

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.

an individual

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".)

Member of the public

Please select the category which best describes your organisation

No Response

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).

Barbara Mair

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 supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I am a strong proponent for dignity in dying. I may well find myself in a position where I would choose to slip away easily without fighting the agony for every single second of continued existence. I say "continued

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

existence" because a life in chronic, debilitating and stubborn pain is not life but a cruel and unusual punishment for those with terminal conditions who do not want to spend their last few months in agony.

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.

I would like to see robust measures in place to ensure the person who is requesting the death is of sound mind or has made a living will; is choosing this way of their own free will and without duress. I would like to see people who have assisted suicides of the terminally ill dealt with compassion and understanding that they acted out of love against a cruel and unjust law.

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 supportive

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 time given for reflection seems to have been well thought out.

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

Fully supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

They may seem quite strict, but I believe this would prevent a person from being "forced" into doing something so that their family may benefit, rather than them. I think it is important to be sure that no one is pressured into assisted suicide and that there needs to be strict safeguards in place to prevent this.

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

Fully supportive

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.

I like the idea that an assisted suicide will not appear on the death certificate as this could cause trauma to friends and relatives of the deceased person. I like that statistics will be comprised by an independent body for the purposes of monitoring numbers and trends to ensure the law is not being abused.

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

No-one should be forced into assisting a suicide if it is against their conscience on moral or religious grounds. However, I believe the majority of GPs and medical practitioners have the understanding and compassion to realise that what they are providing is a service to the benefit of the person they are helping, and not an execution, so there should be sufficient qualified people who will be prepared to provide the service. Nobody likes to watch someone suffer and slowly disintegrate. It is much kinder to let them "go to sleep". We do it for our pets, who are like family, how can we withhold this service from our family members?

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:

some 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.

A new body would need to be set up for the purpose of monitoring the process. This will, of course, cost money. In an independent Scotland I would see this being funded by a small increase in National Insurance - but I don't see that working on top of the UK Govt National Insurance increase. But I think it is a service that comes under health and NI is supposed to pay for that.

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?

Neutral (neither positive nor 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.

I don't see why it would matter the age, disability, gender re-assignment, married status race, sex or sexual orientaton. Obviously there would be ethical issues if the person involved was pregnant - can you deny a woman the right to self terminate if she is pregnant and the fetus is viable? Religion should sort itself out. A true believer of such a religion wont ask for assisted suicide, although there could be the issue of a religious family disagreeing with the decision of the individual in questions. Primarily, I believe in body sovereignty, and I believe that a pregnant woman should be able to make that choice for herself with the caveat that if the fetus is viable it will be delivered before the medication is administered (probably surgically) and given at least the chance to live. However, if the fetus is not viable, then the decision must be solely with the woman concerned - and viability should be based on the same as the abortion laws.

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?

Yes

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Giving people a choice can only help and sustain a democracy.

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)?

I am very pro choice as I live with chronic pain. I am also aware of how depression can affect a person's decision, so I like that this will be raised and checked for by two GPs. However, if I get to the stage where I am not able to do anything for myself and have to rely totally on others; if my pain gets to the stage where I cannot live a meaningful and happy life, I would like the opportunity to choose when to go, with dignity. My faith tells me death is not the end - it is the natural conclusion to this phase in spiritual development. I would resent being held back from taking that step when I choose to do so, and being made to continue in a disabled, broken, pain filled body with little or no way to communicate or occupy my mind would be a criminal act, a sin, if you like, against my body sovereignty.