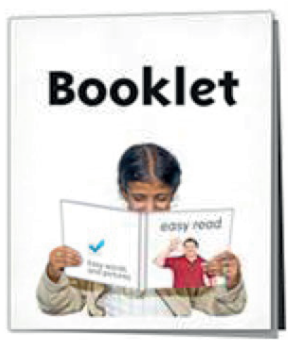


Information about mental capacity

Easy read version



This booklet tells you about mental capacity





This leaflet tells you about mental capacity and where to get more information.



We hope it will help people who are being assessed for mental capacity, and their family and friends.



What do we mean when we say someone has mental capacity?



We say someone has mental capacity when we think they are able to decide what they want to do and how they want to live their life.

Being able to make these decisions is important to all of us.



There are decisions we make every day such as what we want to wear and eat, or if we want to go out and see our friends.

We also make bigger decisions. For example, where we want to live, how we spend our money, or whether or not to go to the doctor about a health problem.



Having the mental capacity to make decisions means you are able to:

- Understand information



- Remember the information for long enough to make a decision using that information.



- Tell other people what you have decided.



Why is it important to know whether or not someone has the mental capacity to make decisions?



It is important because we all want to be independent and make our own decisions about what we want to do.



But we don't want people to be abused or taken advantage of and this can happen if they are left to make decisions when they are not able to do so.



Why might someone not have mental capacity?



A very small number of people are found to not have the mental capacity to make any decisions.

This could be because of many reasons such as learning disabilities, dementia or a mental health problem. But most people will have some mental capacity whatever difficulties they may have.

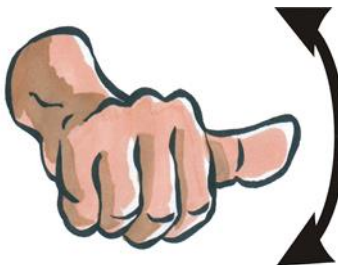


So, not everyone has the same amount of mental capacity?



No. Some people have the mental capacity to make decisions about some things but not other things.

For example, a person may be able to choose what to wear or to eat or drink but may not be able to decide how to stay safe from harm.



Other people can make decisions sometimes but at other times cannot. For example, they may have a mental health problem that affects them differently at different times.



What does the law say?

The law is very clear about protecting and supporting us. It says:



1. We must believe that people have mental capacity and can make their own decisions unless it is proved that they can't.



2. We all have the right to make our own decisions even if other people do not agree with us.

3. We should have as much support as we need to make decisions.

If someone cannot make their own decisions, the law says that people helping them must only make decisions in their **best interests**.



Best interests' means that the decision made by other people for them must be what is best for them, not for anyone else.

The decision must give that person as much freedom as they can have.



Who decides whether you have mental capacity?

A doctor or social worker might decide that someone does not have mental capacity. This will be because they cannot understand, remember and think about the information to make a decision, or if they cannot tell you their decision.



Help and Support

If you have any questions, you will be able to get in touch with a person who will help you.



The name of the person you can get in touch with is:

.....

Here is how you can get in touch with me:



Phone



Email



Please get in touch at these times:

.....

Signature

Other places for information and help



Age UK

Telephone Number: 0121 705 9128

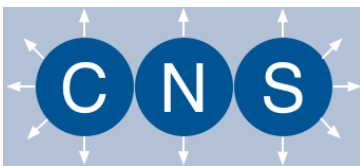
Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull



Solihull Carers Centre

Telephone Number: 0121 788 1143

Website: www.solihullcarers.org



Community Navigator Services CIC

Telephone Number: 0121 722 8958

Web: www.communitynavigatorservices.org



Solihull Action through Advocacy

Telephone Number: 0121706 4696

Website: www.solihulladvocacy.org.uk



Solihull MyLife Portal

Website: www.solihull.mylifeportal.co.uk



Solihull Information and Advice Hubs

Telephone Number: 0121 705 9128

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/solihull/information--advice/community-advice-hubs

Department of Health

Website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-capacity-act-code-of-practice



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