

News Release

For immediate release
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New Name, No New Choice

RADAR, the UK's leading pan-disability campaigning organisation, has declared that the new name for the Voluntary Euthanasia Society will do little to change the minds of disabled people opposed to Assisted Dying legislation.

The Voluntary Euthanasia Society has announced that it will now be known as 'Dignity in Dying: Your Life, Your Choice'. The name change is an attempt to move away from negative connotations of the word 'euthanasia' in the lead up to the Lords debate on Lord Joffe's Bill on Assisted Dying.

RADAR says that although the Voluntary Euthanasia Society is claiming 'Your Life, Your Choice' as a reason for allowing assisted dying in the UK, there is in reality very little choice for disabled people.

RADAR has previously raised concerns about the Assisted Dying Bill with regard to palliative care services and independent living. RADAR believes that the lack of choice currently available to disabled and terminally ill people does not allow individuals to make a truly fair and equal choice about assisted dying.

Kate Nash, RADAR's Chief Executive, said, "There is no choice now. Before there is a right to die, there must be a right to live as full and equal members of a fair society."

"Assisted dying legislation will not create autonomy until supported independent living is a real societal value and a reality for disabled people. And that value must be underpinned by provision that is equally available across the whole country." Kate Nash said.

RADAR is urging decision-makers to consider the consequences for disabled people of adopting Assisted Dying.

Kate Nash, said, "Legislation of this sort runs the risk of reinforcing public opinion that disabled people are somehow tragic figures to be pitied. It serves to diminish the value that society places on the lives of disabled people."

RADAR is concerned that Assisted Dying will become seen as a 'moral good' and a treatment option. Health Secretary Patricia Hewitt's instruction today that 'money should be put before medicine' will no doubt cause concern to

many people who will feel pressure to be assisted to die rather than to consume more resources and take up a hospital bed.

While RADAR acknowledges the revisions made to the Bill, introduction of Assisted Dying legislation would be a watershed moment especially given Lord Joffe's stated intention to pursue legalisation of voluntary euthanasia for both young people and those not terminally ill.

Notes for editors:

¹ RADAR is a national non-governmental disability organisation working for the rights of disabled people, from the broadest range of cultural, racial and social backgrounds, irrespective of their impairment. Although RADAR works with organisations of all types (of and for disabled people) RADAR itself is an organisation of disabled people.

² RADAR's vision is about pushing out the boundaries of the expected; a vision of a world where human difference is routinely anticipated, expertly accommodated and positively celebrated.

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