



SOPS Support “Death and Dying” Initiative

The group called “Good Life Good Death Good Grief” was launched to try to end what is perceived as the “taboo” in Scottish society which prevents open discussion of death dying and bereavement. It is funded by the Scottish Government and its aims are supported by a number of major charities.

The thinking behind the new initiative is that a lot of harm to society arises from the taboo stopping us discussing death openly. This harm manifests itself in many ways from the inability to communicate comfortably with a friend or work colleague, who has suffered bereavement – to families becoming involved in legal disputes because someone died without making a Will. We even seem as a society to have difficulty communicating with people who are dying. One terminally ill speaker, at the launch, explained how a number of her best friends had simply stopped contacting her once they knew she was ill.

The group believes that an open approach, to death dying and bereavement, will hopefully help educate people to behave a bit differently and to deal better with all the issues involved round death, whether with friends or families or in the workplace.

Solicitors for Older People Scotland support the aims of Good Life Good Death Good Grief. Senior Partner of Caesar & Howie (Founder members of SOPS), David Borrowman commented “I think the group’s aims are laudable and cover many aspects of life. But, just taking the legal issues involved there is no doubt whatsoever, that families cope much better with adverse events if some basic legal preparations have been taken. Frankly, every adult should prepare a Will, a Power of Attorney and an Advance Directive, which is a statement of their treatment preferences in the last stages of illness. If everyone were to take these simple and cheap legal steps much distress and difficulty and unnecessary expense for families would be avoided. And remember, many pensioners in Scotland can get legal aid for Wills, Powers of Attorney and “living wills” so there may be no expense involved at all”.

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