

Here's a clear, practical checklist designed to help older people start conversations about who can speak on their behalf if they become unable to do so. It covers both those with close networks and those without, and includes key points about Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPA).

Is it time for a cuppa and a chat?

Starting the Conversation

- Begin with a neutral reason (e.g. getting organised)
- Emphasise peace of mind, not death
- Ask permission to talk about it
- Respect their response if they hesitate, they just might not be the right person to help you with this. This person does not have to be the person to eventually speak for you, just someone who is willing to discuss this matter with you

My wishes and wants

- Have I thought about what matters most to me (health, care, finances, independence)?
- Have I written down my preferences in a simple, accessible format?

Identifying Trusted People

For those with a close network e.g. family or friends:

- Who do I truly trust to make decisions in my best interests?
- Do those people understand my values and wishes?
- Are they willing and able to take on this responsibility?
- Have I spoken to them about specific scenarios (healthcare, living arrangements, finances)?

For those without a close network:

- Is there a trusted professional I can rely on (e.g. solicitor, GP, social worker, faith leader, trusted employee)?
- Can I appoint an independent advocate in a paid capacity?
- Have I explored local support organisations or charities?
- Do I know how to access advocacy services if needed?

Set Up a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA)

There are two main types:

- Health and Welfare
- Property and Financial Affairs



- Do I understand what each type of LPA covers?
- Have I chosen one or more attorneys I trust?
- Have I discussed my wishes clearly with them?
- Have I officially registered my LPA (and paid the fees)?
- Do my attorneys know where the documents are kept?

Consider Backup Plans

- Who might help if my first choice attorney cannot act?
- Have I considered what happens in emergencies?
- Do key people know how to access important information quickly?

Record Your Wishes

- Have I written an advance statement about my care preferences?
- Have I considered an advance decision (living will)?
- Have I shared this information with the right people?

Practical Information

- Have I made a list of important contacts (family, friends, professionals)?
- Are my financial details organised and accessible?
- Do I have a document with key information (medications, GP, allergies)?

Review Regularly

- Have I reviewed my plans in the last 1–2 years?
- Have I updated my choices if relationships or circumstances changed?
- Do my chosen people still feel able to act for me?



For Peace of Mind

- Do I feel confident someone will speak up for me if needed?
- Have I reduced uncertainty for others by being clear about my wishes?

More helpful websites at: www.opaal.org.uk/campaigns/