

Member Briefing - Assisted Dying in England and Wales (June 2025)

The progress of the Bill through Parliament

November 2024 - Second Reading of the Bill passed in Parliament with a majority of 55. Many MPs raised the importance of improving palliative care for all regardless of how the Bill progresses.

January to March 2025 - Committee Stage of the Bill involved detailed discussion on how the Bill should change and parts of it be strengthened. Many changes were made to the Bill during this stage. Hospice UK submitted written evidence and Toby Porter gave verbal evidence to the Committee which were both cited by Committee members.

April 2025 - Hospice UK wrote to and met with Kim Leadbeater (the MP proposing the Bill) following discussions about the role of hospices at Committee Stage. Kim followed up with written assurances that she is working to ensure that "nothing in the Bill damages the sector or adds to the financial pressure it faces", as well as affirming that "hospices should be given the flexibility, freedom, space and time to consider their options." Similar assurances have been made in public by Kim.

May 2025 - The Government published their Impact Assessment of the Bill which highlighted uncertainty about how assisted dying will operate in practice. Hospices were directly mentioned, alongside workforce challenges and the broader state of palliative care.

Ongoing - The Bill recently returned to the House of Commons for **Report Stage (16 May and 13 June)** where MPs debated more specific changes to the Bill.

We are pleased that an amendment was added to the Bill that places a requirement on the Health Secretary to consult with palliative and end-of-life care providers when developing guidance on the operation of the Act, if it passes. This is a positive and important step that ensures the hospice sector is consulted, especially amid ongoing uncertainty about the practical implications of any change in the law on assisted dying.

Next - The Bill will have its **Third Reading (20 June)**, when MPs will decide if the Bill progresses to the House of Lords.

After this, if it passes Third Reading, **the Bill will move to the House of Lords** where they will further debate and make changes to the Bill. Once the Bill has passed through the House of Lords and any changes they have made are agreed by MPs, the Bill will gain Royal Assent which will mean it has officially passed and will become law. If the Bill gets that far, this **will likely be in October 2025**.

Royal Assent of the Bill will officially kick start the implementation period. This will last for up to 4 years, meaning that people who meet the Bill's eligibility criteria will not be able to access assisted dying until late 2029 at the latest.

New media coverage

We have worked with BBC News for a piece looking at hospice care in the build up to the assisted dying vote – thank you to Rowcroft Hospice in Devon for supporting with this.

This has aired **Monday 16 June** and the online piece can be found [here](#). This may generate enquiries to hospices from other media outlets. Please reach out to us if you need support related to any media requests regarding assisted dying.

media@hospiceuk.org / 020 7520 8263

FAQ

What is Hospice UK's view on assisted dying?

Hospice UK has taken a [neutral position on assisted dying](#); officially this is a position of 'no collective view'. This reflects the many different views that exist among hospices, including staff, volunteers, trustees, patients and families. We recognise that this is a decision for society, as expressed by Parliament.

Whatever is decided on assisted dying, we have seen clear agreement amongst both the public and Parliamentarians that palliative and end of life care needs to be improved, and that hospices need better support from the government to protect their services long into the future.

What role would hospices play if assisted dying is legalised?

If assisted dying is legalised, it would undoubtedly have huge ramifications for the hospice sector. Currently, the Bill leaves hospices with significant uncertainty about how legislation could impact them. There is no detail about where assisted dying would sit in the health and social care system, or what role hospices would be expected to take.

While the Bill still leaves many unanswered questions, we are pleased that an amendment has been passed requiring the Health Secretary to consult with palliative and end-of-life care providers when developing guidance on the Act's implementation, if it becomes law.

We recognise the lack of clarity in the Bill is causing significant concern and worry for many across our hospice community. We will continue to work with both government and our members to press for clarity on these questions. However, should the Bill pass, it is likely to take some time through the four-year implementation period to work through the many questions the Bill throws up.

What are we asking for?

If assisted dying is legalised, we want hospices to have the flexibility to determine their own level of involvement in all aspects of assisted dying. We also need to ensure there is no financial detriment to any hospice, whatever position it chooses to take.

Should the Bill pass, Hospice UK will work closely with government during the implementation period to ensure the full range of impacts on hospices are carefully considered in the guidance and regulations that would be issued on assisted dying.

Will hospices be able to opt-out if assisted dying is legalised?

Some MPs have tabled amendments to the Bill suggesting that organisations like hospices should have an 'opt-out' in some form. To date, these amendments have not made it into the Bill. The Bill does offer such a protection for *individuals*, ie no staff member or volunteer will be obliged to play any part in the process should they not wish to.

Our view is that, should the Bill pass, hospices should have the time and flexibility throughout the implementation period to determine their own level of involvement, and that establishing a formal opt-in/opt-out within the Bill itself is too binary to account for both the diversity of views across the hospice sector and the complexity of what the Bill could mean in practice for hospices.

There will be many considerations for hospices across all parts of their practice and operations. As the shape of an assisted dying service becomes clearer, hospices will want to consult with staff, volunteers, and their own communities to make these decisions, which will take time. As hospices are an integral part of palliative and end of life care provision, these questions extend well beyond whether or not a hospice itself may or may not choose to be involved the direct provision of assisted dying services.

If the Bill is passed, we want to see the government coproduce national policy with the hospice sector that supports hospices to determine the speed and extent of their involvement with assisted dying, and to support the sector to navigate the impact of its introduction. We're pleased that, as part of this, an amendment has been added to the Bill that will require the Health Secretary to consult with palliative and end-of-life care providers when developing guidance on the Act's implementation, if it becomes law.

How would assisted dying be funded?

It is currently not clear how assisted dying would be funded, should it become legalised. We have made the case during the Bill process that it should be funded separately from palliative and end of life care, and that there should be no financial detriment to hospices, whatever position they take.

Additionally, if assisted dying was to become available then there would undoubtedly be an associated cost to hospices so they could prepare their staff, volunteers, and institutions.

We believe it would be wrong for hospices to be expected to pay for this out of charitable funds, when NHS bodies will be able to use statutory funding to prepare their staff. Hospice funding is already stretched, and the current funding set up is not sustainable or equitable.

How does this link to discussions about hospice funding?

We've been raising the profile of hospice funding for a long time. Currently, government funding is a patchwork and bears little relation to what local people need.

Any discussion about assisted dying must include how we can ensure good palliative care is well-funded and available to everyone, whoever they are and wherever they live. Nobody should ever feel that they have to make the choice to have an assisted death because of a fear of not receiving the care and support they need.

There has been unanimous agreement in Parliament on this and we look forward to continuing to work with MPs and government to secure long-term reform of how hospice services are funded and commissioned.

For more information or with any questions, email policy@hospiceuk.org.