

3 APPOINTING SOMEONE TO MAKE DECISIONS FOR YOU IN THE FUTURE

If you become unable to participate in decision-making at any point, we as healthcare professionals will do everything possible to facilitate your participation (e.g. hearing aids, large print, use of interpreters). However, if we feel you still do not have the ability to be involved in decision-making, then a decision would need to be made that was considered to be in your 'best interests'. Your next of kin and other key carers, as well as the multi-professional healthcare team would all help contribute to these discussions. For most people this way of making decisions is a good one.

In certain situations patients are able to anticipate that they may deteriorate mentally, for example, advancing dementia. In cases such as these you may want to stipulate that a particular person can make decisions on their behalf, if you are no longer able to do so. Such a person is given Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). The person that you choose can be a friend, relative or professional. You can choose more than one person to act as an attorney on your behalf. Your LPA is specific to you- you decide who will have the power to control your affairs and the precise limits of that power.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF LPA

- **A property and affairs LPA** - such a person can make decisions about financial matters e.g. selling your house, or managing your bank account.
- **A personal welfare LPA** - such a person(s) can make decisions about your health and personal welfare e.g. where you should live, day-to-day care or having medical treatment.

A personal welfare LPA will only take effect when you lack the capacity to make decisions. With a property and affairs LPA, the attorney can start managing financial affairs as soon as the LPA is registered (when you may still have capacity), unless it is specifically stated that this should only happen after you lose capacity.

Forms are available from the Office of the Public Guardian. The application has to be registered with the Office of the Public Guardian in order to be valid. Although appointing such an attorney can be done without a solicitor, the process can be quite complex to do on your own. However, remember that engaging a solicitor may incur costs.

Useful Website: <http://www.publicguardian.gov.uk/>