

## We are:

### A free service

Solent Mind is a charity and those eligible to access our services can do so for free.

### Independent

We are not part of the health services or local authority.

### Impartial

We are not directly involved in your care. If you can instruct us, our advocates will only speak to whom you instruct them to speak to and on what they have been instructed to speak about.

### Confidential

Our advocates will not disclose the information you share without your permission, unless they believe you or someone else to be at serious risk.

### Non-judgmental

Our advocates will not make decisions on your behalf.

### Respectful of patient needs, views and experiences

Our advocates will not tell you what you should or should not do.

Advocates do not make decisions on behalf of the person they are representing. This is the responsibility of the 'decision-maker' or health professional responsible for the care of the patient. IMHAs make sure that an individual's rights are understood and respected and that their views and concerns are taken on board in the 'decision-making' process.

## How can you contact us?

If you are finding it difficult to make your views known, or make people listen to them and take them into account, please call our advocacy team on 023 8020 8955 or email [portsmouthadvocacy@solentmind.org.uk](mailto:portsmouthadvocacy@solentmind.org.uk).

This is a self-referral service, or you can ask a family member or a professional who is providing your care to refer you.

To download a referral form, please visit [www.solentmind.org.uk](http://www.solentmind.org.uk).

Please note: An individual is not obliged to accept help from an IMHA, should they not want to.



We're Solent Mind, Hampshire's leading mental health charity. We're here to make sure that anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn to for advice and support.

For more information on our range of high quality mental health services, please call 023 8202 7810 or visit our website at [www.solentmind.org.uk](http://www.solentmind.org.uk).

Alternatively, you can follow us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn: @SolentMind



Solent Mind IMHA service, funded by Southampton City Council, Hampshire County Council and NHS England.



Solent

Are you subject to the Mental Health Act?

Do you find it difficult to express your views and influence decisions made about you?

We can help.



Independent Mental Health Advocacy service



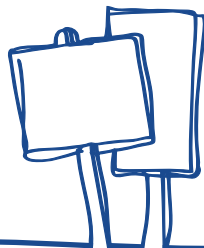
## What is advocacy?

Advocacy is a process of supporting and enabling people to:

- express their views and concerns;
- exercise their rights;
- have their interests represented;
- access information and services;
- explore their choices and options.

Advocacy promotes equality, social justice and social inclusion.

In its simplest form, it can mean just listening respectfully to someone.



## Are you eligible to access our advocacy service?

You are legally entitled to an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA) if you are:

- detained under a section of the Mental Health Act, excluding sections 4, 5, 135 or 136, or;
- subject to guardianship, or;
- on a supervised Community Treatment Order, or;
- considering treatment under section 57 of the Mental Health Act.

If you are under the care of a Community Treatment Team and living in the community, or you have voluntarily admitted yourself to hospital, you may be eligible to access our Community Advocacy service.

Please call 023 8020 8955 for more information.

## What is an Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)?

An advocate is someone who can both listen to you and speak for you in times of need.

They respect the views and wishes of the person they advocate for, without judgement, and defend their right to information, representation, services and opportunities.

The Mental Health Act 1983 defines the role of the IMHA as helping patients to access and understand certain information, and to exercise their rights.

## How can we help?

Our advocates can help you access information you need, or go to meetings or interviews with you to provide moral and emotional support.

In some cases, you might want your advocate to be more active. An advocate might write letters on your behalf, speak for you in situations where you don't feel able to speak for yourself, or represent you if you wish to complain about a mental health or community care service you are unhappy with.

**Our advocates will better enable you to:**

- understand the basis on which you are detained; any conditions or treatment to which you are subject to; any medical treatment you are receiving or might receive, and the reason for that treatment;
- access information and services so that you are better equipped to make informed decisions regarding your future and recovery;
- express your views, concerns and needs;
- defend and promote your rights and entitlements;
- explore your options and exercise your right to choice;
- be more involved in decisions about your treatment and care;
- constructively represent your views at tribunals, hearings, appeals, ward rounds and other meetings; both in hospital and the community.

**Advocacy is:**

choice, equality, justice, support, empowerment, protection, information.

**Advocacy isn't:**

advice, befriending, mediation, counselling, social work.