

## Candidate 4 evidence

### **Intro:**

"Up to 650 dying people end their own lives every year." -Dignity in Dying

House of Lords

Balance and validity

Aspects + affected people

### **1st- strengths**

How when where

Aut.,

no resp,

control

### **1st- weaknesses**

Press.- financial or physical b,

Fear

symptoms

### **2nd- s**

Compassion, d.in.d. - reduce suffering

Beneficence

The Code NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) "Treat people with kindness, respect and compassion." (1.1).

Ackn.

### **2nd- w**

compassion≠AD

King's College London 100,000 die unfulfilled

Reg of Age and ability

### **3rd (against) s**

Improve and fund

UK parliament needs exp. rise 15-47% 2040 E+W

Certainty

All groups

Life expectancy

Fear

Muslim, hospice, preserving

### **3rd w**

Unsafe death

Medication only gsf, don't want to live w symptoms

### **4th s**

Life is sacred

Never justifiable

Genesis 1:27: "So God made man in his own image."

### **4th w**

No religion

Unbearable pain

Quality of life> having life ?

### **VP**

Humanists UK safe pain free

Exodus 20:13: "Thou shalt not kill"

69% of Christians support law change- dignity in dying

**Outro**

complexities within health

Religion= personal bel

### Is assisted dying morally justifiable?

"Up to 650 dying people end their own lives every year." - Dignity in Dying. Assisted dying is a very relevant topic, with the UK parliament discussing and passing the bill, which will then go to the House of Lords in order to confirm its balance and validity; ensuring all aspects and affected people have been considered. Because assisted dying is such a controversial and emotive topic, and there are many varying viewpoints, it's important to ask the question: "Is assisted dying morally justifiable?"

One argument in support of assisted dying is that people have the right to choose how, when and where they'll die. There are a number of strengths within this argument, one being that people are autonomous and have the ability to make their own, informed decisions. Furthermore, as it is the terminally ill person themselves making the decision, there is no responsibility placed on medical professionals or family. The option for assisted dying also allows a dying person to gain back any control they may have lost, which is important.

However, there are also weaknesses to this argument, one of which being that a terminally ill person may feel pressured into making the decision, due to feeling like a financial or physical burden on their families or the healthcare system, external pressures such as a carer or loved one forcing them into making that choice, or financial pressures from not being able to afford bills, housing or even way of living. Oftentimes the reason death presents as such a scary thing, is because of the fear of pain that may occur. There is a concern that a person could make the choice due to this. The decision making skills of a person can be affected by their illness or medication. A person's capacity can also be difficult to ascertain, meaning that they may be able to make decisions for one part of their life, and not another.

Another argument in support of assisted dying is that it is a final act of compassion and gives the person a dignified death. One reason why this is such a strong argument is because it takes into account different experiences in dying, and acknowledges those who will suffer in death or dying. Compassion is also a crucial part of medical ethics, with one of the standards from the NMC's (Nursing and Midwifery Council) 'The Code' reading: "Treat people with kindness, respect and compassion." (1.1). Assisted dying will also allow loved ones to visit and be with the person while they are dying, which might not be an opportunity if the person were to pass naturally.

Conversely, there are also weaknesses to this argument, one being that compassion shouldn't mean assisted dying or euthanasia. An alternative to assisted dying which still shows compassion would be palliative care. King's College London states that around 100,000 people die each year with unfulfilled palliative care needs. If the quality of care is not sufficient, then it also may lead people to pick assisted dying. Compassion can also look different for everyone, some people may believe that simply being there with your loved one while they're dying is enough, and showing them that their life still has value regardless of their age or ability. Some Muslims, for example, believe that taking your own life or someone else's life is completely immoral, and that you must suffer through hard times as life is a test from Allah. As a result of this, muslim communities might be more open to the idea of palliative and hospice care, as it places more emphasis on preserving life, rather than taking it away.

An argument against assisted dying is that there is no need for assisted dying if we can improve and fund palliative care. There is evidence that the need for palliative care is only increasing, as the UK parliament expects the need for palliative care to rise around 15%-47% by 2040 in England and Wales. It is argued that putting more money into services like these will be more beneficial than funding assisted dying, as it is already a demand. The funding received would also not go to waste and would always be useful, as dying is the one certainty of life and all groups in society would benefit from receiving this care. Assisted dying as an option could also possibly reduce the severity of the

symptoms a person is facing, along with potentially increasing life expectancy and reducing the inherent fear that comes with dying.

A weakness of this argument is that regardless of the quality of care provided, there will always be someone who would rather choose not to live. Without the option of assisted dying, it is a possibility that someone attempts this in an unsafe manner, which would be traumatic not only to them, but their loved ones as well. Medication also only goes so far, meaning that it may not be possible for a person's quality of life to improve at all, even with the correct care, and the person may not want to live with their symptoms. Medication can also negatively impact a person's quality of life, as it can cause a change in behaviour and may not allow a person to perform certain tasks.

Another argument against assisted dying is that life is sacred, and nobody has the right to take life away as it is completely immoral and never justifiable. Some Christians, for example, believe in the sanctity of life argument as humans are superior beings as man was made in His image, and therefore taking that life is unacceptable. Genesis 1:27: "So God made man in his own image." However, a survey conducted by Dignity in Dying online shows that 69% of Christians support the law change. There is also the concern that assisted dying will lessen the value of life, as it permits the killing of terminally ill people, and potentially lessens the value of people with physical, mental or learning disabilities. The Roman Catholic viewpoint is that assisted dying entirely goes against the Church, as it does not condone murder of any kind, and therefore is unquestionably immoral. Exodus 20:13: "Thou shalt not kill."

A weakness of this argument however, is that not everybody is religious or shares the same religion. It wouldn't make sense for a non-religious person's morals to have to align with that of a religious person. This argument also disregards the suffering of anyone who is in uncontrollable pain, and favours having life over quality of life. Most humanists believe that assisted dying is not immoral, as you should be allowed to make the safe and pain-free decision that is assisted dying.

Having considered all of the arguments and viewpoints above, I believe that the option for assisted dying should be provided with secure safeguards that are emplaced alongside any laws, in order to ensure the safety of all affected people. However, as complexities within health are becoming more and more common, palliative care should not be disregarded, as it is extremely important. I don't believe religion should dictate any changes within the law, as it is a personal belief and would not line up with everyone's beliefs.