

Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service

Impact & Performance Report

October - December 2024 (Q3)

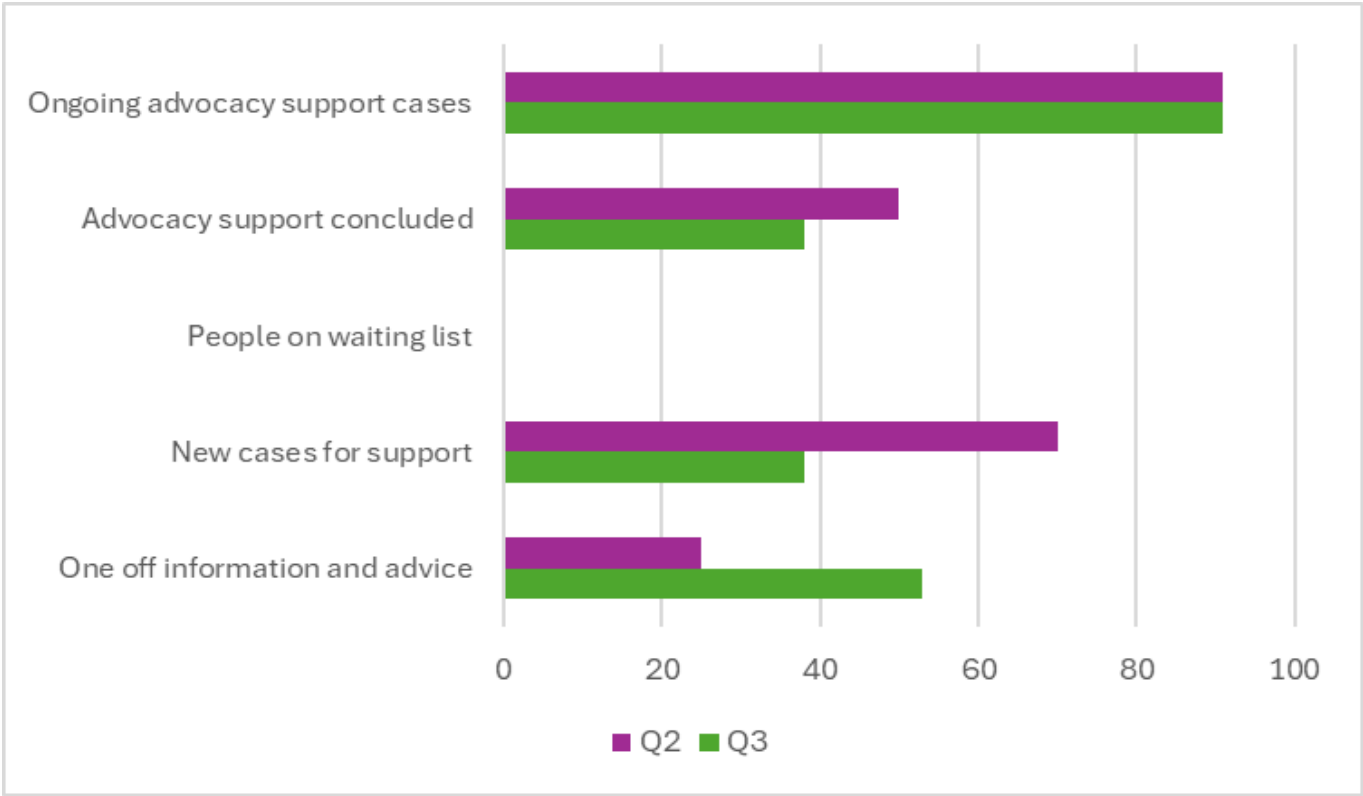
Supporting residents of West Sussex with their NHS Complaints – providing advocacy in the form of listening to the needs of the client and providing a voice for the individual to be heard.



Our service

Quarter 3 saw a reduction in people needed full advocacy assistance but a large increase in people who need one off support, such as being signposted to PALS or given information on how to make a complaint.

Hospital Trust delays in responding to complaints, updating complainants and arranging meetings continued to be a theme for the quarter. Some clients are having to wait over 6 months for a meeting date to be set.



Last quarter comparison

	Key performance metrics for current and previous quarter	
	Q3	Q2
One off information and advice	53	25
New cases for support	38	70
People on waiting list	0	0
Advocacy support concluded	38	50
Ongoing advocacy support cases	91	91

Promoting Advocacy Support for Residents of West Sussex

During November 2024, we published our latest [case study “Listen to a patient”](#) highlighting the importance of listening to patients, especially if a patient is neurodiverse.

Impact of Case Study on Healthcare Practices

These are some of the recommendations from the Acute Trust following the investigation:

- Consider early CT scan in the presence of clinical concern regarding unresolved pain and nausea.
- Training for staff to implement when there is a sudden deterioration.
- Improve documentation.
- Education in the bariatric medical team to specifically assess the anti-emetic drug use as potential markers for the presence of an obstruction.
- Recognition of autism as a part of a holistic assessment and how it may impact upon an individual's recognition and response to pain from the beginning of the patient's journey.
- Importance of asking whether reasonable adjustments might be required to support individuals while they are receiving our care.
- Communication training for nursing staff to ensure time is taken to listen to concerns and when to respond in an effective manner, reassure patients and loved ones that we are listening and taking action.

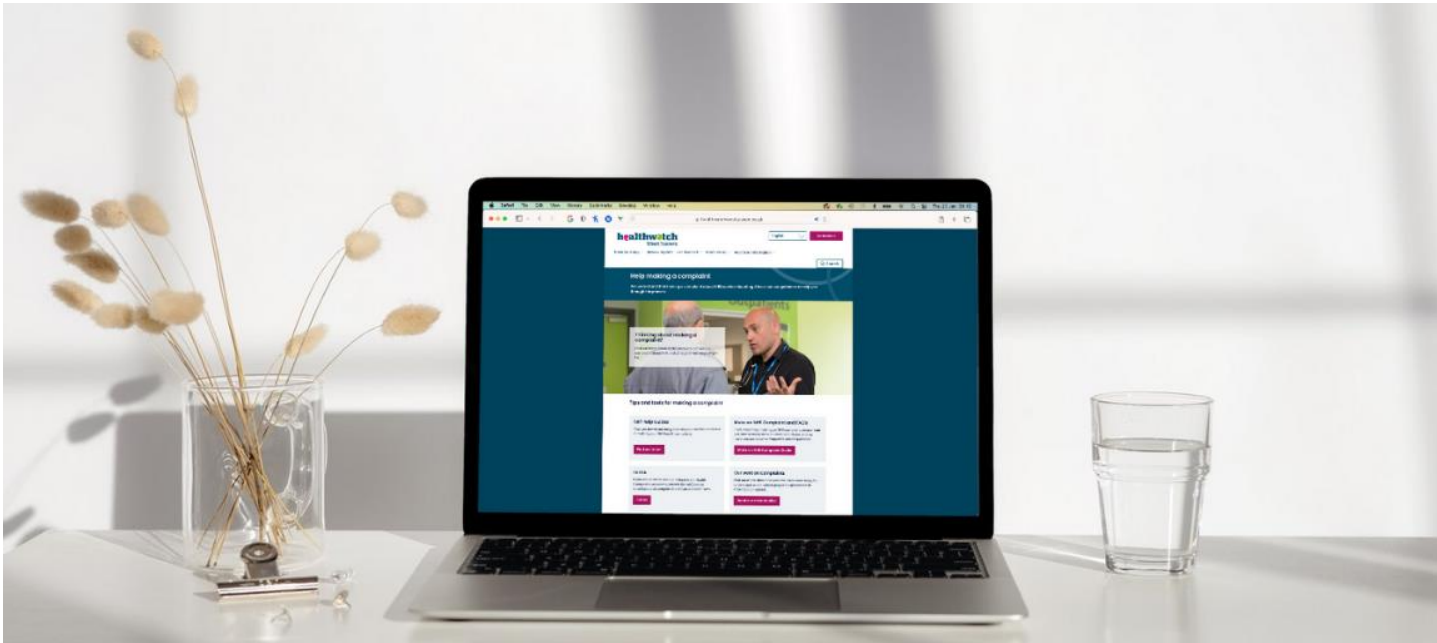
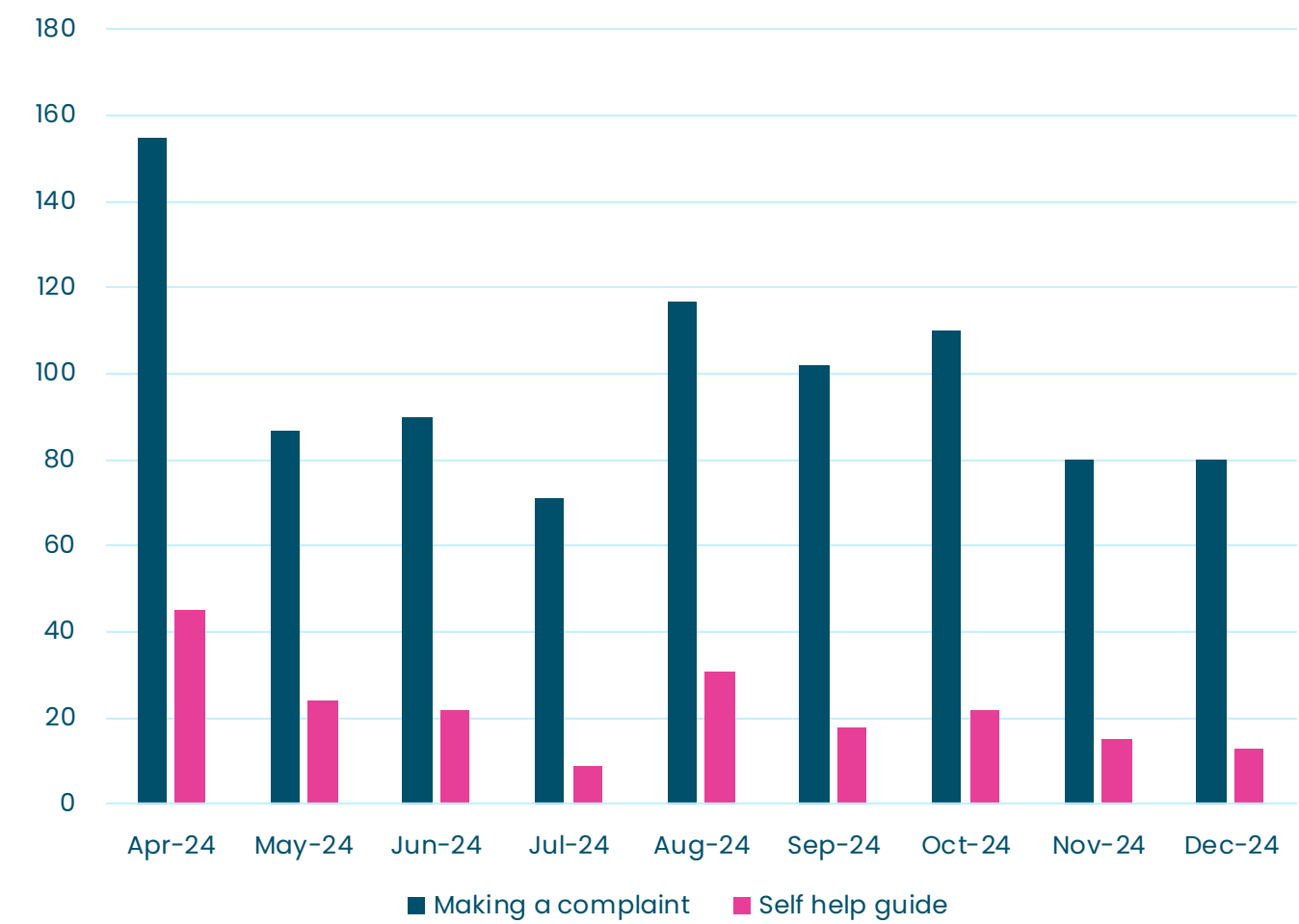
Sammy's story highlights opportunities for improvement and individualised care. It demonstrates how tailored communication methods can help to understand individual patient needs and experiences.

Sharing the story with local people

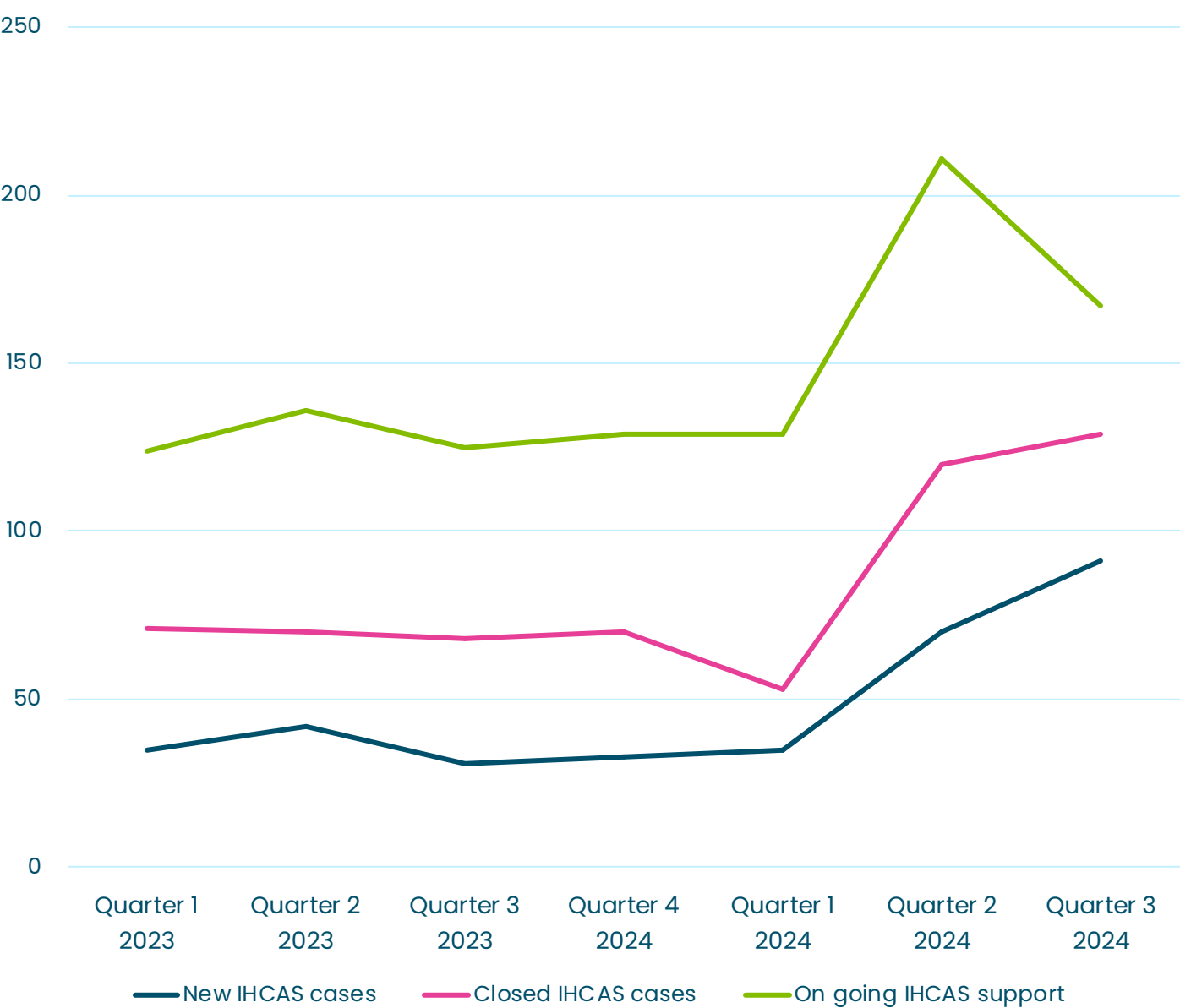
The case study was posted on Instagram resulting in 59 impressions and on Facebook it had 213 views. Additionally, the case study was viewed by 52 people on our website.

Our thanks has been passed onto the family that allowed us to share their story of their much-loved son on the hope of helping other residents of West Sussex with their NHS complaints.

Website views in the past 6 months



Annual IHCAS Case Comparison



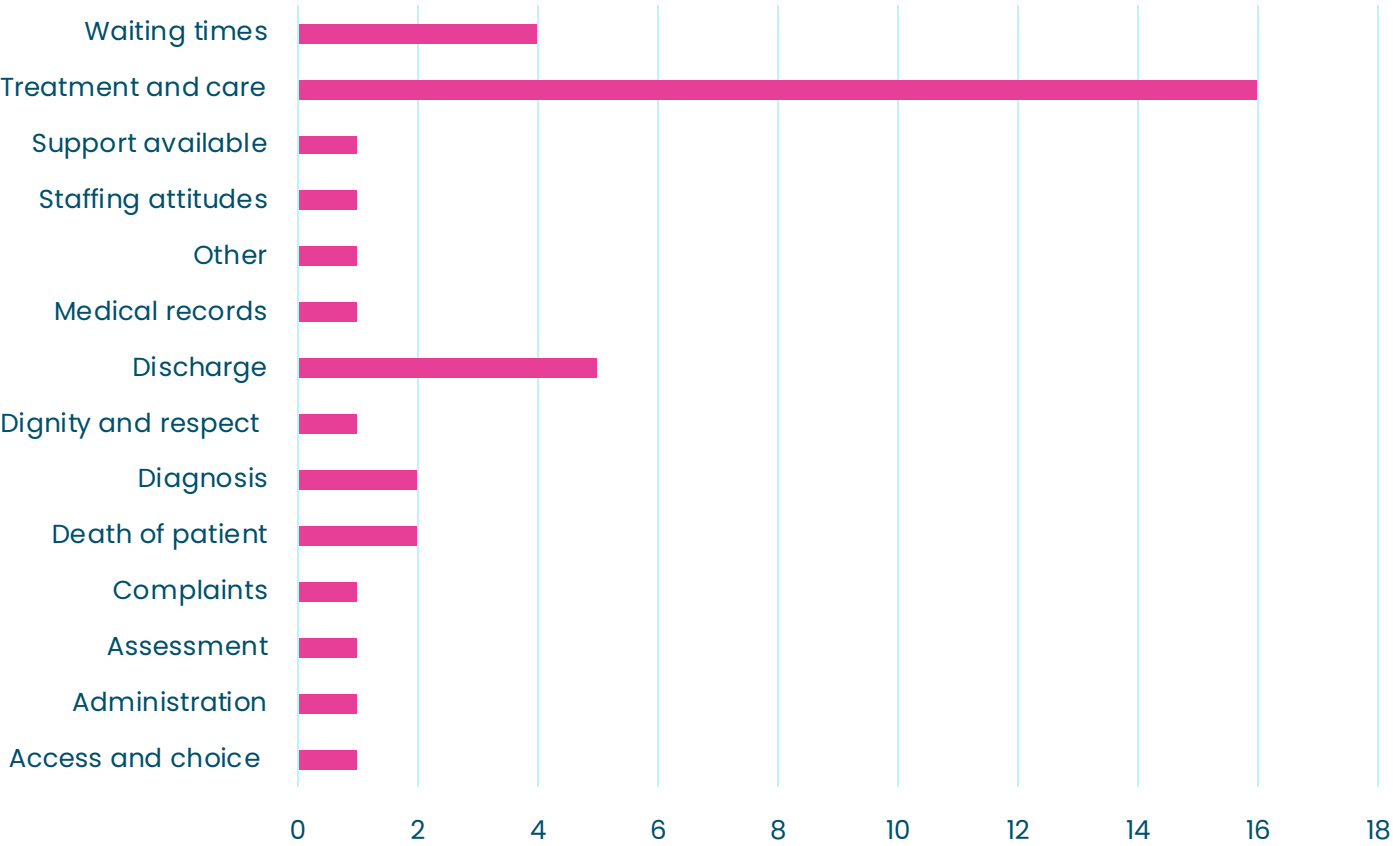
This chart shows that numbers of ongoing cases have increased and remain high.. Advocates have seen lots of delays in getting complaint response letters from organisations complaints were submitted to. There are delays in getting access to medical files and local resolution meetings are taking longer to arrange.

The social media campaign to promote the service resulted in an increase of requests to the service in quarter 3. However, numbers of new referrals declined in quarter 4 as anticipated due to the Christmas period, although remain higher (38 new) than quarter 3 in 2023 (31 new). The number of closed cases in quarter 3 in 2023 and in 2024 remain similar (37/38 cases).

Each complaint is unique and the process each complaint undertakes is different depending on the outcome the person is looking for. Some people just would like an apology, others look for learning to ensure what happened to them does not happen again or some want the evidence to go down the legal route.

Q3 Complaint Themes

Complaint Themes Q3



Treatment and Care is the most complained about subject area in quarter 3, followed by discharge and waiting times.

Impact & Learning

Healthwatch West Sussex Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service (IHCAS) were invited to attend the Complaints and Compliments Committee run by Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (SPFT); this was a valuable opportunity to provide the service with feedback from clients that receive advocacy support.

Advocate, Katie attends regular meetings and provides positive and negative feedback. At one meeting, Katie provided client feedback about the wording of the complaint response cover letter and the committee discussed the purpose and content of the letter.

As a result of this feedback, SPFT's complaints team reviewed the letter.



Following Katie's representation on behalf of Healthwatch at our Compliment and Complaints Committee we were able to reflect on feedback she provided on behalf of her clients.

We heard that many clients were not in favour of receiving an additional covering letter from the Trust's CEO alongside their individual complaint response. We took the opportunity to consider this when in the process of reviewing our Complaints and PALS policy and developing a Standard Operating Procedure document.

As a result, we have now removed this from our process.

We are very grateful to have received this feedback and hope that the subsequent actions taken provide assurance that we are keen to receive all feedback and take this as an opportunity to continually improve our services.

Andy Ashby Lead Nurse Complaints & PALS SPFT




Feedback from people we have supported

"Thank you Katie for your support. It's really difficult on a practical level working out how to make a complaint, then having the energy to see it through. Having you there to guide me through the various actions and decisions required was invaluable."

"I really want to thank you so far for everything you have helped me with, and for any future guidance you will give me. After years of suffering, you have really shown the light at the end of the tunnel to me."

Thank you so much!"

"I want to say thank you so very much for all of your help again this year. I know I've said it on multiple occasions over the years but I absolutely could not have done this without your assistance, and I feel so incredibly grateful and lucky to have had you allocated as my advocate."





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provide its statutory activities