

Who can I talk to if I need more help about anything in this leaflet?

RHN staff will be pleased to talk to you about anything relating to ACP. If you'd prefer, you can speak to your GP.

Other leaflets that we produce that you might find helpful:

- Advance decision to refuse treatment
- Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)



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Advance care planning

Information for patients, residents and their families



Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability



This leaflet explains how to consider your choices and preferences for the future. If you have any other questions we hope you'll talk them over with a member of staff at the Royal Hospital for Neuro-disability (RHN).

Why does thinking ahead matter to me?

Serious illness brings challenges that many of us prefer to avoid thinking about. At the same time many of us fear loss of control about decisions relating to our health.

Thinking ahead and writing down what matters to you can be a daunting process. However, if no one else knows what's important to you, your preferences and choices might not be taken into consideration. It may be difficult to talk together as a family and you might not always agree, but having these conversations can help direct decisions that sometimes need to be made at a time of crisis. You might also like to talk to someone in your healthcare team.

Writing your preferences down will make sure that anyone who provides care for you, carers or health professionals can tailor it to your wishes.

What is advance care planning (ACP)?

ACP is the process of deciding what plans you want to make for your future care, often in discussion with a healthcare professional. This may take place whenever you think about what care you might need in the future.

Why is it a good idea to write down what I think?

Writing down your preferences and choices can help you to influence what happens to you if a time comes when you are no longer able to communicate your wishes. It gives you the opportunity to think about what you would and wouldn't like to happen to you. It will also help healthcare professionals know what's important to you when planning your care, should you ever not be in a position to tell them yourself.

Where can I write down my preferences?

The RHN has an Advance Care Plan booklet that you can use to write down your preferences. The booklet will guide you through a series of questions and ideas for you to think about. The booklet is yours and you can show it to whoever you decide needs to see it. Just ask a member of your care team if you'd like a copy of the booklet.

What sort of things should I write about?

Advance care planning should incorporate everything that's important to you, for example your physical care or your values and beliefs. Bearing in mind your circumstances can change, the booklet can help you to think about aspects of care that you haven't yet had a chance to consider. You don't have to complete it all at once, and you might want to think about or discuss things with your family and/or friends or your care team.

Can I change my mind once I've written down my wishes?

Recording your preferences in this way creates an 'advance statement', which is not legally binding. We suggest that you should review it regularly with your family or care team. You can change your mind at any time.

What about treatment I don't want?

You can record in this document certain treatments or procedures you'd rather not have, and this will be taken into account. However, if you feel really strongly about refusing certain treatments you'll need to complete an Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment (ADRT) which is a legally binding document.

If there are any treatments or procedures that you don't want, you'll need to discuss this with your consultant. It's important that an ADRT is put in writing, signed and witnessed, and that it includes a statement that the decision stands 'even if life is at risk'.

