**Sample advance planning letter for vulnerable patients**

Surgery

Patient’s Name

Patient’s Address

Dear Title Surname,

Given the Coronavirus pandemic, we have started to think more about how we can better look after our patients in accordance with their wishes.

We have found that talking to patients who may be vulnerable, about how and where they wish to be looked after, should they become unwell, is extremely useful. Waiting until patients become unwell means that they are often not in a position to explain their wishes at that time.

Things that we would encourage you to think about are:

• Where you would like to be cared for should you become unwell? (e.g. hospital, home, hospice, with family etc.)

• If there are any situations when you would not want to be admitted to hospital?

• If you are a carer for someone else?

• Whether you would or would not like to be resuscitated should your heart naturally stop beating, or you naturally stop breathing?

• Details of your next of kin and whether you are happy for us to discuss your medical history with them, should this be necessary?

It is probably sensible for you to discuss these matters with your family and loved ones, so that they are aware of your wishes too.

It is important that we can record your wishes and keep them in your medical record. We can then make sure that they are shared at the appropriate time with other community or hospital doctors and nurses or paramedics, for example.

Making these choices now does not tie you to a fixed course of action. You can always change you mind about any of these things if circumstances change.

We appreciate this letter may cause some distress for some of the people we are sending it to, and we are sorry. We hope that you will still be able to consider the issues, and any of the clinical team here would be happy to discuss your thoughts should you wish to.

It may be that you already have plans in place, or have discussed it with us. We have tried to make sure that those of our patients who have spoken to us already are not being sent this letter, but some may slip through. That said, if you have plans in place, it may be sensible to review them and make sure they still reflect your wishes.

Thank you for helping us to continue to help you.

Yours sincerely,

Dr

Surgery