

Your Treatment Options

A guide for those accessing
in-patient mental health care



Contents

01 Introduction

02 Words we use in this booklet

04 Your right to respectful care

05 Care and treatment

07 Your consent

08 Your consent for certain
treatments: special rules

11 Moving to another hospital

12 How to make a complaint

Introduction

This booklet will help you to understand the treatment options available to you during your stay in hospital.

We hope you find this guide helpful and informative.

We will explain



The **treatment options** available to you



The **special rules** for some treatment options



The level of **care and respect** you should receive in hospital



The importance of your **consent**

Words we use in this booklet

Hospital

In this booklet, the word **hospital** means an in-patient mental health unit that is registered by the Mental Health Commission.

Consultant psychiatrist

A doctor who specialises in the treatment of mental disorders. They diagnose mental health conditions and prescribe treatment.

Care team

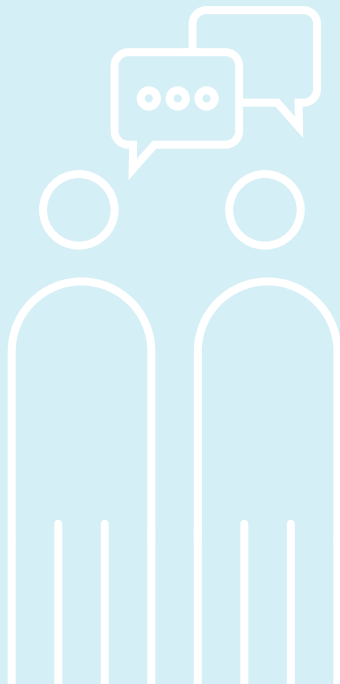
Your care team includes the doctors, nurses, consultant psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, social workers, occupational therapists and other mental health or physical health professionals who are taking care of you. We explain more about each member on pages 5-6.

Keyworker

Your key contact person while you are in hospital. They may be a member of your care team.

Individual care plan

You will discuss your needs and goals with your care team. The input you give them will help to form your care plan. This plan should set out the treatment and care you need as well as your needs and goals. Your care plan should also state what your care team will need in order to help you to reach your goals.



Capacity assessment

An assessment used to confirm if a person has the ability to make certain decisions for themselves.

Mental disorder

If you have a **mental disorder**, your doctor may believe that you could harm yourself or other people. They may believe that going to hospital will help you to get better. They may also believe that you could get worse if you don't go to hospital.

Involuntary patient

A person who has been admitted to hospital for mental health treatment against their will.

Mental Health Tribunal

This is an independent review by three people of a person's involuntary admission or renewal order.





Your right to respectful care

When you are in hospital, you have the right to receive good quality mental healthcare.

People working in the mental health services must make sure that you are treated in a way that respects your rights as an individual. You should always be treated with respect and dignity. This means that the following must happen:

You should be listened to

Your voice is important. You have the right to be listened to by those working on your care team. You have the right to take part in decisions that affect your health. Your care team should consider your views carefully.

You should be treated with dignity and respect

Your rights and views are central to any decision made about your care or treatment.

Your views should be taken into account

You should be included in discussions with your care team and your views should be taken into account while you are receiving care and treatment.

You have a right to be fully informed

You have the right to be fully informed about your legal rights, your admission and treatment. You have the right to have everything explained to you clearly. You can ask questions and you should receive answers that you are able to understand. You can ask for any information you do not understand to be repeated or explained in a different way.

All information you receive should be given in a way that you can understand.

If English is not your first language, the hospital should provide someone who speaks your first language. If you find it easier to understand images and pictures rather than words, the hospital should try to provide this.

Care and treatment

There are different care and treatment options available in hospital, depending on your needs. You should have access to different services and programmes. Your care and treatment will be organised by your care team. You should also have a keyworker who will be your point of contact while you are in hospital.

Let's look at some of the care and treatment you may receive and the professionals who will be involved.

Your care team will take time to assess your needs and develop a care plan that will work for you. Members of the care team usually include:

Doctors assess, diagnose and treat your mental and physical symptoms. Your Consultant Psychiatrist is a doctor.

Nurses work closely with you and your family. They support your recovery and wellbeing. They will help you to live an independent and fulfilling life.

Occupational therapists find ways to help you to live your day-to-day life independently. They will help with practical things, such as looking after yourself. They will also help you with your work life and other social activities.

Clinical psychologists help you to find ways to cope with life's challenges and with your mental health problems. They offer a wide range of psychotherapeutic interventions such as Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT). They will always take your particular needs into account.

Social workers help you with social and interpersonal difficulties. They will assess your needs and work directly with you and your family to help you make changes and solve problems.

Many other professionals are also part of your care team. In addition to mental health needs, your care team will also look after your physical healthcare needs. They will make sure you have access to the right healthcare professionals. These could include dietitians, physiotherapists and speech and language therapists.





Your consent

Consent is when you agree to a treatment or plan of care. When you are in hospital, your care team may suggest particular treatments. For this to happen, they must ask for your consent.

This consent needs to be **informed**.

Informed consent is when you have been given all necessary information, so you can make a decision that is right for you. You must fully understand what you are agreeing to. The hospital must give you clear information and you should be able to show that you understand it.

Let's imagine your care team believes that you need a new care plan. Here's what should happen:

- Your care team should give you information about your care plan. They should discuss the plan with you and explain why they think it will help you.
- You must be able to understand that information and make a decision about it. You should also be able to tell your care team what decision you have made.
- Your care team should make sure that you understand what effects the treatment will have on you.
- You should also be told what might happen if you do not agree to the treatment.
- The members of your care team should tell you about other methods of treatment that may be available.
- The information you get should be clear and given to you in a way that you can understand.
- You should have time to think about the treatment before you agree to it.
- If at any stage you feel you do not fully understand why you need the treatment, or what the effects of the treatment might be, you should ask your care team to explain it to you.

Remember: This is your decision. You should only agree to treatment if you fully understand why you need it and how it might help you.

Your consent for certain treatments: special rules

If you are an involuntary patient in hospital, there are some circumstances under the law when you may be given treatment without your consent. This will only happen if you are **unable** to give your consent.

There are special rules for three forms of treatment. Let's look at these in more detail.

1

Medicine

As an involuntary patient, you will only be given medicine without your consent if your consultant psychiatrist believes that you are **unable** to give consent.

If you have been on medicine for three months and your consultant believes you should continue to take this medicine, they must ask for your **consent**.

Your consultant psychiatrist must also believe the medicine will help you to get better. If you have been on medicine for a mental disorder for three months and your consultant psychiatrist believes that you should continue to take it, they will ask for your consent to continue the medicine.

- **If you give your consent:** You will be given the medicine to take.
- **If you do not consent:** You will not be given the medicine.
- **If your consultant psychiatrist believes that you are unable to give consent:** Your consultant must decide if you are able to make the decision about whether or not to take the medicine.

To do this, they will meet with you and assess your ability to listen to, understand and think about the information you are being given. This is referred to as a 'capacity assessment'. This discussion will be recorded in your records. When making their decision, your consultant psychiatrist must also believe the medicine will help you to get better.

After this meeting they will decide whether:

You are able to consent

If your consultant believes you fully understand your decision, then you will not have to take the medicine if you do not consent: If you are able to give consent, it is important to know that you can withdraw your consent at any time.

You are unable to consent

If your consultant believes that you do not fully understand your decision and are not able to consent, they must ask the advice of a second consultant psychiatrist.

If the second consultant agrees with your consultant, then you will be given the medicine for up to three months. If the second consultant does not agree, you will not be given the medicine. If

you remain an involuntary patient, your medicine will be reviewed in the same way every three months.

2

Electro-convulsive therapy (ECT)

Electro-convulsive therapy is generally known as 'ECT'. ECT is a medical procedure in which an electrical current is passed briefly through the brain. Its purpose is to treat specific types of major mental illness.

If you are an involuntary patient and your consultant psychiatrist thinks you need ECT, they will discuss the procedure in detail with you.

You should be fully informed of what ECT is, its risks and effects. The consultant psychiatrist will then ask if you agree to it. You can ask your consultant psychiatrist any questions about ECT and its effects.

You will only receive ECT without your consent if your consultant psychiatrist believes that you are **unable** to give consent.

If your consultant believes that you do not fully understand your decision and are not able to consent, they must ask the advice of a second consultant psychiatrist.

If the second consultant psychiatrist assesses your case and agrees that ECT will help you to get better, then you will be given the treatment without your consent. Both consultant psychiatrists must believe that the treatment will help you to get better. Strict rules must be followed for this treatment. Ask your care team for more information.

3

Psychosurgery

Psychosurgery is a surgical treatment that is very rarely used. It involves a surgical procedure on your brain. If your consultant psychiatrist believes psychosurgery is necessary to help you get better, they will discuss the procedure with you in detail. They will also discuss the effects of the surgery.

If you consent to psychosurgery, your consultant psychiatrist will inform the Mental Health Commission of your decision. We will then ask a mental health tribunal to review your case for psychosurgery. The mental health tribunal will consider whether or not it is in your best interests.

This treatment can only happen if you consent to it and if a mental health tribunal decides that you need it.

Moving to another hospital

You can be moved to another hospital for mental healthcare and treatment for a number of reasons.

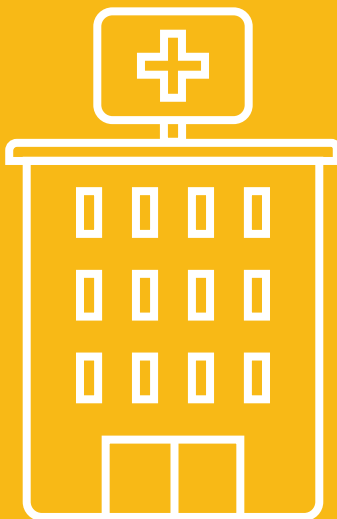
- The person who asked your doctor to recommend that you be admitted may also ask for you to be moved to another hospital.
- Another hospital may have treatments that your care team thinks could improve your condition which are not available in your current hospital.

What must happen before you can be moved to another hospital:

1. The clinical director (person who supervises the treatment of all patients) of the hospital where you are staying must believe that it is in your best interests to be moved to the other hospital.
2. The clinical director of the hospital where you might be moved must agree with the move.

You can also be moved to a **general hospital** if you need medical treatment. The clinical director of the hospital you are staying in will decide if this needs to happen. You will come back to the hospital for mental health treatment when your general medical treatment is finished.

You can only be moved to the **Central Mental Hospital** if a mental health tribunal approves it.



How to make a complaint

The Mental Health Commission do not have the legal powers to investigate complaints but we can point you in the right direction. Visit our website mhcirl.ie for more information.

Each hospital has a complaints procedure in place and has a specific person you can contact if you want to make a complaint. You can make a complaint in person, over the phone or in writing.

Inspector of Mental Health Services:

If you contact the Mental Health Commission with a concern about a specific service, the Mental Health Commission may direct you to the Inspector of Mental Health Services if appropriate. Email any concerns to: concerns@mhcirl.ie.

If the inspector or assistant inspectors from the Mental Health Commission are visiting the hospital where you are receiving care and treatment, you have a right to talk to them and they will ask if you wish to speak to them.

Contact details for the Mental Health Tribunals team:

If you are admitted to hospital involuntarily, you have the right to ask questions and talk to someone about your tribunal. Contact the Mental Health Commission at **01 636 2400** and follow the directions to speak to someone from the Tribunals team.

You can find further information on the Mental Health Commission's website: www.mhcirl.ie

Thank you for reading this guide.



mhc
comisiún meabhair-shláinte
mental health commission