

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 would like this response to be published anonymously

If you have requested anonymity or asked for your response not to be published, please give a reason (Note: your reason will not be published):

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).

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.

I believe legalisation for assisted dying would lead to vulnerable people, especially the old, feeling that

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they have a duty to relieve their families of the duty to look after them. It would also have a very negative effect on the relationship with medical professionals.

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.

There should be no such legislation. The current protections are required to protect vulnerable people from unethical and sometimes selfish attempts to end life prematurely.

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.
No process can fully protect the sick and aged from manipulation or making choices when being unduly influenced by others.

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.

There are no safeguards which can cover all eventualities and boundaries which were introduced in other countries have been breached and the legislation widened in ways which were not intended. The language used about dignity in dying is suggesting to the ill and frail that there is something undignified about their situation and that could put undue pressure on them to take the action they think is expected of them.

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.

It seems unlikely that the data collected by such a body could provide the necessary protections against abuse.

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

If doctors who do not wish to assist people to die are required to refer patients to another doctor which will still be a violation of their conscience. As time goes on many caring doctors will find it very difficult to work within the NHS.

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.

The mention of costs in connection with this proposed Bill is chilling. Some advocates of assisted suicide have said it would save the NHS money. There is a danger that the ill and frail will feel that society sees it as their duty to choose to die.

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.

The effect on the old will be the worst from an equality point of view. Many are already isolated, anxious, depressed and frail. They need the support of those who wish to improve their lives and they need medical professionals they feel they can trust.

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.

A just society is not one where the old, frail and sick are put at risk. Mention of a sustainable economy in the context of this bill raises the suspicion again that the costs to society of helping old and sick people might be a factor in decision-making.

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 think legislation of the type proposed would weaken our traditional acceptance of the dignity and worth of each human being. It would change the nature of our society and experience in other countries has shown that the initial boundaries of the law can be shockingly expanded.