

[SNP bow to Scottish Conservative pressure on support for terminally ill patients](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
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Scottish Conservative MSP Jeremy Balfour has been successful in convincing the Scottish Government to change the policy regarding benefits given to those who are terminally ill.

Mr Balfour had originally secured an amendment to the Social Security (Scotland) Bill that extended the period that terminally ill patients received benefits from six months up to two years.

However he has been successful in forcing the SNP Government to go further, with patients now receiving individual assessments from medical professionals to ensure that they receive the appropriate level of support based on their condition.

It represents a significant climb-down from the Scottish Government who had originally defined a person as terminally ill if they are in the last six months of life.

This unfairly excludes many people living with terminal conditions from accessing the benefits quickly, and the Scottish Conservatives had joined with organisations involved in palliative care such as Marie Curie and MND Scotland to fight for this change.

Scottish Conservative spokesman on welfare reform Jeremy Balfour MSP said:

“It’s welcome that the SNP Government has finally bowed to pressure and made this change.

“The previous situation only provided financial support for those who are terminally ill for six months – that’s simply not good enough.

“That’s why we called for it to be extended, and we’re pleased that all patients will now receive support tailored to their situation.

“Terminally ill patients need as much security and support as possible through what is a traumatic time and this should now ensure that they get it.

“We’d like to thank Marie Curie and MNDScotland for working with us through this battle to make the SNP finally see sense.”