



Department  
of Health

An easy read fact sheet

# Leaving the ward

This fact sheet tells you about leaving the hospital ward where you are detained.



Mental Health Act 1983:  
Code of Practice



## Know your rights

The Mental Health Act  
Code of Practice

# Leaving the ward

## Key facts

- \* **Leave** means being able to leave the ward you are detained on
- \* There are different kinds of Leave and sometimes you might have to go with staff
- \* You may be given Leave in the hospital grounds or the local community
- \* Your Leave is decided by your Responsible Clinician
- \* Your **Independent Mental Health Advocate** can help you understand this.



# Can I go out if I am detained?

- Your Leave is decided by your Responsible Clinician. Leave is also called **Section 17 Leave**
- If you are detained in a hospital you can be allowed out. This is called **'leave of absence'**.



## There are different types of leave.

### You could be allowed to:

- Leave the ward for a short time, to go home or to do some other activity, such as going shopping.
- Go home or somewhere else with a member of staff of the hospital. This is called **'escorted leave.'**
- Go out with family or a friend to another place, such as the local shops, a place that is important to you, or their home. This is called **'accompanied leave.'**





## How long can I be out?

- It is up to your Responsible Clinician to decide if you are allowed to go out and how long for.



**If you are detained in hospital you must have permission to go out.**



If you don't have permission the police and other agencies may be called to look for you.



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## Where in the code?

**This easy read fact sheet comes from:**

- DH Mental Health Act 1983: Code of Practice  
Chapter 27 'Leave of absence' page 276 and  
Chapter 28 'Absent without leave' page 283

**Download the code:**

[www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/396918/Code\\_of\\_Practice.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/396918/Code_of_Practice.pdf)

**Download the easy read fact sheets:**

[www.nhs.uk/easy-mentalhealthact](http://www.nhs.uk/easy-mentalhealthact)

**Download the easy read glossary:**

[www.nhs.uk/glossary](http://www.nhs.uk/glossary)

### More information:

**Rethink**

[www.rethink.org/diagnosis-treatment/treatment-and-support/hospital/leaving](http://www.rethink.org/diagnosis-treatment/treatment-and-support/hospital/leaving)