

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)

What is advocacy?



Advocacy is about helping you get what you need. An advocate can support you to speak up, or they might speak up on your behalf if you need them to.



Advocates are independent. This means they do not work for the council or any other care provider.

What is Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)?



Independent Mental Health Advocacy helps you to make your voice stronger. It helps you to have as much control as possible over your life.



There is a law called the Mental Health Act. This law says when you can be sent to hospital or kept in hospital, even when you do not want to be there.



You have lots of rights if you are in hospital under the Mental Health Act. One of them is the right to help from an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA).



Some people do not have a right to an IMHA. You should contact your local IMHA office to find out if you can use the service.

What does an IMHA advocate do?

We will support you to:



- Understand your rights.
- Understand what medical treatments you might be given.



We will listen carefully to what you tell us about your views and feelings.



We will support you to speak up, or we will speak up for you if you want us to.



We will make sure you are fully involved in decisions being made about you.



We will let you know when our work with you is finished.

An Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) can also support you to:



- Prepare for any meetings like a Mental Health Review Tribunal.



- Go to the meeting. They will come into the meeting with you if you need them to.



- Understand decisions that are made about you at these meetings.

- Get the right support or services.

- Talk about the right care for you after you leave hospital.



- Make complaints about your experience and care.



- Make sure you get what the law says you should have.

Confidential

We won't tell anyone else what you have said to us unless:



- You want us to.
- It involves danger to you or to other people.
- The law says we need to.



If you choose to work with an IMHA, you have the right to end that support at any time.