

Patient Advice and Support Service Annual Report, 2018-19



In 2018/19, PASS supported

3,574 clients



8,443 enquiries



As a result of using the Patient Advice and Support Service, clients are given information and advice which enables them to make informed decisions about what they would like to do. Below is a summary of the work that was carried out to support clients.

- 1,882 clients were given information to take action on their own behalf
- 1,661 clients received information and/or advice from Patient Advisers
- Additionally, 467 clients received information about patient rights and responsibilities when using the NHS
- 586 clients had a letter written on their behalf
- 158 clients had a complex letter written on their behalf
- 535 clients were signposted to other resources
- Patient Advisers had informal contact with NHS staff on behalf of 165 clients
- 107 clients were helped to access and/or review their medical records

Case study - outcomes from PASS support

As a result of PASS supporting a client to raise a complaint, a Palliative Care Review was undertaken which found that

- Clearer documentation was needed from the palliative care team about medication changes, care and treatment plans for weekends when there is only on-call cover.
- There should be clearer, more detailed documentation of discussions with patients and families around decision making processes, patient priorities and care planning.
- Out of Hours support – the phone number to access on-call palliative care clinicians should be clearly documented on patient notes.

Supporting clients

Advisers undertake a great deal of work to support clients -

- Advisers reviewed the cases of 698 clients (this includes, but is not limited to, reading clients' notes, and pulling together information to draft complaint letters)
- Advisers requested information or action on behalf of 289 clients
- Advisers prepared case papers for 149 clients

As a result of the above work –

- 218 clients received a response or explanation from the NHS
- 196 clients received an apology from the NHS
- Local resolution was obtained for 132 clients
- 81 clients were assisted to meet with NHS staff

Case study - outcomes from PASS support

As a result of PASS supporting a client to raise a complaint, staff were asked to reflect on their practice. The NHS apologised:

- For the delay in pain relief being provided
- That the client's move to the ward was not explained
- That family concerns were minimised and not taken seriously.

How our clients felt

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

- 88% of clients had an improved knowledge of patient rights and responsibilities
- 85% reported improved peace of mind
- 70% had an increased ability to help themselves
- 70% said their mental health had improved
- 27% received assistance with other aspects of their life (in their local citizens advice bureau)

What our clients think

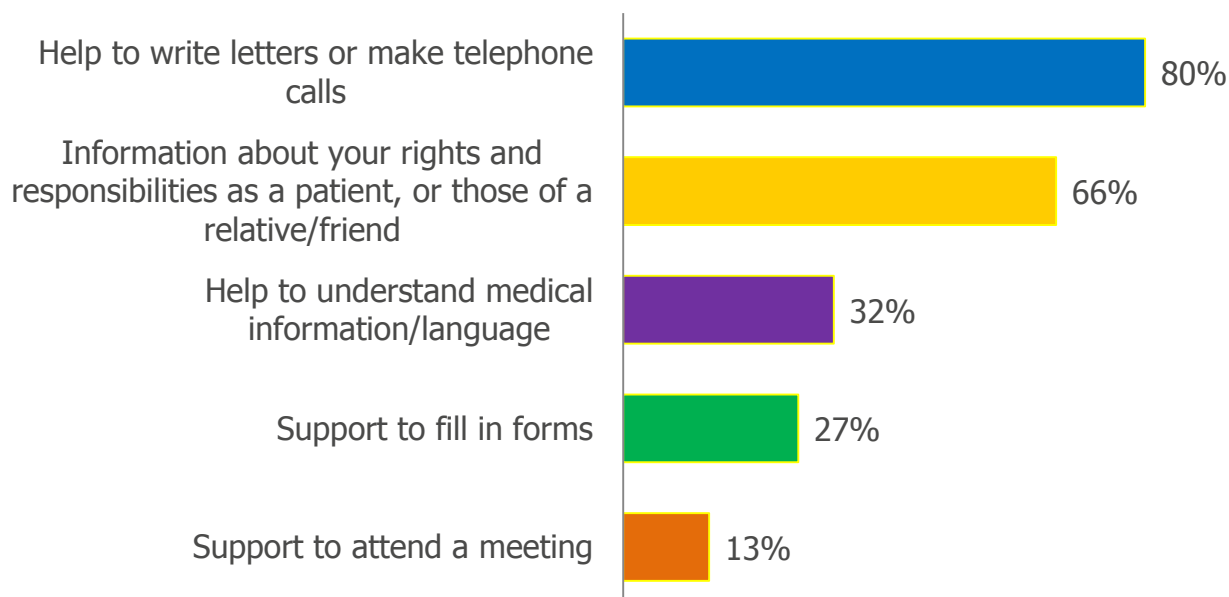
Citizens advice bureaux gather client feedback from PASS clients on an ongoing basis. Between April 2018 and March 2019 very positive feedback, with 96% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service they received from the service. More than 95% of respondents felt it was very easy or easy to contact PASS.

A post-helpline survey was introduced to the PASS helpline from October 2018. The figures from then until March 2019 showed that

- 90% of clients who phone the helpline were satisfied with the service they received on the helpline
- 99% of clients would recommend the service.

The type of support clients received from PASS

Clients receive a wide variety of support from PASS which can be seen below.*



*There are full details of client feedback in the 2018/19 client feedback report.

Prisoners supported by PASS

In the year 2018/19, PASS was used by prisoners as below

Prison	Clients	Contacts
HMP Addiewell	5	5
HMP Glenochil	1	1
HMP Edinburgh	1	1
HMP Kilmarnock	4	5
Total	11	12

Work is ongoing to raise awareness of PASS among prison healthcare staff as client numbers remain low.

Work undertaken by a Patient Adviser to support a client. The Patient Adviser

- wrote a letter on behalf of the client to the NHS requesting a meeting with complaints staff and the client's surgeon
- facilitated the arrangements for the meeting
- ensured the client was receiving appropriate benefits and was given information about various supporting bodies for their medical condition
- gave emotional support to the client throughout the Complaints Process.

Introduction of a Helpline Patient Adviser

In spring 2018 Citizens Advice Scotland and the Scottish Government discussed the issue of demand on the helpline. The service had been so well-used by clients with complex support needs that advisers were struggling to meet demand. This meant clients were having to wait longer to receive support. It was agreed that the role of Helpline Patient Adviser would be introduced, on a pilot basis, to help manage this demand.

The Helpline Patient Adviser has been based in Dumfries and Galloway Citizens Advice Service, since August 2018. The introduction of this role had been very successful, providing much needed support for Patient Advisers who continue to cover the helpline on a rota basis, and in providing a better service to clients. Between October 2018 to March 2019 there were, on average, 58 fewer voicemails each month. This was an average reduction of 75% per month, when compared with the period April to June 2018.

The feedback from citizens advice bureaux on the impact of this role has been very positive. Since the introduction of the Helpline Patient Adviser

- 64% of respondents felt able to manage their case workloads more effectively
 - Of those 64%, 43% said the new role had reduced the need for a waiting list for an appointment with them
- 77% of respondents felt that clients were getting a better service since the Helpline Patient Adviser started.

Impact of the Helpline Patient Adviser role for clients

The introduction of this role has "enabled Patient Adviser(s) to spend more time to help clients with complex case work"

"Phones are answered quicker, shorter waiting time...Local Advisers now have a little bit more time to work on their own casework, therefore, quicker turnaround for all concerned. This has to be seen as better customer service for our clients, many of whom are already angry, stressed, upset, etc before coming to us."

Patient Adviser training

Citizens Advice Scotland organises Patient Adviser training days every quarter. In 2018/19 Patient Advisers discussed service delivery on the helpline, how they had managed vexatious clients (which enabled them to share good practice) and received training on the updated case recording system at these days. There were speakers from NHS Education about Duty of Candour and the General Medical Council on patient safety. In December there was a bespoke training day from the Helplines Partnership which advisers found really helpful.

Regional Events

In spring 2019, two events were organised by Citizens Advice Scotland for Patient Advisers and NHS Complaints staff. There were speakers from the General Pharmaceutical and Dental Councils, Scottish Public Services Ombudsman, NHS Education, Scottish Government, Edinburgh University and the Mediation Network. The events were a great opportunity for the attendees to find out about ongoing developments in the field of NHS complaints and to network and share best practice with their colleagues in citizens advice bureaux and the NHS.

“A great explanation of the SPSO”

“Very interesting to hear more about mediation and the skills required”

“wonderful and insightful. Encouraged more thought; very useful”

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 2018/19 there was 1 complaint. This was resolved at stage 1 (Formal investigation by manager of delegated staff member).

Work undertaken by a Patient Adviser to support a client. The Patient Adviser

- Met the client on a number of occasions and also had a number of telephone and email contacts.
- Drafted three complaint letters to the client's GP, the local NHS Board and the Ambulance Service
- Discussed the responses from the above with the client.
- Helped the client to prepare for a meeting with the Ambulance Service
- Supported the client at a meeting with the Ambulance Service

Contact us

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
- using the contact form at www.patientadvicescotland.org.uk
- emailing us at pass@cas.org.uk