

# UK experts: Assisted suicide legally possible

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An independent panel of experts in the U.K. says there is a strong case for changing British law to help terminally ill people die.

In a report Thursday, the Commission for Assisted Dying described the legal status of assisted suicide in Britain as "inadequate and incoherent." It is illegal to help a terminally [ill person](#) commit suicide, but prosecutions are rare. In 2009, the government's top prosecutor said most people who help terminally ill friends and family members die were unlikely to be charged.

The Commission said it would be possible to legally allow assisted suicide for terminally ill people under strict criteria: those who were at least 18 years old and who were making a voluntary choice free from [coercion](#) or [mental health problems](#).

The experts called for additional safeguards should [assisted suicide](#) be legalized, including requiring patients to be seen by at least two doctors. The system would not let doctors administer a lethal dose but would give such medication to the patient to take when he or she chooses after the other criteria has been met.

"The Commission is not recommending that any form of euthanasia should be permitted," the report said.

Critics, however, say the commission was biased, and the British Medical Association refused to participate in the report. The commission is supported by Dignity in Dying and other advocates who

favor changing the law.

One anti-abortion group labeled the report "a renewed attack" on disabled and elderly people.

"This is part of a thoroughly nasty strategy to convince the public that many [disabled people](#) want to die," Paul Tully of the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children said in a statement.

**More information:** Commission for Assisted Dying report:  
<http://www.commissiononassisteddying.co.uk/>

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