

What does “Deprivation of Liberty” mean?

If a person in a care home or hospital is not able to consent to stay there and is “subject to continuous supervision and control, and not free to leave” they are Deprived of their Liberty.

An example of this is someone who lives in a care home, where care staff are in the building at all times and would stop the person if they tried to go out, to keep them safe.

The Care Home or Hospital where the person is going to live must ask the Local Authority to assess whether a person is being deprived of their liberty and whether this is in the person's best interest. The Local Authority asks for a health and social care professional to assess:

- If that person has the mental capacity to understand what care and support they need
- If restrictions on the person are needed to keep them safe
- If restrictions suggested are ‘proportionate’ (e.g. not too strict)

It is unlawful to Deprive someone of their Liberty without it being properly authorised. The Local Authority can authorise it if the assessment shows it is necessary to keep the person safe.

Why is an RPR needed?

When someone is ‘under’ a DoLS, the law says that that person has a right to support related to their DoLS. The Local Authority has to appoint an RPR for everyone in this situation. The RPR is a Safeguard for the person.

A helpful glossary of terms

Mental Capacity – the ability to make a specific decision by understanding, weighing up and remembering relevant information. People may lack capacity to make a specific decision if they have, for example, dementia or a learning disability.

Conditions – a list of actions on a DoLS that needs to be met by the managing authority (for example staff must accompany the person if they go out).

DoLS – Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

DoLS Team – a team in a local authority that arranges, authorises and oversees DoLS.

IMCA – Independent Mental Capacity Advocate.

Managing Authority – The care home or hospital in which the person is being deprived of their liberty.

RPR – someone who provides specific support for a person who is on a DoLS.

Supervisory Body – the legal name for Local Authority which authorises, reviews and oversees DoLS.

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What is a Relevant Person's Representative (RPR)?



Information for Family and Friends



What is a Relevant Person's Representative?

A Relevant Person's Representative is also known as an RPR.

An RPR provides support to someone living in a care home or hospital, who has a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS) authorised by the Local Authority.

Usually, the RPR would be a family member or friend of the person.

Sometimes the Local Authority asks an advocacy service to be the RPR. RPRs from an advocacy service are specially trained in the DoLS legislation and to work with people who lack the mental capacity about their care and support.



What does an RPR do?

- Keeps in regular contact with the person they are supporting.
- Checks that things aren't too restrictive for the person.
- Helps the person if they want a review of their care and any restrictions.
- Helps the person access legal support to ask the Court of Protection whether they should be Deprived of their Liberty. For example, if the person says or demonstrates that they are not happy with the restrictions or where they live.

I am an RPR. What support can I have to help me in my role?

An advocate with specialist knowledge in the DoLS legislation can support an RPR to understand and undertake their role.

An RPR can ask the Local Authority DoLS Team for this support. This is always a free service.

My relative or friend has a paid RPR from an advocacy service. Will they speak to me?

A paid RPR is there to support the person who is under a DoLS.

A paid RPR does not / can not usually share information about the person with family or friends.

If a paid RPR has any concerns about the person, they will report these to the Local Authority.

If you think you need information about the person and the DoLS restrictions, you can directly contact the Local Authority DoLS Team.