TEMPLATE LETTER TO MSP FROM INDIVIDUAL CLINICIAN OUTLINING CONCERNS

Clinician’s details: name and address

MSP details

Name and address

Date

Dear ……………….(insert MSP),

I am writing to express my concerns about proposals to legalise Assisted Dying (AD) in Scotland. I understand that a Bill to legalise AD has been proposed by Liam McArthur MSP and is currently being drafted and is expected later this year. I work in ………..(region) as a ………………..(insert job title) and regularly provide care for people living with incurable conditions and people who are approaching the end of their lives. In a survey of Scottish Palliative Care doctors published this year, the vast majority (95%) stated that they would take no part in either assisted suicide or euthanasia.[[1]](#footnote-1) In the survey, a large majority believed that legalization of assisted suicide will negatively impact palliative care services (both in practice and reputation) and compromise access to care by vulnerable groups. A large majority were clear that the proposed legal safeguards would not prevent harm to vulnerable individuals and would not detect or prevent coercion. I encourage you to read and carefully consider the results of this survey.

It is well known that the NHS is in crisis and that palliative care services lack proper funding. Many people are unable to access specialist provision or even basic social care, which is so crucial to maintaining dignity at the end of life. In Canada, where assisted suicide and euthanasia is legal, there have been increasing reports of Canadian citizens being found eligible for euthanasia on grounds of poverty-induced suffering and lack of access to basic social care. These reports raise severe concerns which must be politically acknowledged and publicly explored. Terminally ill patients in Scotland face unprecedented levels of poverty. It is naïve to assume that there would be no unintended consequences of embedding AD as a duty of care within NHS Scotland policy. Instead, we should prioritise appropriate resourcing of palliative care services to ensure the provision of timely palliative care for all who need it.

If you would like further information about the impact of AD in other jurisdictions, please see:

The Lancet editorial from September 2022 (enclosed)

BMJ summary: [Katherine Sleeman: Assisted dying—how safe is safe enough? - The BMJ](https://blogs.bmj.com/bmj/2018/03/08/katherine-sleeman-assisted-dying-how-safe-is-safe-enough/) (enclosed)

Many thanks for your time and consideration.

Yours sincerely,

Name and title/role

1. https://apmonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/APM-Survey-of-AD-Impact-on-PC-FINAL.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)