

Information about an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)

What is an Independent Mental Health Advocate?



An **Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)** is trained to provide advocacy support to people under a piece of law called the **Mental Health Act (1983)**.

This advocacy work is **statutory** which means it **must** be done by law



The Mental Health Act says that when you are detained you **must** be kept in hospital.



There is a **Code of Practice** which explains how you should be treated in hospital. It tells you about your **rights**

What does an Independent Mental Health Advocate do?



An IMHA's job is to support you if you have been detained under the Mental Health Act.

Your IMHA can help you to:



- **understand your rights** and be involved in decisions about your **care and treatment**



- understand why you are in hospital and what you **can** and **cannot** do



- understand information about your **detention**, **medication**, **treatment** or rights of your **nearest relative**



- prepare for and go with you to meetings



- make a complaint if you are unhappy

When can I have an Independent Mental Health Advocate?



You have the right to an IMHA if you are **detained** under certain **sections** of the Mental Health Act.



You **do not** have to have support from an IMHA, it is your **choice**. You can **end** the support you have from an IMHA at **any time**.