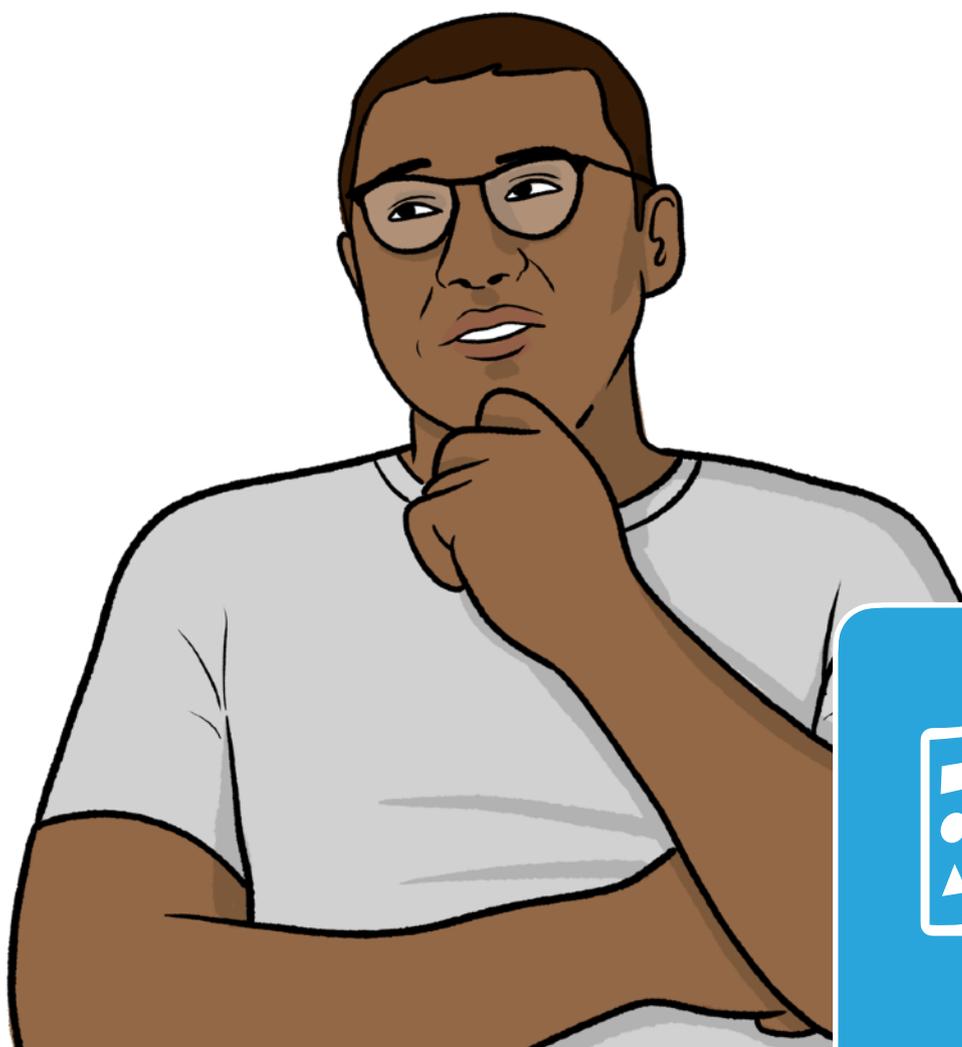


# Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy

Mental Capacity



**Easy  
Read**

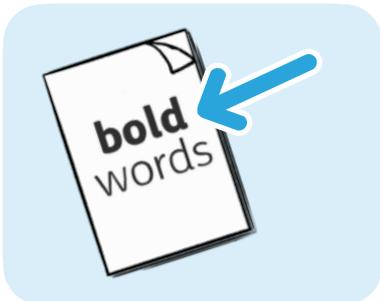
# Easy Read



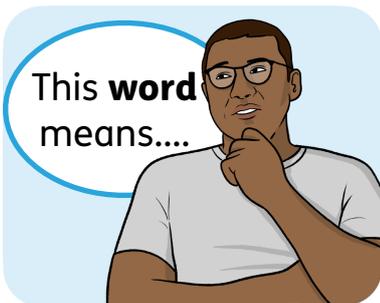
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



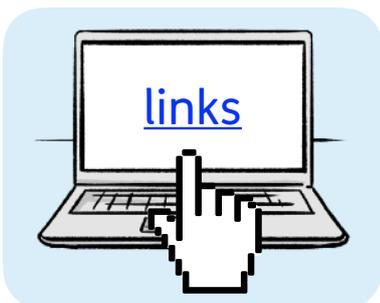
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



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

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# About this booklet



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



**Mental capacity** means whether you can make choices for yourself.



**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**.

# What is mental capacity?



If you have a health issue to do with your brain, you might find it difficult to make choices for yourself.



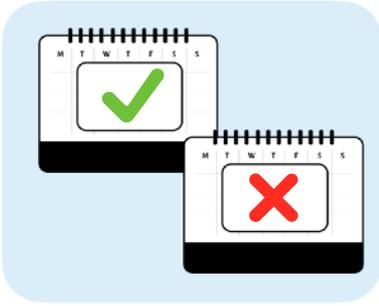
Doctors or social workers can check if you are able to make choices for yourself.



It is possible to have a health issue to do with your brain, and still be able to make choices for yourself.



This is why it is important that doctors or social workers always check whether you are able to make choices for yourself.



You might be able to make some choices on some days and not be able to make choices on others.



People should ask you to make choices when you are having a good day.



There is a law that explains your **rights** if you do not have mental capacity.

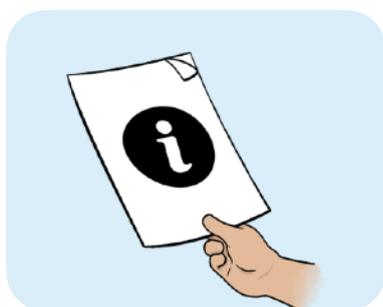
It is called the **Mental Capacity Act**.



**Rights** are things that everyone should have by law, like the right to be respected.

# How your mental capacity is tested

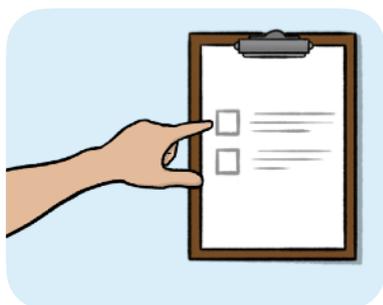
To find out if you have mental capacity, doctors will test if you can:



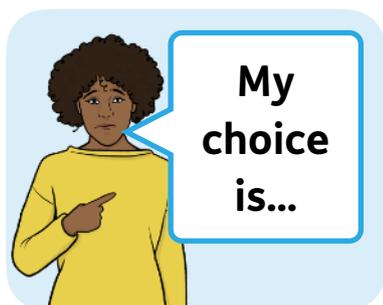
- Understand information about the choice you need to make.



- Remember the information for long enough to make the choice.



- Use the information to make a choice.



- Tell others what your choice is.

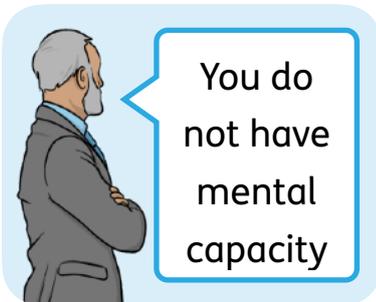


If you cannot do all of these things, the doctors might say you do not have mental capacity.

# Unwise decisions



Some people make choices that others might think are wrong. These are called **unwise decisions**.



People who care sometimes think an unwise decision means that a person cannot make choices for themselves.



But this is not true.



People should be able to choose what they want to do, even if other people might choose something different.

# Taking risks



**Taking risks** means doing things that could go wrong.



Some people like taking risks.



If you like taking risks, but do not have mental capacity, the law can support you.



The law helps you to live your life the way you want and allows you to take risks.



Carers and others who support you might want to keep you safe. They might not want you to take risks.



But it is important that you live your life in the way you want.



When people make choices for you, they must think about what you said you wanted in the past, before you lost mental capacity.

# Making choices for you



If you do not have mental capacity to make a choice, someone else will have to make the choice for you.



If someone has to make a choice for you, that is called making a choice in your **best interests**.

Your **best interests** includes what you would choose to do, if you were able to make a choice for yourself.



We have written a different booklet about best interests. You can read it here:

[LINK](#)



The Mental Capacity Act has information to help people decide how to make a choice in a person's best interests.



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



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

# How an IMCA can help

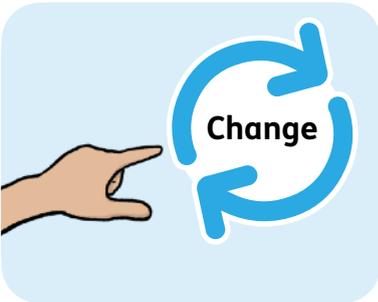
An IMCA can help you and speak up for you if:



- 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.

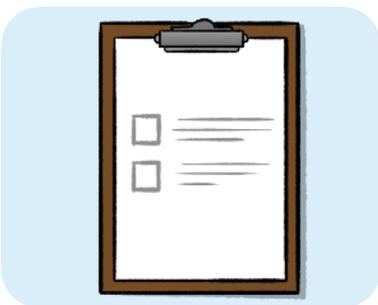


If you are not sure whether you should get an IMCA, please contact us.

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.



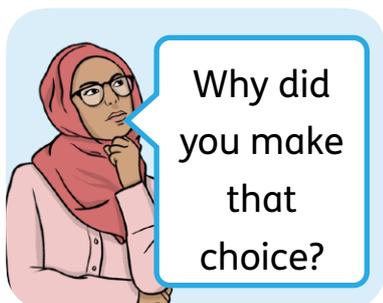
- Looking at information about your health and care.



- 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](http://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](http://www.n-compass.org.uk/information-in-bsl)

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