



ALERT

DEFENDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE'S RIGHT TO LIVE

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Dear ALERT Supporter,

War on the disabled

World Wars 1 and 2 both started in holiday time, when not many people in Britain were watching. The Foreign Secretary was fishing in Scotland in August 1914.

The Supreme Court judgement here on July 30th 2018 also seems likely to promote early death. It makes it unnecessary to get Court permission to withdraw clinically-assisted feeding and hydration from "persons in a state of prolonged disorder of consciousness," which will end their lives, allegedly in their "best interests." Nikki Kenward, who was unable to move or speak for five months before recovering from a virus, commented "The Supreme Court has colluded in the drive to normalise state-sanctioned killing" (*Daily Mail* August 1st 2018).

"Death from dehydration is even more unpleasant than death by starvation, and as a retired nurse I view this approach to our dying patients with dismay," said a writer to *The Times* on 4th August 2018. "Defeatist healthcare gives way to demands for the death of the vulnerable," Teresa Lynch, another experienced nurse, wrote to *The Daily Telegraph* on 3rd August 2018, "The slippery slope takes over when ideology trumps positive medicine and true patient advocacy."

Dr Peter Saunders, of the Care Not Killing Alliance, noted earlier that taking such a decision away from the Court of Protection removes an important layer of legislative scrutiny and accountability and effectively weakens the law. "It will make it more likely that severely brain-damaged patients will be starved or dehydrated to death in their supposed best interests and that these decisions will be more influenced by those who have ideological or financial vested interests in this course of action."

Dr Anthony Cole, of the Medical Ethics Alliance, commented on his website "In the light of the decision to withdraw the Liverpool Care Pathway, mainly because of the agonies of thirst, how can this judgement be reconciled with that? How confident can we be that thirst will not be experienced deep in the brain?"

The House of Commons voted by a large majority in 2015 against legalising Assisted Suicide, death by request. Now the Supreme Court has legalised death without request. MP's must intervene once again to protect helpless patients. **Please will you write to your own MP**, enclosing Nikki's article, and ask him or her to promote new legislation, for the sake of us all?

With best wishes from

Elspeth Chowdharay Best
Hon. Treasurer