

# Making choices for yourself

What the law says



This Easy Read booklet explains the **Mental Capacity Act (MCA)** and **Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)**



**Easy  
Read**

# Easy Read



This is an Easy Read version of some information. It may not include all of the information but it will tell you about the important parts.



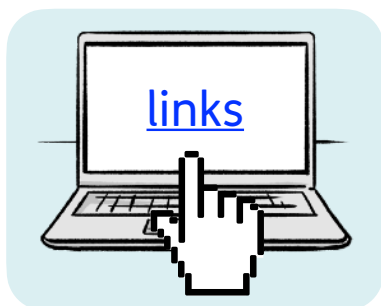
This Easy Read booklet uses easier words and pictures. Some people may still want help to read it.



Some words are in **bold** - this means the writing is thicker and darker. These are important words in the booklet.



Sometimes if a bold word is hard to understand, we will explain what it means.



[Blue and underlined](#) words show links to websites and email addresses. You can click on these links on a computer.

# What is in this booklet

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# About this booklet



Southend Council, Essex Council and Thurrock Council have written this booklet about **mental capacity**.

**Mental capacity** means being able to make choices for yourself.



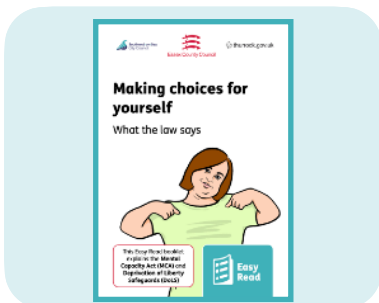
If you find it difficult to make choices for yourself, there is a law, called the Mental Capacity Act (MCA), that:



- Helps you to make choices for yourself.



- Protects you if you cannot make choices for yourself.



This booklet explains more about this law.

# Mental capacity

A person is not able to make a decision if:



- They cannot understand the information about the decision.



- They cannot remember the information about the decision.



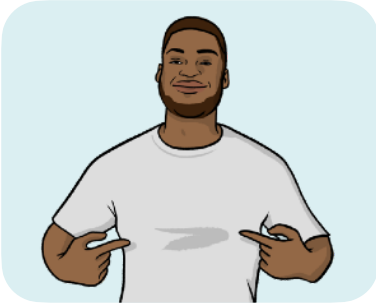
- They cannot think about the information and use it to help them to make the decision.



- They cannot tell other people what their decision is.

# Principles

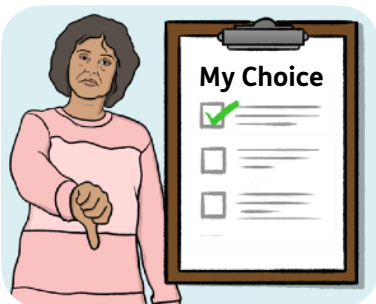
**Principles** are rules. There are 5 principles that services must follow:



1. You must be allowed to make choices for yourself unless there is proof that you cannot.



2. Someone must do everything they can to help you make the decision for yourself.



3. You might make a decision that someone else thinks is not the right choice. This is called an **unwise decision**.



Making an unwise decision does not mean that you do not have mental capacity.



4. If someone makes the decision for you, it must be in your **best interests**.

This means that they must make the choice that you would have made if you were able to.



5. If someone makes a decision for you, they must try to give you as many **rights** as possible.



**Rights** are things that every person should have by law. Like the right to be safe and the right to be respected.

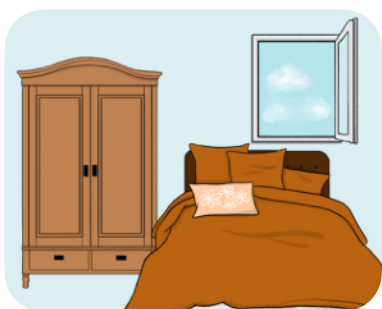
# Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)



**Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)** is part of the law. It protects people who cannot make choices for themselves.



It is for people who live in a care home or hospital, and cannot make choices about:



- Where they live.



- The care that they get.





If you stay in a care home or hospital, and they think you cannot make choices for yourself, they will speak to your local council.



They will ask the council to do a **DoLS assessment**.

This means that the council will check that:



- You are safe and looked after.



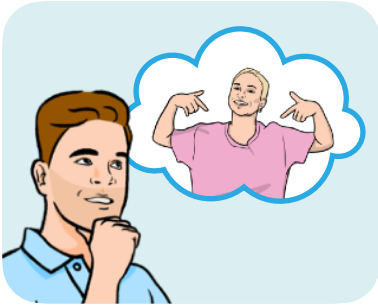
- The hospital or care home protects your rights.



The DoLS assessment might stop you from doing some things that you want to do.



This might include going out on your own or living alone.



They will decide what is best for you. This is a **best interests decision**.

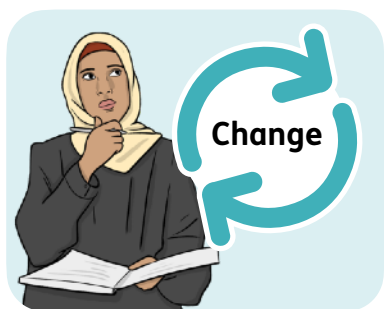
# If you are not happy

If you are not happy with the rules, you can get support by:



- Having someone to help you speak up. This could be a family member, a friend, or an **advocate**.

An **advocate** is someone who has been trained to speak up for others.



- Asking a court to change what the DoLS assessment decided. This is called an appeal.



- Asking the council to change what they have decided. This is called a review.

# Find out more



You can find out more about the Mental Capacity Act here:

[assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/  
media/62321dcae90e070ed943236f/  
MCA-easy-read-summary-booklet.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/62321dcae90e070ed943236f/MCA-easy-read-summary-booklet.pdf)



This information is in Easy Read.

If you want to speak to someone about this, you can contact your local council:



## Southend

- Phone: 01702 215008

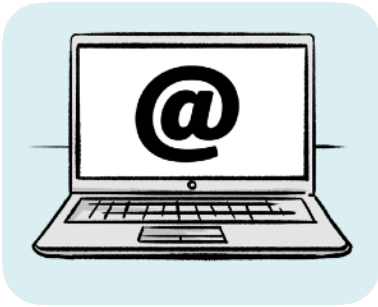


- Email: [libertyadmin@southend.gov.uk](mailto:libertyadmin@southend.gov.uk)



## Essex

- Phone: 0333 013 5895  
Press option 3



- Email: [DOL.forms@essex.gov.uk](mailto:DOL.forms@essex.gov.uk)



## Thurrock

- Phone: 01375 659810



- Email: [Dol.Safeguards@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Dol.Safeguards@thurrock.gov.uk)

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