

PETER GIBSON MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

April 2023

Dear Constituent,

Thank you for your email about Assisted Dying.

I know from personal experience that coping with terminal illness is distressing and difficult both for the patient and their families. As I have said repeatedly, these cases are truly moving and evoke the highest degree of compassion and emotion. I have only sympathy for any family which finds themselves in this situation.

I fully accept that suicide, assisting or encouraging suicide, assisted dying and euthanasia are all subjects on which it is entirely possible for people to hold widely different but defensible opinions. This is why the substance of the law in this area is not a matter of party politics but of conscience. My own view is that if assisted dying is legalised, I fear that terminally ill people may feel pressurised into ending their lives if they feel they have become a burden on loved ones. I do not believe we should place anyone in this position and believe that any such change in the law may have a profound impact on the relationship of terminally ill patients with their doctors.

I take this view because I believe that there is a very fine, but at the same time very important line to be drawn between allowing nature to take its course under some appalling circumstances and, on the other hand, permitting doctors or others (however well-intentioned) to accelerate death. We should not tread over this line by allowing doctors or others deliberately to accelerate death. However, doctors should be allowed to administer pain relief to prevent suffering even if the consequence is death. As I understand it, this is permissible in law and is the practice of many doctors now.

On Monday 4th July, I attended a Westminster Hall debate on Assisted Dying. You can watch my contribution here:

<https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/18ca41fd-1d09-4e9a-814f-822756ea73e6>

Once again, thank you for taking the time to contact me and if I can ever be of any further assistance to you then please do not hesitate to contact me again.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Peter Gibson".

PETER GIBSON MP

Member of Parliament for Darlington

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