



Association for
Palliative Medicine
Of Great Britain and Ireland

Tel: 01489 668332 Email: Office@compleat-online.co.uk Website: www.apmonline.

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Clarification of statement referencing APM made by Lord Falconer

In Friday's Lords debate (9/1/26), Lord Falconer cited, and misrepresented, expert evidence presented to the Terminally Ill Adults committee last year by the Association for Palliative Medicine (APM), by Dr Sarah Cox who is our past president.

The APM evidence stressed a fundamental principle: clinical decisions reached by a multiprofessional team, where each member has personally assessed the patient, are inherently more robust than those made in isolation. This direct engagement ensures each professional contributes a unique, individual perspective on the patient's circumstances.

However, Lord Falconer misrepresented this as being equivalent to the proposed 'safeguard' of a panel within the Terminally Ill Adults Bill. This panel fails to replicate a true multidisciplinary model and essential protection. Crucially, panel members would not be required to meet the patient. They would, therefore, have no individual clinical perspective to bring to bear on the person applying for an assisted death. This renders the panel a mere administrative review, stripping it of the very nuance and human understanding that defines robust, compassionate decision-making at the end of life.

A safeguard that deliberately avoids seeing the patient is no safeguard at all.

Executive of the APM

Dr Sarah Cox (Past President)
Dr Suzanne Kite (President)
Dr Paul Paes (Vice-president)
Dr Natasha Wiggins (Treasurer)
Dr Matthew Doré (Secretary)