

Friends at the End

Promoting end of life choices



Dear Clare Haughey MSP,

Friends at the End is deeply concerned by the recent publication of witness themes by the Health, Social Care, and Sport Committee on the Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill.

The Bill's aim, within clearly defined protocols, is the compassionate relief of suffering for those who are dying of a terminal illness. But no single session focuses on terminal illness in the context of assisted dying, nor does it explicitly include the lived experiences and voices of dying people and their families.

While these perspectives may emerge in discussions across various panels, we believe that the absence of a dedicated theme centred solely on terminal illness is a significant omission. Clearly, the effects of the legislation must be considered in the light of all those who have concerns about the Bill's impact.

However, we can now learn from other jurisdictions how important it is to understand the proper use of safeguards. While these are crucial to ensure protection of those who might be thought vulnerable, their consideration must be part of a wider, proportionate and democratic exploration of the Bill with the key focus on those who are at the end of life.

We believe in the powerful aspirations of the Scottish Parliament as engraved upon the ceremonial Mace at Holyrood. Wisdom, Justice, Compassion and Integrity are woven into the thistles as reminders of Parliament's authority. In striving for wisdom, justice and integrity, we strongly urge the Committee not to forget compassion, and to include the direct testimony of those who are dying and of the practitioners who support them in other jurisdictions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emma Cooper'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a small dot at the end.

Emma Cooper

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