



For better
mental health

Mind in Bexley was founded in 1986 and has been actively involved in the development of mental health services in Bexley. We are affiliated to National Mind and work with our local statutory partners the London Borough of Bexley, Bexley Care Trust and Oxleas Foundation Trust.

Mind in Bexley works to improve the emotional and mental distress and well-being of individual service users through:

- Provision of advice and information
- Outreach
- Advocacy
- Welfare Rights
- Befriending
- Volunteering
- Supporting self help initiatives including a Day Centre
- Health promotion and prevention initiatives
- Partnership working
- Engaging with relevant networks and strategic groups to influence policies relating to wellbeing, integration and social cohesion
- Conducting evaluation and research into mental health and the needs of service users disseminating and promoting research findings and recommendations for action
- Acting as a hub to enable flow of information between service users and mainstream agencies and other voluntary organisations.

The IMHA service is funded through Bexley Care Trust and will provide advocacy support for those that are:

- Detained or liable to be detained under the 1983 Act (excludes emergency and short term sections)
- Subject to guardianship under the Act
- Community patients subject to Supervised Community Treatment (SCT); Community Treatment Orders (CTO)
- Conditionally discharged
- Being considered for section 57 or 58A treatments but are not otherwise subject to the Act (i.e. an 'informal' patient)

Mind in Bexley

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IMHA is an important new development in relation to independent advocacy, which for the first time gives 'qualifying' patients access to a statutory service.

Purpose of IMHA

The IMHA service provides assistance to qualifying patients to ensure that they understand the legal procedures of the Act and the rights and safeguards to which they are entitled. This may include assistance in obtaining information about any of the following:

- The patient's rights under the Act
- The provisions of the Act under which the patient qualifies for an IMHA
- Any conditions or restrictions to which the patient is subject
- The medical treatment the patient is receiving, or which is being proposed or discussed, and the reasons for this
- The legal authority for providing such treatment
- The requirements of the Act which apply in relation to treatment

The IMHA will:

- Ensure that the voice of the patient is heard by supporting the patient to articulate their views and to engage with the multi-disciplinary team
- Support qualifying patients to access information, and to understand better what is currently happening and what is being planned, and to understand better the options available to them
- Support qualifying patients in exploring options, making better-informed decisions and in engaging with the development of their care plans
- Support the patient to ensure that they are valued for who they are
- Support the patient to counteract any actual or potential discrimination

Duties and rights of IMHAs

Where an IMHA is engaged, they have a duty to respond to all reasonable requests to see a patient. These may come from the patient themselves, the hospital managers, the responsible clinician, the local social services authority, and the approved clinician in charge of treatment, an approved mental health professional (AMHP) or the nearest relative, but referrals will also come from members of the hospital or community mental health staff. In response to referrals IMHAs will visit and interview the patient but they will only work with qualifying patients who wish to see them.

In responding to requests to visit qualifying patients, IMHA should be able:

- To visit qualifying patients where they are resident, subject to good practice. This will mean in some cases the patient will not be seen in their place of residence.
- To visit community qualifying patients in community settings, for example community mental health teams
- To see a patient in private unless the patient is under close observation or in seclusion, or clinical staff advise against it for reasons of the advocate's or



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the patient's safety

- To attend relevant meetings at the request of qualifying patients
- To meet with professionals involved with the patient's care in order to promote the patient's involvement in his/her care and treatment. The IMHA can talk to the professional without the patient's permission but unless the patient requests it, the professional will be unable to disclose any confidential information
- To access, only with their permission, those parts of a patient's health records relevant to detention, treatment or after-care
- To access, only with their permission, the patient's social care records areas of advocacy which, have been developed at Level 4.
- Be a person of integrity and good character
- Be able to act independently of any person who requests an IMHA to visit and interview the patient
- Be able to act independently of any person who is professionally concerned with a patient's medical treatment
- Have undergone an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check

With a population of 220,000 people, based on figures available from 2006 and 2007, IMHA's in Bexley would expect to manage a total caseload of 200 people in community advocacy, older and young persons and those in forensic settings per year: