



ASSISTED SUICIDE

A new Bill to legalise assisted suicide is to be lodged at the Scottish Parliament

What is assisted suicide?

- Assisted suicide refers to a doctor helping a patient to kill themselves by providing the patient with a lethal cocktail of drugs.
- Assisting someone to commit suicide is illegal under the common law of Scotland.
- Decisions relating to stopping medical treatments or increasing pain relief that may accelerate someone's death are not the same thing as assisted suicide.

Why is assisted suicide wrong?

- Assisted suicide is gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person.
- Assisted suicide undermines efforts to tackle suicide and sends a message to society that suicide is an appropriate response to physical or mental suffering.
- Assisted suicide sends a clear message to frail, elderly and disabled patients about the value that society places on them and undermines efforts to improve palliative care.
- Assisted suicide puts pressure on people to end their lives for fear of being a financial, emotional or care burden on others.
- Assisted suicide undermines public trust in doctors, damaging the doctor-patient relationship.
- The slippery slope is real and dangerous. Canada has eroded safeguards in just five years, from terminal illness to cover chronic illness and disability. It is impossible for any government to draft assisted suicide laws which include legal protection from future expansion of those laws.
- An assisted suicide law is extremely high risk. The consequences of error are deadly and irreparable.

“As a society we are clear that suicide itself is not something to be encouraged, much less assisted.”

-Lord David Alton

‘The World Medical Association reiterates its strong commitment to the principles of medical ethics and that utmost respect has to be maintained for human life. Therefore, the WMA is firmly opposed to euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide.’

-70th World Medical Association General Assembly, Tbilisi, Georgia, 2019

What's next?

A Bill to legalise assisted suicide will be published alongside a public consultation on the terms of the Bill. We will let you know when the consultation is open for submissions.

The Scottish Parliament will have an opportunity to scrutinise the Bill and MSPs will vote on whether it should be made law.

"The judgement that an illness is incurable cannot mean that care has come at an end."

-Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

What can I do?

- ◆ Visit the [Catholic Parliamentary Office website](#) and keep up-to-date with all the latest developments. You can sign up to our mailing list using the function on the homepage. You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook.
- ◆ Sign up at [Care Not Killing Scotland](#) and support the campaign to resist assisted suicide and to call for proper funding of palliative care.
- ◆ Email your eight MSPs (you have one constituency MSP and seven regional MSPs) and ask them to vote against the Assisted Suicide Bill when it is presented to the Parliament. You can obtain contact details via this [Scottish Parliament webpage](#) (enter your postcode in the 'Find MSPs by postcode' function).

It would be helpful when you write to your MSPs if you could outline some of your own concerns about legalising assisted suicide, which may include some of the concerns we have outlined in this briefing. Please use your own words as far as possible. And don't forget to include your name and postal address as MSPs can only answer concerns raised by constituents.

- ◆ Healthcare professional? Sign up at [Our Duty of Care](#) and support the professional campaign to resist assisted suicide.
- ◆ Please **pray** that attempts to legalise assisted suicide, with all of its associated dangers, will be resisted and that society, respectful of the dignity of life, will commit to improving care for those who find themselves facing death; to care for them, not to kill them.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church declares that assisted suicide is "gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator...[it] must always be forbidden and excluded."

-Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2277