Evaluation of a Citizens' Jury and survey process exploring public views on assisted dying in England

A report for the Nuffield Council on Bioethics

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Sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to this evaluation including the:

- Citizens' Jury members
- Speakers and Expert witnesses
- Advisory Board and Content Group Members
- Jury Friends
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- The Hopkins Van Mil team

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Executive Summary

In 2023, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) commissioned the first ever Citizens' Jury in England to explore public views on whether the law should change to permit assisted dying. The project was funded by the AB Charitable Trust. It sought to deepen understanding of not only what the public thinks about assisted dying, but also why, by examining the values and principles that underlie public views. The Citizens' Jury was enhanced by two nationally representative surveys.

The **aims of the project** were to:

- Explore the public attitudes towards assisted dying in England and the circumstances and conditions where assisted dying should and should not be permissible.
- Understand the associated social, ethical, and practical considerations that the public considers important in forming their views and deliberations.
- Identify the most up-to-date evidence and analysis of the diverse range of ethical views on assisted dying in order to inform the public engagement process.
- Inform future conversations in this area and embed the findings of the public engagement with key decision-makers to inform any future policy and practice related to assisted dying.

The project was designed and delivered by Hopkins Van Mil (HVM), working with M.E.L Research on the delivery of the nationally representative surveys, and the Sortition Foundation on the recruitment by civic lottery. The project was supported by an Advisory Board and a Content Group. The Citizens' Jury brought together 30 members of the public, recruited using sortition to reflect the demographic and attitudinal diversity of the English population. Over 24 hours of deliberation across eight weeks, Jury members engaged with evidence from a broad range of expert witnesses, including professional and lived experiences and relating to legal, ethical, clinical, and religious perspectives.

Evaluation Purpose and Approach

The evaluation assessed the quality of the project's design, delivery, outputs and outcomes, as well as early indications of credibility and impact. Methods included: direct observation of project and advisory meetings, Jury sessions and dissemination events; questionnaires from Jury members and speakers; interviews with Jury members, Jury friends, project delivery teams and advisors; and document review.

Key Evaluation Findings

- All objectives were delivered, and the outcomes were met
- Mixed methodologies added value: A Citizens' Jury was the appropriate methodology
 to thoroughly explore public views and provide the detail and nuance of evidence that
 would be required to inform policy. The surveys added significant value supporting
 recruitment, understanding public terminology and misconceptions, further exploring
 areas of divergence and testing possible future scenarios
- The Advisory Board and Content Group added significant value to the project
- Balance and impartiality were considered and upheld in all project decisions

- The Citizens' Jury questions alongside a Jury-led* design and delivery were optimal in ensuring balance, thorough exploration of the evidence, and generating recommendations that matter to people
 - *A Jury-led approach means that wherever possible Jury members lead processes e.g. steering discussions or creating recommendations, and/or are equal partners in delivery of work, e.g. as media spokespeople
- Facilitation was excellent, with inclusive practice embedded within a culture of care and compassion
- Jury members had a positive experience. They found the Jury very interesting, enjoyable and several felt privileged to be involved
- Efforts invested in building trustful relationships with external stakeholders supported transparency, integrity, delivery and dissemination
- The project achieved impressive media reach. Dissemination and media interviews involving the commissioning organisation, delivery organisation and Jury members were beneficial in highlighting the project's context, methods, findings, and Jury members' voices and experiences
- Early indications are that audiences find the project to be credible. This seems dependent on explanations of methodology alongside findings
- MPs and MSPs leading potential legislation on assisted dying are aware of the project and its findings. The project has been referenced within the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Private Members' Bill Committee¹

Findings from the Citizens' Jury and Surveys

After extensive deliberation, most of the Jury concluded that the law in England should be changed to allow assisted dying for people with terminal conditions. Jury members did not support a change in other cases, such as for those experiencing intolerable suffering without terminal illness. All Jury members agreed that significant investment and reform in palliative care is essential, whether or not the law is changed.

The two surveys provided nationally representative data on public attitudes and found a majority of respondents - 69% and 70% respectively - agreed that the law in England should be changed to permit assisted dying. Support was strongest for access in cases of terminal illness, particularly where individuals have six months or less to live.

Conclusions and Learning

The *Exploring public views on assisted dying* project was an outstanding programme delivered with excellent quality. The project provides high-quality and robust evidence about the English public's views on whether or not the law should change to permit assisted dying, and what such legislation should include or exclude. It also highlights how deliberative methodologies could contribute to evidence-based policymaking on complex, emotive or controversial topics.

¹ https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10123/

1. Introduction

Background and context

Assisted dying remains one of the most complex and ethically sensitive issues in our society. Recent developments have brought renewed attention to the topic, including the publication of the Health and Social Care Committee's inquiry report on assisted dying/assisted suicide² in 2024, which highlighted the diverse and deeply held views on whether and how the law in England and Wales should change.

Jurisdictions across the UK have taken steps to explore public opinion and legislative reform. In March 2024, Liam McArthur MSP introduced the Assisted Dying for Terminally III Adults (Scotland) Bill³ to the Scottish Parliament. This Bill is currently at Stage 1 of legislative scrutiny. In Jersey, following a Citizens' Jury⁴ to examine whether assisted dying should be permitted, in May 2024, Jersey's States Assembly approved plans to legalise assisted dying for terminally ill adults with less than six months to live (or 12 months for those with neurodegenerative conditions).

In Westminster, assisted dying has been debated multiple times. In 2015, a Private Members' Bill, which was defeated by 330 votes to 118⁵. At the time of writing, the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill 2024–25 passed its second reading in the House of Commons in November 2024 with a majority of 55 votes, signalling growing political interest and shifting perspectives.

Most available data on public attitudes to assisted dying in England have come from opinion polls which lack the depth to understand *why* people hold particular views or how they might change when presented with detailed information and diverse perspectives. There has been a clear evidence gap in robust, qualitative insight into the values, reasoning, and lived experiences that shape public opinion on assisted dying.

This project—including the first Citizens' Jury on assisted dying in England, and supported by two nationally representative surveys—was commissioned to address that gap. It provides in-depth evidence about public attitudes on this ethically complex issue.

² https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/43582/documents/216484/default/

³ https://www.parliament.scot/bills-and-laws/bills/s6/assisted-dying-for-terminally-ill-adults-scotland-bill#:~:text=This%20Bill%20is%20at%20Stage%201%20of%20the,by%20health%20professionals%20to%20end%20their%20own%20life

⁴ https://www.gov.je/Government/Pages/StatesReports.aspx?ReportID=5452

⁵ <u>https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2015-09-11/debates/15091126000003/AssistedDying(No2)Bill</u>

The project findings

In 2023, the Nuffield Council on Bioethics (NCOB) commissioned the first ever Citizens' Jury into public opinion on assisted dying in England. This process found that a clear majority of citizens are in favour of a change in the law to permit assisted dying. After an extensive programme of deliberation, based on evidence from experts, advocates on both sides, and those with lived experience of the issues, the Citizens' Jury concluded that the law should be changed to allow assisted dying for those with terminal conditions. They did not feel that assisted dying should be permitted in any other circumstances, for example in cases of intolerable suffering. They were unanimous in concluding that, regardless of whether the law is changed to permit assisted dying, there must be a significant programme of investment and reform into palliative care.

Excerpt from the final report: Exploring public views on assisted dying: Full analysis of Citizens' Jury and survey findings

Evaluation

The evaluation aims were to:

- Gather and present robust evidence about the quality of design & delivery, outputs and outcomes of the public engagement project, and its governance
- Formatively and constructively inform the design and delivery of the project to be responsive to needs and expectations, and promote best practice
- Identify lessons to support capacity development across public engagement/deliberative research practitioners, commissioners, and policymakers

The original scope and timescale for evaluation was focused on the project process and credibility of findings, however, the drafting of the Private Members' Bill has enabled some early impact to be captured.

A theory of change and evaluation framework are provided in Appendix A.

Evaluation data has been gathered through:

- Observing the inception meeting, all project team meetings, the four Advisory Board Meetings, and three Content Group meetings
- Observing all six Jury sessions and the introductory webinar
- Questionnaire data gathered from each Jury session, completed by Jury members and witnesses
- Semi-structured interviews with:
 - 9 Jury members (plus informal chats with a further 18 Jury members at the final workshops)
 - 5 members of the Advisory Board
 - · Hopkins Van Mil Project Team
 - NCOB Project Team

- NCOB staff responsible for Communications and External Affairs
- · Two Jury Friends
- Document review of project documents and correspondence
- Observing two online dissemination events

Interviewees were selected to include a range of demographics, experiences, or expertise across any given group.

How this report is structured

Section 2 describes the context, aims, methodology, opportunities and challenges and the roles of the Project Teams and Advisory functions

Section 3 describes the project design, delivery and outputs

Section 4 covers the approaches taken to engage with key stakeholders, the early impact of the project, and how credible it is perceived to be

Section 5 draws conclusions and summarises learning

Section 6 provides appendices relating to evaluation

In this report, the use of term Project Delivery Team refers to Hopkins Van Mil (HVM), the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Project Team, and M.E.L Research Team.

Text shown in orange summarises the key points and conclusions drawn from this evaluation.

2. Programme scope, design and governance

Context and aims

The Citizens' Jury and Surveys (termed the 'project') are the substantive elements of a programme of public engagement, led by NCOB. The additional elements include commissioned opinion pieces exploring ethical aspects of assisted dying.

The aims of the project were to:

- Explore the public attitudes towards assisted dying in England and the circumstances and conditions where assisted dying should and should not be permissible
- Understand the associated social, ethical, and practical considerations that the public considers important in forming their views and deliberations
- Identify the most up-to-date evidence and analysis of the diverse range of ethical views on assisted dying in order to inform the public engagement process
- Inform future conversations in this area and embed the findings of the public engagement with key decision-makers to inform any future policy and practice related to assisted dying

The purpose of the project was very clear at the outset in that it sought to plug an evidence gap, and inform future conversations, policy and practice, rather than influence a specific policy outcome. With the proposal of the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Private Members' Bill in October 2024, the NCOB Team invested further resources in engaging parliamentarians and press media with the findings.

In preparation for the project, desk research on assisted dying legislation and practices, Citizens' Jury methodology, and insights from similar projects such as the Jersey Assisted Dying Citizens' Jury informed comprehensive project tender documents and provided a foundation for HVM to build on with further desk research and stakeholder interviews.

The project benefitted from the depth of desk research, insight and expertise across NCOB and Advisory Board members before commissioning.

Project Delivery Team

The Nuffield Council on Bioethics commissioned Hopkins Van Mil to deliver the Citizens' Jury and Surveys. NCOB and HVM worked together with the following roles and responsibilities:

Hopkins Van Mil delivered the design, facilitation, analysis and reporting of the project. They sub-contracted and managed M.E.L Research to deliver nationally representative surveys in England, and The Sortition Foundation who delivered a sortition recruitment process for the Citizens' Jury.

HVM liaised with the NCOB Project Team, presented at Advisory Board meetings, led and facilitated Content Group meetings and input. They developed and maintained ongoing relationships with Jury members.

Nuffield Council on Bioethics commissioned and oversaw the public engagement programme, including gaining funding, commissioning and managing contractors, establishing and being secretariat to the Advisory Board, and leading on stakeholder engagement and communications.

NCOB, HVM and some Jury members took part in media interviews, and presented findings and methodology to parliamentarians and civil servants.

The quality of the Citizens' Jury and Surveys was excellent throughout due to the highest standards, intensive efforts and team-working across the Project Delivery Team.

Governance and advisory functions

The project worked with two advisory functions: an Advisory Board and a Content Group. NCOB reported progress within meetings of its Council.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board comprised nine members, with a breadth of relevant expertise, including members of the NCOB, and external experts. Its role was to oversee the project process and outcomes, monitor impartiality and balance across the process and teams, and for members to act as ambassadors for the project. Despite efforts in constituting the Board, it had limited diversity across ethnic groups, which is a sector-wide challenge not unique to this project.

The Advisory Board met four times during the project, with contributions via email between meetings. Its Terms of Reference were slightly amended to ensure clarity of roles and responsibilities, especially to further distinguish between the Advisory Board and Content Group. The Group was advisory via consensus and the Chairperson had the deciding vote.

The Advisory Board supported the Project Delivery Team with many aspects of project development including the surveys, recruitment specification, Citizens' Jury questions, speaker selection, reporting, and stakeholder engagement. Some members generously offered additional support to the project. When members with specialist expertise supported the project on an individual basis, this worked brilliantly. An example of this is in reviewing and iterating the Citizens' Jury questions.

The Chair of the Advisory Board worked closely with NCOB staff, and took a lead ambassadorial role in media and stakeholder engagement events.

Overall, the Advisory Board was generous, constructive, thoughtful, engaged and responsive. They carefully monitored and ensured balance and impartiality across all elements of the project.

The Advisory Board brought a diverse mix of expertise and added significant value to the project.

Content Group

The Content Group comprised four members with rich and diverse knowledge and expertise on assisted dying, and some with previous experience of being involved in similar deliberative projects. It was constituted to be balanced in the members' views on the topic. The role of the Group was to support the Project Delivery Team to ensure the overall evidence, content, and stimulus materials presented to the Citizens' Jury and survey respondents was balanced, accurate, and accessible.

The Content Group met three times during the project and worked via email between meetings. It reviewed themes and advice that had emerged from stakeholder interviews and provided extensive and valuable advice on language and definitions, speaker briefings and selection, and all the information and stimulus for the Jury.

The Content Group generously and thoughtfully shared knowledge, wisdom and deep understanding of the ethical views and arguments relating to assisted dying.

Working with the Content Group ensured diverse, accurate and up-to-date evidence information informed process design and the development of stimulus materials.

Working across the Advisory Board and Content Group

The Chair of the Advisory Board, and the NCOB Project Manager observed the Content Group meetings as a conduit between the two Advisory Functions, which worked well to share information and updates. Evaluative interviews demonstrated that the expertise offered by each advisory function was fundamental to the quality and integrity of the project, but some interviewees questioned whether there might have been more efficient ways to establish this. Some interviewees felt that the Advisory Board and Content Group could have been combined, whilst others suggested the Content Group could have worked as an Expert Review Panel, or within a one-day workshop, removing the need for running a series of meetings.

Approach to risk management

This project was delivered with the utmost care, commitment and attention to detail. Risks were thoroughly considered, and intensive efforts were made to mitigate them wherever possible. Risk registers were maintained, and risks were considered within every project meeting. The project had a crisis communication plan in the event it was needed.

The exceptional quality of the project delivery and outputs reflects this huge dedication across the delivery organisations and advisors. However, achieving this did occasionally involve trade-offs in terms of time and efficiency, which could be streamlined for future projects. An example was in speaker selection, which involved a comprehensive brief by the Project Delivery Team, advice and suggestions from the Content Group, and an additional Advisory Board meeting.

Given the sensitivity and controversial nature of the topic, the overall approach taken to risk management was prudent. Learning for future projects could include discussing risk

management and implications at the project inception meeting(s) including planning for potential pinch points considering options such as allowing more time, or how to delegate greater responsibility to the Project Delivery Team. In the example of selecting speakers, described above of speaker, future projects could be streamlined by, e.g., the Project Delivery Team working to a set of agreed principles and providing regular progress updates to advisors.

Risks were very well considered and managed within the project across the Project Delivery Team and Advisors.

Overview of methodologies

Citizens' Jury - overview

The major investment of time and resources was put into the Citizens' Jury. This method enabled the breadth of evidence and depth of deliberation needed for Jury members to feel informed and confident to make recommendations on such an important topic.

During the process, Jury members had 24 hours of time together over an 8-week period. Some Jury members commented that they appreciated the time in between sessions to think and engage with the evidence and stimulus materials.

The Citizens' Jury involved two Jury Friends whose role was to support Jury members to engage with the evidence in an objective and balanced way. The Jury Friends attended all Jury sessions, answered questions from Jury members as they arose, and provided summaries of the information presented at each session. All Jury members found the Jury Friends helpful in providing factual and balanced answers to their questions.

"The interaction we had with the Jury Friends was invaluable."

Jury member 6

Surveys - overview

Survey One gathered attitudinal data as a robust approach to recruiting a 'mini-public' for the Citizens' Jury, which was broadly reflective of the English population. It also generated data about the general public's understanding of the term assisted dying, which could inform project communications and address misconceptions in future public engagement about end-of-life options and decisions. Survey One findings were kept confidential until publication in November 2024.

Survey Two added further value to the project using scenario-based questions to further explore areas of divergence resulting from the Citizens' Jury with a wider English population. These included whether the law should be changed to permit assisted dying in people under 18 years of age, and for people who are not residents of England.

Both surveys were nationally representative of the English population. This scale and representation enabled a snapshot look at groups of interest, finding, e.g., greater resistance to assisted dying among Muslim respondents, and that disabled respondents were more in favour of changing the law to permit assisted dying than non-disabled respondents.

The Citizens' Jury questions

The questions were formulated and iterated by HVM, working closely with NCOB, and the Advisory Board. They were:

- 1. Should the law in England be changed to permit assisted dying?
 - What are the most important reasons in favour of permitting assisted dying?
 - What are the most important reasons against permitting assisted dying?
- 2. If the law is changed to permit assisted dying in England, what should it include? What should it exclude?
- 3. If the law is not changed to permit assisted dying in England, are there any recommendations or changes to assisted dying policy that should be made?

The questions asked of the Citizens' Jury were clear, balanced, and supported a full exploration of the topic and its associated social, ethical and practical issues.

Appropriateness of methodology

The survey data generated new evidence and are a valuable addition to knowledge on assisted dying. NCOB and the Advisory Board were pragmatic about survey data offering new angles to generate media interest, though following the substantial press coverage of the interim report, NCOB invested its available resource in engaging with policymakers as a priority.

The Citizens' Jury approach enabled research exploring not only what people think about whether the law should change to permit assisted dying, but why they think in that way, and to understand the principles and values that underlie their view.

The timing of the drafting of the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill coinciding with the Citizens' Jury analysis highlights the requirement for a level of detail and nuance in the legislation, which is matched by the detail within qualitative findings of deliberation. This would not be available from surveys alone.

Working with a Jury-led approach, the Citizens' Jury questions supported Jury members to make recommendations including a continued national conversation about assisted dying, decriminalising taking a friend or family to Dignitas, and improving health, social and palliative care.

Utilising surveys as well as the Citizens' Jury improved the sampling, scope and scale of the research, adding credibility to the findings, and improving opportunities for media engagement.

The Citizens' Jury was the method necessary to understand public views to inform complex decision-making.

Overall, the mixed methodology proved an optimal approach to generate new and robust evidence about the public's views, and the principles and values underlying them.

Opportunities and challenges for the project

Assisted dying is a contentious topic with prominent advocacy and campaigning organisations

There are numerous organisations in the UK and globally who campaign for or against a change in the law to permit assisted dying. Following the confirmation of funding, NCOB created an extensive stakeholder map and developed and maintained ongoing relationships with campaigning organisations. Representatives from four campaigning/advocacy organisations were given a comprehensive brief and invited to speak to the Citizens' Jury. Each speaker also completed a written standardised template setting out their main points, which was shared with Jury members via the dedicated webpage.

During the project, instances where questions/critique were received from advocacy organisations about the governance, design or implementation of the project were taken seriously, and discussed with members of the Advisory Board and Project Delivery Team. NCOB engaged with campaigners to discuss the issues raised and their response to them.

Media interest and growing public discourse about assisted dying

There was a high volume of media coverage and public discourse about assisted dying in the UK before, during and after the delivery of the Citizens' Jury. NCOB's media tracking found 113 media articles from the launch of the project to the final Jury session (December 2023 – June 2024), 50 of which were published after the Jury had been recruited.

When asked, all Jury member interviewees referenced campaigns led by prominent spokespeople including Dame Esther Rantzen and Liz Carr. HVM shared the link to the Parliamentary debate in Westminster Hall⁶ on 29th April 2024 and a few Jury members contacted the team to let them know they were following the debate. Of those interviewed, the Jury members did not think the media coverage affected their views on assisted dying, but it did reinforce a sense of the project's importance and utility:

"We need this Citizens' Jury; we need this discussion. What we're doing here is really important."

Jury member 7

"So it gave me a lot of joy at that minute, because I was like, Oh, we are really doing this, and it's coming live... the MPs can also understand the fact that residents within the area they are representing, you know, really want this thing to go through rather than just rejecting a bill that they don't understand whether the people that elected them have the need for it."

Jury member 6

⁶ https://parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/b34a0b31-560b-40b8-9bf8-f1d9dd23c929

Changing political landscape

The project was commissioned in October 2023, and the final report delivered in March 2025. A UK general election was necessary before January 2025, and was called before many expected in July 2024, resulting in a change of Government. 251 Conservative MPs lost their seats, affecting both the impact of the early stakeholder relationships developed by NCOB in the lead up to the Citizens' Jury, and future stakeholder engagement plans.

Following the completion of the Citizens' Jury sessions and the second survey, the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Private Members' Bill was announced. The Bill proposes the legalisation of assisted dying for adults with a terminal illness and a prognosis of fewer than six months to live.

NCOB and HVM responded quickly to the announcement, adapting plans and creating additional reports, in time for the first and second readings of the Bill.

Ensuring information for Jury members was accurate, balanced, accessible, and not overwhelming in volume

The breadth and complexity of information required for Jury members to have informed deliberations included the following content and considerations:

- The existing law in the UK, and some understanding of how law is made/changed
- Assisted dying laws in other jurisdictions, how this is practiced and experienced
- Considerations of eligibility, mode, safeguards and regulation, and their implications
- Different religious beliefs and faith perspectives
- Experiences and views of medical and health professionals, including those who work in end-of-life care
- Lived experiences, including of disabled people, people who consider themselves to be in intolerable suffering, friends and family of people who have had or would like an assisted death
- Ensuring all the information provided is based on credible and available evidence
- Ensuring a balance of views and perspectives is included, and that presentation of evidence is itself balanced
- Consideration of the likely range of learning and communications preferences of the Jury members, and the content's accessibility

Awareness of Citizens' Jury methodology and its value

"For me it was recognising the kind of perception that people have, or the lack of awareness that people have about how robust these methods are. So there's just less inherent trust in them because people don't understand them as a method, and they don't hear them being used about as much."

NCOB staff member 1

As described above, the Citizens' Jury was a mini-public of the English population reflecting both the demographics of adults in England, and their attitudes towards assisted dying, informed by Survey One. It's relatively common for deliberative projects, including Citizens' Juries, to receive questions about the sample size of the research. People with lower awareness or knowledge of deliberative methodologies may have concerns about the number of research participants when compared with the number of respondents in a nationally representative survey:

"...if you've got 2,000 people saying one thing, and you've got 30 people saying another thing in the public's mind something doesn't compute."

NCOB staff member 2

In a Citizens' Jury, relatively small numbers of participants are involved in-depth, with time to fully explore evidence and deliberate across Jury members. In surveys or polls, a large sample of people respond immediately without the depth of exploration.

Low awareness of Citizens' Jury methodologies with external stakeholders, particularly the media, was challenging for this project. This is described further in Sections 3 and 4.

3. Project design, delivery and outputs

"I just thought it was just so well done, well put together. Well thought through. I couldn't say any way to make it better really."

Jury member 7

Recruitment and Jury make-up

The recruitment specification for the Citizens' Jury was designed to achieve a Jury with demographics and attitudes towards changing the law on assisted dying that broadly reflected the English population – a 'mini-public.' Attitudinal data to inform the specification were gathered from Survey One. Drawing on experience, HVM worked with the Sortition Foundation to recruit 34 people in order to achieve the target of 30 Jury members that met the recruitment criteria following attrition.

Following Jury Session 1, HVM facilitators identified that several Jury members had professional experience in health and social care, including some within end-of-life settings, and/or an interest or educational background in ethics, which was expected.

The HVM Team took great care to allocate Jury members into small groups that changed throughout the sessions to ensure a diversity of knowledge and experience of the Jury members throughout the process.

During the 8-week process, the Jury retained its 30 members. Two Jury members were unable to attend the final workshop due to illness.

Thoughtful and best-practice recruitment strategies enabled the Citizens' Jury to broadly reflect the English population, and the surveys to be nationally representative.

Jury members' approach to the Jury

Jury members came into the process with a range of views about assisted dying – some strongly held and others undecided. Significant efforts went into welcoming and preparing Jury members, including introductory phone calls, a comprehensive handbook, and a webinar covering how we listen, critical thinking, ethical thinking, terminology and definitions. Jury members were confident that they would apply these approaches to listening and thinking within their role. Following the webinar, nearly all Jury members were feeling excited, interested and looking forward to the Jury. One Jury member reported feeling a bit overwhelmed.

Importantly, all Jury members (either through interviews, conversation or observation) were found to be open to learning from the evidence, listening to others' perspectives and deeply reflecting on their own views.

"I think I can be quite objective at this stage, and I'm not carrying any sort of ingrained preconceptions as to which side of the fence I sit on because I haven't experienced it first hand with close family. So you know from that side I'm an open book."

Jury member 2 (after session 1)

"I'm intrigued about what the other sessions are going to make me think. At the moment, I'm switching from one side of the fence to the other."

Jury member 3 (after Session 1)

Some Jury members described their views changing, and changing back again during the process. When asked, three of four interviewees named a specific moment that had affected them, either in confirming or challenging their view. These moments were different in each case, with examples including hearing from the Imam followed by the group's discussion, and understanding what the current law is in the UK.

"I think I'm in favour, but I'm quite open to hearing all the arguments before I come to a final decision, so that's how I came into this. And then I think it was perhaps after we'd had the patient perspectives for and against, and I started to have a bit of a wobble then. Like just thinking, oh, I don't know actually if I'm in favour anymore, because the strength of feeling from those against it was so strong. And they were talking about things that I hadn't considered. For example, around the kind of the way people might view disabled people and things like that, and just kind of thinking their life is worthless, and I'd not really considered that was how that group of people might feel. So I really did start to question my choice."

Jury member 7

Jury members were well prepared, open to engaging with the Jury information and deliberating with others.

Jury members thoughts and feelings about whether the law should permit assisted dying changed in response to different inputs.

Process design and delivery

"What an absolute masterclass in citizen engagement. Listening to the reflections of everyone involved, it's striking how powerful these processes can be if run well. Hopkins Van Mil is a brilliant example of what running them well means in practice so that all voices are heard, and useful conclusions emerge."

Catherine Day, Deputy Director, Cabinet Office - Observer at Session 6

The Citizens' Jury was thoughtfully and expertly designed, and successfully achieved the challenge of catering for the varied needs of Jury members, and providing sufficient time to engage with the information, question speakers and Jury Friends, deliberate, and reach conclusions.

HVM designed the process, drawing on input and support from stakeholder interviews, the NCOB Project Team, Advisory Board and Content Group. The Citizens' Jury questions guided the design, with themes of eligibility, mode, safeguarding and regulation used successfully throughout the Jury to organise evidence and recommendations.

The process included a webinar, four evening workshops (all online) and in-person sessions on a Friday night and Saturday. This mixed format worked well in that it enabled people from across England to take part, with time for learning and reflection in between sessions. Overall, most Jury members found both formats to be very or mostly easy. Two people reported that they found online to be mostly difficult due to technical issues or unfamiliarity. Several Jury members expressed a preference for the in-person workshops, which gave them more time for informal discussions, and ability to communicate more effectively by reading body language. A drawback was that the acoustics of the room made one of the sessions difficult for people to hear small group discussions. The in-person format supported collaborative working across the Jury, who could read and respond to the content generated in real time. It also enabled the HVM Team to use that content and, with intensive efforts, prepare voting activities for the afternoon session.

Sessions kept to time and most Jury members found the sessions to be about right in the time available.

The Citizens' Jury was thoughtfully and expertly designed, and successfully implemented.

The mixture of online and face-to-face formats was the optimal approach to support participation of people across England, provide reflection time, and support high quality deliberation and recommendations.

Information and stimulus

Design and delivery of accurate, balanced and accessible information was managed very well by HVM, drawing on input from stakeholder interviews, NCOB, and the Content Group.

All of the essential information was presented during Jury sessions. It was provided in various formats and media, including written information and diagrams, e.g., a map of jurisdictions, a timeline of assisted dying policy-related milestones, films, filmed presentations, and summaries from Jury Friends. All information was made available to the Jury members via a private webpage in a timely, session-by-session approach.

Most of the Jury members used the dedicated website several times, although levels of engagement differed during the process. Three Jury members did not report having used the webpage.

Almost all Jury members found the information to be clear and accessible. Feedback following early Jury sessions shows that four Jury members found there to be a lot of information and the time between sessions was needed to process it. Two Jury members requested a longer lead time for the preparatory information.

"It was very well put together and sensibly managed over the sessions."

Jury member 8

"I'm spending quite a bit of time between sessions to get the information embedded."

Jury member 10

HVM consistently reassured Jury members that the sessions and deliberations would support their knowledge and understanding. The penultimate session for the Jury recapped all of the evidence that the Jury members had heard throughout the process.

Visual identity

HVM commissioned a graphic designer to create a visual identity for the project, which was used across all information and stimuli. This was a triumph, enabling impartiality, engagement, a professional look, and consistency of information for the Jury.

Overall, the Jury members engaged very well with comprehensive, accurate, and balanced information across a range of formats. The project's visual identity enabled impartiality and engagement.

Expert witnesses and speakers

Identifying, inviting and briefing speakers and witnesses was a thorough and thoughtful process, with input across the Project Delivery Team, Content Group and Advisory Board. Twenty-one speakers, including two Jury Friends, presented live to the Jury, and lived experience perspectives were presented using three filmed narratives.

Factors for speaker selection included: expertise, position on assisted dying and whether this information was publicly available, diversity across protected characteristics, capability to communicate effectively, public status, e.g., avoiding celebrities or MP/MSPs, and crucially, availability.

Speakers were categorised and briefed as either informants – those providing factual information, or advocates – those providing opinions. Each speaker:

- Made a declaration regarding expression/conflict of interest
- Received a very detailed briefing document
- Had a video call briefing with the HVM Team (where possible)
- Was asked to send presentations in advance, for review
- Advocate speakers were asked to complete a template document, setting out their position and intended content

Importantly, the quality of evidence was observed to be comparable across speakers.

In the main, speakers used data and references to communicate and substantiate what they were saying, and were clear when they didn't have the data or knowledge requested. Speakers often used questions to prompt reflection, which was helpful.

In Session Two, one of the speakers posted unsubstantiated/unreferenced material within the 'Chat' function of Zoom. Another speaker respectfully challenged the claim in response. This was taken seriously by the Project Delivery Team and in response the 'Chat' function was limited to discussions between the Jury members and Jury Friends for all future sessions. The unsubstantiated information from that session was explained to the Jury members.

Overall, feedback from speakers was positive; they were well prepared, had clear expectations and were well supported by HVM.

"I thought it was organised very well. Speakers are well supported and it's clear that all efforts are taken to facilitate an inclusive and open discussion."

Informant speaker 1

Lead time was raised as an issue, and several speakers fed back that they would have liked more notice, and more time to discuss, review and refine their presentations would have been beneficial. A few speakers did not have a video call with HVM because there wasn't sufficient time available

Suggestions offered by speakers to improve the Jury included co-ordinating across speakers from the same jurisdiction, and briefing Jury members on how to ask succinct questions.

The evaluation has shown differing views on whether it would have been beneficial to prerecord speakers' presentations, rather than speakers presenting live to the Jury. Some interviewees felt this would have enabled further review of draft presentations for clarity and balance, and ensured speakers kept to time. Pre-recording may also support the suggestion described above, with opportunities for better co-ordination between speakers with opposing views. Other interviewees felt that live presentations are more natural and engaging, and they are arguably more trusted resources as there is less opportunity to have made changes to the presentation's content.

The Jury members heard evidence from a diverse group of expert witnesses and speakers including those with lived experiences.

Speakers felt well prepared, briefed and supported by Hopkins Van Mil.

Longer lead times would have benefitted speakers and, for future projects may create options for greater co-ordination across pairs of speakers for the same topic.

There are differing views on whether speakers' presentations should be filmed in advance.

Facilitation

I thought they were very good, amazingly good. They led the groups very well...put the words into suitable questions."

Jury member 9

"I have felt listened to. I've noticed that when anyone says anything, it's followed up."

Jury member 1

The quality of the facilitation was excellent throughout, and this was commented on and highly valued by the Jury members, speakers and the NCOB Project Team.

A consistent and experienced team of five HVM facilitation specialists delivered the sessions with Henrietta Hopkins as Lead Facilitator. They were supported by a Technical Support role and an HVM Team member.

The facilitation team took a participant-led approach, which built trust with Jury members and enabled them to explore the topic of assisted dying in a way that was meaningful and of interest to them. Facilitators took notes using Jury members' own words and often checked back with people to ensure they had grasped the correct meaning.

The facilitators demonstrated inclusive practice, both in terms of ensuring everyone had the opportunity to speak, and also in meeting the needs and preferences of the Jury members.

They were respectful when people didn't wish to contribute or needed time to think and respond. All facilitators were calm, objective, effective and encouraging to the Jury members.

In the final session, all Jury members agreed (93% strongly agreed) that the facilitation was professional, independent and effective.

"I was really impressed when observing the sessions on how the facilitators were really thoughtful and inclusive. I felt that they really brought the groups together effectively."

NCOB staff member 3

The quality of the facilitation was excellent, particularly in enabling a Jury-led approach, and working inclusively.

Reporting and outputs

Following the announcement of the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill in early October 2024, NCOB and the Project Delivery Team agreed to increase the number of reports to provide timely information to parliamentarians and their staff.

The outputs of the project were:

Interim report: Citizens' Jury on assisted dying⁷, Summary of recruitment data ⁸ and Project film⁹ published 13th September 2024 ahead of the first reading of the Private Members' Bill on 16th October.

Policy briefing: Initial qualitative analysis: Citizens' Jury on assisted dying¹⁰ and Surveys exploring public views on assisted dying¹¹, published 13th November 2024, ahead of the second reading of the Private Members' Bill on 29th November 2024.

Exploring public views on assisted dying: Full analysis of Citizens' Jury and survey findings¹², published 6th March 2025, during the Committee stage of the Private Members' Bill.

The project reports demonstrate integrity to what the Jury members said, and provide an accurate and comprehensive analysis of the evidence gathered across the Citizens' Jury and surveys.

⁷ https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/publication/interim-report-citizens-jury-on-assisted-dying/

 $^{{}^{8}\ \}underline{\text{https://cdn.nuffieldbioethics.org/wp-content/uploads/Citizens-Jury-recruitment-data-summary-supplementary-document.pdf}}$

https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/project/exploring-public-views-on-assisted-dying/citizens-jury/
 https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/publication/initial-qualitative-analysis-citizens-jury-on-assisted-dying/

¹¹ https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/publication/surveys-exploring-public-views-on-assisted-dying/

¹² https://cdn.nuffieldbioethics.org/wp-content/uploads/NCOB-Report-Exploring-public-views-on-assisted-dying-Full-analysis-of-Citizens-Jury-and-survey-findings-FINAL.pdf

The project film provides valuable insights into the Citizens' Jury process, and foregrounds the voices of Jury members effectively.

Opportunities for impact were seized due to responsiveness and agility of the Project Delivery Team, additional effort and resource, with timely support from the Advisory Board.

Cross-cutting principles and practices underlying the project's success

This section provides examples to highlight some of the principles and ways of working that were adopted across the project and underpinned its quality.

Clarity, transparency and integrity

The programme clearly communicated its purpose through aims and objectives that were upheld and met by the Project Delivery Team, Advisors and NCOB staff throughout the project delivery. Terms of Reference were clear and followed. As well as guiding the project, the clarity of purpose and positioning of the project enabled integrity in response to external challenge.

Other examples demonstrating integrity are that Danielle Hamm, Director of Nuffield Council on Bioethics, delegated project responsibilities and sign-off to an Associate Director. This was to mitigate any perceived conflict of interest concerns and avoid bias, given her former professional role in policy relating to end-of-life. After the project's outputs were concluded, the Director promoted the findings and recommendations as a spokesperson. Additionally, through the due diligence in constituting the Advisory Board, one potential advisor was found to have historic social media posts declaring a position on assisted dying, and was therefore not eligible to join the Board.

Transparency has been a principle throughout the project. NCOB established an open mailing list, and published project information, meeting minutes and reports on the NCOB website.

Ensuring balance and impartiality

NCOB, as an independent organisation, has successfully generated and begun to disseminate the new evidence gained from this project without adopting an organisational position on assisted dying. Across all observations, every effort has been made to ensure balance and impartiality across all elements of the project, without exception. In interactions between the Project Delivery Teams, Advisory Board, Jury Friends and crucially their interaction with the Citizens' Jury, the evaluator has not observed any partiality, positioning or influencing relating to assisted dying.

"I still don't know to this day their positions on assisted dying, or where they might land on that. So I think that shows really that they fulfilled the role of having that objective voice during the project."

NCOB staff member 3 talking about the Advisory Board

The Content Group was established to be balanced by inviting members with deep knowledge and understanding of assisted dying, acknowledging that members did have publicly stated positions. The Content Group members understood the project's need for balance and impartiality and took this seriously. An example of this is their advice to include two speakers from each jurisdiction, ideally with a similar role or expertise, and presenting evidence for or against a policy of assisted dying.

Evaluation data from speakers showed that there were clear expectations set to present balanced and factual information. As detailed above, there was one occasion on which unsubstantiated information was shared with the Jury. This was swiftly addressed within the session and followed up with the Jury members. In the same session, a speaker was unable to finish their presentation due to time constraints. This was re-recorded and shared on the project webpage.

Jury members were also astute to the balance within the project. A few of them mentioned that they were sceptical at the beginning of the process that there may have been an underlying motivation in the project, but were pleasantly surprised to find this was not the case.

The time and attention for presentations for or against legalising assisted dying was equal in the design and implementation of all sessions. Evaluation data of two online sessions showed that 85% of the Jury members agreed and a majority strongly agreed that overall, the sessions gave balanced time and opportunity to information in favour and against changing the laws on assisted dying. In Workshop 3 – where Jury members heard an overview of faith perspectives, and an NHS Chaplain from the Islamic faith, one Jury member shared a concern that they didn't feel the Jury Friends were neutral in the religious and moral recap they provided, though evaluative observation did not find this to be the case.

Importantly, 27 of 28 Jury members from the final session felt that they had not been influenced towards a particular decision. One person felt that this had happened perhaps occasionally.

The project was designed, delivered and governed with considerations of balance and impartiality given utmost importance and every possible effort.

Jury members consistently received balanced and impartial information, and experiences facilitated by the HVM Team and the Jury Friends.

In almost all sessions, the speakers' presentations and Q&A sessions upheld the expectations for balanced and accurate information set by the briefing.

Overall, the Citizens' Jury were not influenced towards a particular decision and had a full breadth of evidence on which to base their deliberations.

Balance and impartiality were considered thoroughly for each and all project decisions. Some of the important elements of how it was achieved included:

- NCOB was independent as a commissioner
- HVM was an independent contractor and held the relationships with the Jury members
- Advisory Board, Jury Friends and Project Delivery Team members did not have publicly known positions on assisted dying, and did not discuss these within the project
- A key role of the Advisory Board was to monitor balance and impartiality in the project and delivery teams
- The Content Group was balanced by including an equal number of members with similar views towards assisted dying
- All professionals involved in the project completed a conflict-of-interest statement before getting involved in the project, none were identified; speakers made an expression of interest statement as they introduced themselves to the Jury
- The Citizens' Jury questions were thoughtfully iterated to ensure balance in the language, and not only to explore reasons for and against changing the law, but considerations if the law is or isn't changed
- Speakers were selected against strict criteria, based on advice from the stakeholder interviews, Content Group and a review of balance and impartiality the Advisory Board
- The Advisory Board and Project Delivery Team decided not to invite anyone with a
 public profile or public role e.g. MPs, to the Jury sessions, either as a speaker or
 observer to remove the risk of Jury members feeling affiliated to speakers or being
 influenced by their previous work or profile
- HVM held briefings with the speakers and reviewed presentations in advance, where possible
- Speaker briefings and presentations gave clear guidance and communicated to the Jury when people were speaking as an informant – with a need to be evidencebased - and when they were speaking as an advocate and could draw on their personal views and experiences
- Speakers from campaigning organisations were given a strict brief, completed a template of their main points to share with the Jury, and were facilitated to ensure equal time and attention
- The project's visual identity ensured all documentation was presented consistently
- Facilitators took notes using Jury members own words, with regular sense-checking and summarising to ensure unbiased data collection and analysis

Inclusive practice

The Citizens' Jury was designed to be the most accessible and engaging experience for Jury members, drawing on the extensive expertise of HVM, with support from the Advisory Board. From the first interaction with Jury members, and throughout the process, the team invested time in getting to know and understand the Jury members, and made adaptations to be as

inclusive as possible. This included examples such as responding to requests by Jury members who wanted to formulate and share their thoughts in writing by providing a confidential space on the project webpage, and ensuring the same facilitator worked with an autistic person in all sessions, developing a trustful relationship and supporting personalised ways of contributing to the deliberations.

"I found it all quite difficult due to my condition, but the facilitation was top notch".

Jury member 12

Jury members received technical support for working on Zoom, including a 45-minute session for people to familiarise themselves with the technology, and dedicated technical support staff at each event. Four Jury members experienced technical issues during early workshops, and were sent equipment, e.g. dongle, tablet, headset. Some Jury members received extensive one-to-one support from the team until they felt confident.

Care and compassion

"We felt... I felt very... protected, sheltered, nurtured".

Jury member 9

A culture of care and compassion was demonstrated throughout the project development and delivery by everyone involved. Examples included acknowledging the emotive topic and signposting to wellbeing support within Advisory Board meetings, and the decision to film witnesses providing lived experience, rather than asking them to recount their evidence live to the Jury.

Emotional support for Jury members, the facilitation team, and speakers and observers were signposted throughout and was designed to meet individual needs and preferences. The support included:

- Designated time immediately after each Jury session to share questions or concerns with the facilitation team
- Signposting of support organisations within the survey, and Jury members' handbook
- Opportunity to take time out of sessions, without the need to explain, followed by a check in from the HVM team
- A counselling/listening service provided a by a counsellor, Sandeep Ganatra who attended every session, and was available in-between sessions

Interviewees reported that they feel very well supported.

"I'm impressed to have Sandeep. That's been really thoughtful to do that. I don't feel I need it but it's good knowing it's there."

Jury member 1

The Jury convened in person for the final workshops over a Friday night and Saturday. Sharing a meal on Friday evening embedded that caring culture, which continued for the event and beyond.

"The relationship between the Jury and Hopkins Van Mil, and especially Henrietta, I think it's beyond just facilitating. It's created connections."

NCOB staff member 4

Being led by the Jury members - navigating research and dialogue

The Citizens' Jury methodology and questions provided a clear scope and focus of the project, which was important given both the potential impact of the findings in informing new legislation and the logistical planning required to engage with, and deliberate on, the breadth of content within the available time. However, the risks of adopting a solely 'top-down' approach are that a project may be limited by the frames of reference of its designers, and important issues of relevance to the Jury members – that might arise from working more collaboratively - could be overlooked.

Within this Citizens' Jury the Jury members were free to explore the issues that mattered to them in order to answer the Citizens' Jury questions, described in this report as 'Jury-led' or 'participant-led' practice. There were several examples where Jury members shaped discussions, took the lead, and advocated for their findings. These include Jury members steering small group discussions, generating and asking questions of speakers and Jury Friends, being interviewed for the project film, and co-writing blogs with the NCOB. Three Jury members took part in media training and were spokespeople for the project within press interviews and dissemination events.

Jury-led practice was easily embedded in the project as a standard way of working for HVM, therefore, the line between research and dialogue was expertly navigated within the Jury delivery. This supported a sense of agency amongst Jury members, and a robust exploration of the topic from their perspective.

Communicating project findings to external stakeholders

This section highlights challenges experienced in communicating different elements of the project to key stakeholders, which involved navigating some of the principles described in the section above, and low awareness of deliberative methodologies and their value. Details of the project's stakeholder engagement are provided in Section 3 – Outcomes and impact.

Sample size and sampling

A common challenge of Citizens' Juries as a methodology relates to the number of Jury members involved and how they are recruited. Evaluation finds this project to have demonstrated best practice in creating a mini-public of England, drawing on demographic data and findings from Survey One.

The project's sampling approach was challenged in the first media briefing for the Citizens' Jury findings and, despite efforts made by the NCOB and HVM teams to explain the methodology, was questioned on air by BBC Radio 4's *Today* programme who implied that the Jury should instead have been comprised of people who hadn't previously considered the topic of assisted dying.

This was a learning experience for the NCOB Communications Team, and they acted responsively. HVM produced an additional publication to describe the recruitment methodology⁸, and NCOB changed their approach to future dissemination, acknowledging that, for some audiences, explanations of the methodology were necessary to build trust in the findings:

"So you have to sort of build in a degree of education into your comms to tell people what the method is, and essentially why they can trust it, before you can then get to explaining to them what the evidence is that this method has found to allow them to believe that what you're telling them is worth listening to."

NCOB staff member 1

NCOB quickly learned and responded to challenges around methodology, which benefitted all further dissemination of the project findings.

Communicating methodology alongside findings is important to secure trust in the research.

Jury-generated voting data

In the final day-long session, Jury members generated and voted on statements relating to Citizens' Jury Questions 2 and 3. These data enhanced the analysis of qualitative data from deliberation generated in all sessions. For Question 2, a list of Jury members' recommendations about what any new law should include or exclude was compiled using the Jury members' own words. Jury members were given 5 votes to apply to the statements to include, and 5 votes about what to exclude so the output data showed numbers of votes weighted by importance to the Jury overall. The data were presented as one table in the Interim Report⁷, and as individual data points in the Final Report¹².

Importantly, this process was designed to enhance, and not replace or short-cut the deliberations, with the aim of understanding the relative strength of Jury members' views, and the language that resonates most with the Jury, which was fed into the analysis and reporting.

The evaluation finds differing perspectives on this process across the HVM Team, NCOB and the Jury members who were interviewed.

Within the workshop, the HVM team compiled the Jury members' statements using their own words, meaning that some statements were very similar to each other. Some interviewees felt the statements should have been more themed and collated before voting to provide a shorter and clearer output, which would have improved communication of the data to external stakeholders.

All Jury members who were interviewed felt it was important that the statements used their own words:

"That was important because it was about the People's Jury. It wasn't about you know, official professional people putting it into solicitors, lawyers, terminology, was it? It was what we, the people, were feeling."

Jury member 9

"It was really important. We weren't being fed lines by other people; it was our own words."

Jury member 7

Questionnaire data from the workshop shows that all Jury members agreed that the voting questions and voting process were clear and straightforward.

The weighted data for Question 2, across both include and exclude options, was difficult for stakeholders to immediately understand:

"It's very, very hard to communicate that to a journalist or to the public when they're very used to understanding it as simple majority, yes or no questions, things like that."

NCOB staff member 2

NCOB reported that they found the complexity of the weighted data challenging to communicate to media and policy-maker audiences, and questioned whether there should have been more follow up after the voting, or whether there may have been a better voting approach that would have provided information about individual's preferences, e.g. on points of divergence. Within this project, Survey Two supported this further exploration.

Evaluation discussions included considerations about whether the data could have been presented differently within the Interim report, to foreground key messages over the quantitative voting data, which was successfully achieved within the final report. It's worth

noting that the Interim report was produced with a tight turnaround time in order to respond to the first reading of the Private Members' Bill.

Considerations for future projects would be to 'road test' the format of likely outputs from the process design, considering and planning for how they could be best communicated to external audiences and adapting the process where possible without detriment to the depth of research findings, or the Jury members' experience. One idea for future projects would be to build in additional time for the Jury members to further collate the statements themselves – working in small groups. This would uphold the Jury-led approach and use of Jury members' language to benefit analysis, and create an output that might be more straightforward for external audiences.

Use of weighted voting enhanced understanding of the Jury's views but was challenging to communicate to external stakeholders.

Future projects should build consideration of disseminating outputs into process design and/or reporting.

Working with Jury members to compile their own words could be a route to creating a shorter voting process whilst retaining Jury members' meaning and language.

4. Outcomes and Impact

Jury members' experiences and impact

"It was an amazing experience; you could feel it in the room."

Jury member 7

This Citizens' Jury was a special experience for Jury members. The word cloud below shows Jury members' responses to the evaluation question 'What was it like participating in the Jury process?'



Particularly important to note is that Jury members who opposed changing the law to permit assisted dying were equally engaged, and found the experience positive and constructive.

30 Jury members were recruited to the project and were retained throughout. Two members missed the final session due to illness. The Jury was highly engaged and took the responsibility seriously, with several Jury members referring to helping others and their work making a difference to people.

"It's put something into my life that was necessary. The enjoyment lies in knowing you've done something to aid the conversation, move things along. We should learn from the experiences of others."

Jury member 5

"My thoughts were acknowledged, and I believe that they should make a difference. I'll give it a 10/10."

Jury member 6

Two Jury members brought pieces of writing to the final workshop. One Jury member wrote an extensive opinion piece setting out their view after reflecting on everything they had heard. A second member wrote a short story inspired by the topic of assisted dying. Both were submitted to HVM for analysis. Three Jury members co-authored a blog piece ¹³ about their experience of the Jury, with NCOB, and several members volunteered to be media spokespeople for the project, including a Jury member who had found speaking in the sessions challenging.

"I was so impressed. Some of them I think, were incredibly engaged and took it so seriously and really became experts themselves."

Dr Alexandra Mullock, Jury Friend

One Jury member expressed an interest in exploring a career in social research and described the process as:

"An incredible experience I will treasure forever."

Jury member 11

Since the Jury, some of the Jury members have kept in touch via a dedicated WhatsApp group. Hopkins Van Mil has engaged with the Jury throughout the analysis and reporting stages of the project, including Jury members receiving draft reports to review, and keeping them abreast of developments in the Private Members' Bill.

The Citizens' Jury was a positive experience for all Jury members, who found it enjoyable and very interesting. Several Jury members felt it was a privilege to be involved.

 $^{^{13}\ \}underline{\text{https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/news-blog/in-conversation-with-members-of-englands-first-citizens-jury-on-assisted-dying/}$

Stakeholder engagement and impact

NCOB led the engagement and external communications throughout the project. They were very clear in the positioning of the project and took great care not to be seen to be lobbying for the outcome of the findings, and rather, advocating for the evidence.

NCOB undertook extensive stakeholder mapping, identifying civil servants, campaign groups, charities, academia, trade unions, and specialists as interested parties. They developed a plan to implement appropriate tactics for engagement with the following stakeholder groups:

Decision-makers and parliamentarians

NCOB engaged all MPs at the beginning of the project and met with 14 parliamentarians in early 2024.

They developed relationships with the Cabinet Office and other Civil Servants. Senior members of these organisations attended the final hours of the Citizens' Jury to hear their recommendations.

"Having that relationship ensured that our reports and outputs were briefed to the ministers, so that they had the knowledge."

NCOB staff member 4 describing a relationship with a senior civil servant

The Director of NCOB or Chair of the Advisory Board, Director of HVM, and three Jury members presented the project's methodology and findings at:

- An online webinar organised by NCOB on 27th November ahead of the second reading of the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill. This was attended by 3 external stakeholders.
- An All-Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Choice at the End of Life on 24th February 2025. Number of attendees not provided.
- An All-Party Parliamentary Group the Parliamentary Scientific Committee on 31st March 2025, attended by 27 external stakeholders, including one MP

The Project Delivery Team attended two sessions of the Participatory Methods Forum, organised by the Cabinet Office.

NCOB submitted written evidence/ briefings to:

- All MPs in November 2024 to brief them on the initial project findings
- The Senedd Cymru Members' Business Debate in October 2024
- A submission to the call for evidence for the Committee of the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill, on 21st January 2025
- Written evidence to the Commission on Palliative and End-of-Life Care, on 28th March 2025

The project has been referenced on four occasions to date within the Public Bill Committee for the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill:

- 1. Lewis Atkinson MP posed questions to Dr Alexandra Mullock on 29th January 2025 about the findings from Citizens' Juries on assisted dying¹⁴
- 2. Rebecca Paul MP referenced the findings from Survey One on 4th March 2025¹⁵
- 3. Danny Kruger MP referenced written evidence submitted by Dr Alexandra Mullock on 18th March¹⁶
- 4. Danny Kruger MP referenced the findings from Survey One on 19th March 2025¹⁷

Additionally, it was communicated to NCOB that Kim Leadbeater MP and her office are aware of the project and its findings.

In Scotland, the Assisted Dying for Terminally III Adults (Scotland) Bill was introduced in by Liam McArthur MSP in March 2024. Responding to this programme of work, he said:

I believe this has been an important piece of work on a fundamental issue that deserves detailed and nuanced scrutiny. Hopefully this will help further raise public awareness and debate, and give more confidence to fellow parliamentarians that the public believe that a change in the law is the right choice for dying people. I would urge parliamentarians in both Westminster and Holyrood to keep these results at the forefront of their thoughts while considering the proposals before them from myself and Kim Leadbeater.

Liam McArthur MSP, excerpt from the Nuffield Council on Bioethics Impact Report 2024¹⁸

Relationships with decision-makers in government departments supported communication to ministers, and opportunities to present both the findings and methodology of the project to civil service staff.

Events to disseminate findings to policy makers and parliamentarians happened most successfully within existing policy and parliamentary events and formats, rather than NCOB-led activity.

All MPs and peers were made aware of the project and had opportunity to engage.

MPs/MSPs leading potential legislation on assisted dying are aware of the project.

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¹⁴ Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill (Fifth sittin - Hansard - UK Parliament

¹⁵ Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill (Seventeenth - Hansard - UK Parliament

¹⁶ Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill (Twenty-fifth - Hansard - UK Parliament

¹⁷ Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Bill (Twenty-seven - Hansard - UK Parliament

¹⁸ https://www.nuffieldbioethics.org/publication/impact-report-2024/

Press and media

Publication of the Interim Report in September 2024 created significant press interest across mainstream print and broadcast media with an estimated audience reach of 2.6 billion. The spokespeople were Professor Anne Kerr, the chairperson of the Advisory Board, Danielle Hamm, Director of NCOB and Ashok Kumar, a member of the Citizens' Jury. The story was picked up by the following outlets:

- TV: Sky Breakfast, BBC Breakfast, BBC News
- Radio: BBC Radio 4 Today Programme, Times Radio
- Print: Daily Mirror, Daily Telegraph, Daily Mail

Further efforts to gain media interest were made following the publication of the briefing report and the final report, but getting coverage proved challenging as the headline findings had already been broadcast/published. This finding supports the project decision to release the data from the Citizens' Jury to the media before the survey findings – to highlight the depth of exploration into public views and the underlying values and principles resulting from the first Citizens' Jury on assisted dying in England.

It is notable that a Jury member worked with the NCOB team and took part in the press briefings and interviews. This demonstrates the cross-cutting principles of the project being enacted, especially the integrity to the Jury members' voices.

Interviewees felt that the media training and support from the NCOB press team was exemplary.

The project generated impressive media reach of 2.6 billion people across a range of high-profile media which acts as a route to bringing the findings and the Jury voice into public discourse.

Media strategy, training and support to spokespeople, including Jury members, was exemplary and highly valued.

Interested public and other stakeholders

NCOB established a project mailing list of 321 members at the time of writing, posting seven four mailings during the project.

The NCOB Project Team and/or Chair of the Advisory Board presented at the:

- Dundee Pensioners' Forum
- Jesus College in the University of Cambridge Death and Dying Discussion Series
- King's College London Parliament event Assisted dying: principles, practice and politics

Advocacy and campaigning organisations

Of particular note is the approach NCOB took in developing and maintaining active relationships with advocacy and campaigning organisations:

"I really thought that it was important to build those relationships and hear what they have to say, but also, it's easier to say to them, well, I understand why this bothers you, but here's our aims and objectives, and this is why we're sticking to this. And this is why we're doing it.

I think that it's really important to be able to have that shared understanding. You know you can have the conflict, but you can also work through it. And actually, I thought it was it was really beneficial, because then those relationships are stronger, even if there was a point of difference."

NCOB staff member 4

These initial relationships provided a route for advocacy and campaigning organisations to contact NCOB directly to ask questions and seek understanding about the project's purpose and processes. This lessened the likelihood of the project being misconstrued, or misconceptions being communicated to audiences with high interest in this issue.

These early relationships also facilitated the invitation of senior leaders from four advocacy/campaigning organisations to present briefings to the Citizens' Jury. It is likely (though not known) that these organisations would communicate about the project with their networks providing further routes of dissemination and potential impact to audiences who are highly interested in the project findings.

NCOB and project ambassadors engaged tactically with a wide range of stakeholders throughout the project, to mitigate risk and maximise impact.

Developing relationships with decision-makers and advocacy/campaigning organisations supported project delivery, dissemination of the findings, and advocacy for participatory methods of democracy.

Perceptions of credibility amongst external stakeholders

"When you've had a group of lay people who have spent weeks and weeks, and many hours really learning about this, you know the findings are very important, and this process has been very well done, so I think it will be highly credible, and also incredibly valuable."

Dr Alexandra Mullock, Jury friend interviewed in July 2024

At the APPG Parliamentary Scientific Committee Event in March 2025, The Chair of the Advisory Board, Director of HVM and two Jury members presented the project methodology and findings to 27 external stakeholders in an hour long session including opportunities for Q&A. Evaluation data found that 6 of 7 respondents agree (71% strongly agree) that the project provides credible evidence on the English public's views about whether or not the law should be changed to permit assisted dying and that the findings are useful to inform policymakers and/or parliamentarians. One respondent felt neutral on these points, with the following comment:

"I worry about the sample. Just how random were the original 7000 addresses used to form the juries? Were any checks done to see if the addresses generated happened to be in a particular part of the country or type of property etc? So I am not convinced the results necessarily properly reflect public opinion."

Attendee from the APPG - Parliamentary Scientific Committee Event

These data are limited but indicate that the approach to explaining the methodology alongside the findings is successful and provides credibility for most people. However, unanswered questions about the details of the methodology may limit perceptions of credibility and, therefore, the potential impact of the findings.

The following transcript from the Public Bill Committee shows an understanding that the Citizens' Jury methodology is different from polling and there is interest in its value:

"I think we have all seen bits of polling, but that is not necessarily polling of individuals who have wrestled with these issues in a deliberative manner in the way that I understand Citizens' Juries are designed to do."

Lewis Atkinson MP speaking at the Public Bill Committee for the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Fifth sitting¹²

At the time of writing there are limited data on perceptions of credibility of the report. Those who have been involved with the project, through delivery or observation, perceive it to be highly credible. That the report has been referenced as evidence for the Private Members' Bill indicates the project to be useful evidence in informing this legislation.

Early indications are that stakeholders think the project findings are credible. Evidence supporting this is from an online event presented by a cross-project team, and including an explanation of the methodology as well as the findings.

Unexpected outcomes or impacts

In addition to providing robust evidence about the English public's views on assisted dying, this project has been a useful learning opportunity, and there is aspiration from NCOB to use a case study of the work to bolster the application of Citizens' Juries and deliberative methodologies as part of policymaking.

The Project Delivery Team was twice invited to present to the Cabinet Office's Participatory Methods Forum which aims to build expertise and capacity across the Civil Service. NCOB and members of the Advisory Board stated that they are keen to draw on the learning and apply similar methodologies to explore societal issues within their future work. The Jury Friends described how they would likely use the project in their teaching.

Interestingly, from both interviews and observations of dissemination events, the evaluation finds that some of the Jury members have also become advocates for the Citizens' Jury process as well as the project:

"You can't just do a snap, you know, survey monkey kind of thing on this sort of topic. You just can't. You need to have those really detailed discussions and hear evidence and different perspectives, and have that space to reflect and discuss with other people whose opinions might not align with yours...We still were able to come together and make some really good recommendations at the end, taking all of those views into account. So yeah, I think it's an amazing process. I hope it's used more often for more topics like this.

Sensitive topics, you know."

Jury member 7

The project has provided a valuable opportunity for shared learning and development which has boosted confidence in those delivering and overseeing the project.

The project has been a learning experience for those involved, and will be used as a case study about assisted dying, and to demonstrate the value of deliberative processes in informing policy.

5. Conclusions and lessons learnt

Conclusions

The Citizens' Jury and surveys exploring public views on assisted dying was an outstanding project delivered with excellent quality. All objectives and outcomes were met, and the project fulfilled its purpose in providing robust qualitative evidence about the English population's views on assisted dying, and the values and principles that underlie their views.

The project was delivered with the utmost care and thoughtfulness, drawing on specialist knowledge, expertise, and with awareness of the changing external landscape. It benefitted from a very committed team working collaboratively to achieve the highest standards of project design and delivery.

Cross-cutting principles such as clarity of purpose, transparency, balance and impartiality were very clear and upheld by the team and advisors throughout. These, along with the independence of the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, Hopkins Van Mil and partners ensured the integrity of the project.

A notable strength was the responsiveness of the Project Delivery Team, Communications staff, and Advisors, who adapted the reporting plan and timescales to provide the evidence in a timely way to parliamentarians voting on the Terminally III Adults (End of Life) Private Members' Bill.

A stand-out feature was excellent facilitation with inclusive practice and Jury-led approaches embedded. This way of working provided a safe and supportive environment for Jury members and enabled a thorough exploration of the topic in a way that was meaningful to them.

The project gained impressive media coverage and the NCOB team learned early lessons about the need to communicate about the methodology alongside the findings which benefitted all later dissemination. The evaluation shows that MPs and MSPs leading legislation on assisted dying are aware of the new evidence generated by this work. The project findings have been referenced within the Private Members' Bill Committee.

Overall, the project provides high-quality evidence about the English public's views on whether or not the law should change to permit assisted dying, and what such legislation should include or exclude. It also highlights how deliberative methodologies can contribute to evidence-based policymaking on complex and emotive topics.

Learning and considerations for future projects

This was a project of excellent quality. This section summarises key learnings from this success and highlights some considerations for future projects.

Context

Independence of the Commissioner and Delivery Teams – This was essential for the credibility of the project and evidence

Due diligence is essential to integrity and credibility - For projects delivered in landscapes such as this where there is strong feeling and often polarised debate, due diligence of everyone involved in the project underpins project integrity. Suggested learning was to be clear what the parameters of due diligence are, e.g. setting examples of, and timescales for what is/isn't acceptable in terms of previous actions. Everyone involved in the project, including delivery teams, advisors, Jury Friends and expert witnesses and speakers completed an expression/conflict of interest statement.

Ways of working

Build in opportunities for learning and awareness of the external landscape -

Formative evaluation, reflective practices and embedded processes such as facilitator reflections and debriefs enabled responsive refinement of plans and approaches to meet the needs of the project, and/or Jury members. NCOB maintained a media log and all team members were aware of the political landscape and public discourse around assisted dying throughout the project.

Embed principles of clarity, transparency, balance and impartiality - these were fundamental to the integrity of the project. These were built into project documentation, considered in every decision taken and upheld throughout the project.

Work inclusively, with care and compassion – this was a foundation of the Jury members' positive experience, and supported people with minority views to feel comfortable and heard. A counsellor, who was available within and between sessions for Jury members or staff, provided appropriate support for explorations of this sensitive topic. Inclusion, care and compassion were embedded throughout project interactions supporting collaborative and purposeful teamwork.

Consider the approach to risk during project planning – For contentious topics where risks have high likelihood or impact, consider the implications of risk management on the project timeline. Where possible, describe additional requirements in tender documents, and consider forthcoming pinch points during project delivery.

Advisory functions

Consider advisory roles and responsibilities to meet the needs and constraints of the project – the Advisory Board and Content Group brought diverse and deep knowledge and specialist expertise to support the project. Running two separate functions for this project worked very well and was prudent given the emotive topic, contentious landscape and

absolute requirement for balance and impartiality. A different formation could also have worked. When advisors worked individually with the Project Delivery Team they added significant value. For future projects it would be worth considering if and how to separate advisory functions, depending on need. Individual or subgroups of advisors bringing specialist expertise, for example in dedicated workshops, could also be an efficient way of working. A consideration for future projects could be involving public members as advisors on content, formats and accessibility. In this project, inviting public members could have brought greater ethnic diversity within the advisory functions.

Be as clear as possible about roles and responsibilities for advisory functions - This might include specifying what isn't in remit. Where there are two advisory functions, consider rigour-testing terms of reference by considering tasks that may fall into both remits and creating a clear process for decision-making.

Design and delivery

Carefully consider timescales – In this project, timescales were manageable and flexed to accommodate additional reporting needs. The scoping and design phase would have benefitted from a slightly longer timeline, specifically for speaker recruitment, Jury Friend preparations, and the development of stimulus materials, working with the Content Group.

Mixed methodologies added value – a Citizens' Jury was the appropriate methodology to thoroughly explore public views, fulfil the purpose of the project in meeting the evidence gap, and provide the detail and nuance of evidence required for draft legislation. The surveys added significant value towards designing the mini-public, understanding public terminology and misconceptions, further exploring areas of divergence and testing possible future scenarios.

Getting the Citizens' Jury questions correct was essential to success – they underpinned the design of the Jury, guided the process to ensure minority views were heard and all options explored using a Jury-led exploration of the issues.

Jury-led ways of working built trust and encouraged a full exploration of the issues that matter to people – this was achieved in many ways: through relationships, support, Jury-led facilitation, verbatim-style notetaking and using Jury members words in voting, recommendations and the Jury statement.

For future projects consider whether to **record speakers' presentations in advance,** and enable co-ordination across speakers for the same sessions. This could be on a case-by-case basis dependent of the project context.

Consider additional support for Jury members - a few Jury members found the amount of information challenging particularly at the start of the project. Future projects could consider ways to offer additional support, e.g. offering drop-in sessions to answer questions.

Communications and stakeholder engagement

Communicating the methodology should be factored into media briefings and dissemination events – in this project, concerns were raised about sample size and

sampling methods, though these were explained in dissemination events. Dissemination events worked well with spokespeople from the commissioner, delivery organisation and members of the Citizens' Jury, who were all equally keen to advocate for the evidence gathered, and brought different expertise and interesting perspectives.

Consider communication of outputs within process design and initial reports – it was challenging to communicate weighted voting data to external stakeholders. With more time built in, working with Jury members to collate their recommendations could simplify the number of voting options.

Early and ongoing relationships with key stakeholders enabled constructive challenge and transparency within the challenging landscape of a polarised debate, with heightened attention due to the announcement of the Private Members' Bill.

Consider how to disseminate related findings, and share learning – the Jury recommended action with impacts across health, social care and criminal law. Sustained relationships with government departments such as Department of Health and Social Care, and the Cabinet Office supported routes to impact for findings related to end of life and palliative care, and to share learning about methodology with civil servants interested in deliberative democracy.

Further develop routes to impact - NCOB should build on learning and relationships with civil servants and parliamentarians established within this project, and continue to develop these relationships to support the dissemination of this and future projects.

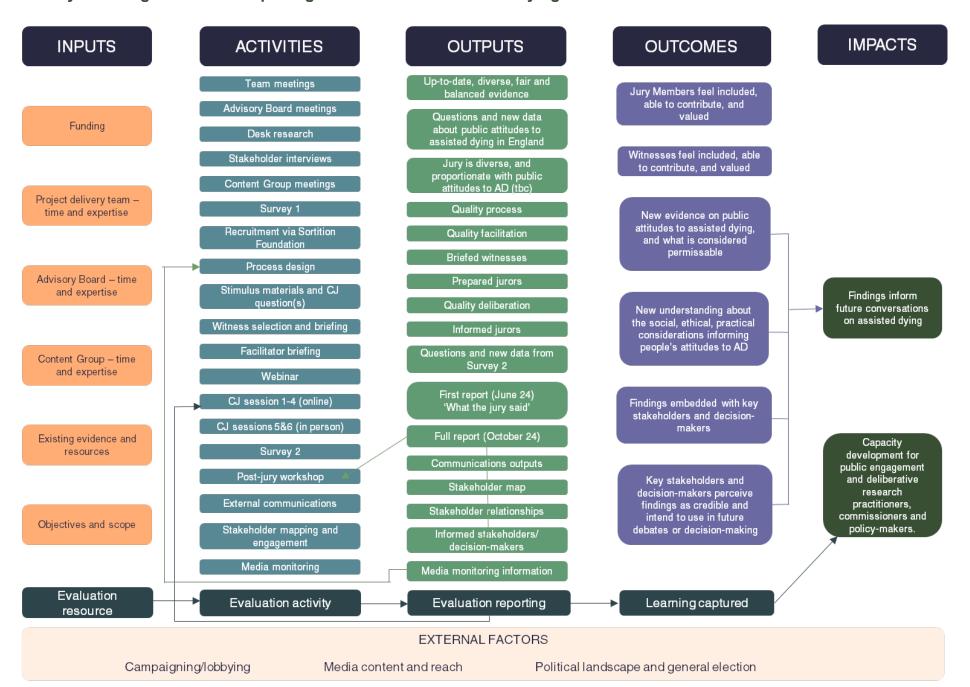
6. Appendices

Appendix A. Theory of Change and Evaluation Framework

A theory of change for the project is provided below. For ease of use, all arrows are not displayed. Included arrows show the connections between outcomes and impacts, the connection between the evaluation and the project, and key dependencies which have arrows in the opposite direction to the sequence of the diagram.

The theory of change and evaluation frameworks focus on the process and outcomes of the Citizens' Jury and surveys.

Theory of Change model for Exploring Public Views on Assisted Dying



Evaluation Framework for Exploring Public Views on Assisted Dying

Category	Questions	Document review	Observation	Juror questionnaires	Juror interviews	Witness questionnaires	Wash up meeting	Project team interviews	Decision-maker interviews
Aims and objectives	actives act the right appa?	V	V				V	V	V
vvere the aims and obje	ectives set, the right ones?	X	X				X	X	X
Did the aims and object	tives change throughout the project?	X	X						
Governance and Proje	ect Management								
Was the governance of	the project clear and working well?	Х	X					Х	
Were risks identified an	nd managed appropriately?	Х	X					Χ	
How did the Advisory B	oard add value to the project?	X	X					Χ	
Were efforts made to e outputs?	nsure public transparency of decision-making, process, and project	Х	Х					X	
Recruitment and Jury									
Was the Jury diverse, a	and proportionate with public attitudes to assisted dying?	Х							
How did findings from s	survey one inform recruitment for the Citizens' Jury?	Х	X						
To what extent were Ju	ry members engaged, did they understand their role?		Χ	Х	Χ				

Did Jury members feel prepared and able to critically assess evidence?			Х	Х				
To what extent did the Jury members find the evidence to be accessible and understandable?		X	Х	X				
Were Jury members able to interact with witnesses and get their questions answered?	X	X	X	X		X		
To what extent were Jury members able to express their views and did they feel heard?			X	X				
What support was available for emotional wellbeing of Jury members, witnesses, facilitation team and observers?	X	X						
Did Jury members feel supported within the process? Were they aware of how to seek support?		X	Х	X				
Did the Jury members feel influenced to reach a particular decision/conclusion?		X	X	X				
Information and stimulus								
Was the project informed by the most up to date evidence and analysis of the diverse range of ethical views on assisted dying?	Х	Х						
How did the Content Group add value to the project?	X	X				Х	X	
Were the Jury questions clear and fit for purpose?	X	X	X	X				
To what extent were efforts made to ensure balance and impartiality across the process?	X	X						
Was evidence presented from a diverse and balanced range of perspectives, including lived experiences?	X	X						
Were witnesses well prepared? Did they understand their role and expectations of them?	X	X			X			
Was the quality of evidence comparable across different perspectives on assisted dying?		X		X				

X	X				X	
X	X		X			
	Х	X	Х		X	
	Х	X	Х			
X						
Х	Х					
X	X					
X						X
X	X				X	
X	X			X	X	X
	X					
	Χ					
	X					
	X X X X X	X X X X X X X X X X	X	X X X X X X X X X X		

Reporting and outputs								
To what extent has the reporting successfully integrated the findings from mixed methodologies?	Х							
To what extent do the reports reflect the diversity of views across voting and deliberation?	Х	Х						
Are minority views included appropriately?	Χ	Χ						
To what extent does the project film reflect the process and outcomes?	Х	X						
Has the project delivered its objectives?								
Has the project generated robust new evidence about public attitudes to assisted dying and what is permissible?	X						X	X
Has the project generated robust understanding of the social, ethical and practical considerations and how these inform people's attitudes?	X						Х	Х
How many government, media and decision-makers have been engaged with the project?	Х					Х	X	X
Has the project achieved its outcomes?								
Do jurors feel included, able to contribute, and valued?	X	X	X	X				
Do witnesses feel included, able to contribute, and valued?	X	X			Х			
Do key stakeholders and decision-makers consider the findings to be credible?		X						Χ
Do key stakeholders and decision-makers intend to use the findings within future debates/conversations on assisted dying?		X				X	X	X
Has the project achieved any unexpected outcomes or impact?	X	Х	X	X	Х	X	X	Χ
Lessons								
What lessons have been learned that can inform future projects?	Х	Х				Х	Х	
To what extent is deliberation a needed and appropriate methodology to understand public attitudes towards assisted dying? Is this a topic where deliberation changes opinion significantly, or do people's views more or less stay the same?	Х	X						X

Appendix B. Evaluation feedback from Jury members

Webinar

Session 1: The UK context



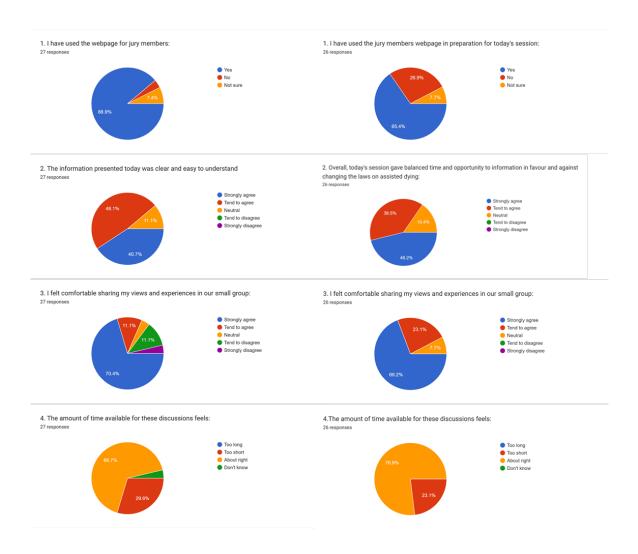
Please note that within the questionnaire for Session 1, the order of the responses was reversed from the previous session.

All three respondents, who selected 'disagree' responses in Session 1, chose 'agree' options in the other sessions.

Tend to agree
Strongly agree

Workshop 2: The global context

Workshop 3: A range of perspectives - 1



Workshop 4: A range of perspectives -2

Workshop 5&6: Reviewing all we have heard & final deliberations

