**Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)**

**What is Independent Mental Health Advocacy?**
If you are an adult and restricted or being detained under the Mental Health Act, you are legally entitled to help and support from an Independent Mental Health Advocate.

This applies to hospital patients and those who are on a Supervised Community Treatment Order (CTO) or under Guardianship.

Also eligible for an IMHA includes:
- Those being considered for section 57 treatment
- Under 18 and being considered for ECT

**What does it mean 'being detained'?**
Being detained under the Mental Health Act is when you are made to stay in hospital for assessment or treatment against your wishes

Being detained is called 'sectioned' because the law has different sections

Your rights depend on what section you are under

**What is a Community Treatment Order?**
A Community Treatment Order (CTO) allows a person who has been detained in hospital for treatment to leave hospital (discharge from detention) and get treatment in the community

**What is Guardianship?**
Guardianship is used to help you live outside of hospital. Your guardian (this could be your Local Authority or someone your Local Authority has agreed) can decide things for you, like where you live. Under Guardianship you should still be free to come and go

**What do Blackburn with Darwen Advocacy Hub’s IMHA’s do?**
An IMHA can support you:
- To be fully involved in your care planning
- Access to Mental Health Review Tribunals, preparing for them and understanding decisions made
- Access to other support or services
- Discussing appropriate aftercare
- How to raise concerns about your experience/care
- Exercising your rights

An IMHA will:
- Listen carefully to what you tell us about your views and feelings
- Support you to speak up or speak up on your behalf if needed
- Make sure you are fully involved in decisions being made about you
What is the Mental Health Act?

The Mental Health Act is a law which tells people with a mental health disorder what their rights are and how they can be treated.

The term "mental health disorder" is used to describe people who have:

- A mental illness
- A learning disability
- A personality disorder

It is important that you know what happens to you when you are detained, what your rights are and where you can seek help.

The Mental Health Act Code of Practice tells everyone how to use this law and what they must do.

How can I make a referral?

Mental Health professionals have a duty to inform patients in their care and their nearest relative about the IMHA services available to them. These measures ensure that each patient who is entitled to receive IMHA support is aware of their right to approach the service.

Referrals to IMHA service are usually made by Health or Social Care professionals, however, The Wirral Advocacy Hub will accept IMHA referrals from the person themselves or family.

The Blackburn with Darwen Advocacy Hub offers a SINGLE POINT OF CONTACT for all advocacy enquiries in the area.

For more information or to make a referral:

Tel: 033 000 222 00
Website: www.ncompassnorthwest.co.uk
Email: admin@advocacyinblackburn.co.uk
Online chat: http://ncompassnorthwest.co.uk/what-we-do/advocacy-service