



Informal patients - Independent Advocate

What is an Independent Advocate?

An Independent Advocate is trained to provide advocacy support to people under a piece of law called the Mental Health Act (1983).

If you are an informal or voluntary patient, you are not detained under the Mental Health Act. If you are an informal patient you have agreed to be in hospital on the advice of the healthcare professionals caring for you.

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 Advocate do?

An Independent Advocate's job is to support you if you have agreed to be in an informal patient.

Your Advocate can help you to:

- understand your rights and be involved in decisions about your care and treatment
- talk through your options
- get information about and support you to access other services
- prepare for and go with you to meetings
- make a complaint if you are unhappy

When can I have an Independent Advocate?

You have the right to an Advocate if you are an informal patient.

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