

Supervised Community Treatment: Information for Service Users

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Terms used in this leaflet

Your Responsible Clinician (RC) is the professional who is in overall charge of your treatment.

An Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) is someone who has been specially trained to help decide whether someone needs to be kept in hospital under the Mental Health Act.

What is supervised community treatment?

Supervised community treatment (SCT) may be used when your Responsible Clinician (RC) thinks you are well enough to leave hospital but is concerned that you may not continue with your treatment, or that you may need to be admitted to hospital again at short notice for more treatment or for some other reasons.

You can only go on to SCT if you have been detained in hospital for treatment and

- you need to receive medical treatment for your mental disorder and there is appropriate medical treatment available for you;
- the treatment is necessary for your health or safety, or for the protection of other people;
- you can have the treatment without you continuing to be detained in a hospital, but only if your RC is able recall you hospital for treatment, if necessary.

How would the decision be made to place me on SCT?

Your RC would have to consider very carefully, with the rest of your care team, whether you meet the criteria for SCT. They will be looking at how your mental health is now and has been in the past and whether SCT would be suitable for your individual circumstances. They will want to talk to you about how they can support you in the community to maintain your mental health.

An Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) will be involved in making the decision and will talk to you about it. The SCT can go only go ahead if the AMHP agrees it is right for you.

If you agree, the RC or another team member may also talk to your family or carers, to see what they think would help.

What is a community treatment order (CTO)?

A community treatment order (CTO) is a form your RC and AMHP fill in to say that you should be on SCT. The CTO will contain some conditions which you will be asked to keep to, to help you live safely in the community and stay well.

The conditions your RC thinks you need to keep to will be discussed with you. There are two conditions that are included in the CTOs of everyone on SCT. They are that

- you make yourself available for medical examination when needed to consider whether the CTO should be extended and
- if necessary to allow an independent doctor (known as a Second Opinion Approved Doctor (SOAD)) to provide a certificate authorising treatment.

Your CTO may have other conditions and these will depend on your individual situation. Any conditions have to be about making sure you get medical treatment or about preventing a risk of harm to your health or safety or protecting other people. For example, there might be a condition that says you should see a nurse regularly.

An AMHP must agree that any conditions are appropriate. If you had questions or concerns about the conditions you were asked to keep to you could talk to your RC about them.

What happens next?

The next step would be to ensure that all the parts of your care plan are in place ready to support you in the community. You will be given a copy of your CTO so you know what to expect.

If you are finding things difficult or have questions about aspects of your care and treatment in the community, you should talk to your RC or a member of your care team.

What treatment must I have while on SCT?

Your RC will discuss your treatment needs with you and will talk about when and how you will be treated in the community.

Unless you have been recalled to hospital, you will be able to refuse treatment you don't want while you are on SCT, just like you could if you weren't on SCT.

If you refuse treatment your RC thinks you need, your RC might decide you need to be recalled to hospital. If you have been recalled to hospital, you can be given treatment without your consent, if necessary.

There are other special rules about treatment while on SCT which will be explained to you if you go onto SCT.

How long does SCT last?

The SCT lasts for up to 6 months initially, but your RC can end it before then if you no longer need to be on it.

Towards the end of 6 months you will be asked to see your RC to see if you need to stay on SCT. If you do, it can be extended for a further 6 months and then a year at a time. An AMHP will need to agree that your SCT should be extended. Your RC will talk to you about this towards the end of each period.

What happens if I don't keep to the conditions?

If you break one of the two conditions which are included in all CTOs about attending for a medical examination, your RC can recall you to hospital to have the examination.

If you don't keep to any of the other conditions, your RC will need to think about whether you need to be recalled to hospital for more treatment.

What is recall?

Being recalled to hospital means that your RC has said you must come to hospital. If you don't come when you are told to, you could be taken to the hospital against your will.

Unless you have broken one of the two conditions which are included in all CTOs, you can only be recalled to hospital if your RC thinks that it is necessary to make sure you get the treatment you need. This may happen if you do not keep to the conditions of your CTO but sometimes, even if you have kept to all the conditions your RC may still think that recall is necessary.

If you are recalled to hospital you can be kept there for up to 72 hours. This doesn't necessarily mean that you need to come back to hospital as an inpatient. You might be told to come to an outpatient clinic instead.

During this time your RC will decide what should happen next. You may be well enough to return home once you have had treatment. Your RC may allow you to go home at any time during the 72 hours or you may need a longer period of treatment or assessment in hospital.

What does it mean if the order is revoked?

If your RC thinks you may need to stay in hospital for longer than 72 hours they may consider revoking your SCT. Before doing this your RC will ask an AMHP to meet with you to assess whether they agree that you need to stay in hospital. The AMHP will consider whether it is appropriate in all the circumstances. If the AMHP agrees that you need to stay in hospital your CTO will be revoked and you will go back to being detained under the section of the Mental Health Act you were on before you went on to SCT.

How do I get discharged from SCT?

If your RC and your care team think that you no longer need to be on SCT, they can end the order just by telling you and the hospital managers in writing that you are being discharged.

What are my rights?

The hospital managers will give you information about the reasons you are on SCT, what this means for you and how you can apply for discharge. You can ask the hospital managers of the hospital responsible for your case to end your SCT. You can also ask a Tribunal to say that your SCT should end. Your nearest relative may also be able to ask the hospital managers to discharge you from SCT.

Independent advocacy

From April 2009 you will have a right to have an independent mental health advocate (IMHA) who can talk to you about SCT and help you to understand your rights. An IMHA may also be able to help you to apply to the Tribunal. The hospital managers will give you information about the IMHA service and how you can contact them.

Where can I find more information?

Mental Health Act Implementation Site

www.mhact.csip.org.uk

Department of Health Model Information Leaflets

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_089275

Royal College of Psychiatrists Information Leaflets

www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinfo.aspx

MIND Information Leaflets

www.mind.org.uk/Information

**The Mental Health Act Has Changed.
Are you Ready?**

www.mhact.csip.org.uk

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