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United Kingdom

How preparation towards the end of life works in the UK:

Making a will

The Law Society recommends that a will should be drawn up with advice from a specialist solicitor. Name guardians if you have children.

Advance decisions

An advance decision (AD) for over-18s, otherwise known as a living will, lets you indicate what type of treatment you want. It comes into play when you lack capacity. In an AD you can't refuse basic care or demand specific treatment.

An AD may take the form of an Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT). An ADRT can't be used to request euthanasia. If you want to refuse potentially life-sustaining treatment your decision must be in writing, signed, witnessed, and include the statement 'even if life is at risk as a result'. Your AD is legally binding and should be recorded with the GP.

Doctors can refuse to give clinically unnecessary treatments. They can add a DNACPR (Do Not Attempt Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation) decision without your consent.

Lasting Power of Attorney

Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) is for health and care decisions if you lack capacity. An LPA may be for either financial or health reasons. Section 5 of the LPA form allows you to choose whether attorneys can give or refuse consent to life sustaining treatment. You must mention any AD on the LPA form. If you haven't got an AD or LPA the doctor treating you must decide in your best interests. In Scotland Power of Attorney may be split into a Continuing Power of Attorney or a Welfare Power of Attorney.

Advanced Care Planning

Advanced Care Planning (ACP) (Anticipatory Care Planning in Scotland) or an Advance Statement addresses the following:

- Who is your trusted person should you lack capacity.
- Where you would like to be cared for if you are dying.
- Who you would like by your side.
- Any spiritual or religious beliefs you would like taken into account.
- Who should visit you near the end.
- Plans for your funeral: burial or cremation; funeral director; coffin; clothes to wear; type of service; music; hymns and readings.

An Advance Statement is not legally binding.

The Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Parliamentary Bill has generated considerable media attention, considered in this Wikipedia article.

Useful Websites

Age UK has advice on making a will, power of attorney and living wills.

Alzheimer's Society covers dementia and ADs.

BBC has a PDF on the practical and emotional aspects of planning one's death.

Bereavement Advice covers advance directives, power of attorney, probate and legal issues.

Citizens Advice provides information about making or updating a will.

Compassion in Dying has a living will template

Death.io gives advice on digital death, legal matters, funeral planning and more.

Dignity in Dying campaigns on assisted dying.

Good Life, Good Death, Good Grief: Planning for the future, and the law in Scotland.

Hospice UK fights for hospice care for all who need it: their Dying Matters campaign seeks to create an open culture in which we're comfortable talking about death, dying and grief.

A UK government site explaining what to do when someone dies step by step.

Macmillan Cancer Support provides information about ADRTs.

Medicalert stores your health details for use in an emergency.

Money Helper looks at getting your financial affairs in order.

Money Saving Expert examines considerations including inheritance tax planning and has checks to minimize financial trauma.

MyWishes is a platform helping with various end-of-life preparations and planning.

Natural Death Centre provides independent funeral advice.

The Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care contains links to useful sites on the subject of end of life.

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