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Living Wills

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A living will is not a Will as we normally understand it.

It does not dispose of property, appoint executors or speak from death and it is not legally binding.

It is a form of advance statement which sets out wishes about our medical treatment if and when we become unable to tell people or take part in any discussion about it.

Some want to know they will be able to determine the quality of their increased lifespan, especially when it is accepted that the prevalence of dementia increases with age. Many of us will not want to be kept alive, often for extended periods of time, in incurable or incapacitated states.

A living Will has to be expressed in writing, with clear directions in respect of future healthcare and instructions about the sort of treatment we would not wish to have.

To be effective, it has to incorporate a number of features.

For example, it cannot request treatment which is considered by doctors to be clinically inappropriate or ask for any intervention or omission which is unlawful.

It would be sensible to let your doctor know that you have made such a Will and of course your husband or wife, or partner, family and friends.

As with a normal will, you can change your mind and cancel it at any time.