

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)



There is a law called the **Mental Health Act**.

The **Mental Health Act** sets out the rules for 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 is Independent Mental Health Advocacy?

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



VoiceAbility is an organisation that provides this service.

What will we 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:



- Be fully involved in your care planning.



- Get to meetings like Mental Health Review Tribunals.

- Prepare for any of these meetings.



- 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.

The Independent Mental Health Advocacy service is:



- **Free.**

- **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.



- **Independent.** It is called independent because advocates are separate from services. They do not work for hospitals, social services or any other services.

How do I find an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)?



Staff must make sure you understand that you can get support from IMHA services. They must tell you how you can get that help.



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

Our contact details:



Telephone: 0300 222 5947



Email: CWAdvocacy@voiceability.org