

**OPEN LETTER TO RT HON ROBERT BUCKLAND QC MP, LORD CHANCELLOR AND SECRETARY OF STATE FOR JUSTICE**

24 October 2019

Dear Lord Chancellor

As Police and Crime Commissioners, we write to express our concern about the current situation in relation to assisted dying.

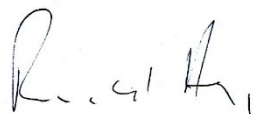
Many will have experienced or heard of cases where the blanket ban on assisted dying has caused distress, confusion and pain for dying people, their loved ones, and even the investigating police officers themselves. Most recently, great-grandmother, Mavis Eccleston, was acquitted by a jury after being charged with murder for helping Dennis, her husband of 60 years, to end his own life rather than suffer any further agony from advanced bowel cancer. Earlier this year, 76-year-old Ann Whaley was investigated by police for booking travel to and accommodation in Switzerland for her husband, Geoff, who had arranged an assisted death at Dignitas in order to avoid a prolonged, traumatic end from motor neurone disease. The cost of these investigations - financial, emotional and societal - cannot be easily dismissed.

We believe it is time for a renewed look at the functioning of the existing law on assisted dying. While there are clearly differences of opinion as to whether or how the law should change, we contend that the law is not working as well as it could and seek an inquiry to confirm that.

Earlier this month, as Justice Secretary, you were asked in Parliament by cross-party MPs to reinstate the commitment your predecessor, the Rt Hon David Gauke MP, had made to a Ministry of Justice led inquiry into the blanket ban on assisted dying.

We echo these calls. We owe it to dying and bereaved people, and their families, to try and find a better way of dealing with terminal illness, including the position around assisted dying. Our colleagues, Ron Hogg and Martyn Underhill, are writing to you under separate cover to request a meeting with you to discuss this further.

Yours sincerely



Ron Hogg  
Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner for  
Durham



Stephen White  
Acting Police, Crime and Victims' Commissioner  
for Durham



Martyn Underhill  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Dorset



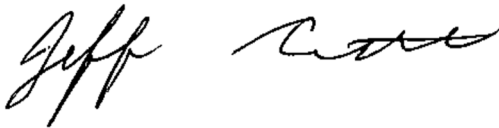
Sue Mounstevens  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Avon & Somerset



David Munro  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Surrey



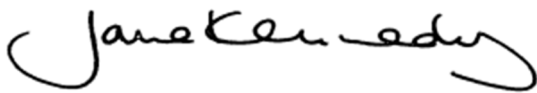
Keith Hunter  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Humberside



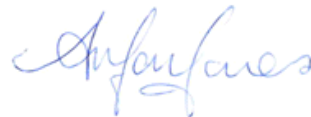
Jeff Cuthbert  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Gwent



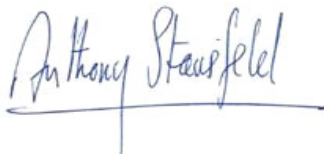
Hardyal Dhindsa  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Derbyshire



Jane Kennedy  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Merseyside



Arfon Jones  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
North Wales



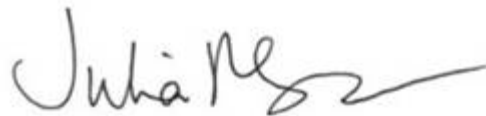
Anthony Stansfeld  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Thames Valley



Mark Burns-Williamson  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
West Yorkshire



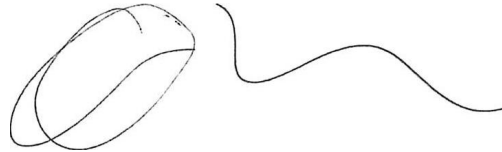
David Keane  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Cheshire



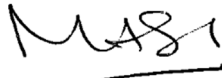
Julia Mulligan  
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for  
North Yorkshire



Barry Coppinger  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Cleveland



Kim McGuinness  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Northumbria



Martin Surl  
Police and Crime Commissioner for  
Gloucestershire



Stephen Mold  
Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for  
Northamptonshire