

## How to obtain support

In Cumbria any individual who is detained under the Mental Health Act is entitled to support from an IMHA

You are not required to use the service and you can start or stop working with us at any time that you choose.

If you are on a Community Treatment Order or subject to Guardianship under the Mental Health Act you can also obtain support from an IMHA.

Please ask staff on the ward where you are detained to contact us on your behalf if necessary. Our details are shown below.

### Write to:

**Your Voice**  
**27 Spencer Street**  
**Carlisle CA1 1BE**

**E: [enquiries@yourvoicecumbria.org](mailto:enquiries@yourvoicecumbria.org)**

**T: 0300 012 0183**  
**(24hours Voicemail service)**



## Feedback, Suggestions & Complaints

We are committed to ensuring that our advocacy meets the needs of our clients and is of good quality. Accordingly users of the advocacy service may be given an evaluation form to complete (unless you request otherwise). We would be very grateful if you could return this to us.

As a service user-led scheme we positively encourage feedback and involvement from those using our services.

We are, therefore, also interested in hearing from you if you would like to help us improve and develop the service.

If you would like to make a complaint about the service or your Advocate please contact the Service Manager (Adults) for Your Voice. Copies of our complaints procedure are also available from your Advocate.



**by your side - on your side**



## Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)

**by your side - on your side**



## What is an IMHA?

Independent Mental Health Advocates (IMHA) were created under the Mental Health Act 2007.

An IMHA has a right to meet with you in private and to speak to any professionals involved in your care and treatment.

They will also help you understand your rights if you are detained under the Mental Health Act (i.e. under Section).

An IMHA can also ask to see your medical records with your consent.

IMHAs are independent from the hospital and people involved in your care or treatment as well as your friends and family.

This means they will only be representing your point of view and no-one else.



## How your Advocate can support you

- Accompany you to meetings, reviews, tribunals and interviews as a supportive presence.
- Support you in voicing your opinions, needs, concerns and complaints. To speak for you in situations where you feel unable to speak for yourself.
- Support you in meetings if you are in hospital or in adult social care meetings if you are in the community under a Community Treatment Order or Guardianship.
- Help you explore and clarify your rights, responsibilities, treatment options and care plans.
- Assist you in accessing information, other services and sources of support.

People who are experiencing mental or emotional distress often feel they have to accept what they are told, or feel they are not in a position to disagree, voice their needs or complain. This is particularly so when someone feels vulnerable, confused or anxious, a time when it can be hardest to find your voice.

Your Advocate can provide support in making your views heard and helping you to find your voice.

## What you can expect

You can expect your Advocate to spend some time getting to know you and your situation.

Advocates will always act only with your consent, and will not judge or criticise you.

- At your first meeting you can expect the Advocate to explain his/her role.
- The Advocate should give a clear idea how they can support you and complete any paperwork relating to the advocacy relationship.
- You can expect your Advocate to be clear about how they can and can't help you.
- You can expect your Advocate to turn up to pre-arranged meetings on time and act in a polite and helpful way.

Your Voice supports people across Cumbria, who are detained in Hospitals run by Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Trust or Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Trust or living in the community.



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