

Document 1

# **VoiceAbility Scotland Quarterly Report**

FY21 Q4; 01/01/2022 – 31/03/2022

# VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
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# Executive Summary

## Headlines

VoiceAbility successfully launched its Social Security Scotland benefits advocacy service on behalf of the people of Scotland. Our 17 personnel have successfully been trained and began providing benefits advocacy for disabled people across Scotland. We have passionately been working to ensure that we fulfil our part of Scotland's commitment that it is the entitlement of anyone in Scotland with disabilities to have access to an independent advocate.

Due to the lack of referrals from Social Security Scotland, our team is taking proactive steps to network with partners across Scotland to build relationships between them and our advocates to both provide awareness and to eventually begin generating referrals.

We have used the standards set forth in the 2018 Social Security Scotland Act and in our contract with Social Security Scotland as our benchmarks in terms of quality assurance and measuring KPIs. The attached Excel document provides the performance data and this document provides accompanying narrative.

## Successes

VoiceAbility Scotland successfully recruited advocates across all 11 health boards in Scotland allowing the team to be positioned to take care of the initial wave of clients. All our advocates are trained in accordance with the advocacy standards laid out in the Social Security Scotland Act and in line with advocacy best practise standards established by VoiceAbility's experience in advocacy services – see Appendix 3. Additionally, all advocates are fully set up to work remotely both with computers and mobile phones.

VoiceAbility launched its webchat function on the VoiceAbility website this month making us the first and only advocacy organisation in the UK to offer webchat services, thus further increasing the accessibility of disabled people seeking benefits advocacy in Scotland.

## Challenges

VoiceAbility faces 3 challenges that have been identified in Q4.

1. no referrals from Social Security Scotland
2. low case loads as a result of low referrals
3. the challenge to recruit in the more remote areas in Scotland.

The referral numbers are not what was expected. Throughout the tender and implementation processes there was a clear expectation that we would receive referrals from Social Security Scotland. There are a number of concerns which include:

- Guidance has not been produced for agency staff to refer entitled clients to VoiceAbility. This has resulted in agency staff not understanding that access to advocacy is an entitlement, and some agency staff publicly stating that VoiceAbility are one of a number of providers that can be referred to for Social Security advocacy

- The advocacy service not being mentioned in external media articles whilst other providers, for example CAB and SIAA, were mentioned

To address the low referral numbers, and consequential low case numbers, we are building local networks and actively promoting the service. We have additionally been able to identify knowledge gaps, for example in use of IT, amongst some advocates and use the spare capacity to provide additional learning where required.

The challenge to recruit also presents the opportunity to find someone that possesses knowledge of the required areas that would allow us to begin building networks in areas where we otherwise may not have had connections. We are already in contact with Fair Start Scotland Providers to help us recruit for remote areas such as Shetland and Orkney.

# Report

## 1. Key Performance Indicators:

### 1.1 KPI Summary

VoiceAbility received 38 referrals with 18 of those turning into cases. All referrals were allocated to an advocate within an average time of 1 business day, and all initial appointments with clients were organised within an average time of 2 business days meeting KPIs 1 and 2. KPIs 3, 4, 5, and 7 were deemed not applicable as we have not had any complaints nor concerns filed against us, we have had no serious issues that have needed escalation, and we have no sub-contractors. For KPI 6, we are at 73.3% (12/18) rate for the issuance of satisfaction surveys which is short of the 95% milestone. However, this issue was rectified early in the process and there was an awareness gap regarding the process for sending satisfaction surveys and training was conducted to ensure that this did not happen again.

## 2. Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

The Scotland Call Centre received 267 calls, connected 253 calls, 2 were missed, and 12 were short abandons putting 6/8 call centre specific KPIs within tolerance. Adjusting for short abandons, for KPI 2 we were at 99% due to the 2 missed calls. For KPI 5, we fell 6% short of the 95% milestone with an 89% service level due to 28 inbound calls that were not classified.

Both KPIs have already been addressed by undergoing an extensive examination of call centre standard operation procedures and further training on how to use the call system to ensure no calls are missed and that all inbound calls are classified.

### **3. Individuals (Clients)**

#### **3.1 The Number of Clients Supported**

VoiceAbility initiated its advocacy service supporting the people of Scotland and Social Security Scotland with a total of 18 cases to date. Of the 18 cases, 3 cases remain open as service continues to be provided meaning 15 have been closed as of 16 March 2022.

The case numbers to date are below the anticipated figures even given the service's recent inception. VoiceAbility has taken deliberate, strategic steps to generate increased case numbers namely a grassroots outreach campaign that is targeting GPs, local authorities, community centres, job centres, and relevant local groups to increase awareness of our service. Additionally, VoiceAbility remains plugged in with Social Security Scotland to work to create interlocked processes that directly drive an increase in referrals as people contact Social Security Scotland about benefits. Our Team Leaders have already begun coordinating with Social Security Scotland's local delivery relationship team to synchronise efforts between our two teams.

#### **3.2 Geographic Split of Clients**

To date, most of the cases have been centred on the greater Glasgow area and North and South Lanarkshire, but there are cases represented from 11 different geographic districts. We will continue to monitor the case load in the area and ensure that we have additional advocates ready to provide coverage if the future cases continue to trend in this direction.

#### **3.3 Equality Act Statistics**

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistics as of 16 March 2022 can be found in the attached FY21 Q4 Data Report. With the case numbers at their current levels, we do not yet have enough data points to provide significant analysis of how these numbers align with their corresponding breakdown amongst Scotland as a whole. Once we have higher case numbers, we will then start comparing the numbers against the entire population to determine if we are not reaching certain demographics. Understanding this will enable VoiceAbility Scotland to adjust and refocus our outreach methods to ensure everyone who needs to use an advocate has the option to do so as is their right.

Regarding communication, VoiceAbility remains committed to providing accessibility to our service to anyone, so while English has been the predominate method of communication, we offer over 100 language options to meet the needs of anyone in Scotland.

#### **3.4 Number of Onward Referrals**

Out of the 18 referrals that did not turn into cases, 11 of them were signposted to the organisations listed in the table above that could best assist the individual with their needs.

#### **3.5 Unmet Demand**

Regarding unmet demands, VoiceAbility received 11 enquiries that we were not commissioned to provide service for, and we were able to signpost on to other organisations.

## 4. Requests and Referrals

### 4.1 Requests for Support

For requests for support, 38 referrals have been received to date. The sections below will provide the breakdown of the geographic split of the referrals and the percentage of referrals that turned into cases.

### 4.2 Geographic Spread of Requests

The geographic split of all the referrals encompasses a broader area than those for only the cases. Glasgow and its surrounding areas still account for the 21% of the referrals, but the initial data shows referrals from 15 counties across Scotland.

### 4.3 Referrals Received

Out of the 38 referrals that VoiceAbility has received, 47% of them have converted into a case.

### 4.4 Referring Agencies and Organisations

Of the 18 cases to date, 89% (16) of the cases have been self-referred. This number should be viewed with caution as this trend will not hold steady once Social Security Scotland begin to refer to us. Our own awareness raising of the service amongst the general population, professionals, and public organisations will also impact the proportion of self-referrals.

## 5. Allocation and First Contact

### 5.1 Referral Allocation

For the number of referrals allocated to an advocate upon receipt, 100% have been allocated within the KPI criteria of 2 business days, with 77% allocated on the same day as receipt.

We anticipate these numbers to remain the same when the number of cases increase as the team has taken this as an opportunity to create sustainable processes that allow for our advocates to quickly receive and action new referrals.

### 5.2 First Contact

For the days until first contact was made with a client, 100% were within the 2 business days, with 72% contacted on the same day with the average being less than 1 business day.

### **5.3 First Appointment and Average Response Time**

100% of cases saw the associated advocates set up the first appointment within 3 business days with the average of less than 1 business days for when the first appointment was scheduled.

This data tells us that our advocates are being extremely responsive and are largely making first contact and scheduling the first appointment within the day the case is initiated.

## **6. Service Administration**

### **6.1 Total Hours Worked**

For total hours worked, we logged 650.22 hours doing benefits advocacy work and 857.31 hours doing miscellaneous work. Benefits advocacy includes work such as direct client work and research. Miscellaneous work includes training, outreach and networking. Over time we will be able to compare changes in activities and will see the hours logged on benefits advocacy work increase.

### **6.2 Onward Referrals**

As discussed in section 3.4, we have signposted 11 referrals to external organisations.

### **6.3 Unmet Demand**

With referral numbers being at their current levels, it is difficult to identify if there is any unmet demand currently. Referrals that do not meet the criteria to become cases are signposted as appropriate as seen in sections 3.4 and 6.2.

### **6.4 Feedback and Complaints**

As of 24 March 2022, VoiceAbility has not yet received back the content of the satisfaction surveys. Anecdotally, the response from the clients to our advocates has been positive.

### **6.5 Concerns**

VoiceAbility has not received any concerns at this time.

## **7. Compliance**

### **7.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance**

VoiceAbility's quality management plan ensures that all social security advocacy service standards are met in time and in compliance. Currently, we are in the process of fully integrating our Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) into every process within the team. This will ensure that disabled people in Scotland receive consistently high-quality support from our advocates.



Part of the QAF is the Quality Action Plan developed and maintained by the contract manager that feeds into the continuous improvement of the service.

To further ensure quality, we will be conducting advocacy practice supervision, a form of work performance review and professional development; quarterly practice audits; and routine training to reinforce knowledge of VoiceAbility’s advocacy standards that are in alignment with Scotland Social Security standards.

## 7.2 Communication

VoiceAbility has systems in place to address language barriers, sensory impairments, cognitive impairments, and physical disabilities. Tools such as access to interpreting services, digital materials that are screen-reader optimised, information available in large print, easy read, and flexible advocate support facilitate anyone to have access to benefits advocacy through VoiceAbility.

## 7.3 Partnership

VoiceAbility has taken its first steps in creating a grassroots network of partners by utilising our advocates as local representatives for the service that we provide. Currently, our staff are identifying and reaching out to relevant local partners to discuss our service and to create the initial links that will eventually generate referrals where appropriate and will assist communities around Scotland.

## 8. Staffing

See Appendix 3 for supporting data for all the below subsections.

### 8.1 Staffing

The team consists of 18 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 2 Team Leaders
- 1 Training Manager
- 12 Advocates
- 1 Referral/Information Advocate

We have a further 5 Advocates and 1 Volunteer Co-ordinator due to join in April.

Table 8.1

<b>Vetting, Qualification, and Training</b>		
<i>Measure:</i>	<i>% of Staff:</i>	<i>Narrative:</i>
Has in date PVG check	94%	1 outstanding, applied for on 24 Feb

Completed internal mandatory training	94%	Ops Manager will start 18 April with the next wave of new staff
Completed AAQ certification?	0%	Only applies to Advocates
Completed AAQ Diploma	0%	Only applies to Advocates
Working on AAQ Certificate	100%	Only applies to Advocates

## 9. Trends and Insights

### 9.1 Q4 Analysis

To date, Social Security Scotland have not referred anyone to VoiceAbility. Throughout the tender and implementation processes there was a clear expectation that we would receive referrals from Social Security Scotland. This lack of referrals needs to be addressed as a matter of priority.

To address the low referral numbers, and consequential low case numbers, we are building local networks and actively promoting the service. We have additionally been able to identify knowledge gaps, for example in use of IT, amongst some advocates and use the spare capacity to provide additional learning where required.

As referral numbers increase we will be able to analyse the data to understand if there are certain demographics that we are not reaching. Identifying these gaps in coverage will feedback into our Quality Action Plan and enable us to target our promotional work.

### 9.2 Gaps in Service Provision

The current gap in provision identified is coverage of rural areas such as Shetland, Orkney, and Moray. Remote areas of Scotland prove difficult to find staff and the remoteness also challenges our advocates' abilities to be as co-located as possible for potential in-person advocacy.

### 9.3 Actions Taken and Planned Improvements

*Case numbers:* VoiceAbility will continue to work with Social Security Scotland to begin receiving referrals from the agency. Additionally, VoiceAbility will also conduct targeted outreach and build relationship with regional partners to begin organically creating exposure for our service and to begin generating additional avenues of referrals. Part of the outreach plan is conducting strategic media and social media campaigns to increase the avenues for outreach.

*Internal Processes:* Has provided us with an excellent opportunity to evaluate our internal procedures for both reporting in Salesforce and in the Call Centre. We are in the process of evaluating what the number that we have to date mean, and how we can adjust our actions in preparation for increased workflow.

Part of that examination is further training for staff. Tasks for the advocates can be quite technical and to facilitate every degree of digital literacy, we will continue to train our advocates to ensure that they expertly utilise all our systems.

*Recruitment:* We have identified a potential gap in coverage in rural areas in Scotland as discussed in the previous section. To address this, our recruitment efforts will specifically target providers such as Fair Start Scotland providers to aid in our search. This potentially will have the dual effect of hiring local staff to address the immediate advocacy needs and will increase awareness of VoiceAbility in these areas.

## **9.4 Feedback from Steering Group**

With the onboarding of our Volunteer Coordinator in April, plans for launching the Steering Group will move forward. The Volunteer Coordinator will work with the Operations Manager to organise the group and bring in disabled people to begin receiving feedback on how to better cater our service to disabled people in Scotland.

# **10. Social Value**

## **10.1 Evidence of Community Benefits**

We are actively planning methods to engage with and create mutually beneficial relationships with community partners and individuals. For instance, we aim to start apprenticeship recruiting during our next stage of recruitment in August that will create opportunities for people to develop skillsets that will benefit themselves and the communities that they will work in.

Additionally, we seek to work with SQA and the Scottish Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Board to support the development of a Level 8 MA, likely utilising the Health and Social Care Apprenticeship Framework though this may delay initial recruiting efforts.

We take every opportunity to work with community partners such as Fair Start Scotland providers who can support our recruitment and aid unemployed, NEET, or anyone who experiences other barriers to employment.

## **10.2 Compliance with Greener Scotland**

VoiceAbility actively contributes to the Greener Scotland Initiative by:

1. Reducing waste through use of digital file storage to significantly reduce the need to print and the encouragement of recycling and reuse where possible.
2. Encouraging the conservation of energy by turning off lights and appliances when not in use and minimizing the use of central heating.

3. Employing a home-based, co-located model that ensures that even when advocates need to do face-to-face visits, they are travelling the shortest possible distances.

### **10.3 Compliance with Fair Work Framework**

VoiceAbility takes its commitment to fair work practices extremely serious as seen by our proactive implementation of measures that put the wellbeing and prosperity of the staff first. VoiceAbility does this by:

1. Providing opportunities to invest in recruiting, skill development, and training.
2. Providing career development through goal setting and mentorship sessions with their managers and supervisors.
3. Paying staff a living wage to ensure our people have security of income.

We also host an EDI forum to empower staff to understand the benefits of a diverse workforce and have a gender pay gap of 2%.

## **11. Promotion, Groupwork & Involvement**

VoiceAbility staff have been actively researching and reaching out to local partners in their respective areas to promote our service but to also better understand the area that they are operating in.

## **12. Safeguarding & Governance**

We have had no safeguarding issues at this time. VoiceAbility staff are trained on the proper procedures in the event of a safeguarding issue either in person, on the phone, or digitally.

# Appendix 1. Glossary of Terms

As explained in the communication accompanying this report, some of our terminology has changed. This outlines the terms we use, and their definition, for added clarity and transparency

Term	Definition
Active	The point at which an advocate has begun work with and on behalf of the client.
Assigned	A case has been acknowledged and assigned to an advocate, but the service has not yet begun for the client.
Billable Hours	This is the new terminology for “Delivery Hours”, or all eligible work related to the delivery of this contract. Our new approach to recording will provide greater transparency and clarity into this for all commissioners.
Case	How we refer to a piece of work related to a single issue or process, defined by the referrer.
Case Origin	How a referrer or client first made contact. This can be via email, phone, website, letter or in person.
Case Throughput	Cases that have been open before, during and after the quarter we are reporting on. This is broken down by service type and illustrates overall trends in referrals and case lengths.
Closure Reason: Advocacy Completed	The client’s wishes and best interest have been considered and an outcome has been achieved with the client’s best interest at heart. The client no longer requires the advocate’s expertise.
Closure Reason: Client Decision	The client may feel they no longer require advocacy support.
Closure Reason: Service Discontinued	The advocacy service has been transferred to a different provider, or if non-statutory, funding may have been discontinued. This would be explained in a narrative.
Closure Reason: Unable to Contact	There have been multiple efforts to contact the client, both via information provided from a referrer and/or through the referrer, but without success.
Delivery Modality	This demonstrates the way in which we’ve worked with clients, whether by email, phone, video or in person. It demonstrates the varied approaches being taken to maintain contact throughout the pandemic and beyond.
Group Activity	This may be an advocacy peer-to-peer group activity where the event is set-up to be attended by more than 2 people.
Involvement Activity	Activity or event whereby clients, and/or their family and other professionals attend an event either in person or remotely. This could be an evaluation/feedback event.

Legacy Product	Our new system links work directly to contracts using the service type (advocacy type in most cases) to ensure that we only undertake work which we are commissioned for. In a small number of cases, advocacy which didn't match the service types available on a contract, were identified. These have been recorded as "legacy product". Work is being undertaken to resolve these cases.
Migration Duplicate	In the process of transferring data from our new to old systems, we identified a small number of duplicate cases. These were merged, and one closed, to ensure no further duplication
NIA	Non-instructed Advocacy, this is how we work with people who are unable to communicate their views and wishes for reasons of disability, impairment or illness. To maximise people's ability to communicate, all advocates are trained in multiple communication methods, and are able to access interpreters and signing advocates where appropriate. All advocates are also trained in providing rights based non-instructed advocacy
Outcomes	See Appendix 2
Promotional Activity	This is the new terminology for "Awareness Raising". This could be in person events, online promotion, raising awareness with stakeholders and other organisations and professionals.
Salesforces	The name of our new case and contract management system
Service Type	This is the type of service provided to a client. In most cases, these are types of advocacy

# Appendix 2. Outcomes

## GOALS

A client's desired changes and outcomes.

### Outcomes:

- I am happy with what's happened as a result of advocacy support

## MY LIFE

A client has control of their life, reduced isolation and knowledge to support independence.

### Outcomes:

- I am being treated with respect & dignity
- I have good economic well-being
- I am getting the care, support or treatment I want
- I have increased independence
- I can access the community & social networks I want

## MY RIGHTS

A client's understanding of their rights to ensure safety and increased protection from harm.

### Outcomes:

- I have been kept safe from people or situations which could harm me
- I know what my rights are
- My rights are protected

## MY VOICE

A client has increased confidence and knows the value of their voice.

### Outcomes:

- I feel confident
- I know my voice will make/has made a difference to decision making
- I was listened to & people understood me
- I can access & use information to help me make decisions
- I understand the choices I can make
- I was able to challenge a decision or make a complaint

### Outcome scoring:

*The higher the score, the better the outcome.*

1. I can't do this
2. Someone is helping me
3. I am beginning to understand/learn
4. I am beginning to do this myself/things are getting better
5. Things are as good as they can be

### NIA: GOALS

A client's desired changes and outcomes.

**Outcomes:**

- **Advocacy means the client's rights, likely wishes & feelings are represented & acknowledged**

### NIA: MY LIFE

A client's quality of life is improving, their wishes and views are expressed and their care/support is right.

**Outcomes:**

- **As a result of advocacy, the client has a better quality of life**
- **A client is getting the right care, support or treatment**

### NIA: MY RIGHTS

A client and their rights are safe and protected.

**Outcomes:**

- **The client's rights are protected**
- **The client has been kept safe from people or situations which could harm them**

### NIA: MY VOICE

A client's wishes and feelings are being heard, considered and impacting decisions regarding their life, including their care and support.

**Outcomes:**

- **The client's wishes & feelings made a difference to the decision that was made**
- **The client's wishes & feelings were listened to (or heard) and understood**
- **A complaint was made, or a decision challenged on behalf of the client**

#### **Non-Instructed Advocacy Outcome scoring:**

*The higher the score, the better the outcome.*

- 1. Client can't address this**
- 2. Making progress**
- 3. Things are as good as they can be**



# Appendix 3. Internal Advocacy Training

## Induction Training: 3-week programme

Modules covered:	Introduction to VoiceAbility
	Advocacy
	Disability Awareness
	Social Security Scotland: overview, application process, appeal process
	Safeguarding
	Salesforce
	Horizon

## Post Induction Training

Internal	Multiple Salesforce Drop-In sessions	completed
	Buddy Week (week 1 live)	completed
	Webchat Training for the Information Referral Handler	completed
	LoneAlert Training	to be arranged
	Story Telling	to be arranged
	Advocacy Standards Refresher	to be arranged
	Adult Disability Payment	completed

External	x12 advocates have started their advocacy award qualification	in progress
	x1 individual has completed their local authorities child and adult protection course	completed

**VoiceAbility  
Scotland  
Quarterly  
Report**

FY22/23 Q1; 01/04/2022 – 30/06/2022

## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY22/23 Q1 April 2022 – June 2022
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## Executive Summary

### Headlines

From 1 March 2022 VoiceAbility are successfully delivering benefits advocacy on behalf of the people of Scotland. Moving from the first quarter of the service into the second we have seen a sizeable increase in referrals and cases from across Scotland. We have received referrals from across 23 different local authority areas and we have cases from 17 local authorities. VoiceAbility's community engagement and networking strategy have made meaningful connections that will provide long-term sources of clients so that we can ensure everyone who is entitled to the service has access.

FY22/23 Q1 showed strong numbers from Glasgow (9), the largest number of cases coming from Dundee City (11). This is partly due to the release of ADP in the area. Additionally, we received cases from 6 new local authorities bringing the total to 17 local authorities represented.

### Successes

1. 122% increase in cases
2. Networking/Community Engagement
3. First Social Security Scotland referrals

FY22/23 Q1 saw a 122% increase in cases from the previous quarter indicating that our networking efforts as well as Social Security Scotland's internal efforts to engage with agency staff have begun showing results.

VoiceAbility has established relationships with partners across Scotland to 1) establish referral pathways through which professionals can refer clients to us for advocacy and 2) build links in the local communities for our advocates to best support clients get the exact help that they require by the best possible provider. To do this, our advocates have contacted nearly 2,000 organisations to build these relationships and to simultaneously foster awareness of our service.

Additionally, the combined efforts of VoiceAbility, Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland to best identify ways in which we can best work with the agency have begun to pay off as we have received our first 2 agency referrals this quarter. This is a significant milestone that everyone involved should be proud of. This milestone was accomplished by the numerous measures planned between the commissioner and VoiceAbility such as: the inclusion of a link to VoiceAbility in the Common Component, setting up a meetings with Client Service Operations to determine more ways to raise awareness of the service, developing the plan to amend the guidance for the interim service and the comprehensive service, and sending out an internal awareness bulletin to agency staff for a 2 week period to ensure awareness of the service.

### Challenges

1. Continuing to grow case numbers
2. The challenge to recruit in the more remote areas in Scotland
3. Ensuring that internal processes continue to function to standard with new staff onboarding

While we have seen success from our current lines of effort, the continued work to grow case numbers is also one of our greatest challenges. We want to continuously challenge our assumptions of what we think is working and evaluate which areas we still need to break into and how to do so. We analyse our data on a weekly and monthly basis to understand where we are having the most success and we perform root cause analysis to determine which techniques and methods being used by our advocates may be having the most success. Additionally, we look at what external factors are going on in that region that may be contributing to growth. Once we have identified all key factors, we look to see how we can implement them into our processes.

For recruiting remote areas, we have ongoing efforts to find staff that can best provide advocacy in Shetland, Orkney, and Moray. We are in contact with the Fair Start Scotland providers and many more employability programmes to help support this.

Lastly, we constantly evaluate our internal processes and performance to ensure that our advocates are trained and remain current in their knowledge of VoiceAbility systems, policies, and procedures so that clients can be guaranteed the best possible service.

## Organisational News

### **Mental health reform in Scotland**

We submitted a response to part 3 of the Mental Health Law Review currently taking place in Scotland. As a member of ALLIANCE, we also fed in evidence to their response.

### **Autistic Pride: how advocacy helped Alex become ‘more authentically me’**

Read Alex’s experience of advocacy support from VoiceAbility, in his own words [here](#).

### **Queen’s Speech 2022: what’s on the government’s agenda?**

The Queen’s Speech marks the opening of a new parliament and offers us insight into the laws that the government plan to pass over the course of this parliamentary period. Charlotte Gill, VoiceAbility’s Director of Policy, Public Affairs and Communications, reflects on what the government has put forward as its legislative priorities and what else we are working on in [this short article](#).

### **VoiceAbility advocates shortlisted for outstanding advocacy at national awards**

The National Advocacy Awards were held in Birmingham and VoiceAbility staff were represented for the first time. Amanda Lewis was shortlisted for her outstanding advocacy practice whilst Speak Out Cambridgeshire was recognised for the excellent co-production of a training package for lawyers working in the Court of Protection. You can read more [here](#).

**VoiceAbility launched their new personalised learning experience – the Learning Hub** for all staff and volunteers. It was developed to support induction, professional development and to

ensure a consistent approach to training and to record ongoing learning and support excellence in practice across the organisation. An introduction can be found [here](#)

## Report

### 1. Key Performance Indicators:

#### 1.1 KPI Summary

No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	100%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	100%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	N/A
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	63%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

This quarter, VoiceAbility received 85 referrals with 40 of those converting into cases. All eligible referrals were allocated to an advocate with an average time of less than 1 business day, and 100% of initial appointments with clients were organised within an average time of 3 business thus meeting KPIs 1 and 2. KPIs 3, 4, 5, and 7 were deemed not applicable as we have not had any complaints nor concerns filed against us, we have had no serious issues that have needed escalation, and we have no sub-contractors.

For KPI 6, we are at 63% (12/19) for satisfaction surveys sent due to advocates not sending a satisfaction survey in cases that were a signpost or if a client stopped responding. After speaking with the advocates after this practice was identified, the satisfaction survey has been updated to be more applicable to cases that ended in the ways mentioned above. Advocates have been informed that satisfaction surveys should be sent 100% of the times regardless of case outcome. This is currently being monitored.

## 2. Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

No	Call Centre Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	80% of all calls and webchats answered with 20 seconds	80%	88.00%
2	100% of calls and webchats answered with one minute	100%	99%
3	Average handling time of an enquiry 5 minutes (this KPI does not apply to remote advocacy delivery)	Average of 5 minutes	7.05
4	Under 5% abandon rate	<5%	6.00%
5	95% call classification capture of all inbound calls	95%	64%*
6	All e-mail, out of hours webchat and voicemail enquiries processed within one working day for urgent	Within 1 working day	100%



7	All online referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within one working day	Within 1 working day	100%
8	All eligible referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within two working days	Within 2 working days	100%

The Scotland Call Centre connected 386 calls, a 53% increase from Q4, with 6/8 call centre KPIs being met and KPIs 4 and 5 being outside of tolerance. For KPI 5, 64% of the calls were classified due to a redundant measure put in place to log classifications in Salesforce as well as Horizon after the issue was identified. This issue was identified back in April and has been in conversation between our Horizon contact and our IT department. For KPI 4, the short abandon rate finished at 6% for the quarter due to 25 short abandons e.g.: client hanging up.

### 3. Individuals (Clients)

#### 3.1 The Number of Clients Supported

In FY22/23 Q1, VoiceAbility received 40 cases, a 122% increase from the previous quarter, and closed 21 of those cases within the quarter. While the cases are still below the originally anticipated numbers, VoiceAbility has seen a marked increase in cases. This is a testament to the tireless networking efforts of our advocates who have started the process of building long-term partnerships with local providers who have begun sending referrals. Additionally, we received our first two referrals from Social Security Scotland. Thanks to the burgeoning channels of communications through Scottish Government being built between VoiceAbility and Social Security Scotland. We fully anticipate that this number and the number of referrals from local providers as the efforts of all parties continue to come to rise as links strengthen and awareness of the service increases.

#### 3.2 Geographic Split of Cases

Opened Date →	1 Jan – 30 Mar 22	1 Apr – 30 Jun 22	Total	
Postcodes.io Admin District ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	From SSS
Aberdeenshire	1	0	1	0
City of Edinburgh	1	2	3	0
Clackmannanshire	0	1	1	0
Dundee City	1	11	12	1
West Lothian	0	1	1	0
East Lothian	1	0	1	0
Fife	0	1	1	0

Glasgow City	5	9	14	0
North Lanarkshire	1	3	4	0
North Ayrshire	0	2	2	1
Perth and Kinross	0	2	2	0
Renfrewshire	2	0	2	0
Scottish Borders	1	0	1	0
South Lanarkshire	3	1	4	0
Stirling	1	2	3	0
West Dunbartonshire	1	1	2	0
Highland	0	1	1	0
Unknown	0	3	3	0
	18	40	58	2

FY22/23 Q1 showed strong numbers from Glasgow (9), the largest number of cases coming from Dundee City (11). This is partly due to the release of ADP in the area this quarter, along with the successful networking with partners. Additionally, we received cases from 6 new local authorities bringing the total to 17 local authorities represented.

### 3.3 Equality Act Statistics

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistics can be found in 'Individuals (Clients)' tab in the attached FY22/23 Q1 Data Report. However, a brief summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below:

#### Top 5 Support Needs:

- Mental Health (22%)
- Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis (13%)
- Other Support Needs (13%)
- Physical Disability (11%)
- Learning Disability (11%)

#### Age Breakdown:

- 0-17 (42%)
- 18-49 (28%)
- 50+ (23%)

Please note that we encountered some reluctance from clients to provide information for some of the EDI statistics so there are some gaps in the data. We are internally discussing the best timing and techniques to use to make client's feel comfortable in providing EDI information so that we can better understand the demographics that are using the service and equally important, the demographics that are not using the service.

### 3.4 Number of Onward Referrals

Enquiry: Created Date →		1 Jan – 30 Mar 22	1 Apr – 30 Jun 22	Total
Closure Reason ↑	Organisation Signposted To ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Ineligible Referral/Case	Citizens Advice Scotland	1	0	1
	Department of Work & Pensions	0	2	2
	Local Authority	1	0	1
Signpost	Advocard	1	0	1
	Angus Independent Advocacy	1	0	1
	CAS Kirkintilloch	1	0	1
	Citizens Advice Scotland	1	21	22
	Disability Unit - DWP	4	3	7
	Glasgow City Council	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>37</b>

Out of the 45 referrals that did not turn into cases, 26 were signposted to the organisations listed in the table above that could best assist the individual with their needs. Of the 26, 81% (21) were signposted to Citizens Advice Scotland and the remainder were signposted to DWP.

### 3.5 Unmet Demand

Regarding unmet demands, the 5 signposts to DWP hint at some of the demand that will come with the transfer from PIP to ADP.

## 4. Requests and Referrals

### 4.1 Requests for Support

For requests for support, 85 referrals were received in FY22/23 Q1. The sections below will provide the breakdown of the geographic split of the referrals and the percentage of referrals that turned into cases.

## 4.2 Geographic Spread of Requests

<b>Geographic Split of All Referrals</b>	<b>1 Jan – 30 Mar 22</b>	<b>1 Apr – 30 Jun 22</b>	
<i>Location:</i>	Record Count	Record Count	<i>Total:</i>
Aberdeenshire	2	4	6
Angus	2	0	2
Ayrshire	0	5	5
City of Edinburgh	3	4	7
Clackmannanshire	0	6	6
Dumfries & Galloway	0	1	1
Dundee City	2	9	11
East Dunbartonshire	2	0	2
East Lothian	1	0	1
Falkirk	0	1	1
Fife	1	3	4
Glasgow City	8	16	24
Highland	1	3	4
Midlothian	0	2	2
North Lanarkshire	2	3	5
Perth & Kinross	0	5	5
Renfrewshire	2	1	3
Scottish Borders	2	2	4
South Lanarkshire	4	7	11
Stirling	1	4	5
Undisclosed	4	5	9
West Dunbartonshire	1	0	1
West Lothian	0	1	1
Western Isles	0	3	3
<b>Total:</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>123</b>

The geographic split of all the referrals encompasses a broader area than those for only the cases. Glasgow, North and South Lanarkshire account for 31% of the referrals and we have now received referrals from 23 different local authorities.

## 4.3 Referrals Received

Out of the 85 referrals that VoiceAbility received in FY22/23 Q1, 47% of them have converted into a case. This aligns with the overall average of total referrals. Of the 123 total referrals received in Q4 and Q1, there is a 47% total conversion rate.

It is important to note that 100% of our referrals received from Social Security Scotland carried over into a case.

#### **4.4 Referring Agencies and Organisations**

The largest referral group this quarter was from professionals (43%) which was at 6% in the previous quarter. Self-referrals fell to the second highest group (33%) with friends and family last quarter (25%).

This sizeable change coming from the extensive networking that our advocates have conducted since the beginning of the contract. We have contacted nearly 2000 organisations across Scotland and have created referral pipelines that have begun to bring in referrals.

### **5. Allocation and First Contact**

#### **5.1 Referral Allocation**

For the number of referrals allocated to an advocate upon receipt, 100% have been allocated within the KPI criteria of 2 business days, with 68% allocated in less than 1 business day.

#### **5.2 First Contact**

For the days until first contact was made with a client, 100% were within the 3 business days and 95% within 2 business days.

#### **5.3 First Appointment and Average Response Time**

100% of cases saw the associated advocates set up the first appointment within 3 business days with the average of 1 business day for when the first appointment was scheduled. Three cases had their first appointment scheduled on the third day due to the advocate awaiting a response from the client to schedule the appointment.

### **6. Service Administration**

#### **6.1 Total Hours Worked**

For total hours worked, we logged 1,673.67 hours doing benefits advocacy work and 2,087.39 hours doing miscellaneous work which is a 149% increase in hours logged from the previous quarter. Benefits advocacy includes work such as direct client work and research. Miscellaneous work includes training, outreach and networking.

#### **6.2 Onward Referrals**

As discussed in section 3.4, we have signposted 26 referrals to external organisations.

### **6.3 Unmet Demand**

With the increase in referrals and cases related to ADP in the pilot regions, it is very likely that the release of ADP nationwide will lead to an increase in referrals to VoiceAbility. While it is difficult to predict what that number will look like, conversations we have had with providers in areas that have yet to go live give us confidence that the demand is there.

### **6.4 Feedback and Complaints**

Anecdotally, the response from the clients to our advocates has been positive. In June, we modified our satisfaction survey to allow us to quantify the feedback and to target more specific information. Feedback should be available for the next quarterly report in FY22/23 Q2.

### **6.5 Concerns**

VoiceAbility have not received any concerns at this time.

## **7. Compliance**

### **7.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance**

VoiceAbility's quality management plan ensures that all social security advocacy service standards are met in time and in compliance. Currently, we are in the process of fully integrating our Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) into every process within the team which is due for publication in FY22/23 Q2. This will ensure that disabled people in Scotland receive consistently high-quality support from our advocates.

Part of the QAF is the Quality Action Plan developed and maintained by the contract manager that feeds into the continuous improvement of the service. This has taken the form of a lessons learnt register that is used to capture issues and fixes identified throughout a given month. These issues are then addressed at the monthly team meeting.

To further ensure quality, we conduct advocacy practice supervision, a form of work performance review and professional development; quarterly practice audits; and routine training to reinforce knowledge of VoiceAbility's advocacy standards.

### **7.2 Communication**

VoiceAbility has systems in place to address language barriers, sensory impairments, cognitive impairments, and physical disabilities. Tools such as access to interpreting services and digital materials that are screen-reader optimised, information available in large print, easy read, and flexible advocate support facilitate anyone to have access to benefits advocacy through VoiceAbility.

This quarter, we had two cases utilise a translation service helping clients who predominantly spoke Urdu and Arabic.

### **7.3 Partnership**

In total, VoiceAbility have made contact with 1,867 organisations including council employability teams, GP surgeries, schools, health providers, job centres, libraries, community and leisure centres, housing associations, welfare, CAB and advocacy services, MSPs, Councilors, NHS, local training and employability programmes, TSi, food banks/pantries, community justice teams, police, parish churches and local delivery teams. We can happily share the full list on request.

#### **Outreach Hubs:**

We have set up the following outreach hubs in our areas, where we will continue to network with local providers and see clients to deliver our service. Over the coming months we will look to increase these venues.

The Change (also known as Street Soccer Scotland) Dundee. The Salvation Army and Welfare Rights Team Edinburgh, Auchtermuchty Learning Centre Fife, Benview Resource Centre Dumbarton, Helensburgh Civic Centre and Alexandria Community Centre.

For awareness raising efforts, we had:

- 1/2-page advert in the Community Advertiser Helensburgh & Lomond which went out to 13,500 households.
- Royal National Institute of Blind – RNIB Connect Radio – broadcast aired to around 80,000 listeners
- Grampian Radio Hospital
- 80,000 staff from Greater Glasgow & Clyde NHS received a newsletter with VoiceAbility.

Last quarter we joined the following organisations:

- Disability Equality Scotland
- Human Rights Consortium Scotland
- Inclusion Scotland

## **8. Staffing**

*See Appendix 3 for supporting data for all the below subsections.*

### **8.1 Staffing**

The team consisted of 23 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 2 Team Leader

- 1 Volunteer Coordinator
- 15 Advocates
- 3 Referral/Information Advocate

Table 8.1

<b>Vetting, Qualification, and Training</b>		
<i>Measure:</i>	<i>% Of Staff:</i>	<i>Narrative:</i>
Has in date PVG check	100%	
Completed internal mandatory training	95%	A new Scotland legislation specific e-learning module has been recently added to the new Learning and Development platform
Completed AAQ certification?	44%	Only applies to Advocates
Working on AAQ Certificate	80%	Only applies to Advocates

## 9. Trends and Insights

### 9.1 FY22/23 Q1 Analysis

VoiceAbility took significant strides in building both its number of cases and its partner network in the community in Q1 as seen by the 122% increase in cases and through the contact with 1,867 organisations across Scotland. We anticipate seeing continued growth in upcoming year based on the numbers seen from the release of ADP in the areas so far and from the steps being taken inside the agency to increase awareness of VoiceAbility both internally and externally.

After initial referral sources are established, VoiceAbility can then begin to further analyse and compare our data to national statistics to then begin seeing how we can expand our approach to be as equitable and inclusive as possible. One we've identified unreached areas we can then use the focus groups to glean information about potential clients and how we can best interact with them (as discussed in section 9.4).

### 9.2 Gaps in Service Provision



The current gap in provision identified is coverage of rural areas such as Shetland, Orkney, and Moray. Remote areas of Scotland prove difficult to find staff, however, we will continue to work alongside local providers such as Fair Start Scotland to support this. One area we may look to explore with external agencies is a routeway into Advocacy. This will give us an opportunity to pave the way for people who never thought about Advocacy as a career.

### **9.3 Continuous Improvement**

*Case numbers:* As discussed in sections 7.3 and 10.1, we have taken deliberate steps to build referral pathways that will continually generate referrals. Our community-oriented strategy hinges on the relationships that we build. Therefore, to continuously improve our case numbers our networking strategy of re-engagement with partners becomes paramount.

*Recruitment:* We have identified a potential gap in coverage in rural areas in Scotland as discussed in the previous section. To address this, our recruitment efforts will specifically target providers such as Fair Start Scotland providers to aid in our search. This potentially will have the dual effect of hiring local staff to address the immediate advocacy needs and will increase awareness of VoiceAbility in these areas.

### **9.4 Feedback from Focus Groups**

In June, we set up a focus group strategy team that began planning the pilot focus group that will serve as our blueprint for regularly holding focus groups in the future. While the final details are currently being finalised, discussions and brainstorming sessions are being held to identify what information we would like to gather from these sessions.

We anticipate our pilot occurring in mid-August and the feedback from the focus group will be shared in the FY22/23 Q2 report.

## **10. Social Value**

### **10.1 Evidence of Community Benefits**

School placement/work experience, Govan High School has been identified as the pilot location for this programme. In September we will deliver an information session to pupils with a start date of late October/early November for the work placement to commence.

For the focus groups, as mentioned in section 9.4, we have a pilot in development. It will then be our intension to plan future focus groups across Scotland in collaboration with local partners to provide a forum for disabled individuals in Scotland.

### **10.2 Compliance with Greener Scotland**

VoiceAbility actively contributes to the Greener Scotland Initiative by:

1. Reducing waste through use of digital file storage to significantly reduce the need to print and the encouragement of recycling and reuse where possible.
2. Encouraging the conservation of energy by turning off lights and appliances when not in use and minimizing the use of central heating.
3. Employing a home-based, co-located model that ensures that even when advocates need to do face-to-face visits, they are travelling the shortest possible distances.

### 10.3 Compliance with Fair Work Framework

VoiceAbility takes its commitment to fair work practices extremely serious as seen by our proactive implementation of measures that put the wellbeing and prosperity of the staff first. VoiceAbility does this by:

1. Providing opportunities to invest in recruiting, skill development, and training.
2. Providing career development through goal setting and mentorship sessions with their managers and supervisors.
3. Paying staff a living wage to ensure our people have security of income.

We also host an EDI forum to empower staff to understand the benefits of a diverse workforce and have a gender pay gap of 2%.

### 11. Promotion, Groupwork & Involvement

As discussed in sections 7.3, 9.4, and 10.1, we are actively engaging with partners and finding ways to engage with client's and potential client's too have their voices heard.

In addition to the ways discussed above, we additionally have our volunteer recruitment and training process being set up. We will look for volunteers through third sector interfaces online, university career centres, and volunteer centres/websites.

### 12. Safeguarding & Governance

We have had no safeguarding issues at this time.

## Appendix 1. Glossary of Terms

As explained in the communication accompanying this report, some of our terminology has changed. This outlines the terms we use, and their definition, for added clarity and transparency

Term	Definition
Active	The point at which an advocate has begun work with and on behalf of the client
Assigned	A case has been acknowledged and assigned to an advocate, but the service has not yet begun for the client.
Billable Hours	This is the new terminology for "Delivery Hours", or all eligible work related to the delivery of this contract. Our new approach to

	recording will provide greater transparency and clarity into this for all commissioners
Case	How we refer to a piece of work related to a single issue or process, defined by the referrer
Case Origin	How a referrer or client first made contact. This can be via email, phone, website, letter or in person.
Case Throughput	Cases that have been open before, during and after the quarter we are reporting on. This is broken down by service type and illustrates overall trends in referrals and case lengths
Closure Reason: Advocacy Completed	The client's wishes and best interest have been considered and an outcome has been achieved with the client's best interest at heart. The client no longer requires the advocate's expertise.
Closure Reason: Client Decision	The client may feel they no longer require advocacy support
Closure Reason: Service Discontinued	The advocacy service has been transferred to a different provider, or if non-statutory, funding may have been discontinued. This would be explained in a narrative.
Closure Reason: Unable to Contact	There have been multiple efforts to contact the client, both via information provided from a referrer and/or through the referrer, but without success.
Delivery Modality	This demonstrates the way in which we've worked with clients, whether by email, phone, video or in person. It demonstrates the varied approaches being taken to maintain contact throughout the pandemic and beyond
Group Activity	This may be an advocacy peer-to-peer group activity where the event is set-up to be attended by more than 2 people.
Involvement Activity	Activity or event whereby clients, and/or their family and other professionals attend an event either in person or remotely. This could be an evaluation/feedback event.
Legacy Product	Our new system links work directly to contracts using the service type (advocacy type in most cases) to ensure that we only undertake work which we are commissioned for. In a small number of cases, advocacy which didn't match the service types available on a contract, were identified. These have been recorded as "legacy product". Work is being undertaken to resolve these cases.
Migration Duplicate	In the process of transferring data from our new to old systems, we identified a small number of duplicate cases. These were merged, and one closed, to ensure no further duplication
NIA	Non-instructed Advocacy, this is how we work with people who are unable to communicate their views and wishes for reasons of disability, impairment or illness. To maximise people's ability to communicate, all advocates are trained in multiple communication methods, and are able to access interpreters and signing advocates where appropriate. All advocates are also trained in providing rights based non-instructed advocacy
Outcomes	See Appendix 2

Promotional Activity	This is the new terminology for “Awareness Raising”. This could be in person events, online promotion, raising awareness with stakeholders and other organisations and professionals.
Salesforces	The name of our new case and contract management system
Service Type	This is the type of service provided to a client. In most cases, these are types of advocacy

## Appendix 2. Outcomes

## GOALS

A client's desired changes and outcomes.

### Outcomes:

- I am happy with what's happened as a result of advocacy support

## MY LIFE

A client has control of their life, reduced isolation and knowledge to support independence.

### Outcomes:

- I am being treated with respect & dignity
- I have good economic well-being
- I am getting the care, support or treatment I want
- I have increased independence
- I can access the community & social networks I want

## MY RIGHTS

A client's understanding of their rights to ensure safety and increased protection from harm.

### Outcomes:

- I have been kept safe from people or situations which could harm me
- I know what my rights are
- My rights are protected

## MY VOICE

A client has increased confidence and knows the value of their voice.

### Outcomes:

- I feel confident
- I know my voice will make/has made a difference to decision making
- I was listened to & people understood me
- I can access & use information to help me make decisions
- I understand the choices I can make
- I was able to challenge a decision or make a complaint

### Outcome scoring:

*The higher the score, the better the outcome.*

1. I can't do this
2. Someone is helping me
3. I am beginning to understand/learn
4. I am beginning to do this myself/things are getting better
5. Things are as good as they can be

### NIA: GOALS

A client's desired changes and outcomes.

**Outcomes:**

- **Advocacy means the clients rights, likely wishes & feelings are represented & acknowledged**

### NIA: MY LIFE

A client's quality of life is improving, their wishes and views are expressed and their care/support is right.

**Outcomes:**

- **As a result of advocacy, the client has a better quality of life**
- **A client is getting the right care, support or treatment**

### NIA: MY RIGHTS

A client and their rights are safe and protected.

**Outcomes:**

- **The client's rights are protected**
- **The client has been kept safe from people or situations which could harm them**

### NIA: MY VOICE

A client's wishes and feelings are being heard, considered and impacting decisions regarding their life, including their care and support.

**Outcomes:**

- **The client's wishes & feelings made a difference to the decision that was made**
- **The client's wished & feelings were listened to (or heard) and understood**
- **A complaint was made, or a decision challenged on behalf of the client**

#### **Non-Instructed Advocacy Outcome scoring:**

*The higher the score, the better the outcome.*

- 1. Client can't address this**
- 2. Making progress**
- 3. Things are as good as they can be**

### Appendix 3. Internal Advocacy Training

#### Induction Training: 3-week programme

Modules covered:	Introduction to VoiceAbility
	Advocacy
	Disability Awareness
	Social Security Scotland: overview, application process, appeal process
	Safeguarding
	Salesforce
	Horizon

#### Post Induction Training

Internal	Multiple Salesforce Drop In sessions	Completed
	Buddy Week (week 1 live)	Completed
	Webchat Training for the Information Referral Handler	Completed
	LoneAlert Training	Completed
	Story Telling	Completed
	Advocacy Standards Refresher	Completed
	Adult Disability Payment	Completed

External	x13 advocates have started their advocacy award qualification	in progress
	x1 individual has completed their local authorities child and adult protection course	Completed

**VoiceAbility  
Scotland  
Quarterly Report**

FY22/23 Q2; 01/07/2022 – 30/09/2022



## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY22/23 Q2 July 2022 – September 2022
Author's Name Job Title Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Data & Quality Administrator [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
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Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@scot.gov
Date	14 October 2022

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## Executive Summary

### Headlines

FY22/23 Q2 full roll out of ADP 28th August 2022 supported the highest number of cases opened (164 bringing a total of 222 applications submitted CTD). Strongest numbers from Fife (48), Dundee (25), Edinburgh (14) Glasgow (12). This is due to established networking hubs and work with local charities. One of our networking hubs, The Big Disability, who are Glasgow based have been successfully working with two of our Advocates to promote the service. To-date received 9 referrals and 6 turned to case (3 ADP, 3 CDP).

To-date VoiceAbility Advocates have made contact with 2,663 providers across Scotland to promote the service.

VoiceAbility delivered presentations to various groups within Social Security Scotland eg: Operational Reference Group, Inclusive Communication External Stakeholder Reference Group, Over Payments Team, the Client Experience Team. We also were given the opportunity to attend the Learning at Work Day, where 80+ staff attended to learn about the Advocacy service. All 4 presentations were greatly received.

A ministerial visit took place at our Glasgow office, where Mr MacPherson, Minister of Social Security Scotland, took the opportunity to meet with some of our Advocates. It was a fantastic opportunity to share the work that we had been doing since go live. Mr MacPherson suggested that we attend parliament and address all MSPs. With the support of Scottish Government an email has been sent to Miss Stewart, MSP Glasgow Kelvin to sponsor this event. This has been accepted. Both Scottish Government and VoiceAbility will proceed with the application for a date early 2023. This date has now been confirmed for 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2023.

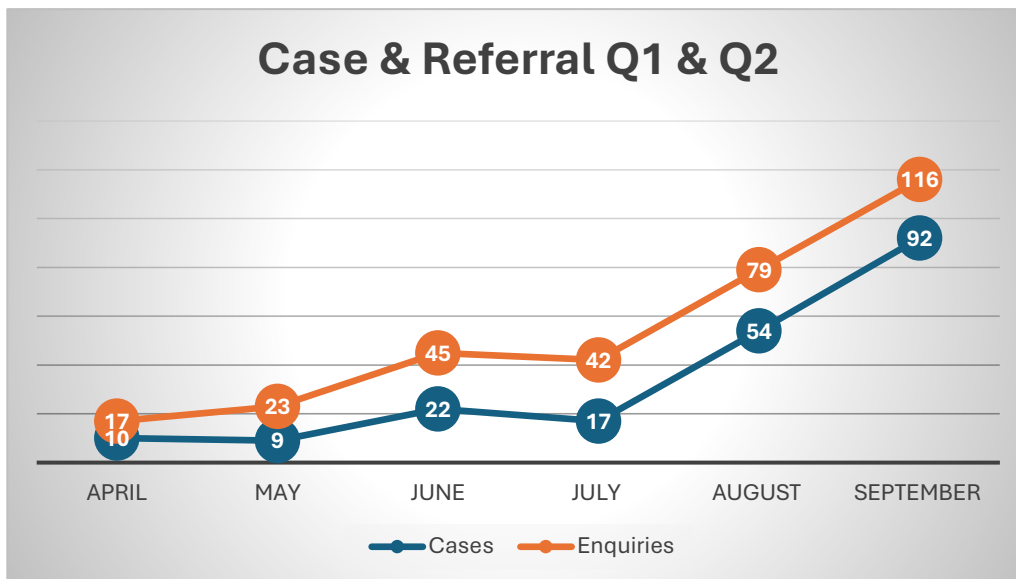
Our Self Advocacy tool kit was launched this quarter – 24 requested, of which 92% of clients took up this opportunity. We will continue to monitor this process and continue to promote self advocacy to empower the people of Scotland.

For awareness raising efforts please see power point presentation.

### Successes

- 34. 310% increase in cases
- 35. Networking/Community Engagement
- 36. Over 200 applications submitted to Social Security Scotland

FY22/23 Q2 saw a 310% increase in cases from the previous quarter indicating that our networking efforts along with the full roll out of ADP is producing great results. Additionally, the combined efforts of VoiceAbility, Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland to best identify ways in which we can best work with the agency have begun to pay off. We received a further 5 (42%) agency referrals this quarter.



The local community networking hubs are showing great signs of success and throughout Q3 we will continue to increase across the health board areas. Local hubs already set up are: Auchmuty Learning Centre, Fife, Gilvan Food Bank, Fife, Food Bank, West Pilton, Edinburgh, Niddrie Library, Edinburgh, Welfare Rights, town centre, Edinburgh, Salvation Army, Leith Walk, Edinburgh, Salvation Army, Stirling, Helensburgh Civic Centre, Benview Community Centre, Dumbarton and The Big Disability, Glasgow.

Having these outreach centres in place have significantly supported the 200+ applications submitted to Social Security Scotland.

#### Challenges

4. Continuing to grow case numbers
5. Engagement Social Security Scotland referrals
6. Ensuring that VoiceAbility is reaching people of all ethnicities.

While we have seen success from our current lines of effort, the continued work to grow case numbers is also one of our greatest challenges. This quarter we have recruited 2 Advocates, one in Fife and the other Aberdeen/Aberdeenshire. Already seeing enquiries coming through. Fife being one of our most successful areas. This has prompted us to recruit a further 2 Advocates, interviews to take place October 2022. Glasgow has also shown an increase and to support this growth we have offered 2 Advocates, of which one, we recruited via a Fair Start Scotland provider.

Scottish Government have been working closely with VoiceAbility to engage successfully with Social Security Scotland. Last quarter we presented to various groups eg: Operational Reference Group, Inclusive Communication External Stakeholder Reference Group, Over

Payments team and the Client Experience team. VoiceAbility also took part in the Learning at Work Day where we presented to over 80+ staff.

During our fortnightly meetings, we have had the pleasure of two managers from Social Security Scotland joining to support the cementing of our relationship. They lead a team of Client Advisors within Adult and Child Disability Payments. Both managers have agreed to provide 4 names from each team to champion the advocacy service within the Agency.

On going discussions to have messaging on the advocacy service included in the Agency's Interactive Voice Response (IVR). This would allow messaging promoting the service to be played when clients were in the queue waiting to speak to an advisor.

Lastly, whilst reviewing our weekly reports we have found that there are groups whom we are not reaching eg: Glasgow has a high population of Muslims and Black African/Caribbean (11.5%). We are developing an action plan on how to reach out to those and other communities and aim to resolve this gap within our service. VoiceAbility, Operations Manager is also in talks with Scottish Government to look at those providers who have signed up to promoting benefit take up.

## Organisational News

**Scotland's new benefits: how the Scottish government is ensuring disabled people don't miss out.** When the Scottish Government announced that they would place human rights at the heart of the social security benefits system, disabled people and rights organisations made clear that this would only happen if disabled people could get independent advocacy. [Read more here](#)

**Liberty Protection Safeguards: VoiceAbility submits the advocacy sector's joint consultation response** VoiceAbility has submitted a joint response to the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as part of their consultation into changes to the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice and how the Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) will work when implemented. [Read more here](#)

**BBC Panorama's Undercover Hospital: urgent change is needed** This week, BBC Panorama exposed the cruel, dangerous actions of staff at the Edenfield Centre in Prestwich, Greater Manchester. [Read more here](#)

## Report

### 1. Key Performance Indicators:

#### 1.2 KPI Summary

No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	98%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	98%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	N/A
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	97%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

This quarter, VoiceAbility received 237 referrals with 164 of those converting into cases. 98% of eligible referrals were allocated to an advocate with an average time of less than 1 business day.

98% of initial appointments with clients were organised within an average time of 3 business thus meeting KPIs 1 and 2.

KPIs 3, 4, 5, and 7 were deemed not applicable as we have not had any complaints nor concerns filed against us. We have had no issues that have needed escalation, and we have no sub-contractors.

For KPI 6, we are at 97% for satisfaction surveys sent. All advocates have been reminded of the process.

## 2. Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

No	Call Centre Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	80% of all calls and webchats answered with 20 seconds	80%	82.00%
2	100% of calls and webchats answered with one minute	100%	100%
3	Average handling time of an enquiry 5 minutes (this KPI does not apply to remote advocacy delivery)	Average of 5 minutes	7
4	Under 5% abandon rate	<5%	2.74%
5	95% call classification capture of all inbound calls	95%	97%
6	All e-mail, out of hours webchat and voicemail enquiries processed within one working day for urgent	Within 1 working day	100%

7	All online referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within one working day	Within 1 working day	97%
8	All eligible referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within two working days	Within 2 working days	97.45%

The Scotland Call Centre connected 578 calls, 149% increase from Q1, with all call centre KPIs being met. An advert went out to all Fair Start Scotland providers to help recruit for one more Referral Information Advocate. Interviews to take place early October.

KPIs 4 and 5 have improved from last quarter and call classification within Horizon system has improved significantly.

### 3. Individuals (Clients)

#### 3.1 The Number of Clients Supported

In FY22/23 Q2, VoiceAbility received 164 cases, 310% increase from the previous quarter. We closed 76 of those cases within the quarter. While the cases are still below the originally anticipated numbers, VoiceAbility have seen a marked increase in cases. This is due to our networking efforts from which we are seeing positive results, most notably Dundee, Fife, Glasgow and Edinburgh. Additionally, we received five more referrals from Social Security Scotland.

#### 6.2 Geographic Split of Cases

Opened Date →		Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Total	From SSS
Service Name ↑	Postcodes.io Admin District ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	
Benefits Advocacy	Aberdeenshire	0	2	2	4	1
	Aberdeen City	1	1	0	2	
	Angus	0	1	1	2	
	Argyll and Bute	0	0	1		
	City of Edinburgh	0	3	11	14	
	Clackmannanshire	0	0	0	0	
	Dumfries and Galloway	0	0	1	1	
	Dundee City	4	7	14	25	



West Lothian	0	0	1	1	
East Ayrshire	0	0	1	1	
East Lothian	0	0	1	1	
Falkirk	0	0	2	2	
Fife	4	19	25	48	2
Glasgow City	0	5	7	12	2
Highland	1	2	2	5	
Moray	0	0	1	1	
Na h-Eileanan Siar	0	2	1	3	
North Lanarkshire	2	3	3	8	
North Ayrshire	1	1	0	2	
Perth and Kinross	1	1	1	3	
Renfrewshire	0	0	3	3	
Scottish Borders	0	1	3	4	
South Lanarkshire	2	0	2	4	
South Ayrshire	0	1	0	1	
Stirling	0	0	5	5	
West Dunbartonshire	0	2	5	7	
Unknown	1	3	0	4	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>163</b>	<b>5</b>

FY22/23 Q2 showed strong numbers from Dundee (25), the largest number of cases coming from Fife (48). This is due to the successful networking with partners in those areas.

We have noticed in some areas eg: Clackmannanshire, Falkirk, Ayrshire and Lanarkshire are relatively low in numbers and we are looking to resolve. These areas will have actions for improvements in Q3.

### 3.3 Equality Act Statistics

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistics can be found in 'Individuals (Clients)' tab in the attached FY22/23 Q2 Data Report. However, a brief summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below:

Top 5 Support Needs:

- Mental Health (35%)
- Physical Disability (21%)
- Long-Term Health Condition (12%)
- Learning Disability (7%)
- Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis (5%)

Age Breakdown:

- 0-17 (8%)

- 18-49 (59%)
- 50+ (32%)

Please note that we are still encountering some reluctance from clients to provide information for some of the EDI statistics so there are some gaps in the data, however, we have seen an improvement in the numbers obtained overall. We have been internally discussing the best timing and techniques to use, to make client's feel comfortable, in providing EDI information. This will provide us with a better understanding of the demographics that are using the service and equally important, the demographics that are not using the service.

For example once we engage with the client and start to support through the advocacy journey, we have provided another opportunity for clients to submit the missing data.

### 3.4 Number of Onward Referrals

Enquiry: Created Date →		Jul-22	Aug-22	Sep-22	Total
Closure Reason ↑	Organisation Signposted To ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Ineligible Referral/Case	Citizens Advice Scotland	4	0	0	4
	Local Authority	0	0	0	0
Signpost	Advocard	0	0	0	0
	Angus Independent Advocacy	0	0	0	0
	CAS Kirkintilloch	0	0	0	0
	Citizens Advice Scotland	7	4	5	16
	Connected Advocacy	0	1	0	1
	Disability Unit – DWP	4	6	2	12
	Glasgow City Council	0	0	0	0
	Sheffield Advocacy Hub	0	0	0	0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>15</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>7</b>

Out of the 73 referrals that did not turn into cases, 33 were signposted to the organisations listed in the table above that could best assist the individual with their needs. Of the 33, 48% were signposted to Citizens Advice Scotland and the remainder were signposted to DWP.

### 3.5 Unmet Demand

Regarding unmet demands, the 12 clients signposted to DWP required additional support such as Housing and Universal Credit.

## 4. Requests and Referrals

### 4.1 Requests for Support

For requests for support, 237 referrals were received in FY22/23 Q2. The sections below will provide the breakdown of the geographic split of the referrals and the percentage of referrals that turned into cases.

### 4.2 Geographic Spread of Requests

<b>Geographic Split of All Referrals</b>	<b>Jul-22</b>	<b>Aug-22</b>	<b>Sep-22</b>	
<i>Location:</i>	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	<i>Total:</i>
Aberdeenshire	1	5	5	11
Angus	0	0	0	0
Argyll & Bute	0	0	1	1
Ayrshire	0	0	0	0
City of Edinburgh	3	4	15	22
Clackmannanshire	0	0	0	0
Dumfries & Galloway	0	0	1	1
Dundee City	10	15	17	42
East Dunbartonshire	0	0	0	0
East Lothian	0	0	2	2
Falkirk	0	1	4	5
Fife	7	20	34	61
Glasgow City	2	14	17	33
Highland	0	4	6	10
Midlothian	0	0	0	0
North Ayrshire	3	1	1	5
North Lanarkshire	3	5	1	9
Perth & Kinross	1	2	1	4
Renfrewshire	1	1	2	4
Scottish Borders	0	2	2	4
South Lanarkshire	2	0	2	4
Stirling	1	0	1	2
West Lothian	0	0	0	0
Western Isles	0	2	1	3
West Dunbartonshire	0	1	1	2
Undisclosed	8	2	2	12
<b>Total:</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>237</b>

This quarter we have seen a broader and more diverse geographic split of all the referrals we have received. We can see that our networking efforts are paying off especially in areas that ADP had rolled out prior to the 29<sup>th</sup> of August.

### **4.3 Referrals Received**

Out of the 237 referrals that VoiceAbility received in FY22/23 Q2, 69% have converted into a case (22% increase from previous Quarter). This is clearly showing positive signs on how VoiceAbility are marketing the service.

80% of our referrals received from Social Security Scotland carried over into a case.

### **4.4 Referring Agencies and Organisations**

The largest referral group this quarter was from Self Referrals (65%) which was at 33% in the previous quarter. Professionals fell to the second highest group (30%) with friends and family at (4%).

This sizeable change coming from the extensive networking that our advocates have conducted since the beginning of the contract. We have contacted 2,663 organisations across Scotland and have created referral pipelines that have begun to bring in referrals. One of our newest providers, The Big Disability, who are Glasgow based have referred 9 clients of which 6 met the criteria (3 ADP and 3 CDP). With their continued support to promote our service, we are now attending outreach over 2 days.

The Big Disability Group is a charity in West Dunbartonshire and is mostly staffed by volunteers. It was founded by the current manager [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]. Having lived with a disability himself he saw the gap in services and the need for this resource centre.

Voiceability became involved with the Big Disability Group when 2 staff members were out networking and just chanced upon the building. They went in with some promotional material and to introduce themselves and arranged to meet the manager later on in the week.

Two advocates hold a drop in for 4 hours twice a week (on an appointment basis).

It has been encouraging to see the number of enquiries which have developed into cases, mostly for CDP and ADP applications. In the months August/September, The Big Disability Group referred 9 clients, 6 of which turned into cases (3 ADP and 3 CDP).

*[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] - Charity Co-ordinator for The Big Disability Group.*

*When we took over these premises as an Independent Welfare Rights Service, we realised from the response from the public that there was real concern. Thousands of clients who had used The Independent Resource Centre, which was here before us, were worried they would have trouble accessing their benefits. The Citizens' Advice Bureau and Working for U were already concerned about the increase in demand for support.*

*The Big Disability Group took over these premises to bring back welfare rights to the area and other benefits too.*

*VoiceAbility dropped in one day. They told us all about their service, and that they were very keen to provide an onsite drop-in centre. This has turned out to be a great partnership! It's been a great way for service users to access the new benefits.*

*We constantly ask for feedback from our clients who use our services, and the response has been amazing. People comment on how friendly VoiceAbility staff are and how comfortable they make the whole process.*

## 5. Allocation and First Contact

### 5.1 Referral Allocation

For the number of referrals allocated to an advocate upon receipt, 98% have been allocated within the KPI criteria of 2 business days, with 90% allocated in less than 1 business day. As our case numbers are growing at a rapid pace, we introduced a new process to ensure that we are consistently assigning to advocates in time. This change led to 4 cases not being assigned within the timescale required, however, early days. We are confident that this new process recently introduced will bring this back on track.

### 5.2 First Contact

For the days until first contact was made with a client, 98% were within the 3 business days and 98% within 2 business days. This follows in line with our referral allocation and the 4 cases mentioned above.

### 5.3 First Appointment and Average Response Time

98% of cases saw the associated advocates set up the first appointment within 3 business days with the average of 1 business day for when the first appointment was scheduled. Four cases had their first appointment scheduled out with of the timescales, again due to a process which has now been updated. We have contingencies in place to prevent this from re-occurring

## 6. Service Administration

### 6.1 Total Hours Worked

For total hours worked, we logged 4,049.91 hours providing benefits advocacy work and 809.35 hours undertaking Community Engagement which is a 29% increase in hours logged from the previous quarter.

Benefits advocacy includes work such as direct client work, research, travelling to appointment, and upskilling.

Community Engagement work includes outreach and networking.

## 6.2 Onward Referrals

As discussed in section 3.4, we have signposted 33 referrals to external organisations.

## 6.3 Unmet Demand

70% of our cases this quarter came after the full roll out of ADP 29<sup>th</sup> of August. VoiceAbility have been welcoming new clients to our service from across Scotland. Our networking efforts has resulted in the majority of clients contacting our service, already knowing exactly what we can support with, therefore, we have had very little unmet demand.

## 6.4 Feedback and Complaints

88% of our clients that responded to our satisfaction survey rated our service as very good (our top option).

100% of our clients stated they had got what they wanted from VoiceAbility.

Key words used to describe our service were, “supportive” (36%), “helpful” (27%).

Feedback from our clients

“There were a number of different ways to attend the appointment [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] was very understanding of my needs, she didn’t rush me and was very supportive”

“There was no way I could do that form on my own.”

Very helpful, the lady who helped was very nice and understanding and informative. Got what I expected from the service.

“[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] took her time to walk me through the application. Also signposted me elsewhere for other applications I had asked about”

“My Advocate was very professional, helpful and kind, her support exceeded my expectations”

## 6.5 Concerns

VoiceAbility have not received any concerns at this time.

## 7. Compliance

### 7.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance

Part of our continuous improvement we have been holding various weekly sessions with Advocates. These are proving to be very successful.

Weekly case management session which is an open forum for staff to be able to share their expertise and skills to inform each other's practice.

Fortnightly reflective practice/peer support sessions. This looks at our continuous professional development, and how we are integrating the advocacy standards into our daily practice.

## **7.2 Communication**

VoiceAbility has systems in place to address language barriers, sensory impairments, cognitive impairments, and physical disabilities. Tools such as access to interpreting services and digital materials that are screen-reader optimised, information available in large print, easy read, and flexible advocate support facilitate anyone to have access to benefits advocacy through VoiceAbility.

This quarter, although we have a translation service available, we have not used this, however, do anticipate the use of this in the future.

## **7.3 Partnership**

In September VoiceAbility sent out 80+ emails promoting VoiceAbility to Scottish charities, community groups and councils. We also sent 500+ press releases including BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Scotland (TV), BBC Scotland News (online), STV, The Scotsman, The Scottish Sun, Daily Record, Edinburgh Evening News, The Times (Scottish Edition) and Glasgow Times etc.

Presented to a group of LGBTQ+ youths to provide an overview of the service, the organiser of the event stated

*"I found it really relaxed, engaging and hugely informative" attendees of the presentation stated "learnt about more about different people's needs, it's great to come along and have a wee bit of a wee lesson today and learn more about me as I have ADHD and autism"*

Met with Meccop Carers who are an Edinburgh charity which actively seeks to challenge and dismantle barriers that deny Black and Minority Ethnic careers access to health, social work and other social care services in Edinburgh and the lothians. We are awaiting an invite to speak to all staff on how we can support.

VoiceAbility have been engaging with organisations across the Western Isles, promoting our service and this has been beneficial. Working with organisations like Advocacy Western Isles and The Citizens Advice Bureau who have already referred clients.

The Advocate in Inverness, initially met with the staff from 1668 Café, at the beginning of August. [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] is our primary contact, who is employed by HTSI (Highland Third Sector Interface), which runs the café, and she has continued to be a valued and

extremely helpful partner. During our drop-in sessions, she introduced our Advocate to [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] the HTSI Custody Link worker.

1668 have been very accommodating, allowing us to use the Café for drop-in sessions on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month. This is proving to be a success.

Advocates attended Training courses run by Social Security Scotland details of these courses below.

Child Disability Payment to Adult Disability Payment Journey on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2022 (3 advocates attended)

Adult Disability Payment – Case Transfer on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July (1 Advocate attended)

Notes are taken and shared with all staff members to support upskilling.

Outreach Hubs:

We have set up the following outreach hubs in our areas, where we will continue to network with local providers and see clients to deliver our service. We have increased our outreach centres and are seeing real benefits to this.

Outreach Hubs	
Organisation	Health Board
The Change	Tayside
We Are With U	Tayside
Helensburgh Civic Centre	Argyll & Bute
Gilven Foodbank	Fife
Auchmuty Learning Centre	Fife
The Big Disability Group	Greater Glasgow
Benview Resource Centre	Greater Glasgow
Alexandria Community Centre	West Dunbartonshire
Niddrie Library	Edinburgh
West Pilton Food Bank	Edinburgh
The Salvation Army	Edinburgh
The Salvation Army	Stirling

## 8. Staffing

### 8.1 Staffing

The team consisted of 23 members with the following breakdown:



- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Data Analytical/Quality Advisor
- 2 Team Leaders
- 1 Volunteer Coordinator
- 15 Advocates
- 2 Referral/Information Advocates

Offers made and awaiting clearance checks for 3 Advocates, 2 Glasgow and 1 Dumfries.

We currently have adverts out for Stirling, Clacks and Forth Valley, Dundee, Edinburgh/Borders and Fife. 1 Referral Information Advocate which is currently sitting with Fair Start Scotland providers. Interviews to be made middle of October.

Table 8.1 –

<b>Vetting, Qualification, and Training</b>		
<i>Measure:</i>	<i>% Of Staff:</i>	<i>Narrative:</i>
Has in date PVG check	100%	
Completed internal mandatory training	100%	A new Scotland legislation specific e-learning module has been recently added to the new Learning and Development platform
Completed AAQ certification?	87%	Only applies to Advocates
Working on AAQ Certificate	100%	Only applies to Advocates

## 9. Trends and Insights

### 9.1 FY22/23 Q2 Analysis

VoiceAbility took significant strides in building both its number of cases and its partner network in the community in Q1, this has resulted in a 310% increase in cases in Q2. 30% of these coming from professional organisations across Scotland. We expect continued growth in the upcoming year, based on case numbers we have seen since ADP full role out on 29<sup>th</sup> August.

Additionally, we anticipate a significant increase in referrals from the steps being taken inside the agency to increase awareness of advocacy service.

VoiceAbility have begun analysing and comparing our data to national statistics to see how we can expand our approach to be as equitable and inclusive as possible. We have identified through this route that there are groups whom we are not reaching eg: Glasgow has a high population of Muslims and Black African/Caribbean (11.5%). We are developing an action plan on how to reach out to those and other communities and aim to resolve this gap within our service.

## **9.2 Gaps in Service Provision**

The current gap in provision identified is coverage of rural areas such as Shetland, Orkney, and Moray. Remote areas of Scotland continuing to prove difficult to find staff, however, we will continue to work alongside local providers such as SDS and Fair Start Scotland to support this.

This quarter we were successful with one of our recruitment campaigns using the Fair Start Scotland providers, however, one area, Argyll and Bute we were not as fortunate.

Through our normal recruitment channels, we have successfully recruited an Advocate in Moray. Great links with local community groups and the local authority already in place.

## **9.3 Continuous Improvement**

This quarter we have set up:

Weekly case management session which is an open forum for staff to be able to share their expertise and skills to inform each other's practice.

Fortnightly reflective practice/peer support sessions. This looks at our continuous professional development, and how we are integrating the advocacy standards into our daily practice.

On 21/09/2022 our team gathered in our Glasgow office, some even travelling from as far as the Western Isles and Aberdeenshire! Our agenda focused around 'How we share best practise' and 'mapping out a client's journey'. Our main focus in this session was our Advocacy Standards and how we implement and evidence these in salesforce and our general practise. The team worked together to explore our standards, what these mean and how they shape our practise! At the end of our session, we asked the staff for feedback relating to the content of our meeting and how they feel it went, this was well received, and we plan to roll out a 'You said, We did' for our next team meeting taking place in December 2022.

## **9.4 Feedback from Focus Groups**

We anticipated our pilot occurring in mid-August, however, this is slightly delayed and will look to completed in Q3. The Big Disability have shown interest to support our first group.

## 10. Social Value

### **10.1 Evidence of Community Benefits**

School placement/work experience, Govan High School has been identified as the pilot location for this programme. In September we delivered an information session to S5 and S6 pupils with a start date of 31<sup>st</sup> October – 4<sup>th</sup> November for the work placement to commence. Govan High School have identified an initial 8 pupils who wish to take part.

For the focus groups, as mentioned in section 9.4, we have a pilot in development. It will be our intension to plan future focus groups across Scotland in collaboration with local partners to provide a forum for disabled individuals in Scotland. These events will take place in various formats eg: face to face group sessions and over TEAMS through creating Eventbrite sessions.

### **10.2 Compliance with Fair Work Framework**

We have formalised our approach to Belonging and expanded on the EDI forum. We now have a wider network of employee groups which feed into our overall Staff Forum. In addition to the EDI group, there are employee groups for such things as health, safety and wellbeing, carers, menopause, disability and veterans. Each region has a representative, setting their objectives and embedding a culture of belonging, thus, enabling employees to have a voice in things that affect them and the work they do for their clients.

We are members of Mindful Employer and Disability Positive.

We continue to provide training to employees to support their professional and personal development and recently held a training session for our employee representatives.

We are members of the Living Wage Foundation and continue to apply a fair and equitable approach to pay and remuneration and regularly review our approach.

## 11. Promotion, Groupwork & Involvement

During this quarter we sent out 80+ emails promoting VA to Scottish charities, community groups and councils. Along with press releases to 500+ Scottish Press contacts including BBC Radio Scotland, BBC Scotland (TV), BBC Scotland News (online), STV, The Scotsman, The Scottish Sun, Daily Record, Edinburgh Evening News, The Times (Scottish Edition), Glasgow Times etc

Scotland Social Security benefits advocacy: paid Facebook ad campaign

This campaign is running for 6 weeks in tandem with the Out Of Home advertising.

Date	Location	Link clicks	Impressions	Reach	CTR
23 – 29 Sept	Edinburgh +40km	1138	104,378	50,449	1.09%
29 – 5 Oct	Glasgow +40km	2611	103,877	49,105	2.51%

The campaign links to a bespoke landing page: <https://www.voiceability.org/support-and-help/support-to-access-benefits-in-scotland/get-free-independent-support-to-access-social-security-scotland-benefits>

**Reach:** the number of people who saw the ad at least once.

**Impressions:** the number of times these ads were on screen (so the same person may have seen the ad more than once).

**CTR:** click-through rate. This is the percentage of people who saw the ad and clicked the link. The average CTR for Facebook ads is 0.9%, so this is already a highly successful campaign.

By testing different ad creative in the first week, we've been able to refine the campaign and more than double the click-through rate/number of clicks while reaching the same number of people. This knowledge is now being used to deliver future ads in the most effective way, including retargeting previous audiences.

The average CTR for Facebook ads is 0.9%, so this is already a highly successful campaign.

The VoiceAbility website hosts an PDF toolkit to support people to apply and to appeal. July 1 to September 30:

Application toolkit page visits: 86

Appeals toolkit page visit: 38

These do not account for the toolkit being sent as an attachment by email.

As discussed in sections 7.3, 9.4, and 10.1, we are actively engaging with partners and finding ways to engage with client's and potential client's too have their voices heard.

In addition to the ways discussed above, we additionally have our volunteer recruitment and training process being set up. We currently have 6 volunteers going through our clearance checks. They have completed all of the Instructor-Led training (ILT) and are completing the online e-learning.

Instructor-led training consists of: introduction to VoiceAbility, introduction to working with clients, community engagement, introduction to Social Security Scotland and safeguarding.

The breakdown of areas are: Glasgow x 4, Edinburgh x 1, Aberdeen x 1

We have a further 4 who are going through various phases of the recruitment process prior to training. The breakdown of areas are: Motherwell x 1, Dundee City x 2, Glasgow x 1.

We will look to create a buddy system for the volunteer with the Advocates who will successfully support on promotional activity/events and some light touch advocacy.

## 12. Safeguarding & Governance

We have had no safeguarding issues at this time.

**VoiceAbility**  
**Scotland Quarterly**  
**Report**

FY22/23 Q3; 01/10/2022 – 31/12/2022

## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Edinburgh Unpaid Carers Advocacy (Lot 4)
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Edinburgh Health & Social Care Partnership
Monitoring Period Covered	FY22/23 Q3 October 2022 – December 2022
Author's Name Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Operations Manager	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@scot.gov
Date	14 January 2023

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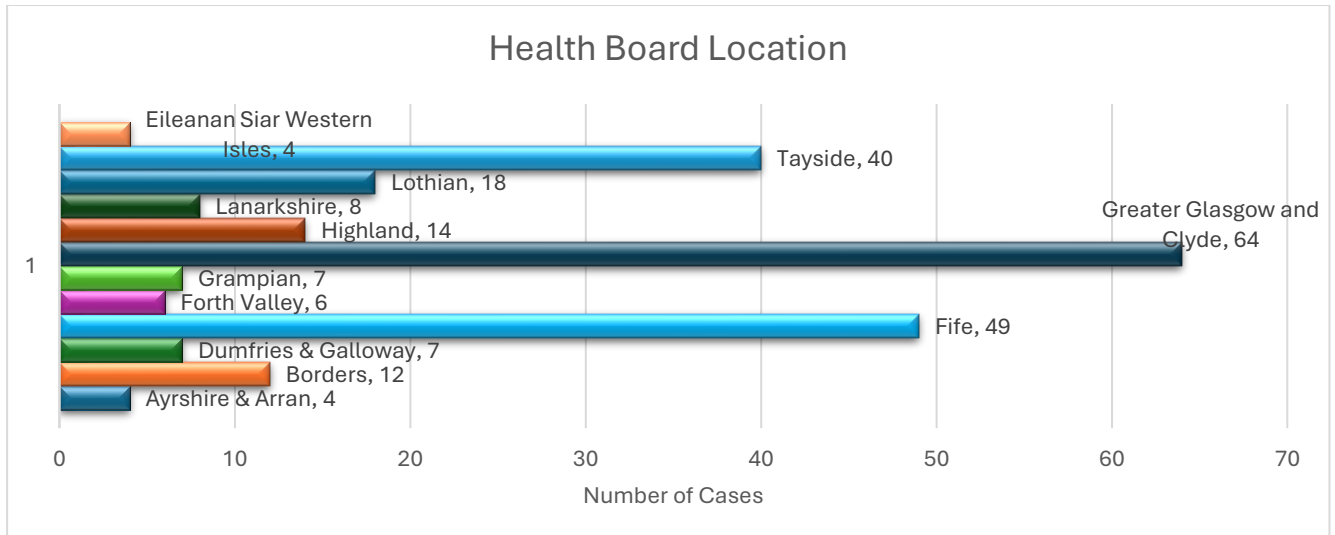
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## Executive Summary

### Headlines

FY22/23 Q3 During this quarter we have seen a (26%) increase in referrals, leading to a increase of (43%) to our case numbers. Highest performing areas remaining the same as last quarter. Greater Glasgow and Clyde (64), Fife (49) and Tayside (40)



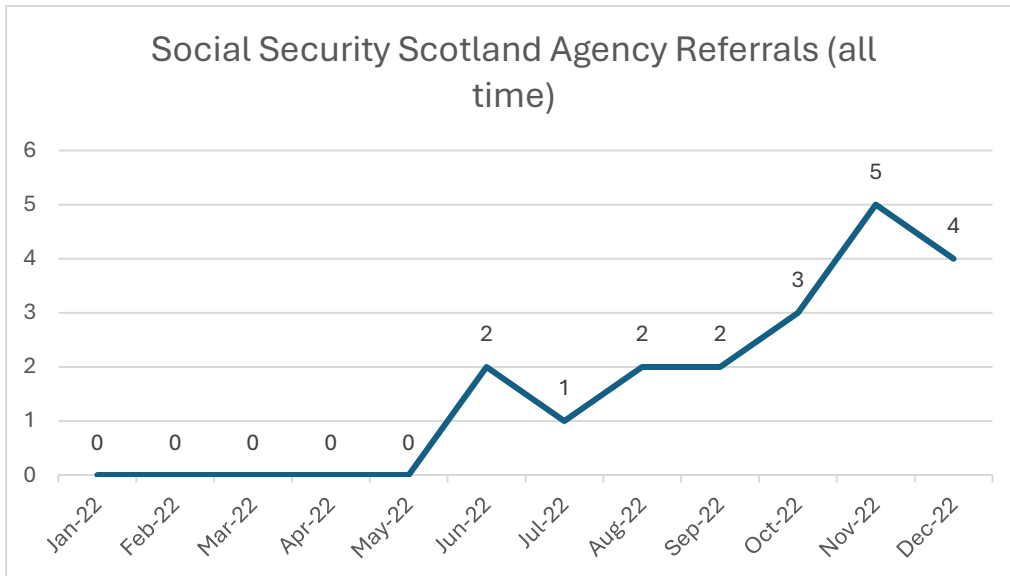
Our partnering organisations who greatly supported this quarter came strong through The Big Disability Group and Fife Council. We also saw an increase in referrals received from Social Security Scotland Agency (71%) and several new areas eg: Dumfries and Galloway and Orkney.

To-date VoiceAbility Advocates have contacted over 4,000 providers across Scotland to promote the service.

VoiceAbility delivered presentations to the following organisations:

- Benefit Take-up Stakeholder Reference Group
- Social Security Scotland Consortium
- Perth Prison Service
- Perth & Kinross Association of Voluntary Service (PKAVS)
- Perth & Kinross Council

This quarter, we had an encouraging breakthrough with Social Security Scotland with the support of Scottish Government and two existing Team Leaders within Social Security Scotland (ADP and CDP teams). A meeting was arranged in High Street with 2 Client Advisors and 1 Team Leader from the ADP team who showed an interest in becoming our champions. It was a fruitful meeting and provided an opportunity to become more familiar with our service. Shortly after this meeting took place, we saw an upturn in our numbers.



VoiceAbility attended Committee on **24 November** to provide an update on the service. This had been prompted by the Minister mentioning the service at an earlier committee appearance. VoiceAbility provided an opportunity to all MSPs present on the day, who would like to meet up face to face and discuss their local area. We are glad to say that Mr Jeremy Balfour – MSP Lothians has requested a meeting. This will take place 23<sup>rd</sup> January at the Scottish Parliament offices with [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)], Operations Manager.

VoiceAbility ran an introduction to advocacy event in Govan High School this quarter in which students from S4&5 attended. The event took place over a week and included activities, presentations to raise awareness of what advocacy is, and how it can support people. [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)], one of our Advocates who ran the course stated that the participants enjoyed the learning experience. We have three planned for 2023, in Ayrshire, Lanarkshire and Edinburgh.

Whilst networking, VoiceAbility contacted the Scottish refugee council in Glasgow. Since then some of the caseworkers there have been making referrals to us for their clients for support with their ADP applications. This has grown and we have had several referrals for some clients from the Ukraine, Sierra Leone and Persia and we have used face to face, telephone and video interpreting services. The caseworkers are happy with the services we provide and are continuing to make referrals to VoiceAbility.

VoiceAbility were invited to attend the AGM for Crossroads Caring Scotland. They are a not-for-profit charity that has been delivering a variety of home care services for over 40 years. On hearing about the service, they were keen to explore how we can work together to support their clients. We have a further meeting booked 26<sup>th</sup> January to discuss next steps.

## Successes

- 63.43% increase in cases
- 64. Govan High School – Introduction to pupils around Advocacy
- 65. Scottish Refugee Council
- 66. Two champions identified within Social Security Scotland – ADP team

FY22/23 Q3 saw a 43% increase in cases from the previous quarter, the partnerships that we have organically grown within the local community are providing referrals to us on a regular basis. We are delighted to share with Scottish Government that 49% of our referrals have come from those sources. The partnerships which we have formed in such a short space of time have supported VoiceAbility to submit over 200+ applications to Social Security Scotland to date.

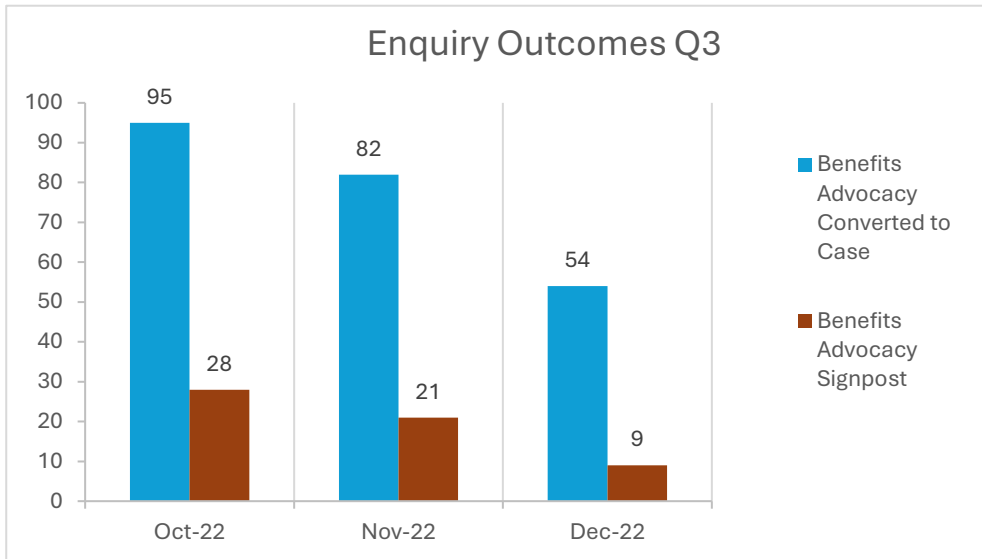
We completed our Govan High School placement, and we have detailed information regarding this in section 9.1

A pilot commenced this quarter with two Client Advisors and a Team Leader within the ADP team, Glasgow. They stepped forward to become our champions. They would help promote the service within the Agency. A meeting was arranged where we provided an overview. Within a matter of days, we could see referral numbers slightly increasing. We received 12 (71% increase) agency referrals this quarter.

## Challenges

7. Increased service demand
8. Staff traveling across health board to meet the demand
9. Under-represented groups.

In Q3 we saw a decline of referral numbers, this was due to several factors 1) Advocates not having the capacity to continue with networking due to increased service demand and 2) staff travelling across health boards to cover annual leave. To accommodate the demand, we have a recruitment campaign in place to recruit a further 14 Advocates. These Advocates will be recruited to initially take on the task of solely driving referrals. We have successfully shown that our partnership work has brought us success, and we wish to continue down this same route, promoting free advocacy support to those clients wishing to claim a Social Security Scotland benefit. We will establish new connections with local organisations where we can deliver advocacy support to make our service more inclusive to those clients who identify as being disabled.



In our previous report we highlighted the lack of engagement and referrals from under representative groups, our Advocates immediately took the action on board and in Q3 we successfully established a referral route for the Scottish Refugee Council. We have supported 10 clients with the support of an Interpreter both face to face and through remote delivery. This service was delivered on the premises of the Scottish Refugee Council. Languages included: Farsi, Kurdish, Latin, Persian, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian and Urdu.

We have supported two people from Ukraine, the first was a woman who visited us at the drop-in at the Salvation Army. The client wanted support to apply for Adult Disability Payment, as she did not know how or where to apply. We met on two separate occasions to complete the form and submit it. The client's daughter then came to the Salvation Army after hearing about the support we gave to her mother. This client initially requested support surrounding her husband visa and help to get her son into a school close to her. We explained the role of an Advocate, gave her details of Just Right Scotland who can provide legal advice and her local council's details to request an assessment of her child's need. After discussions, we also applied for Scottish Child Payment and the School Age Payment as the client was eligible but was not aware that these benefits may be available to her.

## Organisational News

**Flu jabs for all VoiceAbility staff** As we head into the winter, we want to make sure all staff are protected from flu. If you do not get a flu vaccination for free on the NHS, we will reimburse any staff members who pay for their flu jab up to £14.

**New training opportunities for VoiceAbility staff and volunteers** As we enter the new year, the Learning and Development team want to make staff aware of courses we will be running in the coming months. These courses are available to all staff and volunteers, and may support new staff, teach existing staff new skills, or serve as part of professional development.

**Disability awareness training** - You may want to build your learning on disability and think deeper about how you work with disabled people. Or you may already know a lot about disability, be disabled yourself, or have a disabled family member.

We welcome the recent publication of the National Carers Strategy, which focuses on ensuring that people get the support they need, rather than on their eligibility for support. Measures to strengthen the implementation of Self-Directed Support are also welcomed.

VoiceAbility also welcomes the setting up of the Lived Experience Advisory Panel to assist with designing the consultation process for the proposed Learning Disability, Autism and Neurodiversity Bill.

## Report

1. Key Performance Indicators:

### 1.3 KPI Summary

			FY22/23 Q3
No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	98%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	98%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	N/A
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A

6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	98%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

## 1.2 Referral Allocation

For the number of referrals allocated to an advocate upon receipt, 98% have been allocated within the KPI criteria of 2 business days, with 95% allocated in less than 1 business day. Due to a technical malfunction with our salesforce system 4 enquiries failed the KPI in December, we have contacted all clients involved and made them aware of this and they were happy to continue with receiving support from Voice Ability. Our IT team has assured us that the IT malfunction has been resolved.

## 1.3 First Contact

First contact was made with a client, 98% were within the 3 business days 95% being contacted within the first 24 hours by their advocate.

## 1.4 First Appointment and Average Response Time

99% of cases saw the associated advocates set up the first appointment within 3 business days with the average of 1 business day for when the first appointment was scheduled. No cases were above the 3-business day KPI for an initial appointment to be scheduled.

This quarter, VoiceAbility received 300 referrals with 235 of those converting into cases. 99% of eligible referrals were allocated to an advocate with an average time of less than 1 business day.

99% of initial appointments with clients were organised within an average time of 2 business days thus meeting KPIs 1 and 2.

KPIs 3, 4, 5, and 7 were deemed not applicable as we have not had any complaints nor concerns filed against us. We have had no issues that have needed escalation, and we have no sub-contractors.

For KPI 6, we are at 98% for satisfaction surveys sent. We are continuing to see progress on our success of the satisfaction survey.

## 2. Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

		Milestone	FY22/23 Q3
No	Call Centre Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	80% of all calls and webchats answered with 20 seconds	80%	91.80%
2	100% of calls and webchats answered with one minute	100%	100%
3	Average handling time of an enquiry 5 minutes (this KPI does not apply to remote advocacy delivery)	Average of 5 minutes	Average of 8 minutes
4	Under 5% abandon rate	<5%	1.80%
5	95% call classification capture of all inbound calls	95%	97%
6	All e-mail, out of hours webchat and voicemail enquiries processed within one working day for urgent	Within 1 working day	99%
7	All online referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within one working day	Within 1 working day	99%
8	All eligible referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within two working days	Within 2 working days	99%

The Scotland Call Centre connected 565 calls, with all call centre KPIs being met. We have hired a second Information and Referral handler with a third joining the business in January.

KPIs 4 and 5 have steadily improved over the past 2 quarters and are now at a steady rate of success having been monitored closely for previous 2 quarters.

### 3. Individuals (Clients)

#### 3.1 The Number of Clients Supported

In FY22/23 Q3, VoiceAbility received 235 cases, 42% increase from the previous quarter. We closed 217 cases this quarter. With the increase in our case numbers, we are creating a blueprint for continuing this success into 2023. We are recruiting 14 Advocates to commence March 2023, to initially generate new connections within their local community. As caseloads grow this will provide us with a greater opportunity to expand the team further during 2023.

#### 9.2 Geographic Split of Cases

Opened Date →		Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total
Service Name ↑	Postcodes.io Admin District ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Benefits Advocacy	Aberdeen City	0	1	0	1
	Aberdeenshire	0	0	1	1
	Angus	0	0	0	0
	Argyll and Bute	0	3	1	4
	City of Edinburgh	6	4	4	14
	Clackmannanshire	0	0	0	0
	Dumfries and Galloway	1	5	1	7
	Dundee City	8	19	11	38
	East Ayrshire	0	2	0	2
	East Dumbartonshire	1	0	0	1
	East Lothian	1	1	1	3
	East Renfrewshire	1	0	0	1
	Falkirk	0	2	1	3
	Fife	22	14	13	49
	Glasgow City	19	13	5	37
	Inverclyde	0	0	1	1
	Highland	10	0	0	10
	Moray	3	1	1	5
	Na h-Eileanan Siar	1	3	0	4
	North Ayrshire	1	0	1	2
	North Lanarkshire	2	1	3	6
	Orkney Islands	0	0	1	1
	Perth and Kinross	1	1	0	2
Renfrewshire	0	3	0	3	
Scottish Borders	9	2	1	12	



	South Ayrshire	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	South Lanarkshire	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
	Stirling	1	1	1	<b>3</b>
	West Dunbartonshire	7	4	10	<b>21</b>
	West Lothian	0	2	0	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>95</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>234</b>

FY22/23 Q3 continues the same pattern from previous quarters in that our numbers are much stronger from Fife (49) Glasgow (37) and Dundee (38).

One area that we would like to highlight is Dumfries and Galloway. The seven clients were signposted through Change Mental Health. Their offices are located within a community centre in Stranraer which, they have provided us with a space, to meet with clients whenever required, and have been a great partnership that has developed this quarter.

The Advocate joining us in January from Dumfries and Galloway will look to build on this relationship.

Last quarter we highlighted areas for improvement in the take up of our service. However, due to those challenges highlighted above, the plan of action was never executed. This plan will move into Q4/23 where the decision to create a blueprint for hiring new staff members to drive these numbers higher. The blueprint will enable VoiceAbility to consistently drive performance but also being able to deal with any surge in referrals.

### 3.3 Equality Act Statistics

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistics can be found in 'Equal Opps' tab in the attached FY22/23 Q3 Data Report. This quarter we have seen a 3% increase in physical disability cases, a brief summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below:

Top 5 Support Needs:

- Mental Health (35%)
- Physical Disability (22%)
- Long-Term Health Condition (10%)
- Learning Disability (10%)
- Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis (5%)

Age Breakdown:

- 0-17 (11%)
- 18-49 (47%)
- 50+ (40%)

### 3.4 Number of Onward Referrals

Enquiry: Created Date →		Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total
Closure Reason ↑	Organisation Signposted To ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count

Ineligible Referral/Case	Citizens Advice Scotland	18	10	3	31
	Department for Work & Pensions	1	4	4	9
	Local Authority	0	1	2	3
Signpost during advocacy journey	Citizens Advice Scotland	9	5	0	14
	Connected Advocacy	0	0	0	0
	Department for Work & Pensions	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>28</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>58</b>

58 of the 300 enquiries we have received this quarter have been signposted to other organisations. 15 of those were signposted during the client journey when applying for a Social Security Scotland benefit.

Citizens Advice Scotland continues to be our highest provider (77%). Main reason for signposting would be for those clients who are unsure of what benefit they wish to apply for. We can confirm 44% of clients have returned to VoiceAbility with a clearer understanding of what benefit they want to apply for and have requested advocacy support.

40% of our signposted clients requested support in areas VoiceAbility are not contracted to provide.

#### 4. Requests and Referrals

##### 4.1 Requests for Support

300 referrals were received in FY22/23 Q3, in the quarter we converted 78% of those to cases and referred the remaining to other organisation for support. 49% of our referrals came through professional organisation.

Enquiry: Created Date →		Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total
Service Type Name ↑	Closure Reason ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Benefits Advocacy	Migration Duplicate	1	0	0	1
	Client Decision	1	0	2	3
	Converted to Case	95	82	54	231
	Ineligible Referral/Case	1	0	0	1
	Insufficient Information	2	1	0	3
	Unable to Contact	1	2	0	3
	Signpost	28	21	9	58
Miscellaneous	Signpost	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>129</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>300</b>

The sections below will provide the breakdown of the geographic split of the referrals.

**a. Geographic Spread of Requests**

Opened Date →		Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total
Service Name ↑	Postcodes.io Admin District ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Benefits Advocacy	Aberdeen City	2	2	1	5
	Aberdeenshire	0	0	2	2
	Angus	0	0	0	0
	Argyll and Bute	5	3	1	9
	City of Edinburgh	6	5	4	15
	Clackmannanshire	0	0	0	0
	Dumfries and Galloway	1	6	1	8
	Dundee City	10	20	11	41
	East Ayrshire	1	3	0	4
	East Dumbartonshire	2	0	0	2
	East Lothian	1	1	2	4
	East Renfrewshire	1	0	0	1
	Falkirk	0	4	1	5
	Fife	27	20	15	62
	Glasgow City	23	16	8	47
	Inverclyde	0	0	1	1
	Highland	11	0	0	11
	Midlothian	0	1	0	1
	Moray	6	2	1	9
	Na h-Eileanan Siar	1	5	0	6
	North Ayrshire	1	0	2	3
	North Lanarkshire	5	2	3	10
	Orkney Islands	0	0	1	1
	Perth and Kinross	1	1	1	3
	Renfrewshire	2	3	0	5
	Scottish Borders	9	3	1	13
	South Ayrshire	0	0	0	0
	South Lanarkshire	2	1	0	3
	Stirling	3	2	1	6
	West Dunbartonshire	8	5	8	21
West Lothian	1	1	0	2	
Unknown	0	0	0	0	
<b>Total</b>		<b>129</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>300</b>

### 4.3 Referrals Received

Out of the 300 referrals that VoiceAbility received in FY22/23 Q3, 78% have converted into a case (9% increase from previous Quarter). 100% of our referrals received from Social Security Scotland carried over into a case this quarter.

### 4.4 Referring Agencies and Organisations

Opened Date →		Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22	Total
Service Name ↑	Referrer Organisation ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Benefits Advocacy	Adapt	0	1	0	1
	Allander surgery	2	0	0	2
	Auchmuty Learning Centre	1	1	0	2
	Change Mental Health	0	0	1	1
	Citizens Advice Scotland	0	1	1	2
	Community Link Newham	0	0	1	1
	Community Renewal	1	0	0	1
	Fife Council	11	3	6	20
	Highland Third Sector Interface	6	0	0	6
	Money Advice	2	0	0	2
	Moray Council	0	1	0	1
	NHS GGC	4	5	1	10
	Penumbra	3	1	0	4
	Positive Steps	0	5	2	7
	Salvation Army	1	1	1	3
	Social Security Scotland	3	5	4	12
	Scottish Refugee Council	5	2	1	8
	Scottish Association for Mental Health	0	1	0	1
	South Lanarkshire Council	1	0	0	1
	Support in Mind Scotland	1	0	0	1
	Tayside Council on Alcohol	1	0	0	1
	The Advocacy Project	0	0	1	1
	The Alliance Scotland	1	2	1	4
The Big Disability Group	4	5	4	13	
The Well	0	0	1	1	
We Are With You	1	2	2	5	
Friends & Family/Self-Referral	42	46	6	94	
Undisclosed	5	0	0	5	
<b>Total</b>		<b>95</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>210</b>

As mentioned previously, professional referrals (49%) have increased significantly which is higher than our self-referrals (44%). This demonstrates how effective our networking efforts

have been, and that the steps we are taking to create a larger focus on our community engagement, will yield greater results.

Having established a good partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council this quarter we hope to develop this further and see this referral route flourish and expand. We continue to see a steady flow of referrals from the Scottish Refugee Council and are working on creating other partnerships like this across Scotland. Our partnership with Scottish Refugee Council has enabled us to support clients from Ukraine, Sierra Leone and Persia and we have used face to face, telephone and video interpreting services.

A new partnership we have made this quarter is with PKAVS based in Perth & Kinross we have attended several of their presentations and presented our own to their audience as well. PKAVS works with people who have mental health illnesses, young carers, unpaid carers and minority groups to enable them to flourish. We have also been introduced to other organisations that have been working with PKAS such as CAH who are setting up warm spaces for locals,

Health In Mind Organisation are launching an 8-week outreach with a view of reaching out to black and minority ethnic groups within East Lothian. They are intending on breaking down cultural or language barriers, providing support for people experiencing anxiety for family or friends and their need for communication. VoiceAbility is intending on being present to be able to offer our service to anyone who attends who could benefit from our support.

We have made progress in connecting with underrepresented groups from the travelling community and so far, have supported two clients from this community to apply for Adult Disability Payment.

## 5. Service Administration

### 5.1 Total Hours Worked

We logged 5,289.68 hours providing benefits advocacy work and 986.75 hours undertaking community engagement which is a 23% increase in hours logged from the previous quarter.

benefits advocacy includes work such as direct client work, research, travelling to appointment, and upskilling.

Community engagement work includes outreach and networking.

### 5.2 Onward Referrals

As discussed in section 3.4, we have signposted 58 referrals to external organisations.

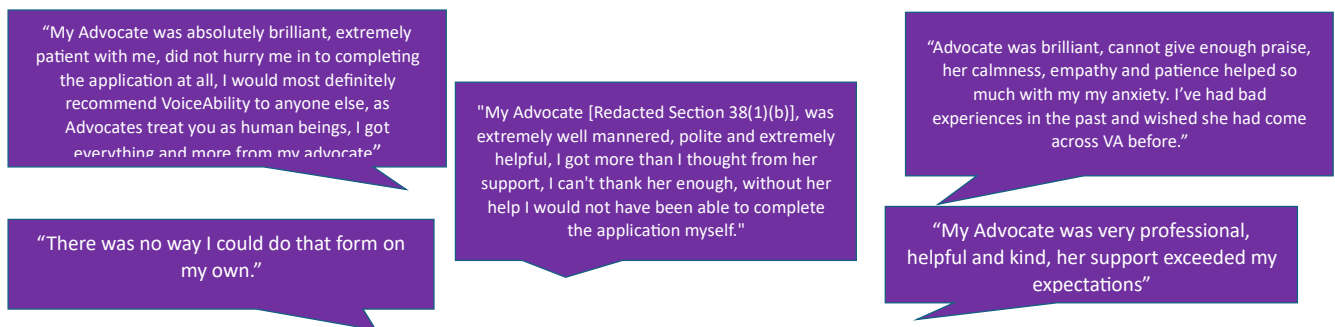
### 5.3 Feedback and Complaints

95% of our clients that responded to our satisfaction survey rated our service as very good (our top option).

100% of our clients stated they had got what they wanted from VoiceAbility.

Key words used to describe our service were, “supportive” (40%), “helpful” (33%).

## Feedback from our clients



## 5.4 Concerns

VoiceAbility have not received any concerns at this time.

## 6. Compliance

### 6.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance

We continue to hold our weekly sessions with Advocates both on case management and reflective practice. As we are seeing our caseloads changing to incorporate re-determinations, we will look to have experienced Advocates taking part in these sessions to share best practice.

On completing our monthly quality audits, we have found gaps in our knowledge, within the team. This has been quickly resolved with additional training planned for the 26.01.2023. We have added this to our induction programme and will continue to monitor.

### 6.2 Communication

VoiceAbility has systems in place to address language barriers, sensory impairments, cognitive impairments, and physical disabilities. Tools such as access to interpreting services and digital materials that are screen-reader optimised, information available in large print, easy read, and flexible advocate support facilitate anyone to have access to benefits advocacy through VoiceAbility.

This quarter, we have utilised our translator service to communicate with clients whose first language was Farsi, Kurdish, Latin, Persian, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian and Urdu.

For awareness raising efforts please see power point presentation.

### **6.3 Partnership**

One of our newly formed partnerships is with **Menziesshill Parish Church**. Open to all in the local community so they can get a hot meal and social interaction. They are donated food from local supermarkets which is of a high quality. Infants, children and adults of all age attend. Clients can take away a food parcel, but they can also collect or be referred for a food parcel from the Foodbank. A Keep well Nurse is usually there to talk to anyone who has health concerns. Clients can be signposted to other agencies or supported to contact other agencies. There is a warm atmosphere where clients are treated with dignity and respect. There is sometimes toiletries, hats, socks, gloves and scarves available for clients.

We have also developed a partnership within Perth Prison where our Advocate has presented an overview of our service and has made connections with other organisations working within the prison and made them aware of our service. In the coming months we have more presentations and co working events planned to build better relationships.

Outreach Hubs:

We have increased our outreach hubs from 16 to 17 this is with the addition of the Menziesshill Parish Church.

## **7. Staffing**

### **7.1 Staffing**

The team consisted of 27 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Data Analytical/Quality Advisor
- 3 Team Leaders
- 1 Volunteer Co-ordinator
- 19 Advocates
- 2 Referral/Information Advocates

In January we have a further two Advocates joining the business (Forth Valley & Dumfries) an additional Information and Referral Advocate joins later this month.

Currently VoiceAbility is advertising for several roles for advocates across Scotland, we are once again attempting to recruit for Orkney & Shetland, however as mentioned this has proven difficult in the past. We are also hoping to recruit in the following health board areas: Greater Glasgow and Clyde, Lothian, Tayside, Lanarkshire, Forth Valley. This will strengthen our strongest and weakest performing areas to drive high referrals numbers across the board.

Table 7.1 –

<b>Vetting, Qualification, and Training</b>		
<i>Measure:</i>	<i>% Of Staff:</i>	<i>Narrative:</i>
Has in date PVG check	100%	
Completed internal mandatory training	100%	A new Scotland legislation specific e-learning module has been recently added to the new Learning and Development platform
Completed AAQ certification?	90%	Only applies to Advocates
Working on AAQ Certificate	100%	Only applies to Advocates

## 8. Trends and Insights

### 8.1 FY22/23 Q3 Analysis

Throughout this quarter we have noticed a trend developing regarding clients seeking our support for redeterminations having had their outcome letter. From our 239 cases this month we have had 12(5%) cases where the client wanted support with a redetermination.

### 8.2 Gaps in Service Provision

The current gap in provision identified is coverage of rural areas such as Shetland & Orkney. Remote areas of Scotland continuing to prove difficult to find staff, however, we will continue to work alongside local providers such as SDS and Fair Start Scotland to support this.



This quarter we were successful with one of our recruitment campaigns using the Fair Start Scotland providers, however, one area, Argyll and Bute we were not as fortunate.

### **8.3 Continuous Improvement**

VoiceAbility has hand-picked a selection of courses that will enhance our understanding of a clients well-being as well as enhance our awareness of mental health conditions and disabilities. A small sample of the courses covered are: Equality and Diversity, Principles of Working with Individuals with learning disabilities, understanding autism (level 2 & 3), awareness of Mental Health Problems, Understanding Mental Health level 3.

To support staff with their development, RNIB attended our all staff meeting which has been beneficial in understanding the challenges people face with impaired vision on a day-to-day basis. We have just received our first referral from RNIB. To grow and nurture this relationship we will assign a champion to work closely with the organisation.

### **8.4 Feedback from Focus Groups**

Our first speak out forum will take place at the Big Disability group on the 19<sup>th</sup> January. We will look to share our findings with Scottish Government and the committee as they were keen to understand and hear the voice of the Scottish people around their experience of accessing services when applying for Social Security Scotland benefit.

## **9. Social Value**

### **9.1 Evidence of Community Benefits**

The Govan high School Placement took place between the 31<sup>st</sup> October and 4<sup>th</sup> November, this involved Advocates, Team Leaders and most importantly pupils from S4 & S5. Over the course of the five days our objective was to provide a greater understanding of advocacy work, and how this can be vital to wider society.

During the week we covered legislation such as the Human Rights Act, Adult Support and Protection Act (Scotland 2007) Equality Act, Children Act (Scotland 1995). The pupils enjoyed hearing of these and were eager to learn more as this was all new. Other activities included goal setting using the S.M.A.R.T technique, business development, equality and diversity and disability awareness training.

Overall, the feedback we received from the participating pupils was beneficial. We have taken everything onboard and amended the training for our next launch in 2023.

## 10. Promotion, Groupwork & Involvement

Our social media campaign continued from Q2, in conjunction with OOH advertising.

Ads on Facebook linked to a bespoke landing page: <https://www.voiceability.org/support-and-help/support-to-access-benefits-in-scotland/get-free-independent-support-to-access-social-security-scotland-benefits>

By testing different ad creative in the first week, we refined the campaign and more than double the click-through rate/number of clicks while reaching the same number of people. This allowed us to only run the most effective ads in Q3 (two ad sets tested in Glasgow, ad set 1 turned off after 3 days due to clear performance differences; 1 ad set in Dundee).

**Reach:** the number of people who saw the ad at least once.

**Impressions:** the number of times these ads were on screen (so the same person may have seen the ad more than once).

**CTR:** click-through rate. 'CTR all' includes people who clicked the ad to comment, share or react. 'CTR' link is the percentage of people who saw the ad and clicked the link. The average CTR for Facebook ads is 0.9%, so this is a highly successful campaign.

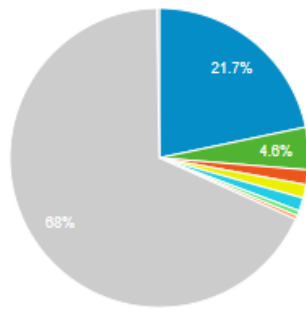
Ad sets	Location	Date start	Date end	Total clicks	Link clicks	CPC	CTR link	CTR all	Budget allocation	Spend	CPM	Reach	Impressions
Total	Glasgow	29-Sep	05-Oct	6300	2611	0.19	2.51%	6.06%	500	500	4.81	49,105	103,877
1	Glasgow			6	32	0.33	0.94%	1.82%		10.59	3.1	2,588	3,413
2	Glasgow			6238	2579	0.19	2.57%	6.21%		489.41	4.87	48,033	100,464
One ad set	Dundee	06-Oct	18-Oct	3645	1890	0.26	2.06%	3.97%	500	482.62	5.45	37,680	91,749

The average CTR for Facebook ads is 0.9%, so this is already a highly successful campaign.

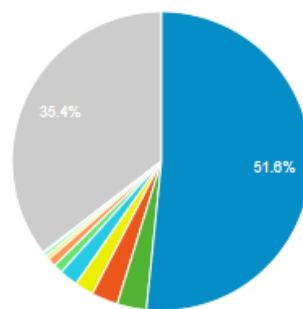
This rise relates to two specific types of page view:

- Visit from a Facebook advert
- Completion of a referral form

Q3 percentage of traffic



Q2 percentage of traffic



Blue: primary landing page <https://www.voiceability.org/support-and-help/support-to-access-benefits-in-scotland/>

Grey: unique IDs generated by referral forms and Facebook ad clicks

We also shared a news story on our website about the Govan school educational placement week: <https://www.voiceability.org/news/glasgow-school-learns-about-advocacy-in-new-voiceability-careers-week>

#### Email newsletter

We launched a general email newsletter in October, with another send in December. The audience is a combination of known contacts and individuals who have chosen to subscribe, with UK-wide content.

	Recipients	Subscribed via web form	Delivered	Opens	Unique opens	Open rate	Clicks	Unique clicks	Click to open rate	Hard bounces	Unsubscribes
<a href="#">Oct</a>	88	31	88.30%	493	29	34.94%	12.05%	14	35.09%	7	1
<a href="#">Dec</a>	98	49	94.90%	124	75	67.74%	45.16%	43	60.56%	5	0

Note: unique opens are individual emails opened by the recipient. Opens also includes all other views from forwarded emails and clicks to the browser link.

The October edition featured the MSP visit to the Scotland team and a video introduction to benefits advocacy in Scotland. It was the most-clicked link with 10 clicks through to the video on YouTube.

#### 11. Safeguarding & Governance

We have had no safeguarding issues at this time.

# **VoiceAbility Scotland Quarterly Report**

FY22/23 Q4; 01/01/2023 – 31/03/2023

## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY22/23 Q4 January 2023 – March 2023
Author's Name Job Title Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Contract Manager [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Operations Manager	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Date	14 March 2023

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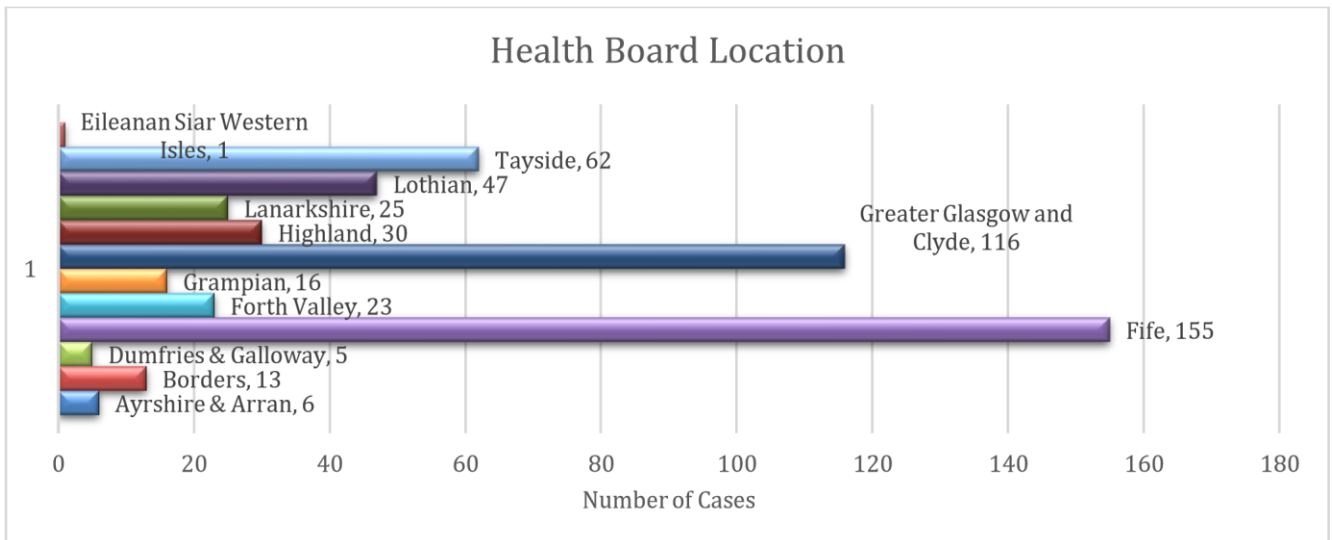
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## Executive Summary

### Headlines

VoiceAbility have started year 2 with much success having doubled the number of cases received. Year one (456) Q4 (499). This success has been driven by our extensive networking efforts, with 251 of our cases coming from our professional networks.

This quarters report we will focus on our networking partnership success and outline key next steps that we are undertaking to continue this growth which will form new partnerships across Scotland.



Our Partnering Organisations continue to contribute to our success, This quarter a larger percentage of our referrals came from Fife Council, The Big Disability Group and The Scottish Refugee Council.

Fife has been an area of continued growth. Huge recognition has to go to our Fife team. We had another two Advocates join this team last quarter and from this they gained stronger partnership links within the local area eg: Welfare team, Dunfermline and Cupar, Restoration Fife and NHS all now providing us with referrals.

The Big Disability Group has been a fantastic partnership and in January, we approached them to increase our working days from two to three days a week.

To-date VoiceAbility Advocates have contacted over 5,000 providers across Scotland to promote the service.

Voice Ability attended 24 events this quarter with new and potential organisations eg: Airdrie Action Partnership, various cost of living events, CTSI community breakfast event, Alloa, South Lanarkshire College for disability pupils, various Job Centres in Glasgow, Health and Social Care Partnership events and Circles Parents evening.

This quarter 51% of our cases came from professional referrals and they have made up the largest proportion of our case numbers in previous quarters. The Success of our networking efforts has given us confidence to bring on more staff to establish new referral routes with new partnering organisations. We will discuss this further in 7.1 Staffing Section.

VoiceAbility have established ten new hubs across Scotland, making the service more inclusive. E.G – Paisley hub, Auldhouse foodbank, Kates Kitchen, Arran, Oakley community centre.

VoiceAbility hosted a parliament event on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February which had a great turnout of clients, advocates, MSPs and partnering organisation and those who we wish to partner with in the future. Our VoiceAbility tote bags at the event were collected by Kuakab Stewart who agreed to distribute these to MSP who were not able to attend on the day. A follow up email went out to all MSPs after the event, four have requested a meeting.

We have had our first volunteer join our service with many more planned in the coming months. Our Edinburgh Volunteer has supported with our first collective advocacy session which took place at the Salvation Army, supported with a home visit appointment, and attended a Human Rights Consortium meeting online. Our Edinburgh Volunteer will also support to collate all the information from the collective advocacy session where 6 clients attended. A full report will be available end of April.

## Successes

1. Exceeded the number of cases received in Q4 against our first year of delivery.
2. Held our first Parliament Event.
3. We have taken the next step in our journey to create an accredited advocacy qualification with SQA.

FY22/23 Q4 saw 47.1% increase in cases. We have detailed information relating to this in section 3.1 & Section 4.1

The pilot which began last quarter has brought some success with an increase in referrals coming from Social Security Scotland. We have had a 108% increase in referrals received of which 40% have been for redetermination cases.

Parliament event has taken place with a well-received reception, and we have been pleased with the response from this. Eight MSP attended and three sent their assistants to attend.

Details relating to our SQA advocacy qualification can be found in section 8.3

## Challenges

1. Increased service demand
2. Staff Recruitment
3. Under-represented groups.



Due to high demand in Fife and Edinburgh we have three Advocates travelling across health boards. We have planned recruitment and hope to mitigate this over the coming months.

We have found it increasingly challenging to attract staff from certain areas in Scotland, hence why we are seeing an increase in Advocates travelling across other health boards. We trialled something different for our last recruitment campaign, and due to some success, we have adopted the same approach for our current recruitment. Adverts have gone out to local Job Centres and providers who have employability contracts, attaching a link to attend an overview on the role of an Advocate and the wider job aspect. We are hoping this will attract suitable candidates who never thought of a career in Advocacy.

Underrepresented groups continue to be a challenge for us, however, we have seen great improvements in this area. The Scottish Refugee Council consistently refer clients onto the service, and recently we have seen a surge of clients being referred from Citizens Advice in Edinburgh for those clients that require benefit advocacy with a translator. A full list of the languages used with our translator service can be found in section 6.2 communication.

## Organisational News

VoiceAbility has created a dedicated newsletter and section of our website which contains news and updates from across Scotland.

**Scottish Parliamentary reception introduces benefits advocacy to MSPs** - The reception brought MSPs, advocates, local organisers and people using benefits advocacy together. [READ MORE HERE.](#)

**Independent advocacy in Scotland** - Learn more about advocacy in Scotland. [Read More Here.](#)

**VoiceAbility joins challenge to government's anti-refugee bill** - More than 320 groups and prominent people united ahead of the Illegal Refugee Bill's second reading. VoiceAbility joined charities, unions, businesses and faith leaders to call for a halt to the Bill before it was debated in Parliament on 13 March 2023. [Read More Here.](#)

## Report

### 1. Key Performance Indicators:

#### 1.1 KPI Summary

			FY22/23 Q4
No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	97.8%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	98.17%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	N/A
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	99%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

#### 1.2 Response Times

97.8% of all our referrals have been allocated to an advocate upon receipt, 96% have been allocated within the KPI criteria of one business day.

98.17% had their first appointment scheduled within three business days, 95% being contacted within the first 24 hours by their advocate. two cases have exceeded the KPI where we needed to arrange a translator to arrange a meeting point with the client. We have introduced a new process during triage to speed this through.

KPIs 3, 4, 5, and 7 were deemed not applicable as we have not had any complaints nor concerns filed against us. We have had no issues that have needed escalation, and we have no sub-contractors.

KPI 6, we have achieved 100% for satisfaction surveys being sent out within two days of the cases being closed.

Due to a technical malfunction with our salesforce system occurring over the Christmas break six enquiries failed the KPI in January. We also discovered an issue where if the incorrect symbol are used in our online form for example “:” instead of “.” our background system doesn’t automatically correct this. This has led to a further four enquiries going unanswered for more than two days. All clients have been contacted and they were happy to continue with receiving support from VoiceAbility. Our IT team has been working on a solution for this.

## 2. Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

No	Call Centre Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	FY22/23 Q4 Result
1	80% of all calls and webchats answered with 20 seconds	80%	91.80%
2	100% of calls and webchats answered with one minute	100%	100%
3	Average handling time of an enquiry 5 minutes (this KPI does not apply to remote advocacy delivery)	Average of 5 minutes	Average of 9.4 minutes
4	Under 5% abandon rate	<5%	2.13%
5	95% call classification capture of all inbound calls	95%	97%
6	All e-mail, out of hours webchat and voicemail enquiries processed within one working day for urgent	Within 1 working day	100%
7	All online referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within one working day	Within 1 working day	100%
8	All eligible referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within two working days	Within 2 working days	100%

The Scotland Call Centre connected 613 calls, with all call centre KPIs being met. KPIs 4 and 5 have steadily improved over the past two quarters and are now at a steady rate of success.

## 3. Individuals (Clients)

### 3.1 The Number of Clients Supported

In FY22/23 Q4, VoiceAbility received 499 cases, 47% increase from the previous quarter. 433 of these have been for initial applications, 3 for change of circumstances, 62 for redeterminations and one 1<sup>st</sup> tier tribunal case. We closed 366 cases this quarter. With our cases increasing quarter on quarter, we have seen the benefits of working within the local community and creating hubs for our advocates to meet with clients. This has resulted in our advocates being able to meet more clients.

We mentioned in our previous quarterly report that we were creating a blueprint for continuing this success into 2023. This quarter we added a further ten hubs into Scotland. We have recruited 9 Advocates and they will initially start with creating new connections within their local community and promoting benefit advocacy. As their cases come on board, we will recruit more Advocates to keep the focus on community engagement and look at new and exciting opportunities to make our service more inclusive.

### 3.2 Geographic Split of Cases

Opened Date →		Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total
Service Name	Postcodes.io Admin District	Count	Count	Count	Count
Benefits Advocacy	Aberdeen City	1	0	5	<b>6</b>
	Aberdeenshire	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
	Angus	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
	Argyll and Bute	1	2	3	<b>6</b>
	City of Edinburgh	18	4	18	<b>40</b>
	Clackmannanshire	1	1	4	<b>6</b>
	Dumfries and Galloway	1	3	1	<b>5</b>
	Dundee City	15	18	14	<b>47</b>
	East Ayrshire	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
	East Dunbartonshire	1	1	0	<b>2</b>
	East Lothian	2	1	2	<b>5</b>
	East Renfrewshire	0	0	2	<b>2</b>
	Falkirk	0	0	1	<b>1</b>
	Fife	40	60	54	<b>154</b>
	Glasgow City	18	18	27	<b>63</b>
	Highland	18	5	3	<b>26</b>
	Inverclyde	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
	Midlothian	2	0	0	<b>2</b>
	Moray	0	7	2	<b>9</b>
Na h-Eileanan Siar	0	1	0	<b>1</b>	

	North Ayrshire	1	0	1	2
	North Lanarkshire	9	4	9	22
	Orkney Islands	0	0	0	0
	Perth and Kinross	5	5	3	13
	Renfrewshire	2	0	5	7
	Scottish Borders	4	4	5	13
	South Ayrshire	1	1	1	3
	South Lanarkshire	0	2	1	3
	Stirling	4	3	9	16
	West Dunbartonshire	10	14	17	41
	West Lothian	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>156</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>499</b>

FY22/23 Q4 continues the same pattern from previous quarters in that our numbers are much stronger from Fife (154) Glasgow (63) and Dundee (47), however other areas have significantly grown this quarter such as Edinburgh, West Dunbartonshire, Highland and North Lanarkshire. We have been working towards improving our numbers in North Lanarkshire and are delighted to be able to see improvements. Our Advocate has attended a vast amount of networking events and is starting to reap the rewards. We have attended several events run by Airdrie Action Partnerships across north Lanarkshire, we have presented at a school to teachers and parents. As a result of our networking, we have seen a 266% increase in cases in North Lanarkshire and will continue to drive the referrals in this area. We have also started to receive referrals from North Lanarkshire Advocacy services and are in the process of arranging a meeting with them to

### 3.3 Equality Act Statistics

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistics can be found in 'Equal Ops' tab in the attached FY22/23 Q4 Data Report. This quarter we have seen a 3% increase in physical disability cases, a brief summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below:

Top 4 Support Needs:

- Mental Health (34%)
- Physical Disability (14%)
- Long-Term Health Condition (18%)
- Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis (7%)

Age Breakdown:

- 0-17 (6%)
- 18-49 (52%)
- 50+ (35%)

### 3.4 Number of Onward Referrals

Enquiry: Created Date →		Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total
Closure Reason ↑	Organisation Signposted To ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Ineligible Referral/Case	Citizens Advice Scotland	2	2	2	6
	Department for Work & Pensions	2	4	3	9
Signposted during Advocacy journey	Citizens Advice Scotland	4	6	7	17
	Department for Work & Pensions	2	7	8	17
	Glasgow City Council	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>49</b>

We have seen a significant drop in our signposting activity within the ineligible referral section due to clients understanding who we can support.

51% of our referrals have come from our partner organisation, thus increasing awareness of what VoiceAbility can support with.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of signposting opportunities whilst delivering benefit advocacy to our clients, demonstrating that they are at the true heart of the work we do. From discussions and where we identify they require additional support out with our contractual obligations, we make sure they are provided with details of specific organisations they can contact.

#### 4. Requests and Referrals

##### 4.1 Requests for Support

526 referrals were received in FY22/23 Q4, converted 92% of those to cases.

Enquiry: Created Date →		Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total
Service Type Name ↑	Closure Reason ↑	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Benefits Advocacy	Advocacy Complete	0	2	0	2
	Client Decision	2	2	0	4
	Converted to Case	149	150	185	484
	Ineligible Referral/Case	6	6	2	14
	Insufficient Information	1	2	2	5

	Mirgration Duplication	0	2	0	2
	Signpost	4	6	4	14
	Unable to Contact	0	1	0	1
Miscellaneous	Signpost	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>		<b>162</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>193</b>	<b>526</b>

Out of the 526 referrals that VoiceAbility received in FY22/23 Q4, 92% have converted into a case. 100% of our referrals received from Social Security Scotland carried over into a case this quarter.

### 4.3 Referring Agencies and Organisations

Opened Date →		Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Total
Service	Referrer Organisation	Count	Count	Count	Count
Benefits	Action For Children	0	0	1	1
Advocacy	ADAPT	2	0	0	2
	Allander surgery	1	1	1	3
	Auldhouse Foodbank	0	1	0	1
	Bethany Christian Trust	0	1	0	1

	Brag Enterprises	0	1	4	5
	Cadder Housing Association	0	0	1	1
	Change Mental Health	0	0	1	1
	Circles Network	2	4	2	8
	Citizens Advice Scotland	5	0	8	13
	Community Renewal	1	0	0	1
	Crisis	0	0	2	2
	Dundee Independent Advocacy Support	1	1	2	4
	Dundee City Council	1	0	0	1
	Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership	1	0	0	1
	Dundee Survival Group	0	0	1	1
	Fass	0	0	1	1
	Fife Council	15	20	18	53
	Freedom From Torture	0	1	1	2
	Gilvenbank Foodbank Hub	0	0	2	2

Groove Park Medical Centre	1	0	0	1
Health In Mind	1	0	0	1
Hearing Voice Network	1	0	0	1
Homestart Glenrothes	1	0	1	2
Job Centre Plus	1	3	0	4
Justice Service	0	1	0	1
Link Life Fife	0	1	0	1
Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service	0	1	0	1
Money Advice	0	0	1	1
Moray Council	0	3	0	3
NHS Fife	1	1	0	2
NHS GGC	1	1	0	2
North Lanarkshire Advocacy	1	1	0	2
Penumbra	2	1	0	3
PKAVS	0	1	0	1
Positive Steps	1	3	5	9
Restoration Fife	0	3	1	4
Right there	1	0	0	1
Royal National Institute of Blind People	2	0	0	2
Salvation Army	1	0	1	2
Scottish Autism	1	0	0	1
Scottish Government - Agency	7	8	10	25
Scottish Refugee Council	7	5	6	18
Skills Development Scotland	1	0	0	1
Stirling Council	0	2	0	2
Support in Mind Scotland	1	0	0	1
The Advocacy Project	1	0	0	1
The Alliance Scotland	0	1	0	1
The Big Disability Group	8	10	8	26
The Well	2	1	3	6
Throughcare Aftercare	3	0	0	3
TSI Highland	2	1	1	4
Turning Point	1	0	1	2
We Are With You	2	6	4	12
Welfare Support Team	1	0	1	2
Friends & Family/Self-Referral	75	71	101	247
<b>Total</b>	<b>156</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>188</b>	<b>499</b>

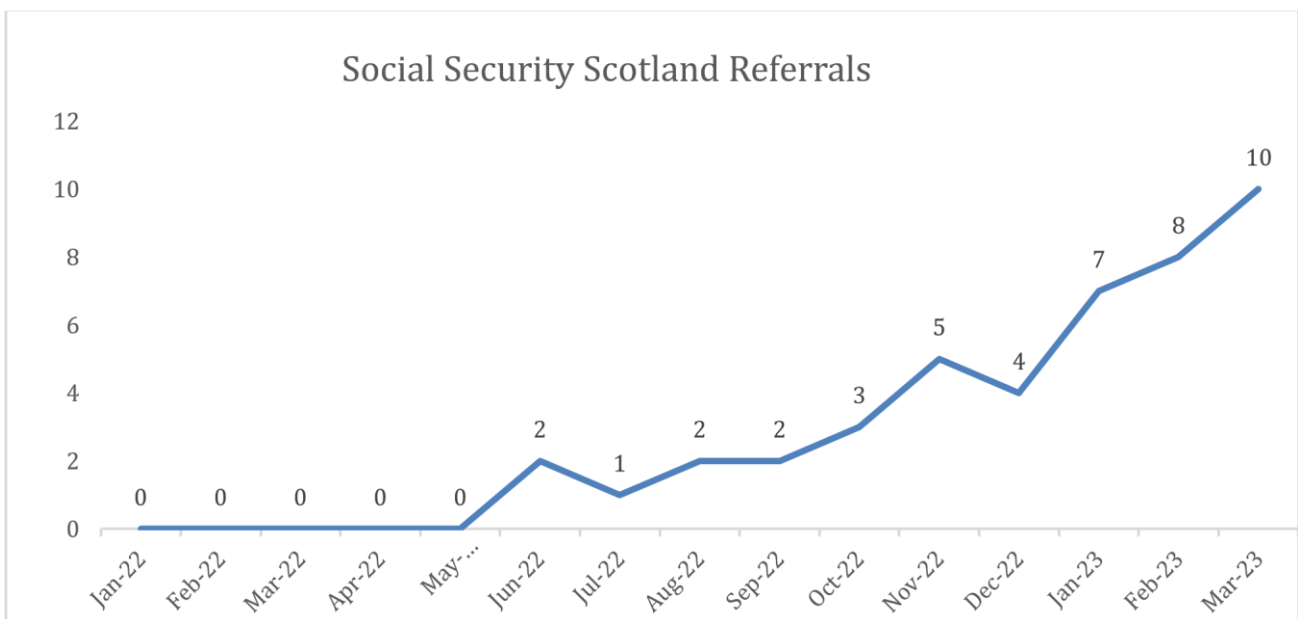


As mentioned previously, professional referrals (51%) have increased significantly which is higher than our self-referrals (44%). This demonstrates how effective our networking efforts have been, and that the steps we are taking to create a larger focus on our community engagement, will yield greater results.

This quarter we welcomed referrals from 12 new agencies and intend on reaching out to those organisations to further improve our working relationship.

Having established a good partnership with the Scottish Refugee Council in the previous quarter we have gone on to see them become one of the organisation that consistently sends referrals. We continue to see a steady flow of referrals from The Big Disability Group and Fife Council has quickly become our highest referring partnering organisation.

A new partnership within the Job Centres in Glasgow is in the early stages and we hope to see more referrals coming from this as we move in to Q1 of the new financial year. We have been given an opportunity to set up a hub in Renfield Job Centre two days a week. They currently have providers working within their offices and believe VoiceAbility can add value.



We have seen a significant increase in referrals from Social Security Scotland, and 40% of these are for redeterminations.

## 5. Service Administration

## 5.1 Total Hours Worked

We logged 6,210.44 hours providing benefits advocacy work and 1,290.37 hours undertaking community engagement which is a 19.5% increase in hours logged from the previous quarter.

benefits advocacy includes work such as direct client work, research, travelling to appointment, and upskilling.

Community engagement work includes outreach and networking.

## 5.2 Onward Referrals

As discussed in section 3.4, we have signposted 49 referrals to external organisations.

## 5.3 Feedback and Complaints

96% of our clients that responded to our satisfaction survey rated our service as very good (our top option).

100% of our clients stated they had got what they wanted from VoiceAbility.

Key words used to describe our service were, “supportive” (40%), “helpful” (33%).

### Feedback from our clients



## 5.4 Concerns

VoiceAbility have not received any concerns at this time.

## 6. Compliance

## 6.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance

We continue to hold our weekly sessions with Advocates both on case management and reflective practice. As we are seeing our caseloads changing to incorporate redeterminations, we will look to have experienced Advocates taking part in these sessions to share best practice.

## 6.2 Communication

This quarter, we have utilised our translator service to communicate with clients whose first language was Arabic, Cantonese, Farsi, Kurdish, Latin, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Tamil, Ukrainian and Urdu.

For awareness raising efforts please see power point presentation.

## 7. Staffing

### 7.1 Staffing

The team consisted of 32 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 3 Team Leaders
- 1 Volunteer Co-ordinator
- 23 Advocates
- 3 Referral/Information Advocates

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of April we will welcome a further 5 community engagement advocates, including one from Shetland, who will work on establishing new referral routes. We have six onboarding (3 Glasgow, 1 Western Isle and 2 Fife). We have further adverts out for Advocacy roles in Glasgow, Dundee, Edinburgh, Fife, Lanarkshire, Ayrshire, Lothian and Borders to strengthen our teams within these areas. This will give us a minimum of 45 Advocates working across our health board areas. We are also planning on recruiting another 2 team leaders to champion our teams across Scotland and encouraging GROWTH.

In addition to our staff, we have six volunteers going through our induction process to begin volunteering with us in the coming months this is in addition to the one volunteer we already have in Edinburgh.

32% of our Advocates recruited since contract GO LIVE were unemployed before joining VoiceAbility.

Table 7.1 –

**Vetting, Qualification, and Training**

<i>Measure:</i>	<i>% Of Staff:</i>	<i>Narrative:</i>
Has in date PVG check	100%	
Completed internal mandatory training	100%	Learning and Development platform
Completed AAQ certification?	84%	New advocates joining the business are making their way through this.
Working on AAQ Certificate	16%	New advocates in the business are working towards this now.

## 8. Trends and Insights

### 8.1 FY22/23 Q3 Analysis

Over this quarter we have seen a large increase in our case numbers. 499 cases of which 42 have been redeterminations and three for a change of circumstances. We have received our first tribunal case and are monitoring this closely to learn and share our experiences across our team.

### 8.2 Gaps in Service Provision

A gap we have had on our radar for some time is finally being filled. On 10<sup>th</sup> April we will have a new Advocate joining us, covering Shetland. We are pleased to be able to have filled this position and look forward to the new partnerships we can establish in this area.

### 8.3 Continuous Improvement

We are in the early stages of developing an SQA approved advocacy course with the aim to use this to train new staff. We have recruited a development coordinator, and this will focus on building the qualification and work closely with the SQA credit manager. The course will be all encompassing and won't be focused directly with Voice Ability however we will work on developing specialism after the core units have been completed such as a module focused on benefits advocacy.

### 8.4 Feedback from Focus Groups

Our second focus group had six participants in attendance, and we hosted it at the Salvation Army café, Our conversation focussed on "what is advocacy" and "what else it can be", and plenty of discussion around engagement with Social Security Scotland. People were generally very positive about advocacy, believing it was a useful support for them. All participants unanimously agreed that advocacy would be useful for them. Although, they did express a need for advocacy to cover more than Social Security Scotland benefits.

## 9. Social Value

### 9.1 Evidence of Community Benefits

We have established new hubs across Scotland, enabling us to reach out the local communities that use these. We have also hosted our second speak out forum and are in the process of planning our second school's placement.

## 10. Promotion, Groupwork & Involvement

We added a new 'In Scotland' page to our About us section, which allows us to share our services, stories and policy work in one location. We also link to advocacy providers across Scotland via the SIAA, to support people to find the right service for them. There is also an option to subscribe to our new Scotland-focused email newsletter.

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Redacted Section 33 – Commercial Interests and the economy

Redacted Section 33 – Commercial Interests and the economy

## 11. Safeguarding & Governance

This quarter we have identified and raise five safeguarding concerns, the details of these are restricted however we can confirm that each of these safeguarding concerns have been closed due to local authority advising they have taken the case on.

# **VoiceAbility Scotland Quarterly Report**

FY23 Q1; 01/04/2023 – 30/06/2023

## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY23/24 Q1 April 2023 – June 2023
Author's Name Job Title Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Contract Manager [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Operations Manager	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Date	14 July 2023

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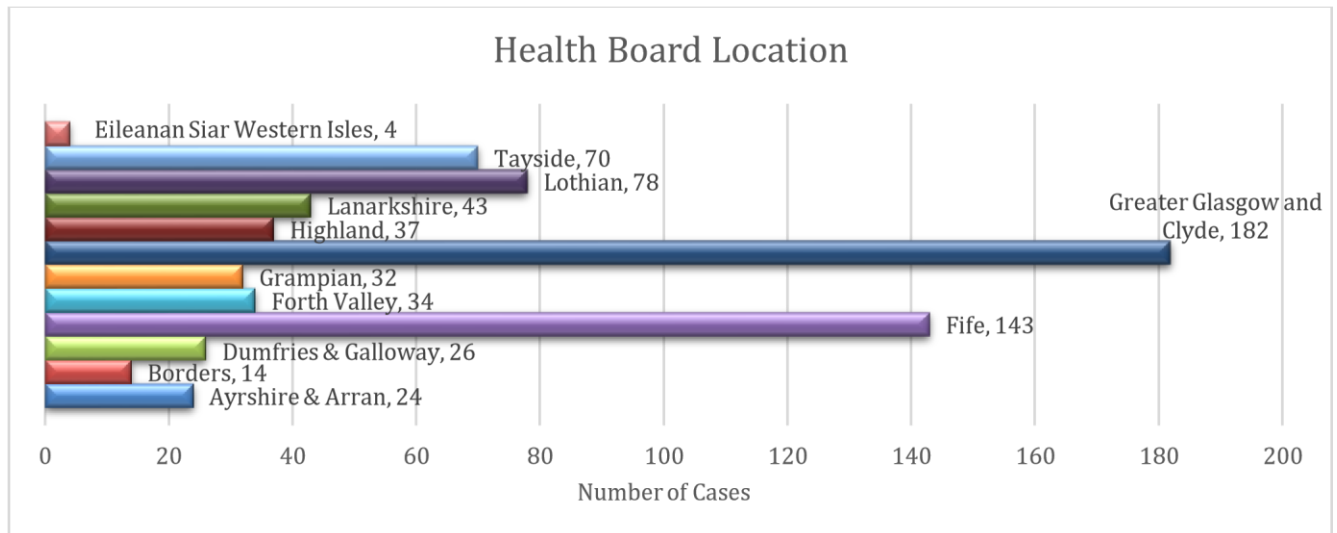
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## Executive Summary

### Headlines

From the beginning of this year, VoiceAbility have continued to see an upward trend in referral numbers, and delighted that we have exceeded previous number of cases in a given quarter. (39.2% increase) (695 cases). We have made huge strides in Lothian, Lanarkshire and Grampian. Further information detailed within the report.



Glasgow has exceeded the case numbers of Fife, our previous highest performing area. Glasgow has seen growth due to higher numbers being referred from The Big Disability Group and our newly established connections within the Job Centres.

VoiceAbility have established 6 new hubs across Scotland, making the service more inclusive and accessible for any potential clients. Job Centre Plus, (Aberdeen City, Inverness and Glasgow), Aberdeen Foyer, Seafit and Skills Development Scotland, Peterhead are offering us space to have drop-ins whenever we require.

VoiceAbility attended 38 events this quarter to promote the service and build on new and established relationships. Some highlights from this quarter include attending the Big Disability Group 1<sup>st</sup> year anniversary where many charities came together along with some local MSPs. We attended an information morning at Parkhill School designed to connect parents of children with disabilities to services that they can access in their local area.

Our Operations Manager attended an event organised by MP Marion Fellows with Alzheimer Scotland, where they provided an overview on Dementia. She found it very interesting and has arranged for the team within Dementia Friendly Scotland to attend our next full team meeting in September to provide the same overview.

We also attended events in Ayrshire, Dumfries, Edinburgh, Fife, Fraserburgh, Inverness, Stirling and Peterhead.

VoiceAbility attended an event held in partnership with Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) at HMP Inverness care.

A selection of partners were invited to the event, which included, Barnardo's, New Start Highland, Moray Pathways, Children Against Poverty, Skills Development Scotland, Developing the Young Workforce and Rokzkool.

The aim of the event, was to interact with individuals within HMP Inverness care, giving advice and support on what is available.

[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] at HMP Inverness gave an Introduction and welcome.

It was a fantastic event, where we were able to provide an understanding of our service and how VoiceAbility could support. Interaction and engagement with all the individuals was a great success and literature was taken away for reference. It was great to be given the opportunity to highlight the work that we are doing across Scotland.

We are pursuing an opportunity to attend on a regular basis with the partnership manager within DWP.

#### Successes

1. Exceeded the number of cases received in Q4 against our first year of delivery.
2. Collective Advocacy expansion.
3. Growth in areas.

FY23/24 Q1 saw 39.2% increase in cases. We have detailed information relating to this in section 3.1 & Section 4.1

Following the success of our collective advocacy sessions, we are increasing our efforts to run these more frequently across Scotland. To start this activity, we sent invitations to all our previous and current clients who had foregone the redetermination process. The dates, times and venues will be placed on our website to provide further opportunities for others to attend. Some of our clients may wish to provide one to one feedback, rather than attend a group setting. (collective advocacy report attached).

We have been working with numerous partners across these areas such as Job Centre Plus and Advocacy North East in the Grampian area and have been seeing steady referrals from both. We have also made a connection with North Lanarkshire Advocacy. Within Lothian we've had meetings with Salvesen Minds and the Action Group to promote our services and joined the East Lothian Financial Inclusion Network meetings to enhance our reach within Edinburgh.

#### Challenges

1. Increased service demand
2. Contacting Social Security Scotland

Due to high demand in Glasgow, we have three advocates travelling across health boards to provide support where appropriate. We have planned recruitment and come September we will have a further six advocates in Glasgow. This will take our staffing quota to service Glasgow up to 9.

Our advocates have highlighted a challenge when they are supporting clients and need to contact Social Security Scotland direct. We have experienced waiting times of over an hour, which is having an impact on the delivery of our service to our clients. We are working closely with Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland to find a solution. We met recently in Glasgow to discuss a few options which are being explored.

## Organisational News

VoiceAbility has created a dedicated newsletter and section of our website which contains news and updates from across Scotland, below are some highlights from that.

**“Get involved, come on in:” student volunteer Barney shares his experience - Barney, 22, volunteers for VoiceAbility in Edinburgh. We talked to him about why he volunteers, and what he gets out of it. [Read more](#)**

**Joint call to implement human rights for all in Scotland - VoiceAbility has signed a joint letter to Scottish public authorities, calling for action to prioritise human rights. [Read More](#)**

## Report

### 1. Key Performance Indicators:

#### 1.1 KPI Summary

FY24 Q1			
No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	100%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	99.5%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied	90%	N/A

	to the SG contract manager for information).		
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	100%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

## 1.2 Response Times

All KPI's met this Quarter.

## 2. Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

No	Call Centre Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	FY23/24 Q1 Result
1	80% of all calls and webchats answered with 20 seconds	80%	91.80%
2	100% of calls and webchats answered with one minute	100%	100%
3	Average handling time of an enquiry 5 minutes (this KPI does not apply to remote advocacy delivery)	Average of 5 minutes	Average of 9.7 minutes
4	Under 5% abandon rate	<5%	2.13%

5	95% call classification capture of all inbound calls	95%	97%
6	All e-mail, out of hours webchat and voicemail enquiries processed within one working day for urgent	Within 1 working day	100%
7	All online referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within one working day	Within 1 working day	100%
8	All eligible referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within two working days	Within 2 working days	100%

The Scotland Call Centre connected 702 calls, with all call centre KPIs being met. KPIs 4 and 5 have steadily improved over the past two Quarters.

### 3. Individuals (Clients)

#### 3.1 The Number of Clients Supported

In FY23/24 Q1, VoiceAbility received 695 cases, 39.2% increase from the previous quarter.

Initial Applications	556
Change of Circumstances	36
Redeterminations	98
1 <sup>st</sup> Tier Tribunal	5

With our cases increasing quarter on quarter, we have seen the benefits of working within the local community. Having a base, where people feel safe and know the surrounding area, with the added bonus of saving travelling times across the health boards, means we are able to see more clients in one day.

#### 2.2 Geographic Split of Cases

Opened Date →	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Total
---------------	--------	--------	--------	-------

Service Name	NHS Health Board	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
Benefits Advocacy	Ayrshire & Arran	6	8	10	<b>24</b>
	Borders	4	3	7	<b>14</b>
	Dumfries & Galloway	7	8	11	<b>26</b>
	Fife	30	48	65	<b>143</b>
	Forth Valley	6	15	13	<b>34</b>
	Grampian	9	11	12	<b>32</b>
	Greater Glasgow and Clyde	57	53	72	<b>182</b>
	Highland	17	7	13	<b>37</b>
	Lanarkshire	15	15	13	<b>43</b>
	Lothian	17	27	34	<b>78</b>
	Orkney	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	Shetland	1	0	7	<b>8</b>
	Tayside	19	17	34	<b>70</b>
	Eileanan Siar Western Isles	2	2	0	<b>4</b>
Unknown	0	0	0	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total:</b>		<b>190</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>695</b>

FY23/24 Q1 continues the same pattern from previous quarters in that our numbers are much stronger from Fife (143) Glasgow (182) and Lothian (78), however, other areas have significantly grown this quarter such as Ayrshire, Highlands and Lanarkshire.

### 3.3 Equality Act Statistics

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistics can be found in 'Equal Ops' tab in the attached FY23/24 Q1 Data Report. This quarter we have seen a 4% increase in Mental Health cases, a summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below:

Top 4 Support Needs:

- Mental Health (37%)
- Long-Term Health Condition (21%)
- Physical Disability (14%)
- Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis (8%)

Age Breakdown:

- 0-17 (9%)
- 18-49 (53%)
- 50+ (38%)

### 3.4 Number of Onward Referrals

36 of our 761 referrals have been signposted to other organisation for further support.

44% of our referrals have come from our partner organisation.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of signposting opportunities whilst delivering benefit advocacy to our clients, demonstrating that they are at the true heart of the work we do. Main signposting requirements are for support with services such as housing, DWP benefits or advice on benefits.

### 4. Requests and Referrals

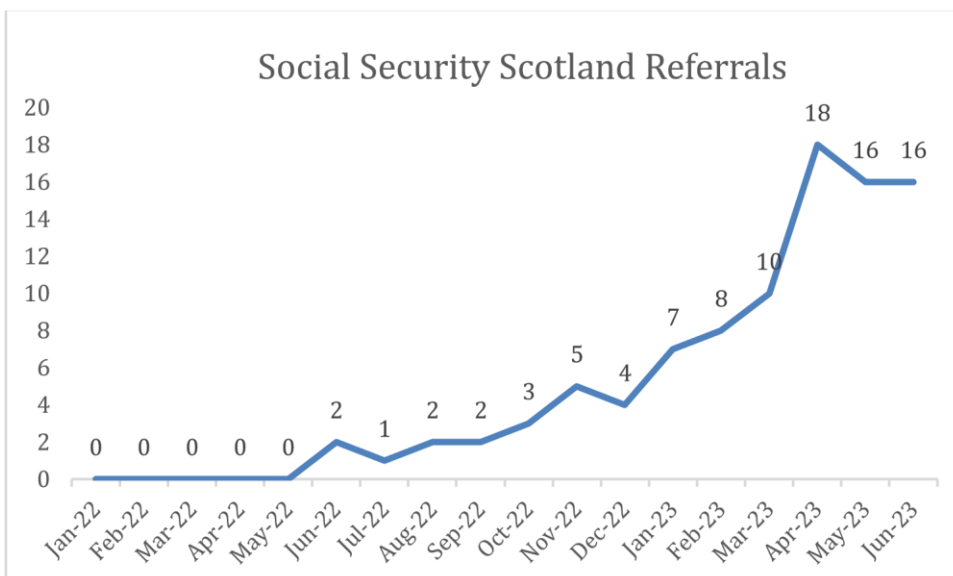
#### 4.1 Requests for Support

Out of the 761 referrals that VoiceAbility received in FY23/24 Q1, 92% have converted into a case.

100% of our referrals received from Social Security Scotland carried over into a case this quarter.

#### 4.3 Referring Agencies and Organisations

As mentioned previously, professional referrals (44%) have increased significantly, we have now received referrals from 110 different organisations. Our self-referrals (52%) have continued to see great reach through our networking effort. This demonstrates how effective our networking has been, and that the steps we are taking to create a larger focus on our community engagement, will yield greater results.



From the table above, we can see further increase in referrals from Social Security Scotland, of which 44% of redeterminations.

Quote from local delivery team member

*"Working with VoiceAbility was a fantastic experience both for me and for the client, it was great to work in partnership with VoiceAbility for the greater good of the client. We were like two peas in a pod working collaboratively to ensure the client's needs were met".*

## 5. Service Administration

### 5.1 Onward Referrals

As discussed in section 3.4, we have signposted 36 referrals to external organisations.

### 5.2 Feedback and Complaints

96% of our clients that responded to our satisfaction survey rated our service as very good (our top option).

100% of our clients stated they had got what they wanted from VoiceAbility.

Key words used to describe our service were, "supportive" (40%), "helpful" (33%).

#### Feedback from our clients



### 5.3 Concerns

VoiceAbility have nothing to report this quarter.

## 6. Compliance



## **6.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance**

This quarter our team meetings have focused on redetermination training, along with looking at the new review forms that have been sent out to clients.

## **6.2 Communication**

This quarter, we have utilised our translator service to communicate with clients whose first language was Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Urdu. We also used BSL for three of our clients.

For awareness raising efforts please see power point presentation.

## **6.3 Partnerships**

Our newly recruited advocates have been making strides in the areas of the Highlands and Aberdeen and Aberdeenshire.

### **Inverness**

Established hubs within the Department of Work and Pensions employment and partnership team, in addition we also attended events within HMP, HTSI Custody Link, 1668 Café children's and families' afternoon and the employability forum.

### **Aberdeen**

We have made contact and set up a partnership with Aberdeen Cyrenians, Turning Point Scotland which is funded by Aberdeen City Council who are keen to have our details included on their financial inclusion webpage. Northeast College are having a fresher week presentation and two advocates will be attending with a leaflet from VoiceAbility going into each of the 1600 welcome packs. Aberdeen Job Centre has accepted us to have a desk there one morning a week. We have also contacted the maternity ward in Aberdeen, the aim of this project is to provide information to new mothers and families about the best start grants.

We are in the process of contacting our referring organisations to complete a satisfaction survey of our service. We shall have the results by the end of July.

Further to contacting our existing partners, we have also reached out to all members of SIAA to arrange meetings. We have met with Advocard, Ceartas, Kindred and Salvesen Mind. Actionforme, Angus in Advocacy, Circles, Includeme and Partners in Advocacy all agreeing to meet to discuss how we can best work together. Awaiting dates for the diary.

In Edinburgh we've also secured a spot in the Thistle Foundation building as this will become our new centralised hub for support services in Edinburgh. Our Edinburgh Advocate has been working jointly with The Edinburgh Food Project to get this underway. Other services involved, and who will potentially be joining the hub are: The Salvation Army, Sacro, Bethany Christian

Trust, Action Group, Changeworks, Community Alliance Trust, Circles, Advocard, Access to Industry, Big Issue, Vocal, and Turning Point.

VoiceAbility attend a conference within the Fenwick Hotel to participate in a “speed networking session”. We promoted our school placement project to all the Ayrshire School Co-ordinators, teachers, and Pastoral support teachers who came from all localities, East Ayrshire, South Ayrshire, and North Ayrshire. From this we managed to set up a few meetings from schools who were keen to hear more.

Ayrshire is an area for development and our Advocate has spent much of their time this quarter attending numerous events. From this work we have seen a 300% increase in referral numbers.

Some examples below on how this tremendous increase has happened.

VoiceAbility attended The Ayrshire Community Trust (TACT) Third Sector Networking Event along with 36 other organisations. They have our details of the service within the directory, along with other third sector and charitable organisations’ details.

On the day we were asked by [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Development Officer Arran Community & Voluntary Service if we would attend a meeting and deliver a presentation of our service on Wednesday the 16<sup>th</sup> of August 2023.

We have also been invited to attend a further meeting by the Lennox Partnership, [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Co-ordinator, who works for families.

SCDN Meeting within South Ayrshire

Great conversations were had all round the table, and we all provided an update on our services.

Connected with [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] who works within the Football Academy, and she had suggested that we come along to their “Honest Men’s Group”.

[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)], Health and Social Care Partnership recommended we attend a networking event within a South Ayrshire School in September 2023 time to do a presentation on our service.

Further to these two contacts and upcoming events, we were invited by [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Community Worker East Ayrshire to attend another networking event in August within the Ayrshire College.

SCDN circulated all our marketing materials to the whole network, these were included within the minutes of the meeting.

## 7. Staffing

### 7.1 Staffing

The team consisted of 39 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 4 Team Leaders
- 1 Volunteer Co-ordinator
- 29 Advocates
- 3 Referral/Information Advocates

In addition to our staff, we have seven volunteers, some of which are just about to finalise their training. Our volunteers support with light touch advocacy and community engagement work.

36% of our Advocates recruited since contract GO LIVE were unemployed before joining VoiceAbility.

## 8. Trends and Insights

### 8.1 FY23/24 Q1 Analysis

We have continued to increase our cases per quarter, however, we have identified areas that we have seen smaller than expected growth specifically in Tayside. We have 2 advocates based in this area, and had expected more cases than what we have received so far. We have started work on identifying new partners to work with in this area to extend our reach.

Our success in Fife is for a number of reasons, we have had very successful partnerships and outreach hubs, welcoming organisations that are willing to work with VoiceAbility to benefit their clients. Fife has areas that rank high on the deprivation scale, which, we have identified and work within to enable us to reach people in these areas that could perhaps not have had access to our service.

Our partnership started early days with Auchmuty Learning Centre in Glenrothes, who were keen to spread the word with all their Welfare Rights team across Fife. Café Connect, Leven and Quit Your Way, are all run by Fife Council and as a result their welfare officers often drop in and meet our advocate supporting clients in the local community. This has resulted in a positive upshift in referrals from the welfare officers.

Cowdenbeath Job centre is one of our newly founded hubs, which is proving to be very fruitful. Restoration Fife, Buckhaven, we attend their welfare weeks. BRAG Enterprises signpost clients that require support for benefit applications. The success of the partnerships and outreach hubs would not have happened had we not had the time and resources required to build these relationships. With 236 professional referrals making up more than 50% of all referrals from fife (406) it speaks to the success of our networking, partnerships, and outreach hubs success.

Fife Council	168
Café Connect	8
Brag Enterprises	13
JCP Cowdenbeath	7
Glenrothes community hub	12

Gilven foodbank	3
HSCP	12
NHS Fife	5
Social security Scotland referrals	8

In Glasgow the themes are very similar to what we see in Fife. We have created close working relationships with partners such as the Big Disability Group, Scottish Refugee Council and have established hubs in areas like Dennistoun Library, Job Centre Plus City Centre and integrated ourselves within the local foodbanks. We have seen great success with all of the partnerships, and even received requests to have multiple days at centres due to the demand for our work. In addition, we have continued to see great success in our targeted approach to working within areas that we have identified using the SIMD map and will continue to do this throughout Scotland.

In Aberdeenshire and in the City we have been working closely with many organisation such as Alzheimer's Scotland, Penumbra, Shirley's Space, Aberdeen Foyer, Fraserburgh Men's Shed, Age Scotland, Help for Heroes, SeaFit, Skills Development Scotland, Four Pillars, Advocacy North East, Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action, Dyce Library, Social Security Scotland, Ellon Foodbank, various Aberdeen Hospitals, HouseAbility and local Job Centres. Many of these connections are still in their infancy and we have already seen 10 referrals from the above agencies.

As new Advocates join the business, our aim will be to continue down the route of networking to help build the caseloads. This has definitely worked in our favour.

## **8.2 Gaps in Service Provision**

With such a growth in our case numbers we have noticed our advocates have less available time in some areas to complete their networking efforts. We have a number of advocates joining in the coming months, where we hope to reverse this.

## **8.3 Continuous Improvement**

Our SQA advocacy qualification is in the early development stages, We have completed Unit 1 which focuses on An Introduction to Independent Advocacy. There are 2 mandatory units and a specialism to be written, each with sub-topics. They are -

- Unit 2 - The Role of an Independent Advocate

- Unit 3 - Safeguarding
- Unit 4 - Benefits Advocacy (Social Security Scotland)

We are looking at ways to increase our referrals to Child Disability Payment. A member of staff has been in contacted with one of the Advanced Paediatric Nurse Practitioners to raise awareness about the service we provide. Supporting people to apply for Social Security benefits with a particular focus on Children's Disability Payment. This information was well received and circulated with ten other colleagues within the Community Child Health Team,

including the Community Paediatricians, which includes staff based at both the Queen Margaret Hospital in Dunfermline and the Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy. We have been invited to provide an overview to the team. We have offered to carry this out before or after clinics to allow as many staff as possible to attend. We have expressed that this invite can be extended to other colleagues within child health, including staff based in the Children's ward and Neonatal unit at The Victoria Hospital in Kirkcaldy.

## **8.4 Feedback from Focus Groups**

In the previous quarter we held our second collective advocacy group meeting and have now collated the results of this.

The aim of the session was to learn people's experiences and understanding of independent advocacy and Social Security Scotland benefits. Each participant received a Participant Information Sheet and a Consent Form prior to the collective advocacy session and asked to sign to confirm their agreed participation. Participants also completed a quantitative paper questionnaire during the session. Five out of the six participants completed this questionnaire. One participant was unable to attend a group setting and provided their comments in writing. This document can be found in Appendix D.

Please see the full attached report for the full findings of our collective advocacy group.

## **9. Social Value**

### **9.1 Evidence of Community Benefits**

DFN Project SEARCH is a one-year transition to work programme for young adults with a learning disability or autism spectrum conditions, or both. We attended the City Chambers in Glasgow for this event that was attended by over 50 young people to inspire them to take on advocacy as a potential career path.

Ardrossan Academy have provided dates to deliver our school placement (Introduction to Advocacy). The first one will commence 25<sup>th</sup> September (1 full week). They were keen for VoiceAbility to support with further sessions during November/December for one day a week. These sessions are for those pupils who are due to leave in December, supporting with extra developmental skills set.

They also invited VoiceAbility to a Careers Fair (3<sup>rd</sup> October).

Queen Margaret have emailed hoping we could help them in two different ways. They have an SLC department who would love our input and they are very flexible in regards for this delivery. They are hoping we may be able to support pupils in mainstream. They have a work placement week beginning 9<sup>th</sup> October for those pupils who may struggle to access this and our input may be more valuable to them. We are awaiting final confirmation of dates.

Social Enterprise Academy, are keen to explore further opportunities to deliver our Introduction to Advocacy as part of our School Placements.

We have set up two event bright sessions to promote the self-advocacy tool kit, this will be for clients and stakeholders. Our Volunteers will be supporting these sessions.

VoiceAbility have been working on establishing apprenticeships within Scotland and are working closely with Borders College to create a bespoke advocacy apprenticeship course. We are also developing an apprenticeship in management for our team leaders, in addition to this we are also discussing potential apprenticeships in Marketing, Finance and Learning & Development with the same provider.

We have contacted Further Education Colleges and Universities in Aberdeen, Edinburgh, Dundee, Glasgow and Stirling as our initial pilot areas for working placements. An invite to attend a meeting early September via TEAMS will be sent within an email to discuss what we are able to offer. We are looking for these to be in place later this year, early next.

#### 10. Promotion, Groupwork & Involvement

We added a new 'In Scotland' page to our About us section, which allows us to share our services, stories and policy work in one location. We also link to advocacy providers across Scotland via the SIAA, to support people to find the right service for them. There is also an option to subscribe to our new Scotland-focused email newsletter.

[Redacted Section 33 Commercial interests and the economy]

[Redacted Section 33 Commercial interests and the economy]

[Redacted Section 33 Commercial interests and the economy]

#### 11. Safeguarding & Governance

This quarter we have identified and raised seven safeguarding concerns. We can confirm that each of these have been closed due to local authority advising they have taken the case on.

**VoiceAbility**  
**Scotland Quarterly**  
**Report**

FY23 Q2; 01/07/2023 – 30/09/2023

## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY23/24 Q2 July 2023 – September 2023
Author's Name Job Title Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Contract Manager [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] @voiceability.org
Operations Manager	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] @voiceability.org
Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@scot.gov
Date	14 September 2023

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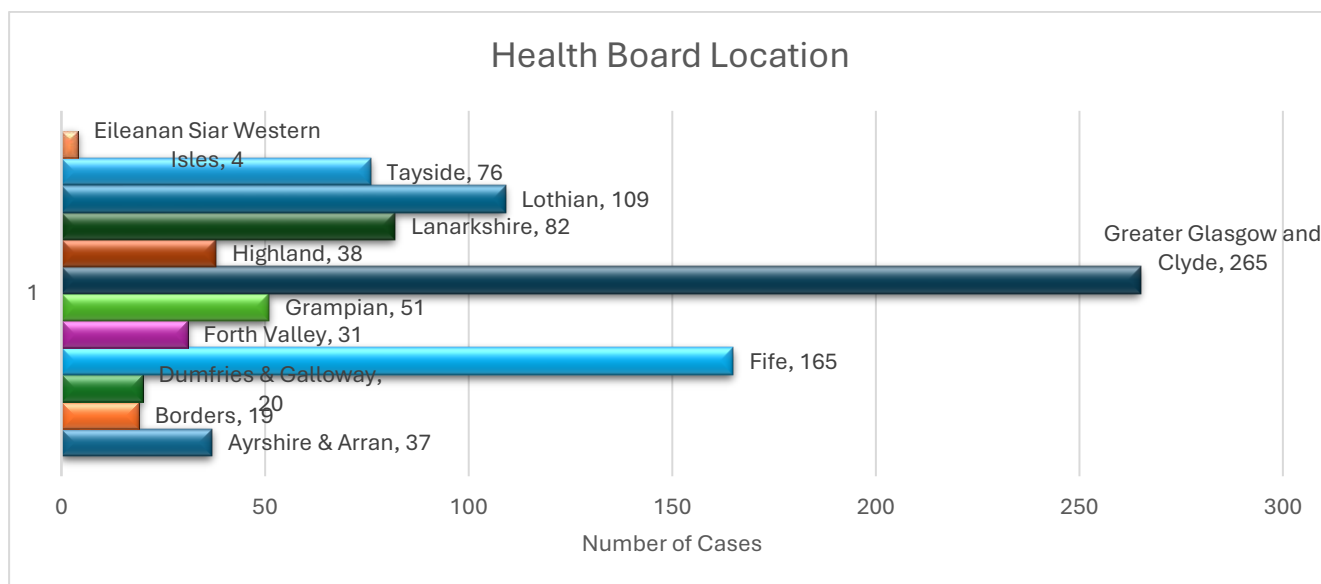


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## Executive Summary

### Headlines

VoiceAbility have continued to experience an upward trend in referral numbers and are delighted to have exceeded our previous all-time high number of cases in a quarter. (32% increase) (912 cases). We have continued to have great success in Glasgow, Fife and Lothian, while also seeing increased take up in areas like Lanarkshire and Forth Valley. We would also like to highlight the 116 cases referred through Social Security Scotland who supported VoiceAbility to achieve this number.



VoiceAbility have established thirteen new hubs across Scotland, making the service more inclusive and accessible for any potential clients. Job Centre Plus, (Aberdeen City, Inverness, Ayr, Balloch and Rutherglen. Peterhead are offering us space to have drop-ins whenever we require) Aberdeen Foyer, Sea fit, Skills Development Scotland, SWAMP, Glasgow, The Royal Edinburgh Hospital, St Margaret Mary Church and Ayton Community Hall in Scottish Borders.

VoiceAbility attended Edinburgh See Hear Day which was a public exhibitors' style event, with over 30 (thirty) exhibitors' stalls for the public to come along and visit between 11.00am and 4.00pm. The event was to provide information, advice and guidance support services to individuals learning, visiting, living and working across Edinburgh with Sensory Loss (Blindness and Sight Loss; Deafness and Hearing Loss; and Deaf Blindness and Dual Sensory Loss).

VoiceAbility attended over 40 events across Scotland, some notable mentions are. Well-being event Routes to Work, Edinburgh & Lothian Regional Equality Council, Home Energy Scotland, Multiply, Compass presentations, Edinburgh See Hear Day, Dementia Story Telling event, Voluntary Sector event, Health & Social Care Forum, Fife Gingerbread, Nourish Support Group, The Gate and Stirling Voluntary Enterprise

### Successes

- 86. 32% increase in cases.
- 87. Welcomed 10 new advocates to the business.
- 88. Partnership with Clare Adamson MSP

FY23/24 Q2 saw 32% increase in cases. We have detailed information relating to this in section 3.1 & Section 4.1

VoiceAbility welcomed 10 new advocates to the business in September to bolster our teams in areas with high demand, this has come at a crucial time for us as we have seen another surge in referral numbers.

A successful new partnership with Clare Adamson MSP Motherwell and Wishaw has been flourishing this quarter with 12 referrals coming from her office. We have hopes that this success continues and spreads to other MSP offices as they hear about VoiceAbility. Discussions have taken place with Scottish Government and hope they may be able to support some of these messages.

## Challenges

- 10. Increased service demand
- 11. Contacting Local Delivery

We have seen an increase in referrals to VoiceAbility from Social Security Scotland, local delivery team, however, some of these referrals come to us with limited information eg; appointment will state AM/PM, which means an advocate needs to keep a full day open in the diary until they have been notified. This limits the potential number of advocacy partners we can support in one day. A slight change to this process is required, which we believe, where advocacy is being asked, that we look to make advocacy the priority in terms of appointment times. Most importantly, we need to be able to contact/communicate with local delivery. We have briefly discussed this with Scottish Government.

## Organisational News

VoiceAbility has created a dedicated newsletter and section of our website which contains news and updates from across Scotland, below are some highlights from that.

**“I’m lucky, I wasn’t on my own:” Gordon’s experience of applying for Scottish benefits -** When Gordon applied for Adult Disability Payment, he encountered a lot of barriers. [Read More](#)

**Joint call to implement human rights for all in Scotland -** *VoiceAbility has signed a joint letter to Scottish public authorities, calling for action to prioritise human rights.* [Read More](#)

## Report

### 1. Key Performance Indicators:

#### 1.4 KPI Summary

FY24 Q2			
No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	99%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	98.3%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	N/A
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	99%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

#### 1.5 Response Times

All KPI's met this Quarter.

### 2.Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

#### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

No	Call Centre Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	FY23/24 Q2 Result
1	80% of all calls and webchats answered with 20 seconds	80%	98.40%
2	100% of calls and webchats answered with one minute	100%	100%
3	Average handling time of an enquiry 5 minutes (this KPI does not apply to remote advocacy delivery)	Average of 5 minutes	Average of 9.2 minutes
4	Under 5% abandon rate	<5%	2.03%

5	95% call classification capture of all inbound calls	95%	97%
6	All e-mail, out of hours webchat and voicemail enquiries processed within one working day for urgent	Within 1 working day	100%
7	All online referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within one working day	Within 1 working day	100%
8	All eligible referrals allocated to the most appropriate advocate within two working days	Within 2 working days	100%

The Scotland Call Centre connected 631 calls, with all call centre KPIs being met. KPIs 4 and 5 have steadily improved over the past two Quarters.

### 3. Individuals (Clients)

#### 3.1 The Number of Clients Supported

In FY23/24 Q2, VoiceAbility received 912 cases, 32% increase from the previous quarter.

Initial Applications	677
Change of Circumstances	35
Redeterminations	186
1 <sup>st</sup> Tier Tribunal	14

With our cases increasing quarter on quarter, we have seen the benefits of working within the local community. Having a base, where people feel safe and know the surrounding area, this enables us to meet more clients in one day. Where a client prefers to receive remote advocacy, we utilise Microsoft Teams, ZOOM, telephone calls and on occasions were requested emailed correspondence, while delivering remote support we can also utilise Microsofts "Quick Assist" application for support with using a computer. For those clients who stated they require only light touch support we have offered our self-advocacy tool kit. 48% of clients who have been provided with the toolkit have returned to advise us they have been able to submit their initial application.

#### a. Geographic Split of Cases

Opened Date →		Jul-23	Aug-23	Sep-23	Total
	NHS Health Board	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count	Record Count
	Ayrshire & Arran	5	11	21	37
	Borders	4	9	6	19
	Dumfries & Galloway	10	3	7	20
	Fife	42	54	69	165
	Forth Valley	9	10	12	31

	Grampian	13	18	20	<b>51</b>
	Greater Glasgow and Clyde	62	87	117	<b>266</b>
	Highland	12	8	18	<b>38</b>
	Lanarkshire	14	30	38	<b>82</b>
	Lothian	26	41	42	<b>109</b>
	Orkney	0	0	0	<b>0</b>
	Shetland	8	4	2	<b>14</b>
	Tayside	23	28	25	<b>76</b>
	Eileanan Siar Western Isles	1	3	0	<b>4</b>
<b>Total:</b>		<b>229</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>377</b>	<b>912</b>

FY23/24 Q2 continues the same pattern from previous quarters in that our numbers are much stronger from Fife (165) Glasgow (266) and Lothian (109), however, other areas have significantly grown this quarter such as Ayrshire, Forth Valley, Grampian and Lanarkshire. We have seen a significant increase from these areas in referrals from Social Security Scotland combined with established great partnerships with East and South Ayrshire Advocacy, Stirling Council & Salvation Army, Forth Valley, Alzheimer's Scotland, Advocacy Aberdeen and MSP Clare Adamson Motherwell and Wishaw.

### 3.3 Equality Act Statistics

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistics can be found in 'Equal Ops' tab in the attached FY23/24 Q2 Data Report. This quarter we have seen a 12% increase in Mental Health cases, a summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below:

Top 4 Support Needs:

- Mental Health (50%)
- Long-Term Health Condition (28%)
- Physical Disability (19%)
- Autistic Spectrum Diagnosis (12%)

Age Breakdown:

- 0-17 (5%)
- 18-49 (48%)
- 50+ (42%)

Advocates across the teams are expressing that there is a rise in cases of people with mental health issues due to childhood trauma, domestic violence, substance misuse. Advocates have expressed that the advocacy partner will often spend the first appointment off-loading about their personal circumstances, and how they manage to give the advocacy partner the time they needed to feel listened to. If an advocacy partner has a support worker, they find it helpful to ask them to attend the meeting. Often these cases take longer to complete the application as they require more appointments.

### **3.4 Number of Onward Referrals**

5.47% of our referrals have been signposted to other organisation for further support.

49% of our referrals have come from our partner organisations. 12% of our referrals have come from agency referrals.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of signposting opportunities whilst delivering benefit advocacy to our advocacy partners, demonstrating that they are at the true heart of the work we do. Main signposting requirements are for support with services such as housing, DWP benefits or advice on benefits.

## **4. Requests and Referrals**

### **4.1 Requests for Support**

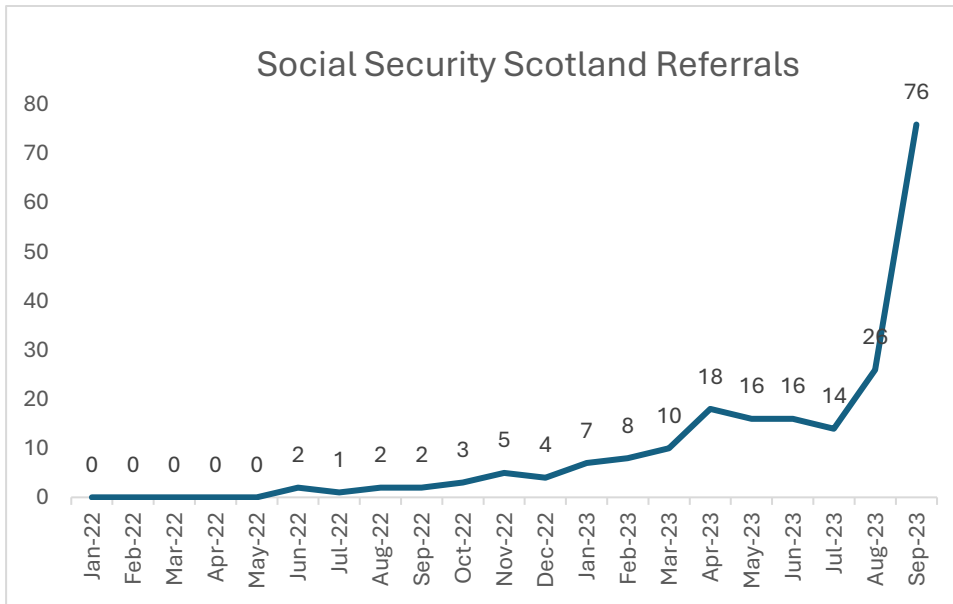
From the 987 referrals VoiceAbility received in FY23/24 Q2, 92% converted into a case.

100% of our referrals received from Social Security Scotland, carried over into a case this quarter.

### **4.2 Referring Agencies and Organisations**

We are delighted to share that we have 145 different organisations who refer onto our service. We have highlighted a few below:

Advocacy Highland, Advocacy Service Aberdeen, Alzheimer Scotland, Brag Enterprises, Circles Network, Dias - Dundee Independent Advocacy Support, East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Advocacy, Edinburgh Council, Glasgow City Council (No Wrong Door), NHS GGC, Scottish Refugee Council, Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs, South Ayrshire Carers Centre, South Ayrshire Advocacy. Showing that the demand under the Social Security Scotland Act 2018 is most definitely a requirement. With the additional 10 staff who have recently joined VoiceAbility, we are expecting this to grow significantly over the next quarter.



We have seen a large increase in referrals from Social Security Scotland predominantly in the month of September. Much work has taken place with Scottish Government, Social Security Scotland and VoiceAbility to support this move. Communication between both parties is something that we need to act on. Making sure that our advocacy partners are kept at the forefront, and where advocacy is being asked, that we look to make advocacy the priority in terms of appointment times.

## 5. Service Administration

### 5.1 Onward Referrals

As discussed in section 3.4, we have signposted 54 referrals to external organisations.

### 5.2 Feedback and Complaints

96% of our clients that responded to our satisfaction survey rated our service as very good (our top option). 92% of respondents stated they would recommend VoiceAbility to a friend. 100% of our clients stated they had got what they wanted from VoiceAbility.

44 respondents (25%) answered **help** for this question.





## 5.3 Concerns

VoiceAbility have nothing to report this quarter.

## 6. Compliance

### 6.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance

This quarter our team have been attending peer to peer meetings where experienced advocates have been providing new advocates with a case study and talking them through how they overcome challenges that were presented throughout the advocacy partners journey. Additionally, our advocates who have been involved in 1<sup>st</sup> tier tribunals have been sharing their experience with the rest of the team of advocates.

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded Quality Performance Mark (QPM) reaccreditation for another three years. This confirms and celebrates the quality of the advocacy services our frontline staff provide every day. The QPM is the UK's only independent quality performance mark for organisations offering independent advocacy. It provides commissioners with a robust benchmark to measure independent advocacy services, ensuring they select the very best providers.



### 6.2 Communication

This quarter, we have utilised our translator service to communicate with clients whose first language was Arabic, Farsi, Kurdish, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Urdu. 2.5% of the clients we have supports stated this quarter that English is not their first language.

### 6.3 Partnerships

Our growing network of partners has expanded this quarter to include seven new Job Centre+ locations all across Scotland from Peterhead to Rutherglen. We have created new hubs within SWAMP, Glasgow, South Ayrshire Autism Society, Dennistoun Library, Capstone Centre, Ainess, Hillcrest, Arbroath Mo-Hub, Montrose, as well as monthly hubs in Thurso and Wick.

Our partner Improving Lives (Formerly The Big Disability Group) have recently increased their reached with a new local contract which they have secured. This will result in receiving more referrals coming to them for support from Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership. Voiceability have increased their days in the centre to 4 days a week to accommodate a potential influx of referrals.

We have made connections with No Wrong Door for Glasgow and already starting to see this being a positive partnership.

No Wrong Door for Glasgow was set up through the COVID pandemic and into the cost of living crisis. With support from Scottish Government, Glasgow Council are developing a multi-agency pathfinder to reshape how they work together across the third and public sectors by developing a No Wrong Door approach.


Within Lanarkshire, an area we have been trying to expand upon for several quarters is now starting to see some traction. Our advocates have been attending many events and have established hubs within the June Stewart Centre, and accessing meeting space at the Restoration Café's across Lanarkshire, as well as utilising the Trussel Trust foodbank. We are confident over the coming months, this area will continue to flourish.






Recently VoiceAbility have managed to secure a space in the offices of Social Security Scotland, Dundee. This is a great opportunity that has been given to us, to further support the building of relationships with staff within that centre. We are hoping for a similar opportunity within the Glasgow centre.

VoiceAbility also conducted a stakeholder survey last quarter and our responses were overall very positive. With all respondents stating they would refer to VoiceAbility in the future.

## 5. How likely would you be to refer to VoiceAbility in future?

[More Details](#)

 Insights

 Very likely	24
 Somewhat likely	3
 Neither likely nor unlikely	0
 Somewhat unlikely	0
 Very unlikely	0



## 7. Staffing

### 7.1 Staffing

The team consisted of 40 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 4 Team Leaders
- 1 Volunteer Co-ordinator
- 40 Advocates
- 3 Referral/Information Advocates

In addition to our staff, we have seven volunteers, some of which are just about to finalise their training. Our volunteers support with light touch advocacy and community engagement work.

48% of our Advocates recruited since contract GO LIVE were unemployed before joining VoiceAbility.

## 8. Trends and Insights

### 8.1 FY23/24 Q2 Analysis

Since July VoiceAbility has seen an increase in cases within Lanarkshire & Forth Valley, the driving factor behind Lanarkshire's increase is the great partnerships that we have established with MSP Clare Adamson's office, North Lanarkshire Disability Forum and Social Security Scotland

Within Forth Valley partnerships are Strirling Council, Scottish Families Drug & Alcohol support and Social Security Scotland.

In Fife we continue to see success from working closely with local welfare officers, Auchmuty Learning Centre, Rothes Halls, Cadham Neighbourhood Centre, Gilvenbank Sports Hub and many others. Our success in Fife has been driven by great working partnerships with local welfare officers.

In Glasgow our partnerships are also flourishing and showing great returns particularly from SWAMP, Cadder Housing Association, Glasgow HSCP, Scottish Refugee Council, We Are With You and the Allender Surgery.

Ayrshire has been an area of focus for VoiceAbility where we have been trying to increase our reach in the area. We now have several partnerships with East and South Ayrshire Advocacy, South Ayrshire Autism Society and South Ayrshire Carers.

### 8.2 Gaps in Service Provision

With 10 new advocates recently joining the business, this gives Advocates the opportunities to move back into their own health board areas, leaving very little gaps in our service.

### 8.3 Continuous Improvement

Our SQA advocacy qualification is in the early development stages, We have completed Unit 1 which focuses on An Introduction to Independent Advocacy. There are 2 mandatory units and a specialism to be written, each with sub-topics. They are -

- Unit 2 - The Role of an Independent Advocate
- Unit 3 - Safeguarding
- Unit 4 - Benefits Advocacy (Social Security Scotland)

## **8.4 Feedback from Focus Groups**

We have held two group advocacy sessions, one in Inverness and one in Dunbartonshire. Both sessions were run by our advocates. We have provided detailed reports on the group sessions separate to this document.

## 9. Social Value

### **9.1 Evidence of Community Benefits**

We have contacted all Scottish Universities with Social Work degree programmes to offer formal accredited placements, Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow Caledonian, West of Scotland, Robert Gordon, Stirling, Strathclyde, Edinburgh Napier. In addition to this we have also contacted all FE colleges offering Health & Social Care qualifications to offer structured work experience placements and volunteering opportunities. We shall look to do relaunch towards the end of this year.

## 10. Promotion, Groupwork & Involvement

We added a new 'In Scotland' page to our About us section, which allows us to share our services, stories and policy work in one location. We also link to advocacy providers across Scotland via the SIAA, to support people to find the right service for them. There is also an option to subscribe to our new Scotland-focused email newsletter.

[Redacted Section 33 Commercial interests and the economy]

## 11. Safeguarding & Governance

This quarter we have identified and raised sixteen safeguarding concerns. We can confirm that each of these have been closed due to local authority advising they have taken the case on.

# **VoiceAbility Scotland      Quarterly Report**

FY23 Q3; 01/10/2023 – 31/12/2023

## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY23/24 Q3 October 2023 – December 2023
Author's Name Job Title Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Contract Manager [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Operations Manager	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Date	14 January 2024

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## Executive Summary

### Headlines

VoiceAbility has been proactive in our efforts to influence decision makers at the highest level, working with partner organisations across civil society to drive change. VoiceAbility was one of 200 organisations to call for action to create a [wellbeing economy in Scotland](#)

Website visits have increased by 3.5% this quarter when compared to April-June (58,569 to 60,625). The number of unique users has also increased in the same period by 3.3% (34,698 to 35,869).

VoiceAbility has received over 1100 case this quarter, which is a first.

### Successes

- Partnership with local MSP Clair Adamson and MP Margaret Fellows
- Entering a partnership with Trussell Trust
- Three School Placements (**see 9.1**)

MSP Clair Adamson's office continues to be a great success with 20 referrals being sent to VoiceAbility.

Met with [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] from Trussell Trust at one of our events. They were keen to explore avenues on how we could work together to support their advocacy partners. We have a number of meetings booked, one where we will have the opportunity to meet all Scotland-wide foodbanks. Here we can explain the advocacy services that VoiceAbility provide.

### Challenges

- Communication between Social Security Scotland (The Agency/Local Delivery) and VoiceAbility

A meeting was held in person to explore further how we could communicate with Social Security Scotland and still adhere to current legislation eg GDPR.

We all agreed that the portal VoiceAbility developed earlier in the service, which provided a secure network for referrals to come from Social Security Scotland was working. One question put on the table was an ask to VoiceAbility to seek advice from our Head of IT if it was possible to open up the portal to allow for 2-way communications between VoiceAbility and Social Security Scotland. If this was possible it would further enable the entire service to be more person centred.

### Report

## 1. Key Performance Indicators:

### 1.1 KPI Summary

FY24 Q3			
No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	99%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	99.5%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	100%
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	100%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

### 1.2 Response Times

All KPI's met this Quarter.

## 2. Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

The Scotland Call Centre connected 649 calls, with all call centre KPIs being met. KPIs 4 and 5 have steadily improved over the past two Quarters.

## 3. Individuals (Advocacy Partners)

### 3.1 The Number of Advocacy partners Supported

In FY23/24 Q3, VoiceAbility received 1140 cases, 25% increase from the previous quarter. We have found that on average our handling times for 1<sup>st</sup> tier tribunal cases have been significantly longer than our average handling times for Applications, Redetermination and Change of



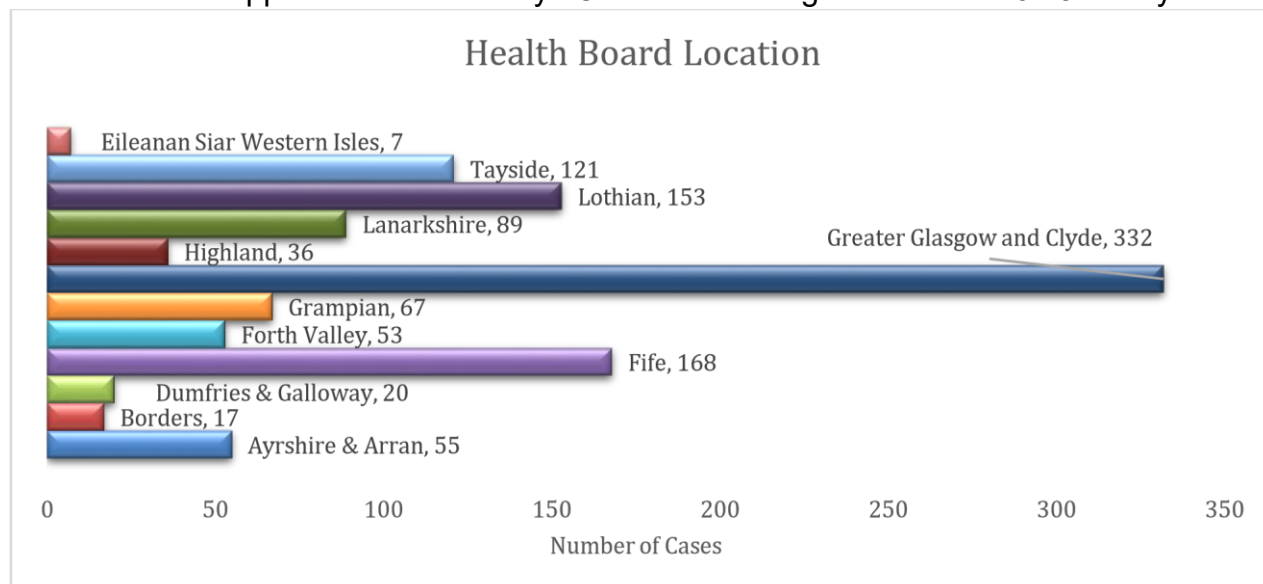
Circumstances which average 6 weeks, 1<sup>st</sup> tier tribunal cases are taking upwards of 10 weeks. The main contributing factor in these longer case handling times is that advocacy partners are coming to us before a date has been set for their tribunal. A positive factor in this is that the advocate and the advocacy partner have time to fully understand the advocacy partners' personal circumstances and develop a strong working relationship before attending the Tribunal.

Initial Applications	825
Change of Circumstances	43
Redeterminations	224
1 <sup>st</sup> Tier Tribunal	48

All advocacy partners are met at a time and place which is convenient to them making it accessible. This can be out in the community, with well over 50+ locations based within libraries, food banks, community centres, churches etc. at home, remote, using Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Telephones or self-advocating using our tool kit which we have attached.

[Follow this link to our self-advocacy toolkit](#)

For those advocacy partners who stated they require only light touch support we have offered our self-advocacy tool kit. 8% of advocacy partners who have been provided with the toolkit have returned to advise us they have been successful in submitting their initial application. We are looking to update this tool and have called upon the members of our Steering Group, which is client led to support with this activity. Our next meeting will be held 16<sup>th</sup> January.



The above graph shows an increase in Lanarkshire's referrals. We knew from the SIMD utilisation that we should be engaging with more people, Over 2023 we dedicated more resource as Lanarkshire is highly populated and has pockets of rural populations. Having more advocates on the ground, we were able to increase the integration of our service within local communities. By attending more events such as Clydesdale's Third Sector Locality Network and Community Partnership networking events we can promote the service wider.

### 3.2 Partnerships

We have been working closely with Watlf who are based in Tarbrax. They are opening a new hub at Loanhead Farm. They have asked VoiceAbility to provide an outreach service in the community space which we have accepted. We were invited to attend a wee walk around back in October to hear about the past and the present and the project work which will running out there.

We are pleased with the increase in referral numbers in Shetland, where we have seen a 57% increase. The local advocate has built up great links with the local job centre where they have received a steady flow of referrals.

The advocate attends two Living Well hubs one in Scalloway and one in Bressay, which is a small island 10 minutes ferry ride from Lerwick. They are looking to attend another one on Brae.

They have made a few connections with some of the services over in Shetland such as the locally run food bank in Scalloway, Shetland community hub, Anker support services, and the local delivery team for Social Security Scotland.

Lothian showing continual growth for the past 2 quarters. It has surpassed Tayside. The decision to bring on more local resource has paid off. Each of our advocates are working across locality wards, providing greater depth and commitment, especially in areas of high SIMD areas eg: Leith, Granton, Niddrie, West Pilton and Wester Hailes.

VoiceAbility have established 8 new hubs across Scotland, making the service more inclusive and accessible for any potential advocacy partners. Wester Hailes and Eyemouth Job Centre, Cold Stream Larder, Oxgangs Library, Ayton Community Hall, High Blantyre Hub, Social Security Scotland Offices Dundee, AFC community Trust, Crieff Health Centre.

With the support of our current translation provider, we have removed any barriers to potential advocacy partners accessing our service where English is not their first language to apply. Languages included: Arabic, Chinese, Farsi, Kurdish, Portuguese, Polish, Romanian, Spanish, Ukrainian and Urdu. 100% of our advocacy partners have had their needs met where English is not their second language or a BSL interpreter required. In addition, our website supports Easy Read, Screen Readers and Google Translate.

Feniks are a recent organisation we have made links with. They engage with the Eastern European community especially the Polish community of Edinburgh.

We have seen an 44% of an increase in our web referrals this quarter this could be down to a number of reasons 1) partnering organisation prefer to use our web referral route and 2) our newly designed marketing material to incorporate a QR code.

### **3.3 Equality Act Statistics**

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistics can be found in 'Equal Ops' tab in the attached FY23/24 Q3 Data Report.

### 3.4 Number of Onward Referrals

13% of our referrals have been signposted to other organisation for further support.

44.6% of our referrals have come from our partner organisations. 8.7% of our referrals have come from Social Security Scotland.

We have seen a significant increase in the number of signposting opportunities whilst delivering benefit advocacy, demonstrating that our advocacy partners are at the true heart of the work we do. Main signposting requirements are for support with services such as housing, DWP benefits or advice on benefits.

#### 4. Requests and Referrals

##### 4.1 Requests for Support

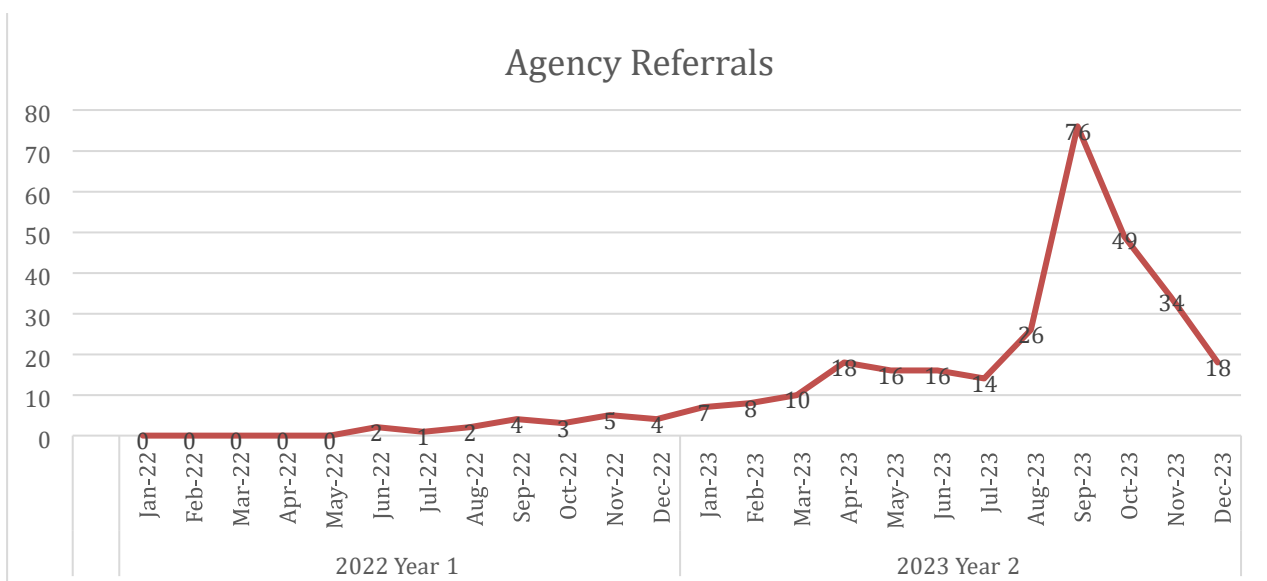
From the 1265 referrals VoiceAbility received in FY23/24 Q3, 90% converted into a case.

100% of our referrals received from Social Security Scotland, carried over into a case this quarter.

##### 4.2 Referring Agencies and Organisations

We are delighted to share that we have 178 different organisations who refer onto our service. We have highlighted a few below:

Advocacy Highland, Advocacy Service Aberdeen, Alzheimer Scotland, Brag Enterprises, Circles Network, Dias - Dundee Independent Advocacy Support, East Ayrshire Council, East Ayrshire Advocacy, Edinburgh Council, Glasgow City Council (No Wrong Door), NHS GGC, Scottish Refugee Council, Scottish Families Affected by Alcohol & Drugs, South Ayrshire Carers Centre, South Ayrshire Advocacy.



At a time where we achieved our highest quarter in referrals, it was difficult to understand why we saw a significant decrease in referrals from Social Security Scotland which we highlighted to Scottish Government.

We were however, pleased to see that the space we have been utilising in the Dundee centre has resulted in five cases being referred to the service. We are hoping for a similar opportunity within the Glasgow centre.

## 5. Service Administration

### 5.1 Feedback and Complaints

96% of our advocacy partners that responded to our satisfaction survey rated our service as very good (our top option). 92% of respondents stated they would recommend VoiceAbility to a friend.

100% of our advocacy partners stated they had got what they wanted from VoiceAbility.

44 respondents (25%) answered **help** for this question.



### 5.2 Concerns

VoiceAbility have received one complaint this quarter and are currently working with the client to resolve.

## 6. Compliance

### 6.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance

Our person-centred approach is at the centre of our advocacy delivery and ensures that our service is led by the advocacy partner. We do this through a process with the person. When starting an advocacy journey with each of our advocacy partners, our advocates discuss the person's desired outcomes. These are the person's goals, rights, life, and voice. We ask each of our advocacy partners to read and sign a consent form before receiving our support to ensure they agree to our involvement. Our advocates also explain our role, including how we can help and what lies out with our remit, e.g., befriending, counselling, and providing advice. Our advocates remain focused on our advocacy partners and adapt their style to suit individual needs, including using body language and facial expressions to communicate and interpret

each other, along with active listening to build rapport and improve understanding to ensure that we are acting in their best interest.

This year, VoiceAbility have strengthened the work we are doing within practice, by adding more HLPs (Higher Level Practitioners) across the organisation, taking them to a team of 12. They can support with the following:

### **Support and development**

- Support with induction of new advocates – shadowing/reverse shadowing etc
- Lead on specialist practice development activities in teams
- Support with mentoring/coaching those that Team Leaders have identified as having practice development needs
- Support Community of Practice activities (including leading on one if required)

### **Quality checking**

- Undertake additional shadowing activity to feed into Team Leaders' practice audits as required
- Undertake case audits as directed by Team Leaders and/or Practice Lead

We have an advocate who has been working on the Social Security Scotland service since February 2022, who was successful. We look forward to working alongside them and supporting our continuous improvement.

## **7. Staffing**

### **7.1 Staffing**

The team consisted of 51 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 4 Team Leaders
- 1 Volunteer Co-ordinator
- 41 Advocates
- 3 Referral/Information Advocates

Responding to a demand led service, VoiceAbility have grown over the past two years from 16 to 41 advocates delivering across Scotland. Occasionally, whilst juggling with growing areas due to our extensive promotional and partnership work, rising caseloads increasing and entering a period of recruiting more staff, our advocates worked across various health boards to provide advocacy to the people of Scotland. Making sure there was no impact on the service and adhering to our KPIs.

In addition to our staff, we have nine volunteers, some of which are just about to finalise their training. Our volunteers support with light touch advocacy and community engagement work. Two of our volunteers have been successful in securing employment with VoiceAbility and are now working as advocates delivering benefits advocacy.

**Quote from our Volunteer – “I have recently joined VoiceAbility as a volunteer advocate I undertook the training which was diverse and informative allowing me to not only gain knowledge with up-to-date legislations and the services provided but also helped to build my confidence and self esteem.**

**Whilst under the guidance of the operations team I have attended advocacy partners homes, hubs and networking events. This has shown just how beneficial the services that are provided to advocacy partners are. With the guidance, support and assistance from an advocate, advocacy partners when at their most vulnerable can complete forms that are either overwhelming or not achievable. In the short period I have been with VoiceAbility it has taught me what a great service we can provide, but also what a listening ear, trust and empathy can do for advocacy partners who would not be able to without these services.**

**I am thoroughly enjoying my time with VoiceAbility and time spent with advocacy partners.”**

48% of our Advocates recruited since contract GO LIVE had been unemployed before joining VoiceAbility

This year four of our staff under our flexible working patterns requested a change to working hours to support a more work life balance and well-being. All granted.

With VoiceAbility we encourage staff to develop within the work place and over 2023 we were delighted that seven staff in Scotland chose to either take up a new role, accept a secondment opportunity or take on additional responsibilities for personal or career development.

- two advocates moved into Leadership roles
- one seconded into L&D to work alongside SQA to develop our very own Apprenticeship in Advocacy
- one seconded into Policy
- one took on a dual role as an HLP (High Level Practitioner – due to start March 2024)
- two advocates joined our National Forum

## 8. Social Value

### 8.1 Evidence of Community Benefits

This quarter VoiceAbility ran three school placements. Three within Queen Margaret Academy. Due to the success of delivering to the pupils within mainstream, they approached us to deliver to their Supported Learning Centre. The final one in 2023 came from Ardrossan Academy.

We were committed as part of our social values and community benefit to run school placements for 60 pupils in years S4 – S6. Our final school will be with Loudon Academy Galston, Ayrshire in January 2024, however, we would like to continue to deliver these if Scottish Government are in an agreement.

The students gained the following from these:

- Grew in confidence
- Developed greater self-esteem
- Understood advocacy and the work that VoiceAbility were doing on behalf of Scottish Ministers.
- Learnt more about legislation and disability awareness

Comments received below

***Liked that we were not just sitting, we would listen, then do an activity, then group work. It wasn't boring. I actually enjoyed learning about VoiceAbility and advocacy. The advocates that presented the whole day were very nice and it didn't feel like school lecture.***

***I liked the history, the human rights and advocates definitions***

***Today I liked learning about real experiences in VoiceAbility in more detail. Learning how to deal with certain situations in the advocacy job. I also liked the activities which we discussed together. I also enjoyed the VoiceAbility advocates acting out difficult situations. I also enjoyed group work together***

Steering group set up in year 2 and led by advocacy partners who have engaged on service. Initial topics identified for discussion are:

- a) Marketing Materials
- b) Self Advocacy Tool kit
- c) The Journey

We will feedback on each topic on our quarterly reports.

## 9. Safeguarding & Governance

This quarter we have identified and raised 11 safeguarding concerns. We can confirm that each of these have been closed due to local authority advising they have taken the case on.

# **VoiceAbility Scotland Quarterly Report**

FY23 Q4; 01/01/2024 – 31/03/2024



## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY23/24 Q4 January 2024 – March 2024
Author's Name Job Title Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Contract Manager [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Operations Manager	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@scot.gov
Date	11th April 2024

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# Executive Summary

## Headlines

### Scottish web pages on VoiceAbility site April 2024

The VoiceAbility website is currently being redesigned and will be structured differently in future. While this is being developed, the Scottish information on the current website has been expanded over recent weeks.

We now have an 'In Scotland' tab on the front page, with articles and news items under the following headings:

- Scotland: news and updates
- Scotland: real stories
- Scotland: Self-advocacy toolkits
- Independent advocacy in Scotland
- Support to access benefits in Scotland.

Information about the reception at the Scottish Parliament is also featured on the main website.

## Successes

- 101. Continued growth of the service (please see graph below)
- 102. Parliament event

VoiceAbility held a second reception on 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024, focusing on the experience of people who had used the service and demonstrating the positive difference that the service can make to the lives of individuals and their families and friends. MSP Collette Stevenson, Convenor of the Social Justice and Social Security Committee at the Scottish Parliament sponsored and hosted the reception. She spoke about the importance of “dignity, fairness and respect” – and how this was leading to an increasing number of benefits being taken up.

Two MSPs have requested a meeting to discuss our service. Collette Stevenson (MSP East Kilbride) and Paul MacLennan (MSP East Lothian). Dates still to be arranged.

## Challenges

### 12. Number of cases growing v recruitment

Our last recruitment phase was not successful, leaving Advocates with high caseloads across several health boards. I can confirm that we have had greater success recently and have a number of new Advocates joining us over the next 3 months.

## Report

### 1. Key Performance Indicators:

#### 1.6 KPI Summary

FY24 Q4			
No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	100%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	98%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	100%
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	98%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

## 2.Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

The Scotland Call Centre connected 784 calls, please see the Data report for further information.

We unfortunately experienced several issues over this quarter. We had a Salesforce, which was a UK wide issue. Please see statement from [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)], Director of IT and Data.

*“The Salesforce outage whilst not a global outage did affect 1000s of Salesforce customers who are hosted on the same cluster of servers which went down. Salesforces has not yet completed a root cause analysis but once a full report comes through we will be able to provide more information”*

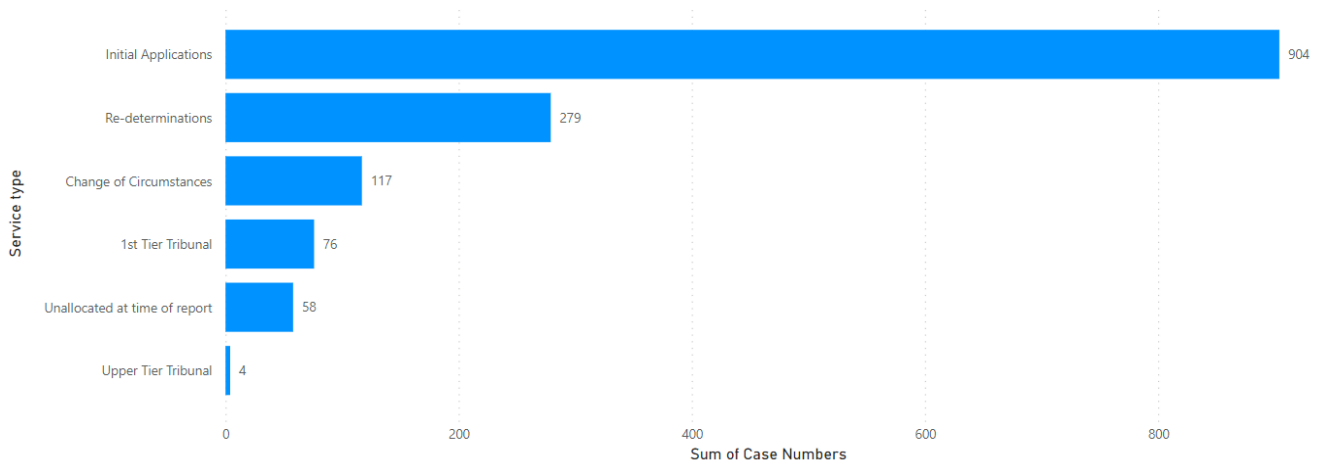
Our second issue we experienced was staff sickness, coupled with the Salesforce outage which set us back, but KPI’s were only mildly impacted.

## 3.Individuals (Advocacy Partners)

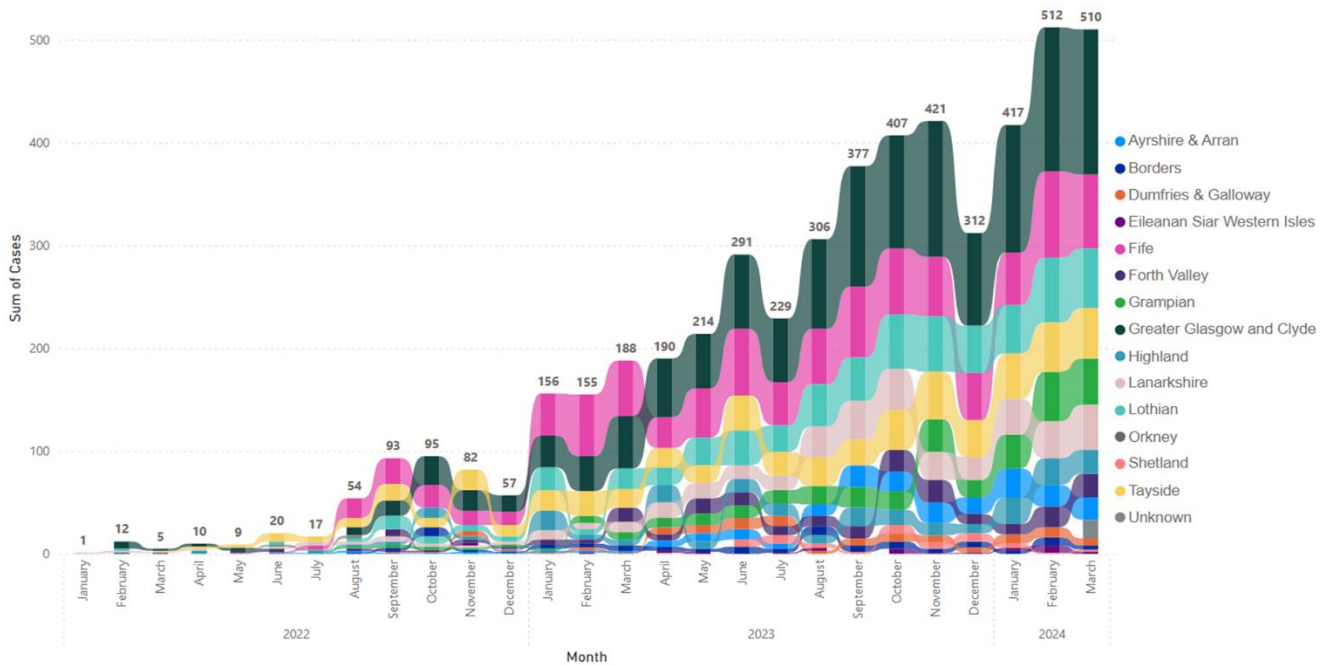
### 3.1 The Number of Advocacy partners Supported.

In FY23/24 Q4, VoiceAbility received 1439 cases, 26% increase from the previous quarter.

Sum of Case Numbers by Service type



Sum of Cases by Year, Month and NHS Health Board



The majority of our cases are coming from Greater Glasgow and Clyde. The surge in referrals for advocacy services in the Glasgow area can be attributed to several key factors. Firstly, positive word of mouth has played a significant role. Our reputation has spread through networking and recommendations, leading to increased awareness of our services. Additionally, our high satisfaction rates have contributed to our popularity. Other organisations and stakeholders, including those with mutual clients, have been impressed by our efficiency and holistic person-centred approach. Most importantly, the feedback we receive consistently emphasises the quality of our service.

Last quarter we raised the number of days that we worked from Improving Lives premises to five, which also supported the higher number of referrals.

Drumchapel Job Centres has been a great source of new referrals. At least 3 potential new advocacy partners expressing interest in our services. This is also spreading from the Job Centre via word of mouth.

The Refugee Council has started to pick up again. With capacity growing in our Glasgow team. We will look to have a dedicated person working with this organisation.

We are pleased to highlight that 20 referrals came from Greater Glasgow and Clyde via Social Security Scotland.

Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire showing great signs of improvement, with both Advocates working extremely hard to promote the service. The relationships within the Job Centres are growing and referrals continue to flourish.

Contract to date we can report that 54% of our cases have been completed remotely and 46% in person.

### 3.2 Partnerships

We recently reported that we have been working closely with Watlf who are based in Tarbrax. They were opening a new hub at Loanhead Farm. I am delighted to say this is up and running and we offer an outreach service for those advocacy partners living in the local area on the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday of every month 11am – 2pm. Already received one referral

MSP Ross Greer (West of Scotland) and MSP Stephanie Callaghan (South Lanarkshire) have referred onto service. I have asked the relevant Team Leaders to reach out to introduce ourselves and the team.

Aberdeen Recovery is a new connection that has been made and a hub that has been set up, we have received three cases this month.

Pittodrie Community Hub continues to be busy and a lot of the service users who attend this are engaging with VoiceAbility. Great hub for signposting opportunities

It would be fair to make reference that our DWP partnership is definitely supporting with promoting our services more and having that dedicated space is working for us all.

The below statement came from Aberdeen City Job Centre

***Hi [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)],***

***Just to let you know I have created a referral form for the work coaches to refer. I have given them the option to self-refer or for myself to pass on their details.***

***So far since yesterday I have 5 customers been referred to the sheet already. This shows a very positive connection has been made and could result in a high load of cases coming through.***

### 3.3 Equality Act Statistics

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistic can be found in 'Equal Ops' tab in the attached FY23/24 Q4 Data Report. This quarter we have seen Mental Health cases remain the highest support need, a summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below.

#### Top 4 Support Needs

- Mental Health (35%)
- Physical Disability (21%)
- Long-Term Health Conditions (14%)
- Learning Disability (7%)

#### Age Breakdown

- 0-17 (6%)

- 18-49 (50%)
- 50+ (39%)

### **3.4 Number of Onward Referrals**

8% of our referrals have been signposted to other organisation for further support.

45% of our referrals have come from our partner organisations. 12% of our referrals have come from Social Security Scotland.

## **4. Requests and Referrals**

### **4.1 Requests for Support**

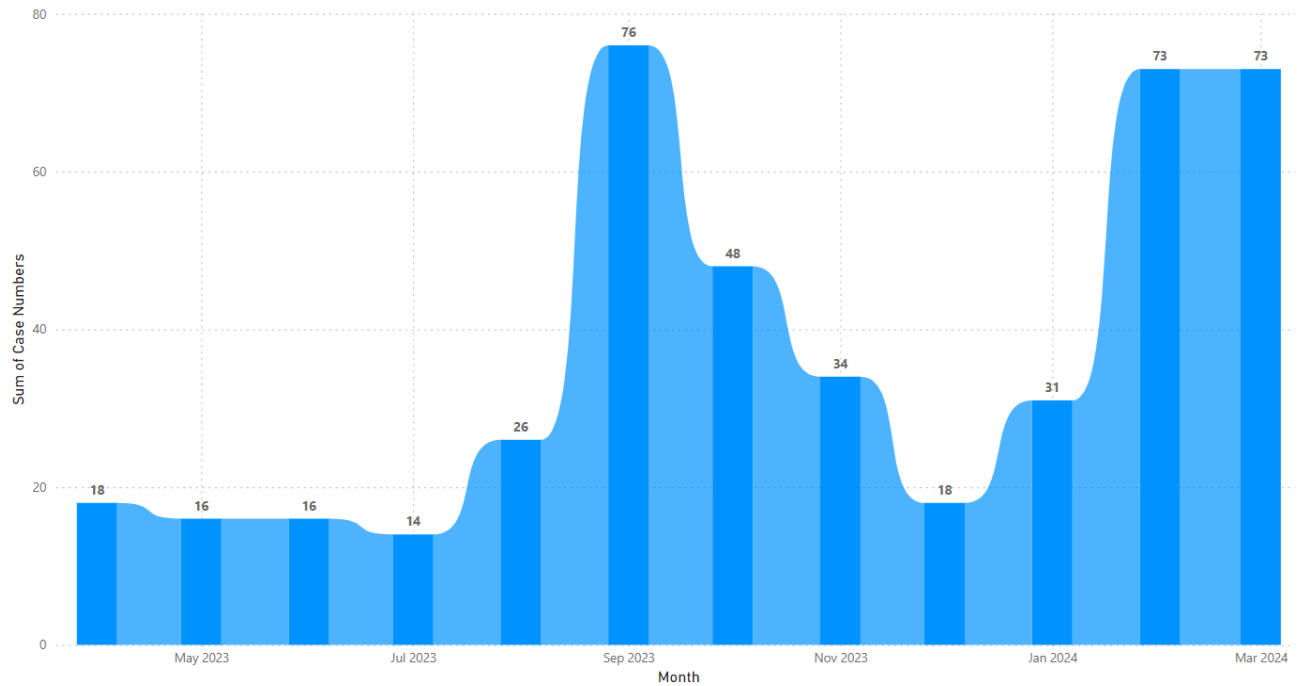
From the 1616 referrals VoiceAbility received in FY23/24 Q4, 88% converted into a case.

91% of our referrals received from Social Security Scotland, carried over into a case this quarter. With the remaining, 1 was signposted, 2 client decisions and 1 Ineligible referral.

### **4.2 Referring Agencies and Organisations**

Scottish Government and Social Security Scotland have made a conscious effort to look at reasons behind the drop in referrals as they were surprised considering the amount of effort gone in with the champions. Another round of presentations taken place within The Agency and further conversations around the table. We would like to thank all involved in supporting this movement.

**Scottish Government Social Security Scotland Cases by month for FYR 23 - 24**



For the quarter we have identified that out of the 177 cases, Greater Glasgow and Clyde, was the top NHS Board for Scottish Government Social Security Scotland cases (23%). Please see table below for a full breakdown of the cases by NHS Board:

NHS Board	Cases Total
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	40
Lothian	27
Lanarkshire	24
Fife	21
Ayrshire & Arran	15
Forth Valley	15
Tayside	14
Grampian	10
Highland	8
Borders	2
Eileanan Siar Western Isles	1
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>177</b>

## 5. Service Administration

### 5.1 Feedback and Complaints

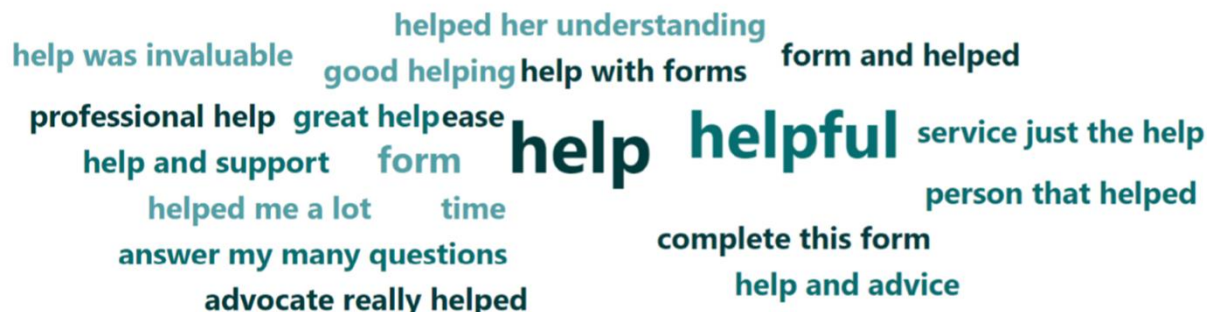
89% of our advocacy partners that responded to our satisfaction survey rated our service as very good (our top option).



93% of respondents stated they would recommend VoiceAbility to a friend.

100% of our advocacy partners stated they had got what they wanted from VoiceAbility.

206 respondents (29%) answered **help** for this question.



Feedback from an advocacy partner from the traveller site.

***He was overjoyed with the determination and called to thank me. He will pass VoiceAbility details to the full site.***

***I have been invited to the sites summer festival.***

***“Hi [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)], you have an open heart and are a credit to the company.”***

***“Just to say thank you very much for all your help it was nice meeting you over the last few weeks and I hope in the future our paths cross well hopefully when I pass this you take care and thank you again”.***

***“I would not even know where to start with the form and I am sure there are lots of people out there that need your help keep up the good work you do a brilliant job”***

## 5.2 Concerns

VoiceAbility have received two complaints this quarter and have been resolved within the quarter.

## 6. Compliance

### 6.1 Social Security Advocacy Quality Assurance

This quarter we have introduced our Contact Centre Quality Control Support for our Scotland Referral and Information Advocates. This is to ensure we are working in line with the process

to support easy and controlled access for our advocacy partners. Improving our triage process to support a better understanding of how an advocacy partner wants to receive advocacy.

VoiceAbility have recently introduced a Quality Data Report through our Power BI reporting system. In order to ensure that we work consistently at checking data throughout the months we will start to run some data quality clinics with Operations Managers and Contract Managers before rolling out to Team Leaders.

## 7. Staffing

### 7.1 Staffing

The team consisted of 51 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 4 Team Leaders
- 1 Volunteer Co-ordinator
- 41 Advocates
- 3 Referral/Information Advocates

Keeping to the demand lead approach we have a further 17 members of staff joining our team over the next quarter, with more offers to be made. Two of which have come from our volunteering programme. Making this a total of 4 volunteers moving into a permanent position.

Please see comments from [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] who is one of our volunteers and will join our Edinburgh team in April.

[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]:

*“Volunteering with VoiceAbility has allowed me to gain knowledge and skills in an area I wouldn’t have otherwise been exposed to. Throughout my volunteering I’ve been able to interact with VoiceAbility’s advocates, who have always been helpful and friendly, helping me understand the organisation and its work. This has allowed me to gain an interest in a field that I wouldn’t have otherwise had the opportunity to experience.*

*The VoiceAbility staff members have always been extremely keen to let me get involved as much as possible, with one piece of work allowing me to find out more about VoiceAbility’s interactions and network within Edinburgh”*

## 8. Social Value

### 8.1 Evidence of Community Benefits

Steering group set up in year 2 and led by advocacy partners who have engaged on service. Initial topics identified for discussion are:

- a) Marketing Materials
- b) Self-Advocacy Tool kit
- c) The Journey

**Areas members from:** Edinburgh, Glasgow, Fife, Forth Valley

Meetings are held via teams as agreed by our steering group members as being the most accessible and easiest way for them to join us. Initially we met within around 8 weeks and have now agreed with the group that we will meet every three months; however, this can be reviewed at any time.

### **21 November 2023:**

We introduced ourselves and explained the purpose of the steering group. We explained that we would like the steering group's feedback on different topics and asked how often they would like to meet. They agreed around every month with potential additional meetings for the steering group members only, for them to discuss topics between the meetings with VoiceAbility staff members. We gave the first task, to review our marketing materials and our self-advocacy toolkit so we can discuss their thoughts at the next meeting.

### **16 January 2024:**

VoiceAbility had previously asked our steering group members to review our marketing materials and self-advocacy toolkit then provide their feedback at this meeting.

The group asked for an understanding of how the materials are used. [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] and [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] explained that our leaflets are used to promote our services to clients and professionals, while our toolkit is a resource for clients to use if they prefer to work through their benefits process independently, i.e., without support from an advocate. The toolkit aims to empower people to have the information and tools they need to pursue their own benefits claims.

Group discussed this at length and provided feedback on areas of our leaflets that could be improved/changed. Group also highlighted that there are no social media links and feel this is important and would be a useful addition.

Touched on the self-advocacy toolkit. The group felt like the toolkit could include a flow chart where it asks you questions and takes you to the information you need. This may be easier to follow and to identify what stage a person is at with their benefit claim. Group will look at the self-advocacy toolkit more and feedback at the next meeting.

**Feedback highlighted to [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] and suggested changes have now been made to our marketing materials and we are looking at how we can develop a social media platform.**

### **6 March 2024:**

Discussed the Advocacy toolkit and the group made suggestions on how we could develop this going forward. The group felt like the toolkit could include a flow chart where it asks you questions and takes you to the information you need. This may be easier to follow and to identify what stage a person is at with their benefit claim. Group will look at the self-advocacy toolkit more and feedback at the next meeting.

Started to discuss the advocacy journey and how each member found the process when they initially came to us as an advocacy partner. All members were referred to our service by another professional. Briefly spoke about the term 'advocacy' and how this can have different meanings in different languages, for instance it can often be thought of as being in connection with legal processes like a legal advocate. Group suggested that advocacy could be an opt-out option so that everyone then can be made aware of what our service provides and chose to opt out.

This discussion will continue at the next meeting on 5 June 2024.

The group has come together and is developing well with all members actively participating in the discussions and providing meaningful feedback to us around the topics we are discussing. They are also sharing information with one another about their own experiences and what helped them on their journey.

## 9. Safeguarding & Governance

This quarter we have identified and raised 12 safeguarding concerns. We can confirm that each of these have been closed due to local authority advising they have taken the case on.

# **VoiceAbility Scotland Quarterly Report**

FY24 - 25 Q1; 01/04/2024 – 31/06/2024

## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY24/25 Q1 April 2024 – June 2024
Author's Name Job Title Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Contract Manager [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Operations Manager	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Date	12 <sup>th</sup> July 2024

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# Executive Summary

## Headlines

We shared 1 article about the meeting between the Deputy First Minister of Scotland and advocate Lynn Robertson to discuss the support for accessing Social Security Scotland benefits.

- It had **31 views** in May
- [Deputy First Minister of Scotland visits Agnes Husband House](#)
- 

**“ Accessing social security is a human right and we have a moral and legal obligation to do what we can to ensure disabled people are supported to access all the financial support they are entitled to.”**



We shared 1 article about our recent celebration of the 2-year anniversary of providing benefit access support to people across Scotland.

- It had **43 views** in May
- [We celebrate 2 years since we started supporting people to access benefits in Scotland](#)

**“ We have built great relationships with partnering organisations, this is purely down to our advocates, who day in day out deliver exactly what we say we will do. Supporting people to have their voices heard and their wishes respected.”**



### **May 2024 Purpose of the Independent Review of Adult Disability Payment**

The Independent Review will consider people’s experiences of the first year of delivery of Adult Disability Payment (ADP). The purpose of the Review is to provide advice to the Scottish Government on the current rules and people’s experience of delivery in the first year of ADP and to make recommendations for improvement. It will look specifically at:

- The activities and descriptors that determine entitlement to Adult Disability Payment, including how these apply to disabled people with fluctuating conditions
- People’s experiences of applying for, receiving or challenging a decision about Adult Disability Payment or undergoing a review (including unsuccessful applicants)
- Consultations process and Adult Disability Payment-specific guidance for practitioners and decision-making guidance to ensure a rights-based model of social security is being applied
- Considering initial priorities capable of early action that do not require changes to the application, decision-making or service delivery, where those changes offer value, are deliverable and useful regardless of any longer-term changes.



## VoiceAbility briefing on the ADP review

The Chief Executive of VoiceAbility, Jonathan Senker, was invited to meet with the Chair of the Independent Review early in the process. As part of the preparation for that meeting, a briefing was developed. Themes in the briefing included:

- applying for, receiving or challenging a decision about Adult Disability Payment
- Re-determinations, First Tier Tribunals and Upper Tribunals
- Automatic escalation of an award decision to an appeal if 56 days have passed
- Participation of applicants in Tribunals
- Difficulties experienced by people whose first language is not English.

## Meeting with the Chair of the Independent Review of Adult Disability Payment on 31 May 2024

Jonathan Senker met with [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] (Chair), [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Disability Benefits Reform Policy Officer Social Security Policy (note taking)

Although an introductory meeting with an agenda focusing on the way in which the review would operate, the Chair was also interested in understanding themes from VoiceAbility's work, which provided the opportunity to give feedback on the areas detailed in the briefing.

The Chair of the Review had already received data from VoiceAbility and was interested in further breakdown by geography and the person's condition/disability.

The Chair asked if it would be possible for her to shadow an advocate for a half day, stressing that this was about building her overall understanding. She is concerned to engage with groups and people traditionally not well included in consultations.

We shared 1 article about a university student's reflection on their experience as a volunteer for the Social Security Scotland benefits service.

- It had **76 views** in June
- [Glasgow student Skye on how volunteering for VoiceAbility 'helped her give back'](#)



[Glasgow student Skye on how volunteering for VoiceAbility 'helped her give back'](#)

Student Skye Thain speaks about volunteering for VoiceAbility in Glasgow.

**“ There are really amazing charities doing all this great work in the local community that I live in, but I would never have known about it if it wasn't for VoiceAbility. ”**

We shared 1 article about no changes being made to Adult Disability Payment in Scotland.

- It had **384 views** in June
- [No changes planned to Adult Disability Payment in Scotland](#)

There are still some people in Scotland who currently receive PIP. However, it's anticipated they will have transferred over to ADP by 2025 and, therefore, should not be affected by the proposed changes to PIP.



Policy  
Scotland

**No changes planned to Adult Disability Payment in Scotland**

The UK Government has proposed major changes to disability benefits in the UK, which will overhaul Personal Independence Payments (PIP).

## Successes

After a successful meeting with MSP Collette Stevenson we are seeing a number of referrals coming our way to support the people within the constituency of East Kilbride to apply for a Social Security Scotland benefit.

VoiceAbility would like to thank both [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] and Ms Stevenson for their support.

Combined referrals received this quarter are 24

## Report

### 1. Key Performance Indicators:

#### 1.1 KPI Summary

FY25 Q1			
No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	86%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	93%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	N/A
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	100%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

KPI 1: This was an internal issue and has been spoken about.

KPI 2: A number of reasons why this has failed the KPI. The leadership team have sent out an email to remind the Advocates of the process.

KPI6 is an automatic for case closures. We have now attached a line to our letter.

There was one case that was actually closed, but then re-opened. This should not have happened. This sets the calculation button back to the start.

These referrals are coming from our web referrals and will look to see how we can make any further amendments to mitigate this.

## 2.Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary

	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24
Number of Phone calls received	248	277	273
% of calls answered within 20 seconds	86.14%	83.54%	89.63%
% of calls missed	0	4%	4.70%
Ave wait time before drop off	2 mins 33	1 Min 43	3 mins 31

## 3.Individuals (Advocacy Partners)

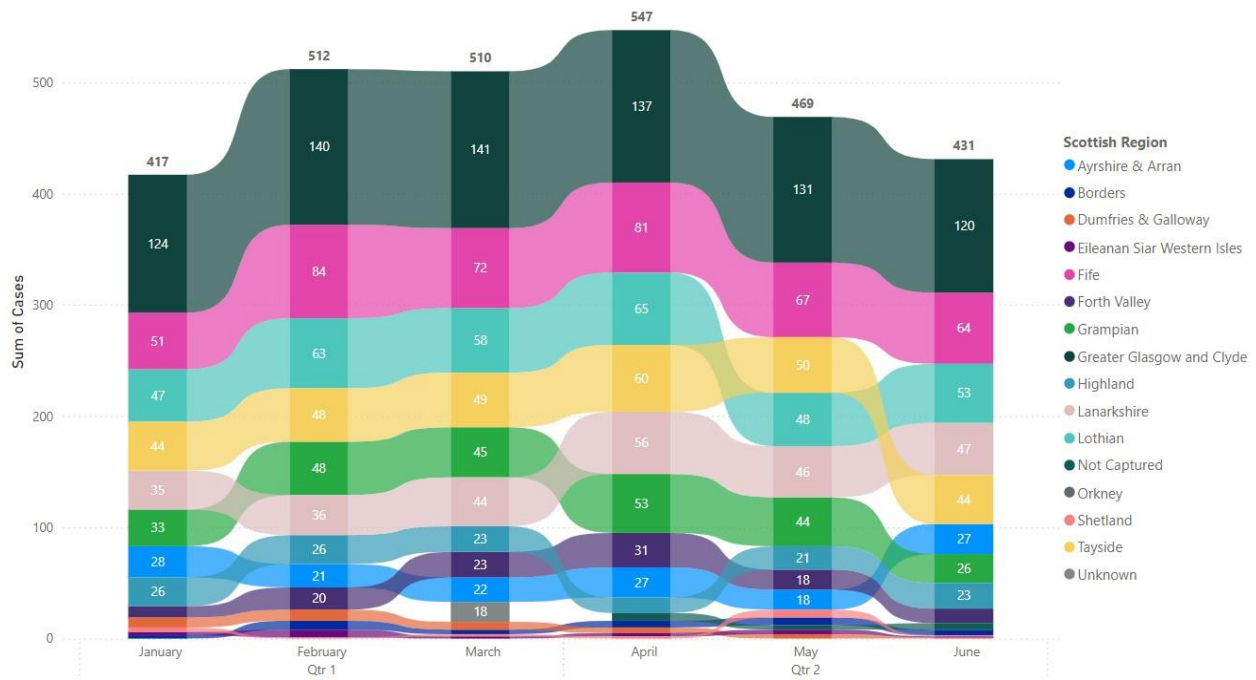
### 3.1 The Number of Advocacy partners Supported.

In FYR25 Q1, VoiceAbility received 1435 cases, which overall is a difference of 4 cases less than previous quarter and supported 1,204 unique Advocacy Partners. There were a couple of General Advocacy cases that were opened and then closed as they are ineligible on this contract.

Cases breakdown	Referral Sub-Type	Apr-24	May-24	Jun-24	Grand Total
<b>Social Security</b>	1st Tier Tribunal	7	4	9	20
<b>Scotland referred cases</b>	Application	40	28	24	91
	Determination	22	14	13	49
	Re-determination	26	28	17	71

<b>Social Security Scotland referred cases Total</b>		<b>95</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>231</b>
<b>Other referral sources</b>	1st Tier Tribunal	36	20	15	71
	Application	274	245	224	744
	Determination	43	31	34	108
	General Advocacy	2			2
	Re-determination	89	91	92	272
	Upper Tier Tribunal	1	6		7
<b>Other referral sources Total</b>		<b>445</b>	<b>393</b>	<b>365</b>	<b>1204</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>540</b>	<b>467</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>1435</b>

Sum of Cases by month for 2024 to date by region



Below you can see the cases by location for last quarter and this Q1 report with the percent of where the cases were for the quarter.

In Q1, 27% of the cases were in Greater Glasgow and Clyde (4% decrease compared to the previous quarter) . Lanarkshire cases increased 30% compared to last quarter, and Shetland cases increased by 43%.

Scottish Region	Qtr 4 2024	Qtr 1 2025	% allocation to region for Q1 2025
Ayrshire & Arran	71	72	5%
Borders	15	18	1%
Dumfries & Galloway	26	10	1%
Eileanan Siar Western Isles	12	8	1%
Fife	207	212	15%
Forth Valley	53	62	4%
Grampian	126	123	9%
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	405	388	27%
Highland	75	58	4%
Lanarkshire	115	149	10%
Lothian	168	166	12%
Shetland	7	10	1%
Tayside	141	154	11%
Not Captured	18	5	0%
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>1,439</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Lanarkshire

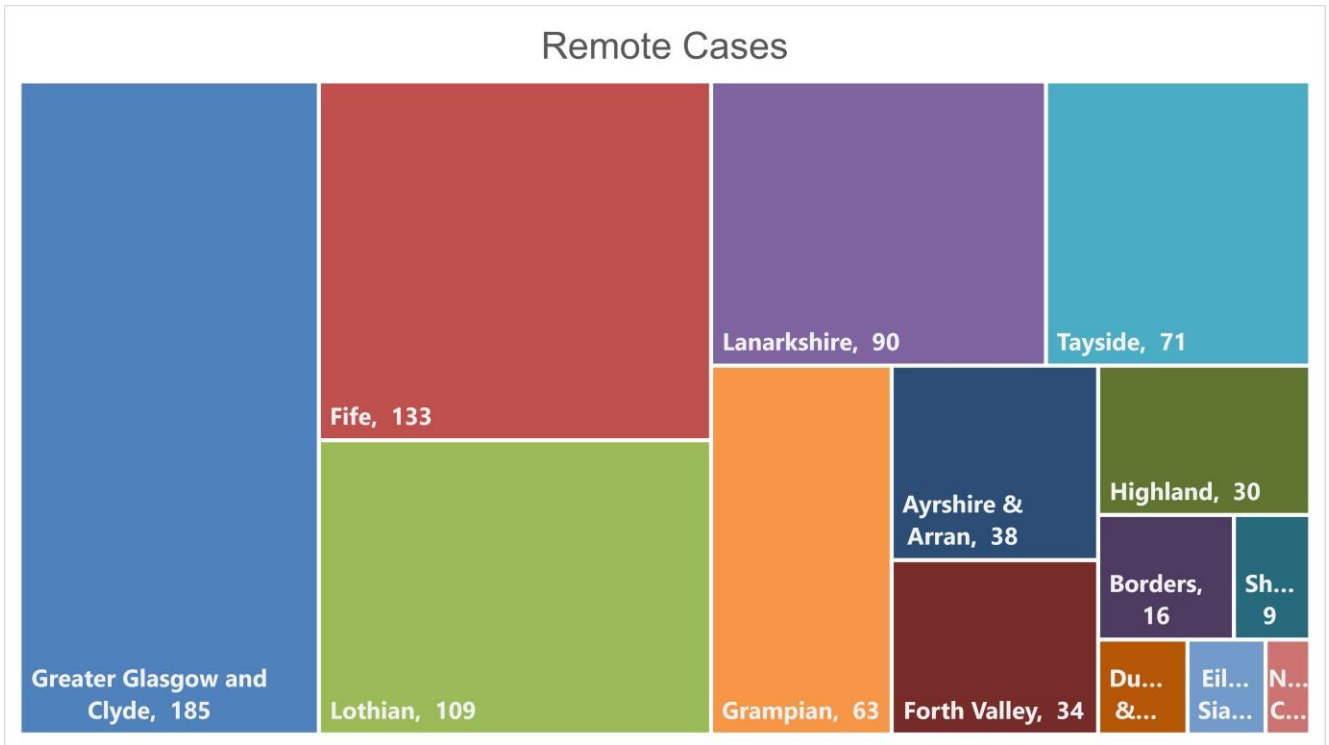
[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] who was one of our volunteers, now a paid member of staff has been in contact with the MSPs throughout the area. She is working in partnership with the foodbanks in East Kilbride to offer a hub every Wednesday alternating across all their sites. [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] has also been invited to attend the foodbanks with Claire Adamson MSP.

We have made positive connections with the local travelling community, and this has resulted in referrals from the traveller's sites as they have built up a trusting relationship.

We have set up a hub in Coltness Memorial Church foodbank and this has already generated further referrals

**Contract to date we can report that 53% of our time has been remote advocacy and 47% in person.**

Majority of our remote cases have come from Greater Glasgow and Clyde, followed by Fife.



### 3.2 Partnerships

#### Fife

Our advocates have been busy networking and making local area connections in Fife. We recently visited Maggie's following feedback from a client that Maggie's are only able to support with the initial application.

#### **Going forward:**

The team are looking at how they can promote and develop the number of CDP applications and have come up with a number of ways to take this forward. This has included a recent visit to Rosslyn School (pupils with complex needs). Staff have access to a meeting space within the school. The headteacher is keen to work in partnership and will be looking to make appropriate referrals to VoiceAbility with a particular focus on CDP applications.

The team will also be looking at how they can work in partnership with national organisations and have already made connections with the team at Marie Curie and will be working in partnership with the benefits advisor when [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)].

#### Edinburgh

##### **Information Maximisation Day**

VoiceAbility collaborated with the Salvation Army to organise an event aimed at promoting our services to the communities of Granton and Pilton. We extended invitations to various other support services to join us in raising awareness. The goal of the event was to provide easy access to information and support for a wide range of issues by bringing together multiple support services in one convenient location.

Organisations in attendance were; VoiceAbility, Edinburgh Food Project, AdvoCard, Access To Industry, Big Issue, Edinburgh & Lothians Regional Equality Council, Granton Goes Greener and Salvation Army Debt Advice and Digital Skills Services

We engaged with individuals in local communities to promote awareness of our service in Edinburgh. Additionally, we collaborated with other service providers to exchange information about the assistance available. Enhancing our understanding of local services aids us in guiding individuals to the most suitable support based on their unique requirements.

VoiceAbility is organising an advocacy event in partnership with the Edinburgh Food Project at the Thistle Foundation, where VoiceAbility, Vocal, and AdvoCard will be present to engage with the community and promote awareness of advocacy support.

### **Fraserburgh Job centre**

We have had 3 cases from this job centre this month. We have had a group approach VoiceAbility looking for support with the **Scottish Child Payment** – A meeting is still to be arranged.

### **Greater Glasgow and Clyde**

VoiceAbility has further built relationships with the North-West of Glasgow. We have organised weekly drop-in sessions at the Women's Centre which is based within the Maryhill area. It acts as a community hub, operating as a safe place for women for the last 25 years.

VoiceAbility are committed to working with organisations and fostering positive relationships to help alleviate child poverty, with an aim to improve the uptake of the Child Disability Payment applications across Glasgow. To support this we attended the 'No Wrong Door' event which was held at the famous landmark 'The Pyramid' in Anderston. This event was organised to bring together multiple charities and organisations to address the growing numbers of child poverty in Glasgow, with organisers commenting on the aim of the event to strengthen the collaboration and partnering of organisations to better serve the Glasgow populace, with the goal being - 'if they reach one of us, they get the best of all of us.

VoiceAbility recently had the privilege of delivering an in-service session to the dedicated Long Covid team in Glasgow, composed of physiotherapists, occupational health practitioners, and healthcare workers. This session was a significant step in fostering a collaborative relationship and enhancing the visibility of our services. It underscored our commitment to supporting those affected by Long Covid and our readiness to work hand-in-hand with healthcare professionals to provide comprehensive advocacy support.

During the session the Long Covid team described the prevalent challenges their patients encounter while seeking support through the Adult Disability Payment. This insightful exchange served as an impactful learning experience for their team, opening avenues to extend our reach and positively impact more lives through this benefit.



We are looking to run a drop-in service at Improving Lives just after the school holidays. Discussing how VoiceAbility can advocate on behalf of parents/guardianship under CDP. We will advertise this giving plenty of notice to allow as many people as possible within the vicinity to join us for a cuppa.

### **Highland**

The support team at one of the local primary schools in Invergordon, they have parents in need of support so left leaflets.

Regular contact with Mikeysline who wish to work with us

Regular referrals from TSI Dingwall, CAB Easter Ross

Arranged first monthly Hub in Ullapool Library for July

### **Stirling**

We have been working in partnership with Action for Children and have started a drop in at their centre in Tullibody.

## **3.3 Equality Act Statistics**

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistic can be found in 'Equal Ops' tab in the attached FY24/25 Q1 Data Report. This quarter we have seen Mental Health cases remain the highest support need, a summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below.

### Top 4 Support Needs

- Mental Health (35%)
- Physical Disability (21%)
- Long-Term Health Conditions (22%)
- Autistic spectrum diagnosis (7%)

### Age Breakdown

- 0-17 (7%)
- 18-49 (52%)
- 50+ (39%)

### **Fife:**

Our advocates in the Fife team continue to support a high number of advocacy partners who have complex mental health needs, drug/alcohol recovery and ex-offenders living in the hostel

in Dunfermline. Due to the complexity of the advocacy partner's needs, we have been looking at advocates working more closely together.

#### 4. Requests and Referrals

##### 4.1 Requests for Support

From the 1626 referrals VoiceAbility received in FY24/25 Q1, 84% converted into a case.

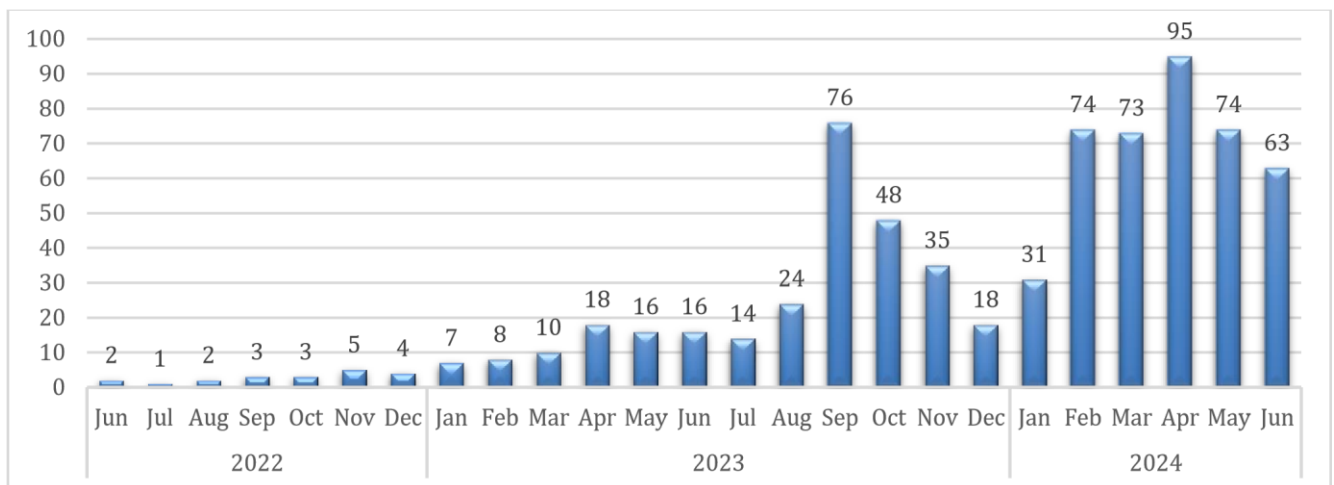
8% of our referrals have been signposted to other organisations for further support.

<b><u>Organisation Signposted To</u></b>	<b><u>Total</u></b>
Advocacy Service Aberdeen	3
Age Scotland	1
Angus Independent Advocacy	2
Benefit entitlement calculator	1
Caps / Advocacy Musselburgh	3
CHAP (Community Housing Advocacy Project)	1
Circles Network Advocacy	11
Citizen's Advice - Money Advice Unit	25
Citizens Advice and Rights Fife (CARF)	1
Citizens Advice Scotland	16
Citizen's Advice Scotland - Clydesdale	1
Dias - Dundee Independent Advocacy Support	1
Disability Information Scotland	1
Dundee City Council	1
Dundee Independent Advocacy Support	1
Dunfermline Advocacy	2
DWP	3
EARS Independent Advocacy Service	2
East Ayrshire Advocacy Services	2
Equal Say – Advocacy	3
Forth Valley Advocacy	1
frontline Fife	1
Independent Advocacy Perth and Kinross	1
Lomond & Argyll Advocacy Service	2
Money Advice Scotland	3
Money Matters	3

Money Talk Team at Citizens Advice Scotland (CAS)	8
North Ayrshire Council	1
Partners in Advocacy	8
Patient Advice & Support Service (Scotland)	1
Scottish Independent Advocacy Alliance	1
Social Security Scotland	5
The Advocacy Project	8
Western isles Advocacy	2
You First Advocacy	7
<b>Total Enquiries Signposted</b>	<b>133</b>

## 4.2 Referring Agencies and Organisations

### Agency referrals by Month and year to date



For the quarter we have identified that out of the 231 cases, Greater Glasgow and Clyde, was the top region for Social Security Scotland referrals (24%). Please see table below for a full breakdown of the cases by NHS Board:

Scottish Region	Opened Date by Months			Grand Total
	Apr	May	Jun	
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	22	17	17	56
Lanarkshire	17	12	11	40
Fife	15	9	7	31
Tayside	9	7	6	22
Lothian	8	7	6	21

Ayrshire & Arran	4	7	6	<b>17</b>
Grampian	4	7	2	<b>13</b>
Forth Valley	7	4		<b>11</b>
Highland	6	1	4	<b>11</b>
Dumfries & Galloway	2	1	1	<b>4</b>
Borders			3	<b>3</b>
Shetland	1	2		<b>3</b>
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>232</b>

We have set up a weekly drop-in session at Partick Annexe where we have secured our first referral for the Child Disability Payment.

Crossreach Warm Recovery Café is becoming busier. We have had two referrals. One arranged by VoiceAbility and one who was using the café after their recovery group meeting.

## 5. Service Administration

### 5.1 Feedback and Complaints

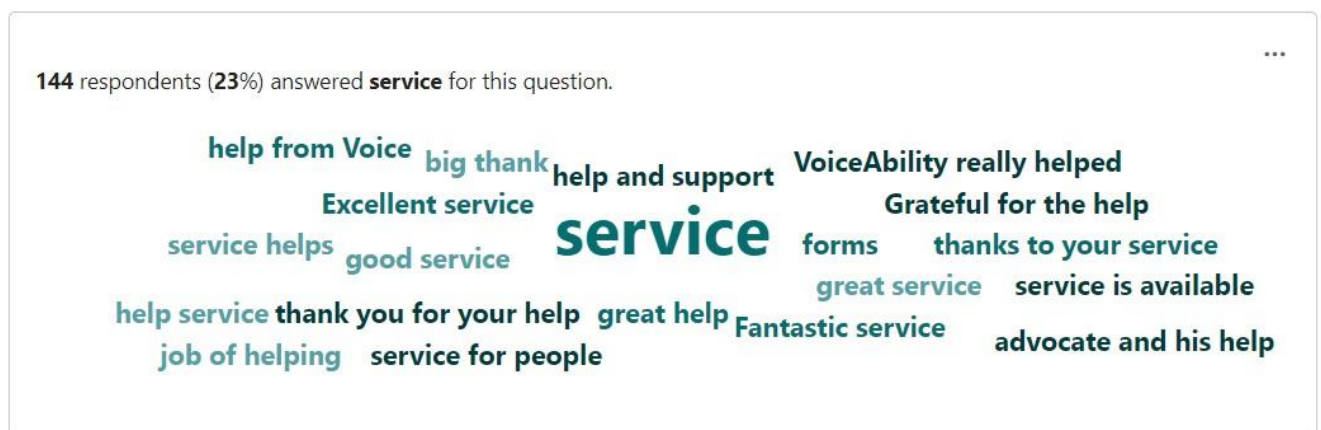
We have received 1041 responses on our satisfaction survey to date.

90% of our advocacy partners that responded to our satisfaction survey rated our service as very good (our top option).

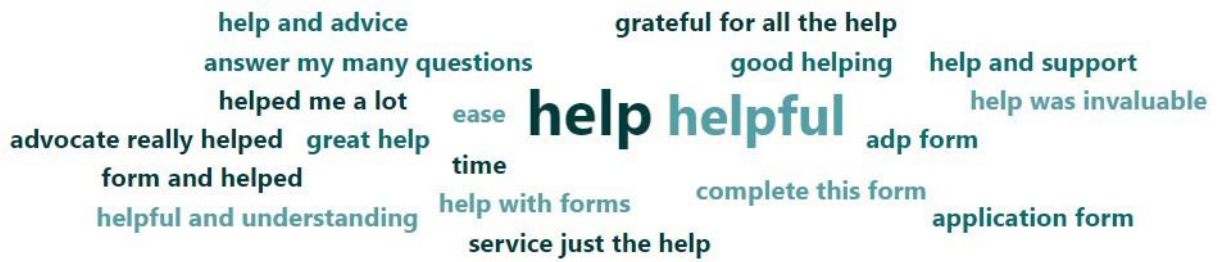
94% of our advocacy Partners said that they are likely to refer a friend to VoiceAbility

71% of respondents stated they have more knowledge than when they started the Advocacy Journey.

50% stated that the Advocacy toolkit answered their enquiry



268 respondents (29%) answered **help** for this question. ...



## Feedback:

*"I felt that I was seen and heard, and I was able to understand my options. My questions were answered, and I felt I now have a better understanding of the process."*

*"[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] was outstanding from start to finish, when I struggled to understand things, she broke it down and made it easier for me to understand, she was approachable and easy to get on with"*

*"[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] was very knowledgeable and gave me great advice and guidance. He was sensitive to the fact that I was anxious and was feeling a bit overwhelmed with the form I was filling in. He helped a lot during what was a stressful time, and I am really grateful to him".*

## 5.2 Concerns

Nothing to report this month

## 6. Staffing

### 6.1 Staffing

The team consist of 60 members with the following breakdown:

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 4 Team Leaders
- 50 Advocates
- 4 Referral/Information Advocates

Keeping to the demand lead approach we have a further 10 members of staff joining our team over the next quarter, with three more offers to be made.

Please see comments from [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] who was one of our volunteers and has joined our Lanarkshire team this quarter.

*On recently joining VoiceAbility as a full time member of staff I started my own quest to spread the word about the services VoiceAbility can provide to the people of Lanarkshire. I emailed every councillor and MSP within North and South Lanarkshire. The response I have had has been phenomenal, councillors have called to ask questions.*

*Making contact with councillors and MSP's has opened up several other avenues and opportunities within the Lanarkshire area. I have been directed to organisations that I now work in conjunction with, this allows them to signpost to ourselves and vice versa. I was invited by MSP Clare Adamson's office [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] to go along with them to attend foodbanks. They have recommended other organisations to get in contact. I have also been given the opportunity by North Lanarkshire Council to join the NLAN to promote VoiceAbility Services.*

*Other opportunities that this has led to are weekly visits within the East Kilbride area. I attend local foodbanks and the local Beacons Addiction Service Recovery Hub. All the foodbanks and The Beacons have offered the use of their offices/rooms.*

*The below have offered me a space to work from and see clients on a regular basis:*

- *The local addiction Service Recovery Hub, Blantyre*
- *The Salvation Army Eva Burrows centre and Turning Point Scotland, Cambuslang*
- *Addiction Service Recovery Hub/foodbank with Street Connect, Wishaw*

*There are many other organisations and events I have been invited to attend, E-mailing all of the MSP's and councillors has definitely paid off and I look forward to working with more of them in the near future.*

## 7. Social Value

### 7.1 Evidence of Community Benefits

One of our advocates and a very shy volunteer who decided instead of being in the picture he would be the photographer. [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] has been working alongside [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] for a number of months and enjoys being part of the team. They both attended The Fife Pride event in Kirkcaldy.



#### Volunteering Programme:

[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]: Has spent some time away from volunteering due to seeking paid employment. Pleased to say he has now secured paid employment and also wishes to continue volunteering with us. [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] is out with the team supporting at our networking events.

[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]: Has spent time with [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] attending some networking events and buddying up for visits. [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] gradually building up her time with us.

[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]: Really enjoying his time learning about the service. He has promoted and secured his first referral. He is supporting the application with the support of one of our experienced Advocates.

Our team of volunteers over in Edinburgh have been working with the team leader attending group advocacy and supporting with events. They have been coming together this quarter to look at additional training and supporting each other.

We are recruiting for a replacement Volunteer Co-ordinator which we are hoping to have on board in September early October. This person will lead and manage the programme.

## 8. Safeguarding & Governance

This quarter we have identified and raised 12 safeguarding concerns. We can confirm that each of these have been closed due to local authority advising they have taken the case on.



# **VoiceAbility Scotland Quarterly Report**

FY24 - 25 Q2; 01/07/2024 – 30/09/2024

## VoiceAbility Contract Monitoring Report

Service Name	Social Security Scotland Benefits Advocacy
Contract Name	VoiceAbility Scotland; Case/540750
Commissioning Authority	Social Security Scotland
Monitoring Period Covered	FY24/25 Q2 July 2024 – September 2024
Author's Name Job Title Contact Details	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] Contract Manager [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Operations Manager	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@voiceability.org
Commissioner	[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@gov.scot [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]@gov.scot
Date	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2024

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# Executive Summary

## Headlines

### Group Advocacy:

The primary goal of running group advocacy on Low Emissions Zones is to directly hear feedback and personal experiences from unpaid carers. The LEZ is a restrictive policy and may have a disproportionate impact on disabled people and their carers. We are running three in person sessions at different venues and taking place at different times in an effort to be accessible to people. We have also included virtual joining options and will be running two additional sessions over Microsoft Teams for those who cannot attend in person but still want their voice to be heard. The feedback that we gather will be collated and passed on to researchers from the Scottish Labour Party who will be sharing the findings with Labour MSPs in order for them to challenge this in Parliament.

All available dates can be found on our website.

### Empowering our Advocacy Partners

We recognise the need to embrace digital capabilities in a way that is both impactful and conscious, ensuring that while technology drives efficiency and innovation, it never overshadows the human element at the core of our work. Our recent partnership with **Sabio** and **Salesforce** is designed to enhance the client journey through smart use of data and AI, while maintaining a focus on the personal, human interactions that remain crucial to building trust and delivering meaningful support. By balancing digital transformation with empathy and understanding, we are committed to creating better outcomes for the people we serve and deeper insights for our commissioners.

### Festival of Politics

One of our Team Leaders and the Community Volunteer Co-ordinator attended the Festival of Politics which ran from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> August to Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> August at the Scottish Parliament Building.

The festival offered opportunities for informed debates on a range of social, political, and environmental issues facing the world today.

We attended five sessions in order to gain new insights on topics relevant to VoiceAbility, as well as to provide new ideas for group advocacy.

### **Health Creators: Health Inequalities in Scotland**

This session asked how do we work together to create good health for all? Health inequalities mean that people living with social, economic, physical disadvantages are more likely to experience poor health and die earlier.

The panel discussed the right to health and access to health services as they specifically impact on race, prison population, poverty and the role they play in tackling health inequalities.

This session was chaired by Emma Harper MSP.

### **Home sweet home?**

The panel discussed the transformation of housing from provision of a warm, safe, and secure 'home' to 'commodity' in the last few decades. They discussed how this is fuelled in part by a rising demand for private housing while the state's social housing has declined. Several councils across Scotland have all declared a housing emergency for a range of reasons and there's been a 130% increase in the last decade of children in temporary accommodation. The panel discussed compulsory sales, land tax values and public land, and potential solutions of these issues.

This session was chaired by Graham Simpson MSP.

### **Reading between the lines: information literacy in the 21st century**

This session covered how technology users are overwhelmed with information that competes for our attention or money. This panel discussed how that information is used to channel this to us in ways that we might not want. This loss of control over our information can lead us to believe in false narratives that harm other people and ourselves. Young people in particular need tools to control their own information and how to separate fact from fiction online. This session asked: how can we nurture responsible and ethical consumers of information in the digital age?

### **Mental Health and Young People**

This session discussed studies as supporting the belief that engaging with arts and creativity has a positive impact on people's mental health, and the potential of the arts to relieve stress, build resilience, support identity and empowerment, and develop vital social connections among children and young people.

This session was chaired by [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)], a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

### **Responsible Debate**

In this session the panel discussed how, as the world becomes more polarised, it is becoming clearer that the way we debate and discuss important issues is preventing us reaching

solutions. The panel also discussed the question of 'how can we debate and discuss in a way that deals with the important challenges facing us?'

This session was chaired by Ben Macpherson MSP.

Attending the events this week gave a deeper insight into sociopolitical issues that are impacting local communities across Scotland and gave several new ideas for group advocacy sessions to run in Edinburgh.

### **Voluntary Health Sector Annual Conference**

We are thrilled to announce that our submission to the Voluntary Health Sector Annual Conference 2024 in Scotland's Vital Health Sector poster competition has been shortlisted as a finalist.

Other finalists include:

- Action for M.E.
- The Breastfeeding Network
- CANDU (Dundee Cancer Support Network) SCIO
- Finn's Place
- Living Streets
- The Sorted Project
- Scottish Partnership for Palliative Care
- RNIB

Our poster showcases how our services contribute to addressing health inequalities and facilitating access to entitled support for individuals. Our approach involves providing tailored support to address specific challenges faced by individuals, such as advocating for changes to a person's care package, when necessary, resources are removed, ensuring that the level of care continues to meet the individual's needs. Additionally, our group initiatives aim to amplify collective voices to shed light on issues affecting broader demographics. For instance, in a recent session, participants articulated barriers to accessing mental health support services. Furthermore, we are proud to offer a complimentary 5-day course for high school pupils, empowering them to understand their human rights and advocate for themselves and others.

We eagerly anticipate the opportunity to present our poster at the conference, where we will have the privilege of engaging with professionals in the voluntary health sector. This platform provides an excellent opportunity to showcase our services, raise awareness, and foster potential partnerships with other professionals. We are committed to making a meaningful impact and are excited about the potential collaborations that may arise from this event.

Some of our media articles covered this Quarter


**VoiceAbility**

### News and blog posts: policy news (Scotland)

We shared 1 article about an independent review of the Scotland Adult Disability Payment taking an inclusive and transparent engagement approach with stakeholders.

- It had **571 views** in August (posted 6 August)
- [Scotland Adult Disability Payment: an independent review](#)

There will be opportunities for people to contribute throughout the review. Although anyone can respond, the call for evidence is primarily intended for organisations, and VoiceAbility will be responding.



**VoiceAbility**

### Media coverage (Scotland)

- VoiceAbility was featured by **16 UK media titles** in August, raising awareness of our benefits advocacy service in Scotland, and new advocacy services in Essex and Wolverhampton
- A [Daily Record](#) article about [urging people with cancer to check if they are eligible for disability benefits](#) included a mention of our benefits advocacy service in Scotland from Shirley-Anne Somerville, the Scottish Government's Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice
- The opening of a pop-up shop in Dumfries to promote the service has featured in the [Dumfries Courier](#) (page 3 of the print edition) and [Dumfries & Galloway What's Going On?](#)

### Media and blog posts - Scottish Government

We shared 3 articles focused on Scottish Government updates

[What is short-term Assistance?](#) had 1 view in September posted 1 September

[The first Programme for Government for the Scottish Parliament](#) had 1 view in September posted 1 September

[Scotland Carers Support Payment to go nationwide](#) had 1 view in September posted 10 September



## Successes

Our very first pop-up shop proved to be a success. We looked to trial something different to raise awareness. Due to the success, we will look to replicate across Scotland.

### Media and blog posts - Benefits Advocacy Scotland

We shared 1 article about the launch of our first Scottish benefits advocacy pop up shop in Dumfries

It had 1 view in September posted 1 September

[First Scottish benefits advocacy pop up shop hailed a real success](#)

**“I feel the pop-up shop was a real success considering it's the first time we've done this, and we plan to do more in the future.”**



[First Scottish benefits advocacy pop-up shop hailed 'a real success'](#)

VoiceAbility's first pop-up shop — set up to promote our Scottish benefits advocacy service — has been hailed 'a real success'.

## Report

### 1. Key Performance Indicators:

#### 1.1 KPI Summary

FY25 Q2			
No	Key Performance Indicator	Milestone	Result
1	All requests for support received must be processed and allocated to appropriate advocacy representation within 2 working days.	95%	97%
2	Initial appointments with Individuals should be arranged within 3 working days of the referral to the advocacy worker or service partner	95%	98%
3	Acknowledge receipt of complaint/concern within 2 working days of receipt and provide a formal response within 5 working days of receipt (copied to the SG contract manager for information).	90%	N/A
4	Any complaints which cannot be resolved by Service provider regarding the system or services must be sent to SG contract manager within 6 working days of receipt.	90%	N/A
5	Serious issues to be escalated to the Scottish Government within 24 hours	100%	N/A
6	Service Provider must issue satisfaction survey to 100% of Individuals within two days of their service requirements ending	95%	100%
7	Service Provider must make payment to any sub-contractors within 30 days of receipt of a valid invoice	100%	N/A

### 2.Call Centre Key Performance Indicators

#### 2.1 Call Centre KPI Summary



		Jul-24	Aug-24	Sep-24
Social Security	Number of Phone calls received	370	308	244
	% of calls answered within 20 seconds	82.97%	90.49%	77.50%
	% of calls missed	5%	2%	5%
	Ave wait time before drop off	2 mins 43	3 mins 11	4 mins 1

Unfortunately, last month we were hit with sickness within the Contact Centre, leaving us short on staff. This coupled with annual leave and the training of two new RIAs in Scotland. We are pleased that we are back to our full quota of 4 RIAs in Scotland.

### 3. Individuals (Advocacy Partners)

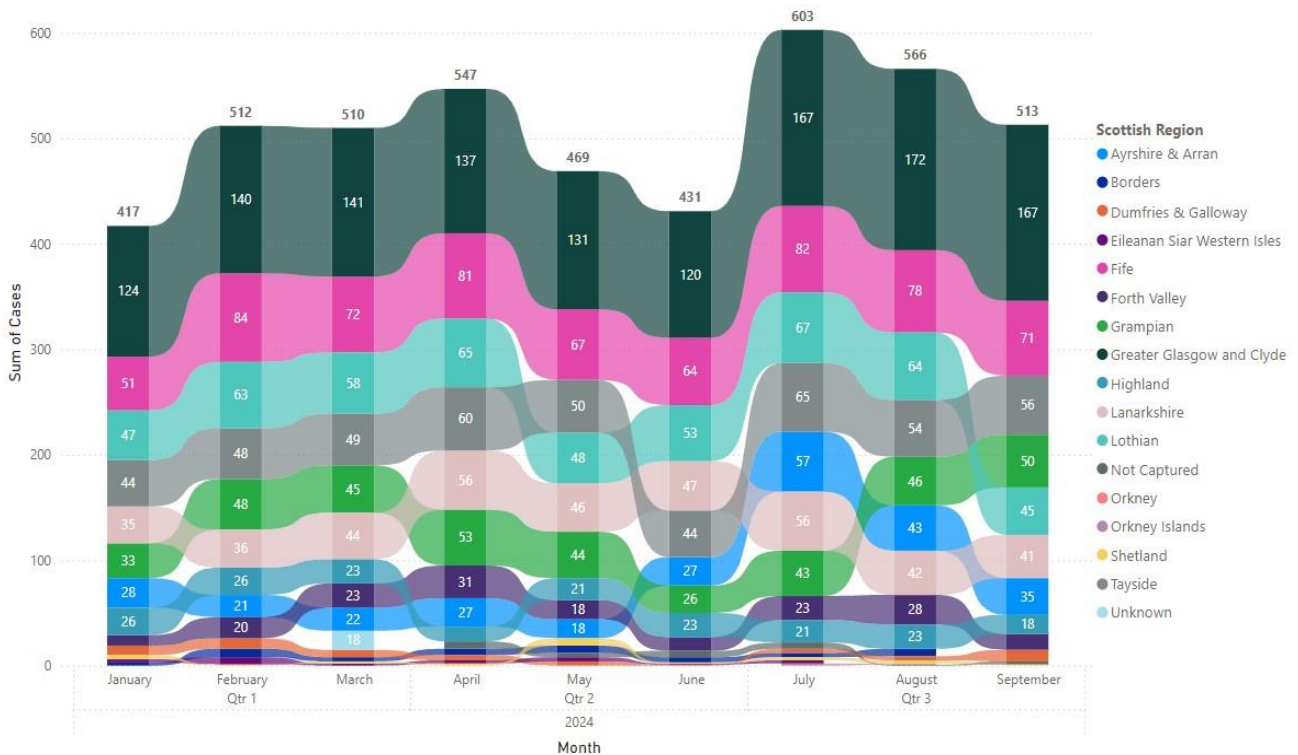
#### 3.1 The Number of Advocacy partners Supported.

In FYR25 Q2, VoiceAbility received 1,682 cases, this is a 17% increase compared to Q1, we opened case for 1,576 unique Advocacy Partners. In July we reached a new record with 603 cases. 64% of all cases for the quarter were for Applications which is the biggest increase compared to 58% of cases being for applications in Q1.

Cases		Jul24	Aug24	Sep24	Grand Total
<b>Referral Sub-Type breakdown</b>					
<b>Social Security Scotland referred cases</b>	1st Tier Tribunal	3	9	6	18
	Application	34	35	19	88
	Determination	16	13	4	33
	Re-determination	39	23	21	83
	Upper Tier Tribunal			1	1
<b>Social Security Scotland referred cases Total</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>223</b>
<b>Other referral sources</b>	1st Tier Tribunal	28	37	32	97
	Application	351	316	292	959
	Determination	44	42	36	122
	Re-determination	86	89	101	276
	Upper Tier Tribunal	2	2	1	5
<b>Other referral sources Total</b>		<b>511</b>	<b>486</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>1459</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>603</b>	<b>566</b>	<b>513</b>	<b>1682</b>

Below you can see the cases by location for last quarter and this Q2 report with the percent of where the cases were for the quarter.

Sum of Cases by month for 2024 to date by region

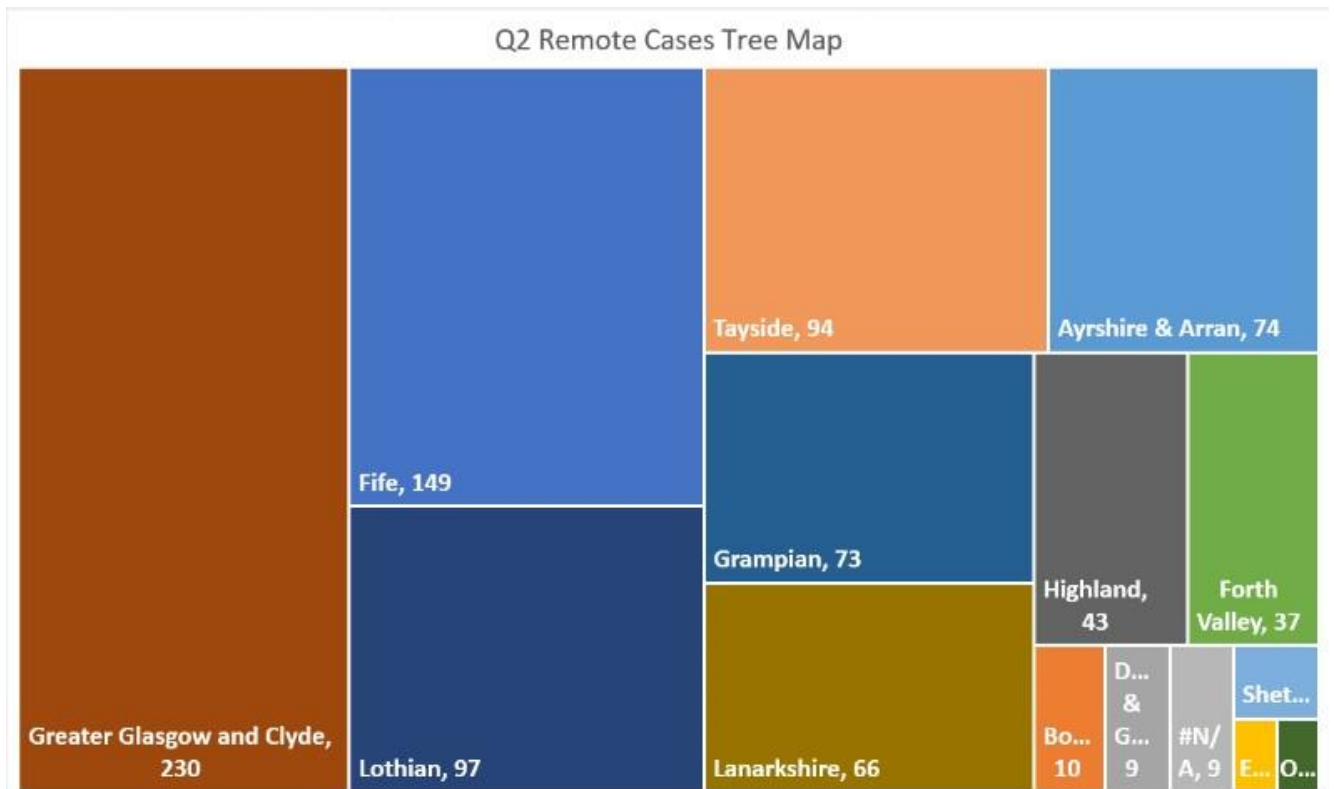


In Q2, we have seen an increase of cases from Greater Glasgow which has risen from 27% of all cases to now 30% in quarter 2 with 507 cases. The biggest increase in cases for the quarter by area have been seen in Dumfries and Galloway (90% Increase) and Ayrshire & Arran (88% Increase) with the largest decreases seen in Eileanan Siar Western Isles 63% decrease and a 39% decrease in Borders.

The increase from Dumfries and Galloway would have been down to the success of our pop up shop.

We have to give thanks to our Advocate [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] in Ayrshire who has recently built a successful relationship with Compass, South Ayrshire. [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] is working out of the centre one day a week, working closely with the key workers. We are in talks of increasing the number of days due to a high number of referrals engaging on service. We have successfully supported 13 advocacy partners through initial application and the numbers are growing.

Scottish Region	Qtr 1 2025	Qtr 2 2025	% allocation to region for Q2 2025
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	388	507	30%
Fife	212	231	14%
Lothian	166	176	10%
Tayside	154	175	10%
Grampian	123	139	8%
Lanarkshire	149	138	8%
Ayrshire & Arran	72	135	8%
Forth Valley	62	66	4%
Highland	58	62	4%
Dumfries & Galloway	10	19	1%
Borders	18	11	1%
Not Captured	5	10	1%
Shetland	10	7	0%
Eileanan Siar Western Isles	8	3	0%
Orkney Islands		3	0%
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>1,435</b>	<b>1,682</b>	<b>100%</b>



### 3.2 Partnerships

Women's Guild – One of our advocates presented to the group. Event was attended by the local councillor [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] and the Depute Lord Provost of Hamilton who both promised to signpost.

Lanarkshire Mosque, Lanarkshire Muslim Welfare Society – drop in provided by team and also just setting up attending the women's support group at the mosque every month.

We continue to work closely with Castle Huntly around providing a service. This is currently ongoing and should hopefully be up and running soon. This has taken time to develop due to the restrictions that have to be in place around security. Castle Huntly prison – meeting held and partnership agreement now in place – they have our digital material, and our ad runs on their link centre screen. Starting in November.

This is another breakthrough for the team. One of our advocates made great connections with the Stirling Welfare Team. We were recently invited along to their team meeting, and we presented to the team about our service. We had the opportunity to share information on how we can signpost to their service. The Welfare team advised that they have previously made referrals to our service and would continue to do so and look forward to working in partnership. We also felt during this meeting due to conversations had that as we deliver advocacy, we would support the client to tribunal level regardless of the points from the initial application.

Two of our advocates continue to develop relationships with Marie Curie and have been invited along to their breakfast mornings. Marie Curie have expressed that they are keen to work in partnership.

Brain Health and Dementia Resource Centre in Perth – morning sessions at the dementia café. They are delivering a local support programme for individual's families and carers living with dementia and/or those concerned with brain health. They are keen to incorporate education, drop ins, information sessions and other activities. We will look to set up a drop in.

This quarter we looked to re-gain some focus on CDP referrals. Due to the number of applications being received under ADP, time was limited. Below we have named a few organisations we contacted.

Cottage Family Centre, Fife, Homestart, Paediatric outpatient team at the Queen Margaret Hospital and the maternity ward at the Victoria Hospital, Women's Aid and how we can support them and their children.

We attended Coatbridge Hub Parent's day to raise awareness of CDP and have been in contact with the Fir Park Link Worker along with distributing volunteer posters at Tact Hall.

We contacted the specialist provision schools for children with complex health care needs Calaiswood and Duloch schools who have advised that they will add our information to their Facebook page.

Downs Syndrome Scotland have expressed their interest in hearing about our service and have invited VoiceAbility to attend a virtual coffee morning in the coming months to meet the team, parents/carers and children who use the service.

Local health visitors are looking at how we can promote this throughout NHS Fife.

Reached out to Fife Council children's services to offer to go along and speak about our service.

Enable (Enable support individuals from 16-21 who have learning difficulties).

Attended a coffee morning with Sense Scot early years and gave a presentation on VoiceAbility to parents and careers present. Agreed to keep in touch and share resources in the future.

We have continued to build upon relationships with the Action for Children centre in Tullibody with a focus on raising awareness of CDP. We hold regular drop in clinics at the centre and will respond and attend on additional dates if needed.

During a meeting held with our operations manager and staff at Improving Lives to discuss our partnership and what we can do to support more residents to engage with our services. We discussed a potential drop in to promote Child Disability Payment. We immediately looked to set up a date, which went ahead Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> August. Due to the success, we will look to hold further events.

***Our Info Day gave our local community the chance to meet the Voiceability advocates who are available in our premises 5 days a week. Families were able to find out about Child Disability Payment.***

***People brought their kids along too and received a free goodie bag and they got to try out a special kids-only session of our Art for Anxiety group***



All our work is coming to fruition on CDP – please see table below

Years (Opened Date)	Quarters (Opened Date)	Months (Opened Date)	Total
2022	Qtr1		7
	Qtr2		8
	Qtr3		8
	Qtr4		20
2023	Qtr1		34
	Qtr2		47
	Qtr3		47
	Qtr4		76
2024	Qtr1		100
	Qtr2		79
	Qtr3		88
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>514</b>

### 3.3 Equality Act Statistics

The full breakdown of Equality Act statistic can be found in 'Equal Ops' tab in the attached FY 4/25 Q2 Data Report. This quarter we have seen Mental Health cases remain the highest support need, a summary of some of the more noteworthy information can be seen below.

#### Top 4 Support Needs

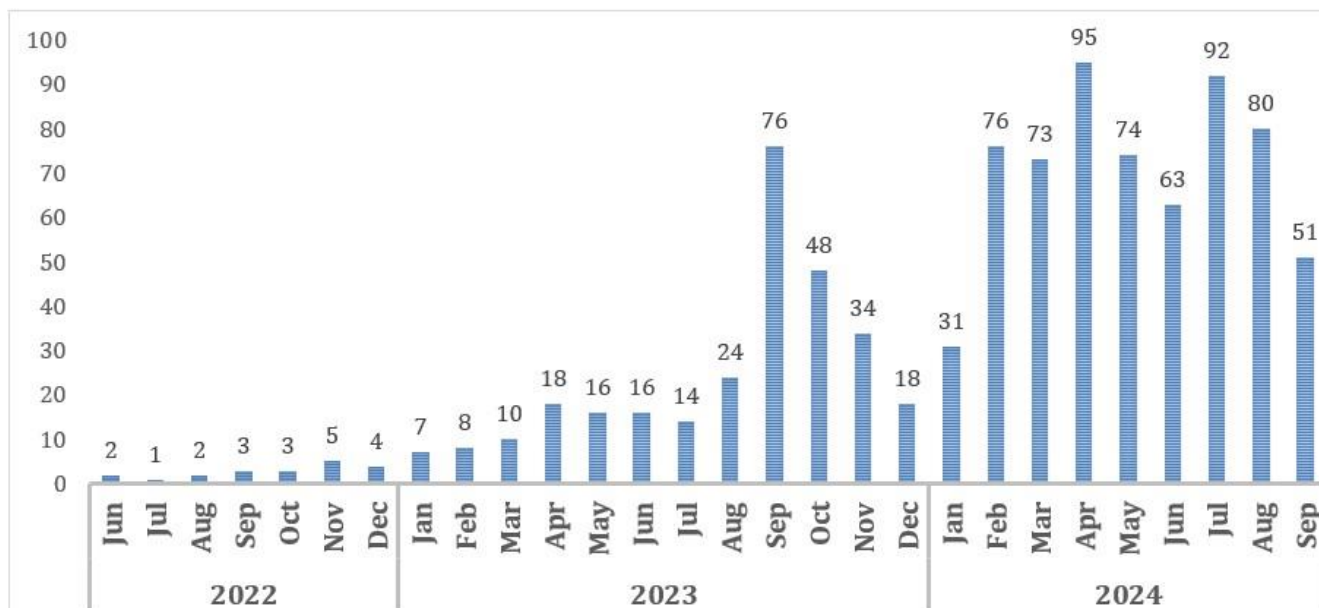
- Mental Health (30%)
- Long-Term Health Conditions (24%)
- Physical Disability (17%)
- Autistic spectrum diagnosis (7%)

#### Age Breakdown

- 50 – 64 (36%)
- 25 – 49 (43%)
- 18 – 24 (9%)

## 4.2 Referring Agencies and Organisations

### Agency referrals by Month and year to date



For the quarter we have identified that out of the 223 cases referred by Social Security Scotland, Greater Glasgow and Clyde, was the top region for referrals (22%). Please see table below for a full breakdown of the cases by NHS Board:

Scottish Region	Jul - 24	Aug- 24	Sep - 24	Grand Total
Greater Glasgow and Clyde	16		15 17	48
Lothian	18		11 6	35
Lanarkshire	17		10 7	34
Fife	9		11 4	24
Ayrshire & Arran	7		11 4	22
Grampian	8		5 6	19
Tayside	7		6 3	16
Forth Valley	4		7 1	12
Highland	3		2	5
Dumfries & Galloway	1		2	3
Information Not Captured	1		1	2

Borders		1	1
Orkney Islands		1	1
Shetland	1		1
<b>Total Cases</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>80 51</b>	<b>223</b>

## 5. Service Administration

### 5.1 Feedback and Complaints

#### Quotes from clients:

***“The person that dealt with me was very good and made me feel at ease , I would never have completed this form without the help, thank you”***

***“[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] was a joy to meet with and both her knowledge and warmth made the process exceptionally easy.”***

***“Complete understanding of our situation. Good clear conversation & also willing to spend time explaining what would happen in the process”***

***“[Redacted Section 38(1)(b)] showed an exceptional level of empathy and diligence, giving me plenty of time to explore how my disability affects me in every aspect asked by the form. He also has the tenacity to ask the hard questions that you don't want to face about how the level of disability is changing. I believe that through his empathy and intelligence he was able to put as accurate a description as possible in the incredibly artificial construct of disability that is within the form. He did this with good humour which is quite a feat as the process is deeply upsetting. He has a tremendous skill set and should be acknowledged for his depth of commitment. Thank you [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)].”***

***“Miła kompetentna, wszystko wyjaśnione jasno”- Translated ( Nice, competent, everything explained clearly)***

***“The female who came to support me was excellent. She went above and beyond to help me with my form. She was very knowledgeable and there was no judgement at all. She was kind, fair and very supportive. She never once looked at the clock and made sure everything was completely finished and accurate before she finished. At the end of our meeting, it felt as if I had known this person for a while. I really thank her so much for her support.”***

### 5.2 Concerns

VoiceAbility advocates are still experiencing some concerns whilst attending The Chamber with our advocacy partners regarding their 1<sup>st</sup> Tier Tribunal. This has been reported back to Scottish Government and we are continuing to provide factual evidence. Not being able to support our advocacy partners during this process has been so stressful for them, some highlighting that they are wishing to put forward a complaint.



## 6. Staffing

### 6.1 Staffing

- 1 Operations Manager
- 1 Contract Manager
- 4 Team Leaders
- 55 Advocates
- 4 Referral/Information Advocates

## 7. Social Value

### 7.1 Evidence of Community Benefits

#### **Charity Fair – Peterhead Academy**

On Monday 26<sup>th</sup> August and Monday 2<sup>nd</sup> September one of our Advocates attended a charity fair that we were invited along to at Peterhead Academy, this was part of the school's curriculum for the Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) They had a list of questions to ask organisations in attendance.

At both of these morning events, the students showed great interest in approaching the stall we had set up in finding out information about VoiceAbility and more so in depth about the impact we have in the local communities across North Aberdeenshire. The advocate spent a lot of time providing an overview of the impact and demand which has significantly grown since appointed into post. Expressing a lot of individuals we work with are often vulnerable and we are making sure they feel empowered throughout the process and their voice is being heard when it matters the most.

A lot of the students expressed they could see the importance of why VoiceAbility is here and voiced they are glad to know of the services and feel for some of them there could be personal reasons of why they would reach out.

Following the event, a group of students have reached out to inform us that they would like to focus on VoiceAbility as the charity for their YPI project.

Please see email received –

***“ Good afternoon, [Redacted Section 38(1)(b)]***

***I wanted to let you know that me and my friend are interested in your charity and we would like to focus on it for our YPI class. We met you last week and you did tell us that you do not have an office but we would still like to arrange a meeting whether it is at our school (Peterhead Academy) or at your preferred location. Thank you very much”***

Through discussion it has been agreed with the students and one of our hubs that they are going to attend on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September.

Our Operations Manager attended an event recently where she met up with staff who were promoting MCR Pathways – Become a Mentor an hour a week. This was shared with all staff across Scotland and we have a number of advocates who are now or are awaiting the opportunity to take up this marvellous opportunity in their local area.

MCR Pathways is a national, award-winning volunteer mentoring charity. Established in 2007, our vision is for all young people to have an equality of educational outcomes, career opportunities and life chances.

Our Advocates attended a session with the Strategic Planning and Commissioning Officer – Older People within the Edinburgh Health and Social Care Partnership and PC Yocksan Bell on a very important subject relating to raising the awareness of the Herbert Protocol.

### **Here are some things you can do to help:**

- Spread the word to family and friends
- Raise awareness to people living with dementia and their families you may be working with and encourage to use where needed
- Think about how you can include in your day to day work processes and procedures to increase uptake. The form is also a useful tool for gathering information for life story and reminiscence work.
- Use the presentation attached and adjust as needed to give a presentation to colleagues and local groups
- Share information about the Herbert Protocol on your social media channels.

There is a Herbert Protocol communications toolkit that has suggested social media and web content. This is available on the Focus on Dementia webpage at <https://ihub.scot/improvement-programmes/focus-on-dementia/herbert-protocol-national><https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https://ihub.scot/improvement-programmes/focus-on-dementia/herbert-protocol-national-launch/&data=05|02|Emily.Johnston@voiceability.org|8e88c9d150c849442f2308dcd8bfb27d|dfca6c78575b44ef9897f543ae1e0f72|0|0|638623565062934130|Unknown|TWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoic4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0=|0||&sdata=qx5sMgRddi4nn4LTg/uUK0CzoFQwPx2v684OYOi3ICY=&reserved=0> and also Health and Social Care Scotland <https://hscscotland.scot/media/news/the-herbert-protocol-safe-and-found.html>

### **Volunteers**

To say thank you for all of your hard work volunteering this year we have arranged tickets to the Castle of Light event at Edinburgh Castle.

Historic Environment Scotland who run the event have offered free entry for you all as they recognise and appreciate the work that volunteers do in the community - as do all of us at VoiceAbility!

The time slot is 6<sup>th</sup> December 6:30pm. It takes around 45 minutes to walk through. There are food and drink stalls at the venue as well.

## 8. Safeguarding & Governance

This quarter we have identified and raised 18 safeguarding concerns. We can confirm that 16 of these have been closed due to local authority advising they have taken the case on. And 2 are Concern Raised pending response.