



A Good to Know guide on
Independent
Mental Health
Advocacy



What is independent advocacy?

Advocacy is about speaking up. It is about having the right information, at the right time to help you speak up for yourself. Sometimes people need help from advocates to speak up.

Independent Advocacy is when people get support from people who are independent from all health and social care services. These people are called Independent Advocates.

Independent Advocates can help you to:

- Understand information and your rights
- Explore your options and choices
- Tell people what is important to you
- Access other services that may be able to help you

What is Independent Mental Health Advocacy?

People detained under most sections of the Mental Health Act have the right to an Independent Mental Health Advocate whether in hospital or on a community treatment order.

Independent Mental Health Advocates support people to understand their rights under the Mental Health Act, and to participate in decisions about their care and treatment.

An Independent Mental Health Advocate does not tell you what they would do, they help you to decide what you want to do.

Independent Mental Health Advocacy is free and independent from health and care services. It is also completely confidential.

Eligibility checker

Who is it for?

You are eligible for the support of an Independent Mental Health Advocate if you are:

- Being detained under a Section of the Mental Health Act* or are on leave of absence from hospital
- A conditionally discharged and restricted patient
- Subject to Guardianship
- On a Community Treatment Order
- Under 18 years old and being considered for a section 57 treatment
- Under 18 years old and being considered for a Section 58A treatment like electro-convulsive therapy

***This does not include emergency and short term detentions such as those made under Sections 4, 5(2), 5(4), 135 or 136**

How can a Independent Mental Health Advocate help me?

An Independent Mental Health Advocate can help you to:

- Understand your rights and choices under the Mental Health Act
- Understand why certain decisions have been made
- Understand the rights other people have in relation to you - such as your nearest relative
- Understand parts of the Mental Health Act which apply to you
- Understand any conditions or restrictions you are subject to
- Understand any medical treatment that you are receiving or might be given
- Be involved in decisions that affect you
- Request a review of your section through access to a mental health tribunal
- Be fully involved in your care planning and reviews

What can an Independent Mental Health Advocate do for you?

An advocate is entitled to:

- Access the ward or unit where you are staying
- Meet with you in private
- Accompany you to meetings with professionals involved in your care and treatment
- Access relevant records, including medical records, but only with your consent
- Discuss your case with professionals involved in your treatment, but only with your consent

If you are unable to instruct an advocate or give consent, the Independent Mental Health Advocate may access records and discuss your case in your best interests.

Getting support Accessing advocacy

If you think you are eligible for support from an Independent Mental Health Advocate and you are based in **Teesside**, you can refer yourself by:

- Calling us on: **0300 303 8037**
- or completing our online referral form:
wearepeoplefirst.co.uk/referral/

If you think you are eligible for support and you're based in **Cumbria**, please contact N-Compass, the service provider for your area:

- Calling: **0300 303 0622**
- or emailing: **admin@n-compass.org.uk**

Any questions?

If you have questions about Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy, take a look at the **Frequently Asked Questions** on our website, or get in touch.



You can call us **0300 303 8037**



Or email **bestlife@wearepeoplefirst.co.uk**



Or live chat **wearepeoplefirst.co.uk**

If you need this information in a different format please let us know

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