

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.

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 Response

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

Other (e.g. clubs, local groups, groups of individuals, etc.)

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).

See answer at section 10.

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).

Edinburgh Lay Dominican Fraternity

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.

Please see answer at section 10.

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.

The Bill's aims of preventing unnecessary suffering for those who are facing terminal diagnoses could be better achieved by funding palliative care and the hospice movement more fully. See further our response at Section 10.

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.

See our response at Section 10.

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.

It is impossible to mitigate the dangers of this Bill other than by not introducing it at all.

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.

Being against the proposed legislation, we are also against setting up a body to report the data that would result from it.

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

By not introducing the Bill.

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 increase 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.

The bill for the increased mental health care work in all relevant sectors (education at all levels, prisons, the health sector) that this Bill would cause would be enormous.

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.

This Bill by its very nature targets the sick and vulnerable and those who care about them, and subjects them to unfair pressures to weigh the worth of their own lives and the lives of those they love against one another. This is ipso facto discriminatory against the disabled and the elderly and their carers.

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

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- 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?

Please explain the reasons for your response.

The proposed Bill is fundamentally unjust to the disabled and those with mental health issues.

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)?

Expression of concern from the Edinburgh Lay Dominican Fraternity about the proposed Assisted Dying bill.

The Edinburgh Lay Dominican Fraternity is a lay Catholic organisation devoted to study, prayer, community and preaching the Gospel of justice, peace and the integrity of Creation in the Dominican tradition. Our members include teachers, University lecturers, business owners, charity workers and retired people.

There are many grounds on which we object to the proposed Bill, not least that it directly contravenes Catholic teaching on the sanctity of human life, and risks making the dealing of death a core part of working for the National Health Service in Scotland. However, we have chosen to highlight one ground for concern in particular in this response, which does not appear to have been addressed at all in drawing up the proposal for the Bill. This is the likelihood that the encouragement of assisted suicide by the Scottish Government in this way, along with the provision of the means to carry it out on the NHS, would inadvertently normalise and promote suicide in Scotland more generally, which Covid and its consequences are already pushing poor and vulnerable people towards in growing numbers. Our members who work in education and in the prison service are aware of many students, prisoners and others who struggle constantly with the temptation to suicide. Some, sadly, struggle in vain. We could all name at least four or five people we have worked with who have taken their own lives in recent years. Evidence is now emerging that those on the autism spectrum (which is well represented in Universities among both students and staff) are particularly vulnerable to suicidal thoughts as part of autism's emotional overload mechanisms, where people are flooded with extreme emotions and liable to do themselves an injury in response before they can get any emotional distance. Those living with impaired mobility, including disabled students, also frequently report suicidal thoughts. Professionals at schools and Universities and in prison and other chaplaincies spend considerable time, energy and resources supporting students, prisoners and others who report suicidal thoughts. We really do not need the Scottish Parliament to undermine our efforts with this proposed legislation.

Society's consensus in discouraging suicide and encouraging all its citizens that their lives are valued at every stage is crucial to dissuading those who are tempted to suicide. If the Scottish Government introduces legislation to withdraw its legal protection from people diagnosed as having six months to live, and encourages and facilitates their assisted suicide with systematic provision, this sends the grim message to all those tempted to suicide that the State would be ready and willing to facilitate their suicide as well if the legislation were extended (as it has been in every jurisdiction which has introduced legislation to allow euthanasia or assisted suicide). The public and private conversations that would ensue would inevitably include arguments offensive to disabled people suggesting that those who are not economically productive are of no value. The work of all those professionals and charity workers who strive to prevent suicides and to persuade those who struggle with their mental health of the value of their lives would literally be fatally undermined. The emphasis and resources should be on assisting the living, those who are vulnerable and those with a disability, as well as ensuring that resources are provided to support the care of those who are dying in a compassionate way through the provision of good hospices and palliative care.

Covid has left a deeply embedded mental and physical health shadow which will be with us for years. The

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scars on the psyches of the young in particular are currently very visible to everyone who works with or engages with this age group in a pastoral capacity. We need the Scottish Parliament to be seen to value the lives of the Scottish people, not to promote a culture of hastening their death.