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Older people to 'write down' future care preferences to mark World Elder Abuse Day



By **Aoibhin Bryant** - 14/06/2020

Safeguarding Ireland has called for older adults to 'write down' their future care preferences ahead of World Elder Abuse Day.

Safeguarding Ireland has said **older and vulnerable adults would be better protected** by having their preferences recorded.

In the UK, calls to elder abuse charity Hourglass rose by a staggering 30% during COVID-19 lockdown.



Safeguarding Ireland has called for older adults to 'write down' their future care preferences ahead of World Elder Abuse Day. Pic: Shutterstock

Safeguarding Ireland have asked people to fill in a Think Ahead form after only 4% of a poll have said they have completed one.

Think Ahead is an initiative by the Irish Hospice Foundation and is a record of personal information, emergency contacts, health insurance, culture preferences, religious beliefs, place of care wishes, organ donation wishes and financial information.

It can also include an Advance Healthcare Directive which records preferences on treatment approaches, surgery, medicines and resuscitation.



Ahead of World Elder Abuse Day on Monday, Safeguarding Ireland has said older and vulnerable adults would be better protected by having their preferences recorded. Pic: Getty Images

Safeguarding Ireland Chairperson Patricia Rickard-Clarke has urged people to write and store carefully their care preferences rather than just thinking about them.

'Planning ahead – for if people became unable to make decisions or live independently in the future — helps people's wishes to be respected and also safeguards against the risk of abuse. It is also better for families, loved ones and healthcare professionals.'



Safeguarding Ireland Chairperson Patricia Rickard-Clarke has urged people to write and store carefully their care preferences rather than just thinking about them. Pic: Shutterstock

As a result of COVID-19, 23% reported that they had considered completing a Think Ahead form with 14% considering to complete an Advance Healthcare Directive.

'The theme of World Elder Abuse Day 2020 is to "safeguard during and after COVID-19"; Ms Richard-Clarke continued.

'It may not always be possible to deliver on all of our wishes, but by being accessible our preferences can inform important health and care decisions, and this is an important part of safeguarding.



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'If people have difficulty recording these decisions by themselves, a trusted person should assist.'

If you suspect that you or an older person may be experiencing abuse then you may need to speak with a GP, Public Health Nurse or Safeguarding Social Worker or contact the HSE Information line on 1850 24 1850.