

Edinburgh MSPs on the Assisted Dying Bill

Amid planned protests this morning outside The Scottish Parliament, The Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill will reach Stage 1 on Tuesday afternoon in The Scottish Parliament.

This is a Member's Bill promoted by Liam McArthur MSP who has put forward the motion "That the Parliament agrees to the general principles of the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill". He has said that "an overwhelming majority" of people in Scotland support the draft legislation.

On Tuesday in the Chamber, the bill will be scrutinised by MSPs in detail, and a vote by a majority is required to allow the bill to move forward.

The bill is intended to allow someone to request a procedure to end their life as long as two doctors confirm they have a terminal illness.

John Swinney said he will vote against the bill, and former First Ministers Humza Yousaf, Kate Forbes and Nicola Sturgeon have also said they will do the same, but supporters of the bill say they believe they have enough support to get the bill past today's stage one.

MSPs are to have a free vote on this legislation. Foyso Choudhury MSP for Lothian has said he will vote against the bill.

He said: "After having considered my position, I will be voting against the bill.

"The bill uses a broad definition of terminal illness which would include people with disabilities and those with years to live. This has been raised by constituents and disabled people's groups as sending the message that their lives are less valuable and opening them to potential coercion. These concerns are compounded by experiences in other jurisdictions, which have seen the law widened following legal challenges.

"I am also concerned that assisted dying would place undue pressure on terminally ill people to end their lives as to not be a burden on their families, and do not believe proposed safeguards protect against this.

"I understand some may be disappointed, this has been a difficult decision to make.

"In any case, our priority should be ensuring every person can access palliative care, and those with terminal illnesses are well supported."

Sue Webber MSP for Lothian said on X: "I have received thousands of emails on Assisted Dying. Tomorrow I will vote against the Assisted Dying Bill. The risks to vulnerable people are real and once we cross this line, there's no going back. No amendments will ever mean the legislation has satisfactory safeguards."

Jeremy Balfour MSP for Lothian has spoken out against the bill along with two other MSPs, Pam Duncan-Glancy and Emma Roddick. Mr Balfour said on X: "We come from different political parties. We do not always agree. But on this we speak with one voice: the Scottish Parliament must reject the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill."

In September 2024, Alex Cole-Hamilton, MSP for Edinburgh Western told the Liberal Democrat conference why he supported

the bill. He said: "My father-in-law slipped away from us six years ago, on a day not unlike this one.

"He succumbed to a kind of liver cancer that was mercifully painless and took him very swiftly after diagnosis. We'd managed to get him home from hospital and when it was clear the end was coming, Gill and her siblings moved back into the house to support their parents through the final week of his life.

"I would go out there whenever I could, it wasn't a chore, it was lovely. They had created a bubble around him filled with love and light and laughter. We took turns to spend precious time with him. There was such unexpected joy in those days and then one morning he was gone. It was a very gentle passing.

"If I could choose the manner of my own death, it would certainly be that.

"But we don't get to choose.

"All too many people are denied a good death and depart this world in pain and in distress.

"Endings matter, in stories and in life, and I want to know that if I am dying in agony, beyond the reach of palliative care or I know that moment is coming, then I'll have the right to say 'this far and no further' and leave this world in dignity.

"We have human rights designed to protect and safeguard every aspect of our life, save one and that is our departure from it.

"That's why I support the Assisted Dying for Terminally ill Adults Bill currently before the Scottish Parliament."

The [debate](#) on the bill will begin after Topical Questions on Tuesday afternoon.



The Scottish Parliament