

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

Optional: You may wish to explain briefly what expertise or experience you have that is relevant to the subject-matter of the consultation:

My father was diagnosed with terminal secondary lung cancer when he was seventy years old. He received strong medication to alleviate pain towards the end of his life. He frequently asked me 'to cut the thread and let him go' his words. I said that was illegal but I would if I could agree to that request. It was extremely distressing for both him as a previously very active man to be deprived of his independence and for us his children to witness the emaciation which went on for four or five months. He had an extremely ominous fear which he related to me on numerous occasions of choking to death. His cancer eventually terminated his life in this manner and it was a vicious struggle to breathe at the end as his heart was still strong. Those requests he made to end his life and the eventual nature of his death led me to believe then and I still believe now that the time is right to allow terminally ill individuals to be in control of the decision to end their lives if it is their rational choice to do so.

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).

Sheena Watson

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 would like the choice of making this decision if I were to become terminally ill at any point in the future.

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 believe legislation could give individuals the legal power to request that their life could be terminate if they have a terminal illness.

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.

Due to the nature of the circumstances, that is a terminally ill individual, the time factor could perhaps be best decided by the individual concerned, who will have details from specialist medical professionals regarding the length of time that individual's particular type of terminal illness will be likely to last. I believe that is discussed openly with most patients therefore they are made aware of the length of time they may have until the disease kills them.

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

Please explain the reasons for your response.

I'm not fully aware of the section referred to as 1.1 therefore cannot comment.

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.

This would allow reviews to occur at any point in time.

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

It may well be possible for the individual concerned to administer any medication to end their life. If this is not possible then only a medical professional who believes that this choice is essential could administer any medication required to terminate life. I wonder if veterinary professionals are allowed to opt out of terminating an animals life but I can understand certain medical professionals may hold beliefs which may not allow them to terminate a life. Possibly the body elected to oversee the data might also hold a register of healthcare professionals, who believe that this right to assisted dying for terminally ill people, is something they believe to be an individual's right to choose.

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:

don't know

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.

I have very little idea of the logistics of maintaining a terminally ill person in a hospice, at home, or in a hospital, but I would imagine the decision to exit a life in which pain, physical immobility, swallowing difficulties, loss of independence etc., should be uppermost rather than assessing the costs or otherwise of any such individual's decision. I'm not sure any financial implication should be a factor in this type of legislation.

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?

Positive

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 think this legislation would not affect any individual's rights in any way because ultimately it is each individual's own personal decision therefore anyone not desiring this choice would not be involved in either making a declaration of intent, required to reflect or ultimately die. I cannot visualise anyone with any objection to the legislation being under duress to make the choice the legislation offers those who may require it in the future.

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.

I think we need to give terminally ill people the choice in a just and humane society.

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)?

My father asked for this choice when he was terminally ill with cancer but was denied it because it was illegal when he died in 1998. I would have liked to have been able to help him when he asked for the ability to 'stop hanging by a thread and just let go'.