

What are my rights as an informal patient in hospital?

Why am I in hospital?

You have agreed to be in hospital on the advice of the healthcare professionals caring for you.

Your mental health needs can be assessed fully and you will be offered the treatment you need.

You have the same rights as a patient in an ordinary hospital.

Can I leave hospital?

You are an informal patient and are not held in hospital against your will. This right is protected under the Human Rights Act (1998).

The ward you are a resident on is locked. This is because there are other patients who are subject to the Mental Health Act and are not free to leave.

As an informal patient you have the right to leave the ward.

Although you are free to leave, it is important to spend time in hospital. This allows staff to complete assessments and plan your care with you.

Staff have a duty of care towards you and it is good practice to let the staff know when you would like time away from the ward.

What care and treatment will I receive?

As an informal patient staff need your consent before you can be given any treatment.

You have the right to be involved in your care and treatment plan.

You can discuss the care and treatment plan with your named nurse and doctor.

What is in a care and treatment plan?

This plan may involve the following information:

- Taking medication
- Having some physical investigations/tests
- Therapeutic work
- Talking to staff and answering their questions

Make sure that you understand what is being offered to you before accepting any treatment. Please ask questions about anything that worries you or if you need further information.

As you are an informal patient you can refuse treatment. However, staff will want to review any possible impact this may have on your mental health.

If the staff are concerned around your mental health and wellbeing they may assess you under the Mental Health Act 1983. This is an assessment by two doctors and an approved mental health practitioner (AMHP).

Can I have contact with friends and family?

Your rights to have contact with your friends and family are protected under the Human Rights Act (1998).

You have the right to have contact with friends and family.

You can send and receive letters, speak to your family on the telephone and they can visit you in hospital. It would be helpful if you let them know the visiting times but if these times are not convenient, please inform the staff and request an alternative.

What can an advocate do?

As an informal patient you are entitled to an advocate. An advocate is someone who is independent and on your side. You can talk through your options with your advocate. They can support you to prepare for and speak up in meetings. This might be a ward round or care review.

You can contact an advocate on 01925 246 888

Your named nurse can also contact an advocate on your behalf.