



# IMHA Independent Mental Health Advocacy



for people detained under the Mental Health Act

 **asist** making advocacy a right not a privilege

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**If you are detained under the Mental Health Act you have the right to an Independent Mental Health Advocate or ‘IMHA’.**

- It is your choice.**
- It is your right.**

Your advocate is independent from anyone who is caring for you or giving you treatment.

IMHAs work for a charity; not for the hospital or social services.

Independent mental health advocacy services provide an additional safeguard for patients who are subject to the Act.

IMHAs are specialist advocates who are trained specifically to work within the framework of the Act to meet the needs of patients.

# Rights and Duties:



Professionals have a legal duty to tell you about your right to an IMHA.

Professionals have a legal duty to help you to contact an IMHA.

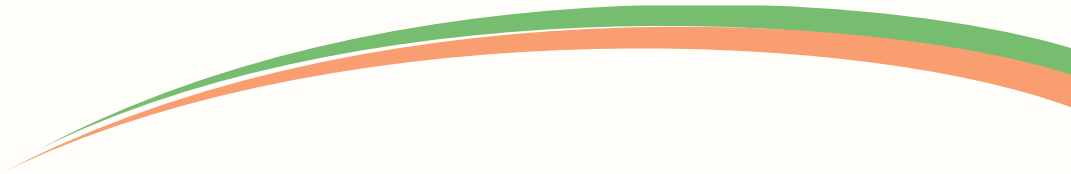
IMHAs have the legal right when acting on your behalf, and with your permission to:

- meet with you in private to find out what you want them to do
- meet with professionals to find out what you want to know
- attend meetings to inform professionals what you want to say
- access your records in certain circumstances and tell you what your records say.





# Your IMHA can:

inform you about your rights, your treatment and anything else about your care:







- help you to come to decisions about what you want to do
- help you to speak up about what you think about your care and treatment
- help you to take part in meetings about your care and treatment - this includes meetings where you are appealing against your Section.



# Your IMHA will not:

-  Judge you, advise you or tell you what you should do.
-  Talk with other people behind your back.
-  Speak up for your family, friends or staff, instead of you.
-  Act as a doctor, social worker or solicitor.

# Your IMHA will:

-  Be loyal to you and only you.
-  Be independent from the people who care for you.
-  Help you find information and make sense of it.
-  Support you to make your own choices.
-  Tell other people what you want to do.
-  Keep what you say confidential.

**" Advocacy promotes social inclusion, equality and social justice. It takes action to help people say what they want, secure their rights, represent their interests and obtain services they need.**

Advocacy Charter 2002, Action for Advocacy

People have a **statutory right** to free, independent advocacy.

Professionals have a **duty** to make the independent advocacy referral.

Office hours are: Monday to Friday 08.30 - 17.00



[referrals@asist.co.uk](mailto:referrals@asist.co.uk)

[www.asist.co.uk](http://www.asist.co.uk)



Asist, Winton House, Stoke Road,  
Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2RW



Phone 01782 845584 or text 60777 and start your message with the word Asist (call charges may apply).

Advocacy referral forms are available on our website.

**Contact us to enquire about referrals,  
for information and signposting.**

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