

Making Decisions Alliance

Accessible summary



This leaflet is a summary of 15 factsheets about the Making Decisions Alliance. The factsheets explain what the Making Decisions Alliance is and what it wants to do.

You may want to read this summary while looking at the factsheets. You may also want to read it all with a supporter.



Factsheet 1: Foreword by Michaela Willmott, Chair of the Making Decisions Alliance

I am very glad that these factsheets are available. They will help people to campaign in their local area for a change in the law on 'mental capacity' (see *Factsheet 3* below).



The Making Decisions Alliance has come together to campaign for a new law which will protect disabled people. It would also protect people who have an illness that makes it difficult for them to make their own decisions.



You can help us by writing to your Member of Parliament (MP) or telling us about whether this affects you.

Factsheet 2: What is the 'Making Decisions Alliance'?

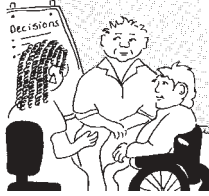


It is a group of charities that have come together to get a change to the law on 'mental capacity'. This group represents a large number of disabled people and people who have mental health problems.

The Making Decisions Alliance believes that new legislation on mental capacity is urgently needed

For more information and other formats of this pack visit www.makingdecisions.org.uk

Factsheet 3: Who is affected?



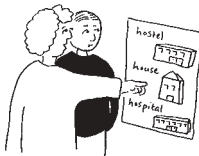
A lot of people in this country can't make decisions for themselves. They might need support to make decisions. People often find that other people make decisions for them and do not listen to their views.

Factsheet 4: What do we mean by 'mental capacity'?



'Mental capacity' is about how able you are to make decisions. If people are able to make decisions they are said to have 'mental capacity'. People who can't make decisions do not have 'mental capacity'.

The law does not clearly say who has or has not got 'mental capacity'. An important question is 'How do you test if someone has 'mental capacity'?'.



The Making Decisions Alliance thinks that we should never just say that some people can't make decisions on anything at all. We believe that every decision should be looked at separately. For example, some people may be able to make a decision about where to live, but might need help on working out their money and benefits.

Factsheet 5: Why we are campaigning for a new law?



The Making Decisions Alliance wants a law to say that people should get help to make their own decisions whenever possible.

We want a new law to protect people who cannot make decisions for themselves. This would make sure that people

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who are very disabled are well looked after when other people make decisions for them.



The Government agrees that things need to change. It has promised to do something about this. But we are still waiting for this to happen, after many years.

Factsheet 6: Communication



We should never assume that someone can't make any of their own decisions. We should always help people to make their own decisions where possible.

There are lots of ways to help people make their own decisions. For example, people can draw pictures that show what they want. Or sometimes it is better to ask people to choose between 2 different things, like 'do you want to have pizza or pasta?' This could be better than just asking 'what do you want to eat?'

Factsheet 7: What are 'Advance Statements'?

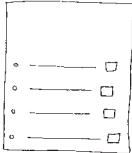


This is when people want to tell their carers and doctors about how they want to be treated in hospital if their health gets worse.

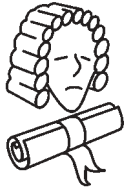
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Factsheet 8: Quotes from Ministers and MPs



A list of what Ministers (members of the Government) and other politicians have been saying about mental capacity since 1989.



They are saying that the law needs to be changed – but nothing has happened yet! We want to show this has gone on for too long and we need things to change now!

Factsheet 9: What is happening in other countries?

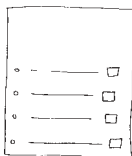
We looked at countries that already have ‘mental capacity’ law – like Scotland, Australia and Canada.



We found that people, like people with a learning disability, get better protection and support in making their own decisions in these countries. We want it to be the same in England and Wales.



Factsheet 10: Frequently asked questions



A list of answers to some questions that people may have about mental capacity. These include:

- what the Making Decisions Alliance is and what it wants
- what mental capacity is
- how there are not proper mental capacity laws at the moment

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- how people are not getting important rights because the law is not clear
- what the Making Decisions Alliance wants the Government to do.

Factsheet 11



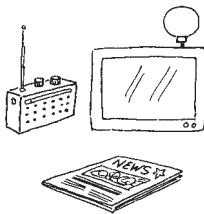
This is an example of a letter you could send to your local MP about your experiences. Please ask your carer or supporter for the name and address of your MP.

Factsheet 12



This is an example of a letter that your carer can send to their local MP telling them about the problems that they have.

Factsheet 13



This is an example of a 'press release' that you could send to your local newspaper, TV or radio station. You may want to organise a local campaign about this issue and tell people that you are doing it.

Factsheet 14



The Making Decisions Alliance would like to find out about your experiences of making decisions on things like your money or where you live. Do people listen to what you want? Have you found yourself in a situation where people did not listen to you? Fill in the form and send it to us, to let us know your experiences.

Factsheet 15



We want to know what you think of this pack. Fill out the form and send it to us, to let us know what you think and how you have used the pack.