

In light of today's distorted press report about Together's response to the Scottish Parliament's call for views on the Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill, we would like to clarify our position. We take no position on assisted suicide, nor on whether children should have a right to assisted suicide. Our response to the Health and Sports Committee made clear that when the issue is being discussed, the rights of children should be taken into account – just as they should be when other important matters affecting their health and wellbeing are being considered:

- If the proposed Bill were to be introduced, Together would want the Committee to consider the impact it could have on the rights of children and young people;
- The proposed legislation could impact on children who have parents, carers or siblings with terminal illnesses or on children and young people who themselves have a terminal illness.
- In all decisions affecting children and young people, the views of a child must be given due weight in accordance with their age and maturity.
- Together recommends that the Committee looks at comparable legislation to learn from other countries' experiences. Together does not endorse any specific legislation introduced elsewhere – rather recommends that the Health and Sports Committee uses international debate and experience to inform its own deliberations.

Together is an alliance of children's organisations that has worked for over 10 years to improve the awareness, understanding and implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The consultation response to the Health and Sport Committee does not specifically express the views of all of Together's members; rather it is based on the overarching principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) to which the UK is signatory. The rights enshrined in the UNCRC include the right of children to have their best interests and their views taken into account in all decisions that affect them, and the right to adequate healthcare.

For further information, please contact Juliet Harris, Director,
Together (Scottish Alliance for Children's Rights)
Level 1 Rosebery House, 9 Haymarket Terrace, Edinburgh, EH12 5EZ

Tel: 07775 866518 / 0131 337 9015 Email: juliet@togetherscotland.org.uk