

Still Not Safe: Our Conclusions

Terminology

The use of the term 'assisted dying' in the current bill is misleading. It reflects campaign rhetoric and has no meaning in law.

The process

Expert doctors contest the idea that assisted suicide is a safe and comfortable death, as campaigners for the practice claim. Evidence from other jurisdictions shows both that serious complications occur in assisted deaths, and that people who opt for assisted deaths do so due to existential crises.

Safeguarding

Global evidence indicates that there is no way to make an 'assisted dying' framework "safe". Abuses do occur, necessarily against the most vulnerable and marginalised in society. There is also no guarantee against legislative expansion. Indeed, countries with long-standing 'assisted dying' laws have seen significant, controversial, and sometimes rapid change.

Palliative care

Doctors whose expertise lies in helping dying people are overwhelmingly opposed to assisted suicide and warn that it will negatively impact patients, doctors, family members, and end-of-life care as a whole. We are acutely concerned that legislating for assisted suicide would undermine healthcare in the UK and damage public confidence in the profession.

Suicide prevention

Public debates on assisted suicide often neglect to mention a potential impact on wider suicide prevention. Experts specialising in the mental health impact of severe physical illness say a change in the law would negatively affect prevention and warn that proposed 'safeguards' are insufficient to deal with the complex factors involved with a request for 'assisted suicide'.

Disability

Experts say a system of assisted suicide would open up disabled people to profound new dangers, undermine societal progress toward disability equality, and result in new, negative value judgments about disabled people's lives. As a result, no major disability organisation in the UK campaigns for assisted suicide and many disability groups and activists staunchly oppose it.

Poverty

People in deprived areas are more likely to present with cancer at a late stage. People in deprived areas are more likely to have poor mental health, and face barriers accessing palliative care. We believe an assisted suicide framework would compound existing social inequalities, and single out the poorest in society for unjust treatment.

Canada

Canada is a nation that shares many cultural and historical ties with the UK. Its legislation has expanded at an alarming rate, despite assurances that such expansion would not occur. Numerous abuses against highly vulnerable Canadians have also been witnessed. This nation offers a stark warning of what can occur under well-intentioned legislation.