



## Statement on the upcoming Third Reading of the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, which seeks to legalise assisted suicide, is fast approaching its decisive vote in the House of Commons which will likely take place on either the 13<sup>th</sup> or 20<sup>th</sup> of June.

The Catholic bishops of England and Wales oppose this flawed bill both in principle and in practice. Among the many concerns, we are particularly alarmed by the following:

- This legislation would require many hospices and care homes to facilitate assisted suicide. This will put in jeopardy their ability to provide care. Parliament has rejected an amendment that would have allowed institutions to opt out of participating in the provision of assisted suicide.<sup>1</sup>
- The provisions for conscientious objection for health and social care workers are both unclear and inadequate. This problem will not be addressed by proposed amendments.
- Safeguards against coercion for the most vulnerable are wholly inadequate, particularly in cases involving coercive control or social pressure. During Committee Stage, the bill's main proponent was unable to confirm whether individuals seeking assisted suicide due to financial concerns or feelings of being a burden would be prevented from accessing it.<sup>2</sup> Since then, no progress has been made, and many MPs consider the existing safeguards insufficient, with the potential to result in a "terrible tragedy."<sup>3</sup>

We note the opposition for the bill from key professional bodies including the Royal College of Psychiatrists whose members will be expected to be involved in the process of assessing those who elect for assisted suicide.

We have already seen the bill weakened during Committee Stage. In addition, MPs are expected to debate nearly 60 pages of amendments in under 15 hours. The whole process by which this bill has been brought forward and debated is insufficient for such a radical change.

We urge Catholics, and all people of goodwill, to contact their MP and ask them to vote against this bill. We also ask you to pray that our representatives choose to protect the most vulnerable citizens of this country when they vote later this month.

You can contact your MP using this [this tool](#).

Archbishop John Sherrington  
*Lead Bishop for Life Issues and Archbishop of Liverpool*