



Alison Hesketh, managing director
TimeFinders. High res jpeg available

TimeFinders launches innovative Advocacy service

- **A powerful alternative to Health & Welfare Lasting Powers of Attorney**
- **Peace of mind particularly for people ageing alone or with family living far away**

TimeFinders, the senior life specialists, has announced an innovative service to protect the best interests of people who do not have someone to appoint as a Health & Welfare Attorney.

“We work with many people who are ageing alone or who have family living at a distance. Many have no-one to appoint or are reluctant to burden distant family or friends with the demands and responsibilities of being a Health & Welfare Attorney;” explained Alison Hesketh, Managing Director of TimeFinders. “In our experience the majority of solicitors will rightly refuse to take on the role of a client's Health & Welfare Attorney as the demands required of such an appointment falls far outside the legal remit and expertise of a solicitor. In addition, H&W Attorneyship must be held by a named individual which causes problems with succession. This inevitably leaves people unsupported and vulnerable.

“It is often assumed that only a Property and Financial Affairs (P&FA) Attorney is really important. We certainly encourage everyone to have a P&FA Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) in place as ensuring that someone trustworthy and knowledgeable is able to look after all financial matters is essential.”

However, the problems of not having a Health & Welfare Attorney in place can be severe. When someone has lost capacity, decisions about their care or treatment or where they should live are made by a Best Interests Panel. A person's Next of Kin – a spouse or adult child – might be involved in the Panel but they have no legal right

to make decisions on their partner's or parent's behalf if they are not a H&W Attorney. Often, members of the Panel will have little or no knowledge of the person for whom they are deciding, and sometimes it can take a long time for a Best Interests Panel to meet.

TimeFinders has developed the traditional role of the Advocate to encompass all the different types of support a client might require in later life. Best described as a surrogate family member, the TimeFinders' Advocate provides the individual with the dedicated support and time required to help them consider, make and manage important decisions about their future. An important advantage of the TimeFinders Advocacy Service is that, unlike a Health & Welfare Lasting Power of Attorney, it can be used before someone loses capacity.

"Having our own preferences and ideas dismissed, disrespected or just ignored is not something any of us like. As we get older, our needs may become more complex and our rights are still as important but, somehow, our voices get weaker and are no longer always heard clearly by society, by service providers and occasionally even by family members. This is where the Advocate can really help," explained Alison. "But we are also there, if someone goes on to lose capacity, to make care decisions, for example if they are living with dementia. We protect their best interests; we make sure that their earlier decisions about care and treatment are heard and respected; we ensure that they receive the help and support they need and we give them the peace of mind that someone professional and dedicated who knows them will make sure they are safe."

A client of ours shared why she came to TimeFinders:

"Having cared for my mother, I am completely at a loss to know how she would have coped alone. It took so much effort to work with care providers, social services and health professional to get the care she needed. Who is going to do that for me? I don't want to be the old lady screaming in the corner because I have no family – no one to make sure I am safe and well cared for."

TimeFinders has already worked with several solicitors, including Gardner Leader and Irwin Mitchell, both in Newbury. Commenting on the service, Stewart Stretton-Hill, solicitor with Irwin Mitchell (Later Life Specialist), said; "The team at TimeFinders are simply excellent. The Advocacy Service provides essential and invaluable

support to ensure that people, who are at the most vulnerable time of their lives, are heard and their wishes respected.”

Key to the success of the TimeFinders Advocacy Service is for the advocate to invest time and energy at the initial stages of the relationship to really get to know and understand the person for whom they are going to act. This ranges from simple things like musical preferences, favourite TV programmes and gaining an understanding of the person's life through to far harder discussions around areas that some people may be uncomfortable discussing, such as care arrangements should mental capacity be impaired, or end of life decisions.

The TimeFinders' advocacy service includes:

- Advice and guidance for clients planning their future
- Support for clients to ensure that their decisions are implemented
- Practical assistance and liaison with health and welfare professionals
- Professional oversight of care provision and assistance with making alternative arrangements if circumstances change
- A co-ordinating intelligence for the myriad of agencies & providers involved in any elderly person's care
- Emotional support throughout the period of advocacy & regular six monthly review meetings
- A first point of contact in an emergency

One question often asked of is, 'Why would I need an Advocate if I already have a Health & Welfare Attorney?' The simple answer is that the powers of the Health & Welfare Attorney can only be activated once someone is deemed to have lost capacity, whilst an Advocate can start to make a difference and represent the elder person's interests from the date of the appointment. Once capacity is impaired, a TimeFinders' Advocate works with a Health & Welfare Attorney if one has been appointed because often this person is unprepared for the amount of time and effort it takes to arrange and manage a person's care and welfare requirements. This is particularly true for Attorneys living at a distance.

Advocacy is just one of a range of services and support strategies offered by TimeFinders to those ageing alone. As one of their clients recently said; "Old age is

not something to be simply endured. It is to be savoured and enjoyed. Having TimeFinders to help me move to the right place and the right time has helped me to do just that." Anyone interested in learning more about the range of services available should contact TimeFinders for a free, initial consultation on enquiries@timefindersuk.com

Background

TimeFinders was established 10 years ago by Alison Hesketh after her experience of helping her own mother navigate the challenges of downsizing and then embarking on a new phase of life. Pivotal to the company's growth and success has been Alison's determination to set the highest standards of integrity and transparency in a sector where there is currently no regulation. Recognised for National Best Practice by The Parliamentary Review of Care, TimeFinders provides practical help and emotional support for older people and their families in changing circumstances.

For more information about TimeFinders visit <https://timefindersuk.com/>
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For business enquiries about TimeFinders and its services please contact;
Alison Hesketh: Email: Alison.hesketh@timefinders.uk.com
 Tel: 01672 890801

For media enquiries please contact Avril Chaffey PR
Avril Chaffey: Email: avril@avrilchaffeypr.co.uk Tel: 07765 343565

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