

SOCIAL & ETHICAL ISSUES GROUP

HOW SHOULD LIFE BE ENDED?

What do these names have in common? MacDonald, Coffe, Falconer, Purvis, Marris, Harvie?

Answer: They are politicians who have all tried, over the past few years, to legalise physician-assisted suicide in either Westminster or Holyrood. On each occasion their proposals were substantially rejected.

There are now two new names to add to this list: Baroness Meacher at Westminster and Liam McArthur MSP in Holyrood, both of whom are currently sponsoring bills in their respective parliaments. Both would claim that the will of the British population is behind legalising assisted suicide and yet polling usually shows that when some of the implications of assisted suicide are explained, public opinion changes.

So what are some of the reasons for opposing any attempt to legalise assisted suicide?

The experience from **other countries** who have adopted assisted suicide clearly shows that any safeguards built into the initial legislation are quickly disregarded. Most proposed legislation initially limits assisted suicide to people with a terminal illness. Belgium and Netherlands – two of the earliest countries to allow assisted suicide – have experienced a steady erosion of protections to the extent that children are now eligible for assisted suicide, as are those who are merely ‘tired of life’.

All major **disability rights groups** in the UK are opposed, believing it will lead to increased pressure on disabled people to end their lives. It would also contribute to a way of thinking that some lives are less valued than others.

The present **law is clear** and is a strong deterrent to exploitation and abuse.

It would alter and undermine the trust in the **doctor-patient relationship**.

Palliative care doctors, those who specialise in care of the dying, are almost all opposed to any change in the law.



These are the people who know most what it is like at the end of life, and how their patients can be provided with a pain-free and dignified death.

Doctors who would not want to be associated with assisted suicide could be forced to be involved. A hospice in Canada – where a stringent form of assisted suicide legislation has recently been adopted – was forced to close its doors because it would not undertake to carry out assisted suicide.

Introducing assisted suicide legislation can contribute to a belief in patients that they are **being a burden** to family and caregivers, and so assisted suicide would resolve the issue. In the US State of Oregon around 3 in 5 of patients applying for assisted suicide quoted not wanting to be a burden as one of the reasons.

So while there are well-funded and resolute organisations committed to changing the law to allow assisted suicide, we as individuals can play our part in opposing these moves. Liam McArthur MSP, proposing to introduce assisted suicide in Scotland, is currently running a consultation open to anyone who wishes to comment.

If you have views on this issue you are encouraged to make them known. You can find guidance on how to do so [here](#).

The main UK organisation opposing assisted suicide is Care Not Killing, an alliance of faith-based and secular groups. Their web site is carenotkilling.org.uk.

MORE ON PHYSICIAN-ASSISTED SUICIDE

- Read the booklet 'A Biblical Discussion of End of Life Issues'. Click [here](#).
- **The Christian Institute in Scotland and Care Not Killing** are holding a series of regional Zoom events to discuss the issue of assisted suicide. Dr Gordon Macdonald, CEO of CNK will be the main participant. The date of the event for Mid Scotland and Fife (which includes the Stirling area) is Monday 1st November at 7.30pm. The Zoom Meeting ID is 891 0596 5727; password: Protecting.

If you are unable to view this meeting, others are being broadcast intended for other regions, but available to all, on Tuesday 2nd, Wednesday 10th, and Thursday 11th November, all at 7.30pm.

Use the same ID and password for all meetings.



- **Baroness Meacher's** Assisted Dying Bill is due to be debated – its second reading - in the House of Lords on Friday 22nd October. This Bill would apply to England and Wales.
- Prime Minister Boris Johnson has said he would not support Baroness Meacher's Bill
- The Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church have both come out in opposition to Liam McArthur's proposed bill.
- In July members of the Irish Parliament rejected proposals for an assisted suicide bill



**UN CLIMATE
CHANGE
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IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ITALY

Cop26 is almost upon us, with tens of thousands of people from around the world due to descend on Glasgow.

Pray for Scotland is producing regular prayer resources to help us intercede for the success of the conference and its outcomes.

In addition to Pfs's own daily emails it has a comprehensive guide to other resources. You can view all this guidance on the Pfs website [here](#).

GRADUATING FROM UNIVERSITY SOON?



For any young Christian leaving university there is a fantastic opportunity to work in politics for a year, build up an understanding of the political process and at the same time participate in an intensive practical study scheme that includes theology, political theory and leadership skills.

The **CARE Leadership Programme** is now inviting applications for the next intake which will be in September 2022.

Many graduates from the Leadership Programme are in prominent positions in UK public life, including one very prominent Member of the Scottish Parliament.

Find out more [here](#). Closing date for applying is 19th November.