

# Cross-Party Group on end-of-life choices

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2025 (AGM) 6 pm (in person/online)

## Minute

### Present:

21 non-MSP members in person.

16 non-MSP members online.

### MSPs:

Rona MacKay MSP

Liam McArthur MSP

George Adam MSP

Jackie Dunbar MSP

Patrick Harvie MSP

### Agenda Item 1: Welcome, introductions and apologies

Rona MacKay MSP expressed her gratitude to attendees. Apologies from Rachael Hamilton MSP.

### Agenda item 2: Minutes of Previous Meetings

The minutes of the previous meeting (AGM Dec 2024) were circulated. Dr Gillian MacDougall proposed the minutes and Dr Julie Lang seconded.

### Agenda item 3: Matters arising

None

### Agenda item 4: Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

Liam McArthur MSP provided attendees with a detailed update on the progress of the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill. He confirmed that Stage 2 of the Bill took place in November 2024 and has now formally concluded.

Liam emphasised the importance of the Scottish Government engaging more actively with the Bill as it progresses. He noted that while the Government has adopted a position of neutrality, this can risk being perceived as opposition or as

an attempt to obstruct progress if it is not accompanied by meaningful engagement with the parliamentary process.

He went on to outline the current expectations for Stage 3. A number of potential Stage 3 amendments are anticipated, informed by feedback from MSPs during and following Stage 2. While the indicative timing for Stage 3 is March 2026, Liam highlighted the significant constraint posed by the parliamentary timetable, noting that the Scottish Parliament is due to rise on 26 March ahead of the election. It is anticipated that Stage 3 would require two to three days of debate in the Chamber, followed by a final vote on the Bill.

Liam also explained that at Stage 3 the Presiding Officer has discretion over which amendments may be selected for debate, and that questions of legislative competence will be assessed at this stage. By way of context, he noted that nearly 300 amendments were lodged at Stage 2, of which approximately 220 were not agreed to by the Committee.

Patrick Harvie MSP questioned why there was such a lengthy gap between the conclusion of Stage 2 and the anticipated timing of Stage 3, suggesting that an earlier timetable would be preferable. Jackie Dunbar MSP echoed these concerns, warning that opponents of the Bill may be seeking to run down the clock in the hope that the Bill runs out of parliamentary time. Liam, along with other MSPs present, agreed that such an outcome would be reputationally damaging for both the Scottish Parliament and individual MSPs.

The meeting also discussed chairing arrangements for the Stage 3 debate, including the potential election of an additional Deputy Presiding Officer to support proceedings.

George Adam MSP provided an update on the Legislative Consent Motion (LCM) relating to advertising, which was considered on 9 December. He advised that this was a procedural matter and confirmed that the Health Committee has already approved the LCM.

Finally, the group discussed developments in relation to the Westminster assisted dying legislation, noting that a vote is currently anticipated around April 2026.

## **Agenda item 5: Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting will be 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 7pm (AGM).

**The meeting closed at 7pm.**

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