



**Digital
Advocacy Hub**

Independent Mental Health Advocacy

What the law says - Section 17



**Easy
Read**

Easy Read



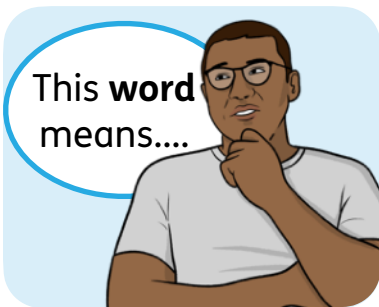
This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



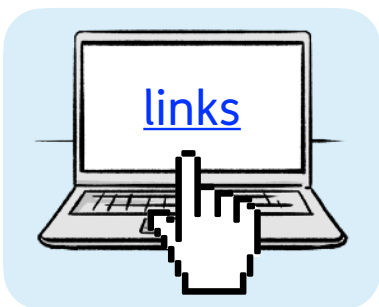
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. You may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker.



These are words that some people will find hard. When you see a bold word, we will explain it in the next sentence.



Blue and underlined words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

What is in this booklet

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About this booklet



This is information from n-compass about **Independent Mental Health Advocacy**.

Independent Mental Health Advocacy is when someone helps people:



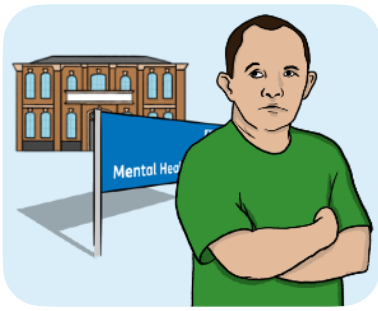
- Understand their rights - rights say how people should be treated and what they should be able to do by law.



- Speak up about their mental health care.



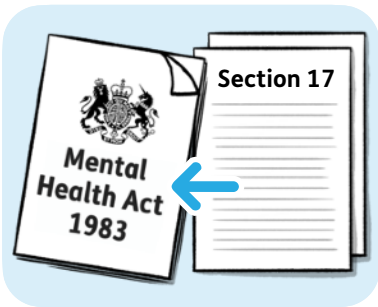
The person who does this is called an **Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)**.



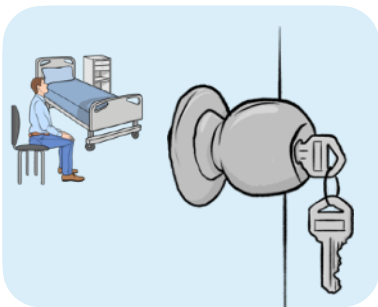
Sometimes, people getting care for their mental health are kept in hospital.



There are rules about how people should be treated in hospital.



This booklet will tell you about part of the Mental Health Act (the law), called Section 17.



This part of the law says when you may be allowed to leave a locked hospital ward.

What is Mental Health Advocacy?



You can get support from an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) if you are **detained** or being treated under a part of the **Mental Health Act**.



Detained means you are kept in a hospital or other building and you cannot decide to leave by yourself.



The **Mental Health Act** is a law. We will explain more about this in the next part.

An IMHA can support you if:



- You do not understand what is happening to you.



- You want to try and change a decision about your care or support.

IMHAs can help:



- Patients who are being kept in hospital.



- People who are on a Community Treatment Order - this means you can be treated in the local area where you live.



- People who are under Guardianship - this means that someone called a Guardian is making sure you get the care you need.



Your Guardian can be someone from your local council or another person chosen by your council.

People can also get support from an IMHA if:



- They might get some treatment that needs 2 doctors to agree to it - called Section 57 treatment.



- They are a child under the age of 18 who might need Electroconvulsive Therapy - this is when electricity is used to treat someone.

What is the Mental Health Act?

The Mental Health Act is a law that tells people with a mental health problem:



- What their rights are.



- How they can be treated.



The Mental Health Act gives doctors the power to detain you so you can get treatment.



It is important that you know what happens when you are detained and how you can get support



The Mental Health Act has different parts called Sections.



These Sections say the different ways that people can be detained.

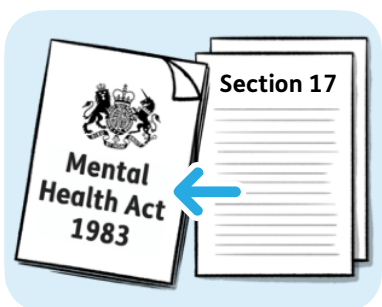


Different Sections have different rules about how you can be detained.

What is Section 17 leave?



The Mental Health Act gives health professionals the power to detain you in hospital.



Section 17 of the Mental Health Act explains how you can leave the hospital for a short time.

Types of leave

There are different types of leave.

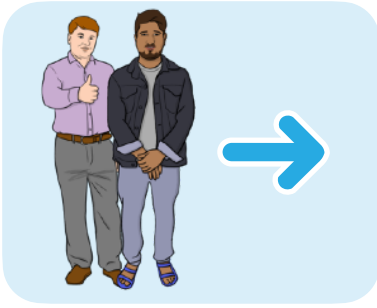
You may be allowed to:



- Leave the hospital on your own for a short time - this is called unescorted leave.



- Leave the hospital with a member of staff for a short time - this is called escorted leave.



You may also be allowed to leave the hospital with a family member or friend for a short time - this is called accompanied leave.

How do I ask to leave for a short time?



You can ask the doctor in charge of your care to leave for a short time.



You can also ask the nurses caring for you to ask the doctor for you.



You can also ask for an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) to support you.

What if I leave the hospital when I am not allowed to?

The police and other organisations may be called to find you if:



- You leave the hospital when you are not allowed to.



- You stay out of the hospital for longer than you are allowed.

How long can I leave for?



The doctor in charge of your care will decide how long you can go out for.



In the early part of your treatment, you may not be allowed to leave the hospital.

There may be rules that you need to keep to, like:



- Only leaving the hospital for a certain amount of time.



- Coming back to the hospital by a certain time.

Leaving the hospital for a longer time



You may be allowed to get care in your local area instead of the hospital. This is called a Community Treatment Order.

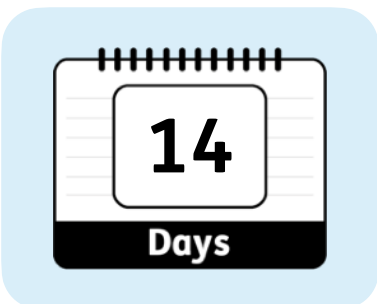


The doctor in charge of your care should think about this if they allow you to leave the hospital for more than 7 days.



A mental health professional can ask hospital doctors to give you a Community Treatment Order.

This can happen if:



- They have seen you in the last 14 days.



- 2 doctors agree with them.

What do Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHAs) do?

An IMHA can support you to:



- Take part in planning your care.



- Get ready for and understand:
 - Mental Health Reviews - these are when health professionals look at your mental health.



- Tribunals - these are when professionals decide if you can leave hospital.



- Get other support or help to use other services, like getting a house or finding a job.

An IMHA can support you to:



- Talk about any care you might need after being detained.



- Understand how you can tell someone if you are not happy about your care.



- Understand your rights and how to use them.

An IMHA will:



- Listen to what you tell them about your ideas and feelings.



- Support you to speak up.



- Speak up for you if you need them to.



- Make sure you take part in any decisions that are made about you.

How can I get support from an IMHA?



Health professionals should tell patients and their families about IMHA services.

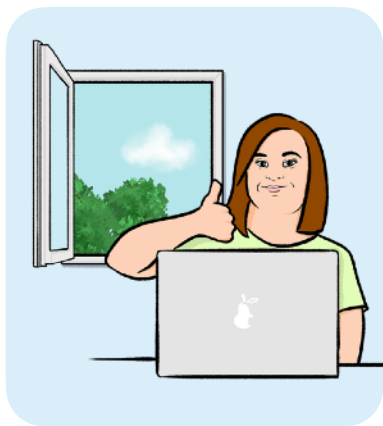


Health and care professionals usually tell the IMHA service if they think a patient needs their services.



n-compass will allow patients or their families to ask for support from an IMHA.

Find out more



The n-compass Digital **Advocacy** Hub gives free and fair information about lots of different parts of life.

Remember, **advocacy** is helping people to speak or speaking up for them.



n-compass runs advocacy services across the north of England.



You can find out if we run services near you on our website:

www.n-compass.org.uk/our-services/advocacy



Or you can speak to us using the Sign video website:

www.ncompass.signvideo.net