

What if things change?

We all want to make choices about the way we live, based on what matters most to us. Thinking about this now helps to make these choices in the future. If we meet health problems in the future, we will want to make choices about how we are treated.



Planning ahead

We all want to make choices about the way we live, and we make these choices based on what matters most to us. Everyone is different, and their choices are different, too.

If we meet health problems in the future, we will want to make choices about how we are treated. Sometimes there are lots of options and sometimes options are limited, but we will still make our decisions based on what matters most to us. Sometimes, people don't feel well enough to choose at the time when important health-care decisions need to be made.

Using this booklet

Feel free to fill in this booklet in your own time - you don't have to do it all at once.

This booklet is a chance for you to think about what matters to you and what you would like to happen if things changed or if you suddenly became ill. It is yours to use how you wish and you can change your answers in the future if you want to.

It aims to help you think, talk, and explore topics whilst you are well so that you are better prepared and can have good conversations with people who matter to you.

You may wish to do this privately, with friends and family, with support groups, or a health and social care professional.

Things I enjoy

What matters most to you is a very personal thing.

Why not take a moment now to think about what things that might be? Those priorities will help you to think about the information in this booklet and make choices based on what's important to you.



What feels good in my life right now?

Scribble down everything that comes to mind, big and small!

What is always guaranteed to help me feel joyful?

What never fails to put me in a good mood?



"Sometimes it helps to reflect on what brings us joy in order to think about what matters to us if things change."

What is my most joyful memory?

What is it about that memory that sparks joy?



What are the parts of me that are most important?

E.g., roles, relationships, hobbies, passions, interests, etc.



When do I feel most like myself?

Consider situations, activities, places, and people.



"Studies show that special places play a role in our emotional and physical well-being. Take a minute to notice where you are, who you're with, and what you're doing when you next feel content."



What are the most important things for me to have a good quality of life?

Include anything that's important to me, even if it doesn't seem important to others.

Think about relationships, hobbies, passions, interests.

What am I most proud of?

What is it about those achievements that resonates most with me? (They can be big or small!)

1. _____



2. _____

3. _____



Are there any religious or cultural practices that are important to my daily well-being or that bring me happiness?

It can be helpful to think about this whilst you're well, so if you do need care and support you can let them know what's important to you.

What matters to me?

It's important to be prepared to talk about what is important to you when you speak to someone about your health and well-being. This helps them to support you better.

Remember, you are the expert of your own health and experiences.

What matters to me?

Who are the most important people in my life?

What things do I do to keep well?

Key things to think about for my future:

Volunteering your time, money, or energy to help others doesn't just make the world better—it also has positive benefits for you too. Studies indicate that the very act of giving back to the community boosts your happiness, health, and sense of well-being.

Are there any social issues, charities, or organisations that I'm passionate about?

They could be big or small, personal, professional, global, or local.

1. _____



2. _____

3. _____



4. _____



Planning for the future

The next section of this booklet has prompts to consider what might be important to you if you become unwell and need care and support.

Thinking about some of these things now means you'll be able to have all your favourite things, and your friends and family will know how best to make you feel comfortable.

For example, if you had a stay in hospital or if you had a friend or family member helping at home.

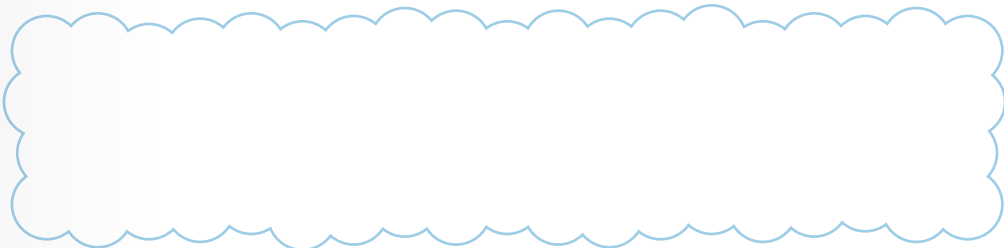
How I like my food and drink

What's my favourite meal and drink?

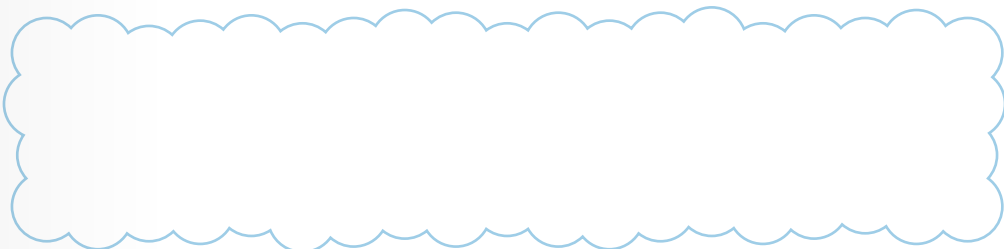


"How do I like it to be made?
Do I have a favourite mug or glass?"

Favourite treat to perk me up:



My go-to comfort food is:



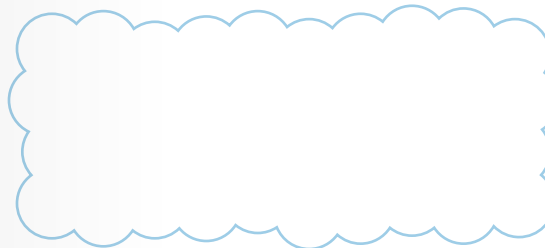
My dislikes/allergies/intolerances:



My favourite things

Taking time to think about what brings you joy now can make these conversations easier if you need care and support.

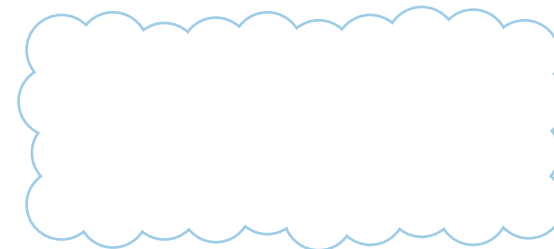
What are my favourite flowers?



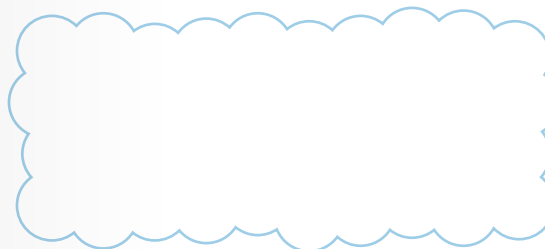
*“Why are these your favourite?
What memories do they spark?”*



Do I have a favourite place to visit?



Do I have any favourite songs, hymns, records, music, or prayers?



Important people in your life

Most of us naturally develop a network of people during our lives. These are people that we can count on; they take an interest in us and support us through good times and bad. We share memories, dreams, hobbies, and pastimes with these family members, friends, colleagues, and team-mates. This gives us a sense of identity and connects us together.

It can be important to know where we can get help if we need it. Sometimes this might be professional help, other times might be practical support, or it could be just needing a trusted person to talk to. This section gives you a space to think about who the important people in your life are, who knows you best, and understand what's important to you.

Death, dying, and bereavement is part of the circle of life – and is as natural as birth, puberty, becoming an adult – or all the many other stages and milestones we encounter in our lives. Getting to know each other in this way means we can be with those who love and care about us, and they understand the things that really matter.

Activity: circles of support

We all have different people we'd go to for different things.

Who do you rely on for support? In what ways do these people help you?



Who is outside your circle?

Who knows me best and understands what matters to me?



Who would I trust with a key to my house?



"If I couldn't make decisions for myself, who would I want to speak for me?"



"If something unexpected happened would someone be able to check on my home for me?"

Who would I want to act on my behalf if I cannot make important decisions about my care?

If you are unable to make your own decisions about your care and support someone may be able to do this for you. A Lasting Power of Attorney is a legal document that lets you choose one or more people to help you make decisions or to make decisions on your behalf. This gives you more control over what happens to you if you have an accident or an illness and cannot make your own decisions.

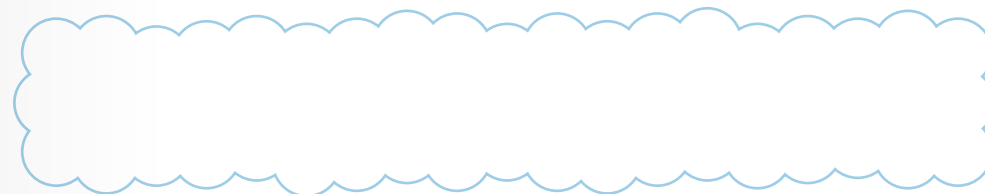
There are a few reasons why you might need someone to make decisions for you or act on your behalf:

- This could just be a temporary situation: for example, if you're in hospital and need help with everyday tasks such as paying bills.
- You may need to make longer-term plans if, for example, you have been diagnosed with dementia and you may lose the mental capacity to make your own decisions in the future.

Thinking about who this might be whilst you are fit and well may give you peace of mind. Your healthcare professional may speak to you about completing a **ReSPECT form**. You can find more information at the end of this booklet.

Who would I trust to make decisions on my behalf?

Use this space to enter a name and contact details.

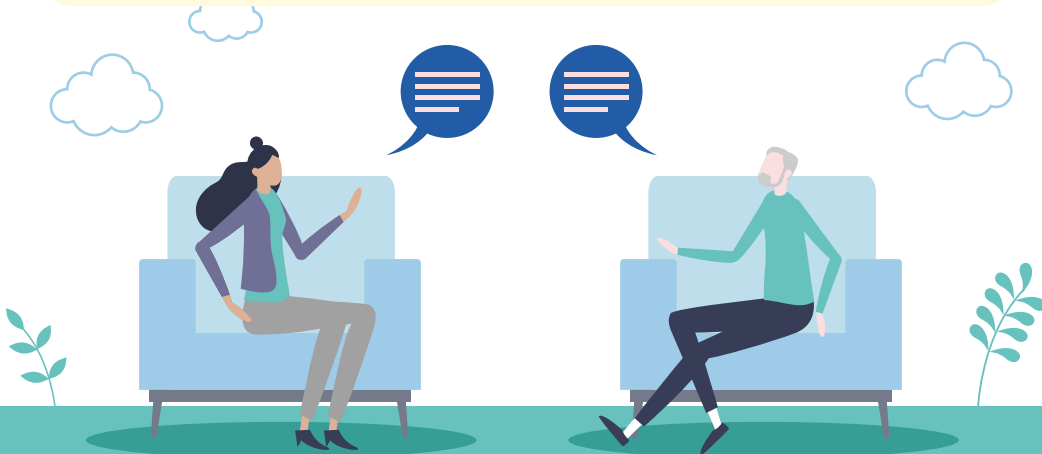


Having sensitive conversations with loved ones

It can sometimes be difficult to talk about your feelings with friends or family. Talking about what would happen if you became unwell or end of life can be hard. It can feel awkward or uncomfortable and sometimes you don't know what to say. Taking time to think about what brings you joy now can make these conversations easier when the time comes.

Starting conversations

- Think about the time and place – you don't want to be rushed or have interruptions
- Be honest, be open
- Don't be afraid to laugh and cry
- Don't have to complete the whole conversation – can be many 'small' conversations
- You can let the thoughts & feelings settle and come back to it
- Don't feel you have to fill the silences
- Talk about plans, hopes and fears



If things change...

If we meet health problems in the future, we will want to make choices about how we are treated and practical things that may need looking after if things change. Sometimes, people don't feel well enough to choose at the time when important decisions need to be made, so it can be helpful to think about this now while you are well.

If I were taken ill, who would I contact in the first instance?

There may be different people you would want to contact for different reasons, e.g., someone to come to hospital with you, someone to do practical things while you're unable to, someone to sympathise, someone to laugh with...

A large, empty, cloud-shaped text box with a blue outline, intended for the user to write their answer to the question above.

Once things have settled down a bit, who would I want to be told if I were unwell?

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What makes me feel better when I'm feeling down or unwell?

A large, empty, cloud-shaped text box with a blue outline, intended for the user to write their answer to the question above.

It's ok to ask

It's important that the information you are given about your health and wellbeing makes sense to you. This will help you get better and stay well.

It's ok to ask:

- 1 What is my main issue?
- 2 What are my choices?
- 3 What are the benefits and possible risks of each option?
- 4 What happens next?

It's ok to...

- Ask again if you don't understand something. Don't feel rushed or embarrassed.
- Make a list of things you want to talk about. This could be things that are important to you.
- Ask if you can bring a friend or someone from your family to help you.
- Make a list of the medicines you are taking and take it with you. It's easy to forget their names.
- Ask the pharmacist. They are there to help you.

Asking questions can help you to:

- Take care of yourself
- Prepare for tests
- Take your medicines in the right way



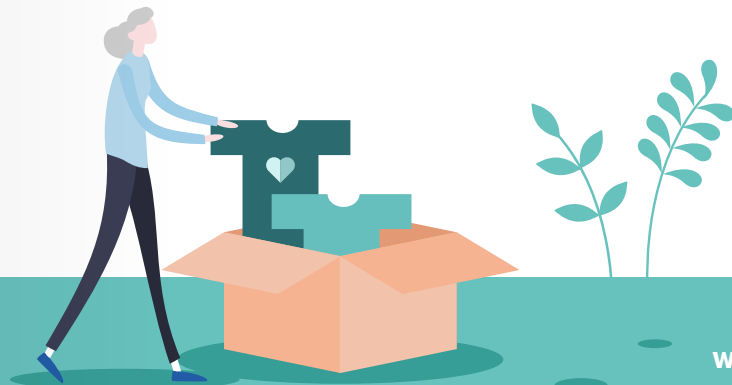
Look out for the 'It's Ok to Ask' postcards where you can write things down to help you remember for later.

#Together Leads

Produced with the permission of University Hospitals of North Midlands NHS Trust

If I become unwell, these are the things I may need:

If I become unwell, these are the things I may need because of my faith:



What plans do I need to make for anyone who is dependent on me?

For example, family, neighbours, and pets.



Are there any types of treatments I may want to refuse based on my beliefs or values?

These could be, for example, cultural or religious beliefs.



Community support organisations

Health and well-being are impacted by different things, including social, emotional, or practical concerns.

If you are interested in speaking to someone about support, or would like to explore this further, these community organisations may be able to help.

Linking Leeds

If practical or emotional problems are stopping you feeling your best, Linking Leeds can help you get them sorted. Open to any resident of Leeds over 16, who is registered with a GP in the city.

0113 336 7612 • linking.Leeds@nhs.net



You can access free, confidential, and impartial help and advice on a range of money related matters such as debt, money, energy, and utilities.

0113 222 4444 • www.leeds.gov.uk/leedsmic



The home of support for all unpaid carers in Leeds. Are you helping a friend or family member due to their illness, disability, mental health issue or a substance misuse problem? We are here to support you.

If you have any questions or concerns, contact our advice line:
0113 380 4300 • www.carersleeds.org.uk



MindWell

MindWell is the mental health website for people in Leeds. They can help you find information about support in the city and different ways to take care of your mental well-being.

If you're concerned about your mental health, you can call the West Yorkshire 24-hour mental health helpline on **0800 183 0558**.

www.mindwell-leeds.org.uk

Advance care planning

Advance care planning is a process of thinking about your views, preferences and wishes about your future care. It is not usually a one-off process. It is ongoing conversation, usually involving the people in your life who provide support and care (for example loved ones, carers, and health professionals). There is no pressure to make quick decisions.

Advance care planning is an umbrella term that covers many aspects of future care planning. Having an advance care plan is a bit like planning ahead for a rainy day. It might include an emergency care plan, resuscitation decisions, advance decisions to refuse treatment, lasting power of attorney, as well as a statement of preferences and wishes such as your wishes on music, food, care of pets.

It's an empowering way of maintaining control when things feel out of control.

Advance care planning can occur at any time you choose. Ask your care provider or someone close to you to have the discussion with you.



ReSPECT

(Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment)

An emergency care plan provides relevant, quickly available information for clinicians in an emergency. You will need support and advice from a clinician to complete an emergency care plan, and they might talk to you about completing an advance care plan at the same time.

In Leeds, we use the national **ReSPECT** document for emergency care planning. This creates a personalised document with recommendations for your clinical care if there is an emergency where you cannot make or express choices.

It provides health and care professionals responding to that emergency with a summary of recommendations to help them to make immediate decisions about your care and treatment.

Consider sharing this document

Documenting and sharing your wishes and decisions will help people know what you want or not want.

Once you've completed this booklet, we strongly recommend you share it with loved ones so that they know what you would want if you are unable to, or need help to express it.

This helps you to stay in control when things might feel out of control.

