

## INDEPENDENT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY - OVERVIEW



### WHAT IS INDEPENDENT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY?

If you are restricted or being detained under the Mental Health Act, you are legally entitled to help and support from an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA).

An advocate is someone who will speak up for you, or support you to speak up for yourself, if you don't understand what's happening to you, want to challenge a decision about your care or support, express your preferences or assert your rights.

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
-  Those under 18 and being considered for Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT)

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### What does 'being sectioned' mean?

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Being sectioned under the Mental Health Act means you are detained in hospital for assessment and / or treatment. This can be against your wishes.

It is called being "sectioned" because you are being detained under a particular section of the Mental Health Act, e.g. Section 2.

Your rights depend on the section you are under.

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### What is a Community Treatment Order?

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A Community Treatment Order (CTO) is an order that enables a person who has been sectioned for treatment to be discharged from their detention, leave hospital and live in the community.

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### What is Guardianship?

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Guardianship is used to support you to live in the community. Your Guardian could be the Local Authority, or someone your Local Authority has agreed, who can decide things for you. Your Guardian might decide, for instance, where you live. However, under Guardianship you should still be free to access the community.

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### What do Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHAs) do?

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An IMHA can support you to:

-  Be fully involved in your care planning
-  Access Mental Health Reviews and Tribunals, prepare for them and understand decisions made
-  Access other support or services
-  Discuss appropriate aftercare
-  Understand how to raise concerns about your experience/care
-  Exercise your rights

An IMHA will:

-  Listen carefully to what you tell them 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

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### 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.

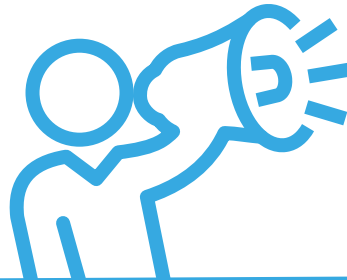
'Mental health disorder' means any disorder or disability of the mind.

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 the IMHA service are usually made by Health or Social Care professionals, however, n-compass will accept IMHA referrals from the person themselves or their family.



**TO LEARN HOW ADVOCACY  
CAN HELP PLEASE GET IN TOUCH**

**The n-compass Digital Advocacy Hub provides free and impartial information on a range of common advocacy issues.**

**n-compass delivers several advocacy services across the north of England.**

**To find out if we deliver in your locality:-**

Website: <https://www.n-compass.org.uk/our-services/advocacy>

Sign video: <https://ncompass.signvideo.net>