

## Jersey Assisted Dying Citizens' Jury – Session 6

Written submission by Anne Pryke

Thank you, Citizens Panel, for allowing me to put forward my views, and my experiences regarding this topic.

All views expressed are my own, and I'm not representing any organisations or Church

Ever since I was 3 years old, I wanted to be a nurse, and to train in London. I was fortunate to fulfil my ambition by training as a Registered Nurse at University College, London, followed by qualifying as a Midwife at Southmead Hospital Bristol.

After returning to Jersey and having our children, I returned to nursing, working at Jersey Hospice Care, for over 20 years. Then I changed direction and in 2005 I was elected to the States of Jersey, and became Minister of Health and Social services in 2008.

Life isn't easy and in 1999, my husband was diagnosed with a brain tumour, playing rugby one weekend and diagnosed the next. From that day life changed in every way possible, dealing with the diagnosis, telling our children, family and friends and coping with what was in front of us- Surgery, Radiotherapy and Chemotherapy', all with very little success.

It was important for my husband and me, that it was a journey we were going to take together and did, along with our daughter and son.

Unfortunately he died very suddenly 9 months after the diagnosis.

What of our journey, one which I hope not many people have go through, but people do.

In a strange way it enriched our lives. I was there for my husband, along side in every step, and our lives were enriched by support from our children, our friends and families. We were close but this brought us even closer.

Our children, families and friends were an important part of our lives by being themselves. It was the little moments, seemingly insignificant, that became so important, taking time to be with us, not being frightened, just being there, which for some people can be difficult, doing things for him, and letting him be himself as much as possible.

Life is precious, and having been a Midwife, I witnessed first hand new life being born. Immediately at birth they are a little person and parents are full of love for this child they had created. I have been privileged to be present at birth and at death through personal experience and though my work with Jersey Hospice Care, The journey that families are on brings them together, it can be powerful as well as so sad. This is so important even for our loved one, but also for families that will be bereaved, knowing that they have done everything they could. We only have one chance at this, there is no dress rehearsal, the clock cannot be turned back. The process has to be as best as it can.

Personally I do have a Christian faith and I believe that all life is precious.

Life journeys can be difficult, I believe with good palliative care for everyone, (whatever the diagnosis) despite the sadness, end of life care can be an enriching experience, negating the need for Assisted Dying.

Family and friends have asked how I coped with those 9 months, I believe with my husband's love he gave me the strength, along with my children, family and friends.

On reflection I was privileged to be with him.

Thank you