

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188

Bulletin No.2- F18

Source Christian Institute

Crossbench peer and disability rights campaigner Tanni Grey-Thompson has said a Royal College of Physicians (RCP) consultation on assisted suicide risks bringing the body into disrepute.

She was responding to the news that the RCP has ended its official opposition to seriously ill patients being given lethal drugs to end their lives.

The RCP will poll its 35,000 members next month about removing current protections.

'Small minority'

Writing in The Times, Baroness Grey-Thompson criticised the RCP for its recent announcement that it will adopt a neutral position on assisted suicide unless 60% of respondents say otherwise.

Lady Grey-Thompson said the reason for this change was "the assisted dying lobby".

"Only a small minority of members want to see an assisted suicide law. They know there is no chance of the college supporting their project but neutrality is, for them, the next best thing because it suggests (misleadingly) that there is a shift in medical opinion."

'Deeply worrying'

She described it as "deeply worrying" that the RCP should allow itself to 'fix the rules' on such an important debate.

The former Paralympic star also warned that the lives of disabled people could significantly worsen if the law on assisted suicide is changed.

She concluded: "If, as I would expect, most members express their opposition to assisted dying, let that be its position, while also making clear that there are other minority views among its members."

Target

In a letter to The Times, Dr David Randall, Specialty Registrar in Renal Medicine at Royal London Hospital, backed her comments, arguing that there was little appetite amongst members for a change.

He said that the RCP has become "the next target" of assisted suicide campaigners, who have so far failed in Parliament and the courts.

In 2015, Parliament rejected a Bill brought by Labour MP Rob Marris to legalise assisted suicide. MPs voted against the Bill by 330 votes to 118.

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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