

# Information and Signposting Service: Enquiries in Quarter 4 (January - March 2023)

The Healthwatch East Sussex [Information and Signposting \(I&S\) Service](#) helps people to access the right health or social care service or organisation for their needs.

We also offer information if people want to share their experience or make a complaint.

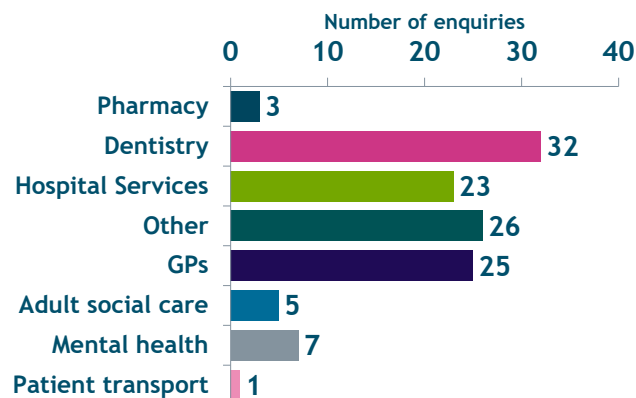
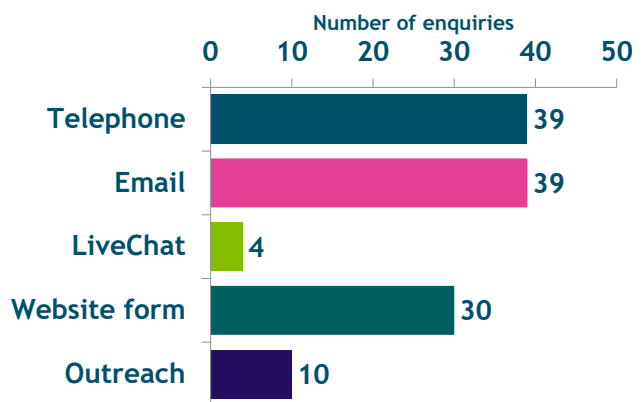
## Overview of the enquiries we received in Quarter 4 (Q4)

### Method of contact

We received 122 enquiries to our I&S service in Q4 2023, compared to 111 in the previous quarter.

Telephone and email were the most popular methods of contact (39 enquiries each), followed by website contact form (30).

A further 10 enquiries were made during outreach events and four via LiveChat.



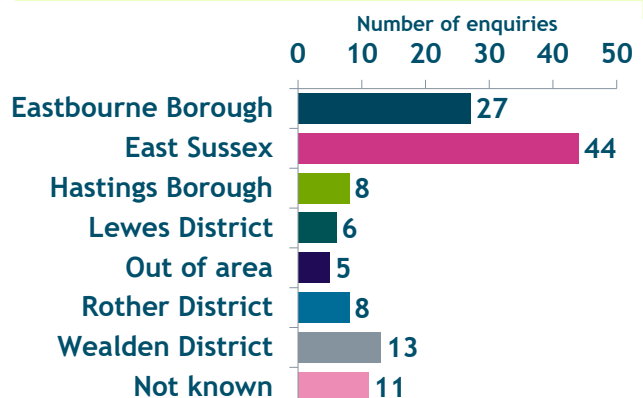
### Enquiry themes

The main enquiry themes in Q4 were NHS Dentistry (32), GP services (25) and Hospital services (23).

There were 7 enquiries regarding Mental Health Services, 5 relating to Adult Social Care, 3 relating to pharmacy services and one concerning patient transport. 26 enquiries were regarding other services including how to access advocacy services.

### Location of enquiries

The most common locations for enquiries received in Q4 were Eastbourne Borough (27), Wealden District (13), Hastings Borough (8) and Rother District (8). In addition, 44 enquiries had an unspecified location within East Sussex, 11 had an unknown location and 5 were out of area.



## Four most common enquiry themes:

### Dentistry (32)

Enquiries regarding NHS dentistry saw a large increase from 13 in Q3, to become the most common reason for individuals to contact the I&S service in Q4.

The vast majority of enquiries were from people unable to find an NHS dentist. Multiple people told us that their dentist had left or stopped treating NHS patients, but they could not afford to be treated privately. Some individuals reported that they were in pain and were worried that they could not find a dentist to treat them.

### GP services (25)

Enquiries concerning GP services decreased from 40 in Q3 to 25 in Q4.

Many enquiries reported concerns regarding the lack of access to GP appointments. This included reports of difficulty being able to book an appointment, and frustration with a lack of face-to-face appointments being offered.

In other enquiries we heard about both negative experiences, including concerns about medication and treatments offered, as well as positive experiences of treatments that had been received.

### Hospital services (23)

The I&S Service saw a significant increase in enquiries regarding hospital services this quarter, from 14 enquiries in Q3 to 23 in Q4.

Several enquiries expressed concern regarding the length of time spent waiting for urgent treatment.

Some enquiries reported poor experiences of the care they received as in-patients, and others told us they were unhappy with the lack of follow-up care after discharge.

We also heard of a positive experience at a walk-in centre.

### Mental Health (7)

Several enquiries were raised regarding mental health services. Issues included poor standards of care in Community Mental Health services and a lack of support services. A few concerns were raised by people unhappy with the treatment they are receiving or complaining about the lack of treatment.

One enquiry was seeking help to find support for anxiety and depression.

## Trends in enquiries:

Q4 showed a rise in enquiries regarding **NHS dentistry and hospital services** from the previous quarter, although there was a decrease in GP enquiries. In addition to the most common enquiry themes, identified above, enquiries also related to:

- Palliative care
- Adult Social Care
- Dementia support services
- Opticians
- Care homes
- Bereavement support
- Medication funded by NHS Sussex
- Pharmacies

## Complaints about health and care:

Our Information and Signposting service engages with people who may be unhappy with the health or care services they have used due to a poor experience or outcome.

We advise people on how they can raise their concerns with providers and, where appropriate, refer them for support from a complaint advocate.

14 enquiries received in Quarter 4 related to complaints about health services, and these individuals were referred or signposted to [The Advocacy People](#) for support with the NHS Independent Health Complaints [process](#).

Topics of complaints during Q4 included:

- Poor quality of dental treatment
- Poor standard of care from hospital services
- Poor standard of care in care home
- Wanting to access a drug NHS Sussex does not fund
- Lack of communication of test results between GP and patient
- Lack of mental health community services

If you need help to make a complaint about an NHS service, please contact The Advocacy People: Tel: 0300 440 9000 or email: [info@theadvocypeople.org.uk](mailto:info@theadvocypeople.org.uk) or visit their website: <https://www.theadvocypeople.org.uk/>

## Healthwatch East Sussex Feedback Centre:

Healthwatch East Sussex's [Feedback Centre](#) enables you to leave a review of services you have used, such as GPs, pharmacists, hospitals, care homes, dentists, and opticians.

Feedback reviews submitted via the Healthwatch East Sussex website are monitored and moderated regularly. Individuals can give feedback anonymously or share contact details if they wish to receive support from the Information and Signposting Service.

Reviews can be accessed by and/or proactively shared with service providers to inform and influence service delivery.

26 reviews were received in the Feedback Centre during Q4 of 2022/23 and related to 17 different services.

### Quarter 4 reviews via the Feedback Centre:

- 6 reviews related to 3 different GP practices (2 positive, 3 mixed and 1 negative)
- 3 reviews were regarding Pharmacies (1 negative and 2 mixed)
- 3 reviews related to Dental Surgeries (1 positive and 2 mixed)
- 7 reviews were in relation to 4 different hospitals (2 positive, 2 mixed and 3 negative)
- 6 reviews were regarding emergency care at 3 different hospitals (3 positive and 3 negative)
- 1 review related to an outpatients clinic (1 negative)

### Share your experience of health and care services in East Sussex:

Leaving reviews on our Feedback Centre helps us to identify where services are performing well or where improvements could be made. Feedback is shared with Commissioners and Managers of Health and Care Services to help to make services better. The more we hear, the more power we have, to influence change.

Your feedback can make a difference, so please visit our Feedback Centre to review a service or see what others have said: <https://healthwatcheastsex.co.uk/services/>



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