

Proposed Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

Introduction

A proposal for a Bill to enable competent adults who are terminally ill to be provided at their request with assistance to end their life.

The consultation runs from 23 September 2021 to 22 December 2021.

All those wishing to respond to the consultation are strongly encouraged to enter their responses electronically through this survey. This makes collation of responses much simpler and quicker. However, the option also exists of sending in a separate response (in hard copy or by other electronic means such as e-mail), and details of how to do so are included in the member's consultation document.

Questions marked with an asterisk (*) require an answer.

All responses must include a name and contact details. Names will only be published if you give us permission, and contact details are never published – but we may use them to contact you if there is a query about your response. If you do not include a name and/or contact details, we may have to disregard your response.

Please note that you must complete the survey in order for your response to be accepted. If you don't wish to complete the survey in a single session, you can choose "Save and Continue later" at any point. Whilst you have the option to skip particular questions, you must continue to the end of the survey and press "Submit" to have your response fully recorded.

Please ensure you have read the consultation document before responding to any of the questions that follow. In particular, you should read the information contained in the document about how your response will be handled. The consultation document is available here:

[Consultation Document](#)

[Privacy Notice](#)

I confirm that I have read and understood the Privacy Notice attached to this consultation which explains how my personal data will be used.

If you are under 12 years old and making a submission, we will need to contact you to ask your parent or guardian to confirm to us that they are happy for you to send us your views. Please **ONLY** tick this box if you are **UNDER** 12 years of age.

On the previous page we asked you if you are **UNDER 12 YEARS** old, and you responded **Yes** to this question.

If this is the case, we will have to contact your parent or guardian for consent.

If you are under 12 years of age, please put your contact details into the textbox. This can be your email address or phone number. We will then contact you and your parents to receive consent.

Otherwise please confirm that you are or are not under 12 years old.

No, I am over 12 years old and I have read and agree the Privacy Notice

About you

Please choose whether you are responding as an individual or on behalf of an organisation.
Note: If you choose "individual" and consent to have the response published, it will appear under your own name. If you choose "on behalf of an organisation" and consent to have the response published, it will be published under the organisation's name.

on behalf of an organisation

Which of the following best describes you? (If you are a professional or academic, but not in a subject relevant to the consultation, please choose "Member of the public".)

No Response

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

Third sector (charitable, campaigning, social enterprise, voluntary, non-profit)

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what the organisation does, its experience and expertise in the subject-matter of the consultation, and how the view expressed in the response was arrived at (e.g. whether it is the view of particular office-holders or has been approved by the membership as a whole).

Kiltarlity Free Church is a Christian church that is regularly involved in pastoral care, including supporting people in the final stages of their lives and supporting grieving families and friends.

Please choose one of the following:

I am content for this response to be published and attributed to me or my organisation

Please provide your Full Name or the name of your organisation. (Note: the name will not be published if you have asked for the response to be anonymous or "not for publication". Otherwise this is the name that will be published with your response).

Kiltarlity, Kirkhill & Beaully Free Church of Scotland

Please provide details of a way in which we can contact you if there are queries regarding your response. Email is preferred but you can also provide a postal address or phone number.

We will not publish these details.

Aim and Approach - Note: All answers to the questions in this section may be published (unless your response is "not for publication").

Q1. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed Bill?

Fully opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The proposed bill, although titled "assisted dying", is exclusively focused on "assisted suicide". Introducing assisted suicide into Scots law is the wrong approach. It will undermine excellence in the provision of palliative care. Moreover, it would result in a huge amount of pressure being placed on the most vulnerable in our society to end their lives. It would result in a more unjust society.

We are fully opposed to the proposals for the following reasons:

1. The Inherent Value, Worth & Dignity of Every Human Life

As Christians we believe that human beings are made in God's image and likeness and this gives an inherent dignity, worth and value to every human being. Assisted Suicide undermines this value.

2. Undue Pressure on Sick and Vulnerable People

Introducing proposals to allow assisted suicide would place a great deal of pressure on sick and vulnerable people to end their lives out of the fear of becoming a burden.

3. Change to Patient / Doctor Relationship

The proposals would fundamentally alter and undermine the patient / doctor relationship by allowing healthcare professionals to be involved in ending someone's life.

4. Undermines Palliative Care

Proposals to introduce assisted suicide fundamentally undermine or devalue excellent palliative care.

5. Open to Abuse

A system allowing assisted suicide is wide open to abuse and there could never be sufficient safeguards.

6. An Incremental Extension of Assisted Suicide

Although these proposals might at first only apply in very narrow cases it is easy for these to be extended over time - in fact this is what has happened in other jurisdictions.

Q2. Do you think legislation is required, or are there other ways in which the Bill's aims could be achieved more effectively? Please explain the reasons for your response.

We do not believe the legislation is required - instead, there is a need for more investment in palliative care and better support for families.

Q3. Which of the following best expresses your view of the proposed process for assisted dying as set out at section 3.1 in the consultation document (Step 1 - Declaration, Step 2 - Reflection period, Step 3 - Prescribing/delivering)?

Fully opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response, including if you think there should be any additional measures, or if any of the existing proposed measures should be removed. In particular, we are keen to hear views on Step 2 - Reflection period, and the length of time that is most appropriate.

The process is too mechanistic and dehumanising and doesn't deal with the complexities of real life.

Q4. Which of the following best expresses your views of the safeguards proposed in section 1.1 of the consultation document?

Fully opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We take the view that the safeguards are completely inadequate and in fact there could never be sufficient safeguards to go ahead with these proposals.

Q5. Which of the following best expresses your view of a body being responsible for reporting and collecting data?

Fully opposed

Please explain the reasons for your response, including whether you think this should be a new or existing body (and if so, which body) and what data you think should be collected.

As we do not approve of the principle of assisted suicide we do not approve of the creation of this kind of body.

Q6. Please provide comment on how a conscientious objection (or other avenue to ensure voluntary participation by healthcare professionals) might best be facilitated.

Not every healthcare professional will find this protection goes far enough.

Financial Implications

Q7. Taking into account all those likely to be affected (including public sector bodies, businesses and individuals etc), is the proposed Bill likely to lead to:

a significant reduction in costs

Please indicate where you would expect the impact identified to fall (including public sector bodies, businesses and individuals etc). You may also wish to suggest ways in which the aims of the Bill could be delivered more cost-effectively.

We believe that a move towards assisted suicide will save the NHS significant sums of money in not providing long term end of life care. The consultation document supports this in a footnote:

"A cost analysis of assisted dying in Canada was undertaken in 2017 and concluded that "Medical assistance in dying could reduce annual health care spending across Canada by between \$34.7 million and \$138.8 million, exceeding the \$1.5–\$14.8 million in direct costs associated with its implementation."

We are deeply concerned that there might be a financial motivation for allowing assisted suicide in the face of an under resourced health service. You cannot put a financial measure on human life.

Equalities

Q8. What overall impact is the proposed Bill likely to have on equality, taking account of the following protected characteristics (under the Equality Act 2010): age, disability, gender re-assignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation?

Negative

Please explain the reasons for your response. Where any negative impacts are identified, you may also wish to suggest ways in which these could be minimised or avoided.

Legalising assisted suicide would completely undermine the equality in value and worth of all lives in Scotland. We are deeply concerned that this legislation will result in undue pressure being placed on the elderly and the disabled to end their life.

Sustainability

Q9. In terms of assessing the proposed Bill's potential impact on sustainable development, you may wish to consider how it relates to the following principles:

- living within environmental limits
- ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- achieving a sustainable economy
- promoting effective, participative systems of governance
- ensuring policy is developed on the basis of strong scientific evidence.

With these principles in mind, do you consider that the Bill can be delivered sustainably?

No

Please explain the reasons for your response.

We fundamentally believe the proposals in this consultation would result in a society that is more unjust and less compassionate.

General

Q10. Do you have any other additional comments or suggestions on the proposed Bill (which have not already been covered in any of your responses to earlier questions)?

We are fundamentally opposed to assisted suicide – it devalues human life, places undue pressure on the vulnerable and is open to abuse and incremental extension. We believe life is a gift from God and those suffering deserve our compassion and care. Accordingly, we are committed to more palliative care and proper emotional and spiritual support for those facing death, and their loved ones.