



Office of the Territorial Leaders

Commissioners Jenine and Paul Main
Territorial Leaders

Tel: 020 7367 4600

November 2024

Dear Salvation Army family,

As the United Kingdom considers new legislation on assisted suicide, the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, we are writing pastorally to you to share reflections and guidance as we navigate this challenging topic together. This issue profoundly touches the heart of our mission to support those who are vulnerable and respect the sanctity of life (Psalm 139:13-16). As Salvationists, we stand with other Christian and faith communities, alongside political and non-faith leaders, in expressing concerns about this legislation.

While the legislation is as yet unpublished, its purpose is to offer an option for those who are terminally ill to end their lives prematurely. Though this proposal stems from a sincere desire to alleviate suffering, we are mindful of the deep ethical, spiritual and relational concerns it raises.

In the Christian faith, acts of mercy include caring for people in life and being with them through the dying process, upholding mercy and sanctity. The Salvation Army upholds this tradition, especially through our older people's ministries. Many Salvationists also live out this compassion daily through health, social care and hospice work, affirming the inherent worth of each person as being created by God (Genesis 1:27).

Decisions about life and death are deeply personal, yet they also affect the wider community. Legalising assisted suicide, however well-intentioned, could place unintended pressures in moments of vulnerability. Called to reflect the love of Jesus Christ, we seek to alleviate pain and offer compassionate support. We journey alongside people who suffer and uphold their inherent, God-given sanctity at every stage and experience of life (2 Corinthians 1:3 and 4). Salvationists believe that God is present with us even in the darkest times, bringing comfort and hope (Psalm 23:4).

We must remember that The Salvation Army has a global track record of championing holistic care for the terminally ill and those in hardship, whether through practical measures like nursing during the [1980s AIDs crisis](#), organising [international symposia](#) to advance best practice, or through advocacy at [Westminster](#), [Holyrood](#) or in other countries including [New Zealand](#), and [Canada](#). As the debate approaches on 29 November, we encourage you to contact your member of parliament by visiting salvationist.org.uk/assisted-suicide.

While we hold to the sanctity of life as an organisation, we acknowledge that individuals may hold different personal views. Please remember that this reflects your individual stance, not that of The Salvation Army. Our positional statement, available at salvationist.org.uk/assisted-suicide, outlines our shared understanding and provides further resources. While Salvation Army officers are expected to align their teaching and counsel with this positional statement, we remain committed to offering our services, fellowship and support to all, regardless of their position on this issue.

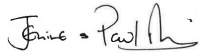
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As the discussions take place, we urge you to pray for wisdom, compassion, and guidance for our leaders and communities (1 Timothy 2:1 and 2). We also pray for each of you, that in your conversations with family, friends and neighbours, you may embody the grace of God, and overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit, who is present with us in life and through death (Romans 15:13).

With Christian love and esteem,

Yours sincerely,



Jenine and Paul Main
COMMISSIONERS
TERRITORIAL LEADERS

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