

**British Geriatrics Society**

Improving healthcare for older people

Marjory Warren House  
31 St John's Square London EC1M 4DN

Telephone +44 (0)20 7608 1369  
Email enquiries@bgs.org.uk  
Website www.bgs.org.uk



Chair, Health and Social Care Committee

House of Commons

By Email

25 March 2026

Dear Layla Moran MP,

**Health and Social Care Committee report - a missed opportunity to highlight the needs of the majority dying each year**

We are writing to outline our deep concern that the [Health and Social Care Committee's report on palliative care](#), published on 24 March 2026, does not reference the specific needs of older people despite them accounting for most deaths each year. It is therefore a missed opportunity to highlight how end of life care can be improved for the majority.

Last year, the BGS submitted evidence to the committee's expert panel evaluation of palliative care in England. We were pleased that our evidence was referred to in your [previous report](#), published 28 November 2025, which summarised findings from this evaluation. However, we are disappointed that this evidence did not inform your recommendations for the Palliative and End of Life Care MSF in this new report.

The majority of deaths in the UK are in older people over the age of 75, accounting for 70% of deaths. Older people will typically have multiple health conditions, including frailty and

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dementia, and will have specific needs at the end of life which are different to those of people dying at a younger age with one terminal illness. They may also experience fluctuating health, making it difficult to predict when they will die. This means that traditional palliative care does not always serve them well.

The report's recommendations include multiple targets for children and young people's palliative care. We recognise that this group, who account for 2% of deaths each year, will have distinct unmet needs at the end of life which the MSF should address. However, we are alarmed that the report does not make similar recommendations for older people, the majority dying each year, who are the group least likely to have access to palliative, end of life, or hospice care. Additionally, the risk of unmet need is 40% higher for those with three or more conditions than those with one condition.

The Palliative and End of Life Care MSF is a pivotal opportunity to improve care for the majority of people who die each year, namely those who die in later life. To achieve this, it must prioritise the needs of older adults living with multiple conditions, including frailty and dementia, who account for the majority of deaths each year. Older people should be clearly recognised as a distinct group within the MSF, including in its overarching moonshot goal and interventions. Without this focus, the MSF risks being perceived as irrelevant for most deaths and even as ageist. We strongly recommend greater involvement of experts in older people's healthcare, such as geriatricians, in the development of the MSF. The BGS will continue to push for the needs of older people to be represented in the MSF and stands ready to work more closely with Government to make this a reality.

The [BGS](#) is a membership organisation representing all healthcare professionals with an interest in improving healthcare for older people. We currently have over 5600 members across the multidisciplinary team, including geriatricians, GPs, nurses, pharmacists, and allied health professionals working in acute, primary and community care settings.

We would welcome the opportunity to discuss these issues with you further. If you would like to set up a meeting, please contact Lucy Aldridge ([l.aldridge@bgs.org.uk](mailto:l.aldridge@bgs.org.uk)), BGS Policy Co-ordinator.

Yours sincerely,



Professor Jugdeep Dhesi

BGS President



Dr Sarah Hopkins

Chair of BGS End of Life Care Special Interest Group