



**Digital
Advocacy Hub**

Independent Mental Health Advocacy

Your Nearest Relative



**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.



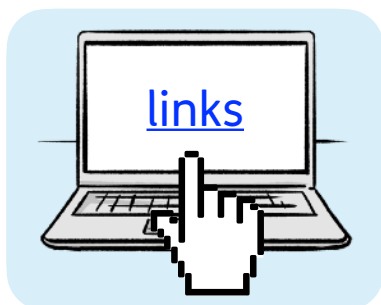
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



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



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



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

About this booklet	4
What is Mental Health Advocacy?	6
Your Nearest Relative.....	9
Who is your Nearest Relative?.....	12
What does an IMHA do?	17
Find out more	20

About this booklet



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

Independent Mental Health Advocacy is when someone helps people:



- Understand their **rights**

Rights are how people should be treated and what they should be able to do by law.



- Speak about their mental health care and treatment.



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



This booklet will tell you about your **Nearest Relative**.

Your **Nearest Relative** is a close family member who gets some rights if you have to stay in hospital to get care for your mental health.

What is Mental Health Advocacy?



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



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



The **Mental Health Act** is a law that tells people with mental health issues about their rights and how they can be treated.



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 support.

An Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) can help lots of people like:



- Patients who have to stay 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 Independent Mental Health Advocate (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.

Your Nearest Relative



Your **Nearest Relative** has some rights to do with your care and treatment if you are detained under the Mental Health Act.

They can:



- Ask that you are detained or put under Guardianship.

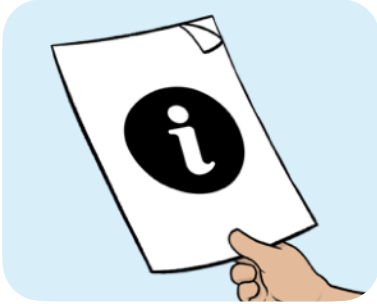


- Say that they do not agree with you being detained or put under Guardianship.

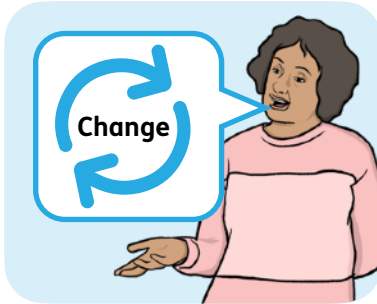


- Ask for an Independent Mental Health Advocate to support you.

Your Nearest Relative can also:



- Get information about you if you are detained.



- Ask a different person to be your Nearest Relative.



- Ask for someone to check your health if they are worried about your mental health.



- Ask to **discharge** you.
Discharge means you can leave the hospital or other treatment.

You can also be discharged by:



- Your **Responsible Clinician**.

Your **Responsible Clinician** is the doctor who is in charge of your care while you are detained.



- The Hospital Managers.



- A **mental health tribunal**.

A **tribunal** is like a court of law. It is where an official person, or group of people, make a decision about something.



If your Nearest Relative asks to discharge you, your **Responsible Clinician** can say no.

Who is your Nearest Relative?

The Mental Health Act has a list of who can be your nearest relative in a set order:



1. Your husband, wife, civil partner or your partner, who you have lived with for more than 6 months.



2. Your son or daughter.



3. Your father or mother.



4. Your brother or sister.



5. A grandparent.



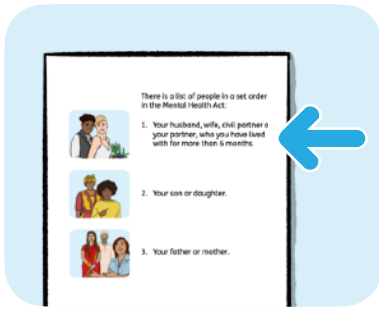
6. A grandchild.



7. An uncle or aunt.



8. A nephew or niece.



The person you have closest to the top of the list is your Nearest Relative.

Sometimes people who are not members of your family can be your Nearest Relative like:



- Your friend.



- Your mental health professional.

Changing your Nearest Relative

If the person who is highest on your list does not want to be your Nearest Relative, they can:



- Find another person who agrees to be your Nearest Relative.



- Write to your hospital saying they have chosen someone else to be your Nearest Relative.



If they change their mind, they can write to the hospital asking to become your Nearest Relative again.



If you are a patient, you can also ask the **county court** to change your Nearest Relative.

The **county court** is a court near you that makes decisions about people's rights.

You may want to do this because you:



- Think someone else would be a better choice.



- Want your mental health professional or social worker to be your Nearest Relative.



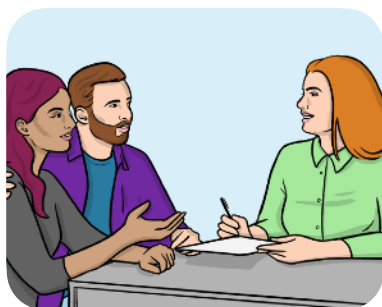
If you ask to change your Nearest Relative and the court does not agree, you may need to pay legal fees.

What does an IMHA do?

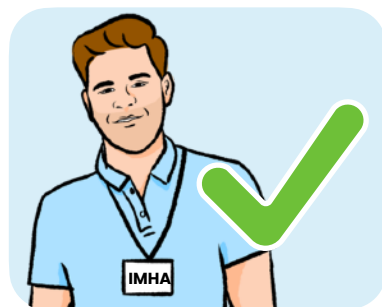
Your Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) can support you to:



- Understand your rights under the Mental Health Act.



- Take part in meetings about your care and treatment.



- Understand how to speak up if you are worried about your care or something that has happened to you.

Your Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) can do this by:



- Listening to what you think, feel and want.



- Speaking up for you, or helping you speak up, about what you think.



- Making sure you can take part in making decisions about your care.

Our IMHA services

Mental health professionals should:



- Tell patients and Nearest Relatives about IMHA services they can use, like n-compass.



- Help patients start using these services.



n-compass can also provide IMHA services if a patient or their family member asks to use them.



If someone else asks for you to get support from an IMHA, you do not have to agree to get support from them.

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

This Easy Read booklet was produced by easy-read-online.co.uk