

Advance decisions and advance statements

Making choices about your care and
treatment

Easy read



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Hard words in this book will look like **this**.
There is a list of hard words and what they mean.

A member of staff or a carer can support you to read this booklet. They will be able to answer any questions that you have.

What is an advance decision?



An advance decision is a choice you make about treatment you may need in the future.

This could be things like this

- medicine
- an operation
- a machine to help you breathe



If you get very ill your doctor might need to give you treatment to keep you alive.

This is called **life sustaining treatment**.



You have a right to **refuse treatment**. This means you can say what treatment you do not want.

You should also say why you do not want this treatment. This makes your advance decision clearer and easier for people to understand.

Your doctor and your care team have to listen to your advance decision.



You can talk to your doctor about your advance decision.

It is better if your advance decision is written down as well. This makes your advance decision clearer.



It means everyone who gives you treatment in the future can read your advance decision.

If you make an advance decision about **life sustaining treatment** you must write it down. You must get someone else to sign it too.

Who can make an advance decision?



You must be 18 years old or older than 18.

You must be able to understand what will happen when you **refuse treatment**. For example, if you refuse treatment you might get more unwell or you might die.

What is an advance statement?



An advance statement tells your care team what care and treatment you would prefer in the future.



It is helpful if your advance statement is written down.

What should you write about?



You should say what you would like to happen if you get unwell. You can write about anything that is important to you.

This could be things like



- If you get unwell who should we contact.



- What medicine or treatment has been helpful for you before.



- If there is any medicine or treatment that you do not like.



- If you need special food.
For example vegetarian food, kosher food, food with less sugar or food with less fat.



- Who will look after your pets or children.



- If you have to go to hospital who will look after your house.

Who can make an advance statement?



You must be able to understand what will happen with your care and treatment.

Does your doctor have to do what you say in your advance statement?



Your doctor and your care team will try to listen to what you want.

If your advance statement is clear it is easier for your care team to understand.



If you ask for certain medicine your doctor does not have to give it to you. Your doctor will try to give you medicine and treatment that is right for you.



If you ask to go to a certain hospital your care team will try to do this. You might not be able to go to the exact hospital you want.

Why should you make an advance decision or an advance statement?



If you get very unwell in the future you might not be able to tell people what you want.



It might be harder for you to make choices when you are unwell.

Your doctor might need to give you treatment before they can talk to you.



Your advance statement tells your doctor what care or treatment you would like.

Who can help you?



Anyone who you trust can help you to write your advance statement.

This could be someone like

- Your mum or dad
- Your friend
- Your **care coordinator** or **lead professional**
- An **advocate**



You can write your advance decision or advance statement on paper. Or you can fill in a form instead.



Your care coordinator or lead professional can give you the form to fill in.

After you write your advance statement



Your care coordinator or lead professional will make copies of your advance statement.

They will give a copy to everyone in your **care team**.

They will give you a copy of your advance statement too.



If you write about someone in your advance statement you must tell them.

For example, if you go to hospital you might want your friend to check your house is ok.



You should make sure that this is ok with your friend first.

Give your friend a copy of your advance statement so they know what you want them to do.

How to change your advance decision or advance statement



If you want to change your advance decision or advance statement you can.

You should talk to your care coordinator or lead professional.



They will help you to fill in a form to change your advance decision or advance statement.

You can also get help from an advocate.



An advocate is someone who supports you to speak up if speaking up is difficult for you.

Problems, complaints or suggestions



If you are unhappy about your support, you should tell your **care coordinator** or **lead professional**. They will help you to make a complaint.

**Patient advice
and liaison
service (PALS)**



Somerset NHS Foundation Trust have a complaints policy. We will give you a leaflet about how to make a complaint.

If you think that we could improve our service, then please let a nurse know your idea.

Or you can contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)



01823 343563



pals@somersetft.nhs.uk

Other people who can help you

Contact Compassion in Dying for more information about advance decisions to refuse treatment.



0800 999 2434



info@compassionindying.org.uk

Advocacy services

To find an advocate contact South West Advocacy Network (SWAN) advocacy services.



03333 447928



reception@swanadvocacy.org.uk

What words mean

advocate	This is someone who supports you to speak up if speaking up is difficult for you.
care coordinator	If you have complex needs your care coordinator will plan the support you get from different mental health professionals.
care team	This is everyone who gives you care and treatment. For example doctors, nurses, psychologists, social worker and other people.
life sustaining treatment	If you are very unwell you might need life sustaining treatment to keep you alive. This could be medicine, an operation or a machine to help you breathe. If you refuse life sustaining treatment you might die.
refuse treatment	This means that you say you do not want the treatment.
lead professional	If you do not have complex needs your lead professional will plan your care. You might just need support from the lead professional.
mental health problems	This is when you find it hard to cope with things in your life. You might get very angry or upset. You might need support to feel better.

Thank you



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Further information about the content, reference sources or production of this leaflet can be obtained from the End of Life Care Education Team. Please email us on

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