

THE DISTANT VOICE

**Autumn News
Break Through**

Marris Bill Protest

Several opposing organisations, including ALERT and The Distant Voices amassed outside of Parliament to protest the Marris Bill on September 11th, 2015.

More than 85 MPs asked to take part in the debate, which the Deputy Speaker said was "unprecedented" for a private member's bill.

MPs have overwhelmingly rejected the legalisation of assisted dying in England and Wales after a marathon four-and-a-half hour debate.

Outside protestors were able to keep the cameras attention through their diligent chanting, drumming, and arguing the cause. The Distant Voices decided not to be shy of theatrics when commissioning a 15-foot puppet of a Judge (courtesy of Elspeth Chowdharay-Best and Christian Concern), which did a lot of good for keeping the media attention and drawing in passers-by.



APPEARANCE IN THE HIGH COURT!

***Dignity In Dying* Makes An Intervention**

The date for the judicial review has been set as the **16th of November 2015.**

Last autumn, the Director of Public Prosecutions amended policy, making the prosecution of healthcare professionals in assisted suicide cases less likely. Nikki and Merv Kenward, however, are challenging the DPP's actions as "unconstitutional"

SHOW OF SUPPORT

Towering 15-foot-tall, the judge puppet will be making a second appearance outside the High Court along with new and exciting theatrics for the assembled media.

Bodies are very much needed for the demo so if you want to participate please feel free to get in touch. Rehearsal on the 15/11/15.

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Why the High Court Matters?

With a sweeping victory in the Commons, it's tempting to think we won't be under threat of Assisted Suicide legalisation for at least another five years. Unfortunately, we're not high and dry just yet.

DE FACTO LAW

Since 1973, physicians in the Netherlands have assisted patients with committing suicide without fear of prosecution—so long as certain conditions existed. This was despite assisted suicide being illegal. After 28 years of allowing such actions de facto, the Dutch parliament moved to allow them de jure—formalising the law. The UK is very much in danger of moving in the same direction.

Alison Saunders so-called 'clarification' sets the groundwork for de facto lawful assisted suicide. Although the Marris Bill was a failure, in practice if this judicial review does not go our way, we could still be looking at a near future where UK Dignitas's can operate without fear of prosecution.

All we can hope is after such a good debate in the Commons, and three days of debate in the Lords, our concerns will be taken as seriously as they need to be on the day.



"Death Pathway" still Alive and Well



Patrick Pullicino warns that the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (Nice) guidelines, which are set to replace the Liverpool Care Pathway, are not so nice. The Neuberger Report, which announced the phasing out of the LCP in July 2013, highlighted clear dangers with the pathway. Nice unfortunately has not taken this onboard.

Pullicino writes, "Diagnosis of who was imminently dying was the core problem of the LCP and is no better in the Nice document. It includes a cookbook list of features that may suggest someone is dying but is totally inadequate to make a diagnosis and is not evidence-based."

The other central concern of the LCP was accelerated death by gradual dehydration. "The section on hydration in the Nice document is a disaster of misinformation, distortion and ambiguity with at least one major error. It says that "death is unlikely to be hastened by not having clinically assisted hydration". This is completely untrue. Not giving hydration is certain to kill someone if they can't take hydration by mouth."

Those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it is apparently a concept lost on NICE. To read more about the guidelines go to <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/csgsp>