**Advance statement about your wishes**

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**What is an advance statement?**

An advance statement is a written statement that sets down your preferences, wishes, beliefs and values regarding your future care.

The aim is to provide a guide to anyone who might have to make decisions in your best interest if you have lost the capacity to make decisions or to communicate them.

**What does an advance statement cover?**

An advance statement can cover any aspect of your future health or social care. This could include:

* how you want any religious or spiritual beliefs you hold to be reflected in your care
* where you would like to be cared for – for example, at home or in a hospital, a nursing home, or a hospice
* how you like to do things – for example, if you prefer a shower instead of a bath, or like to sleep with the light on
* concerns about practical issues – for example, who will look after your dog if you become ill

You can make sure people know about your wishes by talking about them. By writing your advance statement down, you can help to make things clear to your family, carers and anybody involved in your care.

**Is an advance statement the same as an advance decision?**

No. An advance decision (also known as a living will, or advance decision to refuse treatment) is a decision you can make now to refuse specific treatments in the future.

An advance decision is legally binding, as long as it meets the necessary criteria for it to be considered valid and applicable. Read more about [advance decisions to refuse treatment](http://www.nhs.uk/Planners/end-of-life-care/Pages/advance-decision-to-refuse-treatment.aspx).

**Who makes an advance statement?**

You write an advance statement yourself, as long as you have the mental capacity to make these statements. You can write it with support from relatives, carers, or health and social care professionals.

Mental capacity is the ability to make decisions. Sometimes, people do not have mental capacity. This can be for a number of reasons, including illness.

Visit GOV.uk to find out about [creating a lasting power of attorney](https://www.gov.uk/power-of-attorney), and [the Mental Capacity Act](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/mental-capacity-act-making-decisions).

**Is an advance statement legally binding?**

No, an advance statement is not legally binding, but anyone who is making decisions about your care must take it into account.

An [advance decision](http://www.nhs.uk/Planners/end-of-life-care/Pages/advance-decision-to-refuse-treatment.aspx) is legally binding.

**How does an advance statement help?**

An advance statement lets everyone involved in your care know about your wishes, feelings and preferences if you are not able to tell them.

**Does it need to be signed and witnessed?**

You don’t have to sign an advance statement, but your signature makes it clear that it is your wishes that have been written down.

**Who should see it?**

You have the final say in who sees it. Keep it somewhere safe, and tell people where it is, in case they need to find it in the future. You can keep a copy in your medical notes.

**Thinking about your wishes**

If you're thinking about preferences and wishes for your future care, you may find these two leaflets useful:

[Planning for your future care](http://www.ncpc.org.uk/publication/planning-your-future-care)

[Preferred priorities for care](http://www.nhsiq.nhs.uk/resource-search/publications/eolc-ppc.aspx)

The [Dying Matters website](http://www.dyingmatters.org/overview/need-support) has information on talking about dying, and ideas and inspiration to help start the conversation, things to think about and letting people know your wishes.

This information is taken from NHS Choices – see link below

[www.nhs.uk/Planners/end-of-life-care/Pages/advance-statement.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Planners/end-of-life-care/Pages/advance-statement.aspx)