

# Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)

## What is advocacy?



Advocacy is about helping you get what you need. An advocate can support you to speak up, or they might speak up on your behalf if you need them to.



Advocates are independent. This means they do not work for the council or any other care provider.

## What is Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA)?



There is a law called the Mental Capacity Act. It talks about people who are not able to make decisions and choices about their lives. It says what rights they have.



One of the rights in the Act is to have an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA).



This is someone who speaks up for you. They do this if you do not have any family or friends who can do this.

They help when important decisions have to be made about you by the NHS or local council.

## Who can use the Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy (IMCA) service?



Some health or social care professionals can make decisions about what is best for you. These might be doctors or care managers.

They **must** get you an IMCA if:



- You are not able to make a decision yourself
- You do not have anybody who can help make that decision

The decisions that an IMCA **must** support you with are:



- Serious medical treatment like an operation
- A move to hospital that will be for more than 28 days.
- A move to a care home that will be for more than 8 weeks.
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. You might need to live in a certain place to keep you safe, or to keep others safe. There are safeguards to make sure that you are looked after properly.

An IMCA might also be able to support you with:



- A care review, if you have no friends or family.



- Safeguarding. This is when you or someone you know feels that you are not safe. It might also be if someone thinks that you are hurting other people. You would need an IMCA even if you had friends and family who could support you.

## What will your Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) do?

Your advocate will listen to you. They will try to find out as much as they can about:



- What you want.
- What you like.
- What you do not like.
- Any beliefs you have.

They will try to work out what you would choose if you were able to make the decision yourself.



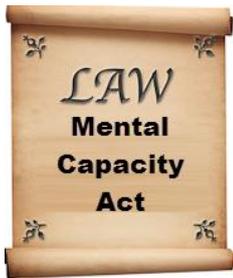
They will speak up for you in any talks or meetings where decisions are being made. This is so that the best decision is made.



Your advocate will talk to staff who work with you to find out what they think is best.



They will tell everyone what they have found out. This information will make sure a decision is made that is right for you.



They will make sure the Mental Capacity Act agrees with the decision.



Finally, they will write a report. The decision maker must read this and think about what it says. Then they will make the final decision.

## The Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) can:



- Meet you on your own.



- Read and copy social and medical records that are to do with the decision.



- Get another medical professional to give their views about the situation.

- Ask questions about the decision or disagree with it.

## The Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) can not:



- Make the decision.



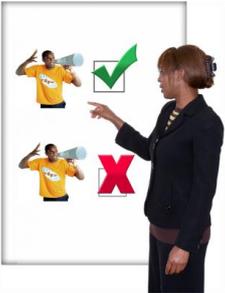
- Do the test to see if you can make your own decisions and choices.



- Tell you what to do.

- Decide who the right people are to talk to about the situation.

# How does someone get an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)?



The decision maker must decide if you should have an IMCA. Then they must contact the IMCA service.



The decision maker will be a doctor if the decision is about medical treatment. It will be a Care Manager if it is about where you should live.



A different professional can contact the service. But we would need the decision maker's contact details. We would contact them to make sure we can talk to you.



## Our Contact Details



**Address:** IMCA, VoiceAbility  
The Old Granary  
Westwick  
Cambridgeshire  
CB24 3AR



**Tel:** 0300 330 5499



**Email:** [imca@voiceability.org](mailto:imca@voiceability.org)