

# Dying NHS chief wants GP's help to end agony

**Sarah-Kate Templeton**  
Health Editor

The man responsible for improving the nation's health has been diagnosed with incurable cancer and has revealed that he would like "a quiet chat" with his GP when his time is nearly up.

Professor Paul Cosford, director for health protection and medical director of Public Health England, would like to be able to ask his family doctor for enough medication to ease his pain – even if this hastens his death.

In a frank account of his illness in a blog on a medical website, he wrote: "I wish I could have a quiet chat with my GP and ask him to make it easier when the time comes.

"That is not a conversation you can really have these days. In the past, easing the process of dying with sufficient medication to ease symptoms but which might

also hasten your passing was generally accepted but it seems difficult to have this conversation now because there have been so many legal concerns raised."

He told The Sunday Times: "Sometimes people are so concerned about the legal consequences that we forget about good, humane, personalised medical care."

Cosford, 54, has lung cancer. He has never smoked and realised he was ill only when he could not complete a 600km (372-mile) cycle ride.

Addressing a meeting of the Royal Society of Medicine in February, he said: "Thinking that I might have some control at the end of my life allows me to focus on living life well now."

Cosford, a father of four married to a doctor, hopes that if he receives the latest treatments he will live another three or four years.

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