

Hospice UK briefing following Third Reading of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill - 23 June 2025

Summary

On Friday 20th June, the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill **passed its Third Reading in the House of Commons**. This was the final opportunity for MPs to vote on the Bill in its entirety before it progresses to the House of Lords for further scrutiny and debate.

This is a significant milestone in the Bill's progression through Parliament. Although the Bill still has to pass through several stages in the House of Lords, members of the Lords rarely block legislation passed by MPs.

As the Bill has moved through the Commons, we have been clear that any change to the law on assisted dying would have profound implications for the hospice sector. There remains significant uncertainty for hospices around the specific impact of any change in the law on assisted dying. This includes a lack of detail on where assisted dying would be delivered, how it would be funded, and what, if any, level of involvement hospices would be expected to have. These are vital questions that must be addressed during the implementation period, should the Bill continue to progress.

We were encouraged that, as in previous debates, many MPs raised the urgent need to address the inconsistent provision of palliative and end-of-life care. This remains a welcome point of unity in a complex and sensitive debate.

Regardless of how the Bill progresses, we will continue to advocate for everyone to have access to high-quality palliative and end-of-life care, whenever and wherever they need it, alongside the need for urgent reform to the hospice funding model.

Our response to the Third Reading vote

Following the Third Reading vote, we issued a [statement](#) on our website and across our social media channels.

Our CEO, Toby Porter, contributed an opinion piece to [The Financial Times](#), highlighting the critical need for renewed attention to palliative care following the vote.

FAQs

What is Hospice UK's view on assisted dying?

Hospice UK has no collective view on whether the law should change on assisted dying. 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.

We continue to engage with Parliamentarians on the potential impact that a legal change could have on hospices, and to advocate for greater clarity on the many unanswered questions hospices face during the implementation period, should the Bill ultimately pass. We also continue to press for urgent action to improve palliative care and reform the hospice funding model - regardless of the Bill's outcome.

To date, our engagement with MPs has secured a requirement for the Health Secretary to consult palliative and end-of-life care providers when developing guidance on the operation of the Act, should it ultimately become law. This amendment ensures a mechanism for hospice input. As part of this process, we will continue to advocate for hospices to retain the flexibility to determine the extent of their involvement in any future assisted dying service. Alongside this, we supported Marie Curie's successful calls to secure a fast-tracked reviewed into the state of palliative care within one year of the Bill receiving Royal Assent.

Is assisted dying now legal in England and Wales?

No - the Bill is not yet law. While passing the Third Reading in the House of Commons is a significant step, the Bill must now proceed to the House of Lords. Members of the House of Lords may propose changes to the Bill, which would then need to be approved by MPs. Only once both Houses agree and the Bill receives Royal Assent will it become law. If that happens, it is expected to be in late 2025/early 2026.

Royal Assent of the Bill will officially start the implementation period. This will last for up to four 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.

Does the Bill require hospices to deliver assisted dying?

Currently, the Bill does not specify any requirement for hospices to be directly involved in delivering assisted dying. More broadly, there is no detail in the Bill about where assisted dying would sit in the health and social care system or how

any future change in the law would be funded. Many of the operational and funding details have been delegated to the implementation period, should the Bill become law.

We recognise the ongoing lack of clarity is causing significant concern and worry for many across our hospice community. We will continue to work with government and our members to press for clarity on these questions. A recent amendment added to the Bill requiring 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, is a positive step and will support us in this endeavour.

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

Some MPs have previously proposed 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 our engagement with the Bill, 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 operation, if it becomes law.

How would assisted dying be funded?

It is not yet clear how any future assisted dying service would be funded. We have made it clear that it should not come at the expense of palliative and end-of-life care, and that no hospice should face financial detriment regardless of its position.

Preparing hospices for any potential change - including staff training and community engagement - will carry costs. We will be working to ensure hospices are not expected to meet these costs from charitable funds, particularly when NHS services will have access to statutory support. 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.

How else will Hospice UK support its members?

We are beginning work on a resource for our members which would aim to provide a framework to support facilitated conversations with staff, patients, families and the wider community. We will update on this resource as it develops.

For more information, please email our Policy team at policy@hospiceuk.org.