

Advance Directives

Advance Directives (sometimes called Living Wills) are generally instructions provided by a patient relating to a condition which may arise in the future.

This patient guide will explain how the Practice will deal with an Advance Directive and what the patient responsibilities are. It is not a legal guide, nor is the information provided necessarily complete or binding in all circumstances.

Practice Policy

- The Practice abides by the British Medical Association (BMA) and other legal guidelines for advance directives.
- Each request from a patient will be considered by the patient's own GP.
- Appropriate advice will be offered relating to the consequences of the request.
- The Practice generally supports the principle of patient choice in the provision of treatment and will take the Directive into account in its provision of treatment

Registration of an Advance Directive

- Make an appointment at least 3 days in advance with your GP, advising the receptionist that an Advance Directive is to be discussed.
- Bring the original document together with identification for each patient containing a signature—a driving licence or credit card.

What the Practice Will Do

Your GP will discuss the clinical implications of your decision bearing in mind your individual health situation to ensure that you fully understand the nature of your request. Your GP may ask you about your Advance Directive again in the future if you come for a consultation.

We will make copies of your documents. The originals will be returned to you. Our medical records will be updated with an image of your documents and an alert placed on your record which will be seen each time your record is opened.

We will provide details to other health professionals involved with your treatment as needed, e.g. where a hospital or other referral is necessary.

Patient Responsibilities

- Maintain your original documents
- Re-affirm that the Advance Directive is still valid on a regular basis in writing—annually is recommended
- Ensure that your family are aware of the directive.

What the Practice Will Not Do

- Remind you to review or update your directive.
- Monitor your treatment elsewhere (other than supply a copy of your directive)
- Express views on the acceptability or legality of the directive in the wide variety of potential future clinical circumstances, or treatments which may be needed.
- The Practice will not be responsible for the provision of Advance Directive information to health providers where the Practice has not been involved in the care process (e.g. private clinics, temporary registration elsewhere etc)