



Chapter 11 Euthanasia and physician assisted suicide

Contents

- The Law (pages 469-76)
 - Attempts to change the law (pages 470-2)
 - England and Wales (pages 471-2)
 - Scotland (page 472)
 - What currently counts as 'assisting suicide' (pages 472-5)
- Public and professional views on assisted dying (pages 467-9)
 - BMA policy (page 469)

LATEST!

The Law (pages 469-76)

What currently counts as 'assisting suicide' (pages 472-5)

In January 2013, the General Medical Council (GMC) issued guidance for its fitness to practise case examiners and Investigation Committee to use when they are considering allegations that a doctor has been involved in encouraging or assisting suicide. The guidance can be accessed at http://www.gmc-uk.org/Guidance_for_FTP_decision_makers_on_assisting_suicide.pdf_51024815.pdf (accessed 8 February 2013). The GMC has also produced separate guidance for doctors, on how they should respond to patients who ask for advice or help in ending their lives, which can be accessed at http://www.gmc-uk.org/When_a_patient_seeks_advice_or_information_about_assistance_to_die.pdf_51001356.pdf (accessed 8 February 2013).

Public and professional views on assisted dying (pages 467-9)

BMA policy (page 469)

A short briefing note, setting out BMA policy on assisted dying, how BMA policy is made and the key reasons for BMA opposition to a change in the law, is available at <http://bma.org.uk/practical-support-at-work/ethics/bma-policy-assisted-dying> (accessed 8 Feb 2013).

The Law (pages 469-76)

Attempts to change the law (pages 470-2)

England and Wales (pages 471-2)

The report of the Commission on Assisted Dying was published in January 2012. Among the report's recommendations were proposals for the legalisation of assisted dying and a system of safeguards in which doctors would have a prominent role. The full report can be accessed at www.demos.co.uk/publications/thecommissiononassisteddying (accessed 8 Feb 2013).

Scotland (page 472)

In January 2012, independent MSP Margo MacDonald launched a second bid to change the law on assisted suicide in Scotland. The proposal is aimed at enabling competent adults with a terminal illness to request



assistance in ending their own lives, and to decriminalise certain actions taken by others to provide such assistance. Following a consultation period, Ms MacDonald's draft proposal for legislation received sufficient support from MSPs to proceed to Stage 1 of the Scottish legislative process. At the time of writing, no timeframe for the draft legislation had yet been put in place.