



**South London  
and Maudsley**  
NHS Foundation Trust

# Mental Health Act (1983)

## Community treatment orders

Information for patients

[www.slam.nhs.uk/mha](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/mha)

## Summary

If you are in hospital under section 3 or 37, your responsible clinician can apply for you to be put on a community treatment order (CTO).

A community treatment order means you can leave hospital and be treated in the community so long as you follow certain conditions. We discuss these conditions with you before you leave hospital.

If you become unwell, or you don't follow your conditions, you may be asked to attend a community team base for a review.

If we can't find a way to make your community treatment order work, or you are very unwell, you might be recalled to hospital.

You have the right to see an independent mental health advocate (IMHA) if you want help or advice.

## Who decides you can have a CTO?

Your **responsible clinician** can arrange a community treatment order if they are sure you can get the treatment you need in the community.

An **approved mental health professional** needs to agree that a community treatment order is appropriate.

## What do CTO conditions involve?

Community treatment order conditions include:

- seeing your responsible clinician if your community treatment order is going to be renewed
- seeing the second opinion appointed doctor if asked

Other conditions might include living at a particular address, taking your medication at a certain place, and staying in touch with your care team.

Your responsible clinician will discuss your conditions with you while you are in hospital. If you want, you can ask your nearest relative or carer to be involved.

Before you leave hospital, we will explain your rights and give you a copy of your conditions. Ask your nurse or care coordinator if you do not have them.

## What about medication?

We need your consent to give you medication. If you are too unwell to give consent, or you refuse to give consent, your doctor needs the agreement of a “second opinion appointed doctor” (SOAD).

This is an independent doctor who checks your views and wishes have been taken in to account, and ensures your treatment is appropriate.

If you refuse medication, you might need to go back to hospital. This is called being “recalled”.

## What if your CTO doesn't work out?

Speak to your care coordinator if you feel unwell, or you are struggling with any of the conditions of your community treatment order. Your responsible clinician might be able to change your conditions.

If you are very unwell, you might be recalled to a community team base for a review. This means we assess your mental health and discuss ways to make your community treatment order work for you.

If that doesn't work out, or you are very unwell, your responsible clinician might recall you to hospital.

## Recall to hospital

Going back to hospital is a last resort. This only happens if we can't find another way to make your community treatment work or your responsible clinician feels you are too unwell to be treated in the community.

If you are recalled, your care coordinator will give or post you a recall notice, or leave it at your address.

You can make your own way back to hospital or ask a friend or relative to come with you. If you are very unwell, an ambulance or the police might bring you back to hospital.

When you arrive, a nurse will explain what is happening and answer any questions. To start with, you can be kept in hospital for up to 72 hours (three days).

## **Assessment**

If you are recalled, the hospital team will assess your mental health and discuss your treatment options with you and your community team.

If we have serious concerns, the senior doctor on the ward and the approved mental health professional might decide your community treatment order is not working and you should stay in hospital.

If you are not willing to stay in hospital voluntarily, you may be kept in hospital under section 3.

## **How long does your CTO last?**

To start with, your community treatment order lasts up to six months. It can end if your responsible clinician decides it is no longer needed, or you appeal and it is agreed that your CTO can end (see page 7.)

Before your community treatment order ends, you will be invited meet your responsible clinician.

If they think it you need to stay on a community treatment order, and it is the first time it has been extended, they can extend it for up to six months.

After that, your responsible clinician can extend your community treatment order for up to a year at a time.

All extended CTOs are reviewed by the associate hospital managers (AHMs).

## How AHMs review extended CTOs

Associate hospital managers are independent of South London and Maudsley NHS Trust. They are responsible for making sure we use the Mental Health Act correctly.

If your community treatment order is extended, the associate hospital managers will invite you to the hearing (meeting) and receive reports from your responsible clinician and care coordinator.

If you do not attend the hearing, the AHMs will look at reports from your doctor and care coordinator, and decide if your CTO should continue.

Once they have made a decision, you will be told in person if you attend the hearing, or by letter afterwards if you do not attend.

If you expect to be discharged from your community treatment order, try to attend the hearing as you can only be discharged if you are there in person.

If you are discharged and do not attend, the associate hospital managers will invite you to another hearing, but this means your discharge will be delayed.

## What if you want to appeal?

If you disagree with the conditions of your community treatment order, or you want it to end, you or your nearest relative (see page 10) can appeal to either of these two groups:

### **Mental Health Tribunal**

An independent legal group who hears from you, your responsible clinician and your care coordinator at a meeting called a hearing.

Write to the MHA Office at the hospital you were discharged from to start an appeal.

### **Associate Hospital Managers (AHMs)**

A group that runs similar meetings to the Mental Health Tribunal. The official name for them under the Mental Health Act is “hospital managers”. We call them “associate hospital managers” or AHMs to avoid confusion with other managers.

Write to the AHMs to start an appeal.

Address: Associate Hospital Managers  
Mental Health Act Office  
Maudsley Hospital  
Denmark Hill  
London SE5 8AZ

Email: **AHMs@slam.nhs.uk**

## Getting help with an appeal

Your care coordinator can help you appeal - or your solicitor, if you have one.

If you go to a tribunal and a solicitor puts your case you can usually get free **legal help** (Legal Aid).

You can also get free help from a specialist advocate called an **independent mental health advocate (IMHA)** - see below.

You can bring someone with you to hearings for support, such as a carer, friend or family member, however they are not allowed to speak on your behalf and the appeal panel needs to know in advance.

## Independent mental health advocates

Known as IMHAs, these specialist advocates are free, independent and confidential. They are not part of the hospital.

IMHAs help you understand your rights under the Mental Health Act, and make sure your voice is heard in decisions about your care and treatment.

There are different IMHAs for each council borough. Your care coordinator, or anyone in your care team, can help you contact an IMHA, or you can search online for your borough name and IMHA - for example "Southwark IMHA".

## Concerns, questions and complaints

Please tell us if you have concerns. We want you to get the support that you need.

You can also contact our **Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)**. They help to resolve issues before they become serious. They can also pass on formal complaints. Call them on **0800 731 2864** (Option 2) or **email [pals@slam.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@slam.nhs.uk)**.

For more information, ask a member of staff, see the ward welcome pack and noticeboards, or visit **[www.slam.nhs.uk/complaints](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/complaints)**

## Care Quality Commission

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) is responsible for monitoring the quality of healthcare services.

You can contact them if you have a complaint about the way the Mental Health Act has been used.

Call: **03000 616161 (option 1)**  
Email: [enquiries@cqc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cqc.org.uk)  
Address: CQC Mental Health Act  
Citygate, Gallowgate,  
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 4PA

For more information visit **[www.cqc.org.uk](http://www.cqc.org.uk)**

## What are your carer's rights?

The Mental Health Act gives rights to the person who is closest to you, such as your partner or the person you live with. The legal term for this person is “**nearest relative**”.

Your nearest relative has the right to:

- be given some information about you
- ask for an independent mental health advocate (IMHA) to see you
- ask for your CTO to end by writing to the hospital managers
- speak on your behalf if you are not able to

Please ask us if you have any questions or concerns.

For more general information for carers visit [www.slam.nhs.uk/carers](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/carers)

## Distressed or in crisis?

Check your care plan or call your care coordinator if you are distressed or in crisis.

You can also call our 24 hour mental health crisis line on **0800 731 2864 (Option 1)** or visit [www.slam.nhs.uk/crisis](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/crisis)

## Your notes about your CTO

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Your name:

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Dates your CTO begins and ends:

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Your responsible clinician (RC):

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Your care coordinator name and number:

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Your care team name and number:

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Your solicitor:

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Your IMHA:

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Date of tribunal/hearing  
(if one has been arranged)

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## More information and advice

Ask a member of staff or your IMHA. You can also visit [www.slam.nhs.uk/mha](http://www.slam.nhs.uk/mha), or check these:

### Easy read information

- Visit [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and search for “Easy Read CTO” or “Easy Read Mental Health Act”.

### More detailed information

- MIND - [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)  
Legal line: 0300 466 6463 (local rate)  
9am to 6pm Monday to Friday (not bank holidays)  
email: [legal@mind.org.uk](mailto:legal@mind.org.uk)  
or write to: Mind Legal Line,  
Unit 9, Cefn Coed Parc  
Nantgarw  
Cardiff CF15 7QQ
- Rethink Mental Illness - [www.rethink.org](http://www.rethink.org)  
Advice and information: 0300 5000 927 (local rate)  
9.30am to 4pm Monday to Friday (not bank holidays)

**Please ask if you want this information in large print or another format or language.**