

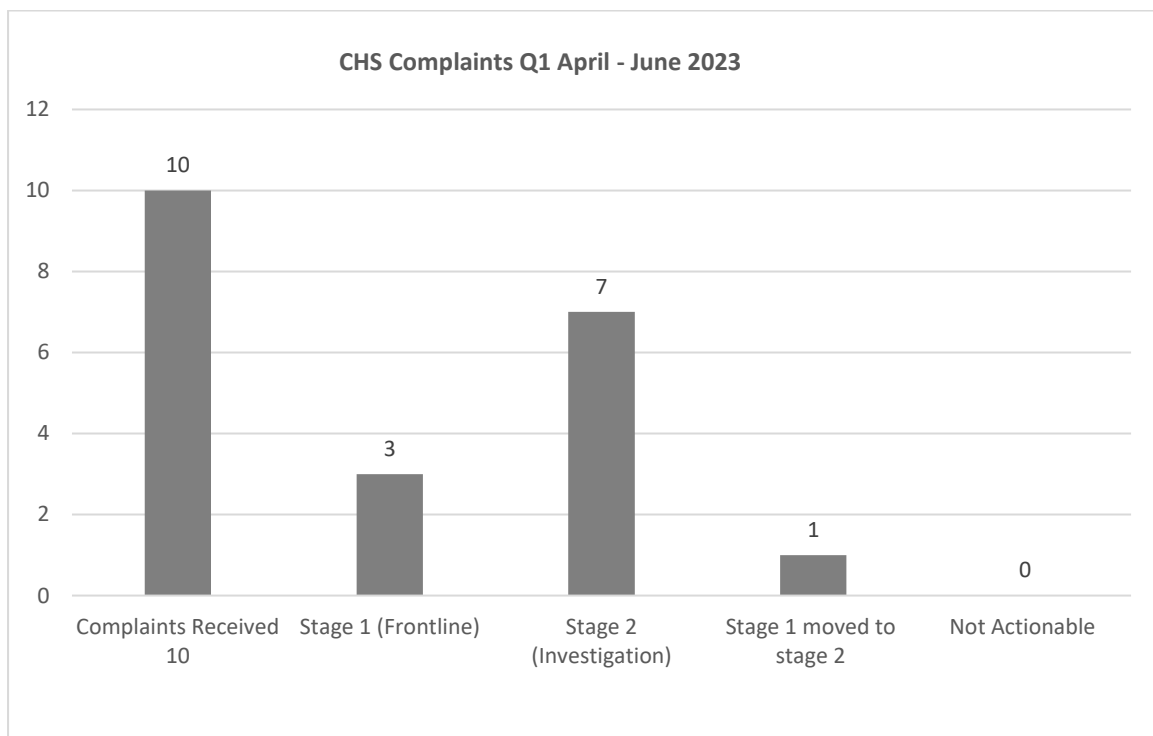
Children's Hearings Scotland (CHS)

Complaints report to 30 June 2023



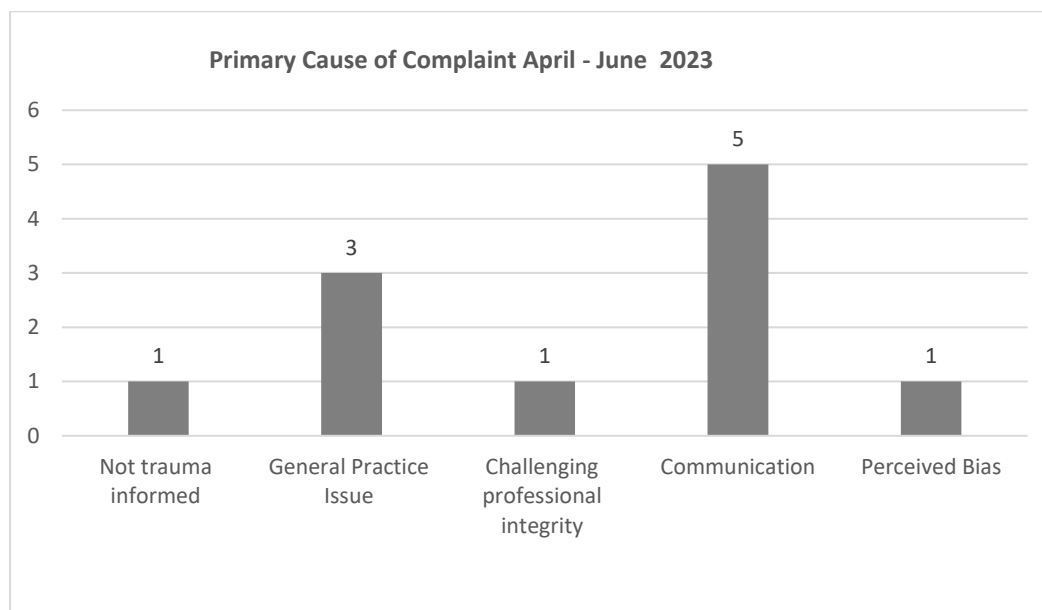
The Children's Panel – life changing.

There were 10 complaints made to CHS during the period to 30 June 2023, this represents a slight reduction from the previous quarter (13) but consistent with the same period last year (10).



Complaint Outcomes

Most complaints during the period (6) were upheld with 1 partially upheld and 3 not upheld.



Lessons learnt and service improvement

The main cause of complaint in this quarter related to the communication style of panel members. Some of this communication should have been more trauma informed and more sensitive to the needs of children. Hearings are legal tribunals and can be complex and cover difficult issues, but we expect panel members to adopt a trauma informed approach in the hearing setting. In response to these complaints we are rolling out trauma informed training across our volunteer community which will help us to improve in this area.

We always discuss the complaint with the individual panel member so that they have an opportunity to reflect on the impact of their words or actions and learn from the experience.

In one case a child was concerned that she had not been permitted to express her view in her hearing. We dealt with the complaint in the normal way but in addition we arranged to meet with her at her residential school and we were able to discuss her concerns directly and listen to her views, along with other children, about how we could make things better.

The Record of Proceedings is a legal document which captures the decision made by the panel and their reasons. This has caused some confusion in this quarter with one complainant expecting that it should reflect the entirety of the discussion which took place during the hearing and panel members using it to record additional material.

We will take this into account in our practice guidance and we have developed and delivered a training session on reasons and decisions.

We also undertook work on analysing the quality of decisions and reasons in hearings in spring 2023 and we continue to build on that with a view to undertaking further work to support our volunteer panel members in delivering high quality reasons to support their decisions later this year.

During this quarter the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman considered a referral to them by a complainant who was dissatisfied with our response to their complaint. After careful consideration they decided there was no reason to open an investigation.