

Need Help with Translation or Interpreting?

Call the Telephone Interpreting and Translating Support (TIS) on 131 450 or visit their website <https://www.tisnational.gov.au/>

Want to Lodge a Complaint?

- 1) Make sure you have raised the issue with the healthcare provider or staff first before taking next steps.
- 2) If you would like to escalate the matter further, you can lodge a complaint online to the Health Care Complaints Commission at <https://ecomplaints.hccc.nsw.gov.au> or call 1800 043 159.

Need Advocacy Support?

Visit the Official Visitors website <https://officialvisitorsmh.nsw.gov.au/> or call 1800 208 218 for more information.

Need Legal Support

Contact the Mental Health Advocacy Service, Legal Aid on 1300 888 529. You can also visit their website <https://www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au/>

BEING – Mental Health Consumers is the independent, state-wide, peak organisation representing the views, perspectives and experiences of people who live with mental health issues in NSW. Our primary focus is to ensure the voices of people living with mental health issues are heard by decision makers, service providers, and the community, and recognised for the valuable expertise they bring to system and service reform.

Supported by NSW Health, BEING has developed this series of resources to help you learn about your rights as a mental health inpatient under the NSW Mental Health Act and the advocacy supports available to you.

For more information about BEING visit being.org.au contact info@being.org.au or call **1300 234 640**

To view an expanded version of this resource online, scan this QR code.



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Mental Health and Your Rights

Finding Advocacy Support

There are people and services available to you to help you exercise your rights as a person admitted to a mental health unit.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

The following supports can provide additional advocacy assistance when you have been admitted to a mental health facility. These supports can be helpful when your needs have not been met from discussing it directly with staff at the mental health health unit.

Peer Workers

A Peer Worker is someone who uses their shared lived experience to connect with you, inspire hope and support you through your recovery journey. They can help you navigate the mental health system and communicate your needs better to clinical staff.

Many peer workers can help you understand your rights and advocate for you. Some mental health units and community mental health services have peer workers that work on site that you can access if needed.

If you have not been introduced to one, ask staff if there is a peer worker on site you can speak to.

Official Visitors

Official Visitors are people who have the right under the Mental Health Act to visit a mental health service in the hospital or community. They help you to advocate for and protect your legal rights. It is best to discuss the matter with medical staff first before reaching out to the official visitors.

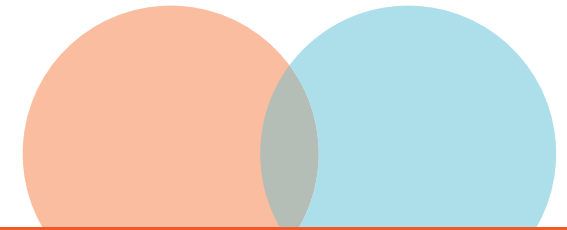
Two Official Visitors visit mental health units at least once a month, and visit community mental health facilities once every 6 months.

An Official Visitor can help you advocate for your rights, and help you resolve issues about any mistreatment you might be facing, including issues around your physical safety.

Mental Health Advocacy Service

The Mental Health Advocacy Service is part of Legal Aid NSW, and provides free legal support and representation at Mental Health Review Tribunal hearings.

They make sure your rights are upheld and fair procedures are followed at a Tribunal hearing as per the Mental Health Act.



EXERCISE YOUR RIGHTS

How do I Contact an Official Visitor?

Option 1 - You can ask to speak to the official visitor at any time during your admission to a mental health unit. Staff are required to notify the Official Visitor within two days after your request.

Option 2 - You can call the Official Visitor's line on 1800 208 218.

Option 3 - You can leave a written note in the Official Visitors Box (if available).

Health Care Complaints Commission

You can contact the Health Care Complaints Commission to lodge a complaint about mistreatment or abuse.

Make sure you have tried to resolve the complaint directly with a staff member or health care provider first before contacting the Health Care Complaints Commission.

What Can the Mental Health Advocacy Service Help Me With?

They can help you with:

- Appeals against the authorised medical officer's decision to refuse your request for discharge
- Appeals against Mental Health Review Tribunal or Supreme court decisions, including detention or a community treatment order (CTO)
- Appeal against a financial management order to have your money managed by the NSW Trustee and Guardian.