

# CNK welcomes Conway appeal ruling

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## 'Care Not Killing welcomes the Court of Appeal's sensible decision to reject this latest attempt to legalise assisted suicide'



### Press Release issued on behalf of Care Not Killing

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Care Not Killing welcomes the Court of Appeal's sensible decision to reject this latest attempt to legalise assisted suicide and to uphold fully the earlier decision of the divisional court.

The case, brought by Noel Conway, argued that the current blanket ban on assisted suicide under the Suicide Act is incompatible with his human rights.

However, this argument has been repeatedly rejected by the Courts, only last year in the Divisional Court three senior and experienced judges dismissed this argument, saying:

'It is legitimate in this area for the legislature to seek to lay down clear and defensible standards in order to provide guidance for society, to avoid distressing and difficult disputes at the end of life and to avoid creating a slippery slope leading to incremental expansion over time of the categories of people to whom similar assistance for suicide might have to [be] provided... we find that section 2 (right to life) is compatible with the Article 8 rights (private and family life) of Mr Conway. We dismiss his application for a declaration of incompatibility.'

The Court of Appeal has now fully upheld this earlier judgement and ruled that the current blanket ban on assisted suicide achieves a fair balance between the interests of the wider community and the interests of people in the position of Mr Conway.

The objectives of this ban are not limited to the protection of the weak and vulnerable, but also include respect for the sanctity of life and the promotion of trust between patient and doctor in the care relationship.

In British Parliaments there have been over ten attempts to change the law on assisted suicide since 2003, all of which have failed. The most recent of these, was in the House of Commons in 2015 and was defeated by the huge majority of 330 to 118.

Members of Parliament, just like every major doctors' group and disability rights groups expressed concerns about public safety, the failure of safeguards in the handful of places that have assisted suicide or euthanasia and the discriminatory message removing universal protections, from the sick, elderly and dying would send.

Dr Peter Saunders, Campaign Director of Care Not Killing commented:

'This sensible decision by the Court of Appeal yet again recognises that the safest law is the one we already have - a complete ban on assisted suicide and euthanasia. Our laws deter the exploitation, abuse and coercion of vulnerable people, who as we have seen in the US States of Oregon and Washington often cite feeling they have become a financial, or care burden as the reason for ending their lives.

'While there are those who argue that feeling that you are a burden on others is

reason enough to seek help to kill yourself, it is this sort of chilling and regressive view that led Paralympian Baroness Grey-Thompson to warn that vulnerable and disabled people risked being collateral damage, if the law were to be changed. This view is echoed by the British Medical Association, the Association of Palliative Medicine, the Royal Colleges and Care Not Killing.

'We hope that those who have been campaigning to remove these important and universal protections from the disabled and infirm accept this ruling. It is now time for them to move on and turn their attention instead to how we can secure equality of access to the very best health care for all. This must include palliative care and mental health support, because we know when the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of patients are met, there is no pressure for change.'

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