

IMHA – Referral Guidance

Mental Health professionals have a duty to inform patients in their care about the IMHA services available to them. Mental Health professionals must also inform the patient's nearest relative that the service exists, unless the patient requests that they not be informed. These measures ensure that each patient who is entitled to receive IMHA support is aware of their right to approach the service.

The responsibility for informing patients about the IMHA service is usually placed on:

- Hospital managers
- Responsible clinicians
- Responsible social services authorities
- Registered medical practitioners

Referrals to IMHA service are usually made by:

- Patients (in the form of a self-referral)
- Family members
- Responsible clinicians
- Approved mental health professionals

A patient may choose not to access or to end IMHA support at any time.

Where patients are entitled to receive IMHA services, our teams respond to requests within three working days.

Before requesting an IMHA to visit a patient, the referrer should:

- Discuss the idea with the patient
- Give the patient the opportunity to decide for themselves whether to request IMHA support

The referrer should consider requesting an IMHA to visit a qualifying patient if they think the patient may benefit from IMHA support but is unable or unlikely to request an IMHA's support themselves.

A request should not be made for an IMHA to visit where the referrer knows or strongly suspects the patient does not want the support of an IMHA.

The involvement of an IMHA does not affect a patient's right to seek advice from a legal representative, nor does it affect any entitlement to legal aid.

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