

Referrals can be made by anyone including the following people

Patients
Nearest relatives
Responsible clinicians
Approved mental health professional
Care Coordinator

Patients can refuse the support of an IMHA

How to contact Onside

Referrals can be made in the following ways

Referrals on **0844 248 9 248**
General enquiries on **01905 27525**
Email advocacy@onside-advocacy.org.uk
Fax **01905 28554**
By post to

Onside Independent Advocacy
Williamson House
14 Charles Street
Worcester
WRI 2AQ



Independent Mental Health Advocacy Service (IMHA)

The IMHA Service in Worcestershire

Onside Independent Advocacy are providing the IMHA service in Worcestershire during the first year of operation from April 2009.

Onside have been delivering an independent advocacy service in Worcestershire since 1993. They have extensive experience and skills in advocacy and in working with a wide range of adults facing disadvantage or who are vulnerable including those with mental health issues.

Introduction to the IMHA Service

Independent Mental Health Advocates were introduced into the Mental Health Act 2007 as a statutory right for people detained under the legislation. From April 2009 patients will have the right to be provided with support by an IMHA. The IMHA will provide the patient with information on their rights, medication and any restrictions or conditions to which they are subject. They provide an additional safeguard for patients who are subject to the Act.

The IMHA is a specialist advocate who will have appropriate training and experience to carry out the role.

The IMHA service will be independent of the NHS.

Who will have the right to an IMHA?

A patient who is detained under the Act (even if they are on leave under Section 17)

A patient who is conditionally discharged

A person who is subject to guardianship

A patient who is on a supervised community treatment order.

Informal patients are eligible if they are

Being considered for a treatment to which Section 57 applies

They are under 18 and being considered for electro-convulsive therapy or any other treatment to which section 58A applies

The Role and Function of an IMHA

IMHAs will help patients obtain information about and understand

- Their rights under the Act
- The rights which other people have in relation to them under the Act
- The particular parts of the Act which apply to them
- Any medical treatment that they are receiving or might receive

IMHAs can also support patients in other ways to ensure they can participate in the decisions that are made about their care and treatment. For example

- Engage with the care planning process
- Access Mental Health Review Tribunals, prepare for them and understand the decisions made. (this does not replace the role of the solicitor)
- Negotiate appropriate aftercare
- Access other support and services
- Raise concerns about their experience/care

The IMHA has certain rights given to them for the purpose of providing support to the patient.

These are

To be able to visit and interview a patient in private

To be able to visit and interview any person who is professionally concerned with a patient's medical treatment

To have access to any records relating to the patient's detention or treatment or any aftercare services provided under Section 117 (with the patient's consent)

To have access to any social services records which relate to the patient

Ensuring the IMHA Service is available to all qualifying patients

The NHS Trust or other organisation have a legal duty to inform them [verbally and in writing] of their rights under the Act. This includes their right to an IMHA. Where a qualifying patient has a nearest relative they must also be provided with a copy of the same information in writing [unless the patient requests otherwise]

Onside will produce a clear and accessible information leaflet for qualifying patients giving details of the IMHA service.

Onside will also carry out promotional work within inpatient facilities to provide information to both staff and patients on the IMHA service