

Union Street | St Helier | Jersey |

Deputy Doublet
Chair, Health and Social Security Scrutiny Panel
BY EMAIL

27 May 2025

Dear Chair,

Re: Assisted Dying - Timeline

Dear Chair

I write in response to your letter dated 22 May 2025.

Lodging period

As you note in your letter, we had previously stated that we anticipated lodging the assisted dying law at end-July 2025 for debate in November 2025 (having provided an advanced draft to Scrutiny in mid-April, at the same time as providing to other key stakeholders for comment and review). An end-July lodging date would have allowed for a 12-week lodging period. In publishing that initial timeframe we were very clear that those dates may be subject to change given the known complexity of the law drafting process.

Post-publication of the initial timeframe it has become clear that the law drafting process is taking longer than hoped, hence we now envisage lodging in early September. Furthermore, it has also been decided that the Government budget debate will be on 25 November, requiring the assisted dying debate to be brought forward from 25 November to 11 November to avoid a clash.

The collective effect of a later lodging date (early September as opposed to end-July) and an earlier debate date is to shorten the lodging time from 12 weeks to 9 weeks.

I note the Panel's request that we revert to the original proposed lodging date of end-July, but it is highly unlikely that the draft law will be ready by then. Given that, our options are:

- lodge in September and debate on 11 November which allows for a 9-week lodging period, or
- lodge in September and debate on 9 December which will allow for a lodging period of at least 12 weeks.

Accepting that debate on 9 December might not be considered ideal by some Assembly members, it will add an additional 4 weeks to lodging period and provide time for thorough Scrutiny. Please could you advise as to your preference?

Please bear in mind that we also anticipate providing an advanced copy of the draft law to Scrutiny in early June, alongside other key stakeholders. Accepting that this advanced copy will be subject to change prior to lodging, it nevertheless provides a period during which the Panel can commence an initial examination and familiarisation process.

Law drafting capacity / prioritisation

In 2024, £55,334 was provided by the Cabinet Office to secure the backfill necessary to allow for dedicated law officer drafting time for 4 months (September to December 2024). Regrettably, due to 2025 savings targets, we were unable to provide additional monies to secure dedicated law officer time from January 2025, and I understand that the law drafting officer has been required to work on assisted dying alongside other legislation.

The law drafting instructions were informally issued on 9 September (with some additional instructions issued shortly after) to coincide with the start of the funded backfill period, although the Ministerial decision formally issuing those instructions was not made until 15 November 2025. You may recall that the Panel had requested sight of the drafting instructions, hence formal issuing in November, although I am not aware that this had any impact on the drafting process. For the purposes of clarity, I think it is important to recognise that the law drafting process requires input from both law drafting officers and instructing policy officers and, whilst I cannot comment on any capacity constraints in the law drafting department, it is the case that the instructing officers are already under considerable pressure progressing the termination of pregnancy law and options related to potential decriminalisation / legalisation of cannabis as prioritised by the Assembly.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely,



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