

This information helps to explain the purpose of an Advance Statement

The Department of Health is encouraging people, especially those with a life limiting condition, to have the opportunity to discuss their personal preferences and choices around their future care. These discussions will take place with professionals who can support them and this may also include your family and carers.

You may choose to have these discussions and take the opportunity for this to be recorded in an **Advance Statement**. This is to enable services, which will be involved in supporting you, to be aware of your wishes if you become unable to communicate them yourself at anytime in the future.

An Advance Statement is not legally binding but those involved in your care are legally required to take it into account when making decisions in your best interests.

An Advance Statement only becomes active if you lose the ability to make your own decisions.

The purpose of an Advance Statement

It gives you an opportunity to think about, talk about and write down your preferences and choices in preparation for your future care.

For most people this form will not have immediate relevance but discussing and recording your views on these issues could help to reduce any concerns you may have in the future.

Before you complete your Advance Statement you may like to think about the following:

- If I become unable to make my own decisions, where would I like to be cared for in the future?
- What type of services will be available to assist me with my care?
- Do I have any religious or other beliefs/values which are important to me?
- Do I need to talk to my family/ friends/carers about my wishes?

You only need to have this discussion if you choose to.

The advantages of having an Advance Statement

Although an Advance Statement is not legally binding it can help you and those who care for you (your family, friends, neighbours and care workers such as doctors, nurses and carers) to understand what is important to you when planning your future care.

You will be supported through this process by your health/social care professional.

The plan should include anything that is important to you or anything that is worrying you about your future. It is a good idea to think about your beliefs and values, what you would and would not like and where you would like to be cared for at the end of life.

There may be a time when, for whatever reason, you are unable to communicate your wishes for yourself. In the event of this happening anyone who has to make decisions about your care on your behalf will be able to take into account anything you have written in your Advance Statement.

If you are unable to say what your wishes are:

1. Your wishes from your Advance Statement will be taken into account.
2. If you have formally appointed somebody to make decisions on your behalf, using your personal welfare Lasting Power of Attorney, they will make a decision in your best interests.

If you want to refuse treatment

Sometimes people wish to refuse specific medical treatments in advance. The Advance Statement is not meant to be used for such legally binding refusals. If you decide that you want to refuse any medical treatments you must discuss this with your doctor. This requires a separate document called an **Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment** or sometimes called an ADRT that can be used to record the specific treatments refused. It is not possible to demand any treatments.

Changing your mind

Remember that your views may change over time. You can change what you have written whenever you wish to. It is recommended that you review your Advance Statement regularly (in no longer than twelve months) to make sure that it still reflects your preferences and choices.

When your Advance Statement is completed you are encouraged to share it with anyone involved in your care.

Unless people know what is important to you, they will not be able to take your wishes into account. A bright Yellow envelope will be supplied to hold your Advance Statement. It is recommended you take your Yellow envelope and all contents, such as your Advance Statement, to all Doctor/hospital appointments or other health/social care services you attend and let the health or social care professional know that you have an Advance Statement which has important information about you.

Unforeseen circumstances

What has been written in your Advance Statement will always be taken into account when planning your care. However, sometimes things can change unexpectedly, such as your carers (family, friends and neighbours) become over tired or ill. If for whatever reason your choices can't be provided for, your doctor, nurse and carers will talk to you and look at ways to manage the circumstances in your best interests.

Making an Advance Statement can be a positive step to planning your future care.

This is an opportunity for you to say what is important for you and your preferences and choices will be taken into account wherever possible when planning your future care.