

SPPC's Approach to the Legalisation of "Assisted Dying"

Assisted dying raises issues of a moral, personal and ethical nature upon which many of SPPC's member organisations (for example our member NHS Boards) are institutionally unable to hold a position. SPPC therefore does not adopt a position in principle either in support or in opposition to a change in the law.

Instead, SPPC's approach is:-

- To take a factual and evidential approach rather than a moral or religious one
- To educate and inform about palliative and end of life care
- To challenge misinformation about palliative and end of life care
- To acknowledge and give an account of complexities which tend to get lost in polarised debates
- To be honest about the limits of palliative care to relieve all suffering
- To be honest about the current deficiencies in care towards the end of life experienced by some people
- To critically review and present a view on the specific provisions of the proposed Bill, such that if the Bill is passed potential harms (to vulnerable people and the practice and provision of palliative care) are minimised.

Opportunities Which Arise from the Public Discourse Associated with the Draft Bill

SPPC will seek to exploit opportunities created by the Bill:

- To promote understanding of palliative and end of life care
- To promote investment in and improvement of palliative and end of life care
- To promote the currently legally available (yet frequently unused) approaches and mechanisms to increase choice and control at end of life (POA, Advance Directives, ACP, DNACPR etc etc)
- To promote the explicit inclusion of a human right to palliative care within the forthcoming Scottish Human Rights Act.

Practical Steps to Take in Relation to the Draft Bill

SPPC will:-

- Produce a briefing for members on the key features of the proposal and the parliamentary processes when the consultation begins
- Keep members and stakeholders informed about opportunities to input to the scrutiny process
- Consult on and submit evidence at relevant stages of the parliamentary process
- Where resources permit, provide media comment in support of this approach.