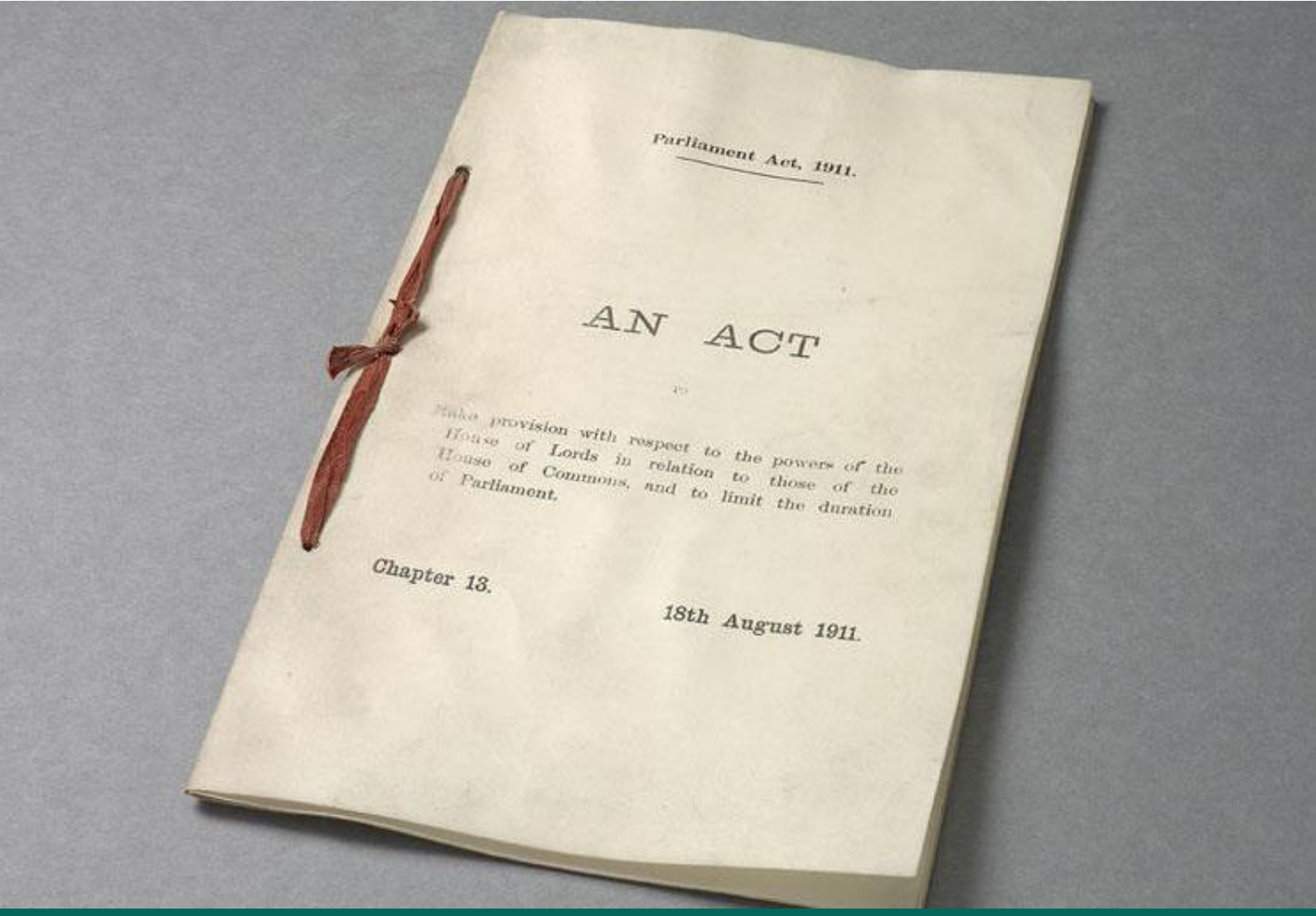

The assisted dying bill: How could the Parliament Act be used?

7 May 2026

HANSARD SOCIETY

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Executive summary

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill ("the assisted dying bill") — a Private Member's Bill (PMB) to legalise assisted dying in England and Wales — failed to complete its passage through the House of Lords before the end of the 2024–26 parliamentary session.

Supporters are therefore expected to seek the bill's reintroduction in the next session, with the possibility of using the Parliament Act 1911 to override continued opposition in the Lords.

The Parliament Act permits the House of Commons, in limited circumstances, to present legislation for Royal Assent without the consent of the House of Lords.

Since 1911, the procedure has been used only seven times, and never for a Private Member's Bill. If it were to be used for the assisted dying bill, novel procedural adaptations might be required.

What conditions must be met to use the Parliament Act?

Section 2 of the Parliament Act 1911 sets out the procedural conditions that must be met if a bill is to be presented for Royal Assent without the House of Lords consent.

- The bill must have been sent to the House of Lords at least one month before the end of the first session.
- The House of Lords must have "rejected" the bill in the first session. "Rejection" means either: defeat at Second or Third Reading; failure to complete all stages before the end of the session; or insistence on Lords amendments unacceptable to the Commons.
- At least one year must elapse between Second Reading in the House of Commons in the first session and Third Reading in the Commons in the second session.
- The bill introduced in the Commons in the second session must be "identical" to that sent to the Lords in the first session. There are some limited exceptions: changes required because of the passage of time; and inclusion of Lords amendments agreed in the first session. In addition, the bill sent for Royal Assent may also include Lords amendments agreed in the second session, as well as any "suggested amendments" proposed by the Commons and agreed by the Lords.
- The "identical" bill must be sent to the House of Lords at least one month before the end of the second session. Whether this requirement can be satisfied will depend on the speed of proceedings in the House of Commons. A session beginning in May 2026 would ordinarily be expected to last around 12 months, although the precise timetable remains flexible.
- The House of Lords must again "reject" the bill in the second session. The meaning of "rejection" is the same as in the first session. However, if the Lords ultimately pass the bill in the conventional manner, the Parliament Act procedure would not be required.

- Once it becomes clear that the House of Lords will not pass the bill, the Speaker of the House of Commons must certify that the statutory conditions for use of the Parliament Act have been satisfied before the bill may receive Royal Assent.

Constitutional significance: Commons primacy

If MPs give an identical assisted dying bill a Second Reading in the 2026–27 Session, that will signal the Commons' intention to proceed, if necessary, under the Parliament Act.

However, a backbench MP sponsoring the bill does not control parliamentary time and cannot table the procedural motions needed to carry the bill through its remaining stages. Without Government support – either by allocating time or tabling the necessary motions – the Commons' expressed intention may ultimately be incapable of being realised.

The Government would arguably therefore have a constitutional responsibility to facilitate the House of Commons' decision, by providing the time and procedural motions necessary to give effect to it. A failure to do so could be seen as frustrating, through inaction, the Commons' exercise of its constitutional primacy through the mechanism provided by the Parliament Act.

Providing procedural support need not compromise Government neutrality on the substance of the assisted dying bill. It would be facilitating the statutory right of the elected House to determine whether to insist upon legislation it has previously approved, rather than endorsing the policy of assisted dying itself.

How can the bill be reintroduced to the House of Commons?

Option 1: Private Member's Bill (PMB) Ballot. An MP successful in the PMB ballot could adopt the version of the assisted dying bill passed at Third Reading in the Commons in the first session. The ballot is expected to take place on 21 May 2026, with First Reading of the 20 ballot bills likely to be on 17 June 2026. To have a realistic prospect of progress, the sponsoring MP would need to rank in the top seven in the ballot, to secure a guaranteed Second Reading.

The ballot bill route to passing an identical bill has been attempted twice before without success: for the European Union (Referendum) Bill (in the 2013-14 and 2014-15 Sessions) and the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill (in the 2022-23 and 2023-24 Sessions).

Option 2: Presentation Bill. Any MP may introduce a Presentation Bill, which is another form of Private Members' Bill. However, these rank behind ballot bills in the allocation of parliamentary time and rarely make progress without Government support.

Option 3: Government Bill with free votes. Procedurally, this would be the simplest and most time-efficient route. The Government could introduce the legislation while allowing MPs a free vote on all its provisions. There are precedents for this: the Hunting Act 2004; the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013; and the War Crimes Act 1991. However, the Government has so far shown little indication that it is willing to adopt this approach.

The "identical bill" rule and amendments

Historically, bills proceeding under the Parliament Act have been subject to only minimal amendment. The bill passed in the second session in the House of Commons must correspond to the version passed by the Commons at Third Reading in the first session, subject to only two limited exceptions.

- **Technical changes arising from the passage of time.** Only minor consequential updates are permitted. In practice, this would likely extend no further than updating the year in the assisted dying bill's short title.

- **Incorporation of amendments agreed by the Lords in the first session.** However, it is uncertain whether amendments made by the Lords in the first session but never communicated to the Commons because the bill did not complete its Lords stages, may be included in the second-session bill. The Lords agreed only three amendments in the first session. The question will ultimately fall to the Speaker to determine.

Other mechanisms for amendment

Although the "identical bill" requirement is restrictive, two additional mechanisms exist for altering the legislation in the second session.

- **"Suggested amendments".** The Commons may attach suggested amendments when sending the bill to the Lords in the second session. These do not formally alter the text of the bill and therefore preserve its "identical" status. If the Lords then agree to some of those suggested amendments, while still rejecting the bill overall, those agreed suggested amendments may nevertheless be incorporated into the final enacted version. This mechanism has been used only rarely. Suggested amendments have been debated on just four occasions and formally proposed only twice, and no suggested amendment has ever been accepted by the Lords.

- **Lords amendments in the second session.** If the Lords amends the bill in the second session and the Commons agrees to those amendments, they may be included in the final text enacted under the Parliament Act.

Departures from conventional legislative practice

Every previous use of the Parliament Act has involved departures from standard Commons procedures.

Because the bill agreed by the Commons in the second session must remain "identical" to that in the first, the Parliament Act did not envisage a conventional amendment process. In previous Parliament Act cases, Committee and Report stages have been dispensed with altogether or retained only in nominal form.

As decisions on whether to hold a suggested amendments stage – and which suggested amendments should be selected for debate – ordinarily fall to the Government in relation to Government bills, this may imply that, for a Private Member's Bill, those decisions should

instead rest with the backbench Member in charge of the bill, including whether a suggested amendments stage should occur and the form it should take.

However, there is no obligation for such a stage to take place, or for the House to consider every suggested amendment proposed. Where suggested amendments are tabled, a decision will need to be made as to which are selected for debate. Possible approaches include limiting debate to suggested amendments from the bill's sponsor; permitting all tabled amendments to be debated; or adopting a more selective approach.

Timetabling challenges

A decision will need to be made about how and when to implement the necessary procedures, and how much time to allocate to each stage. For a Government bill, these matters would be determined by Ministers. For a Private Member's Bill, however, the position is less clear, as backbench MPs cannot ordinarily table motions governing procedures and the allocation of time in the Commons chamber. Key questions for the assisted dying bill would include:

- whether a procedural motion should be moved before or after Second Reading;
- whether, and if so when, a "suggested amendments" stage should be held;
- whether all Commons stages should be completed in a single sitting or over two or more days;
- when any money resolution should be introduced; and
- whether a substantive Third Reading debate should be held before the final vote.

What can be done if the Government provides no time or procedural support?

The Member in charge of the bill could still attempt to steer it through the usual PMB process. However, doing so would be considerably more difficult. The bill would need to pass Second Reading on one of the 13 designated PMB Fridays; navigate Committee and Report Stage without amendment; and then be given a Third Reading. There would be no provision for a "suggested amendments" stage.

The process could be eased if one or more additional sitting Fridays were secured specifically for consideration of the assisted dying bill, outside the normal constraints of the 13 Friday sittings. This could be done by tabling an amendment to the Government's motion proposing the dates for the session's 13 sitting Fridays. This motion is normally tabled after the PMB ballot but before the presentation of the ballot bills. Whether an amendment of this kind – to add one or more dates to the list proposed by the Government – would fall within scope of the motion would ultimately be a matter for the Speaker to decide.

Alternatively, the Backbench Business Committee could also be asked to facilitate the passage of the bill by allocating time for a debate on one or more of the following:

- A motion calling on the Government to allocate parliamentary time and provide procedural support necessary for the bill's passage.

- A procedure motion setting out how the bill should proceed – for example, specifying the time to be allocated for Second and Third Reading; dispensing with Committee and

Report Stages; and providing for a time-limited debate on "suggested amendments" and determining who should select the motions for consideration. It would be for the Committee to determine whether a motion of this sort was within its remit.

- A motion to create one or more additional sitting Fridays beyond the 13 ordinarily allocated for Private Members' Bills, to be dedicated to debate on the assisted dying bill.

What happens in the House of Lords?

Once sent to the Lords, the bill would proceed through the conventional legislative stages in the upper House. If the Commons attaches "suggested amendments" to the bill, the Parliament Act expressly requires the Lords to consider them. Three outcomes are then possible.

- **The Lords pass the bill.** This may occur either without amendment, allowing the bill to proceed directly to Royal Assent, or with amendments, resulting in ping-pong between the two Houses. If agreement is ultimately reached, the bill would become law through the ordinary legislative process without the need to invoke the Parliament Act.

- **The Lords reject the bill outright.** Rejection may occur through defeat at Second or Third Reading; failure to complete proceedings before the end of the session; or insistence on amendments unacceptable to the Commons. In those circumstances, the bill would receive Royal Assent under the Parliament Act.

- **The Lords reject the bill overall but accept some "suggested amendments" proposed by the Commons.** The bill could still proceed under the Parliament Act, with the agreed suggested amendments incorporated into the final enacted text.

When would Royal Assent occur?

The timing of Royal Assent under the Parliament Act depends on when the House of Lords is treated as having rejected the bill.

- If the Lords reject the bill at Second or Third Reading, Royal Assent may follow immediately thereafter.

- If the bill progresses further but fails to complete its passage, rejection is treated as occurring at the end of the session.

Even where all the statutory conditions have been satisfied, the House of Commons could still decide not to invoke the Parliament Act. In the absence of such a decision, the bill would proceed automatically to Royal Assent once certified by the Speaker.

Introduction

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill (or 'assisted dying bill') – a Private Member's Bill (PMB) to legalise assisted dying in England and Wales – fell at the close of the 2024-2026 parliamentary session, when Parliament was prorogued on 29 April 2026.

Its failure was not the result of a decisive vote against it in the House of Lords. Instead, the bill ran into difficulty during Committee Stage, where a record number of amendments – more than 1,200 - were tabled. Progress in considering them was slow. Opponents characterised this as thorough and necessary scrutiny, while supporters regarded it as a filibuster intended to delay the bill's progress. Whatever interpretation is preferred, the outcome was the same: the bill ran out of time.

Attention has therefore shifted to whether the bill could return in the next session and, if so, whether it could be enacted using the procedures set out in the Parliament Act. Since 1911, that Act has enabled the House of Commons, in certain circumstances, to present legislation for Royal Assent without the consent of the House of Lords.

The Parliament Act has been used only seven times since 1911 and never for a Private Member's Bill. Using the Parliament Act for this legislation would therefore set a precedent and may require novel adaptations of the House's procedures.

On other occasions when the House of Commons signalled its willingness to invoke the Parliament Act by passing an identical bill in a successive session, the House of Lords ultimately relented. In those cases, the legislation proceeded through the conventional parliamentary process without the need to formally invoke the Act. Depending on how the politics surrounding the assisted dying bill develop, a similar outcome and resolution remain possible.

This briefing explains the Parliament Act procedure, examines previous uses of the Act and the procedural lessons that may be drawn from them – including the variations in past practice – and considers how the Act might operate in relation to the assisted dying bill.

The briefing also examines the constitutional principle that underpins the Parliament Act: the ability of the elected House of Commons, in certain circumstances, to insist upon legislation despite opposition in the unelected House of Lords. In doing so, it considers the significance of Government support and cooperation, what a position of neutrality might mean in practice, and the extent to which facilitating the process could properly be distinguished from endorsing the substance of the bill itself.

The simplest route would be for the Government to adopt the assisted dying bill while allowing MPs a free vote on its provisions. However, Ministers have so far given no indication that they are willing to take that approach. This briefing therefore explores the alternative legislative vehicles through which the bill might be reintroduced as a Private Member's Bill, the procedural difficulties each would entail, and how some of these difficulties might potentially be overcome.

A central practical issue is that a backbench MP sponsoring the bill does not control parliamentary time and cannot table the procedural motions needed to carry the bill through its remaining stages after Second Reading. Without Government support – whether through allocation of time or the tabling of the necessary motions – the House of Commons may struggle to give practical effect to any decision to assert its primacy under the Parliament Act.

The briefing further considers the statutory conditions that would need to be satisfied, the limited scope for amendment, and the possible use of the Parliament Act's little-used "suggested amendments" procedure. Finally, it identifies the points at which the Speaker may be required to exercise his judgment, the areas in which precedent is limited or uncertain, and the timetabling pressures likely to shape the process.

1. What is the Parliament Act?

Two laws - the Parliament Act 1911 and the Parliament Act 1949 – significantly curtailed the legislative power of the House of Lords. They removed the Lords' ability to veto most public bills, replacing it with a limited delaying power. In doing so, these Acts firmly established the primacy of the elected House of Commons in the passage of legislative bills.

The Parliament Act 1911

At the start of the 20th century, the House of Lords – then composed almost entirely of hereditary peers, apart from the Bishops (the Lords Spiritual) – had the power to block any bill, even those approved by the House of Commons. Although this authority had been exercised sparingly since the expansion of democracy in 1832, the political climate shifted after the Liberals' landslide victory in 1906. In response, Conservative Party leader, Arthur Balfour, urged his allies in the House of Lords to resist the central elements of the Liberal reform agenda.

The conflict came to a head in 1909, when the House of Lords rejected Chancellor David Lloyd George's Finance Bill. In doing so, they broke a 250-year-old convention that peers would not interfere with financial measures approved by the Commons. By refusing Government "Supply", the Lords were effectively asserting a right to decide not only what legislation could pass, but also who could govern, and on what terms.

What followed was a two-year constitutional crisis. The Liberal Government appealed to the electorate twice - in January and December 1910 – pledging to curb the powers of the upper House. When Parliament reconvened, the Lords faced a credible threat: the creation of many new peers loyal to the Liberal Government, alongside clear electoral mandates expressing the "will of the people". Under this pressure, the House of Lords relented, and the Parliament Act 1911 received Royal Assent in August 1911.[1]

The Act imposed firm limits on the Lords' authority. It barred them from delaying certified Money Bills for more than one month and removed their veto over other public bills. Instead, their power was reduced to a suspensory veto: if the Lords rejected a public bill, the House of Commons could still secure Royal Assent by passing the same bill in successive sessions. Once the bill had been approved by the Commons in three sessions – over a minimum period – and rejected by the Lords each time, it could become law without the Lords' consent.

The Parliament Act 1949

Concerned that its post-war nationalisation programme might be obstructed, the Labour Government led by Clement Attlee introduced a new Parliament Bill to further limit the delaying power of the House of Lords. The purpose was to reduce the Lords suspensory veto from three parliamentary sessions to two, making it easier for the Commons to secure the passage of legislation.

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[1] House of Commons, *Journal of the House of Commons*, Vol. 166 (January 1911 – December 1911), p. 427

Although the Bill was approved by the House of Commons in 1947, it faced continued resistance in the Lords. Ultimately, the Government relied on the procedure established by the Parliament Act 1911 to bypass the upper House. Using this mechanism, the Bill was enacted without the Lords' consent and received Royal Assent in December 1949.[2]

Together, the 1911 and 1949 Acts are often referred to as the "Parliament Acts". For clarity, however, this paper treats them collectively as a single framework, referring to them in the singular as the Parliament Act.

Does the Parliament Act apply to Private Members' Bills?

The Parliament Act does apply to Private Members' Bills. The Parliament Act 1911 (as amended by the Parliament Act 1949) applies to any public bill – that is, legislation of general application. A Private Member's Bill (PMB), although introduced by a backbench MP rather than a Minister, is still a public bill. The Parliament Act can therefore be used to secure its enactment.

This issue was explicitly debated during the passage of the 1911 Act. On 20 April 1911, Lord Alexander Thynne MP, proposed an amendment to confine the Bill's scope to Government bills.[3] The Solicitor General, Sir John Simon MP, opposed the change, noting that the mechanism could apply equally to a bill introduced in one session by a private Member and in the next by the Government.[4] Winston Churchill, then Home Secretary, reinforced the point, warning that excluding PMBs would effectively mean "inviting the Lords to exercise their Veto upon them whenever opportunity offers."[5] The amendment was defeated.

In practice, however, the Parliament Act has never been used to pass a Private Member's Bill. This reflects political and procedural realities rather than any legal or constitutional barrier. Private Members' Bills are typically less contentious and therefore less likely to face sustained opposition in the House of Lords. More importantly, the statutory procedure – especially the requirement to pass an identical bill in two successive sessions – demands tight control of parliamentary time, something usually available only to the Government.

How many times has the Parliament Act been used?

Seven Acts of Parliament have been passed using the Parliament Act procedure.

Three of those Acts were passed under the terms of the Parliament Act 1911, originally requiring that identical bills be passed in three successive sessions by the House of Commons.

- The Government of Ireland Act 1914;
- The Welsh Church Act 1914; and
- The Parliament Act 1949.

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[2] House of Commons, *Journal of the House of Commons*, Vol. 204 (October 1948 – December 1949), p. 445
[3] House of Commons, *Hansard*, 20 April 1911, vol. 24, col. 1221
[4] House of Commons, *Hansard*, 20 April 1911, vol. 24, col. 1233
[5] House of Commons, *Hansard*, 20 April 1911, vol. 24, col. 1225

Four Acts have since been passed under the terms of the Parliament Act 1911, as amended by the Parliament Act 1949, requiring that identical bills be passed in two successive sessions by the House of Commons.

- The War Crimes Act 1991;
- The European Parliamentary Elections Act 1999;
- The Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000; and
- The Hunting Act 2004.

Three other Government bills have likewise been reintroduced and passed in identical form by the House of Commons in a second (or pre-1949 in a third) session, with a view to using the Parliament Act. In each case, however, a compromise was reached, enabling the bills to pass in the conventional manner and proceed to Royal Assent with the consent of the House of Lords.

- The Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977;
- The Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Act 1976; and
- The Temperance (Scotland) Act 1913.

Table 1 below shows the stage at which each of these 10 Acts was rejected in the first, second and, where applicable, third sessions.

What are the conditions for using the Parliament Act?

The 1911 Act, as amended by the Parliament Act 1949, sharply limits the role of the House of Lords in relation to public bills. If the Lords fail to return a Money Bill to the Commons within a month of receiving it, the Commons may ask for its return and present it unilaterally for Royal Assent. Other public bills are covered by section 2 of the 1911 Act, which sets out a series of procedural conditions that if met enable the House of Commons to present a bill for Royal Assent without the Lords' consent.[6]

Since the assisted dying bill is not a Money Bill, the relevant conditions are those applying to other public bills. These operate across two parliamentary sessions. In practice, the Parliament Act procedure is only available for bills that are introduced first into the House of Commons.

First session requirements

1. **Timing :** The bill must be sent to the House of Lords at least one month before the end of the session.

    - ✓ Met – the assisted dying bill was sent on 23 June 2025, well in advance of the expected end of the session (April/May 2026).

2. **Rejection by the Lords:** The bill must be "rejected". This is broadly defined as meaning:

[6] *Parliament Act 1911*, section 2

a) defeat at Second or Third Reading; or
b) failure to complete all the legislative stages; or
c) insistence on amendments made by the Lords which are unacceptable to the Commons.

- ✓ Met (b) – the assisted dying bill stalled at Committee Stage in the House of Lords and did not complete its passage.

Second session requirements

3. **One-year interval:** At least one calendar year must elapse between Second Reading in the Commons (first session) and Third Reading in the Commons (second session).

   - ✓ Met – Second Reading of the assisted dying bill in the first session took place on 29 November 2024. A calendar year has since elapsed.

4. **"Identical bill" requirement:** The bill that is introduced must be the same as that sent to the Lords in the first session, subject to two limited exceptions:

   a) changes required due to the passage of time (page 20); and
   b) inclusion of Lords amendments from the first session (pages 20-21);

   There are also two ways in which the bill can be amended after introduction:

   c) if the Lords makes amendments to the bill, and the Commons agrees with some but not others – resulting in the bill's rejection - those Lords amendments that the Commons has agreed to must be included (page 21); and
   d) "suggested amendments" proposed by the Commons and agreed by the Lords (pages 21 and 23-28).

   ⚠ Bills enacted under the Parliament Act have only ever been subject to minimal amendment. The suggested amendments procedure allows the Commons to propose a compromise while formally passing an identical bill. In practice, however, this mechanism has never been successfully used to amend any of the 10 bills subject to the Parliament Act procedure – though there is no reason in principle why it could not do so in future cases.

   A key question for a Member in charge of the assisted dying bill in the second session will therefore be how many amendments, if any, are needed to make the bill workable and how many changes, if any, could be made without breaching the "identical" bill requirement.

   Section 4 sets out more detail about the amendment process for bills passed under the Parliament Act.

5. **Timing requirement (second session):** The bill must again be sent to the Lords at least one month before the end of the session.

- ❓ Uncertain – this depends on the bill's Commons progress and the Government's management of parliamentary time. A session beginning in May 2026 would ordinarily be expected to last around 12 months, but the precise timetable remains flexible.

6. **Second rejection by the Lords:** Peers must again "reject" the bill (in one of the three ways that also constitute rejection in the first session).

   - ❓ Uncertain – the Lords might choose to compromise and pass the assisted dying bill in the conventional way, particularly if use of the Parliament Act appears likely.

7. **Final step: Speaker's certification:** Before the end of the second session the Speaker of the House of Commons must certify that all statutory conditions under section 2 of the 1911 Act have been satisfied. This certification is conclusive and cannot be challenged in the courts.

Table 1: Bills passed in successive sessions engaging the Parliament Act procedure and the stage at which they were rejected in each session

Bill	Parliament Act used?	Stage at which "rejected" in first session	Stage at which "rejected" in second session	Stage at which "rejected" in third session (pre-1949)
Hunting Act 2004	Yes	Did not complete Lords stages	Ping-pong	N/A
Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000	Yes	Second Reading	Did not complete Lords stages	N/A
European Parliamentary Elections Act 1999	Yes	Ping-pong	Second Reading	N/A
War Crimes Act 1991	Yes	Second Reading	Second Reading	N/A
Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977	No	Ping-pong	N/A*	N/A
Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Act 1976	No	Ping-pong	N/A*	N/A
Parliament Act 1949	Yes	Second Reading	Second Reading	Second Reading
Welsh Church Act 1914	Yes	Second Reading	Second Reading	Did not complete Lords stages
Government of Ireland Act 1914	Yes	Second Reading	Second Reading	Did not complete Lords stages
Temperance (Scotland) Act 1913	No	Ping-pong	N/A*	N/A

* The House of Lords ultimately passed these bills in the conventional manner, thus avoiding the need to invoke the Parliament Act.

2. Enforcing the primacy of the House of Commons

The Parliament Act provides the statutory mechanism by which the elected House of Commons can assert its legislative authority over the unelected House of Lords.

Whether a bill is a Government bill or a Private Member's Bill is irrelevant when considering the constitutional question of Commons primacy. In enacting the Parliament Act, Parliament expressly provided that the procedure should apply to Private Members' Bills. It therefore follows that the mechanism for asserting the Commons' primacy is available irrespective of who sponsors the legislation.

However, when the Lords reject legislation passed by the Commons, MPs must actively decide whether to assert that primacy, weighing in the balance the potential future consequences of permitting the unelected House to defy the authority of the elected House.

If MPs grant an identical assisted dying bill a Second Reading in the 2026-27 Session, this will signal the Commons' willingness, if necessary, to proceed under the Parliament Act and override continued opposition from the House of Lords.

Yet a significant practical obstacle would remain. A backbench MP sponsoring the bill does not control parliamentary time and cannot table the procedural motions needed to carry the bill through its remaining stages. Without Government support – either through the allocation of time or the tabling of the necessary motions – the Commons' expressed intention may ultimately be incapable of being realised.

The Government's constitutional responsibility

In these circumstances, if the Commons has clearly voted to assert its primacy, there is a strong argument that the Government bears a constitutional responsibility to facilitate that decision by providing the time and procedural means necessary to give effect to it. A failure to do so could be seen as the Government actively frustrating, through inaction, the purpose of the Parliament Act.

Historically, the principle of the supremacy of the elected Chamber has been regarded as more important than the merits of the individual bill concerned. In 1991, for example, Labour's Shadow Leader of the House of Commons, despite opposing the War Crimes Bill itself, made clear on behalf of the Official Opposition that they supported the principle of Commons primacy.[7] Accordingly, they accepted that the Bill should proceed under the Parliament Act after it had been passed twice by the Commons with substantial majorities.

Similarly, the absence of a bill from the Government's pre-election manifesto has not prevented the use of the Parliament Act. As Table 2 shows, among the five bills enacted under the Parliament Act since 1945 – together with the two further cases in which an identical bill

[7] House of Commons, *Hansard*, 1 May 1991, vol. 190, col. 315

was passed in a successive session with the intention of using the Act, although this ultimately proved unnecessary - the nature and extent of any pre-election commitment has varied.

Table 2: Nature of the pre-election commitment in Parliament Act cases

Legislation	Parliament Act used?	Nature of the pre-election commitment
Hunting Act 2004	Yes	Manifesto commitment to give Parliament a decision on a free vote[8]
Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000	Yes	Pre-election commitment to give Parliament a decision on a free vote, but not in a manifesto[9]
European Parliamentary Elections Act 1999	Yes	Manifesto commitment to legislate[10]
War Crimes Act 1991	Yes	No pre-election commitment
Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977	No	Manifesto commitment to legislate[11]
Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Act 1976	No	Manifesto commitment to legislate[12]
Parliament Act 1949	Yes	No explicit pre-election commitment, but an indirect manifesto commitment: "we will not tolerate obstruction of the people's will by the House of Lords"[13]

Can the Government remain neutral while facilitating the bill?

Government action to enable the House of Commons to assert its primacy would not be inconsistent with a position of neutrality on the merits of the assisted dying bill.

Where the Commons has approved a bill in one session and seeks to proceed under the Parliament Act in the next, facilitating that process may properly be understood as upholding

[8] Labour Party (2001), *Ambitions for Britain*, 'Culture and sport'
[9] C. Brown, 'Labour gives pledge on age of gay consent', *The Independent*, 20 February 1997
[10] Labour Party (1997), *New Labour because Britain deserves better*, 'We will give Britain leadership in Europe'
[11] Labour Party (1974), *Britain will win with Labour*, 'Employment and expansion'
[12] Labour Party (1974), *Britain will win with Labour*, 'Industrial relations'
[13] Labour Party (1945), *Let Us Face the Future: A Declaration of Labour Policy for the Consideration of the Nation*, 'What the Election will be about'

the Commons' constitutional right to determine whether to insist upon its legislation, rather than as endorsing the policy itself.

The Government may be concerned that allocating time or providing procedural support would compromise, or at least appear to compromise, its neutrality on the assisted dying bill. If it has adopted a formally neutral stance and does not ordinarily provide additional time for Private Members' Bills, critics may question why this bill should receive exceptional treatment. That concern is understandable, but it is not decisive, for three reasons.

I. **Distinguishing policy neutrality from institutional responsibility:** Neutrality on the substance of a bill is distinct from neutrality regarding the institutional position of the House of Commons. Although allocating time might appear to favour one Private Member's Bill over others, this would not be a typical case. The key distinction is that the House of Commons has already passed the assisted dying bill, and it is uncommon for the House of Lords to reject a Private Member's Bill once it has secured Commons approval. The Government could therefore justify facilitating the bill on the basis that providing time would simply enable it to return to the House of Lords at the point it had reached at the end of the previous session, thereby allowing further detailed scrutiny to take place. As the Lords did not reach the stage of taking decisive votes on amendments or on the bill's passage, facilitating its return could enable those decisions to be made.

II. **Precedent:** There is clear precedent for substantial Government involvement in legislation on which it has adopted a neutral position or permitted a free vote. Procedural facilitation — such as allocating time or even sponsoring a bill — is not the same as endorsing its substance. Governments have, on occasion, enabled Parliament to reach a decision on contentious issues while explicitly declining to take a collective position on the merits. Examples include the Government's role in sponsoring the Hunting Act 2004 and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013, and providing time for the Abortion Act 1967 and the Murder (Abolition of Death Penalty) Act 1965. Put simply, the Government may enable the House to decide – without deciding for it.

III. **Historical practice on Private Members' Bills:** The current reluctance to allocate Government time to Private Members' Bills is a relatively recent development. Before the 1980s, governments of different political persuasions regularly provided time for such bills, particularly where they concerned matters of conscience or significant public importance. This enabled the House of Commons to reach a decision without being constrained by procedural limitations. Between 1954 and 1979, Government time was allocated to 76 Private Members' Bills, of which 73 became law.[14] The modern practice of withholding time reflects a change in governmental attitudes and parliamentary management, rather than a settled constitutional principle.

[14] Blackburn, R., Kennon, A., Wheeler-Booth, M., Griffith, J. A. G., and Ryle, M. (2003), *Griffith and Ryle on parliament: functions, practice and procedures* (London: Sweet and Maxwell), p. 553

3. How might the assisted dying bill be reintroduced to the House of Commons?

For the Parliament Act to be used, the bill must be reintroduced into the House of Commons in the next parliamentary session. There are three possible procedural routes by which this could be achieved, each with distinct advantages and constraints.

The bill could be reintroduced as:

1. a Private Members' ballot bill;
2. a Presentation bill; or
3. a Government bill.

Option 1: Reintroduction via the Private Members' Bill ballot

The bill could be reintroduced through the Private Members' Bill ballot, as in the first session. The ballot typically takes place on the second or third Thursday of a new session – which is likely to be Thursday 21 May or Thursday 4 June – selecting 20 MPs whose bills take precedence over all other Private Members' Bills. Those 20 MPs must then choose the subject of their bills, which are introduced to the House at First Reading usually on the fifth Wednesday of the session (likely to be Wednesday 17 June 2026).[15]

At the start of each session, the Government proposes – by an amendable motion – the dates for 13 sitting Fridays for Private Members' Bills. Second Readings are given priority on the first seven of these Fridays. When introducing their bills, the 20 successful MPs must therefore each select one of those seven Fridays for Second Reading. In practice, the first seven MPs drawn in the ballot usually choose those dates in sequence, ensuring their bills are listed first on the Order Paper for that Friday and therefore have the best chance of being debated.

Statistically, it is highly unlikely that the original sponsor of the bill, Kim Leadbeater MP, would secure a high place in the Private Members' Bill ballot again.[16] A key challenge will therefore be to identify an MP successful in the ballot who is willing to adopt the same assisted dying bill as passed by the Commons in the last session. To secure a realistic chance of progress, that MP would need to rank within the top seven in the ballot, thereby guaranteeing a Second Reading slot.

If the bill is adopted by an MP ranked outside the top seven, it would not be listed first on the Order Paper for its chosen Friday. As a result, it would be vulnerable to being "talked out", with the available time being consumed by debate on PMBs listed ahead of it on the Order Paper.

[15] The text of the bill does not need to be published on this date and can be published as late as the Second Reading debate itself.

[16] The sponsoring MP in the new session would also be free to choose a new co-sponsor in the House of Lords; it need not be Lord Falconer of Thoroton.

Ideally, the sponsoring MP would be placed as high as possible in the ballot. A higher position not only increases the likelihood of being reached for debate but also allows an earlier Second Reading, potentially enabling the bill to reach the House of Lords sooner.

Even if the assisted dying bill secures a Second Reading, further hurdles remain. Progress beyond that stage may require procedural motions or time allocation that only the Government can provide (see section 6 for more information).

If the Government declines to provide either procedural support or parliamentary time, proponents of the bill could seek to amend the motion approving the 13 sitting Fridays for the session. Such an amendment could propose one or more additional sitting Fridays specifically to facilitate the bill's passage in a form compatible with the Parliament Act. Whether an amendment of this kind would fall within scope of the motion would ultimately be a matter for the Speaker to decide (see pages 35-36 for more detail).

Has the ballot been used to reintroduce an identical bill in a second session?

This ballot bill route to use of the Parliament Act has previously been attempted without success.

- In the 2013-14 Session, the House of Commons passed the European Union (Referendum) Bill – a Private Member's Bill introduced by James Wharton MP – but it stalled in the House of Lords at Committee Stage.[17] At the start of the following session, Prime Minister David Cameron indicated support for its reintroduction as a Private Member's Bill.[18] Bob Neill MP, who was drawn third in the ballot, duly reintroduced the Bill. However, it failed to progress beyond Second Reading because the Government did not provide a money resolution (for more detail on the need for a money resolution, see page 30).[19] This was reportedly due to tensions within the coalition Government.[20]

- In the 2022-23 Session, the House of Commons passed the Hunting Trophies (Import Prohibition) Bill – a ballot bill sponsored by Henry Smith MP – but it also stalled at Committee Stage in the Lords. An identical version was reintroduced as a ballot bill by John Spellar MP in the subsequent session, but the dissolution of Parliament for the 2024 general election prevented it from progressing beyond Second Reading.

Option 2: Reintroduction as a Presentation bill

If no MP towards the top of the ballot is willing to adopt the assisted dying bill, it could be reintroduced as a Presentation bill by Kim Leadbeater or another MP.

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[17] House of Lords, European Union (Referendum) Bill: Stages, HL Bill 63 2013-14,
[18] House of Commons, *Hansard*, 4 June 2014, vol. 582, col. 24
[19] House of Commons, European Union (Referendum) Bill, HC Bill 15 2014-15
[20] N. Watt, 'Double blow for Cameron over EU referendum and £1.7bn demand', *The Guardian*, 28 October 2014

A Presentation bill is another form of Private Members' Bill which allows any MP to present a bill to the House at short notice. However, Presentation bills cannot be introduced until all 20 ballot bills have been presented. As a result, they are automatically placed behind ballot bills in the parliamentary timetable and are unlikely to secure time for Second Reading unless the Government intervenes to provide additional time outside the usual PMB procedures and sitting times.

Even if a Presentation bill were to receive a Second Reading, its progress would depend on Government co-operation – both in allocating time and in facilitating any procedural steps required under the Parliament Act.

Option 3: Reintroduction as a Government bill with free votes on its provisions

The most procedurally straightforward option would be for the Government to take up the bill in the next session. This would allow it to allocate sufficient parliamentary time, schedule proceedings flexibly, and table any necessary procedural motions.

However, sponsoring the bill would require a Minister to stand at the Despatch Box and formally move it through each of the required legislative stages. Government sponsorship need not imply endorsement of a bill's substance. There is precedent for Governments introducing legislation while allowing a free vote on all its provisions – including bills passed under the Parliament Act:

- **Hunting Act 2004:** This was introduced as an "options bill" in both the 2002-03 and 2003-04 Sessions, with free votes at every stage. It was designed to give Parliament a mechanism to decide on the forms of regulation (or non-regulation) of hunting with dogs. Despite neutrality on the preferred option of a complete hunting ban, Ministers facilitated its passage and tabled the motions necessary for use of the Parliament Act.

- **War Crimes Act 1991:** Following an independent inquiry into Nazi war criminals who had entered the UK since the Second World War, the Government introduced this Bill to allow UK courts to try those crimes retrospectively. In 1989, the Government made time for MPs to debate and vote on a motion endorsing the introduction of legislation.[21] MPs agreed this on a free vote. Ministers formally introduced the bill the following year (1990) and MPs approved it on a free vote. However, the bill was rejected by the Lords. The Government reintroduced the bill in the next session and tabled the necessary procedural motions for the bill to be passed in a form compatible with the Parliament Act.

- **Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013**: This was a Government bill, but ministers gave their MPs a free vote on all the bill's substantive provisions.

[21] House of Commons, *Journal of the House of Commons*, Vol. 246 (November 1989 – November 1990), p. 50

The Government could therefore argue that it remains neutral on the substance of the assisted dying bill while enabling the House of Commons to decide whether to assert its primacy.

In the first session, ministers consistently restated the Government's neutrality on the bill and refused to provide any Government time for it. However, the Leader of the House of Commons indicated that if the House of Lords had passed the bill in the first session, he would have found time for the House of Commons to consider any Lords amendments.[22]

[22] House of Commons, *Hansard*, 12 February 2026, vol. 780, col. 956

4. The "identical bill" requirement and amendments

The Parliament Act procedure is not designed for legislation that requires extensive amendment. Its core requirements – particularly the need to pass an identical bill in two successive sessions – favour continuity over revision. Bills enacted under the Parliament Act have only ever been altered minimally.

If substantial changes were needed to the assisted dying bill – for example, to ensure the legislation is workable before it is sent for Royal Assent - the constraints inherent in the Parliament Act process will be tested more than ever before.

Lord Falconer of Thoroton tabled 74 amendments during Committee Stage in the House of Lords (of which only three were agreed), some of them aimed at making the bill workable in practice.[23] A question for any new sponsor of the assisted dying bill to address is whether any of these 74 amendments are deemed absolutely necessary before the bill can receive Royal Assent.

Two exceptions to re-introducing an "identical bill"

The bill reintroduced in the second session must match the version passed at Third Reading by the House of Commons in the first session – here, the text agreed by MPs on 20 June 2025 – subject only to two limited exceptions.

1. **Changes required by the passage of time.** Only minor, technical updates are permitted. These must be "necessary owing to the time which has elapsed since the date of the former bill".[24]

    - In the case of the assisted dying bill, that would likely be limited to updating the year in the short title (from 2025, to a later year).

2. **Incorporation of Lords amendments from the first session.** The Parliament Act allows, but does not require, the inclusion of amendments made by the House of Lords in the first session. However, uncertainty arises where amendments were agreed in the Lords but never communicated to the Commons because the bill did not complete its passage in the upper House. This is an unresolved procedural question.

    Views among former parliamentary clerks differ as to whether such amendments fall within the scope of the Parliament Act procedure. For a Private Member's Bill, the initial judgment would likely rest with the bill's co-sponsors in the Commons and the Lords as to whether to incorporate any Committee Stage amendments made by the Lords in the

[23] Lord Falconer also tabled three additional amendments (bringing the total to 77), but these were withdrawn or not moved. For the full list of his amendments see: https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3774/stages/20186/amendments?Decision=All&MemberId=2758&amendmentNumber=&searchTerm=&page=4

[24] *Parliament Act 1911*, section 2(4)

first session into the second session version of the bill. Ultimately, however, it would be for the Speaker of the House of Commons to determine whether their inclusion is procedurally admissible and consistent with the requirements of the Parliament Act.

- The House of Lords agreed only three amendments to the assisted dying bill during Committee stage.[25] The bill's sponsors and the Commons Speaker will therefore be required to take a relatively narrow view of what constitutes permissible change.

Alternative routes for amendment during the bill's passage

1. **Lords amendments in the second session.** If peers amend the bill in the second session and the House of Commons agrees to some of those amendments, those must be included in the final version sent for Royal Assent under the Parliament Act. In practice, this scenario will occur only if the bill reaches the ping-pong stage and the two Houses disagree on some of the amendments made by the Lords but not others.

2. **"Suggested amendments".** The Parliament Act procedure allows the Commons to attach a package of "suggested amendments" when sending the bill to the Lords in the second session. These:

   - do not alter the text of the bill, thereby preserving its identical nature; and
   - allow the Commons to signal potential areas of compromise to the Lords.

   If the Lords accept any of the suggested amendments, but reject the bill, the Commons can proceed to enact the bill under the Parliament Act, with the suggested amendments agreed by the Lords included.

   Suggested amendments have been debated on just four of the 13 occasions where the Commons has passed an identical bill with a view to using the Parliament Act. The Commons have agreed just two amendments under this procedure – one in relation to the Hunting Act 2004 and one in relation to the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Act 1976. Neither of those suggested amendments were ultimately agreed by the House of Lords through the suggested amendments procedural mechanism, although the suggested amendment to the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Act 1976 was ultimately agreed by the Lords through the conventional legislative process. (See page 28 for more information).

[25] See the three amendments agreed by the House of Lords at Committee Stage here: https://bills.parliament.uk/bills/3774/stages/20186/amendments?searchTerm=&amendmentNumber=&Decision=Agreed

What if a non-identical assisted dying bill is introduced in the second session?

If a substantively revised assisted dying bill were introduced in the second session – for example, to accommodate a number of required amendments – then the Parliament Act could not be used. The revised bill would instead need to proceed through the conventional legislative process in both Houses, securing agreement from both the House of Commons and the House of Lords in the usual way.

However, this would not eliminate the eventual use of the Parliament Act, but it would delay it. If the revised bill were also blocked by the House of Lords, and subsequently reintroduced in identical form in the next (third) session and again blocked by the Lords, the Parliament Act could then be invoked, providing all the statutory conditions were met.

There is precedent for this approach. The legislation that became the Hunting Act 2004 was passed by the Commons in three sessions before the Parliament Act was ultimately used: the second session was a revised version of that agreed in the first session, while the third session bill was identical to that introduced in the second.[26]

Can drafting defects in a bill enacted under the Parliament Act be remedied at a later date?

The Government – and in particular its legal advisers and parliamentary draftsmen – has a responsibility to maintain the integrity of the statute book. However, it is not unknown for drafting and technical errors in a bill that has received Royal Assent to be corrected at a later date through provisions in another Government bill.

There is precedent for amending, or seeking to amend, legislation enacted under the Parliament Act before it comes into force. The Suspensory Act 1914 postponed the commencement of both the Welsh Church Act 1914 and the Government of Ireland Act 1914 – each passed under the Parliament Act – until the end of the First World War. The Government also introduced legislation to amend the Government of Ireland Act 1914 to exclude Ulster from its Home Rule provisions, but this was abandoned due to the War and the passage of the Suspensory Act. In the event, the 1914 Act never came into force, being superseded by the Government of Ireland Act 1920, which incorporated the exclusion of Ulster.

If any drafting or technical errors in the assisted dying bill required correction after Royal Assent, the proposed four-year implementation period would provide ample time for such changes to be made by the Government. However, there may be concern that reopening the legislation, even for technical corrections, could create pressure to revisit the underlying policy on assisted dying.

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[26] The first and second sessions were non-consecutive: 2000-01 and 2002-03.

5. Departure from conventional legislative practice

On every previous occasion when the Parliament Act has been used, the House of Commons has departed from some of its usual legislative procedures. It does this by agreeing a motion applying specific procedures to the bill (a "procedural motion"). Time must somehow be found to debate and decide whether to agree any such motion. If it is moved by a Minister (it would normally be in the name of the Leader of the House), that is not a problem. If it is left to the bill's sponsors to secure this time for debate, that is more difficult to orchestrate.

Omitting Committee and Report Stages

The most significant departure from conventional practice is the removal – or effective suspension - of the normal amending stages at Committee and Report in the House of Commons (see Table 3). While this can occur when bills are expedited on grounds of urgency, it remains relatively uncommon.

In relation to bills proceeding under the Parliament Act, in some cases these stages have been formally dispensed with altogether; in others, they have been retained only in a nominal sense, without substantive debate.

Guidance from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel makes clear that Committee and Report stages "were not contemplated as part of the normal procedure" for bills proceeding under the 1911 Act.[27] The rationale is straightforward.

- As Prime Minister Herbert Asquith explained in 1914: "it would be a waste of parliamentary time to propose amendments which…cannot be adopted without destroying the identity of the Bill";[28] and
- the suggested amendments mechanism was intended to take the place of those conventional amending stages.

The "suggested amendments" stage

To compensate for the absence of the usual amending stages the House of Commons may "suggest" amendments to the House of Lords.

These "suggested amendments":

- do not alter the text of the bill;
- are sent to the Lords alongside the unchanged bill; and
- allow the Commons to signal areas of potential compromise without breaching the requirement that the bill remain identical.

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[27] Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, *Parliament Act 1911 section 2: guidance*, para. 4.1 (last updated 29 August 2019)
[28] House of Commons, *Hansard*, 23 June 1913, vol. 54, col. 818

A typical motion takes the form:

> *"That, pursuant to the Parliament Acts 1911 and 1949, the House suggests to the Lords the following Amendment to the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill… [insert text of amendment]"*

Multiple proposed changes may be grouped together within a single motion, enabling the Commons to present a package of suggested amendments in a structured way.

Timing and use of the "suggested amendments" stage

If a suggested amendments stage is held, it must take place between Second and Third Reading in the House of Commons. However, it is not a mandatory step under the Parliament Act.

In practice, as Table 3 shows, this approach has been used in just four of the 13 attempts to invoke the Parliament Act since 1911. The Commons has never sent more than one suggested amendment to the Lords for a single bill. No amendment proposed by the Commons through this mechanism has ever been accepted by the House of Lords (although one amendment was ultimately agreed outside the suggested amendments procedure, through the conventional legislative process).

Because the Government controls the House of Commons timetable, on a Government bill it ultimately decides whether to allocate time for a suggested amendments stage under the Parliament Act. On a PMB, there is no precedent to go by if the Government does not choose to provide time.

As guidance from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel confirms, the Government "determines the order in which the motions are considered and can also select certain motions and not others."[29] While any MP may table motions for suggested amendments, if the stage occurs in Government time, then Ministers determine:

- which motions are scheduled for debate; and
- the order in which they are considered.

It is an open question whether the procedural motion would give the sponsor of a Private Member's Bill the same power to determine the selection and ordering of suggested amendments.

The suggested amendments procedure differs in a key respect from the conventional Committee or Report Stage. At those stages, the Speaker of the House of Commons selects which amendments are debated and put to a vote. In contrast, suggested amendments are tabled as motions. Under the Commons Standing Orders, the Speaker does not select which motions are debated but determines only whether they are orderly.

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[29] Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, *Parliament Act 1911 section 2: guidance*, para. 3.11 (last updated 29 August 2019)

There is, however, an important qualification. Motions for suggested amendments can themselves be amended, and the Speaker retains the power to select amendments to these motions.

If the Government allocated time for a suggested amendments stage, it could face a difficult political and procedural choice about which proposals to bring forward for consideration, presumably in discussion with the bill's co-sponsors in the Commons and Lords. Alternatively, the Government could defer that difficult decision entirely to the sponsor of the bill.

Each motion for a suggested amendment may encompass multiple individual textual changes This contrasts with Committee and Report stages, where each textual amendment must be tabled separately. In principle, where a number of technical changes are required to make the bill workable, they could be grouped into a smaller number of motions. However, any amendments combined within a single motion should be related in subject matter.

How might "suggested amendments" be selected?

Crucially, there is no requirement for the House to consider every suggested amendment. There are no rules or Standing Orders governing how suggested amendments should be tabled or arranged on the Order Paper, so whoever controls the time in which the suggested amendments are scheduled for debate must select and arrange them. In previous cases, this function has always been performed by the Government, because all have involved Government bills in Government time.

In the context of a Private Member's Bill, however, the position is procedurally untested. As decisions on whether to hold a suggested amendments stage – and which suggested amendments should be selected for debate – ordinarily fall to the Government in relation to Government bills, this may imply that, for a Private Member's Bill, those decisions should instead rest with the backbench Member in charge of the bill, including whether a suggested amendments stage should occur and the form it should take.

Where suggested amendments are tabled, three broad approaches are possible:

- **Sponsor-only suggested amendments:** the most restrictive option, but also the one most consistent with past practice;
- **All suggested amendments:** procedurally possible, but likely impractical if a large number are tabled; or
- **A selective approach:** a middle course, combining sponsor amendments with a limited number of others.

Because there have been so few suggested amendments stages, there are a limited number of examples from which to draw any firm precedent for choosing between these options. Any approach – especially given the high-profile and contentious nature of the assisted dying bill – is likely to be politically sensitive, and novel from a procedural perspective.

Option 1: Sponsor-only suggested amendments

Restricting debate to amendments tabled by the bill's sponsor has the strongest support based on previous cases.

The Hunting Act 2004, the most recent use of the Parliament Act, offers the clearest example. On that occasion, the Government allocated three hours for a suggested amendments stage but confined debate to a single suggested amendment tabled by a Government minister. The House of Commons rejected an attempt by the Conservatives to widen the procedure to include suggested amendments tabled by any MP. However, the Speaker did select a backbench amendment to the Government's suggested amendment motion. That amendment was debated and agreed on a free vote, and the suggested amendment (as amended) was then formally agreed by the Commons.

More generally, where the Government has not tabled its own suggested amendments, it has often declined to allocate time for consideration of those tabled by other MPs. In nine of the 13 attempts to invoke the Parliament Act, no suggested amendments stage was held at all – even where backbenchers had tabled amendment proposals, as with the Welsh Church Act 1914, the Government of Ireland Act 1914 and the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000.

This restrictive practice reflects a narrow interpretation of the stage's purpose. In 1914, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith argued that suggested amendments should be used only in "exceptional cases", primarily to correct clear errors or to propose compromises likely to command agreement in both Houses, rather than to reopen policy debates.[30]

The sponsor could justify such an approach by pointing to the extensive scrutiny the bill received in the Commons during the 2024-26 Session. They might also rely on Asquith's formulation that the suggested amendments stage is intended to serve a narrow purpose: enabling technical corrections and facilitating realistic compromise, rather than acting as a vehicle for wholesale reconsideration of the bill.

Option 2: All suggested amendments

At the other end of the spectrum, the House could seek to debate all proposed suggested amendments regardless of who has tabled them.

In practice, however, this approach might be difficult to manage. Each suggested amendment motion must be moved separately. If Members were to propose a significant number of them, that may place significant pressure on parliamentary time and attempting to consider every proposal would likely prove impractical.

Option 3: A selective approach

A middle course would be to debate the sponsor's amendments alongside a chosen subset of proposals from other MPs.

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[30] House of Commons, *Hansard*, 12 May 1914, vol. 62, col. 952

On a few occasions, the Government has allowed debate on suggested amendments from non-Government MPs. In 1976, for example, the Government allocated time for a suggested amendment stage on the Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Bill which included three motions tabled by opposition Members.[31]

Indeed, non-Government suggested amendments have been moved in three of the four cases where a suggested amendments stage has taken place. However, those instances involved relatively small numbers of amendments, making them easier to manage within limited parliamentary time.

The central challenge with a selective approach is deciding which amendments to include. There is no agreed framework, criteria or precedent to guide this choice. Possible methods might include:

- prioritising suggested amendments most likely to command broad support across the House (for example, based on the number of signatories); or
- grouping suggested amendments for debate, while leaving it to the Speaker to determine which are ultimately put to a vote, mirroring the practice at Committee and Report stages.

If many suggested amendments were tabled, the House of Commons would be operating in largely uncharted territory.

While a selective approach offers a pragmatic compromise, the lack of clear precedent means that any decision on scope or selection could be politically sensitive and procedurally contested.

[31] While there were only three motions for suggested amendments, two of those motions contained more than one individual amendment to the text. In total, the three suggested amendment motions would have made 12 amendments to the text, though none were actually agreed.

Table 3: Use of the "suggested amendments" stage under the Parliament Act

Bill	Was a suggested amendments stage held	Number of suggested amendments debated	Number of amendments to suggested amendments debated	Number of suggested amendments agreed by the Commons	Number of suggested amendments accepted by the Lords
Hunting Act 2004	Yes	1 (Government)	1 (non-Government)	1 (As amended)	0 (Rejected)
Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000	No	0	0	0	0
European Parliamentary Elections Act 1999	No	0	0	0	0
War Crimes Act 1991	No	0	0	0	0
Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977	Yes	3 (non-Government)	0	0	0
Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Act 1976	Yes	6 (5 non-Government and 1 Government)	8 (all non-Government)	1 (Government)	0 (Not moved)
Parliament Act 1949 (*Third session*)	No	0	0	0	0
Parliament Act 1949 (*Second session*)	No	0	0	0	0
Welsh Church Act 1914 (*Third session*)	No	0	0	0	0
Welsh Church Act 1914 (*Second session*)	No	0	0	0	0
Government of Ireland Act 1914 (*Third session*)	No	0	0	0	0
Government of Ireland Act 1914 (*Second session*)	No	0	0	0	0
Temperance (Scotland) Act 1913	Yes	1 (non-Government)	4 (all non-Government)	0	0

6. Timetabling the bill's House of Commons stages

Whichever route is chosen to reintroduce the assisted dying bill, decisions will need to be made about how and when to implement the necessary procedures, and how much time to allocate to each stage.

For a Government bill, these matters would be determined by Ministers. For a Private Member's Bill, however, the position is less clear, as backbench MPs cannot ordinarily table motions governing procedures and the allocation of time in the House of Commons chamber. Again, therefore, the assisted dying bill will take the Parliament Act process into uncharted territory.

When to move the procedure motion: before or after Second Reading?

The first key question is when to move (formally introduce) the procedure motion.

As Table 4 shows, Government and House officials have had to innovate to create suitable procedures and timetables to suit the contextual requirement of each bill that has engaged the Parliament Act to date.

But in the most recent uses of the Parliament Act the procedure motion has typically been agreed before Second Reading, with the motion drafted to take effect only if the bill is given a Second Reading.

For example, in the case of the Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000, the motion, moved before Second Reading, specified that, if the bill were read a second time, it would proceed directly to Third Reading on a future day.

However, MPs may think it inappropriate to facilitate Parliament Act procedures before the House has indicated its support for using it, by, for example, passing an identical bill at Second Reading.

But this creates a practical complication: if no motion is agreed beforehand and the bill passes Second Reading, it is automatically committed to a Public Bill Committee. Any subsequent motion would therefore need to reverse that committal before alternative procedures could be applied.

In earlier uses of the Parliament Act, as Table 4 shows, procedure motions were usually agreed after Second Reading but before Committee Stage. Rather than preventing committal, they typically provided that:

- Committee Stage in Committee of the Whole House would be taken formally, without debate; and
- Report Stage would therefore be omitted, as bills not amended in Committee of the Whole House do not have a Report Stage

If this approach were to be adopted, it would be very difficult to schedule a suggested amendments stage or Third Reading on the same day as Second Reading.

One-day versus multi-day proceedings

If the Government is willing to act in advance of Second Reading, one option is to complete all Commons stages in a single sitting. This approach was used for both the Hunting Act 2004 and European Parliamentary Elections Act 1999.

Applied to the assisted dying bill, that could mean taking all stages on the same sitting Friday as Second Reading, avoiding the need for Government time.

However, this approach depends heavily on the scale and complexity of any suggested amendments. In 2004, although all stages of the Hunting Bill were completed in one sitting, the House only considered a single suggested amendment. If, by contrast, many technically complex suggested amendments are tabled – whether by the sponsor or others – a single sitting may not be realistic. In that case, a second day, particularly for the suggested amendments stage, would likely be required.

A compressed timetable has one clear advantage: it would return the bill to the House of Lords earlier in the session, allowing more time for scrutiny and potential agreement through the ordinary legislative process. That, in turn, could reduce the likelihood of needing to rely on the Parliament Act, which is generally regarded – even in the second session – as a last resort.

Given that previous difficulties in the Lords have centred on extended debate on amendments at Committee Stage, allowing more time for reconsideration may increase the chances of compromise and agreement.

The money resolution

A money resolution is required to authorise the financial implications of a bill. A money resolution for the assisted dying bill was agreed in the first session, but guidance from the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel makes clear that it lapsed at the end of that session. A fresh resolution would therefore need to be tabled in the second session.

Only a Minister can move a money motion, reflecting the constitutional principle that new public expenditure may be initiated only by the Crown. In practice, this gives the Government an important gatekeeping role. While ministers have occasionally declined to move motions for money resolutions for PMBs, the usual expectation is that they will do so for any bill that has secured a Second Reading.

The time available for debate depends on when the motion is taken. Under the Standing Orders of the House of Commons:

- if the motion is moved at the same sitting as Second Reading, it is put forthwith, meaning without debate;
- if it is taken at a later sitting, it may be debated for up to 45 minutes in the Commons Chamber.

For Private Members' Bills, Erskine May indicates that money resolutions are usually considered on a later day, typically in the week following Second Reading and before Committee Stage, allowing for a short, dedicated debate on the bill's financial implications.[32]

Alternatively, the Government could move the motion at the end of the same Friday sitting as Second Reading. If all Commons stages are to be taken in a single sitting, the motion for a money resolution would need to be moved immediately after Second Reading, without debate, to enable the bill to proceed to Committee (though this could be dealt with in the procedural motion).

Third Reading

Regardless of the sequencing of earlier stages, there must be a Third Reading vote at the end; whether there is a Third Reading debate prior to the vote, or whether the debate is treated as a formality, is a matter for decision. In the most recent uses of the Parliament Act, procedure motions have either:

- dispensed with the Third Reading debate; or
- limited it sharply (for example, to 30 minutes on the Hunting Act 2004).

In earlier cases, particularly before the 1970s, Third Reading debates tended to be longer, reflecting a period before the widespread use of programme motions.

There has also been variation in timing:

- where a longer Third Reading debate was provided, it has consistently taken place on a separate day from Second Reading;
- where the Third Reading debate was restricted or dispensed with, the practice has been more flexible.

If a separate day were allocated for a suggested amendments stage, it would not be possible to take Third Reading on the same day as Second Reading. Instead, Third Reading could be taken – potentially without debate - at the conclusion of the suggested amendments stage.

[32] Erskine May's *Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, 25th edition (2019), para. 35.21

Table 4: House of Commons procedural handling of bills where the Parliament Act was used or contemplated

Bill	Procedure motion moved before or after Second Reading?	Second and Third Reading held on the same or different days?	Was there a debate at Committee and Report Stage?	How long was the Third Reading debate?
Hunting Act 2004	Before	Same	No	30 minutes
Sexual Offences (Amendment) Act 2000	Before	Different	No	Taken without debate
European Parliamentary Elections Act 1999	Before	Same	No*	No debate (due to guillotine)
War Crimes Act 1991	Before	Different	No	Taken without debate
Aircraft and Shipbuilding Industries Act 1977	Before	Different	No	1 hour 45 minutes
Trade Union and Labour Relations (Amendment) Act 1976	After	Different	No	21 minutes
Parliament Act 1949 (*third session*) †	After	Different	No	4 hours
Parliament Act 1949 (*second session*)	After	Different	No	5 hours 10 minutes
Welsh Church Act 1914 (*third session*) †	After	Different	No	Two days
Welsh Church Act 1914 (*second session*)	After	Different	No	7 hours
Government of Ireland Act 1914 (*third session*) †	After	Different	No	2 hours, over two separate days
Government of Ireland Act 1914 (*second session*)	After	Different	No	6 hours 30 minutes
Temperance (Scotland) Act 1913	After	Different	No	2 hours 45 minutes

** Committee Stage was not formally dispensed with. Instead, a single time limit was applied across all stages of the Bill. That time limit was reached during the Second Reading debate, with the result that Committee, Report and Third Reading were taken without debate.*
† Bills passed prior to the 1949 Parliament Act had to be passed in three successive sessions; the 1949 amendment of the 1911 Act reduced this to two successive sessions.

7. What can be done if the Government provides no time or procedural support?

If the Government declines to allocate parliamentary time or provide procedural assistance in the second session, the bill would not automatically fail, nor would recourse to the Parliament Act be precluded. It could still proceed either through the conventional Private Members' Bill route or by making use of the Backbench Business Committee. Both options are potentially viable, but each presents significant practical and procedural challenges.

Navigating the standard Private Members' Bill process

One option would be to proceed through the usual PMB process, while still seeking to satisfy the requirements of the Parliament Act. This would involve securing:

- Second Reading on one of the 13 sitting Fridays;
- Committee Stage; and
- Report Stage and Third Reading on subsequent Fridays.

This route presents three main difficulties.

1. **Limited and uncertain time:** In each parliamentary session, Private Members' Bills are given precedence over government business on 13 Fridays in the House of Commons. Only Members placed in the top seven in the ballot are guaranteed a Second Reading debating slot for their bill scheduled across the first seven of those Fridays. If the sponsoring MP is ranked eighth or lower, their bill may struggle even to secure a Second Reading. This is because on the remaining six Friday sittings priority is given to bills according to the legislative stage they have reached in the following order of precedence: consideration of Lords amendments; Third Readings; new Report stages; adjourned Report stages; adjourned Committee proceedings; bills appointed to Committee of the Whole House; and then Second Readings. In practice, all PMBs other than that sponsored by the Member placed first in the ballot are vulnerable to being "talked out" or displaced in the queue whether at Second Reading or at later stages.

2. **No provision for a suggested amendments stage:** The Standing Orders governing Private Members' Bills make no provision for a suggested amendments stage. Without procedural modification, the Commons would be unable to propose amendments to the Lords. This would limit its ability to set out potential areas of compromise formally to the Lords and increase the likelihood that the final Act reflects the version of the Bill passed at Third Reading in the Commons during the first session.

3. **The requirement for an identical text:** To rely on the Parliament Act, the bill must pass in the same form as in the first session (subject to the limited exceptions set out on pages 20 to 21). This means avoiding any amendments during Committee and Report Stage.

At Committee Stage, this challenge may be manageable. The bill's sponsor influences the composition of the Public Bill Committee, whose membership must broadly reflect the balance of opinion expressed at Second Reading. Within that constraint, the sponsor could seek to ensure that the Committee is composed of Members supportive of the bill and willing to resist amendments, thereby preserving its compatibility with the Parliament Act. However, this approach would be politically sensitive. It would require Members to oppose amendments that may be substantively worthwhile, not on their merits, but to maintain the bill's procedural eligibility under the Parliament Act.

At Report Stage, the challenge becomes more acute as the whole House votes on proposed amendments. Maintaining discipline in those circumstances would be more difficult, particularly given that the bill secured Third Reading in the Commons in the first session by a margin of just 23 votes.

That said, there are countervailing factors. Some MPs may take the view that detailed scrutiny has already been undertaken and does not need to be repeated. Some MPs who opposed the bill at Third Reading in the first session may nevertheless support the use of the Parliament Act, to uphold the primacy of the elected House of Commons.

One alternative would be to move, following Second Reading, that the bill be committed to a Committee of the Whole House rather than a Public Bill Committee. This could reduce the need for two separate amending stages (Committee and Report), and may shorten the bill's passage, as Committee of the whole House typically proceeds more quickly. However, without further procedural adjustments, the first available day for Committee of the Whole House would be the eighth sitting Friday for PMBs . This creates a risk: sponsors of other PMBs that complete their Public Bill Committee earlier could select that same eighth Friday for their Report Stages, which would take precedence over the assisted dying bill's Committee of the Whole House. In that event, the House might not reach the bill's Committee Stage at all.

Utilising the Backbench Business Committee

An alternative route for steering the Bill through the House of Commons – without Government assistance in securing the necessary procedural motions or allocating parliamentary time – would be to seek that support from the Backbench Business Committee, which controls a limited but valuable share of Commons debating time each session.

The Backbench Business Committee must be re-elected at the start of the new session, but it is typically appointed within two to three weeks of the State Opening.

A motion calling on the Government to allocate time and procedural support

One option would be to apply early for a Backbench Business debate on a substantive motion calling on the Government to allocate time and provide procedural support for the bill. Although such a motion would not be binding, it would carry significant political weight, particularly if the Government maintains a position of neutrality or uncertainty as to the will of the House. If such a motion were passed, Ministers could then justify facilitating the bill's

progress not as active sponsors, but as giving effect to the clearly expressed wishes of the House.

A procedure motion to schedule the passage of the bill

A more ambitious approach would be to apply to use backbench business time to pass a procedure motion setting out how the bill should proceed.

However, this route raises significant procedural uncertainties. The Backbench Business Committee has the power to schedule only "backbench business", which the Standing Orders define as excluding Private Members' Bills.[33] The key ambiguity is whether that exclusion applies solely to the scheduling of specific stages of Private Members' Bills – which it clearly does – or whether it also extends to scheduling procedure motions relating to such bills. In the first instance, it would be for the Committee's chair, advised by the Clerk, to determine whether such a motion falls within its remit. If the Committee chose to proceed, it would then be for the Speaker to determine whether the motion is procedurally in order.

Assuming a narrow interpretation of the exclusion – limiting it to the legislative stages of PMBs - the Committee could allocate time early in the next session for a procedure motion governing the bill's passage. Such motion might, for example, provide for:

1. a time-limited Second Reading debate (for example, up to three hours);
2. the omission of Committee and Report Stages;
3. a time-limited suggested amendments stage immediately after Second Reading, (for example, up to two hours);
4. restrictions on which suggested amendments are put to a vote (for example, limiting them to those proposed by the sponsor or selected by the Speaker); and
5. a short, time-limited Third Reading debate following the suggested amendments stage (for example, up to 30 minutes).

An illustrative example of such a motion is set out in the Appendix.

A motion for an additional sitting Friday

Alternatively, the Committee could propose a motion to allocate one or more additional sitting Fridays to the assisted dying bill, beyond the 13 ordinarily set aside for Private Members' Bills. Creating an additional sitting Friday would fall within the remit of the Backbench Business Committee.[34] In the case of a ballot bill, such additional time could be scheduled after Second Reading has taken place, to facilitate the remaining stages: the (purely formal) Committee and Report Stages, any suggested amendments, and Third Reading. This approach could also allow

[33] House of Commons, *Standing Orders - Public Business*, 17 March 2026, HC 1745, Standing Order No. 14(7)

[34] Standing Order No. 14(7) defines the scope of "backbench business" and provides that it includes all proceedings in the Chamber except for certain categories expressly excluded by the Standing Order. Motions to designate sitting Fridays are not among the excluded categories listed in the Standing Order. See: House of Commons, *Standing Orders - Public Business*, 17 March 2026, HC 1745, Standing Order No. 14(7)

all stages of a ballot or Presentation bill to be taken in a single additional Friday sitting. The illustrative procedure motion set out in the Appendix could be adapted accordingly, in particular by revising paragraphs (1) and (2) to reflect this alternative approach.

There are constraints on the Committee's remit that limit how far it could go beyond the two options outlined above. In particular, any procedure motion could not alter the general order of precedence set out in Standing Orders – for example, the priority normally accorded to Government business.

Whether the Backbench Business Committee would be willing to get involved is uncertain. Historically, the Committee has been cautious about becoming involved in legislative scheduling, emphasising that responsibility for managing the passage of bills rests primarily with the Government. It may therefore be reluctant to adopt novel procedural mechanisms without explicit authority, or to set a precedent that encourages future complaints about limited time for Private Members' Bills to be redirected to it.

That said, more recent indications suggest some openness to being more involved in the Private Members' Bill process by filtering and facilitating those that command broad cross-party support as an alternative to the ballot.[35] Ultimately, it would be for the Committee itself to decide whether facilitating such an approach for the assisted dying bill is appropriate in the circumstances. The fact that the bill previously secured the support of the House in the last session may provide a particularly strong basis for the Committee to consider doing so.

But if the Committee declines to get involved, or this Backbench Business route is otherwise deemed infeasible, the House might instead seek to secure an additional sitting Friday without involving the Committee, for example by amending the Government's motion setting out the proposed dates for the 13 sitting Fridays, so as to provide an additional day for the assisted dying bill (see page 17).

Overall, in the absence of Government support, progress would remain possible, but it would be more procedurally complex and politically demanding. Both the standard PMB route and the Backbench Business Committee route involve trade-offs and risks, and neither offers a straightforward path to enactment.

[35] House of Commons Backbench Business Committee (2024-26), *15th anniversary of the Backbench Business Committee*, 1st Special Report, HC 1548, pp. 33-36

8. What happens in the House of Lords?

If the House of Commons passes an identical bill in a second subsequent session – thereby satisfying the conditions of the Parliament Act – the bill is sent to the House of Lords where it proceeds through the conventional legislative process, including its usual amending stages.

While peers cannot ultimately block the bill indefinitely, they can shape its final form, especially through their response to any suggested amendments.

The prospect of using the Parliament Act can reshape negotiations between the two Houses. If the Commons passes an identical bill in the second session, the Lords face a choice:

- reject or again fail to pass the bill, and risk it becoming law without amendment; or
- engage constructively and secure changes considered necessary and preferable.

The threat of the Parliament Act can therefore have a moderating effect, creating an incentive for both Houses – but particularly the House of Lords – to compromise and reach agreement.

Lords' consideration of "suggested amendments"

The Parliament Act imposes a clear, statutory expectation that any suggested amendments "shall be considered by the House of Lords".[36] Where the Commons has proposed suggested amendments, time must therefore be found for the Lords to consider them.

As suggested amendments are procedurally distinct from the main Committee Stage, consideration of them does not need to wait for that conventional amending stage to take place; they could be considered at any point after Second Reading, potentially immediately afterwards or as late as ping-pong.

The House of Lords has voted on a suggested amendment only once before, in relation to the Hunting Act 2004. On that occasion, the suggested amendment was debated at Second Reading but not put to a vote until ping-pong.

Possible outcomes in the Lords

Once the bill reaches the Lords in a form compatible with the Parliament Act, three outcomes are possible:

1. **The Lords pass the bill.** Peers may pass the bill either:
    a. unamended, in which case it proceeds directly to Royal Assent; or
    b. with amendments, triggering ping-pong between the two Houses.

    If both Houses eventually agree on a common text, the bill becomes law in the usual way, without relying on the Parliament Act.

[36] *Parliament Act 1911*, section 2(4)

2. **The Lords reject the bill and any suggested amendments (if the Commons proposes any).** Peers may:
    a. vote down the bill at Second or Third Reading;
    b. fail to complete all the scrutiny stages of the bill before the end of the session; or
    c. fail to reach agreement with the House of Commons on Lords amendments during ping-pong.

    If this happens, and the Speaker of the House of Commons certifies that all the statutory conditions are met, the bill may be presented for Royal Assent under the Parliament Act. This is the only scenario in which an unamended version of the bill would be passed using the Parliament Act.

3. **The Lords reject the bill but agree some suggested amendments (if the Commons proposes any).** Peers might decline to pass the bill itself but agree to some or all the Commons' suggested amendments. In that case, the bill may still be presented for Royal Assent under the Parliament Act, but with those agreed suggested amendments incorporated into the final text.

9. When is Royal Assent granted under the Parliament Act?

If a bill qualifies for enactment under the Parliament Act, the timing of Royal Assent depends on when the bill is deemed to have been "rejected" by the House of Lords. The Act provides that a bill may be presented for Royal Assent "on its rejection", but in practice, determining that moment is not always straightforward.[37]

- **Immediate rejection:** if the Lords reject the bill at Second or Third Reading, it may be presented for Royal Assent immediately afterwards.

- **Where the bill proceeds beyond Second Reading but is not passed:** rejection is treated as occurring at the end of the session.

However, as the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel notes, this creates a dilemma, for it cannot be known for certain until the end of the session whether the bill is rejected (that is, not passed), but by then it is too late to present the bill for Royal Assent.[38]

In practice, therefore, a bill is deemed to have been "rejected" in the second session at the last possible moment at which further progress could realistically be made. As explained in Erskine May, "if the bill has not been passed by the day before prorogation", the Speaker of the House of Commons will initiate the Parliament Act certification process.[39] Royal Assent is then granted on the final day of the session.

Where ping-pong between the two Houses is still ongoing on the day before the end of the session – meaning agreement might still be reached without using the Parliament Act – the necessary procedures can be completed entirely on the last day of the session. This occurred, for example, with the Hunting Act 2004.

In either case, the Speaker of the House of Commons will typically make a statement confirming that it is clear the House of Lords will not pass the bill and that the Parliament Act procedure will therefore be used.

Where a bill has been rejected twice by the House of Lords and thereby satisfies the conditions of the Parliament Act, the House of Commons may nonetheless resolve that the Parliament Act should not be used to secure the bills enactment.

However, there is no requirement for the House to consider such a motion, even if one is tabled, and no such motion has ever been debated in practice. In the absence of such a resolution, the bill would proceed automatically to Royal Assent.

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[37] *Parliament Act 1911*, section 2(1)
[38] Office of the Parliamentary Counsel, *Parliament Act 1911 section 2: guidance*, para. 2.65 (last updated 29 August 2019)
[39] Erskine May's *Treatise on the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*, 25th edition (2019), para. 30.55

Differences in the formalities

Two key differences apply to the formalities where a bill is enacted under the Parliament Act.

- **Speaker's certificate:** The bill must be endorsed with a certificate signed by the Speaker confirming that all the statutory conditions for use of the Parliament Act "have been duly complied with".[40]

- **Modified enacting formula:** The opening words of the Act differ from the usual form. Rather than referring to the consent of both Houses, the formula refers only to the Commons and expressly invokes the Parliament Acts.

    - Usual formula: "*Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows…*"

    - Parliament Act formula: "*Be it enacted by the King's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Commons in this present Parliament assembled, in accordance with the provisions of the Parliament Acts 1911 and 1949, and by the authority of the same, as follows…*"

[40] *Parliament Act 1911*, section 2(2)

Appendix: A procedure motion for the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill

(1) The provisions of this Order apply to a Bill which has been presented and read the first time and which (in the opinion of the Speaker) would, if passed by the House without amendment, be the same Bill (within the meaning of section 2(4) of the Parliament Act 1911) as the Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill sent up to the House of Lords in the last Session of Parliament.

(2) The provisions of paragraphs (3) to (8) of this Order shall apply to that Bill at any sitting on which the Order that it be read a second time stands as the first Order of the day.

(3) Proceedings on Second Reading shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion three hours after their commencement.

(4) If the Bill is read a second time—
- (a) the Speaker shall forthwith dispose of proceedings on any motion moved by a Minister authorising expenditure in connection with the Bill,
- (b) the Bill shall be treated as having been committed to a Committee of the whole House and as having been reported from the Committee without amendment, and
- (c) the House shall proceed immediately to consider any Motions standing in the name of the Member in Charge of the Bill under the proviso to section 2(4) of the Parliament Act 1911 for suggested amendments to the Bill.

(5) Proceedings on any such Motions as specified in paragraph (4)(c) shall, if not previously concluded, be brought to a conclusion two hours after the commencement of proceedings on the first such Motion, and the Speaker shall at that time put—
- (a) any Questions necessary to dispose of the Question then before the House,
- (b) any Questions necessary to dispose of any Motions or amendment to any of those Motions selected by the Speaker for separate decision, and
- (c) a single Question on any further Motions moved by the Member in Charge of the Bill.

(6) Proceedings on Third Reading—
- (a) may be taken immediately after the conclusion of proceedings on the Motions referred to in paragraph (4)(c), and
- (b) shall be brought to a conclusion half an hour after their commencement.

(7) No motion may be made to recommit the Bill.

(8) In relation to the proceedings mentioned in paragraphs (3) to (6) above—
- (a) Motions proposed under paragraph (4)(c) of this Order and amendments proposed thereto shall be treated as falling within the terms of paragraph (4) of Standing Order No. 32 (*Selection of amendments*),
- (b) Standing Order No. 15(1) (*Exempted business*) shall apply,

(c) the proceedings shall not be interrupted under any Standing Order relating to the sittings of the House,
(d) Standing Order No. 38 (*Procedure on divisions*) shall apply and Standing Order No, 41A (*Deferred divisions*) shall not apply;
(e) the proceedings shall not be interrupted by a Motion for the adjournment of the House under Standing Order No. 24 (*Emergency debates*) and any such Motion shall stand over until the conclusion of such of the proceedings mentioned in paragraphs (3) to (6) as are to be taken at the sitting concerned),
(f) no dilatory motion may be made except by a Minister of the Crown or the Member in Charge of the Bill, and
(g) the Question on any dilatory motion made by a Minister of the Crown or the Member in Charge shall be put forthwith.

(9) If the House is adjourned or the sitting is suspended during the course of the proceedings mentioned in paragraphs (3) to (6) above, a Motion may be made without notice by a Minister of the Crown or the Member in Charge at a subsequent sitting of the House varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order.

(10) The Question on any further Motion varying or supplementing the provisions of this Order (whether by making provision about Lords messages or otherwise) shall be put forthwith.

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