

Knights of Saint Columba

Accrington Council 188
Source Christian Institute

Bulletin No.2- G17

Justice Minister David Gauke has said he is “in favour” of changing the law on assisted suicide.

In 2015, MPs voted strongly against a Bill to introduce assisted suicide in England and Wales by 330 to 118. David Gauke either abstained or was absent.

Serious concerns were raised that legalising assisted suicide would pressurise the sick, elderly and vulnerable into ending their lives for fear of being a burden.

Meetings

Gauke revealed his opinion in response to a request to remove current legal protections against assisted suicide.

The Minister wrote: “Personally I am in favour of reform in this area, and sympathise with calls to allow individuals choice over how to end their lives without fear of criminal prosecution, for themselves or those close to them.”

He added: “Whilst Parliament has so far voted against any relaxation of the law, I hope that assisted dying is an issue to which it will return.”

He plans to hold meetings with pro-assisted suicide groups next month.

Disappointing

Dr Gordon Macdonald, Chief Executive of Care Not Killing, described the comments as “disappointing, but unsurprising”.

He said: “The Courts and parliamentarians have previously recognised any change to the law would put pressure, real or imagined, on vulnerable people to end their lives, because of being a burden upon relatives, carers, or on a state and health care system that is short of resources.

“These are not imagined fears as we only have to look at what is happening in the tiny number of places that have legalised assisted suicide or euthanasia.”

Inhumane

In March, researchers warned that assisted suicide can lead to “inhumane” deaths, with some people taking as long as seven days to die.

The study, reported by the British Medical Journal (BMJ), found “considerable” inconsistency in the methods being used to end people’s lives.

Bernard Holden MBE JP

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