

Compulsory admission to hospital

If your GP or a member of your community team feels you need hospital treatment and you refuse, you can be admitted to hospital against your wishes under various sections of the [Mental Health Act](#). This means you are a formal patient and is often known as 'being sectioned' or 'sectioning'. If you are sectioned, you will be assessed before you go into hospital. This assessment is carried out by three health professionals:

- a doctor - normally your GP
- an approved doctor - normally a psychiatrist
- an approved social worker (ASW) - with specialised mental health experience

These people will ask questions to find what your state of mind is like and whether you are a danger to yourself or other people.

When you go into hospital, the admission process is the same as for an informal patient and you should be treated in the same way. However, you are not free to leave without a doctor's consent and under some parts of the Mental Health Act you can be treated without your consent.

You must be given written information explaining which part of the act you have been admitted under and what it means to you. You do have rights and can appeal against your detention. If you have any concerns talk to the ward staff or ask for information about a local advocacy service.

How common are mental health problems?

Anyone can have mental health issues. Around two million people a year are diagnosed with some form of mental health problem in the UK.

Mental health problems cover a wide range of experiences, from the everyday worries and stresses we all have at some point, to more serious problems that can affect the way we live our lives. It can often be difficult to judge when everyday feelings become a mental health problem.

For example, we all feel sad, or fed-up, or anxious sometimes. These feelings become a problem if they begin to interfere with your ability to cope with everyday life. It is important to recognise when this happens so that you can look for support. If you feel you are no longer able to manage your feelings, you should visit your GP. He or she will be able to help you.