

Savanta:

RC
GP

Assisted dying: members survey

Findings Report

February 2025

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Make Better Decisions

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Background and objectives

- The RCGP is currently reviewing its position on whether assisted dying should be legal across the UK and in the Crown Dependencies.
- The RCGP commissioned Savanta to run a member survey, that will help to inform future discussions and a decision by the RCGP Council about the position the RCGP should take on whether assisted dying should be legal or not in the UK and the Crown Dependencies.
- The survey was designed to provide a non-binding, representative view of the RCGP's membership on the issue of assisted dying.
- The survey seeks to aid the RCGP Council's decision-making by seeking the views of the RCGP membership on how to best proceed in the event of there being no clear majority for any given approach.



What we did



5-minute online survey



Email invitations (and reminders) to 53,539 records from the RCGP membership database



8,779 responses achieved



Fieldwork: 24th January to 10th February 2025

Who we surveyed

This survey was open to all members of the RCGP listed their database as training, eligible to work or has previously worked as a GP in the UK, one of the Crown Dependencies, or the Republic of Ireland. There are several different categories of RCGP membership, and the following were in scope for this survey:

Member	This category of membership is for GPs who are on the GMC and GP register and have been awarded full membership
GP registrar	This is category is for those who are currently in GP training
Fellow	This is the highest grade of membership where members have applied for and received recognition of their contribution to general practice
Associate	This for other members who are on the GMC and GP register, who are not eligible for or have not applied for full membership

Response Breakdown

Number of stakeholders surveyed in each group

Stakeholders (unweighted)	
Member	5,056
GP registrar	2,431
Fellow	1,200
Associate	92
Total	8,779

Response Rate and Representation

The survey was distributed to a total of 53,539 potential respondents, with 8,779 completing the survey. This is a response rate of **16%**.

The high level of participation for the RCGP survey shows a strong response rate, providing survey results that are likely to be highly representative of the RCGP membership when weighted. A response rate of over 10% is generally considered robust, especially for large-scale surveys.

Throughout the fieldwork, measures were taken to ensure survey accessibility and visibility. These measures included Savanta mailouts and social media posts from the RCGP and contributed to the high response-rate seen overall.

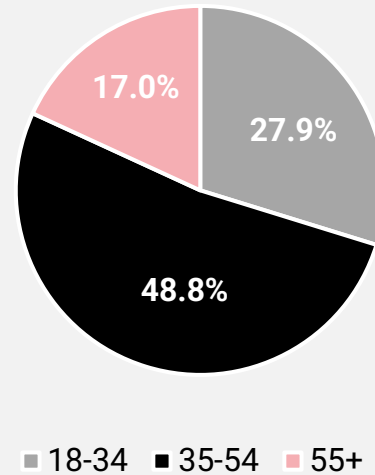
Respondent Profile

Savanta surveyed a total of 8,779 RCGP members from 24th January to 10th February 2025.

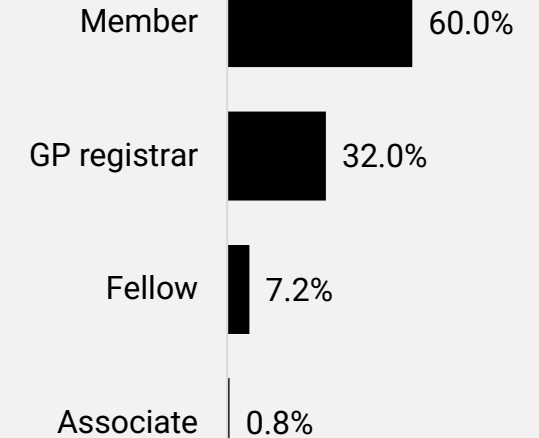
The 5-minute-long survey was conducted online, with respondents drawn from a sample file provided by RCGP.

The final survey data was weighted to be representative of the overall RCGP membership data, on the basis of gender, location, age, and membership type.

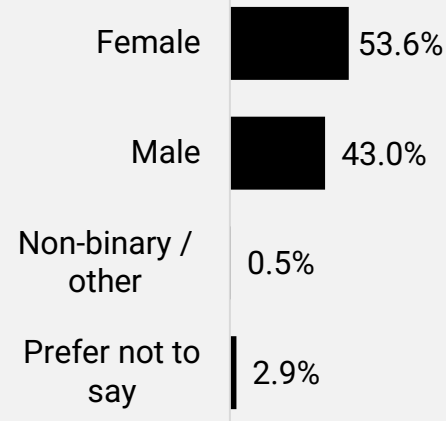
Age



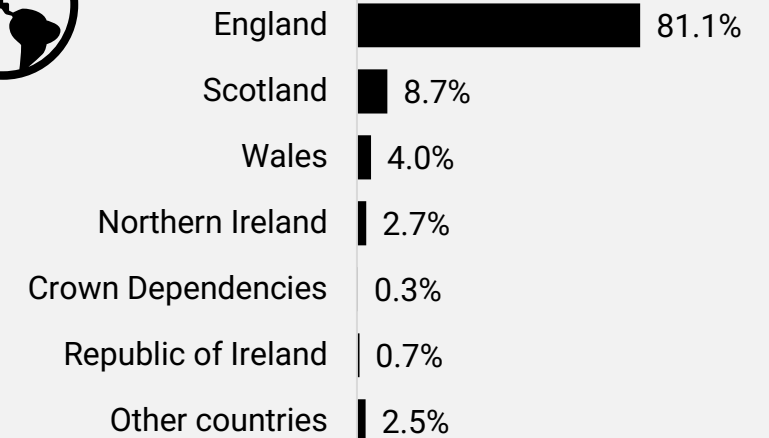
Membership Type



Gender



Location



Contextualising the research

Prior to displaying the two core survey questions, respondents were shown six information screens that contextualised the format and purpose of the research.

- Respondents were made aware of the RCGP reviewing its position on assisted dying and were provided links to the most recent previous RCGP consultation on this topic and a briefing paper setting out the context.
- Respondents were informed of Savanta being commissioned by the RCGP to run the survey.
- Respondents were informed that their answers would be anonymous and processed in compliance with the Market Research Society (MRS) Professional Code of Conduct.
- The RCGP provided key definitions of words/phrases used in the core questions.

The RCGP provided the following definition of assisted dying:

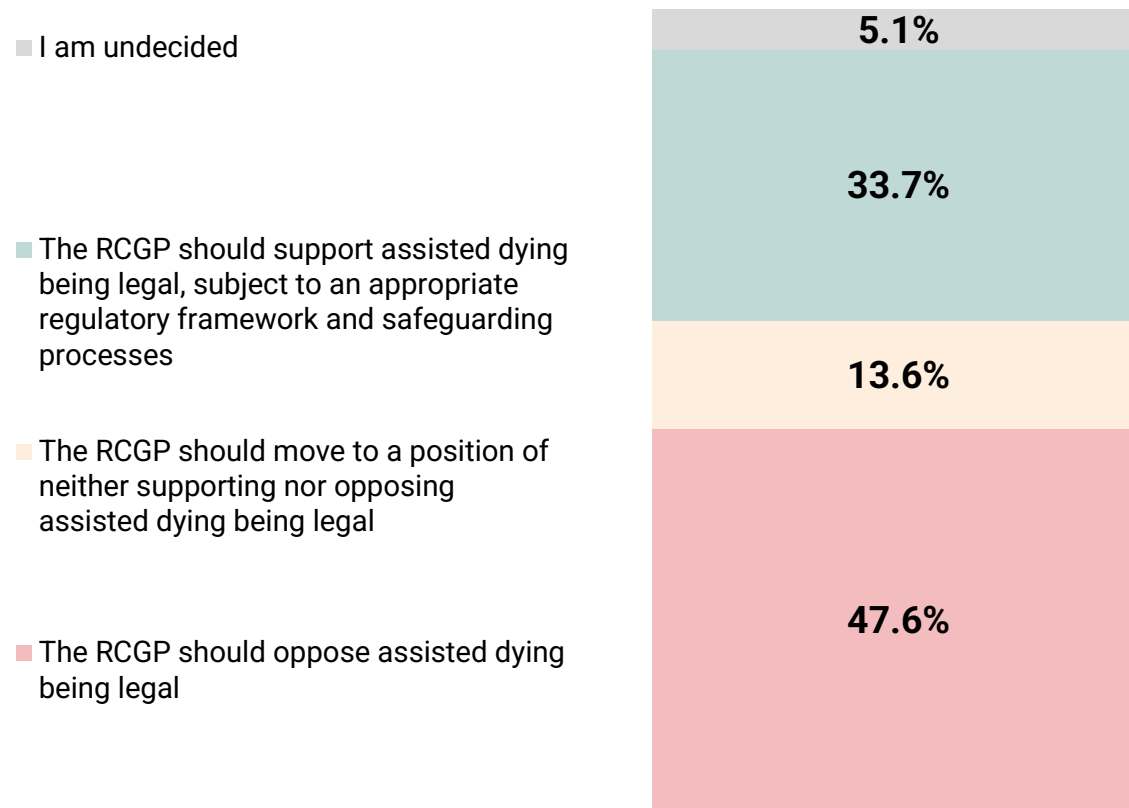
The RCGP defines assisted dying as the act of intentionally assisting a person to end their own life, at that person's voluntary request. This includes healthcare professionals prescribing lethal drugs for a patient to self-administer – which is sometimes referred to as 'physician-assisted suicide' or 'physician-assisted dying', and healthcare professionals administering lethal drugs – which is often referred to as 'voluntary euthanasia'.

All respondents who completed the survey would have seen this definition.

Members survey results

There is no majority among respondents for any of the proposed positions they think that the RCGP should take on assisted dying

What do you think the RCGP's position should be on whether or not assisted dying should be legal in the UK and Crown Dependencies?



Respondents most likely to say the RCGP should oppose assisted dying include:

- **Women** (49.6%, compared to 44.9% of men)
- **Those aged 35-54** (51.0%, compared to 41.6% among those aged 18-34 and 41.8% among those aged 55+).
- **Northern Irish respondents** (62.3%, compared to 47.9% in England, 44.1% in Scotland and 40.4% in Wales).
- **RCGP Members** (49.8%, compared to 45.3% among GP registrars and 38.5% among fellows).

Female respondents are significantly more likely to say that the RCGP should oppose assisted dying, relative to male respondents

What do you think the RCGP's position should be on whether or not assisted dying should be legal in the UK and Crown Dependencies?

	The RCGP should oppose assisted dying being legal	The RCGP should move to a position of neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying being legal	The RCGP should support assisted dying being legal, subject to an appropriate regulatory framework and safeguarding processes	I am undecided
Male	44.9% ▼	12.8%	38.3% ▲	4.0% ▼
Female	49.6%	14.3%	30.2%	5.8%
Prefer not to say	54.7%	11.8%	26.5%	6.9%

Non-binary/Other excluded due to low base size (i.e., <100)

Statistically significant difference to other group(s) at 95% confidence level ▲ ▼

Respondents aged 35-54 are most likely to state that the RCGP should oppose assisted dying being legal

What do you think the RCGP's position should be on whether or not assisted dying should be legal in the UK and Crown Dependencies?

	The RCGP should oppose assisted dying being legal	The RCGP should move to a position of neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying being legal	The RCGP should support assisted dying being legal, subject to an appropriate regulatory framework and safeguarding processes	I am undecided
18-34 years-old	41.6%	13.0%	40.4%	5.0%
35-54 years-old	51.0% ▲	13.7%	29.9% ▼	5.4%
55+ years-old	41.8%	15.8% ▲	39.5%	2.9% ▼

Statistically significant difference to other group(s) at 95% confidence level ▲ ▼

‘Member’ grade respondents are significantly more likely to state that the RCGP should oppose assisted dying, especially compared to fellows

What do you think the RCGP's position should be on whether or not assisted dying should be legal in the UK and Crown Dependencies?

	The RCGP should oppose assisted dying being legal	The RCGP should move to a position of neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying being legal	The RCGP should support assisted dying being legal, subject to an appropriate regulatory framework and safeguarding processes	I am undecided
Member	49.8% ▲	14.2%	30.8% ▼	5.1%
Fellow	38.5% ▼	17.4% ▲	41.7% ▲	2.4% ▼
GP registrar	45.3%	11.7% ▼	37.5%	5.5%

Associates excluded due to low base size (i.e., <100)

Statistically significant difference to other group(s) at 95% confidence level ▲▼

Of respondents within the United Kingdom, there is a clear majority against assisted dying in Northern Ireland

What do you think the RCGP's position should be on whether or not assisted dying should be legal in the UK and Crown Dependencies?

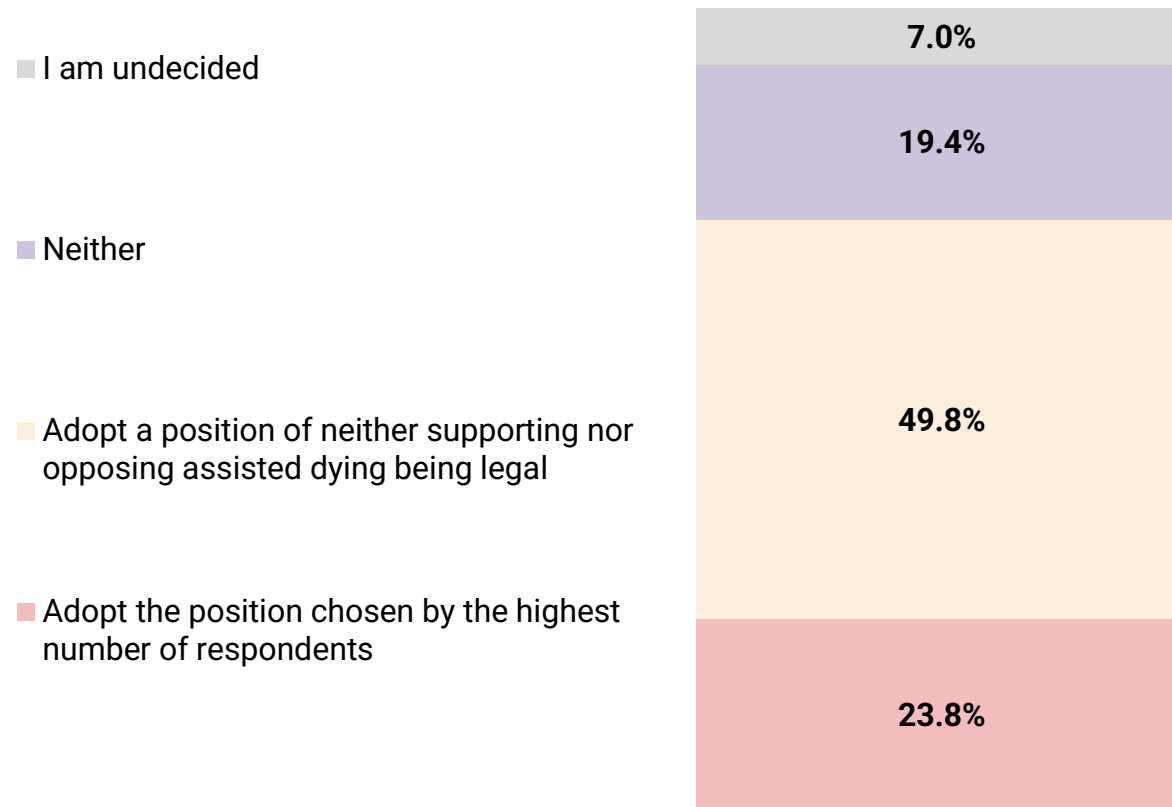
	The RCGP should oppose assisted dying being legal	The RCGP should move to a position of neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying being legal	The RCGP should support assisted dying being legal, subject to an appropriate regulatory framework and safeguarding processes	I am undecided
England	47.9%	13.5%	33.7%	5.0%
Scotland	44.1%	14.8%	36.0%	5.2%
Wales	40.4%	15.7%	36.8%	7.1%
Northern Ireland	62.3% ▲	13.4%	18.8% ▼	5.5%

United Kingdom comparisons only

Statistically significant difference to other group(s) at 95% confidence level ▲▼

Half of respondents believe the RCGP should neither support nor oppose assisted dying, in the event of no majority preference

If none of the three statements in the previous question are selected by more than 50% of respondents, which of the following approaches do you think RCGP Council should take?



Respondents most likely to believe the RCGP should neither support nor oppose assisted dying here include:

- **Women** (52.5%, compared to 46.7% of men)
- **Fellows** (58.1%, compared to 50.9% among members and 46.0% among GP registrars).

A majority of female respondents would prefer the RCGP neither support nor oppose assisted dying, in the event of no majority preference at Q1

If none of the three statements in the previous question are selected by more than 50% of respondents, which of the following approaches do you think RCGP Council should take?

	Adopt the position chosen by the highest number of respondents	Adopt a position of neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying being legal	Neither	I am undecided
Male	27.9% ▲	46.7%	19.7%	5.8%
Female	20.9%	52.5% ▲	18.8%	7.8%
Prefer not to say	18.8%	43.8%	29.7% ▲	7.7%

Non-binary/Other excluded due to low base size (i.e., <100)

Statistically significant difference to other group(s) at 95% confidence level ▲ ▼

In the event of no majority preference among respondents, there is relatively even support for neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying among the age groups

If none of the three statements in the previous question are selected by more than 50% of respondents, which of the following approaches do you think RCGP Council should take?

	Adopt the position chosen by the highest number of respondents	Adopt a position of neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying being legal	Neither	I am undecided
18-34 years-old	25.2%	52.3%	16.2%	6.2%
35-54 years-old	23.4%	48.7%	20.5% ▲	7.4%
55+ years-old	24.0%	55.2%	15.9%	5.0%

Statistically significant difference to other group(s) at 95% confidence level ▲ ▼

In the event of no majority preference, the ‘member’ group are most hesitant about the RCGP adopting the most commonly chosen position

If none of the three statements in the previous question are selected by more than 50% of respondents, which of the following approaches do you think RCGP Council should take?

	Adopt the position chosen by the highest number of respondents	Adopt a position of neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying being legal	Neither	I am undecided
Member	21.8% ▼	50.9%	20.1%	7.2%
Fellow	25.6%	58.1% ▲	12.2% ▼	4.0% ▼
GP registrar	27.4%	46.0% ▼	19.4%	7.2%

Associates excluded due to low base size (i.e., <100)

Statistically significant difference to other group(s) at 95% confidence level ▲ ▼

In the event of no majority preference among respondents, neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying is the most common answer regardless of one's nation

If none of the three statements in the previous question are selected by more than 50% of respondents, which of the following approaches do you think RCGP Council should take?

	Adopt the position chosen by the highest number of respondents	Adopt a position of neither supporting nor opposing assisted dying being legal	Neither	I am undecided
England	24.2%	49.7%	19.2%	6.9%
Scotland	22.9%	50.8%	18.6%	7.7%
Wales	23.3%	53.2%	17.0%	6.6%
Northern Ireland	16.9% ▼	47.5%	27.7% ▲	8.0%

United Kingdom comparisons only

Statistically significant difference to other group(s) at 95% confidence level ▲ ▼

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