I am writing to oppose the End of Life Assistance Bill. I believe that if this bill goes ahead it will give the impression that some lives no longer have any meaning, value or worth. The scope of the bill is too wide. It would offer assisted suicide to people who are to some degree dependant on others, putting vulnerable and elderly people particularly at risk. Also, the wording is too vague. What is meant by “intolerable”? Methods which may be used are not identified. The safeguards are defective. The intention of the bill, to “enable a person to die with dignity and a minimum of distress” is already provided through good health care and palliative medicine. The latter in particular could be extended and better funded. Professional medical bodies, including the BMA, do not support assisted suicide. Evidence from countries where assisted suicide is legal shows that it is impossible to prevent abuses from happening. There is no conscience clause for Scottish doctors who would not be prepared to participate in implementing the proposals.

Sandra Hudson
3 May 2010