n|compass Advocacy Service

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.

The term 'mental health disorder' can be used to describe people who have:
A mental illness
A personality disorder

What is Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)?

If you are an adult and **restricted or being detained** under the **Mental Health Act**, you can get help and support from an **Independent Mental Health Advocate**. An advocate is somebody who can help you to have your wishes and feelings listened to.

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

What does it mean 'being detained'?
Made to stay in hospital for assessment or treatment against your wishes.
Being detained is called 'sectioned' because the law has different sections.
Your rights depend on what section you are under.

What is a community treatment order?

A community treatment order (CTO) allows a person who has been detained in hospital for treatment (this usually means being given tablets or medicine to make you feel better) to leave hospital and get treatment in the community

What is Guardianship?

Guardianship is used to help you live outside of hospital. Your guardian can decide things for you, like where you live. Under Guardianship you should still be free to come and go.

How can I make a referral? (a referral is when somebody tells us that you might need some extra support)

Mental Health professionals have a **duty** (where someone has to do something by law) to inform patients in their care and their nearest relative about the **IMHA** services available to them.

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 family.

The Mental Health Act places a legal duty (where somebody has to do something by law) on Health and Social Care professionals to refer to an IMHA service.