



The independent review of
**Learning Disability
and Autism**
in the Mental Health Act

What the words mean

Here are some common words and terms used in the Mental Health Act. Some of them are words we use in this review.

If there are other words which you would like us to explain please tell us and we will add them to this list.

Advance statement: when you write down how you would like to be treated if you become ill in the future.

Appeal: means you ask the court or the tribunal to change their decision.

Autism: A lifelong condition that affects how people communicate, how people relate to other people, and how people experience the world around them.

Compulsory treatment order: means you have treatment even if you do not want it

Emergency detention certificate: you can be kept in hospital and given treatment for no more than 3 days.

Guardian: someone appointed by the court to make decisions for you if you are unable to decide for yourself.

Legal aid: means that you can get help to pay for a solicitor if you cannot afford it. A solicitor should tell you how to apply for legal aid.

Independent advocate: someone who helps you say what you think about your treatment. They are called 'independent' because they are not tied to other services. Your doctor, hospital or social work department should help you find an independent advocate.

Learning disability: A lifelong condition that affects how people understand information, learn skills and live independently.

Mental disorder: is the word used in the law to describe someone who has:

- a mental illness
- learning disability
- a personality disorder.

Mental health officer: a specially trained social worker who helps people who have a mental disorder. He/she should tell you about your rights and make sure you get the care you need.

Mental Health Tribunal: the organisation that decides about the compulsory treatment of people with mental disorder.

Mental illness: A serious problem with mental health. The most common mental illnesses are depression and anxiety.

Mental Welfare Commission: the organisation that looks after those who need help because of a mental disorder. They make sure all treatment follows the law. You can speak to them at any time if you are unhappy about your care and treatment.

Named person: someone you choose to look out for you if you have to have treatment. They help to make decisions about your care and treatment.

Primary carer: the carer who gives you all or most of the care and support.

Short-term detention certificate: this means you can be kept in hospital and given compulsory treatment for up to 28 days.

Unpaid carer: A person who gives care and support without being paid. This is usually a member of your family or a friend.

Voluntary patient: this is someone who agrees to have treatment for their mental disorder.

Welfare attorney: someone you choose to decide about your care and treatment if you become ill and cannot decide for yourself.

Witness: someone who checks and signs your advance statement.