

ASSISTED DYING AND ABORTION

How do political parties measure up?

Right to Life's challenge to all election candidates – will they sign either “Both lives matter” pledge or “Vote to do no harm”

Right to Life <https://righttolife.org.uk/> have constructed an email to go to all candidates in any constituency asking them to declare their views on ABORTION and on ASSISTED DYING (“Both Lives Pledge”) and another just on ASSISTED DYING (“Vote to do no harm pledge”).

Application of our faith comes into play in that we know God values all life and that these 2 issues challenge what God says.

Their **Vote To Do No Harm** campaign about “Assisted Dying” It states:

After the general election, the assisted suicide lobby, led by pressure group *Dignity in Dying*, is likely to make a major attempt to introduce assisted suicide. The *Vote To Do No Harm* campaign's main goal is to get as many people as possible to ask their MP candidates to sign the *End-of-Life Protection Pledge*. Candidates who sign the pledge commit to vote against any attempts to introduce assisted suicide or euthanasia and support the provision of better palliative care for people at the end of their lives.

Awareness raising:

ABORTION: For your information – to decriminalise abortion means repealing the 1861 "Offences against the person Act" which then negates the 1967 “Abortion Act” which simply amended the 1861 Act. Sadly the “conscience clause” is in the 1967 Act, so would be lost, forcing all doctors to be involved in abortion.

ASSISTED DYING: In Canada there is no “conscience clause” in their Assisted Dying law (“Medical Aid in Dying” – “MAiD”) forcing Christian doctors and health care professionals, and also institutions such as Hospices, to carry out terminating life rather than offering good end of life care.

For more background information and to be better informed on the serious dangers of Assisted Dying see “Care not Killing” <https://www.carenotkilling.org.uk/> or watch the excellent BBC documentary “Better off dead?”

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m001z8wc> - a documentary on assisted suicide, authored by actor and disability rights activist Liz Carr.

The party manifestos also outline their views of these issues. For Assisted Dying see:

<https://www.carenotkilling.org.uk/official-documents/assisted-suicide-in-the-2024-manifestos/>

The pressure is on, so please make yourself fully aware of the dangers at the start and the end of life and then please have conversations with family, friends and neighbours about these vital issues.

Jesus said: “I have come to bring you life, life in all its fullness” (Gospel according to St. John chapter 10 verse 10).

Fr Joseph has endorsed an appeal to the parish to make their views known, in particular using Right to Life's email campaign.

If you choose to use this, it is important to amend the beginning of the standard email to personalise it so as to attract the candidates attention.

For our Parish area, “Kingston upon Hull North and Cottingham”, these are the candidates in order - alphabetical by surname:

Martin Baker, Reform UK

Ahmet Cinlap, Independent

Rowan Halstead, Yorkshire Party

Kerry Harrison, Green

Diana Johnson, Labour

Pauline Peachey, Independent

Callum Procter, Conservative

Mike Whale, Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition

Craig Woolmer, Liberal Democrats

<https://www.thehullstory.com/allarticles/general-election-hull-candidates-list-announced>

As of Sunday 23rd June only these candidates in our Parish area have replied on these issues:

Dame Diana Johnson (Labour)

Thank you for your email regarding abortion and assisted suicide.

These are both clearly complex and emotional issues, with strongly held views on both sides of the debate.

I have always believed in a woman's right to choose, and that abortion should be treated as a healthcare issue between a woman and her doctor, rather than a matter for criminal law.

With regard to assisted dying, it is clear that our current laws are not working for many people at the end of their life and that there is strong public support for reforming them. As it stands, people only have a choice about how to end their life if they are fortunate enough to have the money and the physical strength to travel. This is not right.

However, I also understand concerns about how we could ensure the right safeguards are in place. We should never risk a situation where people could be coerced into agreeing to assisted dying against their will. Equally, assisted dying should not become an alternative to high-quality palliative and end of life care. People deserve dignity in dying, and each person nearing the end of their life should feel reassured that they will receive the very best care.

This is not the case at present, and that needs to change.

Successive governments have taken the view that any change to the law on this should be a matter of conscience for individual MPs. As such, this places a responsibility on MPs to get to grips with this issue, listen to evidence, experts and those with lived experience. Like other issues which will be seen as matter of conscience, I would support a future Labour Government making time for Parliament to decide any changes in the law on this issue.

Ultimately, I remain open-minded on this issue and am committed to making my decision on the basis of available evidence.

Thank you for contacting me and sharing your views – which I will keep in mind.

Ahmet Cinalp (Independent)

Thank you for reaching out and for sharing your extensive experience and concerns regarding assisted dying and other important issues. I wanted to inform you that I have signed the “Both Lives Matter Pledge” and am committed to the principles outlined within it:

Supporting a law change to clarify that sex-selective abortion is illegal.

Voting to lower the gestational time limit for abortion to align with the majority of EU countries.

Backing policies designed to stop pregnancy and maternity discrimination in the workplace.

Regarding your concerns about assisted dying, I acknowledge the serious implications and potential risks you have highlighted, particularly for vulnerable groups and the disabled. I commit to thoroughly investigating these issues and ensuring that any future legislation is

approached with the utmost care and consideration, taking into account the latest research and experiences from other jurisdictions, such as Canada. Your insights as a former General Practitioner and practice lead for Terminal Care are invaluable, and I would be grateful to receive any additional information or research you can provide. Thank you again for bringing these critical issues to my attention. I look forward to working towards policies that protect and support all members of our community.

Pauline Peachey (Independent)

Vote Life – against abortion