

1. What is the law on physician-assisted dying in the UK?

1. Lord Advocate, Frank Mulholland QC. Written evidence on the Assisted Suicide (Scotland) Bill (ASB 178).
2. Scottish Parliament (2015) *Official Report: Health and Sport Committee, Tuesday 13 January 2015. Session 4*. Scottish Parliament: Edinburgh. Para. 24.
3. Crown Prosecution Service (2019) [Latest Assisted Suicide Figures](#), Update as of 31 January 2021.

Northern Ireland

Euthanasia is illegal and could be prosecuted as murder or manslaughter.

'Assisting or encouraging' another person's suicide is illegal under s.13 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Act 1966, which extends the Suicide Act 1961 to Northern Ireland.

The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) examines individual cases to decide whether to prosecute. That decision is guided by offence-specific guidelines published in 2010.

England and Wales

Euthanasia is illegal and could be prosecuted as murder or manslaughter.

'Assisting or encouraging' another person's suicide is prohibited by s.2 of the Suicide Act 1961, as amended by the Coroners and Justice Act 2009.

The Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) examines individual cases to decide whether to prosecute. That decision is guided by offence-specific guidelines published in 2010.

Since April 2009, there have been 167 cases referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), three of which have been successfully prosecuted. (3)

Scotland

Euthanasia is illegal and could be prosecuted as murder or culpable homicide.

There is no specific offence of assisting or encouraging suicide in Scotland. Any suspected offence would be dealt with under homicide law. (1)

The Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service (COPFS) makes the decision whether to prosecute. There are no offence-specific guidelines in Scotland and the decision will be taken on the basis of the general prosecution code. A legal challenge to compel the COPFS to produce offence-specific guidelines failed in 2015.

The last known prosecution was taken in 2006, in an unreported case. (2)

