring in a law to provide for the courts to listen to the views of the child. This Article is unique to the Constitution in that it legally obliges the Oireachtas to define these rights and to make sure that relevant legislation is in place.

Article 42A.4.1 commits the Oireachtas to bring in a law that ensures the best interests of the child will be “the paramount consideration”, in certain areas of decision-making affecting a child. This means those decisions will be determined based on what is best for the child in question. It applies only to proceedings:

- brought by the State involving children in the care system; and
- concerning the adoption, guardianship or custody of, or access to, any child.

Article 42A.4.2 commits the Oireachtas to bring in a law to ensure the views of the child are taken into account in the proceedings listed in 4.1 (children in care, adoption, guardianship, custody and access cases). This does not mean that the child's views will be the determining factor in the case. Rather, the child's views will be considered by the judge and given due weight according to the child's age and maturity. At present, the views of the child are heard on an 'ad hoc' basis, and largely depend on the type of case before the Court and the judge hearing the case. Such gaps will be addressed by this new wording.

Copy Deadlines for Local Newspapers

TITLE	COPY DEADLINE MONO	COPY DEADLINE COLOUR
Anglo-Celt	Mon 2pm	Mon 2pm
Clare Champion	Tue 5pm	Tue 12noon
Connacht Sentinel	Mon 2pm	Mon 12noon

Connaught Telegraph	Mon 12noon	Mon 12noon
Connacht Tribune	Tue 12noon	Mon 4pm
Corkman, the	Tue 1pm	Tue 1pm
Derry Journal(fri)	Wed 3pm	Wed 3pm
Derry Journal(tue)	Fri 5pm	Fri 5pm
Derry People & Donegal News	Wed 1pm	Tue 4pm
Donegal Democrat(thur)	Mon 5pm	Mon 5pm
People's Press(tue)	Fri 2pm	Fri 2pm
Drogheda Independent	Mon 5pm	Mon 12noon
Dundalk Argus	Mon 5pm	Mon 5pm
Dundalk Democrat	Fri 5pm	Fri 5pm
The Echo(Tallaght & Clondalkin)	Wed 12noon	Wed 12noon
Enniscorthy Guardian	Mon 12noon	Mon 12noon
Fingal Independent	Mon 1pm	Mon 1pm
Kerryman	Tue 10.30am	Tue 10.30am
Kilkenny People	Mon 5pm	Mon 5pm
Leinster Express/Offaly Express	Mon 5pm	Mon 5pm
Leinster Leader	Fri 4pm	Fri 4pm
Leitrim Observer	Mon 5pm	Mon 5pm
Limerick Chronicle	Mon 1pm	Mon 1pm
Limerick Leader	Tue 2pm	Tue 2pm
Longford Leader	Mon 5pm	Mon 5pm
Longford News	Mon 11am	Mon 11am
Mayo News	Fri 5pm	Fri 5pm
Meath Chronicle	Mon 12noon	Mon 1pm
Midland/Tullamore Tribune	Tue 12noon	Tue 12noon
Munster Express	Tue 12noon	Tue 12noon
Nationalist Series	Mon 12noon	Mon 12noon
Nationalist & Munster Adv. (Clonmel)	Tue 10am	Tue 10am
Nenagh Guardian	Tue 12noon	Tue 12noon
New Ross Standard	Mon 12noon	Mon 12noon
Northern Standard	Tue 4pm	Tue 4pm
Offaly Independent	Tue 4pm	Tue 4pm
People Group	Mon 12noon	Mon 12noon
Roscommon Herald	Fri 2pm	Fri 2pm
Sligo Champion	Mon 6pm	Mon 6pm
Southern Star	Tue 4pm	Tue 4pm
Tipperary Star	Tue 10am	Tue 10am
Tuam Herald	Tue 1pm	Tue 1pm
Waterford News & Star	Mon 12noon	Mon 12noon
Western People Ltd	Mon 12noon	Mon 12noon
Westmeath Examiner	Mon 4pm	Fri 4pm
Westmeath Independent	Mon 4pm	Fri 4pm

Child Population by County (CSO 2011)

Carlow	14,139
Dublin	287,258
Kildare	59,449

Kilkenny	25,015
Laois	22,932
Longford	10,593
Louth	33,292
Meath	53,400
Offaly	21,149
Westmeath	23,052
Wexford	38,842
Wicklow	36,444
Clare	30,666
Cork	128,448
Kerry	34,940
Limerick	46,067
Tipperary	40,760
Waterford	28,908
Galway	61,194
Leitrim	8,051
Mayo	32,514
Roscommon	16,076
Sligo	15,541
Cavan	20,194
Donegal	43,732
Monaghan	16,031

Information for member organisations on the Standards in Public Office Commission

This material is a reproduction of the Alliance briefing note for Alliance member organisations on the Standards in Public Office Commission, which was produced in July 2011. It provides member organisations with key information that will help guide them in their work, should they wish to support a 'Yes' referendum campaign.

If member organisations do not receive any donations for a 'political purpose' (see overleaf for definition) then leading up to, and during, a referendum campaign, they can freely engage in a campaign for a 'Yes' vote.

Should member organisations receive any donations over €126.97, then they must register with the Standards in Public Office Commission (SIPOC) as a 'third party' and open a political donations account (more information overleaf). Registration involves providing SIPOC with:

- "the name and address of the third party and the name and address of the person responsible for its organisation, management or financial affairs ("responsible person");
- a statement of the nature, purpose and estimated amount of donations to, and proposed expenses of, the third party during the year;
- an indication of any connection the third party may have with any political party or candidate at an election or referendum or otherwise."

"It is an offence to fail to comply with any of SIPOC Requirements."

Those member organisations that resolve not to accept any donations for a 'political purpose' exceeding the value of €126.97 (including being in receipt of professional services at reduced commercial rates or pro bono work) can:

- Publicly campaign for a 'Yes' vote in a referendum (public interviews, debates, social networking, etc.).
- Publicly campaign for a 'Yes' vote and participate in an activity of a 'third party' campaign.
- Join with other organisations to collectively call for a 'Yes' vote.
- Endorse a 'third party' campaign.
- Produce campaign material.
- Provide briefing notes and explanatory documents to a 'third party' campaign.
- Give permission for its logo to be used by a 'third party' campaign or other organisation.
- Facilitate staff to work on a voluntary basis with a 'third party' on a campaign. Staff annual leave must be clearly documented. If a staff member works for the 'third party' whilst still receiving their salary this must be declared as a donation to the 'third party'. In these circumstances, the legislative requirements in relation to donations and prohibited donations apply:
 - a) a third party may not accept a donation or donations from the same person, in the same year exceeding an aggregate value of €6,348.69;
 - b) a donation of whatever value (other than an Irish citizen) who resides outside the island of Ireland;
 - c) a donation from a body corporate or unincorporated body of persons, which does not keep an office in the island of Ireland from which one or more of its principal activities is directed; and
 - d) a donation exceeding the value of €126.97, if the name and address of the donor is not known.
- Direct individuals to give donations to a named 'third party' campaign.

All of the activities listed above do not have a commercial value and therefore do not breach SIPOC requirements.

Extracts from the website of the Standards in Public Office Commission. For more details please refer to their website www.SIPOC.gov.ie or contact them.

Political purposes means any of the following purposes, namely:

- i. (I) to promote or oppose, directly or indirectly, the interests of a political party, a political group, a TD, a Senator or an MEP, or
 (II) to present, directly or indirectly, the policies or a particular policy of a political party, a political group, a TD, a Senator, an MEP, or a third party, or
 (III) to present, directly or indirectly, the comments of a political party, a political group, a TD, a Senator, an MEP, or a third party with regard to the policy or policies of another political party, political group, TD, Senator, MEP, third party or candidate at an election or referendum or otherwise, or
 (IV) to promote or oppose, directly or indirectly, the interests of a third party in connection with the conduct or management of any campaign conducted with a view to promoting or procuring a particular outcome in relation to a policy or policies or functions of the Government or any public authority;
- ii. to promote or oppose, directly or indirectly, the election of a candidate at a Dáil, Seanad or European election or to solicit votes for or against a candidate or to present the policies or a particular policy of a candidate or the views of a candidate on any matter connected with the election or the comments of a candidate with regard to the policy or policies of a political party or a political group or of another candidate at the election or otherwise;
- iii. otherwise to influence the outcome of the election or a referendum or campaign referred to in paragraph (i)(IV) of this definition.

An individual or group, therefore, which accepts a contribution exceeding €126.97 in value, which has been given for the purposes of supporting the individual's/group's campaign in relation to the Lisbon Treaty referendum, will be required to register with the Standards in Public Office Commission as a third party and to comply with the requirements set out below for third parties.

What is a "third party"?

A third party means any individual or group, other than a registered political party or election candidate, who or which accepts, in a particular calendar year, a donation exceeding the value of €126.97.

A donation means any contribution given for political purposes and includes all or any of the following:

- a donation of money,
- a donation of property or goods,
- conferring the right to use, without payment or other consideration, indefinitely or for a specified period of time, any property or goods,
- the supply of services without payment or other consideration thereof,
- the difference between the commercial price and the price charged for the purchase, acquisition or use of property or goods or the supply of any service where the price, fee or other consideration is less than the commercial price, or
- a donation received by way of a contribution made to the net profit from a fund-raising event organised for the benefit of a third party.

Useful Sources of Information

Children's Rights Alliance

Comprehensive information on the history of the Children's Referendum and analysis of the amendment wording can be found here. For more information, visit: www.childrensrights.ie

Yes for Children

Yes for Children is a national campaign led by Barnardos, Children's Rights Alliance, ISPC and Campaign for Children calling for a YES vote in the children's referendum. We believe that this referendum is an historic opportunity to ensure that this and future generations of children in Ireland are better protected, respected and heard. For more information, visit www.yesforchildren.ie

National Youth Council of Ireland (NYCI)

www.nyci.ie - NYCI's recently launched a website providing information about the Children's Referendum.

State websites

www.refcom.ie – the Referendum Commission

www.childrensreferendum.ie - the Government's dedicated information website for the Children's Referendum.

www.irlgov.ie - provides information on all government services and departments, including links to the Houses of the Oireachtas; the Irish Statute Book and Government press releases.

www.cso.ie/ - holds a comprehensive amount of statistical information that is great for getting useful facts and figures for your campaign.

Media Contacts

The Irish Times

newsdesk@irishtimes.com

The Irish Independent

inews@independent.ie

Irish Examiner

news@examiner.ie

Irish Star

news@thestar.ie

Evening Herald

hnews@herald.ie

Irish Daily Mail

news@dailymail.ie

Irish Mirror

news@irishmirror.ie

Irish Sun

irishsun@the-sun.ie

Metro Herald

news@metroherald.ie

The Journal
news@thejournal.ie

RTE
newsdesk@rte.ie

If you know the name of the person you wish to e-mail in RTÉ you can e-mail using the following formula. firstname.surname@rte.ie

TG4
nuacht@tg4.ie

TV3
info@tv3.ie

Newstalk
newsroom@newstalk.ie

Press Association
dublin@pressassociation.ie

Political web sites

Political parties
www.fiannafail.ie/
www.fine Gael.ie/
www.labour.ie/
www.sinnfein.ie/

www.kildarestreet.com - searchable archive of Oireachtas activities
<http://www.politics.ie/> - Irish political forum

Books

The Irish Media Contacts Directory (www.mediacontact.ie): contains contact details of all national and regional television and radio, newspapers, magazines and periodicals. It also includes information on senior Government contacts, NGOs, political parties, and the European Union.

Nealon's Guide is published after each general election; it provides a comprehensive profile of each TD and Senator in the Oireachtas. The latest edition also contains information relating to the Northern Ireland Assembly and the European Parliament.

Key Children's Rights Alliance Contacts



Carys Thomas, Communications and Public Affairs Director: Carys is the Campaign Manager for the Alliance and is responsible for ensuring that Alliance staff implements the campaign plan. carys@childrensrights.ie Mobile: 0877702845



Ken Reid, Information Officer: Ken is managing the Alliance's strategy for member advocacy. He is also responsible for our website, including the section on the Children's Referendum. Email: ken@childrensrights.ie Tel: 01 662 9400



Delphine O'Keeffe, Communications Officer: Delphine is working with the Communications and Public Affairs team, supporting the Alliance's media strategy on the campaign, communicating with key stakeholders and supporting the production of campaign materials. delphine@childrensrights.ie Tel: 016629400



Ciaran O'Reilly, Communications and Administrative Assistant: Ciaran is working with the Communications and Public Affairs team, organising events, supporting the social media campaign and communicating with key stakeholders around the Children's Referendum. ciaran@childrensrights.ie Tel: 01 662 9400.

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS ALLIANCE

The Children's Rights Alliance is a coalition of over 100 organisations working to secure the rights of children in Ireland, by campaigning for the full implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. It aims to improve the lives of all children under 18, through securing the necessary changes in Ireland's laws, policies and services.

October 2012

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The Children's Rights Alliance is a registered charity – CHY No. 11541

This is an in-house publication.

For any enquiries or to obtain additional copies of this paper, please contact:

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