



Ministry  
of Justice

The Right Honourable  
**Dominic Raab MP**  
Deputy Prime Minister  
Lord Chancellor & Secretary of  
State for Justice

Rt Hon Sir George Howarth MP  
House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

**MoJ ref:** MC98104

27 July 2022

Dear George,

### **ASSISTED SUICIDE**

Thank you for your email of 4 July on behalf of your constituent, .....  
about assisted suicide.

Whether there are any circumstances in which it should not be an offence to assist another person to die is something on which there are passionately held but deeply divided views. Even amongst those who support a change in the law, there are differing ideas on where the line should be drawn, what safeguards should be in place and for whom. Conversely, others feel strongly that the law should not be changed and that safeguards will not necessarily give enough protection to vulnerable people who may feel pressure, whether real or perceived, to end their own lives.

The Government's position remains that any change to the law in this emotive and contentious area is a matter for Parliament to decide and an issue of conscience for individual parliamentarians rather than one for Government policy. That is not an indication that the Government does not care about this issue. Rather, because the matter is so important, and is a matter of conscience, it takes no partisan position. Parliament has so far voted against proposals to allow lawful assistance with suicide, including in September 2015 when the House of Commons rejected the Assisted Dying (No.2) Bill by a substantial majority (330 votes to 118). The issue has been debated regularly since then, most recently on 4 July 2022 when a petition to Parliament was debated in Westminster Hall, and it remains a matter of profound public interest and importance.

If parliamentarians were to decide that the law on assisting suicide should change, the Government would not stand in the way of such change but would seek to ensure that the law could be enforced in the way that Parliament intended.

The Government does not currently have any plans to initiate a review of the law in this area or to publish a call for evidence. It is of course open to committees of the Houses of Parliament, including Select Committees, to initiate a review or a call for evidence should they wish to do so.

Yours Sincerely,

**RT HON DOMINIC RAAB MP**