safeguardingireland.org

Safeguarding IRELAND

Safeguarding means living safely, free from abuse or neglect. It means our choices, particularly if we are vulnerable, can be clearly heard and respected.

Safeguarding Ireland promotes safeguarding of vulnerable adults to protect them from all forms of abuse by persons, organisations and institutions and is developing a national plan for promoting their welfare. The organisation's main funder is the HSE.

Plan ahead

The best step to safeguard your future is to think in advance about important future decisions, talk with your most trusted family, friends or professionals and have your wishes clearly recorded.

That means that if in the future, you do not have the capacity to make decisions, due to age related frailty or serious illness, your choices on where you would like to be cared for, healthcare approaches and finances can be known, considered and respected. Planning ahead also safeguards against abuse.

The important steps to take include:

1. Appoint an Enduring Power of Attorney

2. Make known where you would like to be cared for

3. Make your healthcare preferences known

4. Plan your Finances

Most of these steps can be addressed by completing the *Think Ahead* form, which is a carefully considered planning document available at www.thinkahead.ie

Who is most at risk?

People with:

- Reduced decision-making capacity
- Age related frailty
- A serious illness
- A mental or physical disability.

Steps to 'Plan Ahead'

1. Enduring Power of Attorney

An Enduring Power of Attorney means appointing legal and financial decision-making powers to a chosen person for if you lack decision-making capacity in the future.

All adults are encouraged to put in place an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA). Doing so involves contacting your Solicitor and they can work with you. If you need financial assistance, you may qualify for legal aid.

Safeguarding Ireland research found that just 6% of Irish adults had in place an EPA, which is very low by international standards.

2. Place of Care

In the event that you did not have decision-making capacity and became unable to live independently – you should have made clear your wishes on Place of Care. Would you prefer to live at home with supports, in a nursing home or a hospice, remain in a hospital, or live with a family member or friend?

This means thinking about your wishes, talking with a trusted person and documenting them. Safeguarding Ireland research found that just 8% of adults had discussed this with others.

3. Advance Healthcare Directive

Putting in place an Advance Healthcare Directive means recording your future healthcare preferences including treatment approaches, surgery, medicines and resuscitation.

An Advance Healthcare Directive is recognised in law. You can talk with your Doctor about making one and to keep it where it can be found if needed.

4. Finances

We all need to prepare for the likelihood that one day we may need help managing our finances. We should talk with someone we trust and plan our finances.

This will protect against financial abuse, which is a significant issue for older people.

Banks and An Post are keen to work with customers to safeguard their finances. You can make an appointment and trained staff can help make a plan.

More information is also available in *Guide to Safeguarding Your Money Now and in the Future* developed by Banking & Payments Federation Ireland. See **www.safeguardyourmoney.ie**

Think Ahead form – download, complete, store and revise

Think ahead
Speak for Yourself

You can address many of these issues – and safeguard your future – by completing the *Think Ahead* form available at **www.thinkahead.ie**.

It's one document in which you can record your personal information, emergency contacts, health insurance, medications, cultural preferences, religious beliefs, place of care wishes, Advance Healthcare Directive, resuscitation preferences, organ donation wishes, Enduring Power of Attorney and financial plans.

You can update your preferences at any stage. Once completed it is important that your trusted family, friends, or professionals know where your form is.

Think Ahead is an initiative of the Irish Hospice Foundation.

Turn your wishes into PLANS.

Talking these steps means that family, friends and care professionals can, if needed, know what your wishes and plans are.

While it may not always be possible to deliver all of wishes, by being known they can be considered and respected.

Planning ahead is also the best step you can take to safeguard against being treated badly, or from adult abuse.

More Information

Safeguarding Ireland –
www.safeguardingireland.org

Think Ahead –
www.thinkahead.ie

The Irish Hospice Foundation
CHY 6830
Registered Charity Number 20013554

Financial Planning –
www.safeguardyourmoney.ie

Banking & Payments Federation Ireland

Safeguarding IRELAND

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Promoting the rights of vulnerable adults

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