

## Information for services

This information is designed to assist mental health service providers when referring people to Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA).

IMHA is a state-wide advocacy service for people receiving compulsory treatment under the *Mental Health Act 2014* (Vic). IMHA is one of a range of mechanisms established to achieve the supported decision making objectives of the Act.

## What does IMHA do?

IMHA advocates support and assist eligible people to make, and be involved in, decisions about their mental health assessment, treatment and recovery. This may include:

talking with a person to discuss and clarify their preferences and wishes

- providing information about the mental health system and assisting a person to understand their rights and to act on them e.g. in respect of Advance Statements and/or Nominated Persons

- engaging directly with a person's treating team, support people or other services, or providing support and coaching for a person to self-advocate

referring people to other support services, if the person requests this.

Advocates are always guided by what the person wants, rather than what may be considered by others to be in their best interests. Advocates do not take action without a person's consent. IMHA advocates are required to share information provided by clinicians and support people with the consumers they are working with.

## Eligibility for IMHA

Anyone currently subject to compulsory treatment in Victoria is eligible for assistance from IMHA. This includes people receiving treatment in an inpatient or forensic unit, or in the community. Advocates determine the level of service to be provided when a person engages with the service.

## How to make a referral

People receiving compulsory treatment, or workers who wish to make a referral, can connect with IMHA advocates in the following ways:

**see** an advocate in person at outreach locations (inpatient and forensic units)

- call** the dedicated IMHA phone line: 1300 947 820, from 9.30am–4.30pm, Monday–Friday

- online**, via the IMHA website [www.imha.vic.gov.au](http://www.imha.vic.gov.au) or **email** at [contact@imha.vic.gov.au](mailto:contact@imha.vic.gov.au).

Our team of advocates are located across Melbourne CBD, Geelong, Bendigo and Dandenong, and outreach across the state.

When making a referral, we will ask whether the person consents to the referral being made. If they do not consent to the referral, consent will need be obtained before IMHA can assist.