

Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service

Impact & Performance Report

October - December 2023 (Q3)

Supporting residents of West Sussex with their NHS Complaints – providing advocacy in the form of listening to the needs of the client and providing a voice for the individual to be heard.





Feedback from people we have supported

"..We like many before us, were left disillusioned and feeling let down by the system...that does not take away from our appreciation of the support and guidance you gave us. Without your help the whole process would have been far more distressing and intimidating than it was."

**Death of a Family Member
Complainant**

"Thank you for everything and for all your care and support, you have been wonderful!"

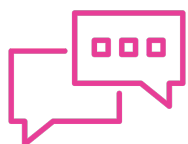
Client

"Appreciate all you have done for us, more than you could ever know."

**Child and Adolescent
Mental Health Services
Complainant**

"Thank you very much for thinking about me and being concerned, that is very kind of you".

**Client response to advocate
Follow-up**

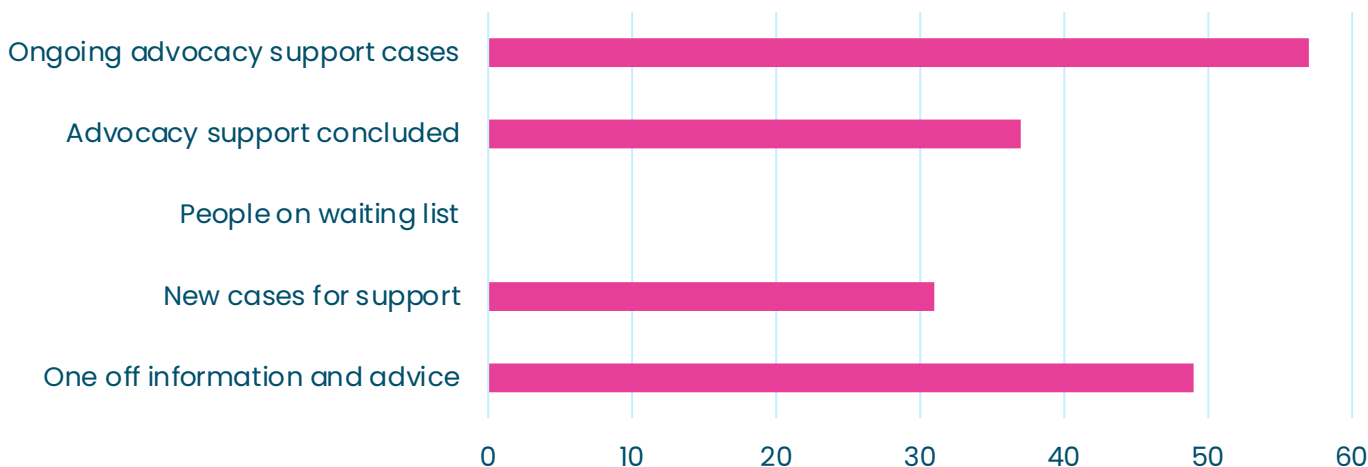


Our service

In recent months, IHCAS has seen a higher demand on the service with new complaints and requests for support. The service is still seeing increasing delays with receiving complaint response letters and resolution meetings from the local acute hospital Trusts in West Sussex but also experiencing delays from providers outside of our area.

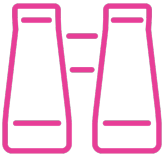
IHCAS has seen a rise in complex complaints that require additional time and empathy, especially when supporting clients when their complaint involves the death of a loved one.

We have also seen a rise in complaints about delays for procedures. Such complaints are difficult to manage as the outcome is ultimately for the procedure to go ahead, but this can be something outside the provider’s control.



Last quarter comparison

	Key performance metrics for current and previous quarter	
	Q2	Q3
One off information and advice	46	49
New cases for support	42	31
People on waiting list	0	0
Advocacy support concluded	28	37
Ongoing advocacy support cases	66	57

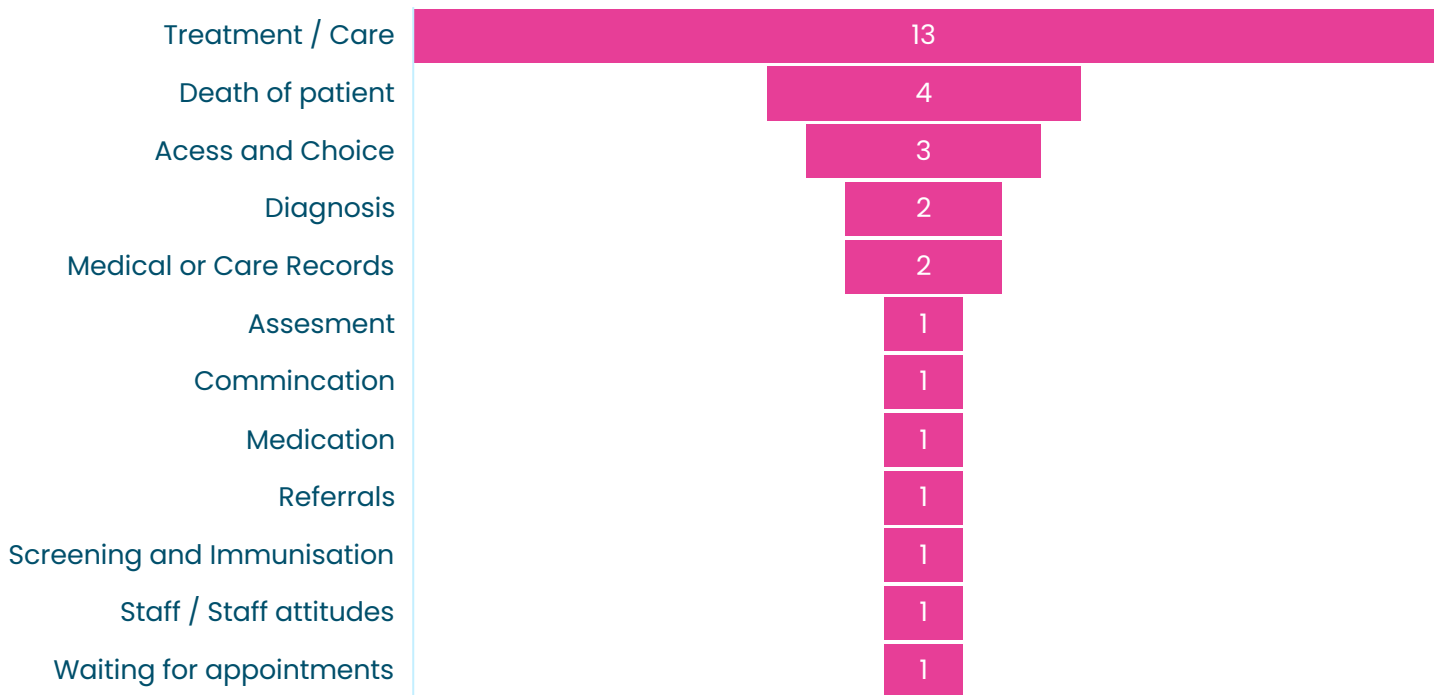


Themes

Open Advocacy Cases Q2/Q3 Comparison



IHCAS Interaction Themes in Q3



In quarter three, the Team received complaints mostly regarding 'Treatment/Care' within local Healthcare Providers.



Impact

- Assisted a client by drafting a complex complaint letter which involved multiple healthcare providers regarding the removal of a brain tumour. The client appreciated the help compiling the complaint and worked closely with their advocate to ensure the detail and content was accurate.
- Supporting a client with the follow-up of a Trust resolution meeting. A client raised a complaint about the treatment of her son in a local Acute Hospital Trust's A&E Department. The client's son has complex medical and additional needs. She received a response from the Trust in December 2023 and with support from an advocate, is communicating with the Trust to arrange a local resolution meeting to discuss her outstanding concerns.
- Supported a resident with her complaint about a GP removing a repeat prescription for her child. A local resolution meeting took place with the GP Practice and as a result the items were added back onto the repeat prescription list and a referral was made to a dietician at their local hospital.
- One of the advocates attended a local resolution meeting with a GP Practice to resolve a complaint which was made over a year ago. A resolution was found and the GP Practice is working on the outstanding actions from the meeting.
- Following receipt of a complaint response letter, a client receiving palliative care was unable to attend a local resolution meeting. Therefore, an advocate supported the client to write a second letter to the hospital Trust as the client's original concerns had not been addressed.
- Following receipt of a complaint response letter from a local Mental Health Trust, an advocate met with the client to read over the letter and provide support to move to the next stage of the complaints process. A local resolution meeting has now been requested.



Case Study

Sarah (name changed for anonymity) was looking for a service to accept her child for an assessment. She approached her local IHCAS service support with a complaint she had already submitted to Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT). After following up, an advocate found out that the complaint had been actioned as a PALS 'concern', which was not the outcome Sarah was looking for. With support from her advocate, a formal complaint was submitted to both Sussex Community Foundation NHS Trust (SCFT) & Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT).

When Sarah received a response letter, she felt accused of abusing her daughter. A Local resolution meeting was requested, and the Trust agreed that the letter could have been worded more appropriately for clarity. As a result, the Trust advised that they will no longer refer to examples in their letter to parents. Sarah was advised to re-submit her referral to the Trust and again the referral was rejected.

However, finally with the support from the school, yet another referral was made, this time going to CAMHS and after a long battle, the referral was accepted. Sarah's daughter is now on a waiting list for an assessment.

Feedback from client

Katie was an amazing and supportive advocate for me and my daughter. When we first met (or talked) I was at the end of my tether with the system in general and how I was constantly banging on locked doors and begging for help which never came.

Katie communicated well with me and always kept me in the loop of what was happening and what would happen. Without Katie I wouldn't have had the courage to complain and have my say and fight for my daughter. She arranged meetings and constantly stayed on the case when SCFT were taking forever to reply and action things.

She checked in with how things were at home and went above and beyond and I'm really proud that our work and her advocating for us changed the practice for letter writing and not accusing parents of abuse. Thank you, Katie, for everything. I really couldn't have got here without you!



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