



From the Cabinet Secretary

All Government Ministers

3 October 2024

Dear all,

Kim Leadbeater MP has said that she will seek to introduce a Private Members' Bill to enable assisted dying.

As is long-standing convention for such issues of conscience, the Prime Minister has decided to set aside collective responsibility on the merits of this bill and any others covering the same subject matter. That means that ministers can vote, or not, however they wish.

The Government will therefore remain neutral on the passage of the Bill and on the matter of assisted dying. At the despatch box, ministers should reiterate that this is a question for Parliament, on which the official Government position is to remain neutral. Outside of Parliament, all ministers should take the same approach in all forms of media, including social media. Though ministers need not resile from previously stated views when directly asked about them, they should exercise discretion and should not take part in the public debate.

This is an exceptional arrangement, which applies only to the question of whether, and how, Parliament should legislate on the issue of assisted dying. Collective responsibility applies as usual across the rest of Government business.

SIMON CASE

Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Civil Service