

If you are detained under the Mental Health Act you have the **right** to an Independent Mental Health Advocate or '**IMHA**'.

- it's **your** choice.

- its **your** right.

Your advocate is independent from anyone who is caring for you or giving you treatment.

IMHAs work for a charity; **not** for the hospital or social services.

Independent mental health advocacy services provide an additional safeguard for patients who are subject to the Act.

IMHAs are specialist advocates who are trained specifically to work within the framework of the Act to meet the needs of patients.

20.2 - Mental Health Act Code of Practice

## Rights and Duties

Professionals have a **legal duty** to tell you about your right to an IMHA.

Professionals have a **legal duty** to help you to contact an IMHA.

IMHAs have the **legal right** when acting on your behalf, and with your **permission** to:

- meet with you in private to find out what you want them to do
- meet with professionals to find out what you want to know
- attend meetings to inform professionals what you want to say
- access your records and tell you what they say about you (there are conditions, talk to your advocate)

## Your IMHA can:

**inform you** about your rights, your treatment and anything else about your care

- **help you to come to decisions** about what you want to do
- help you to **speak up** about what you think about your care and treatment
- help you to **take part in meetings** about your care and treatment - this includes meetings where you are appealing against your Section

## ✓ Your IMHA will:

- ✓ be loyal to you and only you
- ✓ be independent from the people who care for you
- ✓ help you find information and make sense of it
- ✓ support you to make your own choices
- ✓ tell other people what you want to do
- ✓ keep what you say confidential

## ✗ Your IMHA will not:

- ✗ judge you
- ✗ advise you or tell you what you should do
- ✗ talk with other people behind your back
- ✗ speak up for your family, your friends or staff, instead of you
- ✗ act as a doctor, social worker or solicitor

## Contact

**Our IMHA advocacy service is free.**



North Staffordshire / Stoke-on-Trent:  
01782 441630

South Staffordshire:  
01785 246709

Head Office:  
01782 845584



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 **Advocacy Services.** Registered Charity No. 1048075 Company No: 3068125



**advocacy services  
in staffordshire**

## IMHA Independent Mental Health Advocacy



Information for people detained under the  
Mental Health Act

 making advocacy a right not a privilege