

What to expect when working with an IMCA or paid RPR

This guide is intended for professionals supporting people who have an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (**IMCA**) or Paid Relevant Persons Representative (**RPR**).

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the process of supporting and representing the views, wishes, and rights of people who need help to have their voice heard. An advocate will make sure that the person has a say in their life by helping them to communicate what is important to them.

The advocate will ensure that the person's rights are protected and that decisions are made in their best interests.

The Legislation

An **IMCA** is appointed under the **Mental Capacity Act (2005)** when a person:

- Lacks capacity to make decisions about serious medical treatment or their long-term accommodation.
- Has no appropriate family or friends who could be consulted on the decision.

A **paid RPR** is appointed under the **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)** to represent a person whose liberty is restricted.

Role of the Advocate

The role of the IMCA is around decisions – the IMCA will represent the person's views, wishes, and feelings about a key decision, ensuring any decision made is in their best interests.

The role of the RPR is around deprivation of liberty in care - the paid RPR safeguards the person's rights and ensures that the care arrangements are in their best interests. They can request a review, make a complaint, or appeal the DoLS authorisation on behalf of the person when needed.

When working with an Advocate, you can expect them to:

- Ensure that the person's views and wishes are considered by the decision maker and those involved in their care.
- Meet with the person in private and uphold their confidentiality.
- Require access to information and records.
- Advocate for changes that align with the person's wishes or result in less restrictive care arrangements.
- Help the person to challenge restrictions on their liberty.
- Raise concerns and utilise internal complaints systems.
- Make observations and suggest adjustments.
- Raise safeguarding concerns.
- Be polite and respectful.
- Respond to any questions you may have about their role or the legislation.
- Work within the Advocacy Charter and Code of Practice.

Please note that advocates support decision making processes – advocates are not decision makers.

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