

# Medical Assisted Dying

## **Policy motion F20 as adopted by Federal Conference September 2012**

Conference notes that:

- a) A significant minority of people who suffer unendurably from medical conditions that offer no hope of recovery are physically unable to end their lives at a time of their own choosing without assistance.
- b) It is over 50 years since the passage of the 1961 Suicide Act established the current legislative framework, but that scores of British citizens now travel to Switzerland each year to seek medical assistance to die.
- c) Legislation making provision for medically assisted dying, and incorporating many safeguards to prevent misuse, was enacted in Belgium and the Netherlands a decade ago and continues to enjoy very strong public support in those countries.
- d) There is continuing debate on the subject in the United Kingdom, and the evidence of successive opinion polls demonstrates very strong

public support for similar legislation here.

Conference reaffirms the policy it adopted in the conference motion Medically Assisted Dying in 2004 in support of legislation providing for medical assistance to die to be available to patients in particular circumstances, subject to rigorous safeguards to prevent abuse. Conference also recognises the importance of high quality palliative care being available to all who may need it, and of greater support for carers.

Conference calls for Liberal Democrat ministers:

1. To press for the introduction of a government bill on the subject, allowing Parliament the opportunity to consider, as a minimum, the legalisation of those who are terminally ill to have assistance to die with dignity, subject to safeguards.
2. In the event of a Bill being introduced through Private

Members' procedures, to press for time to be made available in the House of Commons to enable it to be fully considered.

Conference believes that any such legislative proposal should be determined by way of a free vote in order to respect the freedom of conscience of Parliamentarians.

*Applicability: England and Wales*

This policy motion was drafted by Chris Davies MEP and submitted by HSLD members for debate at the Liberal Democrat Federal Conference at Brighton, Autumn 2012.

This is the text as adopted.

For further information:  
[www.hslld.org.uk](http://www.hslld.org.uk)