



**Digital  
Advocacy Hub**

# **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy**

General information



**Easy  
Read**

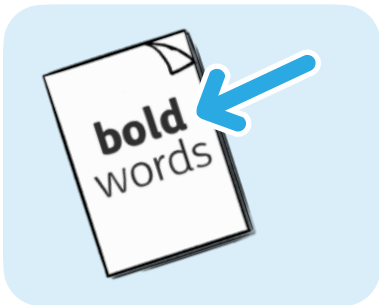
# Easy Read



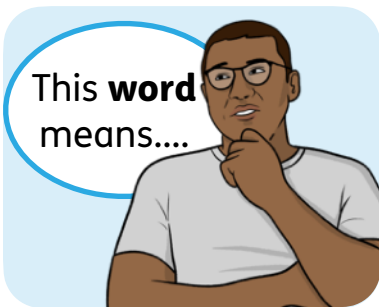
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



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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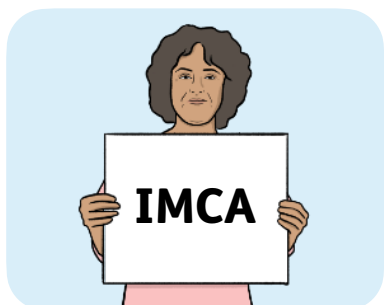
# About this booklet



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



**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**.

# How an IMCA can help

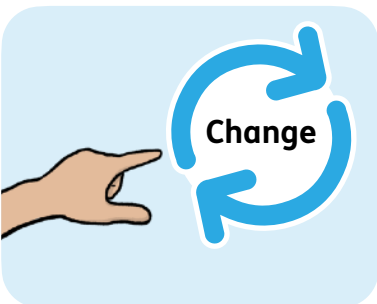
An IMCA can help you and speak up for you if:



- 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**.

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



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.

# Mental capacity

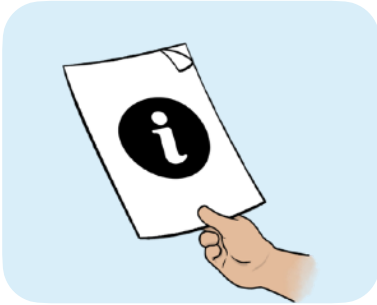


**Mental capacity** means whether you can make choices for yourself.



Doctors might say that you cannot make choices for yourself.

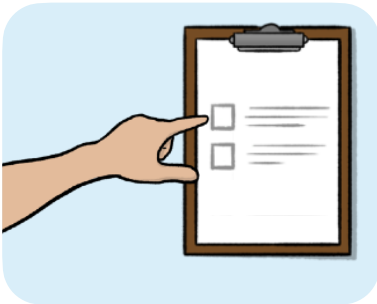
To find out if you have mental capacity, doctors will test if you can:



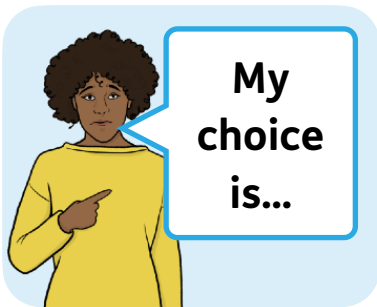
- Understand information about the choice you need to make.



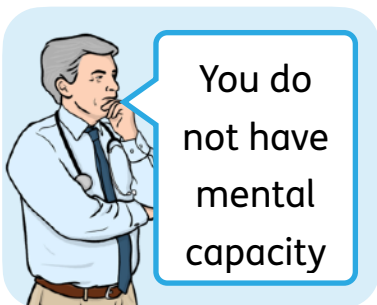
- Remember that information for long enough to make the choice.



- Use the information to make a choice.

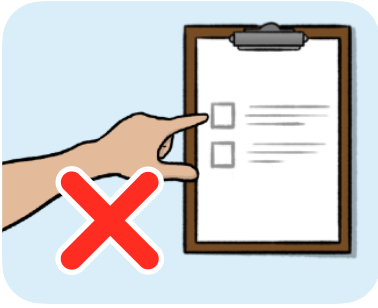


- Tell others what your choice is.



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





If you do not have mental capacity, you will not be able to make important choices for yourself.



Someone else will need to make the choice for you.



An IMCA can help make sure that the choice the other person makes is the right choice for you.

# Best interests



An IMCA should speak up for your **best interests**.

Your **best interests** are what you would choose to do, if you were able to make choices for yourself.



If an NHS service or council is making a choice for you because you cannot make choices for yourself, they must think about your best interests.



A law, called the **Mental Capacity Act**, explains what councils and services must do.



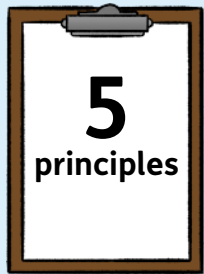
We have written a different booklet about best interests. You can read it here:

[LINK](#)

# The Mental Capacity Act



The **Mental Capacity Act** is a law about how to support people who cannot make choices for themselves.



Some of the most important parts are called the principles.



**Principle 1** says that services must assume that you can make choices for yourself, unless they have done a test that says you cannot.



**Principle 2** explains that services must do everything they can to help you to make a choice for yourself.



**Principle 3** says that services should respect choices you make, even if they think your choice is unwise.



**Principle 4** tells anyone who makes a choice for you that they need to think about your best interests.



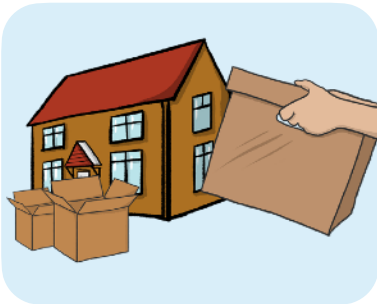
**Principle 5** explains that choices made for you should give you as much freedom and rights as possible. Services should not just make the cheapest choice.

# When you can get help from an IMCA

An IMCA might be able to help if:



- An NHS service wants to give you serious health treatment.



- A council is making plans to change where you live, like moving you to a care home.



If the NHS or council wants to do this, they must give you help to make your choice about whether to do it.



If you have no friends or family to with with the choice, and you cannot choose for yourself, they must give you an IMCA to help you.

You might also get help from an IMCA if you are not able to make choices about:



- Your care plan.



- Plans to keep you safe, called your safeguarding plan.

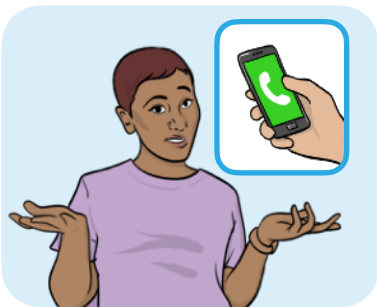


In these cases, it is up to the service that is making choices for you to decide if you should get an IMCA.

# 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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