Supporting the Right to Choose

What will we do?
1. Affirm Edinburgh University Students' Association's pro-choice position, supporting the right of those seeking an abortion to make decisions about their own bodies
2. Support the belief that all those seeking an abortion in the UK are entitled to free, safe and legal abortion, regardless of geographical location or ability to pay
3. Support campaigns to oppose any restrictions to current rights and access to abortion
4. Support campaigns to make access to, and experience of, abortion fairer for those who decide not to continue a pregnancy
5. Ensure that independently of the Students' Association's stance on this or any issue, all students who are pregnant and wish to access free, impartial and non-directional advice are able to do so through the Advice Place

What is the background to this?
1. Under UK law, abortion can be carried out up to 24 weeks in England, Scotland and Wales subject to legal requirements; abortion is permitted after 24 weeks if the pregnancy poses a risk to life
2. There is currently no legally protected right to abortion on request; two doctors must confirm that continuing a pregnancy involves a greater risk to physical or mental health than having a termination
3. Abortion is tightly restricted in Northern Ireland and can only be obtained if the pregnancy poses a risk to life and in some cases of foetal abnormality
4. Under the Scotland Act 2016, responsibility for abortion law was devolved to the Scottish Parliament
5. At present, those in Scotland seeking abortions after 18 weeks are required to travel to England to have this procedure
6. One in three women in the UK have an abortion in their lifetime (Abortion Rights)
7. Restrictive laws do not stop people from having abortions, they mainly make the procedure clandestine and often unsafe (Guttmacher Institute)
8. The Students’ Association previously held policy stating its pro-choice stance, and this motion largely restates the content of that policy

What beliefs motivate the actions you propose?
1. The Students' Association is an organisation dedicated to representing the interests of University of Edinburgh students
2. As such, it should support the right of all students to choose what happens in their lives and what happens to their bodies, including the choice of whether or not to continue with a pregnancy
3. Abortion is a student issue because pregnancy is something that happens to students, and because the decision about whether or not to continue a pregnancy can influence how and whether students are able to access education.

4. Threats to the right to choose are not uncommon; tactics against abortion, including street protests outside abortion clinics, are occurring in Edinburgh and throughout the UK.

Submitted with 20 student signatures