

St Columba's Hospice Position Statement on Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia

“St Columba's Hospice provides specialist palliative care, which “affirms life and regards death as a normal process. (It) intends neither to hasten or postpone death”¹. We put patients and families at the centre of everything that we do by making time to explore what matters most to them. This will include exploring any worries and fears they have about their illness and the future, for themselves and for those close to them. We will provide excellent care up to the point of death, encouraging people to live until they die, and supporting them to achieve the best quality of life possible for them. We will continue to offer support to their families, and to those important to them, in bereavement.

St Columba's Hospice does not believe that assisted suicide or euthanasia is consistent with provision of specialist palliative care for our patients and would not support any change in the law. We would be concerned that any change in the law might result in vulnerable patients feeling obliged to consider assisted suicide, or euthanasia, as an option, for fear of becoming a burden in the future.

We acknowledge and respect that there are a wide range of views with regards to assisted suicide and euthanasia, held by patients and families, the general public and amongst health care professionals. We want to assure those we care for that, irrespective of their wishes and beliefs concerning assisted suicide and euthanasia, nothing will affect the standard of specialist palliative care which we would offer to them.

¹ World Health Organisation definition of Palliative Care:
<http://www.who.int/cancer/palliative/definition/en/>

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