

## **Making Decisions Alliance**

Update for Members and Supporters, April 2003

The Making Decisions Alliance (MDA) campaign was launched on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2003 with two key objectives:

- Lobbying the Government to introduce mental incapacity legislation in the 2003 Queen's Speech
- Increasing awareness of the need for new legislation

To launch the campaign, the MDA produced a detailed campaign pack setting out the case for new mental capacity legislation and providing support for individuals and groups to take action. Alongside the pack was a summary flyer, which included a detachable postcard to be sent to the Lord Chancellor in support of the campaign. At the last count, the Lord Chancellor's Department had received over 6000 postcards, demonstrating the breadth of support for the MDA. Both the pack and the flyer are available from the MDA website, [www.makingdecisions.org.uk](http://www.makingdecisions.org.uk)

The MDA commissioned an NOP poll which showed that 92% of people think that their partner would be asked to make decisions for them if they lost the ability to make decisions for themselves. There is currently no legal right for partners to do this in England and Wales. The poll findings and the campaign launch generated good media coverage, including reports in the Guardian and on Radio 4's You and Yours.

In the build-up to the MDA launch, Rosie Winterton MP, a junior Minister at the Lord Chancellor's Department, announced that her officials were to begin work on drafting a mental capacity bill. Although the MDA welcomed this development, we noted that the Minister did not commit the Government to introducing the Bill at a particular time, nor did she give any details as to what the Bill might contain. The MDA has met with officials at the Lord Chancellor's Department to give our views on what must be in the Bill, and these discussions are ongoing.

The MDA has also been active in Parliament. All MPs have been sent information about the campaign, and a series of briefing meetings have been arranged with key MPs. Micky Willmott, Chair of the MDA, spoke on the campaign at a meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Autism in February.

The next stage of the campaign will be to get more MPs signed up to the campaign, and we will be looking to our supporters to push the issue up the agenda for their MP. In addition, the MDA core group is working on more factsheets, including Advocacy and Advance Statements, to help develop our position on certain key areas. Policy development has been helped by a meeting looking at the experience in Scotland, where the Scottish Parliament passed mental capacity legislation in 2001.

For more information on the Making Decisions Alliance, please contact Micky Willmott, on [willmom@ace.org.uk](mailto:willmom@ace.org.uk). If you'd like a copy of the pack or leaflet, please call 0207 306 0807.

Currently, the following organisations are members of the Making Decisions Alliance:

Action on Elder Abuse  
Age Concern England  
Alzheimer's Society  
Carers UK  
Caring Decisions  
Counsel and Care  
Headway  
Help The Aged  
Leonard Cheshire  
The Manic Depression Fellowship  
Mencap  
The Mental Health Foundation  
Mind  
The National Autistic Society  
Patient Concern  
The Down's Syndrome Association  
The Relatives and Residents Association  
Respond  
Rethink  
Scope  
Sense  
The Stroke Association  
Turning Point  
United Response