



Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy

Decisions about Serious Medical Treatment (SMT)

IMCA is an independent advocacy service that supports people who lack capacity to make certain decisions for themselves and do not have family or friends.

Refer to the IMCA service if you have a patient who may not be able to make Serious Medical Treatment decisions because they lack the capacity to do so.

Serious Medical Treatment is defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Code of Practice as treatment which involves giving new treatment, stopping treatment that has already started or withholding treatment that could be offered in circumstances where:

- If a single treatment is proposed there is a fine balance between the likely benefits and the burdens to the patient and the risks involved
- A decision between a choice of treatments is finely balanced, or
- What is proposed is likely to have serious consequences for the patient

The Code of Practice suggests the following examples of possible Serious Medical Treatments:

- Resuscitation treatment
- Chemotherapy
- Electro-convulsive therapy
- Therapeutic sterilisation
- Major surgery (such as open-heart surgery or brain/neurosurgery)
- Major amputations (for example, loss of an arm or leg)
- Treatments that will result in permanent loss of hearing or sight
- Withholding or stopping artificial nutrition and hydration
- Termination of pregnancy.
- Any decision not to offer the above treatments would similarly require the involvement of an IMCA.

More information on the Mental Capacity Act 2005 can be found on

www.publicguardian.gov.uk

Getting Heard (Formerly Oxfordshire Advocacy)

0300 343 5718

www.gettingheard.org

Advocacy/IMCA/Marketing and Publicity/SMT examples for health pros