



**Recording your wishes
safeguards you**

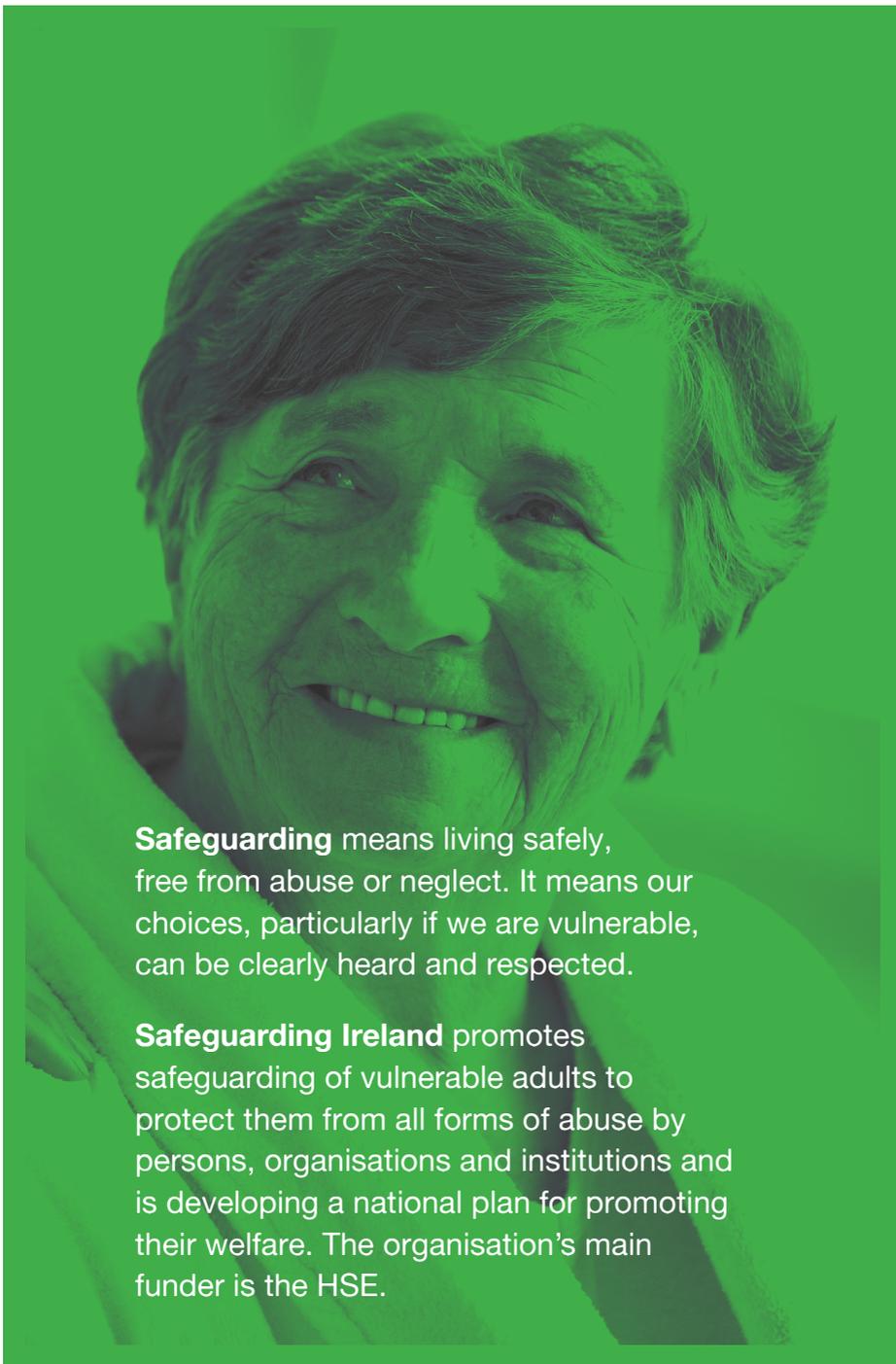
**Plan Ahead –
It's better for everybody**

safeguardingireland.org



**Safeguarding
I R E L A N D**





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 – it's better for everybody

Planning ahead your important life decisions is even more important now during the COVID-19 pandemic, as greater risks are posed to our health and well-being.

That means that if in the future, you did not have the capacity to make our own decisions (due to illness, or age-related frailty) that there is clarity on your future wishes regarding healthcare, where you would like to be cared for, who can act on your behalf, and use of your money.

This means **Planning Ahead now** – thinking about, talking about and recording these important preferences.

Advance planning also safeguards against risks of being treated badly, disrespected, or suffering from adult abuse when we are vulnerable.

Having our choices easily accessible if needed is also better for all of those around us – reducing potential for stresses and tensions among loved ones, and for providing information to healthcare professionals.

Who is most at risk?

Planning Ahead is recommended for all adults, especially those who are getting older and is particularly important for vulnerable people such as those living with:

- Reduced decision-making capacity
- Age related frailty
- A serious or sudden illness
- A mental or physical disability
- High-risk of serious illness from COVID-19
- Under the control of another person.

Plan Ahead

1. Healthcare

The recommended way to plan future healthcare is to put in place an Advance Healthcare Directive, a document that is recognised in law. You can talk with your Doctor about making one – and keeping it where it can be easily found.

In it you can record future healthcare preferences including treatment approaches, surgery, medicines and resuscitation. During COVID-19 healthcare professionals will still be guided by people's preferences.

2. Place of Care

In the event that you became unable to live independently – you should have made clear your choices 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?

COVID-19 has changed access to health services for all of us – and pandemic restrictions should be considered. However, we still have choices.

3. Enduring Power of Attorney

An Enduring Power of Attorney means giving legal and financial decision-making powers to a chosen person if you lack decision-making capacity. All adults are encouraged to put in place an Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA).

During the COVID-19 period, you can phone or email your Solicitor and they can advise you on how best to put an EPA in place. If you need financial assistance, you may qualify for legal aid.

4. Finances

We all need to prepare for the likelihood that one day we may need help managing our finances. Unfortunately financial abuse is a significant issue for older people. We should talk with someone we trust and plan our finances.

Banks and An Post are keen to work with customers to safeguard their finances. For the COVID-19 period they have put in place additional services with dedicated helpline numbers established.

More information is available in a special Banking & Payments Federation Ireland guide *Cocooning During Covid-19, A Guide to help customers manage their money* which can be viewed at safeguardyourmoney.ie

You can address many 'Plan Ahead' needs 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 and financial information.



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



Think Ahead is an initiative of the Irish Hospice Foundation.



More adults in Ireland need to PLAN AHEAD.

There is a need for more adults in Ireland to plan ahead, Safeguarding Ireland research found that:

- 4% had completed an Advanced Healthcare Directive
- 4% had completed a Think Ahead form
- 6% had in place an EPA
- 8% had discussed a future place of care with others

In comparison, many more people have planned ahead in other European countries.

Turn your wishes into PLANS.

It may not always be possible to deliver on all of our wishes, and this may be more difficult during the COVID-19 pandemic.

6

However, by being discussed and recorded your preferences can be at the centre of important conversations or decisions about you, if you were unable to act independently.

Unfortunately adult abuse occurs, particularly at times when we are vulnerable. We know that Planning Ahead greatly reduces the risk of being treated badly, or suffering adult abuse.

Planning Ahead is also better for those most important to us. Our clarity reduces the potential for tension or stress among loved ones and families. It also helps healthcare professionals to provide the best possible care for us.

Plan Ahead – it's better for everybody.

More Information

Safeguarding Ireland –
www.safeguardingireland.org

Think Ahead –
www.thinkahead.ie

COVID-19 information –
www.hse.ie/coronavirus

Safeguarding
IRELAND 

 The Irish
Hospice
Foundation
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Promoting the rights of vulnerable adults

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