

Mental capacity

1. **Each decision is individual.** Your brother/sister might be able to decide what food to eat (and communicate that decision by spitting it out) and may not be able to weigh-up the long-term benefits of signing a tenancy agreement. Each decision is seen individually – no one can make a blanket statement that your brother/sister ‘doesn’t have mental capacity’.
2. **What counts as being able to make a decision?** Your brother/sister must be able to: understand the information; retain it long enough to make the decision at that time; understand the long-term consequences; communicate their decision. They should be given information in accessible formats and given the time and support they need.
3. **Your voice matters!** You *do* have the knowledge, you *do* have the expertise and you have built up years of experience on your brother or sister’s medical, behavioural, communication and personal needs. You will most likely have the longest standing relationship with your brother or sister across their life-span. Your voice deserves to be heard when you are supporting your brother/sister with decision making.
4. **Use the law.** When putting your points across to health and social care professionals, use the principles of the mental capacity act to back these up (“*Giving my brother a localised numbing cream, rather than sedation, would be the less restrictive option when he has this injection*”)
5. **Stay informed.** Read our full guide *Decision-making and the law: When your brother or sister can’t make a decision, who does?* available to download at www.sibs.org.uk/support-for-adult-siblings/guides/