

HOSPICE OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Hospice of the Good Shepherd and West Cheshire Living Well Centre Position statement on Assisted Dying

As an organisation we abide by all relevant laws relating to the provision of specialist palliative and end of life care.

To value people's lives is fundamental to every aspect of palliative care and is at the heart of the care we provide to all our patients and families. We believe that all have the right to be well cared for up until the time of death.

The whole ethos of hospice and palliative care, as defined by the World Health Organization, is that it "intends neither to hasten nor postpone death". For our staff and volunteers, the issue is not about whether to live or die, but is about respect for individual dignity and the right to be well cared for up until the time of natural death.

We use an ethical framework to guide us in all care and decision making with our patients and families respecting the following principles; the need to maximise good and minimise harm, the individual's right to self-determination and the importance of fairness and honesty.

As part of our compassionate, individualised, holistic and supportive care we encourage our patients, their families and carers to talk about end of life decisions with each other and with our staff and to make an Advance Care Plan. As part of these conversations we discuss natural death and can explore the alternatives to assisted dying if this is raised.

All patients and those important to them should be made aware of the options available for palliative care service provision locally, including care provided by the hospice throughout their illness. They should be offered an assessment of their individual needs to address symptom management, spiritual or psychosocial distress and to make sure that appropriate palliative care is being provided.

For the Assisted Dying Bill, we will neither support nor oppose attempts to change the law. We acknowledge and respect the wide range of views and perspectives in society about the ethical issue of assisted dying and this statement makes no value judgement about assisted dying or the people who are supportive of it or who request it. We will always ensure patients and those important are well cared for until their time of death and in the hours after this event