

guide to



who's who in
mental health

The Mind guide to who's who in mental health

This online booklet is for anyone who wants to find out more about the different people who work in mental health.

It lists the job titles and organisations you may come across, and explains what different people and organisations do.

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Advocate

A mental health advocate is someone who can listen to you and support you in times of need. Advocates should be independent from any person or organisation involved in delivering your care.

An advocate should support you to:

- express your views and concerns
- access information and services
- defend and promote your rights and responsibilities
- explore your choices and options.

There are many forms of advocacy in mental health – see the entries for different types of advocate below. (For more information about advocacy, see Mind's booklet *The Mind guide to advocacy*.)

Citizen advocate

A citizen advocate is a volunteer, who works as part of a citizen advocacy scheme. A citizen advocate would usually work with you on a long-term and one-to-one basis. Unlike a peer advocate, a citizen advocate does not have to have personal experience of a mental health problem. (See 'Peer advocate' on p.6.)

Independent mental capacity advocate (IMCA)

An independent mental capacity advocate (IMCA) can support and represent you if it has been decided that you lack capacity to make decisions under the Mental Capacity Act. An IMCA provides information to work out what is in your best interests and, if necessary, will challenge decisions that they do not believe are helpful for you. (See Mind's legal briefing *Mental Capacity Act 2005*.)

Independent mental health advocate (IMHA)

An independent mental health advocate (IMHA) helps you understand and use your legal rights if you are being treated under the Mental Health Act. For example, if you have been detained under the Mental Health Act (sectioned) or are being treated on a community treatment order (CTO). (See Mind's booklet *The Mind guide to the Mental Health Act 1983*.)

Inpatient advocate

An inpatient advocate works with people who have been admitted to hospital. Inpatient advocates can be helpful in several ways, including helping you to claim benefits, challenging detention and supporting you to express your preferences and concerns to doctors during ward rounds. Most advocacy services will have inpatient advocacy as part of their service.

Peer advocate

A peer advocate is someone with experience of using mental health services who can support you to understand and defend your rights. Because a peer advocate has experience of using mental health services, they can often use their own experiences to help you understand your situation and give you practical advice.

Self-advocate

Self-advocacy is about you expressing your own needs and rights as a mental health service user. Some examples of tools for self-advocacy are:

- assertiveness training
- blogging
- using crisis cards or advance statements which set out your wishes in the event of crisis.

Self-advocates often form self-advocacy groups – a group of mental health service users and ex-users who work together. A self-advocacy group might:

- act collectively to influence service provision and treatment
- support an individual to advocate for themselves.

Appropriate adult

If you are held by the police and they realise, or are told, that you have a mental health problem, you have the right to be accompanied by an appropriate adult.

An appropriate adult should be an adult who is independent of the police, such as a member of your family or a mental health worker, but it cannot be your solicitor. You can't choose who your appropriate adult is, but you may be asked you about your preferences.

An appropriate adult should make sure that you get a solicitor, request that you are seen by a doctor and help you to communicate with the police. They should also be present if you are questioned about an offence. (See Mind's booklet *Rights guide 2: mental health and the police.*)

Approved mental health professional (AMHP)

An approved mental health professional (AMHP) is responsible for organising and coordinating assessments under the Mental Health Act. An AMHP can recommend that you are detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act (sectioned) or that you receive a community treatment order (CTO).

The role is often held by specially trained social workers, but can also be carried out by occupational therapists, community mental health nurses and psychologists. This role has replaced the role of approved social worker (ASW). (See Mind's booklet *The Mind guide to the Mental Health Act 1983.*)

Assertive outreach team (AOT)

An assertive outreach team (AOT) may work with you in the community (i.e. outside of hospital) if you have found working with other community-based mental health services difficult or unhelpful. If you have experienced severe mental health symptoms along with other problems such as violence or homelessness, it is more likely that you will work with an AOT.

The care coordinator within an AOT will generally be responsible for a smaller number of service users than in a community mental health team (CMHT), which means they can devote more time to each individual they see. (See 'Community mental health team (CMHT)' on p.11.)

An AOT contains a range of different mental health workers, such as social workers, support workers, community mental health nurses (CMHNs) and psychologists.

Care coordinator

A care coordinator is the main point of contact and support if you need ongoing mental health care.

They keep in close contact with you while you receive mental health care and monitor how that care is delivered – particularly when you're outside of hospital. They are also responsible for carrying out an assessment to work out your health and social care needs under the care programme approach (CPA).

A care coordinator usually works as part of the community mental health team (CMHT). (See 'Community mental health team (CMHT)' on p.11.)

A care coordinator could be any mental health professional; for example, a nurse, social worker or other mental health worker. This is decided according to what is most appropriate for your situation.

Care Quality Commission (CQC)

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is the independent regulator for health and adult social care in England. It registers, monitors and routinely inspects all hospitals, care homes and home care agencies to ensure that they meet national standards of quality and safety.

All providers of health and social care have to be registered with the CQC. It publishes its inspection reports on the CQC website, so you can see whether a particular health or social care provider has met the required national standards.

The CQC does not investigate or resolve individual complaints, but you can contact them if you feel that you, or someone you know, have received poor care. Any information you provide is used to help the CQC decide when and where to inspect services. (See 'Useful contacts' on p.25.)

Carer

A carer is anyone who supports someone experiencing mental health problems. This could be a parent, partner, son or daughter, neighbour or friend. A carer can be an adult or a child. Carers are often unpaid, but some receive benefits to provide full-time care. A lot of carers live with the person they care for, but many do not.

The term carer may also refer to someone who is employed as a professional carer, but it is used less frequently in this sense. (See Mind's booklet *How to cope as a carer* for more information.)

CBT practitioner

A CBT practitioner provides cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) – a short-term talking treatment (usually six weeks – six months) designed to change patterns of behaviour and thoughts. CBT is recommended as the initial treatment for many mental health problems. (See Mind's booklet *Making sense of cognitive behaviour therapy*.)

CBT practitioners may offer individual or group therapy as well as other kinds of talking treatment. A CBT practitioner could be a psychiatrist, psychologist or another mental health professional who has had specialist CBT training.

CBT practitioners may work for the NHS, for private practitioners or for a voluntary organisation, such as a local Mind. All CBT practitioners should be registered with an appropriate professional accreditation body. There are a number of such bodies. (See 'Useful contacts' on p.25.)

Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) is an independent organisation providing the public with information across many social and legal issues. Specialist advisors working at CAB can answer queries on a broad range of topics, including employment, housing rights and benefits. (See 'Useful contacts' on p.25.)

Community mental health nurse (CMHN)

A community mental health nurse (CMHN) is a registered nurse with specialist training who works with you if you receive community-based mental health care (i.e. care outside of hospital).

The role of a CMHN is very wide and can include:

- counselling or anxiety management
- exploring coping strategies
- helping you with day-to-day life
- administering psychiatric drugs such as injections.

CMHNs may also have a particular specialism, such as children, elderly people, or drug or alcohol problems.

Some CMHNs are attached to GP surgeries or community mental health centres, and others work in psychiatric units. Most work as part of a community mental health team (CMHT). (See 'Community mental health team (CMHT)' on p.11.)

Community mental health team (CMHT)

A community mental health team (CMHT) organises and coordinates your care if you receive community-based mental health care (i.e. care outside of hospital). This includes carrying out mental health assessments, treatment and care. You are normally referred to a CMHT if you have complex mental health problems and need more specialist help than a GP can offer.

A CMHT contains a range of different mental health workers, such as psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, social workers and occupational therapists.

Community psychiatric nurse (CPN)

A community psychiatric nurse (CPN) is another term for community mental health nurse (CMHN). (See 'Community mental health nurse (CMHN)' on p.11.)

Counsellor

A counsellor offers counselling – a talking treatment that aims to help you find ways of coping with problems that you are experiencing. The overall aim of counselling is to provide an opportunity for you to work towards living in a more satisfying way where you feel able to cope with life's challenges. (See Mind's booklet *Making sense of talking treatments*.)

A counsellor may offer individual or group therapy, and may deal with specific problems, such as grief, anxiety, violence or shyness.

A counsellor may be a professional counsellor, a psychologist or another mental health professional. Counsellors may work for the NHS, for private practitioners or for a voluntary organisation, such as a local Mind.

All non-NHS practitioners should be registered with a professional self-regulating body. The body they register with will depend on their exact role and qualifications. (See 'Useful contacts' on p.25.)

Crisis resolution and home treatment team (CRHTT)

A crisis resolution and home treatment team (CRHTT) offers you intensive support and advice if you are experiencing a mental health crisis.

The aim of the CRHTT is to provide the support you need to recover at home and avoid you being admitted to hospital if possible. They may also work with your care coordinator and your carer(s) to develop and review your care plan.

During a crisis, they will visit you at home, often on a daily basis. Once you start to feel better, their involvement in your care will decrease and you will either be referred to another team for ongoing care or you will be discharged.

If a crisis gets worse, or continues for longer than expected, your CRHTT may work in partnership with a hospital, possibly including arranging for your admission.

A CRHTT contains different mental health workers, such as psychiatrists, community mental health nurses (CMHNs), social workers and community support workers.

Early intervention team (EIT)

An early intervention team (EIT) works with anyone aged 14–35 who is experiencing a first episode of psychosis or is at significant risk of doing so.

An EIT aims to help you understand the symptoms that occur just before a psychotic episode, in order to help you seek appropriate treatment as early as possible. This is intended to reduce the length of your psychotic episodes and help you recover from them more quickly.

An EIT contains different mental health workers, such as psychiatrists, psychologists, community mental health nurses (CMHNs) and social workers.

Gateway worker

A gateway worker offers one-to-one support to people who are experiencing low-level mental health problems, such as mild depression, anxiety or stress.

A gateway worker aims to help you stay independent and supports you to manage your own mental health. A gateway worker can:

- give you information and advice
- tell you about services and groups in your area
- carry out mental health assessments
- support you to attend health or social care appointments.

A gateway worker is usually a nurse, social worker or occupational therapist. They may work in a GP surgery or visit you at your home.

General practitioner (GP)

A general practitioner (GP) is a doctor who provides a complete spectrum of health care in the community (i.e. outside of hospital). GPs are the first point of contact with the NHS for most people, including if you are experiencing emotional and psychological difficulties.

GPs can talk through problems, prescribe medication or make referrals to other services, such as counselling or cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT).

Many GP practices have counsellors, social workers or community mental health nurses (CMHNs) attached to their surgeries.

GPs may provide treatment themselves, or work with other mental health professionals to provide your care. They may also refer you to a more specialist mental health team, such as a community mental health team (CMHT). (See 'Community mental health team (CMHT)' on p.11.)

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales

The Healthcare Inspectorate Wales (HIW) is the Welsh equivalent to the English Care Quality Commission (CQC). (See 'Care Quality Commission' on p.9 and 'Useful contacts' on p.26.)

Health visitor

A health visitor is a qualified nurse or midwife, with special training and experience in child health. Health visitors work with you if you are pregnant, have recently given birth, or have a child under the age of five.

They can offer practical support, information and advice about the health and development of your child, as well as about mental health issues such as postnatal depression. They can also point the way to more specialist help if it is needed.

Hospital manager

A hospital manager coordinates hospital resources, facilities and services. They are responsible for administering all non-medical areas of the hospital and ensuring that medical staff have the resources to do their jobs. Hospital managers may work for NHS or private healthcare providers.

Mental Health Tribunal

If you disagree with a decision that has been made about you under the Mental Health Act, you can apply to the Mental Health Tribunal.

The Mental Health Tribunal listens to evidence from doctors and social workers and reviews the decisions that have been made. The tribunal have the power to overturn or change decisions if they feel they are not appropriate.

The Mental Health Tribunal deals with decisions about:

- detaining (sectioning) someone in hospital
- community treatment orders (CTO)
- conditions placed on discharge from hospital.

The Mental Health Tribunal is made up of three tribunal members, who are legal and medical professionals. Tribunal hearings are usually held in hospitals. (See GOV.UK in 'Useful contacts' on p.26 for more information.)

Nearest relative (NR)

If you are admitted to hospital under a section of the Mental Health Act or subject to a community treatment order (CTO), your nearest relative (NR) is given rights and powers under the Mental Health Act.

The nearest relative is selected from your closest relatives, including your partner if applicable, by the approved mental health professional (AMHP) responsible for your care. It is a specific legal role, separate from a person's next of kin.

The nearest relative may request that you are detained in hospital under the Mental Health Act (sectioned), or that you are discharged from hospital if you have been detained. They have the right to be given

information about your care, and to be consulted in any decisions that are made about you. (See Mind's booklet *The Mind guide to the Mental Health Act 1983* and legal briefing *Nearest relatives under the Mental Health Act* for more information.)

National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) provides national guidance and advice on health and social care in the UK. NICE has a range of responsibilities, including:

- issuing guidelines that describe how best to manage and treat mental health problems
- setting quality standards for treatment
- providing access to information for NHS professionals, such as information about medication.

NICE's guidelines and advice are used by the NHS, as well as by some voluntary and private organisations. NICE works in collaboration with relevant professional bodies such as the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Occupational therapist (OT)

An occupational therapist (OT) aims to help you overcome any practical difficulties you have as a result of your mental health problem. They can help you build up the confidence and skills needed for personal, social, domestic, leisure or work activities.

They often focus on the learning of specific skills or techniques, including arts, crafts, drama, dance, writing, group work (such as anxiety management and assertion training), individual counselling and practical day-to-day living skills.

Occupational therapists work in a range of places, such as GP surgeries, psychiatric units or residential units. They may also visit you at home. They may work for the NHS, a social services department or a voluntary organisation.

Occupational therapists are usually registered with the British Association of Occupational Therapists and College of Occupational Therapists. (See 'Useful contacts' on p.25.)

Paramedic

A paramedic is a senior health care professional for the ambulance service. They deal with accidents and medical emergencies and, in many circumstances, may be the first person you deal with if you are experiencing a mental health crisis. Paramedics will assess your condition and make a decision as to whether, and where, you require further treatment.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is the independent body responsible for considering complaints from the public about the NHS, as well as other areas of government in England.

In order for the Ombudsman to look into a complaint, you must have made a previous complaint to the relevant NHS body. Complaints regarding the NHS can also be referred to the Ombudsman directly if the response from the NHS body is considered insufficient.

Unlike other government departments, you do not need a referral from an MP for the Ombudsman to take up your complaint. (See Mind's legal briefing *Complaining about health and social care*.)

Psychiatrist

A psychiatrist is a qualified medical doctor, who has taken further training and specialised in the treatment of mental health problems. They study diagnosis, management and wellbeing/resilience.

Psychiatrists tend to focus on mainly physical treatments, such as drug therapy and electroconvulsive therapy (ECT), but they can also supervise a combination of treatments, such as drug therapy with psychotherapy or counselling.

Some psychiatrists specialise in a particular field. For example, paediatric psychiatrists work with children and young people, and forensic psychiatrists work with people who have come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Psychiatrists work in many different settings. They are often based in hospitals, although in some areas, they work in GP surgeries or community mental health centres. Some psychiatrists also work in multi-disciplinary teams with other mental health professionals, such as psychologists, social workers and psychotherapists.

Consultant psychiatrist

A consultant psychiatrist is a senior psychiatrist. Consultant psychiatrists are responsible for managing a team of other psychiatrists and would not usually be involved in providing your day-to-day care.

A consultant psychiatrist can recommend that you are detained for treatment (sectioned) under the Mental Health Act (See Mind's booklet *The Mind guide to the Mental Health Act 1983*.)

Psychologist

A psychologist studies human behaviour and mental processes, and considers the thoughts, feelings and motivations behind our actions. They provide talking treatments, such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and psychotherapy. They may also offer individual, group, couple or family therapy. (See Mind's booklet *Making sense of talking treatments*.)

Psychologists work in a range of health and social care settings, including GP surgeries and hospitals, and often work in multi-disciplinary teams with other mental health professionals, such as psychiatrists, social workers and psychotherapists.

Psychologists should be registered with a self-regulating professional body such as the British Psychological Society. (See 'Useful contacts' on p.25.)

Psychotherapist

A psychotherapist works to help you to understand why you feel the way you do, and what lies behind your responses to other people and to things that happen to you.

Psychotherapists may offer individual, group, couple or family psychotherapy. They may also offer different types of psychotherapy, such as cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), psychoanalytic therapy or psychodynamic therapy. (See Mind's booklet *Making sense of talking treatments*.)

A psychotherapist may be a psychiatrist, psychologist or other mental health professional who has undergone specialist training in psychotherapy.

Psychotherapists may work for the NHS, for private practitioners or for voluntary agencies. Non-NHS psychotherapists should be registered with a regulatory organisation, such as the UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP). (See 'Useful contacts' on p.26.)

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

The Public Services Ombudsman for Wales is the Welsh equivalent to the English Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman. (See 'Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman' on p.18 and 'Useful contacts' on p.26.)

Registrar

A registrar is a doctor who works in a hospital. Registrars have completed several years of training and act as a senior assistant to a consultant. They usually work as part of a team of medical professionals and may specialise in mental health care.

Responsible clinician (RC)

A responsible clinician (RC) is an experienced medical professional with overall responsibility for your care, if you are being treated under the Mental Health Act. While they may not see you every day or deliver your care directly, they have the power to take certain decisions about your care and will be kept informed and consulted by other professionals.

For example, if you have been detained in hospital under certain sections of the Mental Health Act (sectioned), your responsible clinician will decide whether your detention should continue, or whether you can be discharged. Your responsible clinician can also place you on a community treatment order (CTO), and determine the conditions of your treatment.

A responsible clinician can be a doctor, nurse, occupational therapist, psychiatrist, psychologist or social worker. (See Mind's booklet *The Mind guide to the Mental Health Act 1983*.)

Second opinion appointed doctor (SOAD)

If you are detained under a section of the Mental Health Act (sectioned) or being treated on a community treatment order (CTO), a second opinion appointed doctor (SOAD) is required to approve certain decisions about your treatment.

For example, if you have been given medication without your consent for more than three months, an SOAD must consider whether treatment should continue.

An SOAD should be an independent doctor, who is not involved in your treatment, and is different from your responsible clinician (RC). (See 'Responsible clinician (RC)' on p.21 and Mind's booklet *Rights guide 3: consent to treatment.*)

Self-help and support groups

A self-help, or support group, offers an opportunity to meet up with other people who are in a similar situation as you. Going to a self-help group can help you feel less isolated and, at the same time, show how other people have coped with similar situations.

There are self-help groups for all kinds of issues, such as mental health problems, bereavement, eating disorders or sexual abuse. Many people find that supporting others is also of help in managing their own wellbeing. Online support communities using social media and other websites, for example Mind's Elefriends, are also increasingly popular. (See 'Useful contacts' on p.26.)

Social worker

A social worker may be involved in mental health in a number of ways and can work in a variety of settings. Increasingly, social workers are being organised in more specialised teams that work in a particular field, such as community mental health teams (CMHTs). (See 'Community mental health teams (CMHT)' on p.11.)

Social workers should be able to offer you advice on practical matters, such as day care, accommodation or benefits, and can refer you to appropriate services. Some may be able to give counselling directly.

However, there are no clear guidelines about the level of social services people are entitled to, and services provided differ significantly from area to area.

Psychiatric social worker

A psychiatric social worker specialises in helping people with mental health problems to overcome practical difficulties and access services. Psychiatric social workers can help you access social and medical care; for example, supporting you to find work or claim benefits. They may also be able to provide counselling for you or members of your family.

Therapist

A therapist is anyone who provides a therapy or talking treatment. For example, a therapist may be a counsellor, psychotherapist, psychologist or psychiatrist, if part of their role involves providing therapy. (See Mind's booklet *Making sense of talking treatments* for more information.)

Volunteer

A volunteer is anyone who offers their time or services for free. In the mental health field, volunteers provide invaluable support and assistance to voluntary organisations, such as local Minds, and government organisations, such as the NHS.

Mental health volunteers may themselves have had experience of mental health services. Volunteers may work in day centres, charity shops, befriending and advice schemes, and in various projects provided by voluntary groups. They may use the services of the voluntary organisation on occasions, as well as work within them.

Useful contacts

Mind

Mind Infoline: 0300 123 3393
(Monday to Friday 9am to 6pm)
email: info@mind.org.uk

web: mind.org.uk

Details of local Minds and other local services, and Mind's Legal Advice Line. Language Line is available for talking in a language other than English.

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP)

tel: 0161 705 4304

web: babcp.com

Provides details of accredited CBT therapists.

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)

tel: 01455 883 300

web: itsgoodtotalk.org.uk

Provides details of registered practitioners in your area.

British Association of Occupational Therapists and College of Occupational Therapists

tel: 020 7357 6480

web: cot.co.uk

The professional body for occupational therapists in the UK.

The British Psychological Society

tel: 0116 254 9568

web: bps.org.uk

Produces a directory of chartered psychologists.

Care Quality Commission

tel: 03000 616161

web: cqc.org.uk

The independent regulator for health and social care in the UK.

Citizens Advice Bureau

advice line: 08444 111 444 (England);
0844 477 2020 (Wales)

web: citizensadvice.org.uk

Confidential advice on a range of issues.

Elefriends

web: elefriends.org.uk
Mind's online peer support community.

GOV.UK

web: gov.uk
Information about government organisations, including roles and responsibilities in mental health.

Health and Care Professions Council

web: hpc-uk.org
Keeps a register of health and care professionals.

Healthcare Inspectorate Wales

web: hiw.org.uk
The independent regulator for health care in Wales.

NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence)

web: nice.org.uk
Provides guidance on health and social care.

Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman

tel: 0345 015 4033
web: ombudsman.org.uk
Investigates complaints about government departments and the NHS in England.

Public Services Ombudsman for Wales

tel: 0845 601 0987
web: obudsman-wales.org.uk
Investigates complaints about government departments and the NHS in Wales.

UK Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)

tel: 020 7014 9955
web: psychotherapy.org.uk
Has a voluntary register of qualified psychotherapists.

Further information

Mind offers a range of mental health information on:

- diagnoses
- treatments
- practical help for wellbeing
- mental health legislation
- where to get help

To read or print Mind's information booklets for free, visit mind.org.uk or contact Mind infoline on 0300 123 3393 or at info@mind.org.uk

To buy copies of Mind's information booklets, visit mind.org.uk/shop or phone 0844 448 4448 or email publications@mind.org.uk

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email: dons@mind.org.uk
web: mind.org.uk/donate

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Mind

We're Mind, the mental health charity for England and Wales. We believe no one should have to face a mental health problem alone. We're here for you. Today. Now. We're on your doorstep, on the end of a phone or online. Whether you're stressed, depressed or in crisis. We'll listen, give you advice, support and fight your corner. And we'll push for a better deal and respect for everyone experiencing a mental health problem.

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