

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).

John Grantham

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.

Having witnessed my parents' final struggles, I came to believe that quality of life is paramount in an intelligent, caring, society. I also worked as a carer for a number of terminally ill patients and witnessed prolonged, unnecessary, suffering in lovely people who just wanted a peaceful end of their choosing.

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.

Clear legislation is required to both guide professionals and to provide safeguards against possible abuse. Assisted dying already happens (as I have witnessed) but against a background of fear, ignorance and uncertainty. As a society we need to be mature and open and that requires clear legal parameters in which to work.

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.

I believe the three step approach provides a suitable model. Having considered the reflection period, I think 14 days may be excessive in cases of great suffering. Given that the patient will have given great thought before approaching their healthcare professional, will then have discussed the implications before making the declaration, I believe that five to seven days for reflection would be adequate.

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.

It is important to be able to demonstrate that personal choice is free from undue influence and that it is based on medical evidence from qualified persons.

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

Neutral (neither support nor oppose)

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 am uncertain of the purpose for collecting data. Assisted death could be information added to a death certificate and collated by existing bodies of required.

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

Legislation must make clear that healthcare professionals are free to decline to participate without reason or detriment or adverse judgement of any kind.

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 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.

Palliative care can be resource intensive (to the NHS and Care sectors) and disruptive (to family and business). Whilst cost is not a criteria for introducing assisted dying, it will have some positive impacts on the health and Care services.

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.

Death is the one thing all persons have in common and the bill would apply to all persons equally, granting them the right to seek to reduce their suffering and their loved ones the pain of witnessing a drawn out, lingering, death.

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.

We are all destined to die. I cannot see that advancing the inevitable for terminally ill persons makes any difference from a sustainability perspective. It is humane, just, and the ultimate human right.

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)?

Unfortunately, we live in a society that treats death as an evil to be avoided for as long as possible and, almost, as a failure. Consequently we force individuals to live when they are suffering both mentally and physically and who, if given the free choice, would seek assistance to end that suffering. I understand the concerns of those who fear undue pressure being placed on vulnerable people but that is not an argument for denying assisted dying, but an invitation to ensure a proper legal framework with effective safeguards. No civilised society should accept a situation in which it's members are denied the right to seek assistance, to curtail suffering, before an inevitable death.