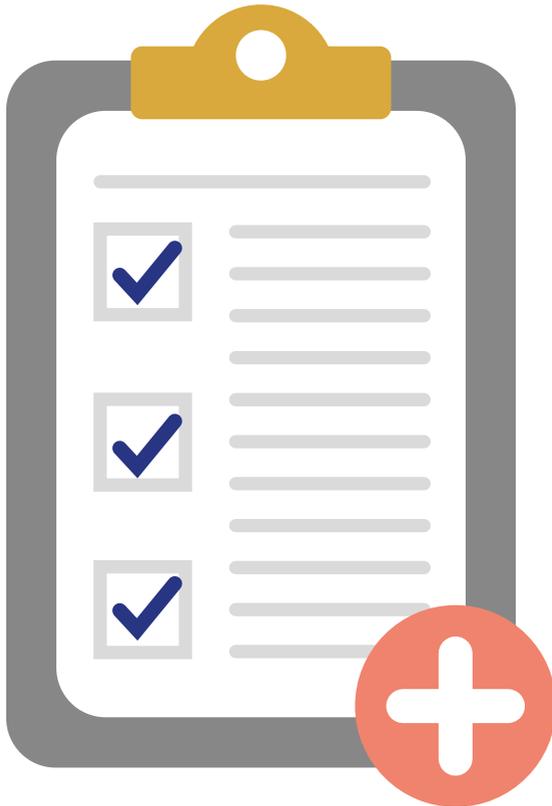


NORTH · LONDON
HOSPICE

Registered Charity No. 285300



Advance Care Planning
Planning for your future care

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If you do choose to plan your future care, you can change your mind at any time.



WHAT IS Advance Care Planning

Advance Care Planning is a way of putting plans in place for your future care, often in discussion with a healthcare professional. This may happen when your condition begins to change and you feel less well, or whenever you want to think about any care you might need in the future.

Advance Care Planning is entirely voluntary and no one is under any pressure to take any of the steps described here. If you do choose to plan your future care, you can change your mind at any time.

Healthcare professionals will always try to discuss decisions regarding your care with you, but if you are no longer able to express your views, they will use information you have included in your Advance Care Plan to guide their decision making.



Why might Advance Care Planning be important to me?

Some people choose to make an Advance Care Plan because they have clear views about the treatments they would or wouldn't want if they were to become ill. Others decide to discuss their future because their circumstances have changed, such as being diagnosed with a serious illness.

A discussion about your care will help your family and the nurses and doctors looking after you, know your wishes and understand what is important to you. It will help you all understand the choices available and assist the planning of your future care. This will enable you to be cared for in the place of your choice and in the manner of your choosing, where possible.

If you are no longer able to express your views about your care, healthcare professionals must identify what is in your best interests and make decisions on your behalf. Whilst family members and significant others will be asked for an opinion on what they think you would want, they cannot make decisions for you. So if you have already talked about it and made some notes, these decisions in more difficult times will be easier and may help you feel more secure and in control of your future.

How is it done?

For some people, a discussion with their family or doctors is enough. If you discuss any preferences with your doctor or nurse, they will make a record of your views in your medical notes. They may also ask your permission to write to other members of your healthcare team (such as your hospital consultant, GP or District Nurse) so that everyone is aware of your views.

You may choose to write your decisions down more formally. There are some examples of ways to do this in this leaflet. You can also appoint someone to make decisions on your behalf if you are no longer able to do so, by formally appointing a Lasting Power of Attorney.

Advance Statement of Wishes and Preferences

This is the easiest, least formal way of expressing your views in a written document. You can incorporate everything that is important to you, including any information you think would be helpful for those who care for you to know. You may want to write down where you would like to be cared for, whether you want to go to hospital for treatment, who you would like to be with you, any religious or spiritual requirements, even the music you like to listen to. You are free to express any wishes or preferences you want.

This is not a legal document so whilst your doctors will use this to guide them in making decisions regarding your care, there may be times when it is not possible to follow your exact wishes. In particular there may be medical treatments which would not be appropriate in certain circumstances, because they would not be of overall benefit.

Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT)

You may have strong views regarding treatment that you would **not** wish to receive. An Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment is a legally binding document, which clearly states any treatment you do not wish to have. It is important to discuss this with your doctors as it needs to be specific in its instructions, and also needs to be signed and witnessed, including a statement that the decision stands 'even if life is at risk'.

You cannot use the document to make doctors give you treatment which they feel would not work.

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)

You may choose to appoint someone to make decisions on your behalf if in the future you are no longer able to make them for yourself. An LPA can be appointed for health and/or financial decisions. Most people choose to involve a family member or friend who is aware of their wishes. Doctors will discuss decisions regarding your care with an LPA as if they were planning care with you. There are special rules about appointing an LPA. You can get a form from the Office of the Public Guardian, which explains what to do. Your LPA will need to be registered with the Office of the Public Guardian before it can be used.

Sharing Information

If you have a discussion regarding your future, or complete one of the above documents, it is vital that the information is shared as widely as possible to ensure that your wishes are met. Your GP, District Nurse, Specialist Palliative Care Nurse and hospital team are examples of people who should be made aware of your views and be given copies of your Advance Statement or ADRT. If you would prefer not to complete a formal document, you could ask your healthcare professionals to share your views in a letter.

Who can I talk to if I want further help with anything in this leaflet?

North London Hospice nurses and doctors would be pleased to talk to you about anything related to Advance Care Planning. If you prefer you can speak to your GP or consultant.

Useful Links:

Advance Care Planning

www.nhs.uk/conditions/end-of-life-care

Lasting Power of Attorney guidance

www.justice.gov.uk/forms/opg/lasting-power-of-attorney

Tel: 0300 456 0300

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NORTH·LONDON
H O S P I C E

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