

OPEN LETTER TO RT HON ROBERT BUCKLAND QC MP, LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE

24 October 2019

Dear Lord Chancellor

As Police and Crime Commissioners, we write to express our concern about the current situation in relation to assisted dying.

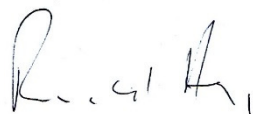
Many will have experienced or heard of cases where the blanket ban on assisted dying has caused distress, confusion and pain for dying people, their loved ones, and even the investigating police officers themselves. Most recently, great-grandmother, Mavis Eccleston, was acquitted by a jury after being charged with murder for helping Dennis, her husband of 60 years, to end his own life rather than suffer any further agony from advanced bowel cancer. Earlier this year, 76-year-old Ann Whaley was investigated by police for booking travel to and accommodation in Switzerland for her husband, Geoff, who had arranged an assisted death at Dignitas in order to avoid a prolonged, traumatic end from motor neurone disease. The cost of these investigations - financial, emotional and societal - cannot be easily dismissed.

We believe it is time for a renewed look at the functioning of the existing law on assisted dying. While there are clearly differences of opinion as to whether or how the law should change, we contend that the law is not working as well as it could and seek an inquiry to confirm that.

Earlier this month, as Justice Secretary, you were asked in Parliament by cross-party MPs to reinstate the commitment your predecessor, the Rt Hon David Gauke MP, had made to a Ministry of Justice led inquiry into the blanket ban on assisted dying.

We echo these calls. We owe it to dying and bereaved people, and their families, to try and find a better way of dealing with terminal illness, including the position around assisted dying. Our colleagues, Ron Hogg and Martyn Underhill, are writing to you under separate cover to request a meeting with you to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



Ron Hogg
Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for
Durham



Stephen White
Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner
for Durham



Martyn Underhill
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Dorset



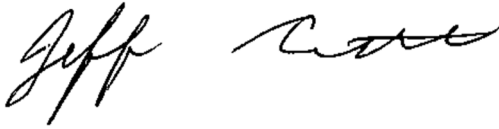
Sue Mounstevens
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Avon & Somerset



David Munro
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Surrey



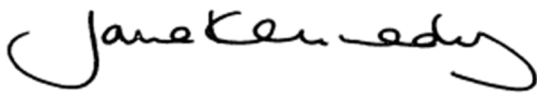
Keith Hunter
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Humberside



Jeff Cuthbert
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Gwent



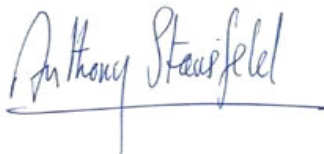
Hardyal Dhindsa
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Derbyshire



Jane Kennedy
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Merseyside



Arfon Jones
Police and Crime Commissioner for
North Wales



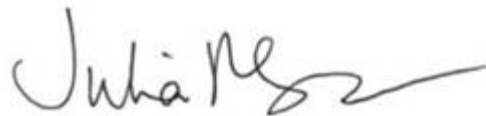
Anthony Stansfeld
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Thames Valley



Mark Burns-Williamson
Police and Crime Commissioner for
West Yorkshire



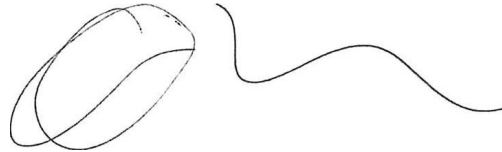
David Keane
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Cheshire



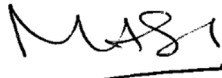
Julia Mulligan
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for
North Yorkshire



Barry Coppinger
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Cleveland



Kim McGuinness
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Northumbria



Martin Surl
Police and Crime Commissioner for
Gloucestershire



Stephen Mold
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for
Northamptonshire