

Citizens Advice Scotland

Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux



Consultation on Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities

Citizens Advice Scotland and its 81 CAB offices form Scotland's largest independent advice network. CAB advice services are delivered through over 250 service points throughout Scotland, from the islands to city centres.

The CAB service aims:

to ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities, or of the services available to them, or through an inability to express their need effectively

and equally

to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

The CAB service is independent and provides free, confidential and impartial advice to everybody regardless of race, sex, disability or sexuality.

Citizens Advice Scotland
Spectrum House, 2 Powderhall Road
Edinburgh EH7 4GB
Telephone: 0131 550 1000
Fax: 0131 550 1001
Email: info@cas.org.uk
Web: www.cas.org.uk

The Scottish Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux - Citizens Advice Scotland
(Scottish charity number SC016637)

Copyright © Citizens Advice Scotland, June 2012

No part of this publication may be reproduced without prior permission except for purposes of review or referral.

Table of contents

	Page
Question 1	
a) Do you think the level of detail in the Charter is useful and appropriate?	
b) Is there any information not included in the Charter that should be covered?	
c) What would make it better?	4
Question 2	
a) Do you think the information in the Charter is written in a way that is easy to understand?	
b) Does the format of the Charter make it easy to find the information you need?	
c) What would make it better?	4
Question 3	
Do you have any comments on the design of the Charter?	4
Question 4:	
a) What do you think is the most appropriate way for people to get a copy of the Charter?	
b) Do you agree that we should only make alternative formats available on request?	5
Question 5	
a) Do you have any comments on the balance of rights and responsibilities set out in the Charter?	
b) What would make it better?	6
Question 6	
Do you have any additional comments to make about the Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities?	7

Introduction

1. Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS) is the umbrella organisation for Scotland's network of 81 Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) offices. These bureaux deliver free, impartial and confidential frontline advice services through more than 250 service points across the country, from the city centres of Glasgow and Edinburgh to the Highlands, Islands and rural Borders communities.
2. The Citizens Advice Service aims to ensure that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the services available to them or through an inability to express their needs effectively'.
3. In 2010/11, Scottish Citizens Advice Bureaux dealt with 560,303 new issues. These issues covered a wide spectrum of advice needs ranging from benefits to housing, employment to debt, and consumer issues to utilities and many more. Benefits and debt made up nearly two thirds of issues brought to Bureaux in 2010/11. 143,556 new debt issues were brought by clients, which accounts for a quarter of all issues. Common debts includes credit card; personal loans, council tax arrears and overdrafts. Some of the benefits issues that were brought to bureaux by clients include 38,438 Disability Living Allowance issues (a fifth of all benefit issues); 19,536 Employment & Support Allowance issues; 5,130 Carers Allowance issues; 5,996 Incapacity Benefit issues, and 5,563 Attendance Allowance issues
4. The Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS) is a part of the CAB service in Scotland. The service is independent and provides free, confidential information, advice and support to anyone who uses the NHS in Scotland. It aims to support patients, their carers and families in their dealings with the NHS and in other matters affecting their health. The service promotes an awareness and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of patients. It also advises and supports people who wish to give feedback, make comments, raise concerns or make a complaint about treatment and care provided by the NHS in Scotland.
5. Citizens Advice Scotland welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Consultation on Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities.

Content

Question 1

- a) Do you think the level of detail in the Charter is useful and appropriate?
- b) Is there any information not included in the Charter that should be covered?
- c) What would make it better?

Question 2

- a) Do you think the information in the Charter is written in a way that is easy to understand?
- b) Does the format of the Charter make it easy to find the information you need?
- c) What would make it better?

Question 3

Do you have any comments on the design of the Charter?

- 6. CAS believes the level of detail in the Charter is useful and appropriate.
- 7. In response to 1 b) CAS would welcome the communication including contact details for PASS, ie 'you can find contact details for your local Citizens Advice Bureau in the phonebook or at www.cas.org.uk' instead of 'information about the availability of PASS' where this is mentioned.
- 8. CAS believe the information in the Charter is easy to understand
- 9. The design of the Charter is colourful and eye-catching.

Availability

Question 4:

- a) What do you think is the most appropriate way for people to get a copy of the Charter?
- b) Do you agree that we should only make alternative formats available on request?
-

10. CAS recommends that the Charter is available as widely as possible in both hard copy and electronically. It would be helpful if it was available from every NHS surgery, clinic and hospital so that people can access it as easily as possible.
11. The Patient Rights (Scotland) Act states that the Patient Advice and Support Service will, in particular "(a) promote an awareness and understanding of the rights and responsibilities of patients (and in particular, promote awareness of the Charter), and it would be useful to have copies of this available in Citizens Advice Bureau as the providers of the Patient Advice and Support Service. Citizens Advice Scotland would be able to help with the distribution of the Charter to all Citizens Advice Bureaux.
12. To ensure that people can get a copy of the Charter it would also be helpful for NHS staff to be aware of it so that they can direct people to copies of it when asked for it. It is vital that awareness raising is carried out amongst all NHS staff.

Rights and Responsibilities

Question 5

- a) Do you have any comments on the balance of rights and responsibilities set out in the Charter?
 - b) What would make it better?
-

13. CAS believes the rights and responsibilities set out in the Charter are well-balanced.

General

Question 6

Do you have any additional comments to make about the Charter of Patient Rights and Responsibilities?

14. Under 'You have the right to be registered with a GP practice' in the Access section, CAS would welcome the addition of information or reference to a website where patients can find out how to register with a GP.
15. Under 'You have the right to be registered with a GP practice' in the Access section CAS would welcome the addition of reference to the Patient Advice and Support Service after the sentence 'A GP may be able to remove you from the practice in some situations....', if a patient is unhappy about being removed from a practice, as on page 20 "The independent Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS) can help you with this."
16. Under the Communication section, CAS would welcome the addition of reference to the Patient Advice and Support Service after the sentence 'You can expect to be able to access information and advice on how to give feedback, make comments and raise concerns or complaints about the care you have received and the services you have used' as on page 20 "The independent Patient Advice and Support Service (PASS) can help you with this."
17. Under Confidentiality, 'You have the right to access your own health records', CAS would welcome reference to the Health Rights Information Scotland leaflet 'How to see your Health Records'
18. Under 'Comments and complaints', CAS would welcome the reference to the Patient Advice and Support Service being immediately after the sentence 'You should be given information and advice on how to give feedback and comments or raise concerns or complaints' as this is the main service being provided to support patients, their carers and families to provide feedback, comments, or raise concerns and complaints with the NHS as set out in the Patient Rights (Scotland) Act.
19. CAS is concerned that having the statement "You may ask to have an independent advocate to help you give your views" before the mention of PASS may lead to clients being misdirected to the wrong source of information, advice and support.
20. On page 21, What does the NHS in Scotland expect from me? CAS would welcome the removal of the sentence "The independent Patient Advice

and Support Service (PASS) may be able to tell you where to get information about specialist solicitors who handle negligence claims.” This could be replaced with a reference to the Law Society of Scotland.

21. On page 21, under What does the NHS in Scotland expect from me? CAS would recommend the wording “You should give positive or negative feedback” being made softer and changed to “You can give positive and negative feedback.”
22. On page 22, under Part 2: What if my rights have not been respected? the name of the Patient Advice and Support Service is incorrect as the word ‘Advice’ ‘and’ are in the wrong order. CAS would appreciate this being amended.
23. In part 3: How can I find out more? CAS would welcome the inclusion of a reference to the HRIS website where these documents currently sit.
24. Under ‘For Information, help and advice’ on page 25, CAS would welcome the addition of more information about what the Patient Advice and Support Service does. CAS would welcome the inclusion of information from the PASS leaflet, as follows “The Patient Advice and Support Service is an independent service which provides free, accessible and confidential information, advice and support to patients, their carers and families about NHS healthcare. The Patient Advice and Support Service:
 - can provide you with information, advice and support if you want to give feedback or comments, or raise concerns or complaints, about healthcare provided by NHS Scotland
 - helps you understand your rights and responsibilities as a patient
 - works with the National Health Service (NHS) in Scotland to improve healthcare provision – work that can be done because of the feedback you provide.

Visit www.cas.org.uk or use the phone book to find your local CAB.”

25. CAS would welcome the opportunity to be involved in the promotion and marketing of the Charter to patients as part of the Patient Advice and Support Service’s role.