

Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill

General Pharmaceutical Council

The General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) is the regulator for pharmacists, pharmacy technicians and pharmacies in Great Britain. It is our job to protect, promote and maintain the health, safety and wellbeing of patients and the public who use pharmaceutical services in England, Scotland and Wales.

We protect the public in two main ways- by registering competent professionals to practise pharmacy and by regulating pharmacies. Our core functions are:

- setting the standards of education and training which pharmacists and pharmacy technicians must meet in order to join our register and to remain registered throughout their professional life
- registering pharmacists and pharmacy technicians and setting the standards of conduct, ethics and performance which they must meet in order to stay on our register
- setting standards which must be met by the owners of registered pharmacies
- registering pharmacies which meet our standards and inspecting pharmacies to check that that they continue to do so; and
- taking action when our standards are not met

As a statutory regulatory body we work within the remit of our legislation and the relevant legal and political context. It is not for the Council to have a position on proposals to legalise assisted suicide, however it is our responsibility to provide effective regulation taking account of current legislation and any future developments in relation to this matter in any part of Great Britain.

Our standards of conduct, ethics and performance already recognise that a pharmacist or pharmacy technician's religious or moral beliefs may prevent them from providing a particular professional service. If this is the case, our standards require that pharmacists and pharmacy technicians tell the relevant people or authorities and refer patients and the public to other providers. These standards can be accessed at:

<http://www.pharmacyregulation.org/standards/conduct-ethics-and-performance>.

If legislation on assisted suicide were to be passed in Scotland, the GPhC would wish to engage with Scottish Government, regulatory bodies, patients, the pharmacy profession and others to ensure our standards took account of the new legislative framework and its wider implications. We would also consider any education and training implications and collaborate with professional organisations and NHS Education for Scotland regarding any additional guidance that may be required for pharmacy professionals.

Lynsey Cleland
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General Pharmaceutical Council