



COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Sandwick Road, Stornoway, Isle of Lewis HS1 2BW

Rathad Shannabhaig, Steornabagh, Eilean Leòdhais HS1 2BW

Mr Liam McArthur MSP
The Scottish Parliament



Dear Mr McArthur,

CONSULTATION: ASSISTED DYING FOR TERMINALLY ILL ADULTS (SCOTLAND) BILL RESPONSE FROM COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR

Comhairle nan Eilean Siar considered your proposed Bill at our Policy and Resources Committee and Comhairle meeting on 8 December 2021 and authorised me to advise you of Members' views. This is not a response on behalf of the Comhairle, but an indication of views expressed by Members in the debate.

The Comhairle has received a number of representations from organisations and individuals, mostly opposed to the Bill, and that position is reflected by the majority of Comhairle Members who have expressed a view on the matter. It is acknowledged, of course, that there are strong views on both sides of this important policy question, and that decisions on this issue are informed by personal experience as well as religious, ethical and other convictions. These divided opinions are represented in the Western Isles communities and in comments made to many of our Members.

The majority view of Comhairle Members who have expressed opinions is opposition to the introduction of this or any similar legislation, and the reasons for that view can be summarised as follows:

- assisted dying is contrary to the dignity of the human person;
- assisted dying undermines efforts to tackle suicide, sending a message that suicide is an appropriate response to physical or mental suffering;
- there is an implied message to frail, elderly and disabled people about the value placed on them by society which, advertently or inadvertently, undermines efforts to improve palliative care;

- inevitably and regardless of intention, assisted dying puts pressure on people to end their lives for fear of being a financial, emotional or care burden to others;
- assisted dying compromises the doctor/patient relationship; and
- countries which have introduced assisted dying often subsequently and quickly seek to extend the legislative provisions for assisted dying to cover, for example, situations of chronic illness and disability.

It is of particular concern to many Members that legislation of this kind can relatively quickly lead to legislative provision being extended to other groups and individuals, including those suffering from chronic illness and disability, enhancing negative messages to, and pressures placed on, such groups and individuals about the value placed on them by society.

I hope that these comments are of assistance.

Yours sincerely,