

## **Response to the End of Life Assistance (Scotland) Bill from the Association of Directors of Social Work**

The Association of Directors of Social Work is the professional organisation representing senior social work managers in local authorities across Scotland.

Having considered the End of Life (Scotland) Bill we wish to make the following response. Our response does not offer a view as to whether or not a person should be allowed to end their own life. Our members have their own views on this issue. Rather, our response deals with the practicalities of implementing the End of Life (Scotland) Bill should it become law and focuses on the role that social work should have in determining the ability of a person to make a free and informed decision about whether to end their life.

As a profession we fully support the principle of personalisation. Personalisation centres on enabling people who need care and support to choose how, when and by whom services are provided. It reflects the expectation that people should exercise choice and control over all aspects of their life. Social workers are skilled at helping people make the right choices for themselves and for their families and their future.

The End of Life (Scotland) Bill proposes to allow a person to help someone who has chosen to end their life carry out the actions required to do that. Social work has an important role in assuring that a person is able to make that decision and is doing so independently, free from coercion and in full knowledge of the consequences.

There are many areas within the Bill where a social worker could have a role, both as a person who knows the individual making the request to end their life, but also as a professional able to judge whether the person is making the right decision for them.

Social work involvement will be critical in the consultation process to inform the psychiatric report. ADSW would promote a 'case conference' style approach to ensure that all professionals, including social work, involved with the individual have the opportunity to air any concerns about that person's capacity to make their choice freely.

Representatives from ADSW would be happy to discuss these views with the Committee.