

Roxton Nursing Home

Information for Residents and their families

Advocacy Services

Advocacy services:

Are independent of the Nursing Home

Can help you to exercise basic human rights

Can help you to access community facilities

Can help you with life decisions and choices

What is an Advocate?

An advocate is someone who supports a person so that their views are heard and their rights are upheld. They can help a person to put their views and feelings across when decisions are being made about their life.

They can give support which will enable a person to make choices and they inform people of their rights. An advocate will support a person to speak up for themselves or, in some situations, will speak on a person's behalf.

Advocates are independent. They are not connected to the carers or to the services which are involved in supporting the person. An advocate will work one-to-one with a person to develop their confidence wherever possible and will try to ensure that the person feels as empowered as possible to take control of their own life.

In 2007, a new service called the **Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy Service** (IMCA) was launched.

Why have an IMCA service?

In the past, many people who lacked the capacity to make decisions for themselves may not have been listened to. IMCAs safeguard the rights of those with nobody else to speak for them.

The main benefits for the person who lacks capacity are:

- having an independent person to review significant decisions being made
- having an advocate who is articulate and knowledgeable not solely in relation to the Act but also about a person's rights, health and social care systems and community care law
- receiving support from a person who is skilled at helping people who have difficulties with communication to make their views known
- having an independent person who can support and represent them when certain serious decisions are being made and they have nobody else who can be consulted.
- There are benefits also for decision-making bodies as practitioners working in those bodies may find that:
 - the collaborative way in which IMCAs work will mean that practitioners are assisted in their decision-making processes by a person with a good knowledge of the Act
 - the information brought to the attention of the decision-maker by the IMCA may be extremely useful and can often save valuable time for the practitioner
 - complex decisions can be made with more confidence and in many cases more quickly due to the involvement of an IMCA.

What is mental capacity?

Mental capacity is the ability to make a decision.

The Act covers situations where someone is unable to make a decision because the way their mind or brain works is affected, for instance by illness or disability. The lack of capacity may be temporary because they are unconscious or barely conscious whether due to an accident, being under anaesthetic or as a result of other conditions such as the effects of drugs or alcohol. It includes everyday decisions such as what to wear or when to take a bath and more serious decisions such as where to live.

Who are advocates?

Local Authorities and NHS bodies have a duty to instruct an IMCA to support an individual if they meet the criteria as laid out in the Act.

An IMCA must be instructed where:

- There is a decision to be made regarding either serious medical treatment (SMT) or change of accommodation.
- The person has no close family or friends to represent their views
- The person has been deemed by the Decision Maker not to have capacity to make that decision in accordance with the assessment of capacity as defined in the Act

The IMCA service can be contacted

iBIC Holt Court South
Jennens Road
Aston Science Park
Birmingham
B7 4EJ
Tel: 0845 120 3748
pohwericas@pohwericas.net

Some other useful numbers:

North B'ham Advocacy	0121 685 8899
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There are also advocacy services that cater for specific groups, these include:

Birmingham Carers Association	0121 686 4060
AXIS – Support for Black & Ethnic Minority People	0121 464 4133
Pakistani Welfare Association	0121 772 4253
WAITS – Women Acting In Today's Society	0121 440 7000
Carers Advocacy Service - CASI	0121 464 5957
Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)	www.publicguardian.gov.uk 0845 330 2900