



**Digital
Advocacy Hub**

Independent Mental Health Advocacy

What the law says - Section 117



**Easy
Read**

Easy Read



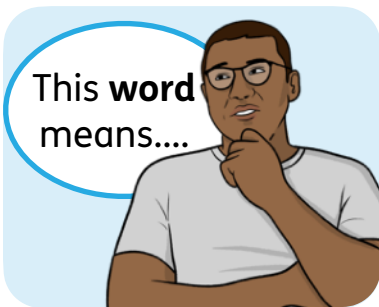
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



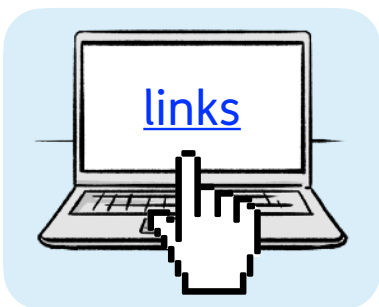
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker.



These are words that some people will find hard. When you see a bold word, we will explain it in the next sentence.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

What is in this booklet

About this booklet.....	4
What is Mental Health Advocacy?	6
What is the Mental Health Act?	9
What does Section 117 aftercare mean?	11
What happens to my aftercare when I feel better?.....	15
What if there are problems with my aftercare?	17
What do Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHAs) do?	18
How can I get support from an IMHA?.....	21
Find out more.....	22

About this booklet



This is information from n-compass about **Independent Mental Health Advocacy**.

Independent Mental Health Advocacy is when someone helps people:



- Understand their rights - rights say how people should be treated and what they should be able to do by law.



- Speak up about their mental health care.



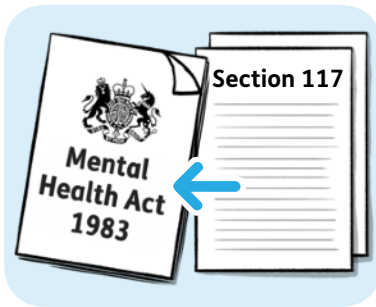
The person who does this is called an **Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)**.



Sometimes, people getting care for their mental health are kept in hospital.



There are rules about how people should be treated in hospital.



This booklet will tell you about part of the Mental Health Act (the law), called Section 117.



This part of the law says what care you might need in your local area after you leave hospital.

What is Mental Health Advocacy?



You can get support from an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) if you are **detained** or being treated under a part of the **Mental Health Act**.



Detained means you are kept in a hospital or other building and you cannot decide to leave by yourself.



The **Mental Health Act** is a law. We will explain more about this in the next part.

An IMHA can support you if:



- You do not understand what is happening to you.



- You want to try and change a decision about your care or support.

IMHAs can help:



- Patients who are being kept in hospital.



- People who are on a Community Treatment Order - this means you can be treated in the local area where you live.



- People who are under Guardianship - this means that someone called a Guardian is making sure you get the care you need.



Your Guardian can be someone from your local council or another person chosen by your council.

People can also get support from an IMHA if:



- They might get some treatment that needs 2 doctors to agree to it - called Section 57 treatment.



- They are a child under the age of 18 who might need Electroconvulsive Therapy - this is when electricity is used to treat someone.

What is the Mental Health Act?

The Mental Health Act is a law that tells people with a mental health problem:



- What their rights are.



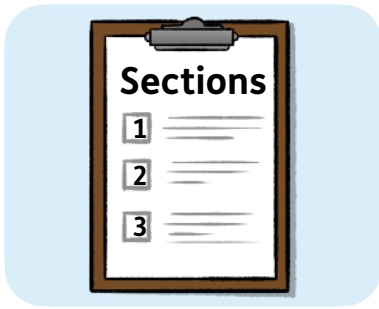
- How they can be treated.



The Mental Health Act gives doctors the power to detain you so you can get treatment.



It is important that you know what happens when you are detained and how you can get support



The Mental Health Act has different parts called Sections.



These Sections say the different ways that people can be detained.



Different Sections have different rules about how you can be detained.

What does Section 117 aftercare mean?



Aftercare is care and support that some people who have been treated under the Mental Health Act can get when they leave hospital.



Aftercare can help you live in your local area when you leave hospital.

It can include:



- Healthcare.



- Social care - this is extra support with your daily life, like washing or eating.



It can also include Supported housing - this is where people who need care or support live in the same building.



The law says that local councils and health services must give aftercare.

What is included in Section 117 aftercare?

The Mental Health Act says that aftercare includes things like:



- Health and social care.



- Services to help you get a job.

The Mental Health Act says that aftercare also includes things like:



- Supported housing.



- Other services to meet your mental health needs or to stop your mental health from getting worse.

How long does Section 117 aftercare last?



You will be given aftercare services until your local council and health services think you do not need them anymore.



It is up to the local council and health services to decide this together.

They must:



- Give clear reasons for their decision.



- Check your needs before the aftercare finishes.

What happens to my aftercare when I feel better?

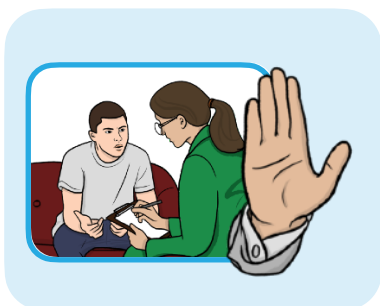


Even if you feel happy in your local area, aftercare services can help you to stay well.

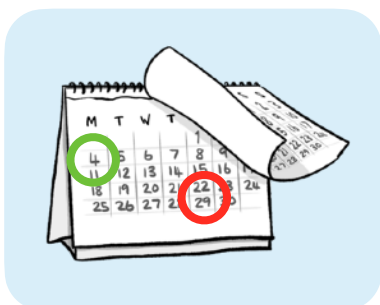


You should take a full part in any decision to end your aftercare services.

Aftercare services should not be taken away:



- If you have stopped getting care from a special mental health service.



- After a fixed amount of time.

Aftercare services should also not be taken away:



- If you go back to hospital for a mental health problem.



- If you are not on a Community Treatment Order or Section 17 leave anymore.



If your mental health gets worse after your aftercare services stop, the services should start again.

This is to stop your mental health from getting worse.

What if there are problems with my aftercare?

If there are problems with your aftercare you can:



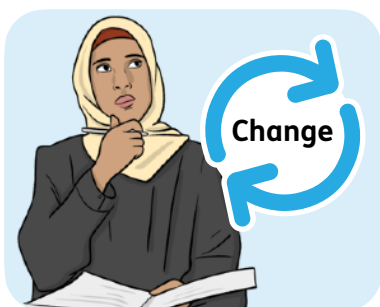
- Speak to the person in charge of your care in your local area.



- Complain to a health service if there is a problem with the service.



- Complain to a local council if they are providing the service you want to complain about.



- Talk to a lawyer about how to change the local council or health service's decision.

What do Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHAs) do?

An IMHA can support you to:



- Take part in planning your care.



- Get ready for and understand:
 - Mental Health Reviews - these are when health professionals look at your mental health.



- Tribunals - these are when professionals decide if you can leave hospital.



- Get other support or help to use other services, like getting a house or finding a job.

An IMHA can support you to:



- Talk about any care you might need after being detained.



- Understand how you can tell someone if you are not happy about your care.



- Understand your rights and how to use them.

An IMHA will:



- Listen to what you tell them about your ideas and feelings.



- Support you to speak up.



- Speak up for you if you need them to.



- Make sure you take part in any decisions that are made about you.

How can I get support from an IMHA?



Health professionals should tell patients and their families about IMHA services.



Health and care professionals usually tell the IMHA service if they think a patient needs their services.



n-compass will allow patients or their families to ask for support from an IMHA.

Find out more



The n-compass Digital **Advocacy** Hub gives free and fair information about lots of different parts of life.

Remember, **advocacy** is helping people to speak or speaking up for them.



n-compass runs advocacy services across the north of England.



You can find out if we run services near you on our website:
www.n-compass.org.uk/our-services/advocacy



Or you can speak to us using the Sign video website:
www.ncompass.signvideo.net