# Help shape guidance for people affected by the Mental Health Act

## About this opportunity

Mind is working with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to ensure that people's lived experiences help shape new guidance for the Mental Health Act.

We're looking for people with personal experience of being detained under the Mental Health Act, as well as family members, carers, friends and supporters of someone who has been detained, to help inform updates to the Mental Health Act Code of Practice.

## About the Mental Health Act and the Code of Practice

The Mental Health Act is the law in England that sets out when someone can be detained (sometimes called being "sectioned"), assessed or treated for a mental health condition without their agreement. You can find out more information about it here: What is the Mental Health Act 1983? | Legal rights | Mind

The Act has recently been updated following recommendations from an independent review, with the aim of strengthening people's rights, improving experiences of care, and reducing longstanding inequalities in how the Act is used.

As these changes are introduced, the Government is updating the **Mental Health Act Code of Practice**. The Code of Practice provides guidance to mental health professionals, hospitals and services on how the law should be applied in practice.

While the law sets out what can happen, the Code of Practice helps shape **how people are treated, supported, involved in decisions, and informed about their rights**.

## How your views will be used

Mind is leading part of the lived experience engagement that will inform the development of the new Code of Practice. We will bring together feedback, experiences and recommendations from participants and share these with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). DHSC will use this information to help inform the development of the Mental Health Act Code of Practice.

This is an opportunity for people with direct experience of the Mental Health Act, and those who have supported someone through it, to help ensure the guidance reflects what good, compassionate and rights-based care looks like in practice.

## Who we are looking to hear from

People aged 18 and over who live in England and who:

- have been detained (sometimes called "sectioned") under the Mental Health Act in the last five years
- are family members, carers, friends or supporters of someone who has been detained (“sectioned”) under the Mental Health Act in the last five years
- we also welcome interest from people whose experience was more than five years ago. If we receive a high number of applications, we may prioritise people with more recent experience as this can help us understand how the Mental Health Act is working today.

**We value the power of diversity and are particularly interested in hearing from underrepresented communities.** We embrace the different perspectives that everyone brings and seek to empower a range of voices as part of our work. In this project, we will be touching on aspects of culturally appropriate care, so we welcome participants of different race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, religion, identity and experience.

We are committed to becoming truly anti-racist in everything we do and ensuring that all the people we work with are treated fairly and equitably at work and promoting equity in physical and mental health for all. Our strategy to become an anti-racist organisation right at the centre of our work. View our strategy.

## How can I get involved?

We want to hear from a wide range of people with lived experience of the Mental Health Act.

There will be a few ways in which you can take part in this project depending on your experiences and availability. This may be through **online discussion groups, or 1-1 interviews.**

### Core discussion group

A small group of people with a range of experience who will take part in a series of discussions from **November 2026 – April 2027**. The same group will attend **around 7 online discussion groups** in this time, with no more than two sessions a month.

The core group will discuss topics relevant to everyone with experience of the Mental Health Act.

**Specific experience topics**

People will be invited to take part in **one-to-one interviews** or **online discussion groups** which focuses on a particular area or experience of the act they have experience of and are interested in discussing. This may involve attending between **1 – 4 sessions** related to the same topic.

## Who will be in online sessions

There will be no more than 13 people in a session. This is made up of:

- 8-10 people with lived experience
- Influence and participation consultants, who have their own lived experience and expertise in involvement work, and who will be facilitating the online discussion group
- A staff member from national Mind to support with any participant wellbeing or reasonable adjustment needs

## Sharing your experiences

We understand that some experiences connected to the Mental Health Act may be difficult to talk about.

You do not need to share detailed personal stories or discuss anything that feels uncomfortable when applying or taking part. We encourage you to share only what feels right for you.

We're interested in the insights and learning you've gained from your experiences, rather than the personal details of those experiences.

## Time commitment and key dates

- The project is due to run until April 2028 with **the majority of sessions taking place before April 2027**.
- Sessions will mostly be **online or via phone, Monday - Friday**. There will be some evening sessions and some daytime sessions.
- Participants will be sent all information and invites to sessions in advance and can decide whether to participate at that time.

## Support to expect from us

We want everyone to feel able to participate fully and safely. We will:

- Provide information and agendas in advance
- Offer a named contact throughout the project

- Discuss any access needs or reasonable adjustments with you before participation
- Work with you to create a supportive and respectful group environment
- We are also happy to do a test online call if you haven't used Zoom before

## Payment

All participants will receive a payment as a thank you for taking part. The Department of Health and Social Care is funding this project and Mind will facilitate payments.

As a guide:

For a **1-hour session or interview** you would be offered a thank you payment of **£27.50**

For a **2-hour session** you would be offered a thank you payment of **£55**

## How to apply

You can apply by completing our application form and answering the application questions in writing.

**We want to make the application process as accessible as possible**. If you would prefer to answer the application questions by phone, please contact us by email and we will arrange a suitable time to call you. You can also submit your answers in an alternative format, such as an audio recording or video file, instead of completing the written application form.

**If you require any other adjustments to support your application, please let us know and we will do our best to accommodate your needs.**

Please note we may not be able to offer a space to everyone that applies for this opportunity. We want to hear from people with different experiences and backgrounds so will choose people to take part based on your answers to the questions and the demographic form. Please note this is not a reflection on your lived experience or passion to change the mental health system.

**Recruitment will be on an ongoing basis. We expect most engagement to take place between November 2026 and April 2027.**

If you are interested in taking part, please **apply here.**

## Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact livedexp@mind.org.uk.