

Assisted Dying Bill Passes in Commons – Epsom MP Explains Absence

22 June 2025



In a historic moment for UK parliamentary debate, the Assisted Dying Bill passed its third reading in the House of Commons on **Friday 20 June 2025**, following a narrow but decisive vote. MPs voted **314 in favour** and **291 against**, a margin of just 23 votes, paving the way for the Bill's progression to the House of Lords.

The **Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill**, introduced by Labour MP Kim Leadbetter, proposes to legalise assisted dying for terminally ill adults in England and Wales who are medically expected to live for six months or less. Under the Bill's framework, individuals would be able to request life-ending medication, to be self-administered following a rigorous process of approvals.

That process would require sign-off by two independent doctors and a special three-member oversight panel comprising a legal expert, psychiatrist, and social worker. Earlier provisions for High Court authorisation were removed in the final draft to streamline implementation, a move both welcomed and criticised in equal measure.

Supporters of the Bill argue that it reflects modern values around personal autonomy and compassionate end-of-life care, allowing individuals the dignity of choosing how and when they die. They point to robust safeguards within the Bill – including mental capacity assessments, a residency requirement, and a mandatory waiting period – as protections for vulnerable people. Medical professionals would retain the right to opt out on grounds of conscience.

Opponents, including some religious leaders and palliative care specialists, argue that the Bill could open the door to pressure on the elderly, disabled or chronically ill to end their lives prematurely. They also warn that overstretched NHS and social care services might struggle to implement the regulatory framework effectively.

Among those unable to cast their vote was Epsom and Ewell's Liberal Democrat MP, **Helen Maguire**, who has consistently supported the Bill in previous readings. Ms Maguire issued the following full statement to the *Epsom and Ewell Times* explaining her absence:

"I am disappointed to have been unable to attend the vote. I have consistently voted for this Bill.

My absence on the voting date of Friday, June 20th, was due to a pre-planned parliamentary trip. This visit was scheduled before the voting date was confirmed and unfortunately could not be moved.

This is an issue I care about profoundly, and I gave serious thought as to whether I should be away. In the end, I was paired with another MP who was unable to attend as they hold a different view from me, which meant that our absences effectively cancelled each other out in terms of the final result.

While this did offer some reassurance to my conscience, I appreciate that my absence may still be disappointing to those who had hoped to see a vote recorded in person. Please know that I have made it a priority to attend all other sitting Fridays when the assisted dying bill was debated, precisely because of how important I know these debates and votes are, particularly on such sensitive and personal matters."

With the Bill now heading to the House of Lords for further scrutiny, attention turns to whether peers will support what could become one of the most significant moral and legal reforms in recent decades. While some in the Lords remain sceptical, others are warning against frustrating legislation that has cleared the elected chamber by a democratic vote.

Whether or not the Bill survives its passage through the Lords, the June 20th vote represents a shift in the national conversation – one that brings the UK a step closer to joining countries like Canada, New Zealand, and parts of the United States in legalising assisted dying under carefully controlled conditions.