

The Role of the Approved Mental Health Professional

We believe that it is essential that the initial entry process be made fully human-rights compliant because the majority of patients will not have the ability to appeal to the Mental Health Tribunal for a review of their detention.

Compulsory admission is an extremely traumatic event (often involving forcible removal from home by the police) and if it was unjustified, the damage cannot be undone by a subsequent Tribunal discharge.

The Alliance believes that the role of the Approved Mental Health Professional should be independent, given its essential role during the assessment period. Without proper safeguards of the AMHP's neutrality, the procedure for assessment would run the risk of contravening human rights law. BASW have made a number of suggestions about how this should be resolved in legislation, including detaching from the AMHP role, the co-ordinating and transporting functions which would have to be carried out by a Trust employee, and ensuring that the remaining quasi-judicial function is performed by someone who is legally independent of the Trust and free of conflicts.