



# Common Terms

A list of common terms used in health and social care.

Term	Meaning
Mental capacity	Mental capacity means you have the ability to make your own decisions about issues that affect your life.
Mental Capacity Act (MCA)	The MCA is a legal framework for making decisions, for people who lack mental capacity. It sets out important things to think about when making decisions and how they should be made in a person's best interests.
Lack capacity	When someone lacks capacity, it means they cannot make certain decisions at that time, due to a problem in their mind or brain. This could be due to a temporary medical condition, or it could be more long-term. A person who lacks capacity may struggle to understand information, weigh up choices, remember information, or communicate their decision.
Best Interests (BI)	A key part of the Mental Capacity Act that helps with decision-making for people who lack the capacity to do so. When a person is unable to make a decision due to them being found to lack capacity, any action or decision made must be in their best interests.
Least restrictive	The least restrictive part in the Mental Capacity Act guides how decisions are made for people who can't decide for themselves. Decisions should be made in the least restrictive way and with minimal impact on a person's rights.



Term	Meaning
Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA)	Independent Mental Capacity Advocates are a safeguard (see Safeguarding below) for people who lack capacity to make some important decisions. The IMCA role is to support the person in the decision-making process.
Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)	This is a framework that protects a person's rights if the care or treatment they receive in a hospital or care home means they are deprived of their liberty and lack the mental capacity to agree to it. This may mean that person is not free to leave the hospital or care home and staff members know where the person is at all times.
Best Interests Assessor (BIA)	A Best Interests Assessor is a trained professional who considers and decides what is in the best interests of someone who lacks the capacity to make certain decisions. They are involved in the DoLS process. This role looks at the person's situation, gathers information from different people like family and carers, and then makes suggestions about what actions or care would be in the person's best interests.
Relevant Person's Representative (RPR)	Someone who represents a person deprived of their liberty under DoLS. They make sure that the person is aware of their rights and supports them to challenge the DoLS framework if they are unhappy.
Court of Protection Deprivation of Liberty (CoPDoL, community DoL, DiDS and DoLiC)	A CoPDoL order is a legal framework from the Court of Protection allowing restrictions on a person's liberty when it is in that person's best interests, if they lack the mental capacity to consent to the arrangements. These may be used for people who live in their own home or in supported living. These orders are made to ensure that the deprivation of liberty is lawful and, in the person's best interests.



Term	Meaning
Rule 1.2 Representative (1.2 Rep)	<p>A Rule 1.2 Representative is the name given by the court to the person who takes on the role to speak up for a person who lacks capacity. This role considers whether it's in the person's best interest to authorise the individual's package of care and support that would include depriving them of their liberty.</p>
Court of Protection (CoP)	<p>The Court of Protection is a court that deals with issues related to people who lack mental capacity to make certain decisions for themselves. It works under the framework of the Mental Capacity Act. The court's main role is to make decisions, or appoint deputies to make decisions on behalf of people who cannot make decisions about their finances, health, welfare, or other important things.</p>
Section 21A challenge (S21A)	<p>A Section 21A challenge refers to a legal process under the Mental Capacity Act. It allows people, typically someone affected by the decision made regarding the deprivation of liberty, to challenge the decision by applying to the Court of Protection. The court reviews the information and evidence to decide whether the deprivation of liberty is lawful and in the best interests of the person. The court tries to balance the person's liberty and choice, with keeping them safe and well.</p>
Section 16 application (S16)	<p>A Section 16 application refers to a legal process under the Mental Capacity Act. It involves an application made to the Court of Protection for a decision on welfare or financial matters for the person who lacks the mental capacity to make these decisions themselves.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welfare Decisions: This may be about the person's residence, care, medical treatment, or day-to-day issues affecting their wellbeing.</li> <li>• Financial Decisions: This covers matters about the person's property, finances, or other financial affairs.</li> </ul>



Term	Meaning
Round table meeting (RTM)	<p>A round table meeting aims to create open discussions, share information, and work together to make decisions, to help decide the best interests of the person during ongoing court proceedings. The round table meeting is often used to have open communication and consider the different views of people, when making decisions that impact the person who lacks capacity.</p>
Litigation Friend (LF)	<p>A person who has been found to lack capacity to make specific decisions which go to the Court of Protection, may also lack capacity to run the proceedings. In these cases, a litigation friend must be in place to act on behalf of the person. This includes instructing a solicitor and making sure the person's views are put forward in court.</p>
Accredited Legal Representative (ALR)	<p>An ALR is a solicitor whose role is to represent the person in court proceedings. They should visit the person and keep them informed of proceedings and try to find out the person's view and wishes.</p>
Official Solicitor (OS)	<p>The main role of the official solicitor is to act as litigation friend or representative for people going through court proceedings in the Court of Protection. They provide legal support, represent the person's best interests, and make decisions on their behalf. Making sure that their rights and welfare are protected.</p> <p>The official solicitor's is usually involved in cases where there are no family members, friends, or anyone suitable to be a litigation friend for the person. They are chosen by the court and their role is to make sure that the person's voice is heard, and their rights are upheld throughout the legal process.</p>



Term	Meaning
Court appointed deputy	A deputy is a person the Court of Protection appoints to make decisions for someone, once they have lost capacity to make decisions themselves. A deputy can make decisions about finances and property and/or health and welfare decisions.
Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA or POA)	A person can make someone their lasting power of attorney before they lose capacity. This might be a family member, friend or solicitor. This can be about health and welfare decisions and/or property and finance.
Mental Health Act (MHA)	This is the legal framework for the assessment, treatment, and rights of people with mental disorders.
Independent Mental Health Advocate (IMHA)	The role of the IMHA is to support people detained under the Mental Health Act. An advocate helps people to understand their rights, treatment options, and can help with other issues.
Care Programme Approach (CPA)	A meeting for assessing and coordinating care for people with mental health needs.
Care, Education, and Treatment Reviews (CETRs)	<p>Assessments carried out for people with complex needs, such as people with learning disabilities and/or autism and mental health needs. People who have a CETR may be at risk of being admitted to a mental health hospital, or already be in one.</p> <p>These reviews look at the care, education, and treatment provided to the person and make sure that the person is safe, and plans are appropriate, effective, and person-centred.</p>



Term	Meaning
Leave when in hospital (S17)	This is where a person detained under the Mental Health Act can have leave (permission to temporarily leave the hospital where they are receiving treatment) from the hospital, either with other people (such as staff, family or friends) or alone.
Section 117 aftercare (S117)	Requires health and social care authorities to provide aftercare services for people who have been detained under certain sections of the Mental Health Act once they leave hospital.
Community Treatment Order (CTO/S17a)	Where people can receive treatment whilst living in the community rather than in a hospital. There can be rules and conditions added to CTOs to try and help the person stay well in the community.
Community Mental Health Team (CMHT)	A team of professionals with different roles, who provide support and treatment for people with mental health needs in the community.
Care Act	The Care Act is a framework in England, which outlines the roles and duties of local authorities in providing social care for adults. It includes safeguarding, assessments, and support for those in need of care and support.
Independent Care Act Advocate (ICAA)	The role of the ICAA is to support a person in their social care assessment and safeguarding with the local authority under the Care Act.
Safeguarding	Safeguarding is the process of protecting people's wellbeing and rights, and protecting them from harm, abuse, or neglect.
Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)	Different people work together to safeguard and protect vulnerable people, especially children and adults at risk of abuse or neglect.



Term	Meaning
Local Safeguarding Adults Board (LSAB)	A multi-agency group who oversee and bring together safeguarding efforts for people at risk of abuse or neglect within a local area.
Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)	A framework to manage and reduce the risk posed by potentially dangerous individuals in society. It involves various agencies, such as the police, probation, prison services, health authorities, social services, and other organisations who may be working with the person.
Integrated Care Board (ICB)	An NHS organisation which is responsible for planning for the health needs of the local population and arranging for the provision of health services in a certain area.
Continuing Healthcare (CHC)	A package of care arranged and funded solely by the NHS for people with ongoing healthcare needs.
Decision Support Tool (DST)	The DST meeting is part of the continuing healthcare assessment process. It looks at whether the person meets the criteria to be fully funded by NHS Continuing Healthcare.
Care Quality Commission (CQC)	Regulatory body responsible for inspecting and monitoring health and social care services in England, to make sure they meet quality and safety standards.
Children and Young People (CYP)	Refers to people under the age of 18.



Term	Meaning
Early Help	Early help describes any service that supports children and families as soon as problems occur. The type of support on offer can vary a lot. Many services will provide information and advice to support families. This can be offered in a one-to-one setting or as part of a group. They may also help families work through a specific problem.
Team Around the Child/Family	A Team Around the Child/Family is a group of professionals who work together to agree a plan and the delivery of support to meet a child or young person's assessed needs.
Child in Need Plan (CIN Plan)	A CIN plan is made after an assessment, where the child has complex needs, or the family requires support from the local authority to promote the child's welfare.
Child Protection Conference (CP Conference)	A Child Protection Conference is when there is a concern for a child's safety. The conference is a discussion about a child's future safety and health. Conversations are had with the family, the child (wherever possible), and professionals involved with the family.
Child Protection Plans (CP Plans)	A child protection plan is made after a child protection conference, the people who were there, make a plan to protect the child.
Looked After Children (LAC), Children We Look After (CWLA), Child Looked After (CLA)	Children who are under the care of the local authority, usually placed in foster care or residential homes.
Care leavers	Care leavers are people who have been in the care of the Local Authority (or foster care, residential care, or other forms of care provided by the Local Authority) as children but have since left care or are about to leave.



Term	Meaning
Independent Visitor (IV)	An independent visitor is a volunteer who provides support and friendship to children and young people who are in the care of the local authority. They act as mentors or friends, having regular visits, outings, and activities with children and young people.
Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	A service providing mental health support and treatment for children and young adults.
Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP)	A document describing the support a child or young person with special educational needs and disabilities receives.
Adult Social Care (ASC)	Services and support provided to adults with care and support needs.
Do not attempt cardiopulmonary resuscitation (DNACPR)	A medical document indicating that cardiopulmonary resuscitation should not be attempted if a person's heart stops.
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)	A service in hospitals providing support, advice, and information to patients and their families, helping to resolve concerns or complaints.
Information Commissioner's Office (ICO)	The ICO is an independent authority in the UK that oversees data protection laws, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act.
Subject Access Request (SAR)	A Subject Access Request (SAR) is a request made by a person to an organisation to get a copy of all personal data that the organisation holds about them.



Term	Meaning
Local Government Ombudsman (LGO)	An independent body that investigates complaints against local authorities in England.
Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)	The Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman is an independent body in the United Kingdom that investigates complaints about public services, including government departments, the National Health Service (NHS), and other public organisations. Its main role is to ensure the fair handling of complaints when people feel that their complaint was not dealt with correctly.
Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)	The Office of the Public Guardian is a government body in the United Kingdom that helps people in England and Wales plan for decision-making about their own affairs or for others who may lack the mental capacity to make decisions. They help with lasting power of attorney (LPA), deputyship, safeguarding (they can check that the LPA is doing everything they should), maintaining a list of LPAs and deputies, offer support and develop policies.

## Get in touch

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