

# Independent Health Complaints Advocacy Service

## Impact & Performance Report

April – June 2024 (Q1)

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

*I really appreciate the heads up just in case she (PHSO caseworker) decides to go with the trend. It's one of the reasons why you're the best.*

*Thank you so much, I don't think you realise what your support to me has meant.*

*Thanks, that's great, really appreciate your support.*

*Once again, thanks for absolutely everything, you being there for me throughout all of this means so much to me!*

*I am so angry and upset about what they have put me through over so many years...*

*I will not let this go until I secure a satisfactory outcome.*

*Thank you again for everything. I really appreciate your continued efforts.*

Our service

The demand for IHCAS support is steady, with the service seeing an increase in one-off information and advice enquiries.

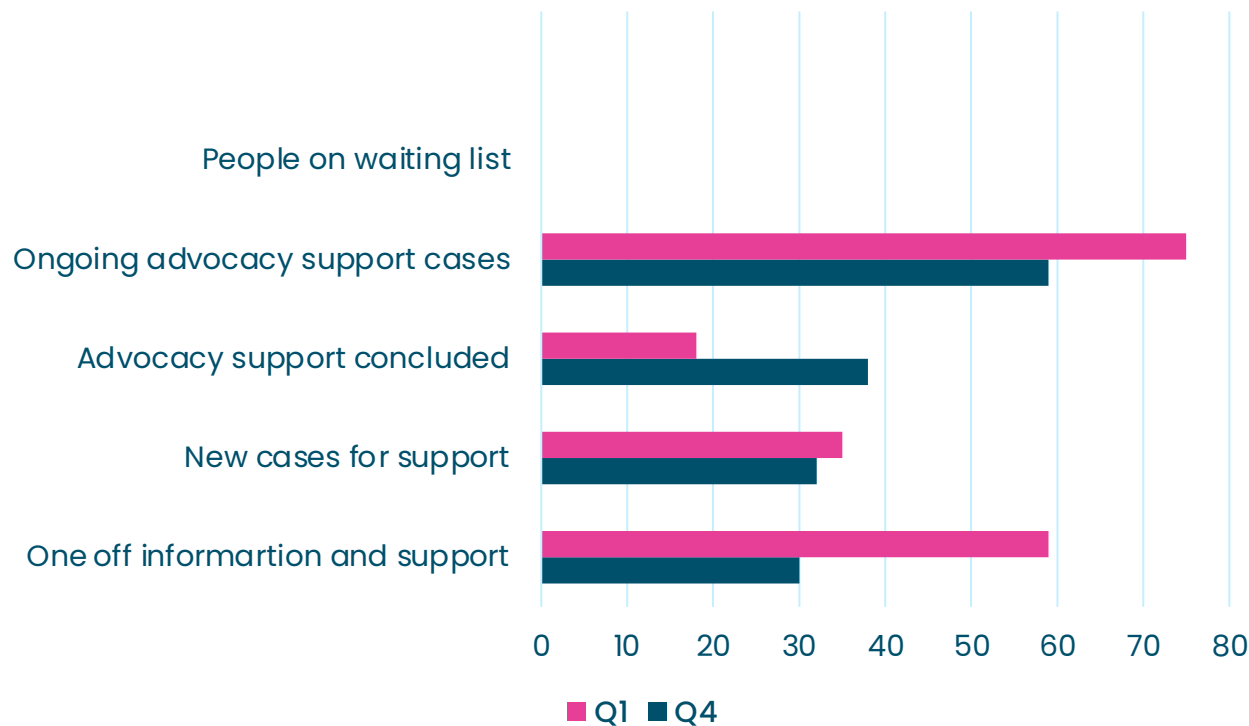
The progress of ongoing advocacy support cases is impacted by the delays experienced receiving complaint response letters and resolution meetings from local acute hospital Trusts.

A high number of the existing cases are complex complaints that require additional time and tailored support to each Client’s needs.

Last quarter comparison

	Key performance metrics for current and previous quarter	
	Q4	Q1
One off information and advice	30	58
New cases for support	33	35
People on waiting list	0	0
Advocacy support concluded	37	18
Ongoing advocacy support cases	59	76

Last quarter comparison



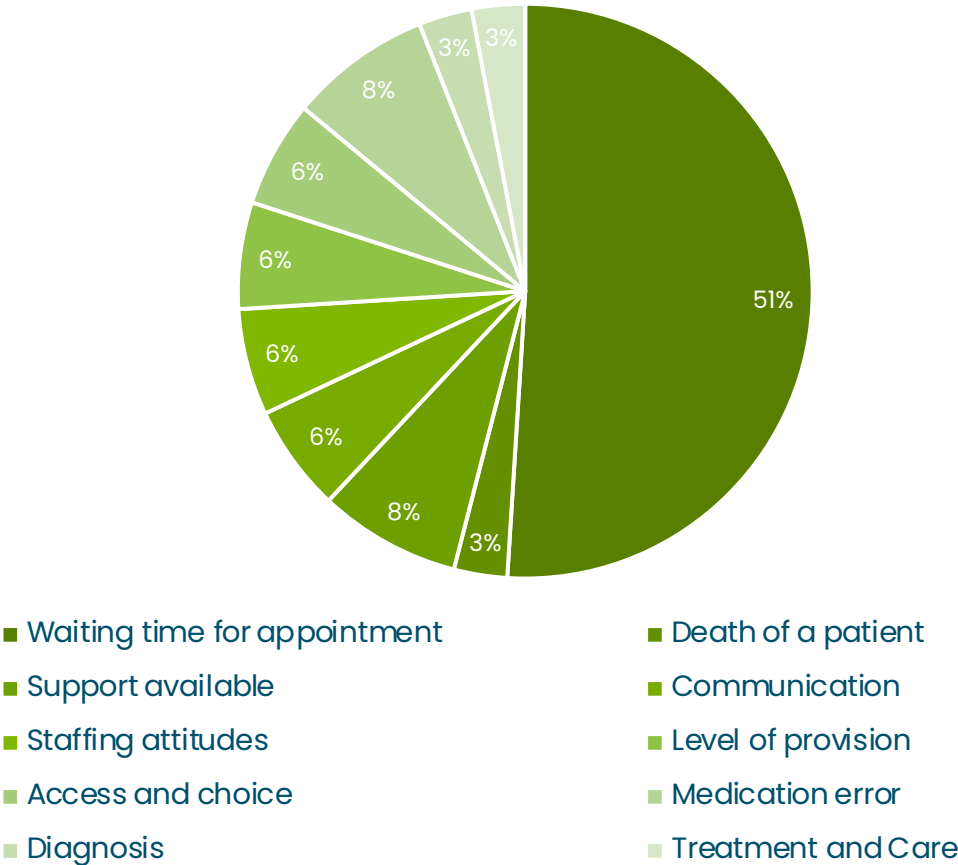
Summary

In quarter 1, there has been a rise in general enquiries for one-off information and support and a consistent number of new cases (33).

In quarter 4, the Team spent some time going through and closing down some older cases whereby they were waiting for a client to confirm closure, although after 3 attempts of contact had not received a response. The closure statistics in quarter 4 was particularly higher than the standard number of closed cases since per month. Therefore, case closures have reduced in quarter 1. This is also reflected in the rise of ongoing cases in quarter one.

Themes

New advocacy case themes

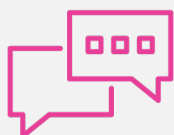


In quarter 1, the Team received complaints mostly regarding ‘**Treatment and Care**’ within local Healthcare Providers.

## Impact

**As delays in receiving a complaint response lengthen, and as it gets increasingly difficult to get answers from Complaint Departments, then our advocates are spending more and more time in trying to update Clients on the status of their complaint.**

### **The Client provided feedback:**

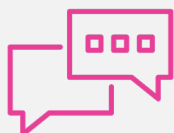


*I am so angry and upset about what they have put me through over so many years... I will not let this go until I secure a satisfactory outcome. Thank you again for everything. I really appreciate your continued efforts.*

Following the death of their son, a parent approached the IHCAS service for support. With the complaint being out of time, the only suggestion was to approach the GP Practice to see if a meeting could be arranged. It was agreed a short appointment/meeting.

When the time arrived to have the conversation, the GP provided a safe space for the Client to have a voice and to be heard. It was upsetting to discuss, although a positive resolution for the family at a very sad time for them.

### **The Client provided feedback:**



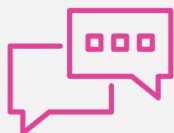
*I can never thank you enough, for your full support and strength you gave me through a terrible time in our lives. You were there for us when so many were not. The job you are doing meant the world to me when I felt so alone, it gave me the opportunity to speak and be heard. I wish there was more people like you in the world. Thankyou ★*

*I'm pleased my words helped, they came from my heart, we couldn't have got there without your caring, kindness and understanding. You're a legend, the work you do is priceless.*

Whilst acting on behalf of a Client on another complaint, they disclosed to an advocate that they were not happy with the treatment their father had received at an acute hospital Trust.

The Client decided they would also like to complain about this, so the advocate guided them through the process for this as well, and arranged a local resolution meeting with the Trust and prepared an agenda for the meeting.

### **The Client provided feedback:**



*Once again, thanks for absolutely everything, you being there for me throughout all of this means so much to me!*



## Challenges faced during the NHS Complaints Process

### Delays in receiving a complaint response

- Following the death of their father, a family approached IHCAS, requesting support to make a complaint with the Acute Hospital Trust. The complaint was submitted in April 2023 and to date, the family has still not received a written response. Such delays are commonplace.
- One Client wished to consider legal action against a Trust, but in order to do so, a solicitor often requires a complaint response. Unfortunately, after 14 months, the Trust has still not responded. This means the Client has been unable to find a solicitor and may have difficulties in making a claim in time.

### Delays in arranging resolution meetings

- A meeting was requested for a family following the death of their husband and father. They had outstanding questions following the inquest and made a request in October 2023. The family has finally been given a date for the meeting, which hopefully will take place in September 2024.
- A Client received her written complaint response letter regarding the death of her husband, in November 2023, and still had outstanding concerns. The normal process is to request a local resolution meeting with the Trust and was submitted in December 2023. Still to date, the Client has not received a date for the meeting. This is another example of the challenges faced by local people when trying to move forward.

### Lack of communication from PHSO

A Client decided to submit an application to the PHSO as they were not happy with the response they received to their complaint from an Acute Hospital Trust in West Sussex. The application was submitted in September 2023 and was allocated to a case worker in November 2023. The advocate struggled to receive updates and found out the above, during communication with an intake worker whilst enquiring about another case.

There was no communication from the PHSO (despite chasing emails and calls) from the date of submission, to when a decision was reached about the case in May 2024. The PHSO was asked to communicate their decision with the advocate and the Client and sent the decision only to the Client. The advocate found out 3 weeks after it had been issued.



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