



Patient Advice and Support Service

Annual Report 2016-17

8413
PASS
enquiries

95% of
respondents
very satisfied
or satisfied
with PASS

2845
clients
supported
by PASS

citizens
advice
scotland

Patient Advice and Support Service Annual Report

The Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS) is delivered by citizens advice bureaux in Scotland to promote an awareness and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of patients. It also advises and supports clients who wish to give feedback, make comments, raise concerns or make a complaint about treatment and care provided by the NHS in Scotland. The service:

- Helps clients understand their rights and responsibilities as patients
- Provides information, advice and support for those wishing to give feedback or comments, raise concerns or make complaints about health care delivered by the NHS in Scotland
- Ensures clients feel listened to, supported and respected when raising concerns about difficult experiences
- Works with the NHS to use feedback to improve NHS service provision.

In 2016/17, 51% of our clients were supported to explore options, give advice and initiate action, such as, letters and 3rd party contact. 43% of our clients received special support and complex casework, including accompanying clients to meetings and working jointly with partner organisations. The complexity of the work that the advisers do to support clients is illustrated by the case studies throughout this report. This ranges from meeting with clients to explain the service and the support we can provide to discussing a client's options, explaining their rights and responsibilities (with reference to the Patient Charter) and managing their expectations about what can be achieved through the complaints process.

At a national level, Citizens Advice Scotland were successful in their bid for the Patient Advice and Support Service which went out to tender in May 2016. Following the confirmation of the award, Citizens Advice Scotland spent the following months preparing to set up a national helpline (which went live on 1st April 2017), introduced webchat (which went live on 20th April) and upgraded the PASS website at www.patientadvicescotland.org.uk. This involved delivering training and support to the 27 Patient Advisers based throughout the country to ensure they had the necessary skills to deliver this service.

Christine Lang
Patient Advice and Support Service Coordinator
Citizens Advice Scotland

Snapshot of the year

In 2016/17, PASS supported

2845 clients



8413 enquiries



2,503 of these clients were new clients in this year.

Supporting clients

As a result of using the service, clients are given information and advice which enables them to make informed decisions about what they would like to do.

- On 2,305 occasions, information was given to clients
- Additionally, on 243 occasions, information on patient rights and responsibilities when using the NHS was given to clients

This information enabled clients to make informed decisions about what they wanted to do. As a result

- Advisers requested information or action from a third party on 523 occasions
- Clients were supported to draft a formal complaint letter to the NHS on 577 occasions
- There was informal contact with NHS staff to try to resolve issues on 427 occasions
- Clients were given information to take action on their own behalf on 254 occasions
- Clients were assisted with a letter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) on 119 occasions
- Clients were assisted with meeting NHS staff on 26 occasions. This gave clients the opportunity to discuss their issues face to face with PASS support, which is very beneficial in resolving issues.

Case study – what the Patient Adviser did for the client

- Had two meetings with the client to look at the paperwork the client had and explain the complaints process.
- Drafted a letter for the client to send to the NHS. Due to the client's visual impairment the Patient Adviser read out the documents including the response letter from the NHS.
- Discussed the options open to client including accepting the offer of a meeting with NHS.
- Explained that because of the time limits the client couldn't take the case to SPSO.

Behind the scenes, advisers undertake a great deal of work to support clients -

- On 987 occasions, advisers reviewed cases* (this includes, but is not limited to, reading clients' notes, preparing for meetings, pulling together information to draft complaint letters)
- On 1,261 occasions, advisers requested information / action of a client
- On 74 occasions, advisers prepared case papers

As a result of the above work -

- A response or explanation was received on 256 occasions
- An apology was received on 65 occasions
- The issue/s raised were fully or partially upheld on 18 occasions
- There was a service improvement or review on 25 occasions

Case study - outcomes from PASS supporting clients

The GP practice stated that changes were made within the practice in terms of:

1. Staff training on communication skills.
2. Continuity of care and patients having a 'named' GP.
3. As a result of the complaint the practice have adopted a new Standard Operating Procedure for all patient generated letters.

How clients felt

Many of our clients noticed improvements in their lives after using the service.

- 85% of clients had an improved knowledge of patient rights and responsibilities
- 70% reported improved peace of mind
- 66% had an increased ability to help themselves
- 54% said their mental health had improved
- 26% received assistance with other aspects of their life

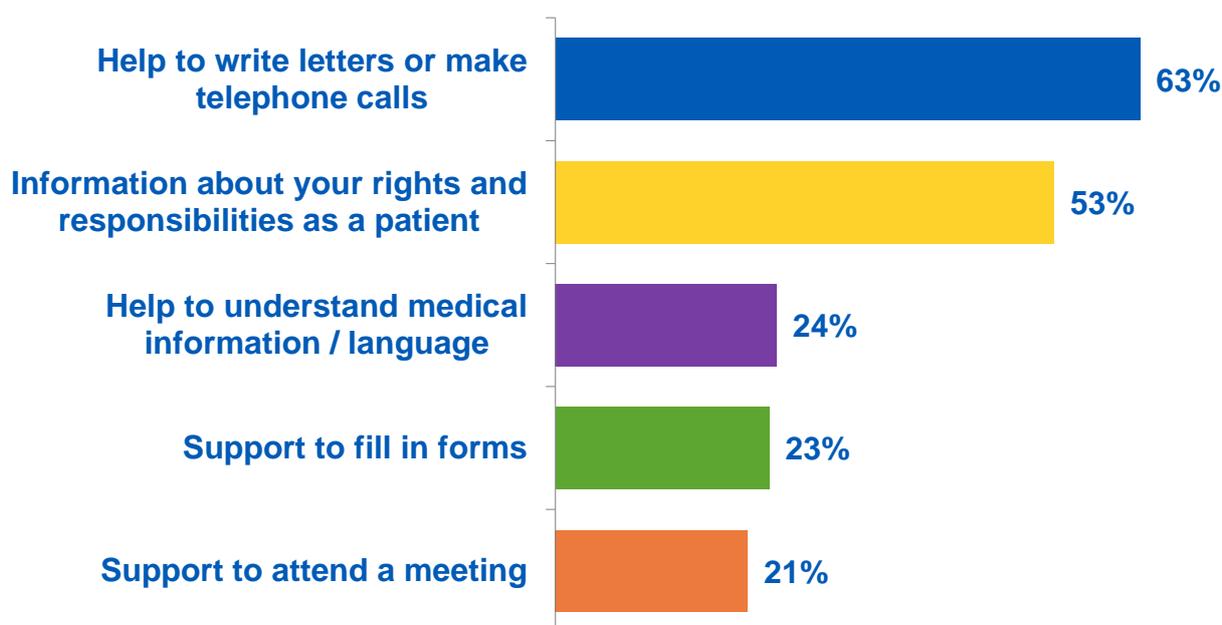
Case study - outcomes from PASS supporting clients

The NHS gave the client a full explanation highlighting the reasons why certain procedures are in place, that the client's view would be taken on board and that the NHS are always trying to improve communication. The NHS apologised for any confusion or lack of clarity surrounding any decisions made regarding the care provided to the client. The client was satisfied with the outcome of the meetings and decided they no longer wanted to escalate the complaint to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman.

What our clients think

Citizens advice bureaux gather client feedback on an ongoing basis. Between April 2016 and March 2017 we received very positive feedback, with 95% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service they received from the PASS. More than nine out of ten (98%) respondents felt it was very easy or easy to contact the service.

What type of support did clients receive from PASS?



What difference did PASS make to clients?

Clients noticed an improvement in a number of areas of their lives which can be seen in the table below.

	Respondents who reported an improvement
Knowledge of patient rights and responsibilities	85%
Peace of mind	70%
Ability to help yourself	66%
Mental health	54%
Physical health	32%

Complaints about PASS

Every quarter, CAS gathers performance management information from bureaux. In this way, information on complaints about the service and what stage they were resolved at is collated. In the year 16/17 there were 2 complaints. These were both resolved at the informal resolution stage.

Outcomes from PASS supporting clients

The client's family were experiencing problems with items not being available or not being delivered. This meant that the family had to approach their local hospital in order to get the items. This was causing tension between the family and the hospital.

The NHS investigation found that the current system used for ordering and delivering medical items was not robust. It showed that orders were not being received and information was missing from the requisition sheets. A revised system was suggested and is to be implemented with immediate effect. This would be achieved with collaboration between the family, health visiting team and support services team. The NHS apologised for the failings in the system.

Clients say that feedback is good for their health

Client feedback for the year 2016/17 found that:

- 95% of respondents were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service received from PASS.
- 70% of clients reported improved peace of mind after using the service

Patient Advisers do a great deal of work for each client. An example of the work done for / support given to an individual client is below. The Patient Adviser

- visited the client at his local CAB to obtain details of his complaint
- explained the NHS complaints process and discussed the client's option including possible referrals to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman,
- referred the client to a local CAB benefits adviser and ensured the client was in touch with a local support group for their health condition
- wrote 2 drafts of a letter of complaint to the NHS for the client
- sent the complaints letter to the NHS on the client's behalf
- discussed the NHS response with the client
- arranged and attended a meeting for the client, with the NHS
- discussed the outcome with the client and ensured client was satisfied
- confirmed the client was now going to receive follow up appointments at hospital
- assisted the client to re-establish relationship of trust with his surgeon

Prisons

In the year 2016/17, PASS was used by prisoners as below

Health Board Area	Prison	Clients	Enquiries
Dumfries & Galloway	HMP Dumfries	4	8
Highland	HMP Inverness	1	2
Lanarkshire	HMP Shotts	1	1
Lothian	HMP Addiewell	9	12
Lothian	HMP Edinburgh	1	1
Tayside	HMP Perth	4	15
Total		20	39

Work is ongoing to raise awareness of PASS among prison healthcare staff as client numbers remain low. The PASS National Coordinator met with the Prisoner Healthcare Lead Nurse at Healthcare Improvement Scotland who sent tailored information about PASS to Health Care Managers and NHS Board Leads in order to increase engagement.

In the prisons not listed above (Barlinnie, Castle Huntly, Cornton Vale, Glenochil Greenock, Kilmarnock, Low Moss, HMP & YOI Grampian, Polmont) the service was not used.

Outcomes achieved for client

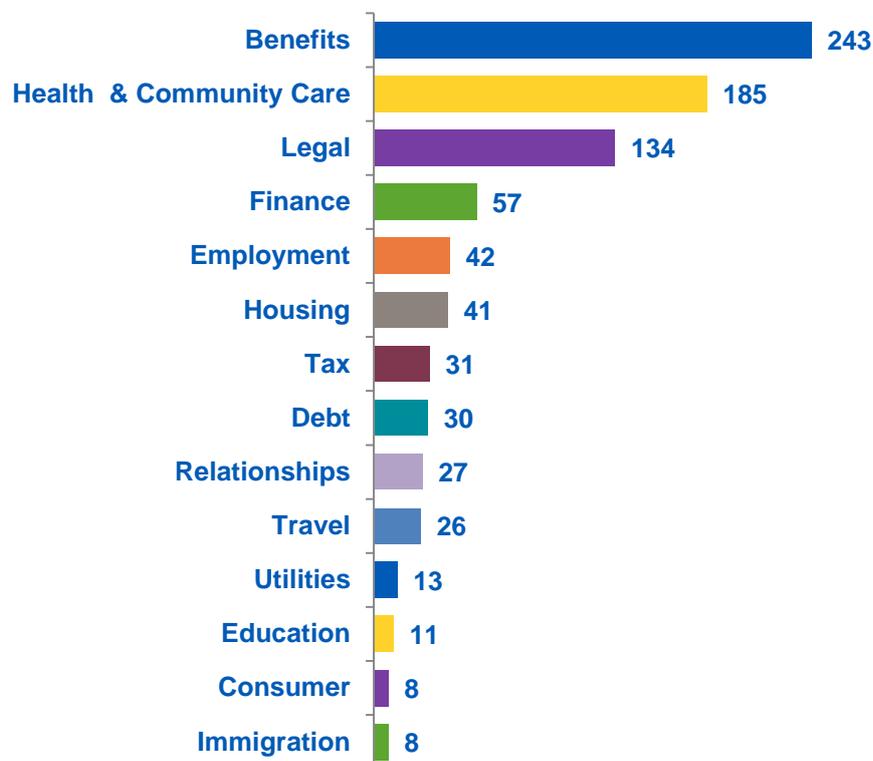
The client had a complex complaint about treatment relating to sepsis, kidney dialysis, cardiology and mobility assessment.

The NHS response encompassed three hospitals and was very detailed. It was recognised that there were a number of failings with regards to discharge. The NHS admitted that the discharge checklist was not followed. The outcome from this is that all ward and nursing staff will be provided with training around discharge and discharge paper work. It was recognised that although renal and cardiac departments had liaised regarding the client, due to the client's emergency transfer the discharge pack including advice on dietary needs, medication and rehabilitation normally given to clients was not given. Sincere apologies were given to the client for this.

The response advised that the client's mobility was assessed throughout. However, it was recognised a referral to physiotherapy should have been made. Apologies were given for this. The client was assured that all necessary training to ensure this would not happen again were being put in place. The client was satisfied with the response.

Additional support we gave to our clients

The 27 Patient Advisers provide specialist support to clients. The added value of PASS being delivered by the Scottish CAB service means that clients benefit from the support provided by Generalist Advisers in the bureaux who provide information, advice and support about PASS and other issues which may affect clients' lives. The range of advice given can be seen below - clients received advice about an area other than NHS feedback on 856 occasions.



Case study - how the CAB helped a client

The client stated they had been advised by a consultant that a Urine Cytology test result had not been reviewed when it was first carried out. The client was told that if this had been done at the time, the client would not have needed a stoma fitted.

The Patient Adviser met with the client and advised them on the NHS Complaint procedure. The client and the Patient Adviser drafted a formal letter of complaint.

The NHS investigation revealed that the test result had not been passed on as expected. The NHS apologised for this failing and stated that due to the complaint it would:

1. Look to employ a bladder cancer nurse specialist
2. Explore how the computer system could issue a prompt when a test result was received for review
3. Ensure Urine Cytology was no longer part of the pathway for bladder cancer.

The client was satisfied that these actions were being taken. The client received a full benefit check due to illness.

What Citizens Advice Scotland did this year

Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) are responsible for operationally supporting the Patient Advice and Support Service by ensuring the delivery of marketing, information, training and advice to CAB throughout Scotland, and the provision of contract compliance data to the Scottish Government. CAS also maintains and develops relationships with external stakeholders and the Scottish Government on an ongoing basis. In 2016, CAS successfully tendered to deliver the Patient Advice and Support Service from April 2017 for a further 3 years.

PASS national helpline

The tender for the PASS service specified the introduction of a national helpline. CAS proposed to deliver this with the specialist Patient Advisers answering the phone. CAS introduced a new phone system to allow this to be delivered in a rotational basis, created a podcast and written training materials for the Patient Advisers and provided support with the advisers around how to handle these.

Case study – learning opportunity

The client had attended a specialist clinic and received an injection which caused permanent and life changing injury. The client wanted reassurance that the clinic would review its procedures so nobody else would go through the same experience.

The client and the Patient Adviser met and discussed options. The Patient Adviser composed a draft complaint letter which the client reviewed, approved and posted.

The Patient Adviser, the client and his wife met with the NHS who admitted that an infection was introduced when the injection was administered. The client received verbal apologies and assurances this would not happen again. The NHS staff emphasised that this would be a valuable learning opportunity for the relevant team. The agreed post-meeting actions were as follows:

- The client's experience would be shared with the team to learn from.
- The wording on the information leaflet would be changed.

Interactive website

The tender for the PASS service specified the introduction of an interactive website which allows "click to call". This was introduced on 30th March 2017 and the first calls were received through the national helpline the same day. The website includes webchat, and a list of frequently asked questions. These can be viewed at www.patientadvicescotland.org.uk

Patient Adviser training

Regular Patient Adviser training days are held at the CAS offices in Edinburgh. These provide a useful opportunity for the Patient Advisers to develop working relationships, share best

practice and support each other. In 2016/17 Patient Advisers attended training days in the Citizens Advice Scotland office in Edinburgh to discuss recent cases and share good practice, feed into marketing and prepare for the introduction of the helpline. Individual training was delivered in February on answering telephone calls on the national helpline, responding to webchats and email enquiries on the PASS website.

Regional Events

In spring 2017, two events were organised for Patient Advisers, Complaints Officers/Managers and Scottish Health Council staff. These were run with the NHS Complaints Personnel Association for Scotland and are the only events which brings these groups of staff together. CAS was very pleased to receive very positive feedback.

“Extremely helpful to hear update on new complaints process”

“Great opportunity to speak to a wide range of attendees”

“A lot of clarity about how it (duty of candour) will work”

Marketing

In preparation for the introduction of the PASS helpline and webchat, the PASS marketing materials (leaflets, posters, pens, and post it notes) were redesigned to include the new helpline number. These will be distributed in April following the launch of the new PASS website and helpline to citizens advice bureaux, the Scottish Health Council, NHS complaints officers, NHS inform and other local and national stakeholders. Marketing material can be ordered at pass@cas.org.uk

Contact us

As of 1st April 2017, the service can be accessed by

- phoning us on 0800 917 2127
- chatting to us online at www.patientadvicescotland.org.uk/
- speaking to us in person at any Scottish citizens advice bureau.
- emailing us at pass@cas.org.uk