

Analysis of written submissions to Health Select Committee's investigation into ending one's life.

Background and methodology

Written submissions to the Select Committee closed on 1 February 2016. They were progressively uploaded to the Parliamentary Select Committee (Submissions and Advice) website until 17 August 2016 when it appeared that all the submissions had been posted.

On 9 September 2016 a master list of these 21,514 submissions was created from the public website, including links to individual submissions. Duplicate submissions were then removed. It was also found that a small number of submissions could not be coded (broken links, parts of submissions missed during scanning, etc).

The final number of public submissions analysed here is 21,277.

The Care Alliance organised a small team of volunteers to read through each submission, and code for three characteristics.

1. Attitude to legalisation of euthanasia/assisted suicide.
 - Support | neutral or unclear | oppose
2. Length of submission.
 - 1 or 2 sentences | paragraph | up to a page | more than a page
3. Reference to religious arguments.
 - None | some | mainly

An independent research company reviewed the coding of 500 submissions and concluded: "Having found no errors in the sample of 500, we can say with at least 95% confidence that the overall classification percentages are accurate within no more than 0.4% variation."

Legalisation of Euthanasia/Assisted Suicide

	Total
Support	19.5% 4,142
Neutral/Unclear	3.4% 724
Oppose	77.1% 16,411
Total	100% 21,277

Submission Length

	Total	1 or 2 lines	Paragraph	Up to page	More than page
Support	19.5% 4,142	3.8% 814	5.8% 1,233	7.4% 1,572	2.5% 523
Neutral/Unclear	3.4% 724	2.0% 431	0.5% 116	0.5% 103	0.3% 74
Oppose	77.1% 16,411	25.9% 5,518	20.7% 4,410	23.4% 4,973	7.1% 1,510
Total	100% 21,277	31.8% 6,763	27.1% 5,759	31.2% 6,648	9.9% 2,107

Use of Religious Argument

	Total	None	Some	Mainly
Support	19.5% 4,142	18.5% 3,934	0.9% 201	0.03% 7
Neutral/Unclear	3.4% 724	3.1% 653	0.1% 32	0.2% 39
Oppose	77.1% 16,411	63.6% 13,539	7.2% 1,535	6.3% 1,337
Total	100% 21,277	85.2% 18,126	8.3% 1,768	6.5% 1,383