

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).

Timothy Smith

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 have seen people, including my mother, dying from cancer who have had to endure much suffering. I too am a cancer patient and have been a long time supporter of a right to choose an assisted death. I am therefore pleased that the Scottish Parliament is considering this subject as I believe a change in the law

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

in this area is long overdue. Why should a terminally ill person have to suffer beyond their endurance before they die? We should be entitled to dignity and a quality of both life and death.

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. Without legislation it may be impossible for another person to assist with a death, that has been consented to by the "patient" without risk of prosecution. There has to be no ambiguity about what is allowed, what requirements have to be met and in what circumstances an assisted death can be acceptable. Without clearly defined legislation supporters of a terminally ill person could be exposed, as now, to risk of prosecution.

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)?

No Response

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

No Response

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

No Response

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

Whilst I understand that some healthcare professionals would want a right of conscientious objection, their right to conscientious objection must not prevent terminally ill patients from knowing about their right to choose and assisted death should they choose to. I would be concerned, that a healthcare professional who conscientiously objected to assisted dying would probably do so based on a moral or religious belief. It could well be that their moral or religious belief would also result in them not properly informing a terminally ill patient of their right to an assisted death. Clearly, if there is an opinion that assisted dying is somehow wrong, they are hardly going to be the best source of information to a terminally ill person. Patients should therefore not be counselled on end of life choices by someone who has chosen to conscientiously object.

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:

No Response

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.

It will have a positive impact. The current situation, where assisted deaths are not allowed, largely arises from religious beliefs, particularly Christian belief. If assisted deaths were legalised, the majority of people who are not Christian would gain the right to choose an assisted death, if circumstances required. It would mean that non-believers and those of other faiths would have an option that is currently denied them mainly due to the religious beliefs of a minority.

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.

For some terminally ill people, their lives are prolonged unnecessarily. While they suffer in agony, the public purse is funding medical care and using resources which the recipient would rather not be enduring. It seems a callous way to look at this topic but yes, in many cases money would be saved as medical care would stop earlier at the point of the assisted death. Also hospital/hospice facilities would be available sooner to care for those patients who have a better prognosis. From the governance standpoint, rather than the terminally ill person being told they have to continue to suffer until they die "naturally", they would be able to participate in their end of life care. Presently, these patients are excluded from making such choices, which leaves them with no control over the final chapter of their own lives.

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)?

No Response