



# Diocese in Europe

## **Policy on ministerial involvement with assisted dying**

Assisted dying is legal in some European countries. It is a deeply sensitive and contested issue. The theological and pastoral implications have been well set out in the Joint Anglican Orthodox Statement: [Dying-Well-Living-Well.pdf](#). Paragraph 65 of this document states: 'The false assumption that what is lawful must therefore be moral or ethical drives a normalization of ethically unacceptable practices...St Paul reminds us that what is permissible is not always helpful (1 Cor 10.23).'

Consistent with this, the General Synod of the Church of England has repeatedly expressed the Church's opposition to assisted dying.

Any involvement by an authorised minister in a process of assisted dying would connote at least some degree of acceptance or even approval of what was happening. Of course, praying for a person when they are seriously ill is absolutely something every minister would want to do. However, as a matter of diocesan policy, the Bishop directs that ministers should not be involved in rites that accompany the administration of lethal drugs. If asked, a minister can sensitively and politely decline on grounds of diocesan policy and, where applicable, personal conscience. From a pastoral perspective, it will be better for the minister to make their position clear at the outset, rather than being drawn into a situation that leads to sudden disappointment.

Authorised ministers are expected to offer ministry in all other respects to a dying person and his/her family. This includes ministry to the sick, prayers before a funeral, officiating at the funeral itself, and ministry to the family after the funeral. Authorised and commended liturgical resources for these elements of pastoral ministry are found in Common Worship.

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