



28 November 2025

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

By email

Dear Committee Members,

Assisted dying survey: Clinicians ask for greater clarity to protect doctors and patients

The Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow has today (Friday 28 November) [published the findings of an independent survey of UK-based Fellows and Members](#) looking at the practicalities of implementing the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill in Scotland, and the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill applicable to England and Wales, should they become law.

As a College, we have a neutral position on the principle of assisted dying, recognising that the views of doctors and healthcare professionals are mixed. However, with two bills currently under discussion, we felt it was important to ask our Fellows and Members for their views on the practicalities of implementing the bills should they become law. I have attached a copy of the full report.

The survey received 635 responses from physicians, surgeons, dental surgeons, GPs, nurses and allied health professionals.

Overall, respondents were split over whether they would support or oppose the relevant bill's implementation.

However, the majority felt there would be challenges around the bills' practical implementation. Key themes from respondents were that greater clarity on eligibility criteria would be needed, alongside capacity assessments and safeguarding if assisted dying was to be legalised.

Among the findings:

- Three in five (59%) respondents felt assessing a patient's voluntariness – that is, ensuring they were not being coerced into a decision - would pose a 'major challenge', and one in four (26%) thought it would be a 'minor challenge'.
- Almost one in two (48%) respondents said assessing capacity would pose a 'major challenge', while about one in three (35%) said it would be a 'minor challenge'.



- Nearly half of respondents (45%) said they had 'major concerns' regarding the McArthur Bill's definition of terminal illness, while two in five (40%) had 'major concerns' regarding the Leadbeater bill's definition of terminal illness. The remaining respondents were split between having 'minor concerns' and 'no concerns' about the definitions.
- Overall, confidence that current professional standards and oversight will ensure safe implementation of the bill is low. Only about one in three (35%) of respondents were 'very' or 'moderately' confident.
- Almost two in three (64%) felt the method of assisted death should be addressed in the legislation.
- Over half of respondents (55%) were 'not very' or 'not at all' confident that the bills provide sufficient legal protection for professionals involved in assisted dying.

While doctors and healthcare professionals have a range of views on the principle of assisted dying, all are deeply concerned for the wellbeing of their patients.

Please don't hesitate to contact the College via Hannah Parker, Public Affairs Manager, on policynetwork@rcpsg.ac.uk if you would like any further information.

Yours sincerely,

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Dr Morven McElroy

Honorary Secretary

Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow