
Most Influential End-of-Life Rights Advocates 2025

World Federation of Right to Die Societies

The debate surrounding end-of-life rights continues to spark passionate discussions worldwide. Countries that have passed legislation have done so with their own sets of rules and regulations around what is and isn't permissible when it comes to helping those requesting an assisted death.

The World Federation of Right to Die Societies (WFRtDS) believes that everyone, regardless of where they live, should have the right to die peacefully, with dignity and without suffering. We caught up with their Executive Director, Peter Warren, currently their only paid employee, to find out more about the work of the Federation.

Regardless of whether someone supports Voluntary Assisted Dying (VAD) as a fundamental human right, or not, death is unavoidable. Around the world, beliefs are shifting on what constitutes a good death, with more people looking to have autonomy over the timing and manner of their death. The WFRtDS is clear in its belief that every single person who is capable of appreciating the consequences of their actions should, as a fundamental human right, be entitled to have the option of a peaceful death at a time of their choosing.

Through its advocacy and education work, the Federation envisions a world where all people, regardless of nationality, job, religion or any other factor, are free to make their well-considered end of life decisions – whilst reflecting on the reasonable interests of others – in a safe, controlled environment, supported by the law.

The Federation is continually working to inform the assisted dying debate in as many ways as it can. It seeks to distribute up-to-date information and educational materials to individuals and groups whenever asked. It responds to media requests worldwide. It also co-hosts a major international conference every two years—the most recent of which was held in Dublin in September 2024. The next one is already scheduled to take place in Tokyo, Japan, at the end of November 2026.

These conferences are an invaluable source of support and knowledge building, bringing together world-renowned medical, legal, and end-of-life advocacy professionals for an intense week of knowledge exchange. These meetings always energise World Federation members, and they are particularly beneficial for societies representing countries that have still to enact voluntary assisted dying legislation.



This work, which is impressive in scope, is carried out by a small team, of which Peter Warren is currently the only paid employee. However, he is backed up by an impressive Committee, whose members are elected during the WFRtDS biennial conference. The Committee has a global presence, and its current President is from Mexico, the Treasurer from Switzerland, and the Secretary from Australia. Other members of the Board are from Japan and Norway.

As well as the Committee, Peter can tap into a worldwide network of researchers, activists and professionals working day to day to further the cause of assisted dying. This body of knowledge greatly assists him in his role. The combination of knowledge and expertise within these ranks is the organization's greatest strength, standing it in good stead as it continues to grow.

Peter added,

"I was very fortunate that I took over the role of Executive Director of the Federation at a time when it had benefited from many years of growing professionalism under the guidance of my immediate predecessor, Dr Rob Jonquiere. His vision for the Federation was that it should be the premier international resource for clear and factual information around voluntary assisted dying. This had already started to pay dividends, with an increasing membership and growing international reputation."

As a doctor and native of the Netherlands, Rob brought unparalleled medical expertise to the role. I come from a political and activist background, which I believe is what the Federation now needs as it pushes on its global work."

As with almost every NPO, funding is a significant issue for the WFRtDS, which tempers its expansion plans. Nevertheless, the organisation is careful about how it manages its budget, and key to its financial stability is that it does not own any buildings or offices, which would be an impractical expense given its global reach. However, this, of course, comes with its challenges as members do need to be kept informed and remain connected through digital channels.

Despite these issues, the WFRtDS remains committed to doing more in the name of assisted dying around the world. For example, it is currently working to establish itself as an international NGO, and having discussed this for several years, it is exciting to see real progress being made. This project is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

Additionally, Peter told us, "We are also doing a full audit of our web presence. Our website should be both a shop front and a library, a go-to resource for both our members and anyone interested in learning more about the work that we do, as well as the work that all our member societies undertake."

Ultimately, as these and other projects come to fruition, the World Federation of Right to Die Societies will continue to go from strength to strength, rallying people around its cause and having an impact on a global scale.



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