

BE BOLD. BE HEARD.

My Death, My Decision
Campaign Toolkit 

YOUR GUIDE TO:

**Effective meetings,
communicating our
message, and changing
hearts and minds.**



WELCOME

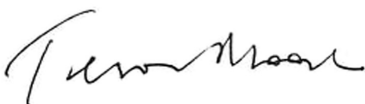
My Death, My Decision is a grassroots non-profit organisation that campaigns for a balanced and compassionate approach to assisted dying in England and Wales. As a growing movement we are at the forefront of social change: nearly 90% of the public now favours a change in the law to allow adults of sound mind, who are either terminally ill or facing incurable suffering, the option of a peaceful, painless, and dignified death.

However, unlike some right-to-die organisations we don't believe that the right to control the manner and timing of your own death should be restricted to those with six or fewer months left to live. We believe that just as compassion for others has motivated people to support assisted dying for those who are terminally ill, it should also underscore support for those facing constant and unbearable suffering, as faced by our patron Paul Lamb.

As a member of My Death, My Decision's campaign network, your voice helps us to broaden the public debate on assisted dying and has already enabled us to:

- Campaign in Parliament for the interests of those who are terminally ill and incurably suffering.
- Champion the legal cases of Omid T, Paul Lamb, and Phil Newby to enshrine a fundamental human right to choose.
- Support families after compassionately helping a loved one to die, by putting them in touch with our local groups and support networks.

The stakes and urgency of our campaign have never been clearer, but I hope the guidance within this toolkit will give you the confidence and skills necessary to continue driving our campaign forward.



Trevor Moore
Chair, My Death, My Decision



Credit: British Medical Journal



HOW TO MEET WITH YOUR MP

Meeting with your Member of Parliament is a great way to raise awareness about our campaign, and can sometimes be the most important step in their journey towards supporting a change in the law. For example, due in part to the hard work of My Death, My Decision's Campaign Network, Vince Cable MP recently declared:

"I am someone whose views have radically changed. Until recently I was a vehement opponent of assisted dying, but I have changed my views..."

Vince Cable MP (Twickenham) - July 2019

Moreover, following the work of our network, another MP recently declared:

"[I voted against the issue of assisted dying before but] I'm glad the House has a chance to think about this issue again. Traditionally, the argument for changing the law is based on the Oregon Model ... and it generally refers to people who have six months left to live ... I have some difficulty with that if we are to look at the matter again ... such a narrow position would not help someone as Paul Lamb. Having listened to Paul Lamb and thought about it again [and following] the poll that was released by My Death, My Decision ... [I think] we should be considering assisted dying both in the context of terminal illness and in the context of suffering."

Steve McCabe MP (Selly Oak) - July 2019

However, despite some great progress, we still have a long way to go. In 2015, only 118 Members of Parliament (less than 20%) voted to legalise assisted dying. As a result **233 people have been forced to die abroad since.**



More than 8 in 10 MPs voted against changing the law on assisted dying in 2015.

It is vital that My Death, My Decision continues to meet with our elected representatives and asks for them to represent the views of nearly 90% of the public. Meeting with your MP face-to-face is a great way to directly engage with them on the issues around assisted dying, influence their thinking, and demonstrate the passion behind our movement.

There are lots of ways that you can arrange to meet with your MP, and it is important to remember that they are obliged to engage with you as a constituent. **Contacting their local office directly and asking for advice is normally the best way to arrange a meeting.** Their office can advise you whether your MP runs a drop-in-constituency surgery, whether you should book a slot in advance, or prepare to queue, or when you could meet them at Westminster. You can also ask to take a friend, family member, or fellow My Death, My Decision network member to the meeting.

Preparing for a meeting

If you are uncertain or unsure who your Member of Parliament is, you can find out by searching your postcode in:

www.writetothem.com

Once you are confident who your locally elected representative is, the next step is to prepare for a meeting. MPs typically have 15 minutes for every meeting, and usually spend Monday - Thursday in London. Therefore, it is important to remember when you first get in touch to explain:

1. That you are a local constituent (e.g. give your address)
2. That you would like to discuss assisted dying
3. Who will be attending your meeting
4. How you would like them to help

If multiple people plan to attend your meeting, you may also want to agree different roles beforehand. For example, one person may want to ask questions, or explain information relating to assisted dying, and someone else might want to take notes.

Don't be disheartened if your MP doesn't respond immediately, as they normally have a large number of correspondences to consider. However, if you haven't heard back after one week, you may want to follow up with a call to their constituency office.

When you eventually meet with your MP, **the number one rule is to be yourself** - you are the person they want to listen to after all. Don't worry, your MP will not expect you to be a policy expert, and if you are asked a question you don't know the answer to, it's fine to admit that you are unsure (you could even offer to follow up with the answer in an email afterwards). However, in some cases you might actually know more than them. Bringing some brief notes (or even this guide) to your meeting can prove to be helpful.



Tips for an effective meeting

The key to an effective meeting is to be clear what action you'd like your MP to take. For example you might ask them to:

- Follow My Death, My Decision on social media
- Attend a local My Death, My Decision meeting
- Write to the Justice Minister or raise an issue on your behalf
- Sign an Early Day Motion
- Table a parliamentary question
- Raise assisted dying verbally in a debate
- Send a press release to your local paper about the meeting, or blog the meeting on their website.

My Death, My Decision can provide help and advice before a meeting by contacting: campaigns@mydeath-mydecision.org.uk

Whilst at the meeting you may want to consider:

- **Are you overwhelming your MP with information?** If so, try to focus your conversation on only two messages or relevant stories.
- **Are you being party political?** Assisted Dying is an issue of conscience, and therefore not associated with any particular political party.
- **Are you balancing how long both of you are speaking?** In general, your MP will respond better if you both have an opportunity to reflect and respond to each other's opinions.
- Finally, if they disagree, **can you find a way to remain constructive?** Remember, you don't have to change their minds in a single meeting.

At the end of the meeting, remember to thank your MP for their time, and keep a note of the actions you agreed. You may also want to give your MP a briefing document that they can take away.

Also, remember to keep your MP updated on My Death, My Decision's activities and inform them of any key successes or developments.

ACKNOWLEDGING THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY OF DEBBIE PURDY'S LANDMARK CASE

Tuesday 30th July 2019

Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice
102 Petty France
London
SW1H 9AJ

Dear Sir,

We represent a diverse range of perspectives from across British society, including those who have accompanied loved ones abroad for an assisted death. We all agree that the right to choose how we die is a fundamental human right, and that those who are either terminally ill or facing incurable suffering should have the option of a peaceful, painless, and dignified death.

It is ten years since Debbie Purdy's successful legal case, requiring the Director of Public Prosecutions to clarify when a person who accompanies a loved one to Switzerland can expect to be charged from progressive countries, including

Prominent medical opinion has shifted and an increasing number of their friends and families who are incurably suffering, in at least some

Debbie Purdy and Tony Nicklinson the right to

WRITING A PERSUASIVE LETTER

If you'd rather not meet with your MP face-to-face, there are still plenty of other ways to get in touch. For example, you could write them a letter, send an email, or message them on Facebook and Twitter. Remember, whilst parliamentarians may receive hundreds of mass emails every day, they rarely receive a personal letter. Taking the time to write a handwritten note is a great way to stand out and prompt a response, since it shows that you have dedicated time and thought to the issue you hope to discuss.

To write a persuasive letter, aim to write less than one side of A4, raise a maximum of two points, and explain your own reasons for supporting a change in the law. Persuasive arguments often highlight the human impact of an issue and My Death, My Decision can help by providing case studies to add weight to your argument. Alternatively, if you have already met with your MP, or think that a recent comment they've made is particularly relevant, it may help by drawing attention to these facts.

Remember, just as when arranging a face-to-face meeting, set out clearly and concisely what you would like your MP to do. Make sure to check for spelling mistakes, and that names and titles are correct.

Assisted Dying Coalition

Since 2015, more than 230 Brits were forced to make a heartbreaking journey to Switzerland to end their lives.



GETTING OUR MESSAGE OUT

Another way to make your voice heard on the issue of assisted dying is meeting with your local Councillors.

Local Authorities

According to the law in England and Wales, Local Authorities (*local, parish, community, county, or district councils*) must: assess the intention/ capacity of anyone known to be seeking an assisted death abroad, and in 'exceptional circumstances' consider whether to apply for a travel ban. No guidance has been published as to on what basis the local authority makes such decisions.

Therefore by focusing on your local area you can help to make a difference by:

- Asking to meet with, or writing to the Councillor in your ward, and asking them to raise the issue of assisted dying. (Find their details at: www.writetothem.com)
- Gather information on the number of bans on assisted dying your Council has sought by sending a Freedom of Information Request.

Freedom of Information

The specific legal requirements to make a Freedom of Information Request (which can be made to any Local Authority, Minister, etc) is to include in writing: (i) your name, (ii) your contact address, and (iii) the details of the information you want e.g. it might be all the information held on one topic, or just a summary.

It is important to know that whilst Freedom of Information requests are usually free, you can in some circumstances be asked to pay a nominal amount if your question is unusually difficult. After you have made your request your Council will respond in 20 working days, or will let you know if they need more time. Your request may be refused if it is too costly or deemed too sensitive. However, if you disagree with their decision you can ask for an internal review.

Councillors

Beyond their strict powers, local Councillors can also help by passing a local motion against the UK's prohibition of assisted dying. This is a great way to send a strong message to your MP that the local community is against the current law.

If you want to pass a local council motion you will need:

1. A sympathetic Councillor prepared to move your motion.
2. Another Councillor to second the motion.
3. A motion (*see later in this document*).

When approaching your local Councillor, try to treat them as you would your MP: explain why the law against assisted dying should change, and **why they should speak out against it**. Motions can usually be proposed at any council meeting, but often need to be proposed in writing between 5 - 7 days before a debate - if you are unsure about passing a motion you can ask your Councillor or the **campaign network** for more information.



S O C I A L
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OTHER WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

We know that not everyone can always give as much time as they might like, but even if you cannot meet with your local Councillor or MP, there are still a number of quick things you can do to help our campaign. For example:

- Join a local My Death, My Decision group
- Write an opinion piece for our website
- If you have had a personal experience of assisted dying, share your story with My Death, My Decision
- Write to the Secretary of State for Justice to share your story, and ask whether they intend to help compassionate families in the future.
- Add your name to one of My Death, My Decision's campaigns - a full list can be found at: www.mydeath-mydecision.org.uk/campaigns
- Write to your GP and ask their views on assisted dying
- Write to the Secretary of State for Health and ask them to clarify the law for doctors on assisted dying. See www.mydeath-mydecision.org.uk/medicalgroup/

Alternatively, social media is increasingly becoming a vital method by which you can influence key decision-makers, raise awareness, and drive our campaign forward. Two immediate ways to help My Death, My Decision today are to: like My Death, My Decision on Facebook or follow us on Twitter.

 @MyDeathMyDecision

 @MDMDmydecision



93%

OF THE PUBLIC AGREE ASSISTED DYING IS ACCEPTABLE IN AT LEAST SOME CIRCUMSTANCES.

 @MDMDMYDECISION

Frequently Asked Questions...

Who are My Death, My Decision?

My Death, My Decision is a grassroots not-for-profit organisation that campaigns for a compassionate and balanced approach to medical assisted dying in the UK. We believe that everyone deserves access to excellent palliative care but that mentally competent adults, who are either terminally ill or facing incurable suffering, should be able to decide for themselves the manner and timing of their own death. Through the work of our members, supporters, patrons, and activists we help to broaden the public debate on assisted dying and seek to secure changes in the law.

What does 'facing incurable suffering' mean?

There is no set list of illnesses or conditions defined as of 'incurable suffering'. However, we believe that those such as the late Debbie Purdy and Tony Nicklinson, who suffered from multiple sclerosis and locked-in syndrome respectively, should have had the right to choose the manner and timing of their own death. It is for each individual to determine for themselves whether and when their quality of life has permanently dipped below a level they can accept. However, we think that an important safeguard should be that two doctors can confirm a patient's suffering is incurable and unbearable, before they can be assisted to die.

Why should someone facing incurable suffering have a right to die?

There is a strong moral and legal case for allowing those who face years of prolonged suffering the right to choose how they die. Just as compassion motivates people to support assisted dying for the terminally ill, it should also underscore support for those who face years of potentially unbearable suffering. Beyond this, a restriction to only those with a terminal illness poses a specific problem as it is common for life expectancies to fluctuate, meaning it is difficult to draw a cut-off e.g. why six months and not seven? From a legal point of view, a set time restriction also discriminates against those who are not assumed to die within that time.



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What is the current law on medically assisted dying?

It is illegal under the 1961 Suicide Act to commit an act capable of assisting or encouraging another person to end their life, and those convicted could face up to 14 years in prison.

How many people support medical assisted dying reform in the UK?

A record 88% of the public favour assisted dying, in at least some circumstances. Whilst a direct comparison to a 2014 poll cannot be made, this indicates that public support has nearly doubled between 2014 and 2019.

Where is medically assisted dying legal?

Assisted dying is now legal for both the terminally ill and incurably suffering in five countries, most recently Canada, and is also legal for terminally ill people in Colombia, ten US jurisdictions, and the Australian state of Victoria. In Canada, four criteria must be met: a serious illness, disease or disability; an advanced state of irreversible decline of capability; physical and psychological suffering that is intolerable to them; and a natural death is reasonably foreseeable.

How many people from the UK travel abroad to Switzerland to end their life?

Research from the UK's Assisted Dying Coalition, of which My Death, My Decision is a founding member, estimates that one person a week now travels from the UK to Switzerland to end their life.

How many people would actually want a medically assisted death if the law changed?

There is no way of knowing for sure, but research from the Assisted Dying Coalition indicates that nearly 1,500 UK citizens are members of an assisted dying organisation in Switzerland. However, this is a self-selecting group of individuals who can afford to make the trip to Switzerland, so the number would likely be far higher.

What do disability groups think about medically assisted dying?

An overwhelming majority of the disabled community favour assisted dying reform. This is reflected in the positions of several high profile disability rights organisations, who have adopted no stance, or a neutral position on reform e.g. The Motor Neurone Disease Association, Parkinsons UK, and The Alzheimer's Society.



Credit: Jeremy Young

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What do doctors think about assisted dying?

Although some doctors conscientiously object to medical assisted dying reform, the vast majority of UK doctors and nurses want the law to enable them to ease their patients' suffering. For example, 55% of GPs agree or strongly agree that the law on medical assisted dying should change, and 45% of doctors believe that some healthcare professionals already hasten the death of their patients. This is also reflected in the positions of several high profile medical organisations, who have either not taken, or have adopted a neutral stance on assisted dying including: The Royal College of Physicians, The Royal Society of Medicine, The Royal College of Nursing, and The Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Doesn't medically assisted dying conflict with a doctor's hippocratic oath?

The hippocratic oath has long since been replaced by the Declaration of Geneva, which actually begins with a pledge to 'respect the autonomy and dignity' of a patient, before it requires a doctor to pledge to respect life.

Is there any evidence that medically assisted dying pressures vulnerable people to end their life?

There is no credible evidence from countries or jurisdictions which have legalised assisted dying, that vulnerable people will be pressured into ending their lives. In fact, the most comprehensive study on the topic by Professor Margaret Battin et al, concluded the exact opposite:

"[the authors] found no evidence to justify the grave and important concern often expressed about the potential for abuse—namely, the fear that legalised physician-assisted dying will target the vulnerable or pose the greatest risk to people in vulnerable groups"

Would a change in the law create an expectation that people should end their life instead of becoming a burden to others?

The majority of evidence indicates a compassionate and balanced right-to-die does not prompt people to end their life because they fear they will become a burden. For example, in 2018 over 90% of people who requested an assisted death in Oregon cited a 'loss of autonomy' and inability to enjoy activities 'making life enjoyable' as their motivation.



TEMPLATE LETTER:

THE RIGHT TO DIE SHOULD BE SEEN AS A FUNDAMENTAL HUMAN RIGHT.

[Date]

[Name] MP
[Email Address]
[Constituency Address]

Dear [insert your MP's name] MP

I am a local constituent of yours and would welcome the opportunity to meet with you to discuss how we can work together to support the choices of those who are terminally ill or facing incurable suffering. I believe, as nearly 90% of the public do, that as society has become increasingly adept at extending the length of someone's life, though not necessarily its quality, the law should allow those facing unbearable suffering the right to choose a peaceful, painless, and dignified death.

Parliament last considered assisted dying reform back in September 2015 and you [either voted in favour of reform, voted against reform, or did not vote on reform - see: <https://www.theyworkforyou.com>]. Since then, new evidence has emerged from progressive countries, including Canada, that robust safeguards can be achieved whilst protecting autonomy. Prominent medical opinion has shifted, and institutions previously opposed to reform, such as the Royal College of Physicians, have now adopted neutral stances. Perhaps most importantly, **233 people have been forced to end their lives in Switzerland**, because at home their only option could ever be an undignified and humiliating death.

* [Add personal or local information that will help illustrate your reasons for supporting a compassionate and balanced change in the law on assisted dying. Make it as personal as you are comfortable with.]

I'd be grateful for your thoughts and time to meet and discuss the topic of assisted dying.

Best wishes,

[insert your name]

[insert your address and postcode]

[insert your email address and contactable number]

Council Motion:

Notice of Motion - The right to a peaceful, painless, and dignified death.

This Council notes that nearly 90% of the public now favours the option of an assisted death, and believes that Parliament must legalise the right-to-die for those who are terminally ill or facing incurable suffering. Therefore, this Council:

- Endorses the work of My Death, My Decision.
- Calls for the Government to inquire into the evidence of progressive countries, including Canada, where robust safeguards have been proven to work alongside the right to a peaceful, painless, and dignified death.
- Asks our local MPs to support the spirit of the motion, to raise the matter in the House of Commons, and to support changing the current law to introduce a right to die.

Proposed by Councillor:

Seconded by:

Also signed by:



Freedom of Information

DATE XXXX

To whom it may concern,

Request under Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA)

I am writing to make a request under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. Please can you inform me:

(i) The number of injunctions upon travel sought under the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court, between January 1st 2015 and December 31st 2018, in relation to assisted suicide.

(ii) The criteria upon which the Local Authority fulfills its obligation to judge in 'exceptional circumstances' whether to invoke the High Court's inherent jurisdiction, in relation to assisted suicide.

Please can the above information be provided in an electronic copy via email. I appreciate that you must receive a lot of inquiries but I would be very grateful if you could direct me to the relevant source, if my requested information is already in the public domain or help me if my requested information is too wide or unclear.

If it is of any assistance my request relates to the legal obligations set out by Mr Justice Hedley at paragraph 19 in *Re Z* [2004] EWHC 2817 (Fam).

Thank you for your assistance and hardwork. I am happy to answer any questions if I can be of more help.

Best wishes,

Name

Email

Contactable Telephone Number



Freedom of Information Act 2000

BRIEFING: ASSISTED DYING

My Death, My Decision

For more information contact:

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About us

My Death, My Decision is a grassroots not-for-profit organisation that campaigns for a compassionate and balanced approach to assisted dying in the UK. We believe that everyone deserves access to excellent palliative care but that mentally competent adults, who are either terminally ill or facing incurable suffering, should be able to decide for themselves the manner and timing of their own death. Through the work of our members, supporters, patrons, and activists we aim to broaden the public debate on assisted dying and seek to secure changes in the law.

The law on assisted dying

Helping someone to end their life is a criminal offence that carries a maximum sentence of 14 years in England and Wales, provided the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) consents.¹ Following the landmark ruling in Debbie Purdy's 2010 case, the DPP clarified the factors tending for and against a prosecution, with factors including:²

- acting in your capacity as a medical professional, with the person in your care, tending for prosecution
- the absence of a voluntary, clear, settled, and informed decision tending for prosecution
- a wholly compassionate motivation tending against prosecution

In 2014 Jane Nicklinson, the widow of locked-in sufferer Tony Nicklinson, and Paul Lamb, who is paralysed from the neck down, challenged the law on assisted dying in the Supreme Court. With a notable dissent from the now President, Lady Hale, the court held that Parliament should be afforded the opportunity to debate the issue before the courts would rule on whether the law is incompatible with the human rights of those who are both terminally ill and incurably suffering.³ Since then three bills have been introduced to Parliament attempting to legalise assisted dying.⁴ However, all three related only to those with six or fewer months left to live.

The case for an inclusive and balanced law

We believe that the right to die should be seen as a fundamental human right, and that those who are either terminally ill or facing incurable suffering should have the option of a peaceful, painless, and dignified death. Unlike some organisations, we don't consider terminal illness to be a reliable measure of someone's suffering or quality of life, and are conscious that such a restriction poses a specific problem as it is common for life expectancies to fluctuate. Just as compassion for others motivates people to support assisted dying for those who are terminally ill, we believe it should also underscore support for those like Tony Nicklinson or Paul Lamb.

- According to research from the **Assisted Dying Coalition**, which My Death, My Decision helped to co-found, more than one person a week now travels from Britain to Switzerland to end their life because they cannot request a peaceful death at home. Prior to 2015, it was estimated that one person every fourteen days made this journey. These journeys are often difficult and isolating, with many people forced to sacrifice their opportunity to say goodbye to their loved ones, to protect them from being prosecuted.⁵

1 The Suicide Act 1961. Section 2(1) and Section 2(2A) Suicide Act 1961.

2 The Crown Prosecution Service. Suicide: Policy for Prosecutors in Respect of Cases of Encouraging or Assisting Suicide. 2014. <https://www.cps.gov.uk/legal-guidance/suicide-policy-prosecutors-respect-cases-encouraging-or-assisting-suicide>

3 R(Nicklinson) v Ministry of Justice [2014] UKSC 38, para 321

4 Lord Falconer. Assisted Dying Bill. House of Lords. 2014. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2014-2015/0006/15006.pdf>
Rob Marris MP. Assisted Dying (No.2) Bill. House of Commons. 2015. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2015-2016/0007/16007.pdf>
Lord Hayward. Assisted Dying Bill. House of Lords. <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/lbill/2016-2017/0042/17042.pdf>

5 The Assisted Dying Coalition. 'Number of UK citizens going to Switzerland to seek an assisted death' https://humanism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019-2-1-KM-Assisted-Dying-Briefing_-_Number-of-UK-citizens-going-to-Switzerland-to-see-an-assisted-death-1.pdf; BBC. 'Assisted Suicide: One Briton a fortnight goes to Switzerland. 2014. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-28876130>

- Now more than ever, as society has become increasingly adept at extending the length of life, but not its quality, the right to decide the manner and timing of your own death should be seen as a fundamental human right. Forcing individuals to end their life abroad undermines this right, as the physical demands of travelling abroad can compel those with progressive conditions to end their lives sooner than would they otherwise wish, and many cannot afford the £10,000 cost of an assisted death in Switzerland.⁶
- Patients often fail to confide in their doctors, when they intend to end their life abroad, because they fear their doctor will make it more difficult for them by withholding medical records.⁷ In reality, this measure doesn't stop anyone from having an assisted death. However, when unable to trust their doctors, patients often seek advice from unqualified or unethical sources, who may only give them partial information.⁸ We believe the best way to protect patients, and doctors, is an early system of open and honest conversation.
- According to a National Centre for Social Research survey, commissioned by My Death, My Decision, 93% of the public support legalising the option of assisted dying for the terminally ill, in at least some circumstances, and up to 88% of the public support legalising the option of assisted dying for those facing incurable suffering.⁹ We believe, as the majority of the public do, that dying through a long and drawn-out illness, or through the inhumane process of starvation, as Tony Nicklinson did, does not honour the compassion or dignity that those at the end of their life deserve.

Popular Counterarguments

Palliative care is an important choice which has brought relief to many people suffering in the UK. My Death, My Decision strongly believes that everyone deserves access to high quality palliative medicine. However, we do not think that palliative care and assisted dying should be mutually exclusive. Northern Belgium has demonstrated, for over a decade, that palliative medicine and assisted dying work best when they work in tandem: 70% of people who request an assisted death in the Flanders region of Belgium also receive palliative care.¹⁰ Moreover, a comprehensive study by the European Association of Palliative Care recently concluded: 'There is evidence of advancement of palliative care in countries with legalised euthanasia, also after the legalisation of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide. The idea that legalisation of euthanasia and/or assisted suicide might obstruct or halt palliative care development thus seems unwarranted and is only expressed in commentaries rather than demonstrated by empirical evidence.'¹¹

The protection of **vulnerable people** is of the utmost importance, however opponents of assisted dying should be equally concerned with protecting those living in constant pain from prolonged suffering. There is no credible evidence from countries or territories which have legalised assisted dying, that vulnerable people will be pressured to end their life. In fact, the most comprehensive study by Professor Battin et al concluded the exact opposite. The study looked at evidence from two different models, Oregon and the Netherlands, and concluded: 'Where assisted dying is already legal, there is no current evidence for the claim that legalised PAS [physician-assisted suicide] or euthanasia will have a disproportionate impact on patients in vulnerable groups.'¹²

The Declaration of Geneva, the modern iteration of the **Hippocratic Oath**, begins with a pledge to: 'respect the autonomy and dignity' of a patient, before it requires a doctor to pledge to respect life.¹³ Perhaps unsurprisingly a majority of doctors and nurses therefore support changing the law on assisted dying. This attitude is similarly reflected in the policy of several high profile medical organisations, who have either not taken, or have adopted a neutral stance, on assisted dying including: The Royal College of Physicians,¹⁴ The Royal Society of Medicine, The Royal College of Nursing, and The Royal College of Psychiatrists.¹⁵

6 My Death, My Decision. 'New Report on Outsourcing Assisted Dying to Switzerland'. 2017. <https://www.mydeath-mydecision.org.uk/new-report-outsourcing-assisted-dying-switzerland/>

7 General Medical Council. 'Guidance for the Investigation Committee and case examiners when considering allegations about a doctor's involvement in encouraging or assisting suicide. 2013.

https://www.gmc-uk.org/-/media/documents/DC4317_Guidance_for_FTP_decision_makers_on_assisting_suicide_51026940.pdf

8 It has been predicted that anywhere between 4 - 10% of doctors and other healthcare professionals engage in illicit end of life practices. Roger Magnusson. 'Euthanasia: above ground, below ground'. British Medical Journal. 2004. <https://jme.bmj.com/content/30/5/441>

9 My Death, My Decision. 'New Research finds up to 93% of people consider assisted dying acceptable in at least some situations, even if rarely.' 2019. <https://www.mydeath-mydecision.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Briefing-on-NatCen-assisted-dying-poll.pdf>

10 Sigrid Dierrickx et al. 'Involvement of palliative care in euthanasia practice in a context of legalised euthanasia: A population-based mortality follow-back study'. Sage Journals. 2017. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/0269216317727158>

11 Clare Dyer. 'Legalisation of assisted dying does not harm palliative care, study concludes'. British Medical Journal. 2011. <https://www.bmj.com/content/343/bmj.d6779>

12 Margaret Battin et al. 'Legal physician-assisted dying in Oregon and the Netherlands: evidence concerning the impact on patients in "vulnerable" groups'. Journal of Medical Ethics. 2007. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/17906058>

13 World Medical Association. 'Declaration of Geneva'. 2018. <https://www.wma.net/policies-post/wma-declaration-of-geneva/>

14 Jacky Davis. 'Most UK doctors support assisted dying, a new poll shows: the BMA's opposition does not represent members.' British Medical Journal. 2018. <https://www.bmj.com/content/360/bmj.k301>

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