

Assisted dying: scenarios for discussion

November 2025

These scenarios are designed to support hospice teams in engaging in safe, respectful, and constructive dialogue around the topic of assisted dying. Each case study presents a scenario that may arise in practice, with guided questions to encourage reflection and discussion.

This document should be used alongside our guidance on holding [safe space discussions](#) around assisted dying.

Scenario 1: patient request and team response

A patient with advanced motor neurone disease expresses a desire for assisted dying. The patient is articulate and clear in their request and they have heard about assisted dying legislation on the news. However, assisted dying is not currently legal in the UK.

The clinical team is unsure how to respond.

Discussion prompts:

- What values are at play in this situation?
- How can the team respond with compassion and clarity?
- What support do staff need to navigate this ethically and emotionally?
- How can the hospice maintain unity while respecting diverse views?

Helpful information:

- Share our summary of [what's happening with the assisted dying legislation](#) in different jurisdictions of the UK as it progresses through parliament.

- Make sure your staff and volunteers know about and understand your hospice's current position on assisted dying. Consider whether you could provide guidance on how to respond to enquiries about assisted dying.
- Read [Hospice UK's position](#) on assisted dying.

Scenario 2: conflicting views and emotional distress

Following a parliamentary debate on assisted dying, colleagues express a broad range of views. Tensions rise in team meetings and some staff are experiencing emotional distress.

Discussion Prompts:

- How can the hospice create space for respectful dialogue?
- What support structures can help staff process their feelings?
- How can hospice leaders model compassionate engagement with difficult topics?

Helpful information:

- Use our guidance on holding [safe space discussions](#) to help facilitate respectful dialogue
- Signpost colleagues to sources of [information and support](#).

Scenario 3: hospice position and public pressure

A local community group submits a petition asking the hospice to publicly support assisted dying legislation. Other supporters of the hospice have strong views against assisted dying. The Board is divided, and staff feel anxious about how the hospice's relationship with the public, donors and families will be affected by this issue.

Discussion Prompts:

- How should the hospice respond to public pressure?
- What principles should guide the organisation's public stance?
- How can staff be involved in shaping the response?
- What communication strategies can preserve trust and integrity?

Helpful information:

- Make sure your staff and volunteers know about and understand your hospice's current position on assisted dying. Consider whether you could provide guidance on how to respond to enquiries about assisted dying.
- Read [Hospice UK's position](#) on assisted dying.