

Guidance for self-completion of the Preparation Star™

The Preparation Star is designed to **support reflection and a conversation** about what is important to you when considering your last years or months. While this conversation may be most relevant following a diagnosis or for those who are elderly or have a health condition, it is also relevant to all of us and positive to reflect on at any point in our lives. This guidance is for completing the Preparation Star on your own or with family or friends.

The completed Star may help you to communicate with professionals and others supporting you about what is important to you and what support you need. It may also help you reflect and plan.

The Star covers nine areas of life, including how you feel physically and emotionally, care and dignity, relationships with family, doing what matters to you and sorting things out legally.

These nine areas are each set out along a five-stage "Journey of Change": **not yet dealing with this, finding out, trying things out, finding what works** and **as good as it can be**. With the right support and actions, everyone can be at 5, even when very frail or unwell.

The pack of Star materials consists of:

- The Star Chart to complete, with space for notes and next steps
- The User Guide, with the scales in a visual form and more detailed descriptions of each of the nine areas
- Short illustrated Scales – these are the same as the ones in the User Guide, but in a more accessible form
- Guidance on what the numbers mean and possible next steps (on page 3).

You can choose which area to start on and go through in any order. Use the short illustrated Scales and refer to the detailed scales in the User Guide where needed, or just use the User Guide.

Always refer to the scales when deciding where you are in each area. Read through the descriptors and see what the best fit for you is. Think about how things are most of the time at the moment, perhaps over recent weeks.

Mark your responses on the Star to create a shape – a visual image of how things are for you at the moment. You can use the notes pages to record what is important to you.

A big, rounded shape indicates that you and others are doing what you can, a small or uneven shape indicates that changes are needed. See the guidance on what to do on the next page.

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Use your completed Star for reflection or a conversation with those supporting you. You could ask questions such as:

- What is going well and what is helping you in those areas?
- Which areas are not going well – where might you need to change things or have more support?
- Why did you choose each response? You could talk through your thinking with someone
- How do you feel about the completed Star? Are there any surprises?
- Where do you need to make changes yourself or get help?

There are services and organisations that can support you, for example with aids or adaptations or changes to your home. Ask a health worker or support group to put you in touch.

Look again at your Star after a few months, when you have made changes. You might want to have another go at filling in the Star to see how things have progressed and to note any changing priorities.

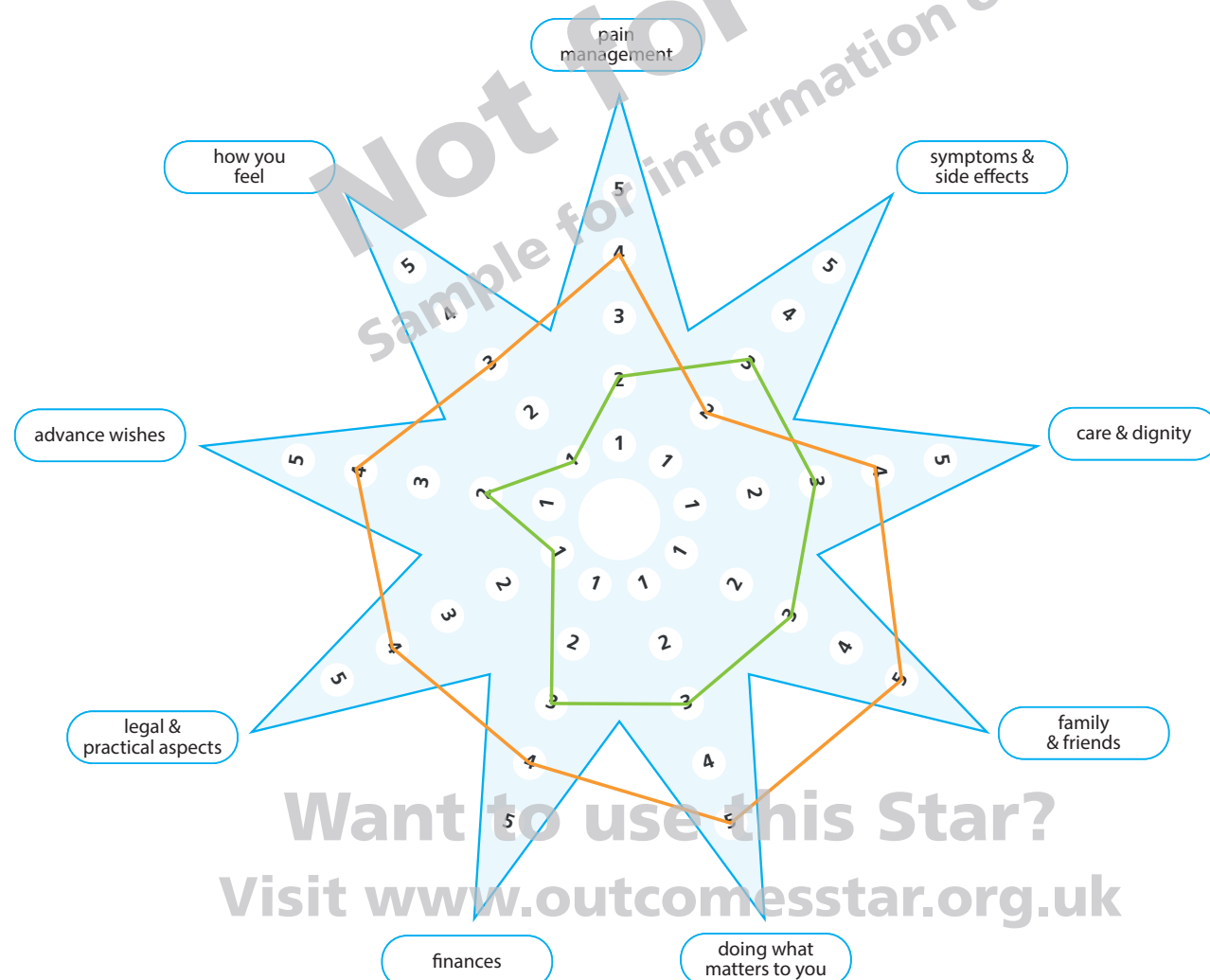


Figure 1: The Preparation Star