

INDEPENDENT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY – Inpatient ward rounds



WHAT IS INDEPENDENT MENTAL HEALTH ADVOCACY?

If you are restricted or being detained under the Mental Health Act, you are legally entitled to help and support from an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA).

An advocate is someone who will speak up for you, or support you to speak up for yourself, if you don't understand what's happening to you, want to challenge a decision about your care or support, express your preferences or assert your rights.

This applies to hospital patients and those who are on a Supervised Community Treatment Order (CTO) or under Guardianship.

Also eligible for an IMHA includes:

-  Those being considered for section 57 treatment
-  Those under 18 and being considered for electroconvulsive therapy (ECT)

What is a ward round?

A ward round is a regular meeting that takes place at mental health inpatient wards that patients are invited to. Ward rounds usually take place in a private room at the hospital and carers and professionals who are supporting you will also attend.

The person who runs the meeting is usually your hospital consultant (Responsible Clinician) and a member of the nursing staff from your ward usually attends too.

Professionals who could be involved in your ward round meeting include but are not limited to your Social Worker, Care Co-ordinator, Community Psychiatric Nurse, Occupational Therapist, a family member or friend and / or your advocate. Other people can also be invited, depending on what needs to be discussed.

You do not have to attend your ward round meeting, but decisions will be made about your care even if you do not attend. If you are involved in the meeting you can influence the outcome.

What is the purpose of a ward round?

The purpose of the ward round is to discuss and evaluate the effectiveness of your treatment at the hospital, to make plans for your discharge and to identify and plan for what support you may need when you are back in the community.

It is important to know that the purpose of your ward round and your treatment plan is to enable you to feel better and to help you recover from the symptoms of mental and emotional ill health. Consideration will also be given to any physical health concerns that you have and any referrals required for physical health needs should be discussed.

You might not always agree with your treatment plan, a ward round is your opportunity to explain to your consultant what you think is going well, what isn't going as well and what you would like to change in your plan.

Your hospital consultant is not obliged to implement everything that you ask for, but they should listen carefully to what you say. An advocate, or a family member can help you to prepare for ward rounds, to enable you to express your views, wishes and feelings effectively.

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What will the ward round meeting be like?

Your Responsible Clinician will begin the meeting by introducing themselves if you have not met them before and they should also introduce any new people who are in the meeting. Some people might not be able to attend the ward round in person, so they might join via a computer screen or telephone link.

There are sometimes lots of people in ward round meetings and some people feel intimidated by the meeting. However, it is very important to remember that all the professionals are there to support you to recover and to help you make plans to improve your wellbeing. The professionals do not want to keep you in hospital indefinitely, they want you to get better and be safely discharged from the hospital.












The Responsible Clinician will usually have an agenda, or list of questions to ask you and the other people in the room about your mental and emotional health, before they make their decisions about the next steps in your care and treatment.

Sometimes ward meetings can feel quite tense, if you are upset or unwell. Perhaps you do not agree with the treatment proposed, or the restrictions placed on your autonomy and liberty.

The professionals caring for you and supporting you understand that it can be frustrating to be kept against your will in a mental health ward, but shouting and arguing is counterproductive. A positive and constructive discussion is much more likely to be effective.

What sort of things can I discuss in a ward round?

There are many areas that can be discussed in your ward round.

-  Your diagnosis – what this means to you and how your diagnosed condition could affect you.
-  Medication – the therapeutic benefits, dosage and any side effects that you may be experiencing.
-  Other treatments – such as any talking therapies that you can participate in.
-  Your rights whilst you are at the hospital.
-  Other rights that you have relating to your section.
-  Requesting leave from the ward under section 17.
-  How to access advocacy support.
-  Discharge planning, including the Care Programme Approach (CPA) and care and support planning under the Care Act.
-  Helping you to access support for important issues like housing and welfare benefits.
-  Making sure that your discharge plan is effective and safe for you and others.
-  How to make a complaint if you are not happy with your care at the hospital.

Can I be given treatment I don't want?




Staff should ask you to accept treatment, but they are able to treat you without your consent. If you are unhappy about your treatment, you can talk to your Responsible Clinician who oversees your care on a day-to-day basis.

The hospital can only give you some treatments, like Electro-Convulsive Therapy (ECT), if strict additional criteria are met.

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Who has the power to discharge me from hospital?






You can be discharged by:

-  your Responsible Clinician
-  the Hospital Managers, at a Hospital Managers' Hearing
-  a Mental Health Tribunal




In addition, your Nearest Relative can request that you are discharged.

What do Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHAs) do?

An IMHA can support you to:

-  Be fully involved in your care planning
-  Access Mental Health Reviews and Tribunals, prepare for them and understand decisions made
-  Access other support or services Discuss appropriate aftercare
-  Understand how to raise concerns about your experience/care
-  Exercise your rights

An IMHA will:

-  Listen carefully to what you tell them about your views and feelings
-  Support you to speak up or speak up on your behalf if needed
-  Make sure you are fully involved in decisions being made about you

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What is the Mental Health Act?

The Mental Health Act is a law which tells people with a mental health disorder what their rights are and how they can be treated.

'Mental health disorder' means any disorder or disability of the mind.

It is important that you know what happens to you when you are detained, what your rights are and where you can seek help. The Mental Health Act Code of Practice tells everyone how to use this law and what they must do.

How can I make a referral?

Mental Health professionals have a duty to inform patients in their care and their nearest relative about the IMHA services available to them. These measures ensure that each patient who is entitled to receive IMHA support is aware of their right to approach the service.

Referrals to the IMHA service are usually made by Health or Social Care professionals, however, n-compass will accept IMHA referrals from the person themselves or their family.



**TO LEARN HOW ADVOCACY
CAN HELP PLEASE GET IN TOUCH**

The n-compass Digital Advocacy Hub provides free and impartial information on a range of common advocacy issues. n-compass delivers several advocacy services across the north of England.

To find out if we deliver in your locality

Website www.n-compass.org.uk/our-services/advocacy
Sign video ncompass.signvideo.net/