

Health, Social Care and Sport Committee

Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill

Summary of responses from the calls for views

Background

The Committee issued two calls for views which were open for submissions between Friday 7 June and Friday 16 August 2024:

- A short call for views for people who wished to express general opinions about the Bill as a whole. From the outset, respondents were informed that responses to the short call for views would not be published.
- A detailed call for views for people, groups, bodies or organisations who wished to comment on specific aspects of the Bill. From the outset, respondents were informed that responses to the detailed call for views would be published.

The Committee received 13,821 responses to the short call for views and 7,236 responses to the detailed call for views.

The Scottish Parliament Information Centre (SPICe) is in the process of producing a detailed analysis of responses to both calls for views. However, in advance of this, the following information provides an overview of high-level quantitative results from both calls for views to coincide with the publication of individual responses to the detailed call for views.

Respondent Information

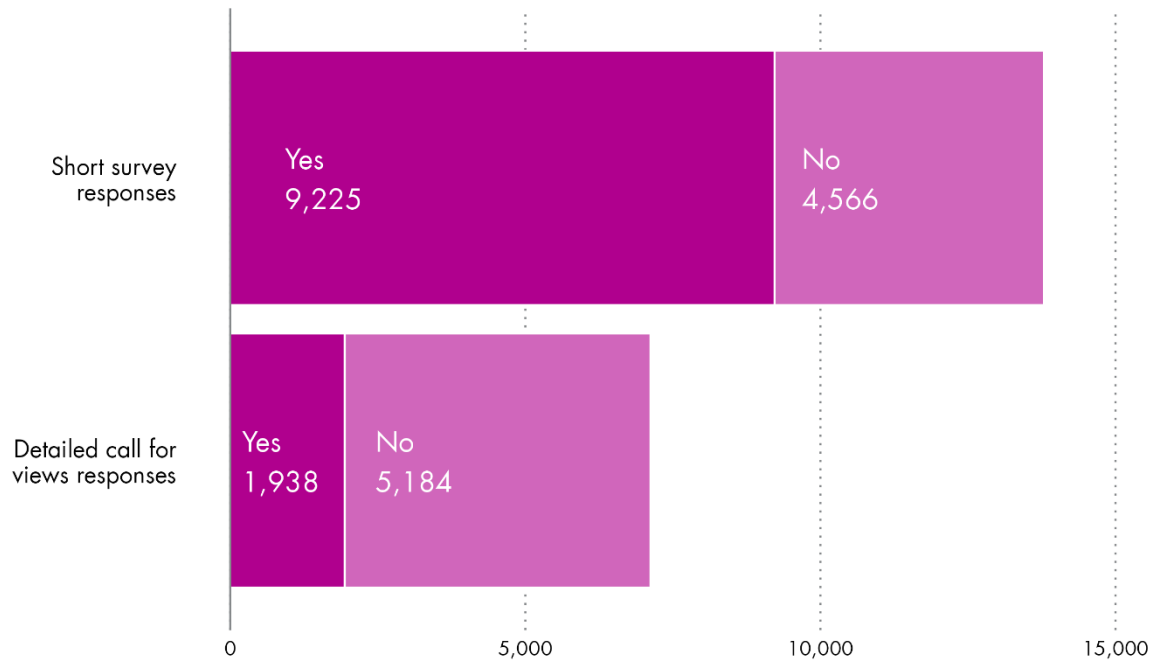
Respondents were asked if they were answering on behalf of an organisation or as an individual. Of those who answered, the following responses were received from each:

Table 1: Type of respondent to each call for views

	Individual	Organisation
Short call for views	13,791	30
Detailed call for views	7,122	114
Total	20,913	144

Individual respondents were also asked whether they lived in Scotland or not. The location of respondents who answered this question is shown in figure 1 for both calls for views.

Figure 1: Do you live in Scotland?



Summary of Results

The first question was the same in both the short and detailed call for views. The results for each call for views and a combined summary are shown in table 2.

Please note that there was nothing to prevent the same individual from completing both forms so there may be some element of double counting when looking at the combined results.

Throughout the process, it was made clear to respondents to the calls for views that their purpose was not to measure levels of public support for or opposition to assisted dying and/or the Bill, but rather to inform the Committee's scrutiny of the Bill at Stage 1 by offering a snapshot of respondents' experiences, opinions, questions, improvements, comments and concerns about the Bill.

Additional information provided to respondents before completing their response concluded: "The Committee will base any assessment of public opinion on published data from opinion polls. As responses to this call for evidence will be self-selecting, they cannot be assumed to be representative of public opinion and will not be treated as such."

For those wishing to understand more about public opinion on assisted dying, further information is publicly available on the results of polls conducted by reputable polling companies. As an example, see the [YouGov tracker on assisted dying](#).

Q1. Overarching opinions and main factors influencing this opinion

Table 2: 'Which of the following best reflects your views on the Bill?' - Breakdown of responses for each call for views and combined results

	Short call for views	Detailed call for views	Combined
Strongly oppose	3,448	6,672	10,120
Partially oppose	78	55	133
Neutral/Don't Know	39	58	97
Partially support	263	63	326
Fully support	9,992	388	10,380
Total	13,820*	7,236	21,056

*One respondent did not answer this question.

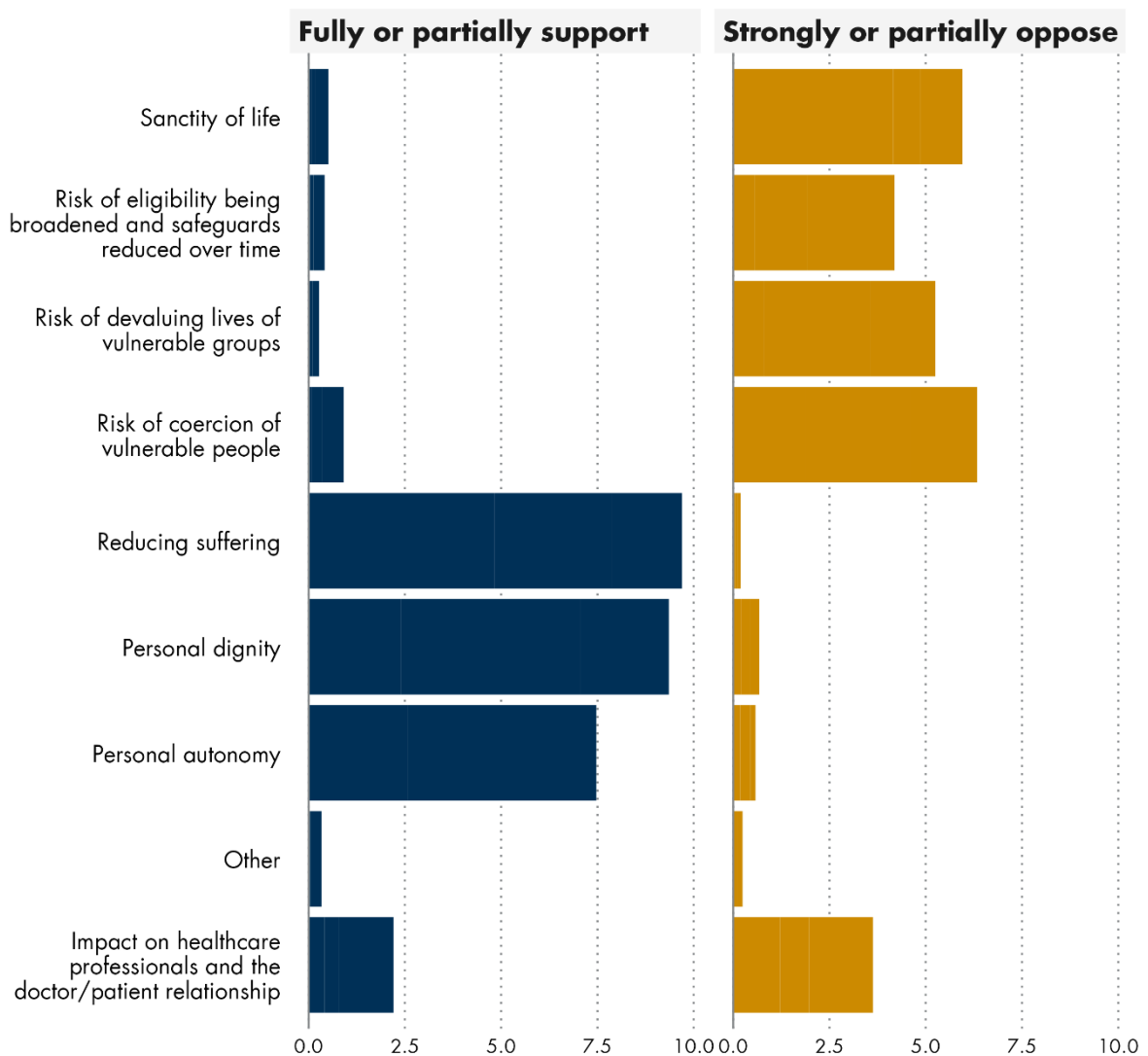
As can be seen from the table above, a majority of responses to the short call for views (74%) expressed support for the Bill, while the majority of responses to the detailed call for views (93%) expressed opposition to the Bill.

There is strong evidence to suggest that a significant number of individual responses to both calls for views were the result of organised campaigns.

Respondents to both the short survey and the detailed call for views were then asked to rank the three most important factors influencing their overall view of the Bill (support / neutral / oppose).

Figure 2 provides an overview of responses to this question, broken down in accordance with whether the respondent was supportive of / opposed to the Bill. Please note that, for the purpose of Figure 2, all rankings (whether 1st, 2nd or 3rd) are treated alike.

Figure 2: Which of the following factors are most important to you when considering the issue of assisted dying? Please rank a maximum of 3 options. Number of responses ('000s) that ranked each factor (whether 1st, 2nd or 3rd)



*Data excludes 97 responses where the response to Question 1 was 'neutral / don't know'