

When I'm gone...



Have you spoken to your loved ones about your choices for end of life care or your last wishes?

- Many people do not die as they might have wished to
- Many people die without telling anyone about their wishes for funeral arrangements
- Many people don't manage to make the arrangements for care of loved ones and dependants before they die

It can be very distressing to be told that your illness cannot be cured but none of us want to make things difficult for our loved ones either. Talking about your death with your loved ones and about any special wishes can be the most important conversation you have - it can bring you closer as well as giving you both peace of mind.

Remember in the long run you can hurt people more by the conversations you don't have than by the conversations you do. You can talk about dying without destroying hope.

It is important for everyone's sake not to delay making significant arrangements like care, wills and funeral plans.

What steps can be taken?

We've compiled a useful list of things to consider before you die. Use the spaces provided over the page to make some notes.

Make a will or update your will

Writing a will allows you to plan what happens to your money and possessions after you die. If you die without a will your possessions will be distributed and decided by the law and not your choice. You may want to give another person legal authority to make decisions on your behalf. A Lasting Power of Attorney enables you to give another person the right to make decisions about your property and affairs and/or your personal welfare.

Try to collect together all important documents relating to property, insurances, investments, debts, pensions, birth and marriage certificates, memberships etc. and put them somewhere safe. Make sure the whereabouts of these items and the will are known to loved ones or those who have been selected to deal with your affairs after death.

“It was really difficult to talk about the end of my husband's life because we were both frightened. But we sat down and faced the fact that this was it. It was tough but really helpful emotionally. In the end he died as he wanted to - at home.”



Notes

Will information

Funeral plan

Treatments & the final days

Other wishes & information

Make a funeral plan

You can leave written wishes about your funeral and what should happen to your body with those you care about, or in a will. You can also make arrangements far in advance with a funeral director's help. Funerals aren't cheap but you can pay in advance and spread the cost by paying over months or even years. Many charities, financial organisations and funeral directors run funeral plans which allow you to pre-pay for your funeral.

Things to consider:

- Do you want a burial or cremation?
- Whether there will be a funeral service? Would you want it to be religious or a civil ceremony? Choose whether you would like this to be in a church, at a graveside, or at another location of your choice.
- Who would you like to be invited to the funeral service?
- Do you want flowers or donations?
- Would you like notices in the local newspaper to inform people of your death and the time and date of your funeral?
- If you want a cremation - would you like your ashes to be kept/scattered in a place special to you or those you love?

Decisions about medical care, treatments and the final days

- What type of care would you like towards the end of your life?
- Are there any treatments you don't want to have? This can be done by making a legal document called an 'advance decision'.
- Do you want to write an advance decision to refuse treatment (also called a living will or advanced directive)?
- Where would you like to die?
- What would you like people to know before you die?
- How would you like the surroundings to be as you are dying?
- Who do you want to have around you?
- Do you want people to know before you die?
- Organ Donation - the Gift of Life. Have you considered organ donation? Almost anyone can be a donor; organs and tissue from people in their 70s and 80s are transplanted successfully. You can find out more and join the NHS Organ Donor Register by calling **0300 123 23 23** or visiting the website www.organdonation.nhs.uk

Make sure your loved ones know your plans

Before you finalise any of the above, consider talking through them with your loved ones. If you have important documents or notes about your care or inheritance keep them in a safe place and let loved ones know where they are. Use the space on this page to make notes.

What if someone close to you is dying - have you spoken to them about their wishes?

If you don't know what your loved one wants from their remaining days, how they feel about receiving further treatments, what type of funeral they would like or you don't even know if they have made a will, why don't you raise the subject? It is in everyone's interests to talk about the practicalities. Sharing feelings and anxieties can bring you closer and allows you to make the most of the time that you have.

It could be the most important conversation you have ever had!



Next steps

If you would like to talk to one of our Elderly Client team in confidence, we offer a free half hour consultation. Please call Louise Southwell to make an appointment **01736 362294**

See our website for more details coodes.co.uk

Our offices: **St. Austell, Truro, Newquay, Liskeard, Launceston, Penzance and Holsworthy**