



Department of Health & Social Care

*From Baroness Merron
Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for
Women's Health and Mental Health*

*39 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0EU*

29 January 2026

Dear Baroness Falkner,

Thank you for your letter of 22 January, in which you asked the Government to update its Equality Impact Assessment for the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill, to provide balanced, comprehensive and authoritative information to allow Parliament to effectively scrutinise the Bill.

You note that, as drafted, the Equality Impact Assessment focuses primarily on access to an assisted death, rather than on safeguarding risks and the potential for coercion, which you state could fall disproportionately on certain groups.

The purpose of the Government's Equality Impact Assessment was to consider the impact of the Bill on people who share each of the 9 protected characteristics. It concludes that the Bill is not discriminatory against people on the basis of those protected characteristics.

As I am sure you will appreciate, an Equality Impact Assessment has to strike the right balance between topical breadth and strength of evidence. This is what we have sought to do with this Equality Impact Assessment. While it would be ideal to cover the full range of issues that have been raised on the matters contained within the Bill, we have had to focus on those areas where we believe it is possible to produce helpful evidence. While some comparative evidence may be generated for different jurisdictions on some of the wider matters you have raised, we do not feel it could be used to produce conclusions that were sufficiently robust or relevant; not least because of the variations in public health systems, population demographics, and service processes.

The matters you raise are of great importance, and ones on which there are strongly held views. It is entirely understandable that colleagues in both Houses have debated them. Parliamentary debate is the right means to address these questions, drawing on insights from the testimony provided to the evidence sessions in both Houses.

Should this Bill become law, Government will consider how to ensure the implementation of the Bill maintains statutory safeguards, including assessments that a person has not been coerced or pressured by any other person. We intend to update both the Impact Assessment and Equality Impact Assessment, should the Bill receive Royal Assent, once detailed implementation work has been completed.

I will deposit this letter in the libraries of both Houses.

All good wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Giulia", with a horizontal line underneath the signature.

BARONESS MERRON