

## 'No regrets' over euthanasia aid

**A man arrested after his terminally-ill partner committed suicide in Switzerland says he has no regrets.**

Alan Rees, 57, who is originally from Swansea, went with his partner Raymond Cutkelvin to the Zurich base of euthanasia organisation Dignitas.

But he said uncertainty over his legal position was like a "black cloud".

He said he was pleased for Debbie Purdy, who has multiple sclerosis and has been backed by the Law Lords in her call for formal advice on legalities.

Ms Purdy, 46, from Bradford, wants her husband to be able to help end her life in Switzerland without him fearing arrest, but accepts safeguards must exist.

Critics say the ruling could pressure people into ending their lives early. Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) Keir Starmer will consult the public before issuing interim policy guidance in September.

Mr Cutkelvin, 58, who had inoperable pancreatic cancer, died with the help of Dignitas February 2007.

Mr Rees, who lives in London, said he felt he had done nothing wrong.

Speaking on BBC Radio Wales, he said both he and his partner knew he [Mr Rees] was breaking the law but he felt there was no other choice.

**" I've not been allowed to grieve in the manner that I wish to because I've had this black cloud over my head, not knowing whether I'm going to be arrested or not "**  
Alan Rees

He said: "Of course it worried me. But Raymond wanted to end his life in a dignified and peaceful manner and this was the only option he had. We both knew I was breaking the law.

"He could not have done it without me. In fact, 95% of the work involved was done by me and not by Raymond."

Mr Rees said his partner did not want to have any chemotherapy or radiotherapy as he expected his cancer to spread quickly and he wanted to feel as well as he could for as long as possible.

When asked if he had any regrets, Mr Rees said: "None at all. I would do it tomorrow."

He criticised his arrest, and said he had made his actions public in 2007, giving newspaper interviews about what the couple had done.

He said: "It's nearly three years now since Raymond was diagnosed.

"The way it's affected me is that I've not been allowed to grieve in the manner that I wish to because I've had this black cloud over my head, not knowing whether I'm going to be arrested or not."

Dr Michael Irwin, the struck-off GP who helped the couple, said he hoped to be prosecuted to highlight the "hypocrisy" where the wealthy could pay to travel to Switzerland's Dignitas clinic for euthanasia but the poor could not.

Dr Irwin, of Cranleigh, Surrey, wrote a cheque for £1,500 towards the cost of Mr Cutkelvin's procedure at Dignitas.

He was due to attend the police station where the CID officers who arrested Mr Rees's this month were based.

Dr Irwin said Mr Rees was only the second of more than 100 people who has accompanied people to Switzerland in such cases in the past 15 years.

He said: "Then two weeks ago, Alan was arrested, [a] complete surprise to all of us. And as I was equally involved with Alan, I felt I should stand shoulder-to-shoulder with him.

**Struck off**

"[If] he gets arrested, then why not me?"

The retired GP was struck off the medical register in 2005 by the General Medical Council (GMC) after he travelled to the Isle of Man with the intention of giving his friend, Patrick Kneen, about 60 Temazepam sleeping pills to help him die.

But Mr Kneen, who was in his late 70s and had prostate cancer, was too ill to take the class C drug and died a few days later while in a coma.

The GMC struck Dr Irwin off the medical register, saying his actions had been "unprofessional", "inappropriate" and "irresponsible".

Dr Irwin stood down as chairman of the then Voluntary Euthanasia Society, now renamed Dignity in Dying, after receiving a police caution over the incident.

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