



Bishops of England and Wales condemn 'flawed and dangerous' assisted dying bill

As the UK's House of Commons prepares to resume debate on an assisted suicide bill, Catholic bishops in England and Wales warn that it "does not protect vulnerable people".



By Roberto Paglialonga, Vatican News (Article published on Vatican News on Thursday, September 10, 2026)

The UK's House of Commons is due to vote again on assisted dying at the second reading of a bill tomorrow, 11 September. The legislation was introduced by Labour MP Lauren Edwards on 17 June and is substantially identical to the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill introduced in 2024 by MP Kim Leadbeater, which fell in the House of Lords in April 2026 after around 1,200 amendments were tabled.

Archbishop Sherrington: A flawed and dangerous bill

Several representatives of the Catholic Church in England and Wales — which has set up an online form on its website enabling people to contact their MP and urge them to vote against the bill — have spoken out in recent days to express their opposition. In particular, the Archbishop of Liverpool, John Sherrington, Lead Bishop for Life Issues, reiterated his opposition both in principle and in practice, describing the bill as “flawed and dangerous” and urging all people of goodwill to oppose it.

Negative consequences for the most vulnerable

“It is wrong in principle that medical professionals should be involved in ending the lives of their patients,” Sherrington said, before highlighting the potential impact on the most vulnerable, arguing that the bill “does not contain sufficient safeguards against coercion or protect vulnerable people, including disabled people, those with eating disorders, and victims of domestic abuse”. These concerns are also shared by organisations working in these areas, as well as bodies such as the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Association for Palliative Medicine and the British Medical Association (BMA).

The bill would also fail to adequately protect the right to conscientious objection and would not provide “an institutional opt-out for hospices and care homes that do not wish to participate”. Another concern raised by the archbishop is that “the experience of other countries suggests” that legalising assisted suicide has a “negatively affects the quality and development of palliative care.”

Bishop of Portsmouth: dangerous developments in its application

Two days ago, the Bishop of Portsmouth, Philip Egan, also described the bill as “dangerously flawed”. He went on to stress that “the very principle of assisting someone to take their own life is abominable”.

If the bill were to be approved, Egan added, there would be a risk of dangerous “mission creep”, as has happened in countries where similar legislation has already been adopted. “More categories of persons will be eligible, not just the terminally ill, but the mentally ill, those with dementia or depression, sick babies, the disabled, and so on. No government in the world can stop this. In Canada already, more than 5% of deaths are by lethal injection.”

Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle: life is a gift from God

The Bishop of Hexham and Newcastle, Stephen Wright, has also voiced his opposition. “I’m against assisted suicide. Life is a gift from God. Every person is made in the image and likeness of God, and every person, no matter what their position in life is or whatever they may be going through, has a God-given dignity that must be respected. It’s not for human beings to kill one another in any context.”

“Morals and ethics aside,” the Bishop said, “it’s a bad Bill. It fails to provide safeguards to the most vulnerable in society. This Bill is not necessary and it is wrong.”