



## **Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)**

### **What is an Independent Mental Health Advocate?**

An Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) is trained to provide advocacy support to people under a piece of law called the Mental Health Act (1983). This advocacy work is statutory which means it must be done by law.

The Mental Health Act says that when you are detained you must be kept in hospital.

There is a Code of Practice which explains how you should be treated in hospital. It tells you about your rights.

### **What does an Independent Mental Health Advocate do?**

An IMHA's job is to support you if you have been detained under the Mental Health Act.

### **Your IMHA can help you to:**

- understand your rights and be involved in decisions about your care and treatment.
- understand why you are in hospital and what you can and cannot do.
- understand information about your detention, medication, treatment or rights your nearest relative.
- prepare for and go with you to meetings.
- make a complaint if you are unhappy.

### **When can I have an Independent Mental Health Advocate?**

You have the right to an IMHA if you are detained under certain sections of the Mental Health Act.

You do not need to have support from an IMHA, it is your choice. You can end the support you have from an IMHA at any time.