



Patient and Client Council  
5<sup>th</sup> Floor, 12 -22 Linenhall Street  
Belfast  
BT2 8BS

22nd July 2026

By Email

[REDACTED]

Ref: FOI 2853

Dear [REDACTED]

I am writing to you in response to your Freedom of Information request received by the Patient and Client Council (PCC) on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2026 in which you requested information relating to advocacy casework and complaints data.

Please find the response below.

**This is a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. It is a request for statistical and policy information only; I am not requesting any personal data.**

**Unless otherwise stated, please provide the information for each of the last three full financial years (2023–24, 2024–25 and 2025–26), broken down by year. Where a category I have described does not match how PCC records its data, please provide the information in the form in which it is held, together with the definitions PCC uses.**

**1. The total number of individual enquiries or cases opened requesting advocacy or individual support from PCC.**

Please find attached links to PCC Annual reports for 2023-2024 and 2024 – 2025 whereby this information is provided.

[pcc-annual-report-and-accounts-2023-24.pdf](#)

[pcc-annual-report-and-accounts-2024-2025-final-with-cert-october-2025.pdf](#)

PCC Annual report 2025-2026 is unpublished as of yet but I can confirm the total number of individual enquiries or cases opened requesting advocacy or individual support from PCC for 2025-2026 was 727.

**2. Of those, the number of cases in which PCC made direct contact with a health and social care organisation on the client's behalf (for example by letter, email, telephone call or attendance at a meeting), as distinct from providing advice or information to the client only.**

\*Please refer below

**3. The number of cases closed with the client signposted or referred to an external organisation, and a list of the organisations most frequently signposted to, if recorded.**

\*Please refer below

**4. The list of case outcome / closure categories used in PCC's case management system, together with the internal definitions or guidance for each category.**

**The list of case outcome / closure categories used in PCC's case management system, together with the internal definitions or guidance for each category.**

For 23/24, 24/25 and 25/26 the closure categories remained consistent and unchanged:

Closed Contacts were classified as 'Advice and Information'

Closed Cases were classified as either:

1. **Advocacy:** Working with a client and supporting them to resolve an issue with the service with which they had an issue through mediation. When a case is closed at the Advocacy stage, it has reached 'Resolution'.
2. **Advocacy – Information Only:** This is when work with a client has involved the provision of specific information to help them further their issue.
3. **Advocacy – Issue/Concern:** Similar to the above processes but reflects when action taken by the PCC has been taken to address a specific issue within a broader Case.
4. **Advocacy – Formal Complaint:** This is work with a client who has already made a complaint to a HSC service and the PCC have supported them in furthering this issue.
5. **Formal Complaint:** When a client is unhappy with the response from services to any of the Advocacy stages above, or if they have tried pursuing the issue themselves and not had a satisfactory outcome, they may seek support from the PCC to make a 'Formal Complaint' to the HSC service.
6. **SAI – Level 1, 2, & 3:** 'Serious Adverse Incident' relates to when unintended harm, loss or damage occurred within the HSC. The HSC service may create

a SAI themselves following an incident or a Formal Complaint being dealt with by the PCC may escalate to a SAI, with Level 3 being the most serious.

**Note:**

- In 25/26, PCC merged the categories of Advocacy, Advocacy – Information Only, Advocacy – Issue/Concern and Advocacy – Formal Complaint were all merged into one single Advocacy category, recognising that all work on a case with a client is considered Advocacy.
- From 2026 onwards, the new Model Complaints Handling Procedure (MCHP) implemented by NIPSO has introduced new categories that the PCC has also adopted. The term ‘Formal Complaint’ has been replaced with ‘Complaint Stage 1 and Complaint Stage 2’. However, this is not in the scope of this FOI.

**5. The number of cases closed after two or fewer contacts with the client, if this can be extracted from the case management system.**

\*Please refer below

**6. The number of whole-time-equivalent staff whose role includes providing individual advocacy support to clients, as at the end of each financial year.**

|             |    |           |
|-------------|----|-----------|
| 2023 – 2024 | 19 | 17.31 WTE |
| 2024 – 2025 | 19 | 17.31 WTE |
| 2025 – 2026 | 19 | 16.97 WTE |

**7. The number of formal complaints received about PCC itself under PCC’s own complaints procedure, and their outcomes (upheld / partially upheld / not upheld), including the number that proceeded to a second-stage or review level.**

| Number | 2023 – 2024 | 2024 – 2025 | 2025– 2026 |
|--------|-------------|-------------|------------|
| 1      | Not upheld  | Not upheld  | Not upheld |
| 2      | Not upheld  | Not upheld  | Not upheld |
| 3      | Not upheld  |             | Not upheld |
| 4      | Not upheld  |             | Not upheld |
| 5      | Not upheld  |             | Not upheld |

**8. A copy of any internal policy, procedure, guidance or criteria used by PCC staff to determine (a) what individual advocacy support PCC provides, and (b) when a request for advocacy support is to be declined or redirected to an external organisation.**

There is no internal policy, procedure, guidance or criteria used by the PCC to determine (a) what individual advocacy support PCC provides, and (b) when a request for advocacy support is to be declined or redirected to an external organisation.

Please note that information relating to questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 8 have been retrieved from the Alemba case management system.

Information relating to question 6 has been retrieved from a staff in post report provided by Business Services Organisation.

Information in relation to question 7 has been retrieved from the PCC Complaints register and shared drive.

\*In relation to your questions 2,3 and 5, the Freedom of Information Act (2000) ('FOIA') states that a public body, such as the PCC, may apply charges in order to provide information to the public. If a public body spends more than £450 on staff time in complying with a request, then charges may be applied; this figure is based on an hourly rate of £25 over 18 hours.

Please refer to sections 12 and 13 of FOIA and sections 3 and 4 of The Freedom of Information and Data Protection (Appropriate Limit and Fees) Regulations 2004 ('The Fees Regulations') for further information.

The PCC has estimated that it would take a minimum of 256.5 working hours to determine what information is held in relation to these aspects of your request. Minus the appropriate limit of £450, the minimum cost to comply with your request would therefore equate to £5962.50.

As such, in line with the above, this serves as a refusal to comply with this aspect of your request on the grounds of cost exemption, as set out with Section 12 of FOIA.

We are unable to continue processing this aspect until the fee is paid. If you wish the PCC to continue to process your request you should pay the fee within 3 months of receipt of this letter. If the PCC does not receive payment of the fee by this date, the request will be considered closed.

I hope that the information provided assists you. If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter, as the PCC, along with all other public authorities are not obliged to accept internal review requests after this period has lapsed.

In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to The Business Services Organisation (BSO), which provides an Information Governance service on our behalf:

Post: Information Governance Manager,  
2 Franklin Street,

Belfast,  
BT2 8DQ

Email: [foi.bso@hscni.net](mailto:foi.bso@hscni.net)

If, following an internal review, carried out by an independent decision-making panel, you remain dissatisfied in any way with the handling of the request, you may make a complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office and ask that they investigate whether the PCC has complied with the terms of the Freedom of Information Act

You can contact Information Commissioner at:

The Information Commissioner's Office – Northern Ireland  
10th Floor  
Causeway Tower  
9 James Street South  
Belfast  
BT2 8DN

Telephone: 0303 123 1114

Email: [ni@ico.org.uk](mailto:ni@ico.org.uk)

In most circumstances the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out. However the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at his discretion.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Fionnuala Murphy'.

Fionnuala Murphy  
Business and Governance Manager  
Patient and Client Council