

# Independent Mental Health Advocacy

## The Role of the Advocate (IMHA)

An Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) is a specific type of mental health advocate provided to 'qualifying patients' under the revised Mental Health Act 2007.

### WHO QUALIFIES?

Who qualifies for an IMHA is set out in the Act and includes:

- Anyone detained under the Mental Health Act, except for those on sections 135, 136, 4, 5(2), 5(4)
- Anyone on a Community Treatment Order or conditional discharge
- Anyone subject to a Guardianship
- Any patient discussing serious treatment such as neurosurgery or ECT for anyone under 18

### WHAT DOES AN ADVOCATE DO?

- Help the person understand the Mental Health Act and how it affects them
- Provide information on a person's rights and how to exercise those rights
- Help the person understand the medical treatment being proposed or given to them
- Attend tribunals, ward rounds, and other meetings to support and provide representation to ensure a person's views are heard
- Help people consider their options and be actively involved in decision making processes
- Help a person challenge decisions or make a complaint

### OTHER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- The advocate has a right to meet with the patient in private
- To meet with and interview any professional concerned with the patient's medical treatment
- Access any medical records that relate to the patient's care, with the consent of the patient
- Meet with any reasonable request to visit the patient when referred by themselves, responsible clinicians, nearest relative or approved mental health professionals.
- Be confidential and Independent of a person's treatment and care
- Ring us on the contact details given on our website and leave us the patient's name and ward / hospital they are on.
- e-mail us on: [brightonimha@mindcharity.co.uk](mailto:brightonimha@mindcharity.co.uk) for people living in Brighton and Hove
- email us on [wsusseximha@mindcharity.co.uk](mailto:wsusseximha@mindcharity.co.uk) for people living in West Sussex

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