

Read the Archbishop's statement on assisted suicide below, ahead of a new Private Member's Bill introduced in the House of Commons today.

"Though our society might be divided over the question of assisted suicide, we all ultimately want the same thing for those who are suffering. We want compassion offered to those in deep distress and we want our loved ones to be able to die with dignity. My concern is that however well-intentioned, the Private Member's Bill being introduced in the House of Commons today will not achieve those things.

The introduction of this Bill instead serves as an important call to properly fund and resource palliative care, community support services and mental health provision. As we listen to many of the heart-breaking experiences of those who have lost loved ones, it is important to remember that dying in pain is not inevitable. Good palliative care can provide us with the dignity and compassion we are all searching for as we reach the end of our lives. This proposed legislation risks eroding funding for palliative and hospice care.

Furthermore, legalising assisted suicide would disproportionately impact many millions of vulnerable people, who might perceive themselves as a burden on those around them and the health service. My concern is that once you can ask for assisted suicide, it soon becomes something that you feel that you ought to do. Permission slips into being duty. This does not represent true choice for all, and I worry that no amount of safeguards will ensure everyone's safety at the most vulnerable point of their lives.

A good death and compassionate care should be available to everyone, but the Bill being introduced today will not achieve that."

2 min read

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