



Assisted Dying statement 29 November 2024

Assisted Dying is often used to describe circumstances in which a person is either helped to end their own life (physician assisted suicide), or where there is a deliberate act to end a person's life (euthanasia).

Assisted Dying is a complex and sensitive subject which raises challenging ethical questions for society and for hospices. St Gemma's Hospice recognises that across society there is a range of different views. We respect the right of everyone, including all those who are cared for, work for, or support St Gemma's, to take their own individual position.

St Gemma's Hospice is founded on the principle of respecting human life and ensuring dignity in death. Committed to providing and promoting the highest standards of palliative and end-of-life care, St Gemma's seeks to relieve suffering without intending to shorten or prolong life. Palliative care includes the right to withhold or cease medical interventions where this is the wish of an individual, or where it is considered to be in the best interests of the patient if they do not have capacity to make their own decision.

The Hospice maintains the position that Assisted Dying is not compatible with the care we provide. Even if legislation were to change, St Gemma's would remain committed to its principles and values, and would not offer or provide Assisted Dying.

St Gemma's makes a huge difference to thousands of patients and families every year; but we know there is already significant unmet need, and that inequalities exist in service provision, particularly for the most disadvantaged.

Hospices, including St Gemma's, rely on the generosity of local communities to fund much of their care and we are enormously grateful for this. The NHS contributes towards funding hospice care, but the local and national NHS investment in palliative and end of life care is insufficient; more NHS funding is required to ensure equitable access for everyone who needs it.