

Over the summer, an IASS marketing strategy was created by external consultants and a number of key messages have been produced. These will take the emphasis away from complaints to focus on the 2nd aim of IASS, namely:

- the holistic approach to working with clients
- independent advice
- one-to-one support and mediation
- extensive knowledge of local services and other advice and redress agencies.

This also fits with national priorities relating to the improvement of health and the drive to enhance patient rights.

After discussion with IASS workers and managers it was decided that the strapline will be “IASS: Supporting you with your healthcare concerns”. This will appear on the updated IASS website which is in development. It will have 2 sections - one for the general public with information about how IASS can help them and one for stakeholders with updates and events, policy information, and frequently asked questions for NHS staff. Both sections will include case studies and contact details.

Trialled successfully in east Lothian, prescription pads will enable GPs to ‘prescribe’ an appointment with an IASS worker at their local bureau. To promote IASS in hospitals, a 30 second advert will run in hospitals with plasma screens. These are Dumfries Royal Infirmary, Galloway Community Hospital, the Western General in Edinburgh, St John’s in Livingston, Glasgow Royal Infirmary, the Royal Alexandra in Paisley, Perth Royal Infirmary, Ninewells in Dundee and Fraserburgh Hospital.

In early October, invites to healthy “Advice in Action” sessions in bureaux were sent to MSPs, MPs and MEPs and there have been 12 responses so far. Alongwith the planned Parliamentary Reception these will raise support for and the profile of IASS amongst MSPs, MPs, MEPs and civil servants.

All interested stakeholders are invited to 3 regional events which will be held jointly with the National Complaints Personnel Association Scotland (NCPAS) on:

**Tuesday 10th November**-The Albany Learning and Conference Centre, Glasgow

**Monday 16th November** - Edinburgh Training and Conference Venue, Edinburgh

**Thursday 26th November** - Highland Hospice, Bishop’s Road, Inverness

The Independent Advice and Support Service (IASS) provides advice and support to all NHS users.

The marketing strategy involves:

- Emphasising the ‘2nd aim’ of IASS
- Reducing the emphasis on complaints
- Using the strapline “IASS: Supporting you with your healthcare concerns”
- Holding 3 regional events with NCPAS in November.

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# IASS Case Study



citizens  
advice  
scotland

An IASS client has serious mental health difficulties which mean he avoids contact with people and cannot leave his home alone. He asked his GP for a referral to a Social Worker but received no contact from Social Work in over six months. He also received no response to a number of letters he sent to his psychiatrist. He contacted the NHS Complaints Officer who referred him to the IASS caseworker as he was unable to complain about his treatment without support.

## Action

The IASS caseworker visited the client at home and explained the NHS complaints procedure and the role that IASS has within this.

The IASS caseworker supported the client by writing to the GP and the GP agreed to refer the client to Social Work again. Since the GP had evidence of the original referral to Social Work, the IASS caseworker wrote to the Social Work Head Office on the client's behalf to ask about the delay.

The caseworker also wrote a letter to the NHS Complaints Office at the client's request. The client was unhappy with the response to this complaint. The IASS caseworker supported him to complain to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and the Mental Welfare Commission about a possible deficiency in care.

## Outcome

The client now has a Social Worker who was recently able to assist when the client had a serious fall in his home. The client also received an apology from the Social Work department for the delay. The explanation was a problem with communications between the Social Care and Health Team and the Mental Health Social Work Team. In future, the Council will ensure that they review communication procedures for all referrals made to the department. They will also review and update the range of standard letters sent to clients.

The SPSO investigation showed the client's general NHS care was satisfactory and they decided not to issue a formal report. However, they were concerned with the monitoring of the client's in-community care and commented on the breakdown in communication within the Social Work Department. The SPSO asked the NHS to identify aspects of follow-up procedures which could be improved to ensure referred patients are being properly monitored within their own communities. The Board then anonymised the recommendations and forwarded them to each Consultant Psychiatrist working in Community Health Services to ensure communications are improved and a better service is provided for mentally ill people in the community.

A client with serious mental health difficulties was referred to Social Work by his GP but heard nothing from them in six months.

The IASS worker supported him to contact his GP, the NHS Complaints Office and SPSO.

The client received an apology from Social Work and now has a Social Worker to support him.

SPSO asked the NHS to identify aspects of procedures which could be improved.