



Patient Advice and Support Service

Annual Report 2015-16

8997
PASS
enquiries

94% of
respondents
very satisfied
or satisfied
with PASS

2717
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 bureau 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 2015/16, clients throughout Scotland used the Patient Advice and Support Service to raise issues with the NHS that they were not happy with. Most often, these were about hospital acute services or family health services, clinical treatment, staff competence and staff attitude and behaviour. The clients who used PASS were also advised by the bureau about other issues affecting their lives, from benefits, legal and housing to employment, travel and utilities. This demonstrates the important role bureaux play in reducing health inequalities, as well as the benefit of the service being based in the bureaux - that clients can access all the advice they need from one organisation and in one place.

At a national level, Citizens Advice Scotland implemented the recommendation of the PASS external evaluation carried out in 2014/15. Citizens Advice Scotland established a Statistics Working Group and undertook a telephone helpline feasibility study. Both these pieces of work had input from citizens advice bureaux, NHS Complaints Officers and the local offices of the Scottish Health Council. The outcomes of these are covered in more detail in this report.

As recommended by the report, Citizens Advice Bureaux also developed effective working relationships with other relevant service providers in local areas to provide a stronger network of support, including with local advocacy provision.

Christine Lang
Patient Advice and Support Service Coordinator
Citizens Advice Scotland

Snapshot of the year

In 2015/16, PASS supported

2717 clients



8997 enquiries



2,420 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 3,027 occasions, information was given to clients
- Additionally, on 244 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 651 occasions
- Clients were supported to draft a formal complaint letter to the NHS on 617 occasions
- There was informal contact with NHS staff to try to resolve issues on 372 occasions
- Clients were given information to take action on their own behalf on 190 occasions
- Clients were assisted with a letter to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) on 145 occasions
- Clients were assisted with meeting NHS staff on 100 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 - outcomes from PASS supporting clients

The NHS were able to reassure the client regarding his late wife's care and treatment. The NHS acknowledged the importance of offering a clear explanation to relatives and ensuring patients and relatives were able to understand what treatment was being offered and why. The hospital undertook to increase staff awareness of this issue.

The hospital also apologised for the delay in organising a meeting with the client and subsequently issued a written record of the meeting. The NHS undertook to improve their performance in these areas to enable clients to gain closure as early as possible.

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

- On 1,801 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 1,183 occasions, advisers requested information / action of a client
- On 173 occasions, advisers prepared case papers

As a result of the above work -

- A response or explanation was received on 140 occasions
- An apology was received on 50 occasions
- The issue/s raised were fully or partially upheld on 14 occasions
- There was a service improvement or review on 11 occasions

Case study - outcomes from PASS supporting clients

The NHS liaised with the client's consultant who invited the clients to contact him at any time if they were having difficulties around the care and treatment from surgical services. This increased the clients' sense of security and confidence.

The NHS recognised the importance of having important mental health information at the front of client records.

How 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
- 80% noticed improved peace of mind
- 76% had an increased ability to help themselves
- 70% said their mental health had improved
- 38% received assistance with other aspects of their life

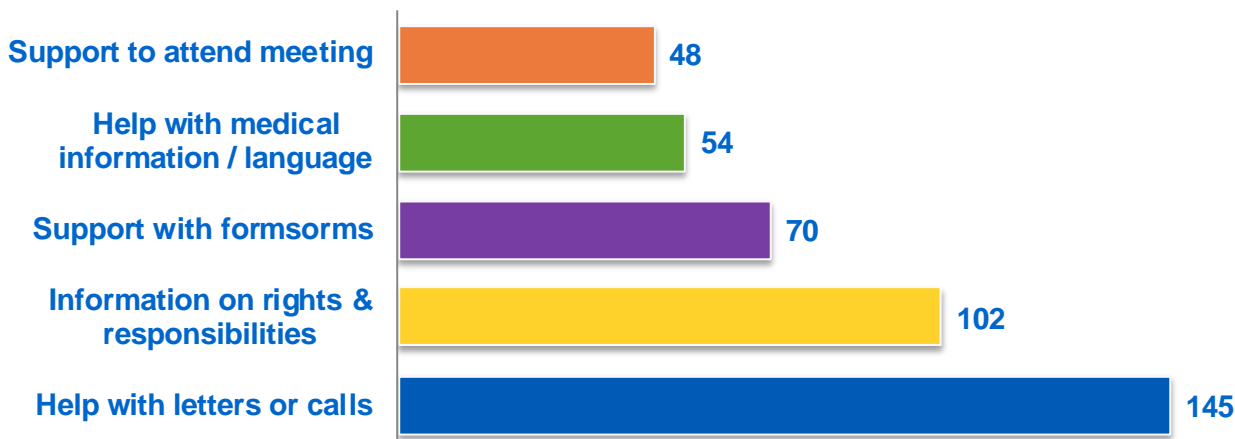
Case study - outcomes from PASS supporting clients

The NHS performed a clinical review and provided relevant education sessions to highlight the learning provided by this case. Following recommendations by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) the NHS Board are investigating how to improve communication between themselves and the Royal Hospital for Sick Children. The SPSO instructed the Health Boards to make a formal apology to the client in recognition of their findings.

What our clients think

Citizens advice bureaux gather client feedback from PASS clients on a regular basis. Between May 2015 and March 2016 we received very positive feedback, with 94% of respondents 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service they received from the PASS. More than nine out of ten (93%) respondents felt it was very easy or easy to contact the service.

What type of support did clients receive from PASS?



Clients say that feedback is good for their health

Client feedback for the year 2015/16 found that:

- 94% of respondents were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with the service received from PASS.
- 93 % of respondents felt it was 'very easy' or 'easy' to contact PASS
- 149 of the clients surveyed were given help to write letters or make telephone calls

Case study - how the CAB supported a client

The client stated that they attended hospital after a referral from their opticians due to a concern about a cataract. The client was admitted and a detached retina was diagnosed. The client stated that they did not receive an eye test while in hospital and had to have one carried out at their local opticians. The client felt that this was unacceptable.

The investigation found that it was unacceptable for the client to have to leave the hospital to have an eye test done as there is a twice weekly ophthalmology clinic within the hospital. The NHS apologised unreservedly for the oversight and that the client's condition had not been acted upon during her admission. The client accepted the findings and apology given.

The client was referred for a full benefits check within the bureau.

What difference did PASS make to clients?

Clients noticed an improvement in a number of areas which can be seen in the graph below. More clients noticed improvements in all areas of their life in 2015/16 than in 2014/15 which can be seen in the table below.

	Respondents who reported an improvement (14/15)	Respondents who reported an improvement (15/16)
Knowledge of patient rights and responsibilities	81%	88%
Peace of mind	78%	80%
Ability to help yourself	67%	76%
Mental health	59%	70%
Physical health	30%	24%

Finally, respondents were asked if they have any further suggestions for improving the PASS. There were many comments and the majority stated they were happy with the service or could not think of any changes. There were a few themes which came out strongly from the comments and they were:

- There should be additional marketing and publicity
- A wider remit for the service
- Improved access to the service (ie with improved flexibility for appointments)

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

- Explaining the client's options when giving feedback to the NHS
- Writing a draft letter of complaint to the NHS to request a meeting
- Visiting the client with the draft letter to discuss and make changes
- Speaking with the NHS Complaints Department to set up a meeting with relevant members of staff
- Had continued contact with the client and his wife to support them during the complaints process
- Liaising with the local advocacy service (with the permission of the client)
- Ensuring both the client and his wife's relevant medical issues appeared on their notes
- Ensuring the client is satisfied with the outcome of the complaint - the client is delighted
- Discussing disability benefits with both the client and his wife and referring them to colleagues in the citizens advice bureau for a benefits check.

Prisons

In the year 2015/16, PASS was used by prisoners as below

Health Board Area	Prison	Clients	Enquiries
Dumfries & Galloway	HMP Dumfries	5	9
Grampian	HMP Grampian	2	2
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	HMP Barlinnie	4	4
Highland	HMP Inverness	1	4
Lanarkshire	HMP Shotts	3	4
Lothian	HMP Addiewell	6	9
Tayside	HMP Perth	3	7
Total		24	39

Work is ongoing to raise awareness of PASS among prison healthcare staff as client numbers remain low and in the 9 prisons not listed the service was not used. The PASS National Coordinator met with the Prisoner Healthcare Lead Nurse at Healthcare Improvement Scotland who has sent tailored information about PASS to Health Care Managers and NHS Board Leads to increase engagement.

Case study - how the CAB helped a client

The client had been suffering severe back pain with pins and needles going down her leg. The client stated that she had been seen by four doctors. She had not been referred for a scan. The client was subsequently taken to hospital where a fragmented disc was diagnosed. She subsequently had surgery.

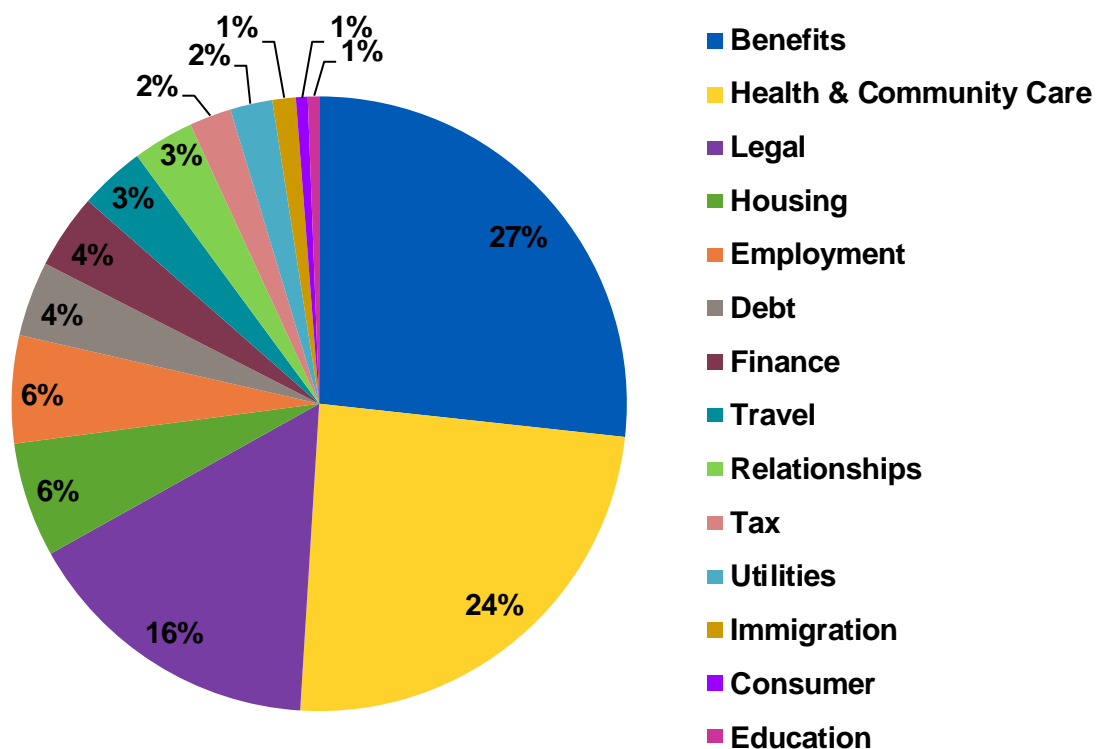
The Patient Adviser met with the client and advised her about the NHS complaint procedure. At the client's request, a formal complaint was submitted to the GP practice. The response stated that the doctors felt there were no red flag symptoms and that there had been no need for a referral for a scan.

The client was dissatisfied with this response and the Patient Adviser supported the client to take her case to the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO). The SPSO upheld the complaint in full as on 3 occasions the client had displayed red flag symptoms. The SPSO made a number of recommendations for all the GPs who had seen the client. This included an apology to the client for failing to make a referral for a scan.

The client was satisfied with the outcome.

Additional support we gave to our clients

The 27 Patient Advisers provide specialist support to clients. The added value of being delivered by the Scottish CAB service means that clients benefit from the support provided by Generalist Advisers in the bureaux. These advisers provide information, advice and support about PASS and other issues which may affect clients' lives. The value of this is demonstrated by the figures below which show that clients received advice about an area other than NHS feedback on 807 occasions. Clients raising feedback, comments, concerns or complaints about the NHS were also advised on a range of issues from benefits to education.



Work undertaken by a Patient Adviser

The Patient Adviser met with the client several times, firstly to listen to the client's issues and explain their options. At this point, it was established that their personal circumstances had been dealt with prior to meeting the Patient Adviser, for example receiving the correct benefits. At the second meeting, they discussed a draft complaint letter for both the GP and the Health Board. The Patient Adviser helped to organise a meeting with the NHS to discuss the issues raised in the client's letter.

The Patient Adviser made and received a number of phone calls to and from the client to keep her informed and updated of the complaint responses either being delayed or received. The Patient Adviser also made and received a number of phone calls to the NHS Complaints Department to ask when a response would be received. The Patient Adviser informed the client that a Directorate Review had been implemented and the time guidelines were being put on hold as a result.

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.

Implementation of the PASS external evaluation

When PASS was established it was agreed that an external evaluation would be carried out in the 3rd year of the service to detail “the quantitative and qualitative benefits of the Patient Advice and Support Service delivered by Citizens Advice Bureaux across Scotland”.¹ This evaluation was carried out in 2014/15 by SMCI Associates who spoke with a wide range of stakeholders and made a number of recommendations for CAS, the Scottish Government, Scottish Health Council, local citizens advice bureaux and NHS Boards. These included reviewing the monitoring criteria for PASS, and to “Consider alternatives to face-to-face delivery of advice and support – notably on-line and telephone provision – to help address issues of limited capacity/opening hours.”²

Statistics Working Group

As a result of the evaluation Citizens Advice Scotland established a Statistics Working Group made up of representatives of the NHS, citizens advice bureaux and Citizens Advice Scotland to review the quarterly statistical reports produced every quarter for the NHS. The aim of the group was to provide statistical reports which are more useful for the NHS, bearing in mind the requirements for certain information to be provided. The Group met several times to consider the statistics currently produced, looking at what can be provided and what Health Boards need. There were also separate discussions with individual group members about their views on draft reports produced by CAS. This work carried on into 2016/17.

Telephone helpline feasibility study

In the PASS contract extension proposal for 2015/16, the Scottish Government asked CAS to put forward a proposal to develop a telephony strategy. CAS agreed to undertake a feasibility study in 2015/16 to determine the best means to develop a proposal for a telephony strategy, including helplines where appropriate, within the current financial constraints. Between April and October 2015, CAS undertook a telephone feasibility study, consulting citizens advice bureaux, NHS Complaints Officers and the local offices of the Scottish Health Council. This report was submitted to the Scottish Government.

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

¹ Evaluation of the Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS), Report to Citizens Advice Scotland, December 2014, www.cas.org.uk/about-us/partnerships-services/cab-service-partners/patient-advice-and-support-service

² As 1.

practice and support each other. In 2015/16 Patient Advisers heard from speakers from the Scottish Medicines Consortium, the General Medical Council, the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman and General Dental Council. In addition, local Patient Adviser Days were held in Highland to enable the advisers in this area to discuss issues and share experiences.

Regional Events

In spring 2016, 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.

Clear, very useful,
informative and
well presented...
good speaker

Great insight into
clinical
governance
process

Fantastic activity
... excellent and
refreshing

Marketing

The work of the PASS Marketing Officer continued, focussing on the five target Health Board areas of Dumfries and Galloway, Fife, Forth Valley, Grampian and Highland. Stands were held at a number of conferences to raise awareness of the service and distribute leaflets, postcards, post-its and pens. A new postcard about rights and responsibilities was designed and the first 2,000 were distributed in 6 weeks.

Complaints about PASS

Every quarter, CAS gathers performance management information from bureau. In this way, information on complaints about the Service and what stage they were resolved at is collated. In the year 1st April 2015 to 31st March 2016 there was one complaint in NHS Forth Valley which was resolved at stage 4 (Review by independent arbiter (if complaint not upheld at stage 3)). In NHS Highland a client made an informal complaint which was subsequently withdrawn.

Outcomes from PASS supporting clients

The NHS agreed

- an action plan with learning points to be shared with staff
- the process for patients phoning the ward to be admitted would be changed
- information would be shared with staff along with the meeting note and learning points.

The client and their family were satisfied with the meeting and agreed outcomes.