



Association for
Palliative Medicine

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THE APM'S POSITION STATEMENT ON VSED AUGUST 2024

Voluntarily Stopping Eating and Drinking (VSED) should never be a suggested course of action in healthcare. If VSED does occur, it should be considered in the context of the relevant law in each jurisdiction including, the right to be provided with food and drink, respect for a person's autonomy/individual will and preferences, their mental health, and the legal precedent that forcing food and drink could be classed as the unlawful use of force against a person.

Nationally agreed information, advice or guidance for health professionals could help clinical teams navigate clinically and ethically this rare situation.

The APM believes that a range of stakeholders would be necessary to be involved in the development of this information, advice or guidance. To ensure adequate representation of mental health considerations we would specifically suggest stakeholders in psychiatry. The APM would welcome the opportunity to be part of developing this.

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