



Independent Mental Health Advocacy

A free, impartial and confidential service

Trafford
Mental
Health
Advocacy
Service



What is Independent Mental Health Advocacy?

Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA) is a statutory service introduced in 2009 where it became a legal duty to provide Independent Mental Health Advocacy to patients who qualify under the Mental Health Act.

Any patient who qualifies should be informed of their right to access an IMHA by the person in charge of their care at the time.

What is an Independent Advocate?

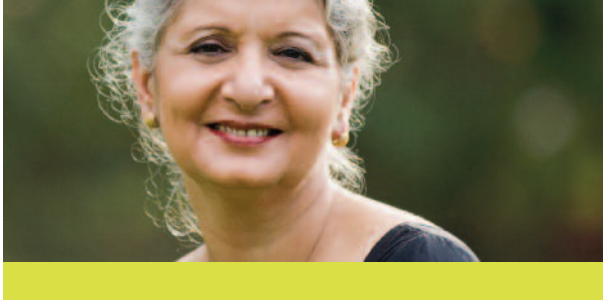
An Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) is someone specially trained to work within the framework of the Mental Health Act to meet the needs of patients. Independent Mental Health Advocacy services do not replace any other advocacy and support services that are available to patients. An IMHA will work alongside these services.

What will an IMHA do for me?

An IMHA can help you to find out about and understand:

- Your rights under the Mental Health Act (MHA).
- The rights which other people, such as your relatives, have in relation to you under the MHA.
- The parts of the Mental Health Act that apply to you.
- Any conditions or restrictions which apply to you.
- Any medical treatment that you are receiving or might be given.
- The reasons and legal authority for providing particular medical treatment (or proposed treatment).
- The safeguards and other requirements of the MHA that apply to your treatment.
- How you can appeal against your section and help you do this.

The involvement of an IMHA does not affect your right (or the right of your nearest relative) to seek advice from a lawyer, nor does it affect your entitlement to legal aid.



Do I qualify for the support of an IMHA?

You will be a **'qualifying patient'** if you are:

- Detained under Section 2 or Section 3 of the Mental Health Act, even if they are on section 17 leave from hospital.
- A conditionally discharged restricted patient.
- Subject to guardianship (section 7).
- Subject to a supervised community treatment order (SCT/CTO).
- An informal patient being considered for section 57 treatment (psychosurgery).
- An informal patient aged under 18 and being considered for section 58a treatment (ECT).
- You do not 'qualify' if you are detained under Section 4, Section 5'2, Section 5'4, Section 135 or Section 136.

An IMHA will:

- Spend time with you and ask questions to get to know your views and wishes.
- Visit you in private, if that is appropriate.
- Support you on ward rounds and attend meetings you have with the professionals involved in your care and treatment, if you would like them to.
- Visit and speak to any person professionally concerned with your treatment, provided it is for the purpose of supporting you in their role as your IMHA.



www.tmhas.org.uk

Telephone: 0161 877 4330



An IMHA can also help you:

- Exercise your rights, which can include acting and/or speaking on your behalf.
- Participate in the decisions that are made about your care and treatment.
- Get access to your Medical Records.

An IMHA cannot:

- Offer advice, opinions or judgments about what is best for you.
- Act as a substitute for therapeutic support.

How to get in touch

You can ring us directly, ask the person who is in charge of your care to contact us directly by telephone, or have a family member or friend contact us on your behalf.

Trafford Mental Health Advocacy Service

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Old Trafford, Manchester M16 0PQ

Telephone: 0161 877 4330

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