



Patient Advice & Support Service

Use your rights
Know your responsibilities
Share your experience
Make a difference

Patient Advice & Support Service Annual Report

April 1st 2022 – March 31st 2023

The Patient Advice & Support Service (PASS) supports clients to give feedback and comments as well as to raise concerns and complaints to NHS Scotland. PASS informs clients of their rights and responsibilities as a patient and provides information and advice to enable clients to access NHS services and to make informed decisions.

Key Statistics

PASS supported

- > **4,667** clients: down **7%** on the previous year, but up **10%** on 2020-21.
- > **14,830** client contacts, up **11%** on the previous year, which in turn was up **17%** from 2020-21.
- > **42%** of clients with two or more contacts, up **5%** on last year; **58%** of clients had one contact with advisers.
- > **15%** of clients at level 3, which is defined as complex casework. This is up **6%** on last year, likely due to the introduction of codes to represent clients requiring complex support due to their emotional or mental health.
- > **50%** of clients to take action on their own behalf.
- > **4,260** Helpline calls, a slight increase (**1%**) on the previous year, which in turn was an increase of **33%** on 2020-21.
- > **1,118** emails and contact forms sent to PASS central email account, a decrease on last year but still a **15%** rise on 2020-21.

NHS complaints (Percentage of clients)

- > **50%** Clinical treatment
- > **19%** GP access
- > **30%** received an apology from the NHS, where response was known.
- > **4%** involved a service review, where the NHS response was known.

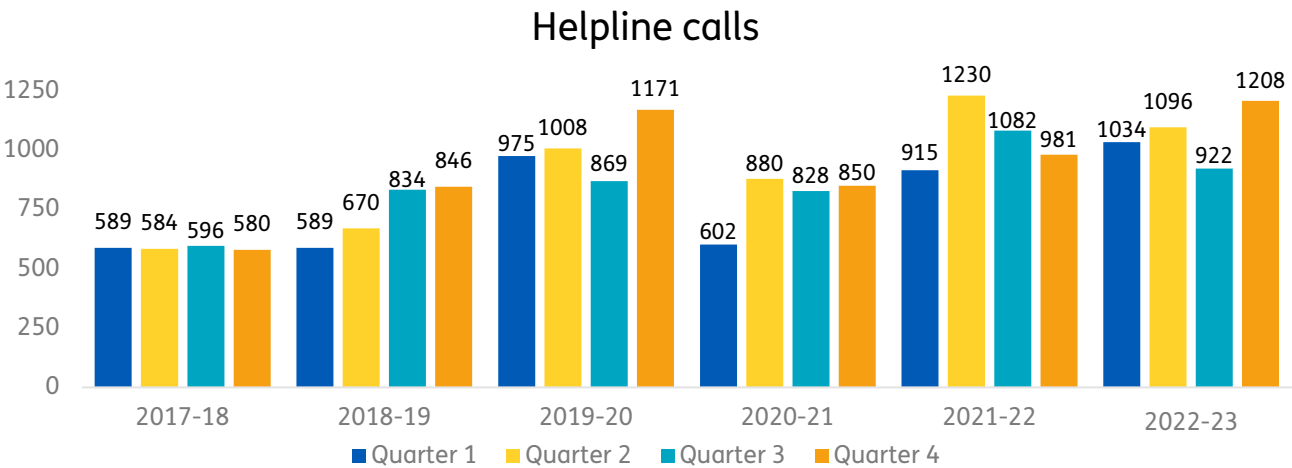
Full statistics are contained in the Appendix.

Contacting PASS

Clients can access PASS at any citizens advice bureau, via our contact form on our website and by calling our Helpline, which is open 9am – 5pm, Monday – Friday. They can also leave a message for a call back out of hours and when the advisers are on other calls. Once they speak to an adviser, any further contacts are arranged in keeping with the clients’ preferences.

> **4,260** calls were taken by the Helpline, **>81%** increase on 2017-18

The figure below shows that the number of Helpline calls per quarter over the last six years has increased significantly.

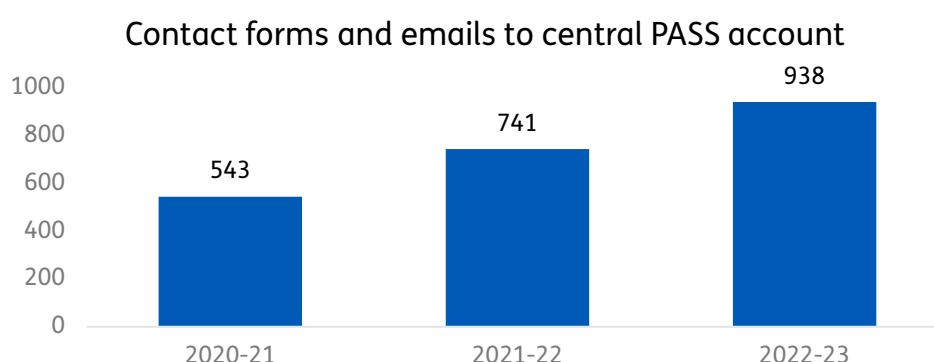


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- > **1118** contact forms and emails were sent to our central account, in 2022-23.
- > **1041** of the **1043** for direct response, were made within time limits.

As you can see from the figure below, contact forms and emails to the PASS central account have risen significantly, even in the last two years.

- > **27%** up on 2021-22
- > **73%** up on 2020-21



Feedback from clients accessing support via the Helpline showed that:

	Year	Satisfaction	Recommended
PASS Helpline client satisfaction and recommendation rates have remained consistently high.	2019-20	87%	99.4%
	2020-21	92%	99.6%
	2021-22	89%	99.4%
	2022-23	90%	97.5%



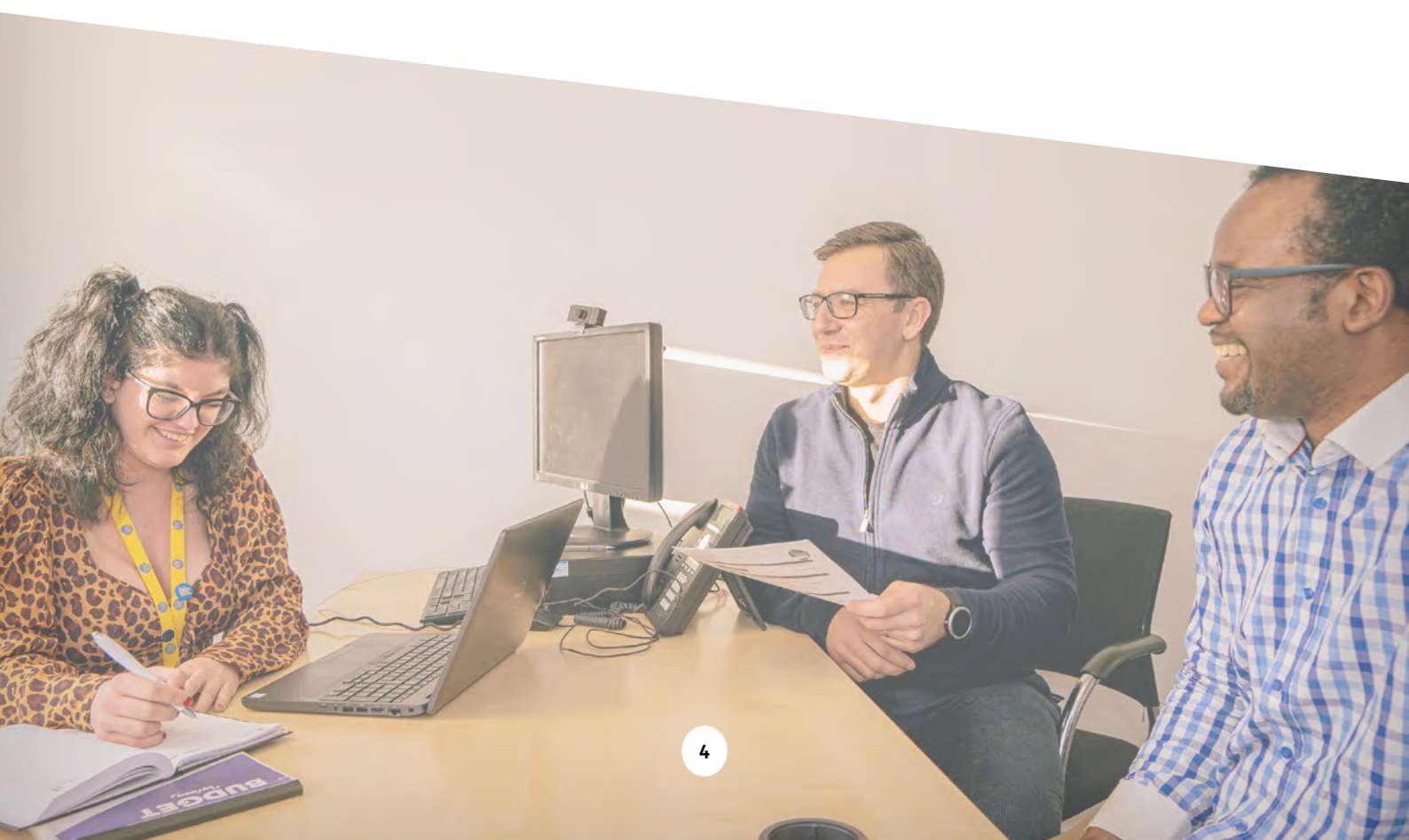
“After writing a letter of complaint stating the misinformation we received, ... I received a telephone call from the Consultant looking, apologising. He also said he would go and see my husband and see what could be done.... So in this instance it does pay to complain... Thank you for giving me the confidence to go ahead with my complaint.”

The work we do to support clients

The reasons clients contacted PASS and the support they received are given in the following two tables. Clients can choose all options that apply.

Reason client contacted PASS	Clients	Percentage
Help to make a complaint or raise a concern	43	61%
Information out about rights and responsibilities	30	42%
Help to sort out problems that were affecting health	27	38%
Help to make a comment/give feedback on an NHS service	24	34%
Other	1	1%

Support from PASS	Clients	Percentage
Information about rights and responsibilities	57	80%
Help to write letters or make telephone calls	48	68%
Help to understand medical information/language	42	59%
Support to attend a meeting	28	39%
Support to fill in forms	10	14%
Other	3	4%



Case study 1

Patient Adviser work and Client outcomes

After significant delays in diagnosis, the client's twin sibling was admitted for end-of-life care, and domestic abuse services were alerted about the patient's partner.

The client found it extremely challenging to be recognised as Next of Kin (NOK), as initially, the patient's partner was recorded as the first contact. The client struggled to get updates on their twin's condition, despite discussion and agreement between the client, their twin and senior staff, that the client should be added as an additional contact. The client was not initially informed of their twin's death and staff were unclear, in the circumstances, on protocol for releasing the body for burial.

The communication issues and delays had a significant impact on the client; however, the Patient Adviser was able to support the client to

- > Make a subject access request
- > Compile the complaint and reduce it from the initial 250 concerns
- > Support the client on receipt of the response
- > Provide options for the client who was not fully satisfied with the response
- > Arrange and attend a meeting with relevant parties to discuss remaining concerns
- > Confirm the client's satisfaction with the meeting and relay the actions being made by the NHS because of the client's complaint, which included:
 - > Review option of using 1st and 2nd contact in patient admission documentation
 - > Update Medical Certificate of Cause of Death (MCCD) process to remove NOK
 - > Check wards to see if notices are still in place ref. escalating issues/concerns
 - > Review policy/process for releasing a body from the
 - > Confirm patient admission documentation will change to 1st/2nd contact.

After review, the MCCD now use the term 1st/2nd contact instead of NOK.

Patient Advisers undertake a range of tasks to support clients, depending on the complexity of the case and the support needs of the client. Over the year:

- > **81%** given information and/or advice
- > **34%** signposted
- > **21%** allocated to a Local PASS Adviser for ongoing casework
- > **9%** supported to write letters
- > **8%** needed complex letters and/or redrafts, after further client information.

Outcomes achieved for PASS clients

PASS provides clients with information and advice, which enables them to make informed decisions about what they would like to do. Clients may have multiple outcomes, depending on the nature of the case.

The most frequent outcome, is Client enabled to take action on own behalf, recorded for 50% of clients. This number is significantly down on last year's figure of 72%, which may be indicative of the extra support and extra complex support Patient Advisers report has been needed by clients. The outcomes from NHS Scotland are not always known when the service has empowered the client to complete their complaint themselves.

Of the **426** responses from NHS Boards shared with PASS

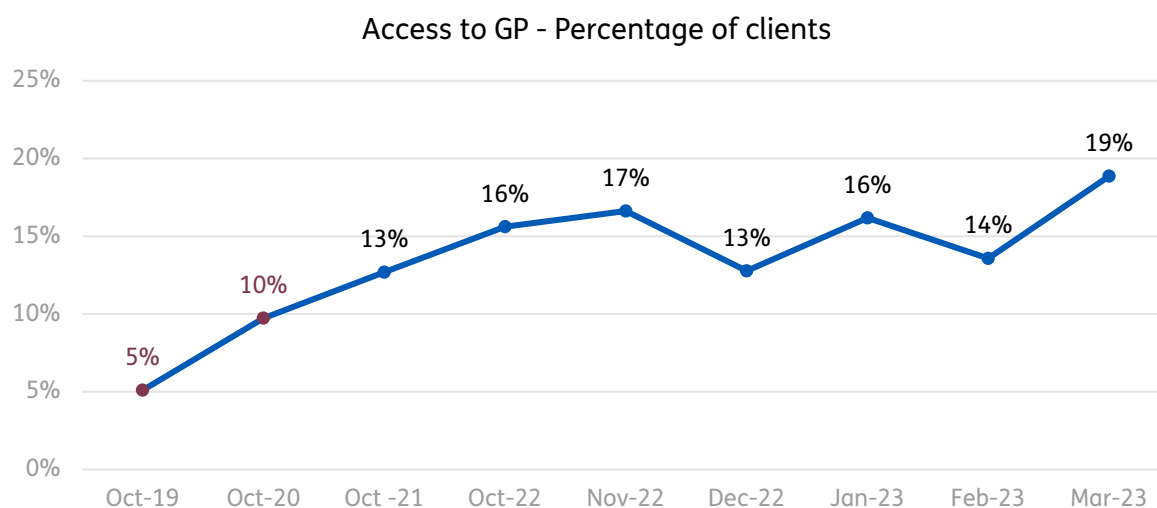
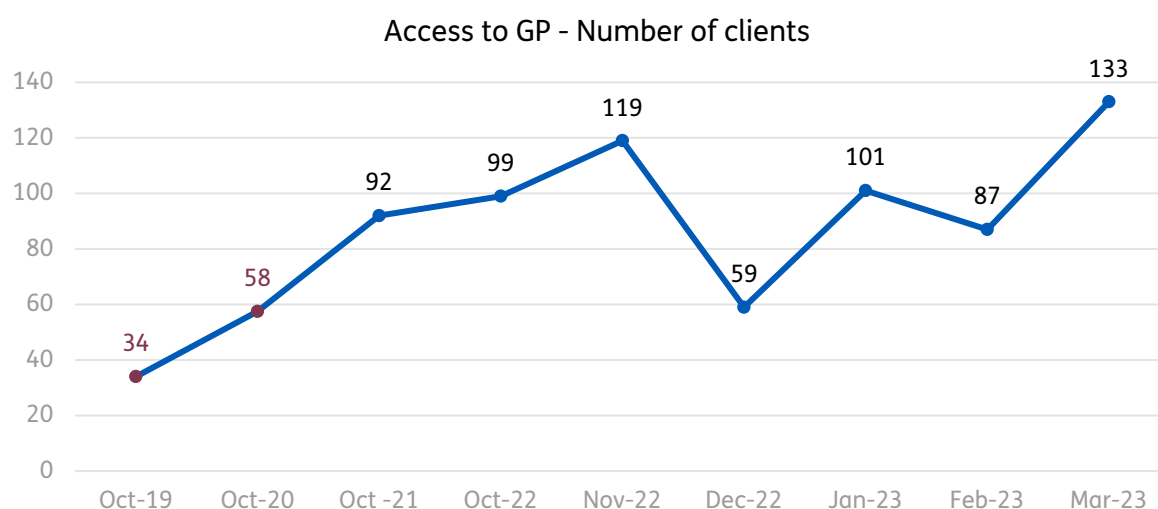
- > **139** clients received an apology
- > **57** complaints weren't upheld
- > **32** complaints were partially upheld
- > **30** complaints were fully upheld
- > **19** resulted in a service improvement review
- > **5** were deemed as unreasonable complaints.

In addition, **216** clients withdrew their complaint and **93** clients' complaints were resolved by local resolution.



GP Access

Following an increase in complaints from clients with access to GPs issues in the 2020-21, PASS continued to monitor figures relating to Access to GPs issues through 2022-23. Specific issues for clients continue to include difficulties registering with a GP, getting a GP appointment and being removed from their GP register.

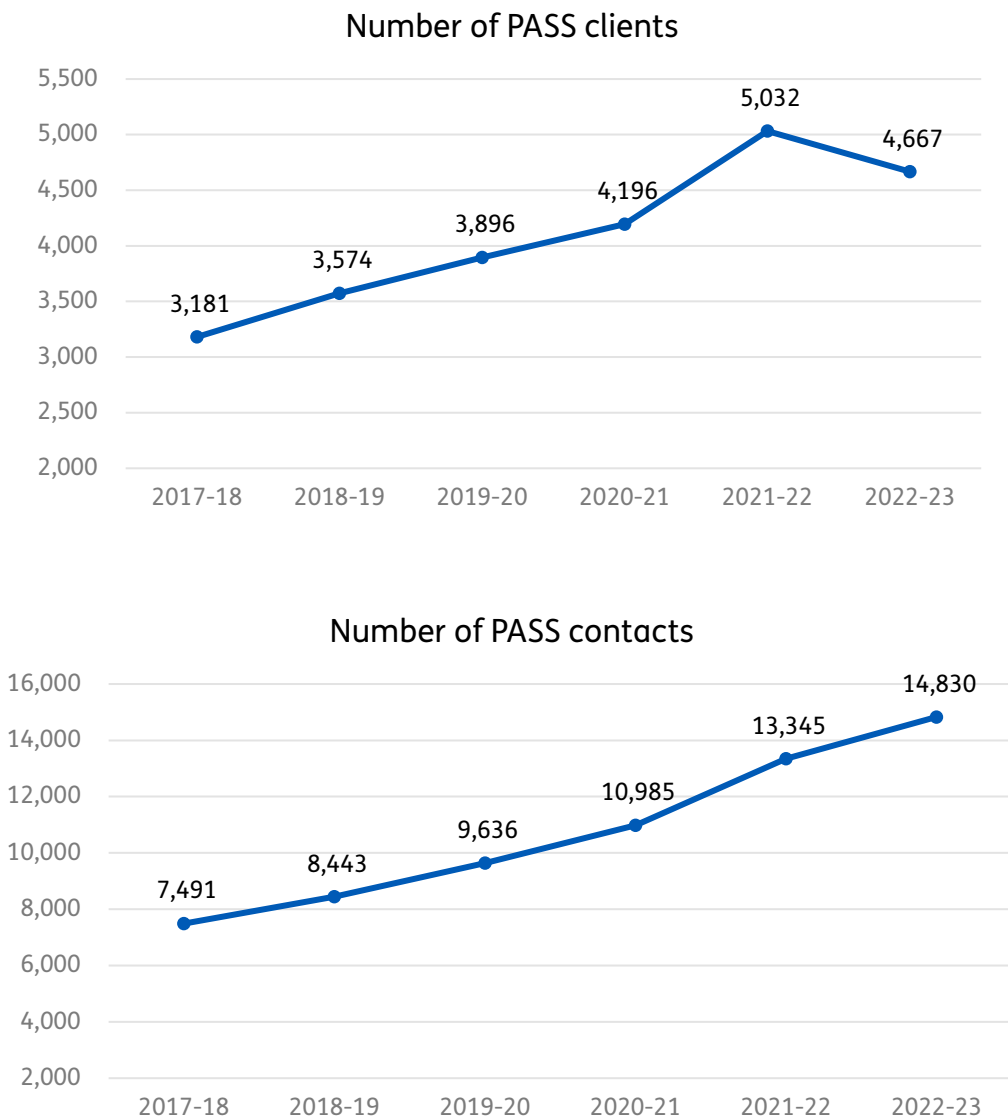


NB The Oct 2019 and 2020 figures, in red, have been estimated, based on GP access being 89% of the total GP & dentist access figures, which was the average value between October 2021 to March 2022.

Changing demands for PASS and Patient Advisers

Patient Advisers continue to follow a blended approach to working, whilst maintaining an effective service for PASS clients. Face-to-face meetings are available to clients; however, only 2% of client contacts were in person in 2022-23 and work is managed mostly over the phone and by email.

The number of clients has increased by 47% between 2017 and 2023, peaking last year when PASS supported 47% more clients than in 2017-18.



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The number of contacts has risen, with numbers almost double that in 2022-23 than in 2017-18.

The average number of contacts per client has also increased significantly between 2017 and 2023.

Advisers reported that clients have needed an increasing amount of time and support, especially since the start of the COVID 19 pandemic.

	Contacts per client
2017-18	2.35
2018-19	2.36
2019-20	2.47
2020-21	2.62
2021-22	2.65
2022-23	3.18

Advisers also reported that an increasing number of clients talk of their stress and poor mental health since the COVID 19 pandemic. This includes clients wanting to take their own life. As such, coding was introduced to allow advisers to record “Complex support” and “Safeguarding,” not only to capture the number of clients struggling to cope with their situation, but also to capture the number of these difficult calls, which, in time, can affect the well-being of advisers. Monitoring these figures ensures that the appropriate training, support and counselling is available to maintain the advisers’ well-being.

2022-23	Clients	Contacts
Complex support	249	492
Safeguarding	19	21

The rise in calls from people struggling with their mental health and/or in emotional crisis, reported by advisers since the COVID 19 pandemic started, is also a trend seen across the services of the bureau network.



“It was very nice to talk to you. I can’t even say how much it means to be shown empathy and be listened to. I am very grateful for your help.”



“The service was first class.”

Case study 2

Emotional support and practical help

Following an ectopic pregnancy, the client was unable to get any information, follow-up tests or emotional support, despite having concerning symptoms. The client was emotionally drained and contacted PASS.

The Patient Adviser listened to the client and was able to give emotional support. The adviser also helped to compose a letter to the GP stating the main points of the situation, including the emotional impact on the client.

The practice offered the client a meeting with the GP. The staff were accommodating and sensitive to the client's concerns and provided the client with the answers she needed and within an appropriate timeline.

The client was very grateful to the adviser for taking the time to listen, not only to her medical concerns, but also the toll it was taking on her mental health, and for the emotional and practical support.



Client feedback

Bureaux gather client feedback from PASS clients on an ongoing basis. Between April 2022 and March 2023 feedback was received from **78** PASS clients.

The clients' response to the service was extremely positive

- > **96%** felt it was very easy or easy to contact PASS
- > **10%** were satisfied with the time taken for a response
- > **99%** were very satisfied or satisfied with the support they received
- > **99%** stated that they would use the service again; 1% was unsure.



"I found the help I received extremely useful. The adviser was extremely professional and helpful and provided me with relevant avenues to follow up on, which I had not considered/known about at the time. I felt very well-supported."

The feedback on the result of using the PASS service to raise and resolve the clients' issues with NHS Scotland was again very positive.

Clients also reported additional positive outcomes because of the support PASS provided.

	Raise	Resolve
Fully	86%	70%
Partially	10%	19%
Not at all	0%	4%
Doesn't apply to situation	4%	4%
Complaint ongoing	0%	6%



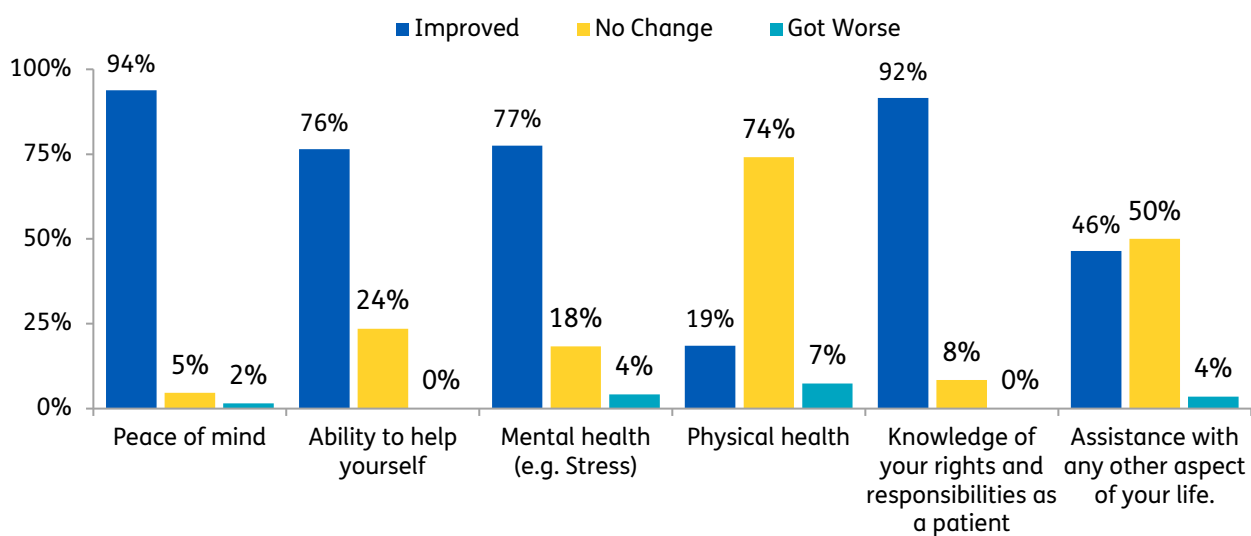
"Thank you again for all your help, I couldn't have done this without you and your service."



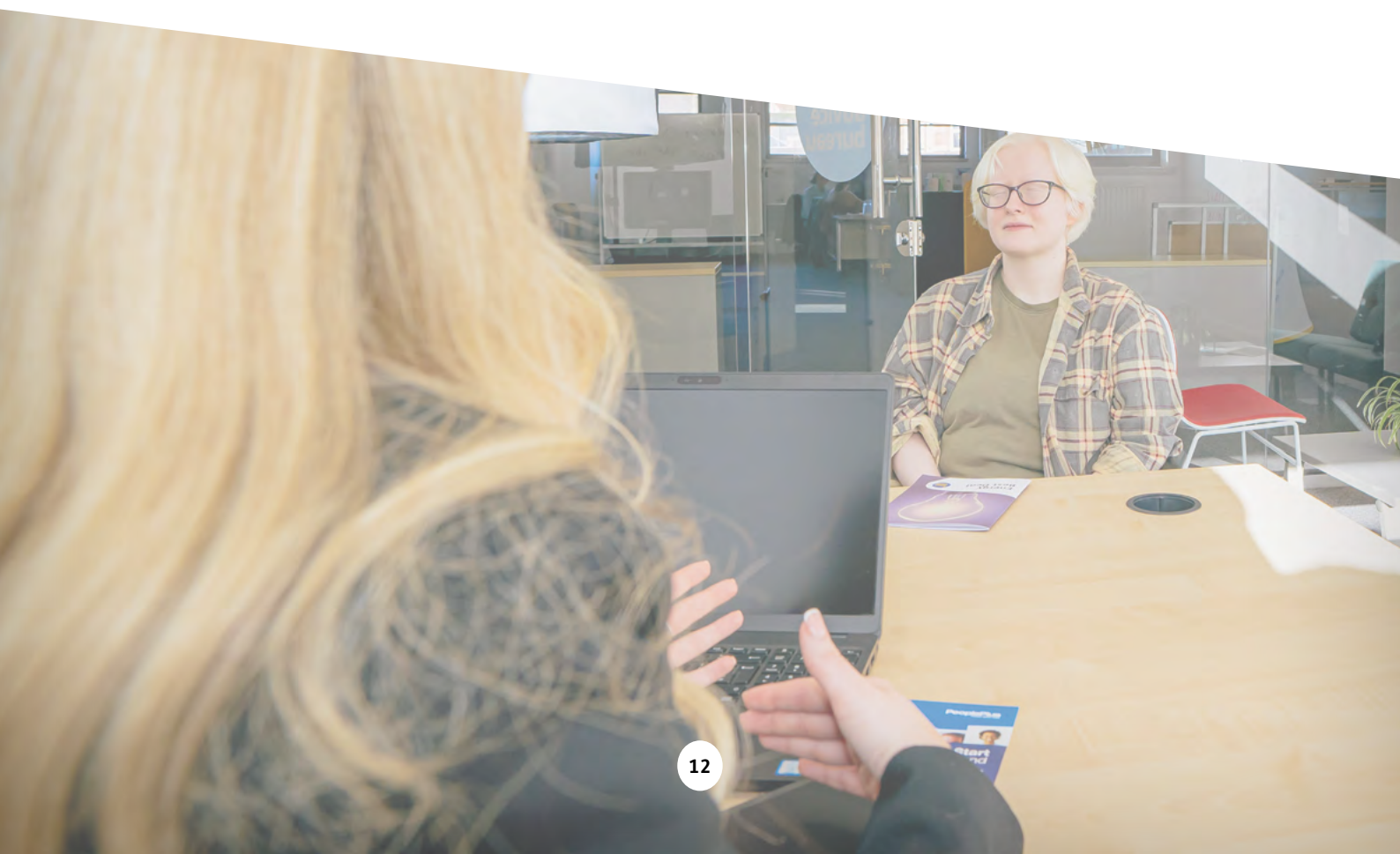
"The Service I received was excellent."

Clients also reported additional positive outcomes because of the support PASS provided.

Changes felt by the client during their support from PASS



“Thank god for this service. I can’t imagine where I would be without it.”



Case study 2

Empowering patients and their communities through liaison work with MSPs

The client was struggling emotionally, mentally and physically. The client, who is transgender, felt it was due to hormones causing an imbalance in her body and that she required bridging hormones.

The GP agreed to discuss client's treatment plan within the practice; however, they decided not to provide the treatment, due to the costs involved, and advised the client to seek treatment privately.

The client was deeply upset by the decision and felt discriminated against, because she is transgender.

The client contacted PASS to make a complaint to the local health board. She was advised that the best route would be to involve the client's local MSP.

The Patient Adviser supported the client to write a letter of complaint to the GP Practice; liaised with the client and her MSP to ensure progress; provided clarification on processes, as required, and ensured the client had the emotional support she required.

The MSP is looking into the costs of the treatment and other reasons why bridging hormones are not easily available to transgenders.



“My Patient Adviser has been an enormous support through a very distressing health complaint. So kind, friendly and patient - extremely professional and guided me through the system which I couldn't have navigated without her help and assistance - absolutely invaluable service. Many, many thanks”



Prisoners supported by PASS

In the year 2022-23, PASS was accessed **41** times by prisoners:

Prison	Clients	Contacts
HMP Barlinnie	14	20
HMP Edinburgh	4	17
HMP Dumfries	1	2
HMP Perth	1	2
Total	20	41

Patient Adviser training and regional events

Training for Patient Advisers over the last year included:

- > Adverse Event awareness
- > Autism awareness
- > Communication skills: Angry and Abusive clients, Difficult conversations, Remote working
- > GDPR training and case recording
- > Health & Safety for remote working
- > IT
- > Mediation training
- > Medical Negligence
- > Mental Health
- > Quality of Advice
- > Safeguarding
- > Staff shadowing
- > Time management.

Weekly catch-up sessions and access to group chats have continued to be of benefit to the Patient Advisers. It provides easy access for peer support, sharing knowledge and best practice, as well as highlighting particular issues or trends within the service.

As part of the transition into the new PASS contract due to start in June 2023, Regional and National Complaints Managers were contacted and agreed that regular meetings with Patient Advisers and the Project Team at CAS should re-start in 2023-24.

Complaints about PASS

Every quarter, CAS gathers performance management information from bureaux, including information on complaints about the service. In the year 2022-23 there was one complaint made about PASS; it is at Stage 1.

Looking forward

With the new PASS contract starting on June 1st 2023, citizens advice scotland and the CAB network have invested much time into making improvements, especially in technology, to enhance an already highly successful service through the next three to five years of the current term.

New website and chatbot

Management and advisers have worked together to launch a new website that is easy to navigate and has lots of helpful information for PASS clients. It hosts “PASSbot,” which was designed around input from the Patient Advisers. It can assist clients to navigate the website and help them with several issues, NHS complaints and services.

The site and the bot will be monitored over the coming months and for the duration of the new contract and further updates will be made, as appropriate.

Reporting

Local quarterly reports have also been redesigned to be more concise and impactful and the information has been made more relevant to each health board. Much of the information included has been changed and it is hoped that the new and improved reports, which were designed in consultation with complaints managers and NSS, will be more helpful to the local health boards and other stakeholders.

Contact us

The service can be accessed by:

- > phone on 0800 917 2127
- > via any Scottish citizens advice bureau
- > using the contact form at www.patientadvicescotland.org.uk
- > email at pass@cas.org.uk

Patient Advice and Support Service

Annual Report Appendix

2022-23

The Annual Report Appendix provides statistical details of feedback, comments, concerns and complaints raised via the Patient Advice and Support Service. The statistics have been gathered to provide evidence of what has been delivered in each Health Board area in Scotland.

To note: throughout this report percentages may not total 100% due to rounding.

1.1 Enquiries

A contact is recorded each time an adviser works directly with the client.

4,667 Clients

14,830 Contacts

- > **4214** new clients
- > **2712** had a single contact with a Patient Adviser, **1995** had two or more contacts

1.2 Support Level

The complexity of clients' enquiries is categorised from 1-3, as detailed below, with the percentage of clients whose cases were at each level.

Support level	Percentage of clients	Definition of case work level
1	13%	Give access to information, such as leaflets, help-line numbers and website addresses.
2	73%	Give advice, explore options and initiate action, such as preparing letters and 3rd party contact such as advocacy services.
3	15%	Provide increased support and assistance as required to support complex casework, including accompanying clients to meetings and working jointly with partner organisations.

1.3 NHS Advice Codes

NHS advice codes highlight the areas about which feedback, comments, concerns and complaints are raised. Each NHS advice code is reported once per client. The percentage of clients whose cases related to the **ten** most frequently recorded advice codes are reported below.

Advice code	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
Clinical treatment (all aspects)	2,168	50%
Staff - attitude / behaviour	890	20%
Access to GP	787	18%
Rights and responsibilities	680	16%
Staff - complaint handling	535	12%
Personal records (medical, complaints files)	450	10%
Staff - communication (oral)	425	10%
Mental health	382	9%
Staff - competence	268	6%
Waiting for date of appointment	263	6%

1.4 Support provided

Each task is reported once per client, although it may have been carried out multiple times as part of a client's case. The table therefore counts the number of clients who received particular forms of support, rather than the number of times that this support was provided. The **ten** activities completed for the largest numbers of clients are reported below.

Support provided	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
Client given information and/or advice	3,797	88%
Sign-posting	1,593	37%
Allocated client to local PA	984	23%
Review case	876	20%
Information to client on rights and responsibilities	779	18%
Request information / action	465	11%
Write letter	427	10%
2nd Tier support sought	320	7%
Complex support given	249	6%
Write complex complaint letter	214	5%

1.5 Referrals In

Clients often find out about the Patient Advice and Support Service when they are referred in from external organisations. The **five** most frequently recorded referrals are reported below.

Organisation	Number of clients	Percentage
Self referral	4,051	87%
CAB	361	8%
NHS – Non Complaints Team	72	2%
NHS – Complaints Team	71	2%
Advocacy Organisation	36	1%

1.6 Organisations contacted by the Patient Advice & Support Service

The Patient Advice and Support Service often works in conjunction with external organisations to support clients. This involves joint partnership work, as well as referrals. The **five** most frequently recorded referrals out are reported below.

Organisation	Number of clients	Percentage
NHS – complaints staff	294	40%
NHS – non complaints staff	111	15%
AvMA	48	7%
General Practitioner	48	7%
SPSO	46	6%

1.7 Outcomes

Advisers are always working towards a client-centred outcome when supporting clients. The **eleven** outcomes recorded for the most clients are reported below. Some clients' cases were still ongoing at the end of the year.

Outcomes - Client cases	Number of outcomes	Percentage
Case closed - client enabled to take own action	3,320	50%
Case closed - no further contact from client	903	14%
Case closed - complaint withdrawn	216	3%
Case closed - death or illness	7	<1%

Outcomes - Results	Number of Outcomes	Percentage
Outcome not known	1,498	23%
Local resolution resolved	93	1%
NHS - irresolvable - time barred	60	1%
Case closed - alternative dispute resolution - resolved	35	1%
	28	<1%

Outcomes - Responses	Number of outcomes	Percentage	Percentage of apologies
NHS - response / explanation received	154	2%	111%
NHS - apology received	139	2%	n/a
NHS - not upheld	57	1%	41%
NHS - issue partially upheld	32	<1%	23%
NHS - issue fully upheld	20	<1%	14%
NHS - service improvement review	19	<1%	14%

1.8 Additional support

In addition to the clients and enquiries already listed, the clients below received help with enquiries relating to NHS treatment from other CAB advisers.

Additional support	Number
Clients	849
Contacts	1,171
Tasks	267
Referrals out	104

1.9 Health Boards

Additional support	Number	Percentage
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	281	27%
Tayside	154	15%
Lothian	115	11%
Highland	109	10%
Fife	94	9%
Forth Valley	87	8%
Grampian	84	8%
Lanarkshire	35	3%
Dumfries & Galloway	32	3%
Ayrshire & Arran	22	2%
Borders	18	2%
Western Isles	10	1%
Shetland	6	1%
Other/ Not known	5	<1%
Orkney	3	<1%

1.10 Health & Social Care Partnerships (HSCPs)

Additional support	Number of clients	Percentage
Greater Glasgow & Clyde	224	29%
Tayside	117	15%
Lothian	99	13%
Highland	79	10%
Fife	69	9%
Forth Valley	45	6%
Grampian	42	5%
Lanarkshire	33	4%
Dumfries & Galloway	24	3%
Ayrshire & Arran	18	2%
Borders	16	2%
Western Isles	2	<1%
Shetland	2	<1%
Other/ Not known	5	<1%
Orkney	3	<1%

1.11 National Health Boards

National Health Board	Number of clients	Percentage
Golden Jubilee (National Waiting Times Hospital)	2	8%
NHS24	12	48%
Scottish Ambulance Service	11	44%

1.12 National Health Boards

Service Area	Number of clients	Percentage
Family Health Services	665	36%
Hospital Acute Services	541	30%
Psychiatric / Learning Disability Services	144	8%
Community Health Services – not elsewhere specified	87	5%
Continuing care	68	4%

Staff Groups (1 & 2)

Staff Group 1	Number of clients	Percentage
Hospital Consultants / Doctors	695	38%
GP	628	34%
Nurses	234	13%
NHS Board / hospital administrative staff / members (excluding FHS administrative)	76	4%
Dental	57	3%

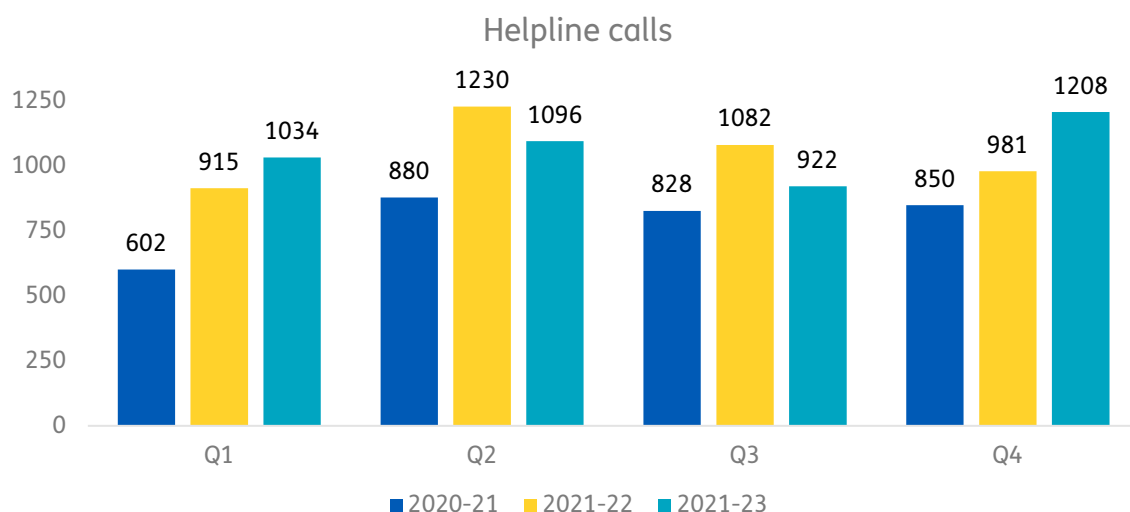
Staff Group 2	Number of clients	Percentage
Clinical treatment (all aspects)	2,168	46%
Access to GP	890	19%
Staff - attitude / behaviour	787	17%
Rights and responsibilities	680	15%
Staff - complaint handling	535	11%
Personal records (medical, complaints files)	450	10%
Staff - communication (oral)	382	8%
Mental health	268	6%
Waiting for date of appointment	263	6%
Information about services	200	4%

1.13 Advice Codes

NHS Advice Code	Number of clients	Percentage of clients
Clinical treatment (all aspects)	2,168	46%
Access to GP	890	19%
Staff - attitude / behaviour	787	17%
Rights and responsibilities	680	15%
Staff - complaint handling	535	11%
Personal records (medical, complaints files)	450	10%
Staff - communication (oral)	382	8%
Mental health	268	6%
Waiting for date of appointment	263	6%
Information about services	200	4%

2.1 PASS Helpline calls

PASS handled 4,260 inbound helpline calls over the year, which is an average of 355 per month and 82 calls per week. This is a slight increase on the previous year, which saw a 33% on 2020-21



	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Calls answered within 30 seconds	98.8%	99.6%	99.2%
Voicemails responded to in time limits	99.6%	99.8%	99.6%

2.2 PASS website contact form

Clients can contact PASS by email, including our contact form on the PASS website. In total we received 1118 emails over the year. This is a decrease of 14% on the previous year, but an 15% increase on 2020-21.

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Contact forms and central emails responded to in time limits	100%	100%	99.8%

3. Client profile data

In 2018/19 it was agreed with the Scottish Government that client profile data would be gathered every November, to give a “snapshot” of the clients that use PASS. The figures below show the figures for clients who used the service in 2022-23.

Age range		
Prefer not to answer	211	26%
15 and under	0	0%
16-17	0	0%
18-24	28	3%
25-34	83	10%
35-44	124	15%
45-59	207	25%
60-64	34	4%
65-79	108	13%
80+	24	3%
Total	819	100%

Ethnic Group 1		
Prefer not to/Did not answer	310	38%
African	4	<1%
Arab	1	<1%
Asian	2	<1%
Caribbean or Black	0	<1%
Indian	1	<1%
Mixed	5	1%
White	496	61%
Total	819	100%

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Ethnic Group 2		
Prefer not to/Did not answer	362	44%
African, African Scottish or African British	3	<1%
Arab, Arab Scottish, Arab British	1	<1%
Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	0	0%
Black, Black Scottish, Black British	0	0%
Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish, Caribbean British	0	0%
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	0	0%
Gypsy/Traveller	0	0%
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	1	<1%
Irish	2	<1%
Other British	64	8%
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	0	0%
Polish	16	2%
Scottish	350	43%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	4	<1%
Other	16	2%
Total	819	100%

Gender		
Prefer not to/Did not answer	170	21%
Female	426	52%
Male	218	27%
Transgender	5	1%
Total	819	100%

Health Problem or Disability affecting day-to-day activities		
Prefer not to/Did not answer	274	33%
No	169	21%
Yes, limited a little	146	18%
Yes, limited a lot	230	28%
Total	819	100%

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Communication and Support Needs		
Prefer not to/Did not answer	204	25%
No	431	53%
Yes	184	22%
Total	819	100%

Type of Extra Need		
Prefer not to/Did not answer	61	33%
Not applicable	31	17%
British Sign Language interpreting	0	0%
Language interpretation	4	2%
Low literacy	11	6%
Other	77	42%
Total	819	100%



Patient Advice & Support Service

Use your rights
Know your responsibilities
Share your experience
Make a difference

www.pass-scotland.org.uk