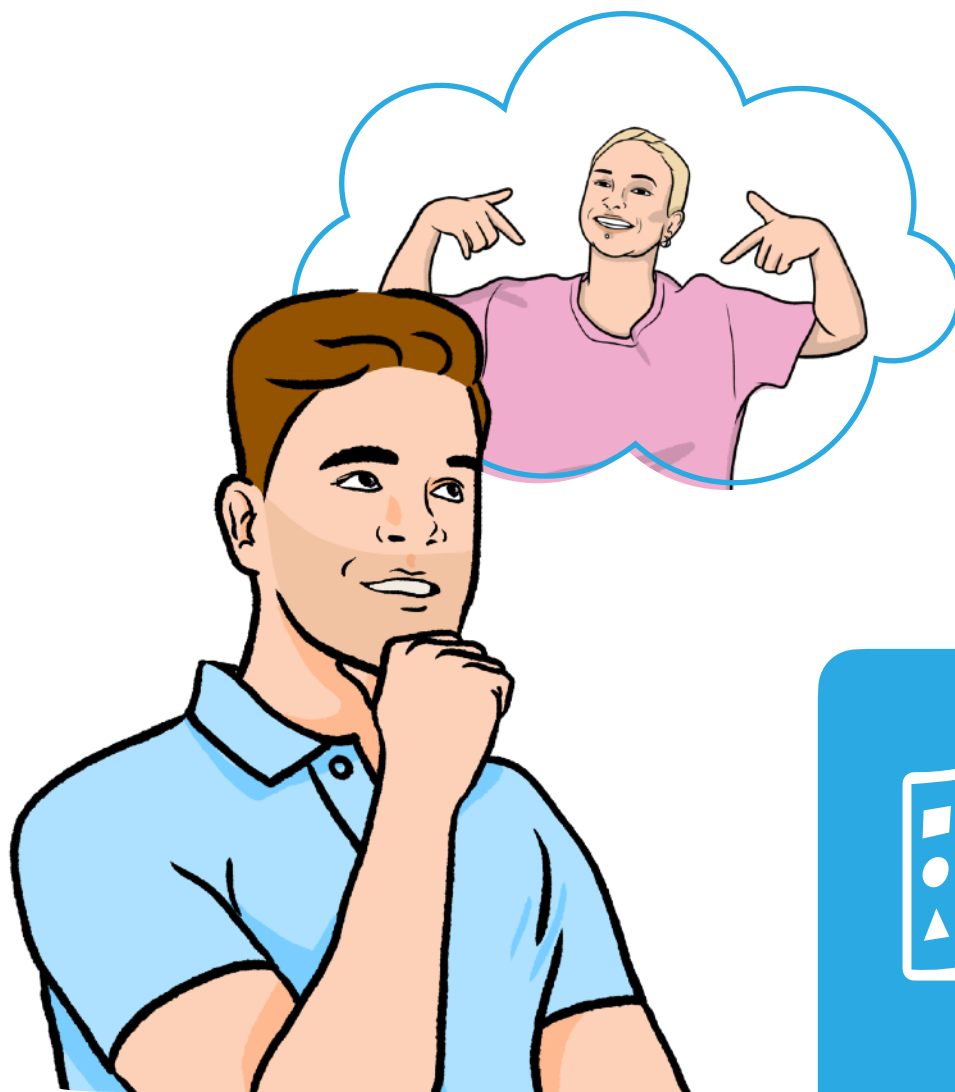




**Digital
Advocacy Hub**

Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy

Best interests



**Easy
Read**

Easy Read



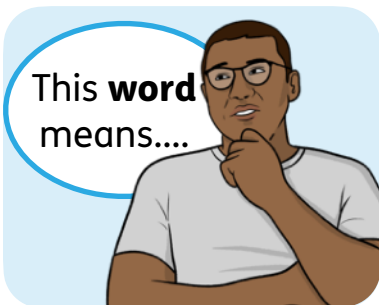
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



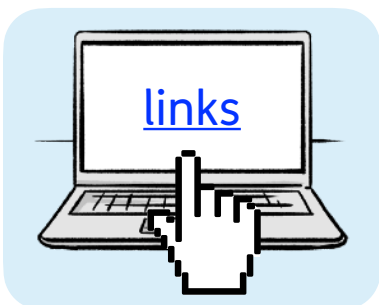
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



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



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

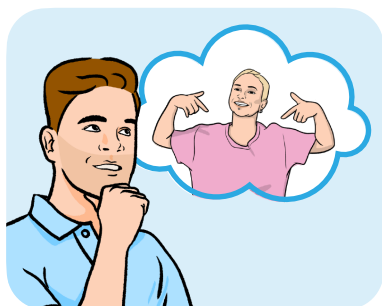
What is in this booklet

About this booklet	4
Best interests decisions.....	5
Making a best interests decision.....	6
Pros and cons	9
How an IMCA can help.....	10
How to get an IMCA.....	12
What do IMCAs do?	13
Find out more.....	15

About this booklet



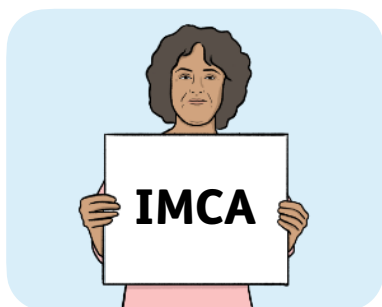
n-compass has written this booklet to explain **best interests decisions** and **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy**.



Best interests decisions are where a person makes a choice for you, by thinking about what you would choose.



Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy is when a person speaks up for you if you cannot make a choice for yourself.



This person is called an **Independent Mental Capacity Advocate**, or **IMCA**.

Best interests decisions

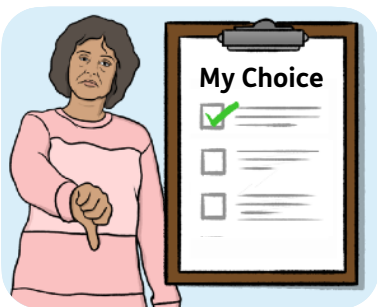


Making a best interests decision for someone means trying to make the choice that they would make if they were able to.



This choice should respect the person's **rights**.

Rights are things you are allowed to have and do by law, like the right to be respected.



The best interests decision might not be the choice that others would want them to make.



But it is the choice that is right for the person.

Making a best interests decision



To make a best interests decision, there is a list that the person who makes the choice must follow.



They must give you as much freedom, and as many rights, as possible.



They must not make a choice based on your age, what you look like, your illness or how you behave.



They must think about all of the important information about you.



Sometimes, they might make a list, like a **pros and cons** list.

A **pros and cons** list is where they write down all the reasons to make different choices.



They should think about whether you will be able to make choices for yourself again in the future.



If you will, they should try and wait until you can make choices again.

They should involve you as much as they can. This means they should:



- Try and find out what you want to happen.



- Involve you in meetings where they talk about what should happen.



The person making the choice for you must think about what you thought and felt in the past, and what you think and feel now.



They should also talk to people you know, like your carers, family or friends.



They should write their choice down, and explain it to anyone who asks.

Who can make choices for others?

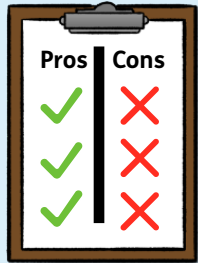


Usually, the person who makes the choice for you is the person who cares for you.



For bigger choices, it might be a doctor, nurse or social worker.

Pros and cons



Judges, social workers and doctors often use a **pros and cons** list to help them make a best interests decision.



This is where they write down the reasons to make different choices.



They can also write down which are the most important reasons.



What you think, want and feel is always very important.



The person who makes the decision cannot just pick the cheapest choice.

How an IMCA can help

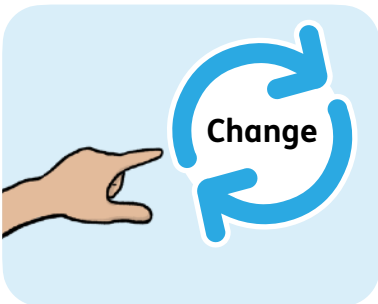
An IMCA can help you and speak up for you if:



- You do not understand what is happening to you.



- You need support to speak up for yourself.



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



- You need help to get your rights.



IMCAs can support you when nobody else from your family or friends can help.



IMCAs support people to say what they want to happen.



IMCAs do not make choices themselves.



Anyone aged 16 or older can get an IMCA if some big decisions have to be made, like where you live or if you need serious medical treatment.

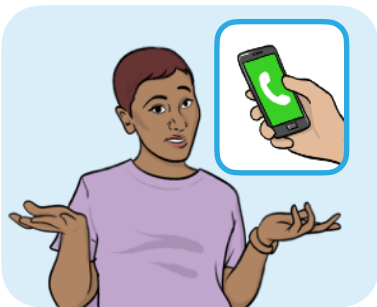


The local council or health service will provide an IMCA.

How to get an IMCA



Health or care staff usually ask an IMCA service for help.



If you are not sure whether you should get an IMCA, please contact us.

We will need to know:



- Who the person making the choice is.



- Some information about the choice that needs to be made.

What do IMCAs do?



An IMCA can support you by:

- Visiting you in a care home, hospital or other place.



- Looking at information about your health and care.



- Meeting with people who are involved in your care.



- Speaking up for what you think and trying to protect your rights.



- Asking about choices that services have made that might not be in your best interests.

An IMCA will:



- Listen to what you tell them about what you think and feel.



- Support you to speak up, or speak up for you if you need them to.



- Make sure you are involved in choices being made about you.

Find out more



You can look at our website here:

www.n-compass.org.uk/our-services/advocacy



You can watch a sign video about our IMCA services here:

www.n-compass.org.uk/information-in-bsl

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