

# What is the Making Decisions Alliance?

The Making Decisions Alliance brings together a wide range of organisations and groups\*, working with people who may, for a range of different reasons, have difficulty in making or communicating decisions.

## What do we want to achieve?

The two broad aims of the Alliance are to:

- lobby the Government to introduce mental capacity legislation in the next Queen's Speech, by November 2003
- increase awareness of the need for new legislation.

## Why an alliance?

The Alliance brings together organisations with many different perspectives. Its purpose is to develop debate on the issues to do with mental capacity. By sharing information, we aim to develop a better understanding of what is needed to support and protect people's ability to make decisions about their everyday lives – decisions about health, welfare and financial affairs, for example.

We want key policymakers, MPs and peers to appreciate the complexity and variety of the issues around mental capacity. By presenting a wide range of views and

perspectives on these issues, we are seeking to sustain a public debate.

By bringing all our members into one Alliance, we can better support other organisations' work where appropriate and avoid duplication of work. We have adopted some principles for the way we work: in summary, we aim to work in an inclusive, open, accessible way, based on the experiences of the people represented and supported by our organisations.

## \* Who is involved in the Making Decisions Alliance?

The following 20 organisations are members of the Making Decisions Alliance :

1. Action on Elder Abuse
2. Age Concern England
3. The Alzheimer's Society
4. Caring Decisions
5. The Down's Syndrome Association
6. Headway
7. Help the Aged
8. Leonard Cheshire
9. Mencap
10. The Mental Health Foundation
11. Mind
12. The National Autistic Society
13. Patient Concern
14. Relatives and Residents Association
15. Respond

**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](http://www.makingdecisions.org.uk)

16. Rethink (formerly the National Schizophrenia Fellowship)
17. Scope
18. Sense
19. The Stroke Association
20. Turning Point

### Who else supports the campaign for new legislation?

Many organisations representing professionals, such as The Law Society, the British Medical Association (BMA) and the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), all agree that new legislation is needed to provide clear guidelines on who can make decisions and when.

Family members, carers, doctors, nurses and social workers are often unsure of the legal situation. This puts them in a difficult position: they want to act in a person's best interests but are unclear what the law allows them to do.

For example, in some situations, medication can be administered to a person without clear consent. But professionals are often unsure about what the law allows them to do to ensure the patient gets the necessary treatment. As a result, professionals are at risk of being accused of malpractice; while patients are vulnerable to abuse. New legislation will

therefore protect people who may not have capacity, empower people who have difficulty making or communicating decisions and, it will also help protect professionals in carrying out their duties.

The following web links and may contain additional useful information. For individual advice we recommend that you contact a solicitor or ask your General Practitioner (GP):

- Lord Chancellors Department  
[www.lcd.gov.uk](http://www.lcd.gov.uk)
- Law Society  
[www.thelawsociety.org.uk](http://www.thelawsociety.org.uk)
- Department of Health (consent initiative)  
[www.doh.gov.uk/consent](http://www.doh.gov.uk/consent)
- Law Commission  
[www.lawcom.gov.uk](http://www.lawcom.gov.uk)
- British Medical Association  
[www.bma.org.uk](http://www.bma.org.uk)
- General Medical Council  
[www.gmc.org.uk](http://www.gmc.org.uk)
- Royal College of Nurses  
[www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)
- Nursing and Midwifery Council  
[www.ukcc.org.uk](http://www.ukcc.org.uk)
- Scottish Executive  
[www.scotland.gov.uk/justice/incapacity](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/justice/incapacity)
- Disability Rights Commission  
[www.drc.org.uk](http://www.drc.org.uk)

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