

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 supportive

Please explain the reasons for your response.

Modern medicine makes it possible to keep people alive in situations where they would not otherwise be viable. In the vast majority of cases, the people involved are very happy with this and grateful that the NHS

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

is so good. Sometimes, however, this results in terminally ill people with very little quality of life being kept alive beyond the point where they feel they have 'had enough'. For people suffering months or years of chronic pain (which may not be able to be relieved to any great extent) and enduring numerous unpleasant medical interventions, being forced to continue to live against their will must feel almost like they are being legally tortured on a daily basis. If terminally ill people have nothing to look forward to except more (and worse) pain and suffering on every day that they continue to live, they should have the right to decide that they would rather go through that. They should have the right to a gentle death at a time of their choosing. This would be much more in their interest than suffering weeks/months/years of excruciating pain knowing that it is likely only going to get worse. These situations lead to depression and a sharp decline in overall mental health and wellbeing. Knowing that they have the option to ask for assisted dying when they feel need it, would enable terminally ill people to choose the date of their death and enjoy their final weeks with their families, knowing that their suffering will soon be over. Instead of spending the end of their lives in the knowledge and fear that their health will only deteriorate and their suffering will increase, terminally ill people will know that they can choose to put a stop to their pain when they feel they want to do that. That power would give every terminally ill person the ability to put a stop to their life if they decide that their life feels is one where there is no hope, no joy, just enduring daily tortures that are only going to get worse.

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.

Legislation is required to ensure that terminally ill people (who would like to end their lives) have their views taken into account and their wishes respected. It would ensure that medical staff are protected from prosecution whenever they make it possible for a terminally ill person to take their own life. It will also ensure sufficient safeguards are put into place that terminally ill people cannot be pressured by anyone else to opt to take their own lives.

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.

Two weeks or a month would seem about right to me. It would give people enough time to reflect on their decision (and change their minds if they want to) without prolonging the process too much.

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.

Safeguarding the terminally ill from being pressured to end their own lives is essential if we, as a society, don't want to end up in a situation where terminally ill folk are being encouraged to kill themselves when they don't want to. It's also essential for the protection of medical staff from stigma within their own professions and from malicious prosecution.

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.

Gathering data on the prevalence of assisted dying in different areas of the country would highlight any discrepancies and may show up any situations where people are being pressured into asking for it. A national group/department within the NHS would be in the best position to collect and analyse this data as the NHS would already be responsible for helping the patients to end their lives. Keeping the data within the NHS would make data breaches less likely.

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

Some medical professionals will have religious or other reasons for not wanting to participate in helping terminally ill adults with assisted dying. The rights of these professionals must be respected. A simple register of staff listing those who have opted out of providing assisted dying and those who have chosen to help should be kept. There is no reason why staff should be required to explain their decision one way or the other.

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.

Allowing terminally ill adults to end their lives is unlikely to lead to an increase in costs to the NHS/other organisations/individuals because keeping terminally ill folk alive already has associated costs. Great care needs to be taken to ensure that no terminally ill person is pressured into opting for assisted dying just to save money.

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.

If the proposed Bill is written in such a way as to ensure all terminally ill people are fully protected from being pressured into opting for assisted dying, then there should be no impact on any protected

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characteristic. Those who have religious or other objections to it, would just not ask for it or refuse it when offered.

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.

Helping a terminally ill person to die on a date for their choice instead of continuing to prolong their life is not going to have any negative environmental impacts. For society, it would mean that those in the worst health, would be given control over an aspect of their lives that they currently don't have any say in. This power to make their own decisions about their lives would be an improvement to the current situation.

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)?

Thank you, Liam, for standing up for those terminally ill folk who would like to end their own lives but are currently suffering because nobody can do anything to make their wishes come true.