



Community Advice and Support Services

**Plymouth and Cornwall CASS+ 2017
(Community Advice and Support Service)**

Quality Account



Community Advice and Support Services

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General Manager Foreword

The last year has been incredibly busy for us all, but incredibly rewarding, in so many ways. We continue to work with approximately 140 clients each month across area, with over 150 volunteer hours being consistently delivered every week!

Our model of client working from a court setting is still seen as innovative -12 years on! We remain focused on the needs of complex individuals and are still excited and passionate about the resolutions that we can find for these clients. We see positive results all the time and our challenge into the next year will be to express those positive outcomes in a more sophisticated way. Collectively, we have strong ideas on where we need to take the charity. This is informed by what business 'walks through our doors' every day, and when I reflect on our business plan for 2017 I am delighted that we have met current objectives and when setting new objectives for 2018 we are being brave and feeding our dynamic ideals for CASSPLUS.

Our greatest achievement to date, and in this last year, was receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service – the MBE for Voluntary Groups. The comments held within this report reflect the obvious pride that the team has felt as a result. For some of us, this has been quite a journey; for others it has been a much shorter one. But the common thread between us all is how much we protect and nurture the reputation that we have built over the lifetime of the service. Everyone displays an unquestionable loyalty to each other and a genuine interest in helping the charity to build and thrive. The volunteers are the 'window' into CASSPLUS and, alongside the staff teams, represent their localities with professionalism and good humour. They are an incredibly valuable workforce, both for us and those services that they move on to after their volunteering experience with CASSPLUS has ended. We have also been pleased to develop our Board this year and welcomed David as a full Trustee in October.

We have maintained current contracts and built on them by attracting new funds to expand into new court sites next year. We have created new funding streams, increased our opportunities for sustainability and will be reaching more communities. This development is expanding our staff resource, building better organisational infrastructure and bringing in fresh ideas - but alongside this expansion we must not compromise quality!

We have made significant developments with marketing and promotional strategies; developed and launched a new web-site; re-vamped our ICT systems and have a strong sense of next steps into 2018, where we will be enhancing our offer across all areas. A Board member referred to us as now moving on from being a 'family firm' into becoming a 'proper business.'

As we enter our fourth year as a charity, I could not be happier with how we have maintained our integrity alongside our vision for CASSPLUS. In times of austerity, it would be easy to be driven by funding and commissioning and we remain true to our identity and unique setting. I am incredibly proud of the whole team; I know how hard they all work, and they deserve every success into 2018. My genuine thanks go to them all.

Carole General Manager

CASSPLUS Staff

The past twelve months have been incredibly busy, not only with clients but also in terms of what has been happening in the office. We have worked really hard at strengthening our team here in Plymouth, and also trying to diversify, we have definitely felt the benefits of this, it has meant we have been able to start building in other areas. At the start of the year we had a period of time when we had to close on a Friday just to catch up with administration and as we struggled to get volunteers on this day, we are now in a fortunate position whereby we can open on a Friday, and I am able to get out and about much more easily, the benefits of this are endless. I am now more able to source training for the volunteers, network to a greater degree, and work on maintaining standards and providing regular supervisions. I am so proud of how the team has built and developed and how they all “look out for each other” well done and thank you everybody for all of your hard work and support

Liz Plymouth Co ordinator

My experience of CASS+ in the last year has come with highs and lows; the most amazing high was receiving the Queens Award for Voluntary Service and being able to send my Daughter (Volunteer) along with Kirby (my longest standing volunteer) to accept it with the Plymouth team. Also, for myself, for being given the opportunity to attend a Buckingham Palace Garden Party on behalf of CASS+. I will never forget the feeling of pride for what we, as a service and then as a charity, have achieved over the past 12 years; it was such a privilege to be a part of that event.

The lows, as always, are when you lose a member of your team when they are off to pastures new; but it is also a great feeling knowing that the knowledge and experience they have obtained from working with CASS+ will transfer into their new workplace. We know that CASS+ is a stepping stone to employment and are proud of the journey that some of our volunteers have made to achieve their own personal objectives.

An additional low, for me, are the gaps that still exist in service provision. We work hard and spend a lot of time sign-posting people, but they still feel let down by systems that do not fully support their complex needs when they are on their own out there in the community. It is disappointing when a client returns to court, having re-offended because they have ‘hit a brick wall’.

To end on a positive note; I continue to enjoy my additional role as co-ordinator for victims of crime in Cornwall. This stretches my skills into new areas but also very much taps into my skills when co-ordinating offenders and their families through my role at CAPPLUS. I have enjoyed the much closer partnership arrangements that this role brings and am proud of the outcomes that we collectively achieve for very complex individuals.

Debbie Cornwall Co-ordinator

Well what can I say, the last 12 months have been interesting and a great learning experience for me. I have been allocated additional hours per month and have gone from 6 days to 12 days a month. The extra days are a result of successfully being granted Awards for All funding. This has given me the capacity to carry out extra, necessary and essential work for all the CASSPLUS team; staff, our valued volunteers, trustees and external fundraiser, plus a little with our accountants.

Working more closely with Co-ordinators, General Manager and Trustees, has given me a much better and more informed idea of what all our roles are like and the differences between how the Plymouth, Truro, Bodmin and the newly established Newton Abbot, courts operate.

My role has developed from compiling stats and ordering in stationery and leaflets, to working a bit more on budgets and project management, setting up new excel systems for use across the team, using quick books for allocations and reconciling bank accounts. I also have been trusted to confidentially take on creating and paying invoices, making payroll payments, and am now able to more confidently recognise, investigate and correct any anomalies within our six bank accounts so to assist with accurately managing projects. I have personally developed and grown in confidence in many areas.

A role which I have also enjoyed is reviewing and improving our structured staff and volunteer recruitment process; from replying to expressions of interest, receiving applications, to interviews and inductions, whilst also providing continued development support for newly recruited or existing volunteers. The process has worked effectively and has proved to be successful to date. I do not feel afraid to challenge any areas of concern, but I do look to my General Manager for guidance and authorisation; thanks Carole for showing me the way forward 😊.

I absolutely love and enjoy all aspects of my role and feel very humble to be working with such a supportive and amazingly hard-working team; we are all an inspiration to each other. I also want to say we could not do this work without our amazing, supportive and much appreciated volunteers.

People say how they don't want to get out of bed in the morning to go to work, that's not me! I look forward to my working days - I get a real buzz! Working at CASSPLUS is just the boost I need to get up every day. My role is so varied, I can't possibly get bored of it.

I am still completing my AAT Level 4 management accountancy qualification but am confident I will get there by August 2018.

Christine Administrator

Events

Volunteer Engagement Session- Bowling Afternoon- Warner Village

Plymouth staff and volunteers attended an Engagement session at the Bowling Alley, we had an afternoon working on some volunteer feedback so that we can improve things for the future and had a burger meal and a game of bowling. The CASS+



champion was Lauren. This was a fun afternoon and it was lovely to get all the team together. So many of the team work on different days, so it is unusual for us all to get together in this way. A similar event was held for the Cornwall team in Truro.

Queens Award

CASS+ was delighted to be awarded the Queen's Award (MBE for Voluntary Service). We

were happy to even be nominated - so would like to thank everybody who has helped to make CASS+ happen. Thank you especially to all the volunteers that have given their free time to the service, we would not be who we are without you. We would also like to say a big thank you to all partners who responded with their congratulations, we appreciated your kind words.

Reactions to the news of our Queens Award:

'This is amazing news! I am chuffed to bits for CASSPLUS. The award clearly showcases the amazing work that you've done over a considerable time period. You have done the SW VCSE community proud!' – Domestic Abuse agency

'Fine recognition of all your hard work and the difference you make to people; volunteers and clients alike – so well deserved' - Magistrate



Debbie (Cornwall Co-ordinator), Carole (General Manager) and Kirby (Volunteer) at the Palace 1st June 2017.

Members of CASS+ were officially handed the Award at a special investiture ceremony at Plymouth's Council House in October. The official letter stated "The work your group does for the community was very much admired by the independent assessment committee chaired by Sir Martyn Lewis CBE and I am delighted to

inform you that your group has been selected as a recipient of the Queens Award for Voluntary Service 2017". It was an honour to be there and an amazing experience for the volunteers and staff alike. There were many other people from other charities across Devon, too, so this was a brilliant way to raise awareness of CASS+. There were many citations detailing the work CASS+ does with its clients and the amazing difference it makes in the community.



Garden Party

To celebrate our Queens Award we held a local Garden Party. This was held on the 1st July at Blackwater at the home of our very own (ex- Magistrate and now CASS+ Volunteer) Mel Sandall and his lovely wife Ruth. The event was attended by over 100 people including Magistrates, Crown Prosecution Service, Probation, Independent Domestic Violence Advisors, External referral partners, volunteers, their families & all staff. Various and generous donations were received to help make this day a great success and we finished off with a disco in the evening, with dancing round hay bales and candlelight! The children enjoyed games in the afternoon, whilst the adults tucked into Pimm's, Pasties, a Cornish cream tea and a free bar! It was a wonderful way to say a huge thank you to all our volunteers, families and the many providers who we work with. Check out our website for a full account of the day/night.

Pentillie Castle Event



Carole and Liz attended an event at Pentillie Castle, hosted by Sarah Coryton (High Sheriff of Cornwall). This event was well attended and a great opportunity to do some networking. We had a lovely evening and were delighted to be able to experience such beautiful surroundings.

Training events for the Teams

CASS+ teams need to attend a wide range of training to best meet the needs of clients. We need to understand the processes for claiming benefits, for example, and so it would make sense to attend Universal Credit training to keep abreast of change. We attend training to better deal with issues that we see every week, namely bereavement, domestic abuse, drug and alcohol, suicide and bailiffs. We access training for personal development; presentation skills, wellbeing at work. However, we also access training which will build the layers of our understanding in much broader areas, for example, Restorative Justice, Blood-borne viruses, understanding autism - all are relevant to our client group!

Operating across area means that training availability is not always consistent; it does, however, give us options to share any learning internally and to allocate individual training slots to the most appropriate team members. Learning then comes back to the team as a whole and often results in invitations for training providers to attend team meetings. This approach also informs the volunteer team as a whole and most especially those who are limited in their availability to train because of work or study commitments

Training has been accessed because we have listened to what volunteers have asked for (for example, suicide conversations) and we are now thinking creatively about building internal training packages for ourselves so that we can strengthen our own rolling programmes, perhaps moving towards e-learning.

Our ever-changing work environment demands this flexible attitude to learning as we respond to what our clients need - we now also support people attending Tribunals and Family courts in response to cuts in legal aid. There is a close potential interplay between people attending these types of cases and also to be involved in criminal cases.

Some training is also highly transferable into everyone's day to day life! Health and Wellbeing in the workplace is something that we practice and promote at all levels both as a responsible employer and to demonstrate our charitable purpose when working with complex and vulnerable people.

Our organisational ethos is to support and develop people at all levels and so the broad range of training we attend helps us to keep current when working with adults who are experiencing crisis. It provides us with the right tools and if we can get it right, we know we will make a difference!

What's working well and why

Student Social Workers on Placement

CASS+ provides Social Work Students with a unique and enriching insight into working with offenders. This experience enables students to obtain valuable insight into the processes offenders are subject to. Social Work students often have a steep learning curve as they attend several days per week; whereas volunteers generally do one day per week, so they often have more time to settle in and learn 'the ropes'. Social Work students however, have a limited time with CASS+ so they must learn as much as possible about supporting offenders in a short period of time.

I began my stage two social work placement with the team in Cornwall at the end of October 2017. I am really enjoying my placement with the organisation, it provides so much support for people who are experiencing a wide range of issues. I really like that CASS+ can provide continuous support for clients, so many organisations today can only provide immediate support due to a lack in funding or long waiting lists for services. This in my experience really gives clients piece of mind when they are in a crisis because they have somewhere to turn. I find the model that CASS+ uses to work with the support of volunteers and students is really positive and creates a great working atmosphere and a wide range of knowledge and support from all the various experiences of each volunteer. Everyone I have spoken to seems to have a real passion for the work they do and pride in the outcomes they achieve. The feedback and comments from service users are always very positive and the training the organisation provides for new volunteers is very informative and I felt well prepared for my first day with CASS+. It's a real breath of fresh air for me coming into an organisation that is so person-centred, they see the service users as the professionals in their own lives which in my opinion is the best way to practice. I have only been with CASS+ a couple of months but I can already feel myself learning more and becoming acquainted with the court process and the support needs of the people we see. I have been able to experience well managed practice and I am continuously being challenged. It's really nice to know that my experience and knowledge is valued rather than being 'just a student'. I know that when I complete my placement with CASS+ in April 2018 I will have had great experience of supporting individuals and the criminal justice system.

Leighanne BA (Hons) Stage Two Social Work Student

I'm a Stage Two Social Work Student with Plymouth University and have been with CASS+ since October. Working with CASS+ has shown me how important 3rd sector charities are in England, without these charities many individuals would have little or no support due to their financial circumstance, lack of support networks and social status. However, without CASS+ signposting to those services and charities most of our clients would not know where to look in the first place. I hope my interventions

can help people in some way to overcome barriers in their lives, no matter how small or large a change they are able to make, I would be pleased to be a part of them moving forward.

Will BA (Hons) Stage Two Social Work Student

The role that I had at CASS+ was really interesting and varied, I had lots of opportunities to work with different clients from a wide range of backgrounds. Working within the court environment was a real eye-opener for me and helped me to understand much more about the criminal justice system; something that I really did not know a lot about beforehand. I felt that the career opportunities offered at CASS+ were really fantastic. I have had the opportunity to work with different professionals from a range of different organisations, both within and outside of the court environment. I have also gained a wealth of knowledge about the different agencies and resources, that I will be able to draw upon in my future career.

Rebekah MA Social Work Student

The fact that we are a drop-in service, clients like that they can come in when they want to. Networking across Plymouth is good also. All team members are at different levels in the office and have varied skills within my team. I feel that the team draw on each other's strengths, supporting each other where they may find something challenging. The team communicates well so they are all clear about who is doing what and when. Everyone is aware of the risks that some clients present and are excellent at keeping each other safe.

Liz Co-ordinator

I have been volunteering with CASS since June 2016. This experience has brought out my confidence when working with service users and has given me confidence in myself in general. The best part of this volunteering opportunity is that no day is the same, you never know what to expect, which keeps the experience exciting and interesting. CASS staff and volunteers work well together by being fully supportive towards one another through difficult cases. Also, the amount of training that is made available helps to inform and encourage the team to work to the best of their ability.

Vicky Volunteer

The team is very supportive of each other; we communicate very well with each other to ensure that we provide the best service possible to the people we work with while also working together in a safe manner to manage any conflict or crisis situation that may occur.

Our presence and what we do is very well known within the court setting. This makes the referral process into our service timely and efficient.

Regular team meetings enable the team to come together across both sites and share what is working well/not so well, whilst also being kept updated with changes, upcoming training/ networking etc.

We have developed excellent working relationships with Probation, Addaction, AA, CMHT and Court staff. This enables us to work together with the client to help them address their issues, while aiming to achieve the best outcome possible.

CASS+ has also been given the opportunity and funding to extend into Devon next year, Newton Abbott opening in January 2018, with future plans for Exeter later in the year. This is a proud achievement as well.

Debbie Co-ordinator

Overall there is a good feeling of people working together. My main experiences are based on Mondays. A real strength is that everyone's contributions and input are welcome and even young and inexperienced volunteers (like me...inexperienced, not young!) are valued.

Caroline Volunteer

The office has a great mix between being professional and also upbeat and fun, I feel this is important because with the work we do, and the service users we see, it would be very easy to go home thinking about what had happened that day; but the office atmosphere makes this so much more manageable.

Leighanne Social Work Student

My time with CASS+ started in October 2011 when I was on my final year placement of my Social Work degree. I became a volunteer in June 2012 after completing my degree and have seen the service go from strength to strength. We are very supportive of each other; we communicate very well with each other to ensure that we provide the best service possible to the people we work with, whilst also working together in a safe manner to manage any difficult situation we may come across.

Kirby Volunteer

The variety of work load, the friendly team we work within, the support given by all levels within the team and the flexible working.

Chris Admin worker

I am finding CASS + an honour to work for. I think what they do for reducing the risk of re-offending and of increasing the defendant's wellbeing is amazing.

Rachel Volunteer

I love working with Liz and the team, and feel personally valued – which is quite rare in both the voluntary and statutory sectors! I am increasing my knowledge base and learning all the time.

Karen Volunteer

I think team work is at the core of CASS+. Everyone pulls together (not the same as agreeing!) and pulls out the stops to make things work. Team building exercises have helped, not only to bond but also to define where dynamics are not working well. Important to recognise that we are moving from a "family firm" to a charity with increasing scope and influence.

Mary Anne Board Member and Vice Chair

I am very pleased to be a member of the board of trustees for CASS+. I believe the work that CASS+ undertakes is of immense value both to those who use its services and more broadly to society itself. It is self-evident that reducing offending and re-offending is of benefit both in economic terms and in terms of social capital. I am very proud to be able to play a small part in the work of CASS+. As an academic social psychologist with a specialist interest in the criminal justice system, I find it very satisfying to be part of an organisation which puts into practice, and so effectively, the ideas and concepts which are central to the academic study of crime and criminality. I also feel very proud to be able to contribute some of my own expertise to fulfilling the aims and objectives of CASS+ and to encouraging links between the academic community and CASS+.

Tim Board Member

If anyone has a question or doesn't understand what's happening there are plenty of people to ask. I've never worked with a more genuine group of people. Although I haven't been at CASS long (I joined end of October this year as a volunteer) I have already found that working with CASS and the people we interact with has helped me gain a lot of perspective.

Alice Volunteer

I always feel supported in my role and I like that we are able to work together as a team with clients and share our ideas to solve difficult issues that they may bring in. From this I have been able to develop my knowledge and understanding surrounding different agencies/networks and broaden my skill set personally and professionally. Alongside this I also feel that it has enabled me to be independent and use my initiative with confidence.

Megan Volunteer

I started at Cass in May of this year and have enjoyed every minute of it. The volunteers gel well together and all have their own experiences and wisdom to bring to the table. I think the diverse nature of our volunteers matches to the diversity of our clients perfectly.

Clare Volunteer

CASS+ has a great way of bringing all volunteers and colleagues together due to the complexity of clients we see on a day to day basis. It is imperative to work as a team so that each client can get the best possible help with the social issues they face. Everyone within the team shares existing knowledge with each other to help develop those areas of knowledge that some may lack.

Jessica Volunteer

What we do.

There is a wide variety of clients that CASS+ supports, with our main focus on supporting offenders and their families. As a service, we go 'above and beyond' to support people through some of the most difficult points in their lives; we work with people before, during and after their court process. This continuous level of support ensures that clients never feel that there is nowhere to turn for support. Our most common cases generally involve debt and how to manage and resolve it; alongside mental health and accommodation. However, the teams deal with a wide variety of matters, such as immigration, education (children not attending school) and providing clothes for people who have been in custody (it is not unusual for someone to have been arrested inappropriately dressed or having had their clothing taken as evidence). We achieve the best support packages by working alongside other organisations and charities and building a rapport with them.

Our volunteer model gives us flexibility and the ability to spend time with clients to really get a sense of what life is like for them. We are not bound by time slots or appointment systems and people have easy access to us because they can 'drop in'. It is critical for people to have somewhere to turn in a crisis; we try to be an organisation that has knowledge and some stature within the community, whilst at the same time showing that it cares a great deal for the clients it sees. Having someone on the end of the phone and a network of support freely available is not an

insignificant thing! CASS+ teams spend many hours offering advocacy, counselling, signposting, mediation, advice and compassion; but we are also not a soft touch! We will challenge, direct, manage risk and have difficult conversations where they are deemed necessary.

Clients are not mandated to attend CASS+; this is possibly a reason why we have so many clients because it's not something they 'have to' do, it's something they 'want to do' and by taking that first step and asking for help it often opens many opportunities that they need to improve their lives. In an environment full of rules, fear and stern looks we provide a friendly face and support on potential next steps.

What improvements have we made?

From my perspective as Plymouth Coordinator I think that we have strengthened the team this year, we had better cover over the Summer, this was resolved by limiting out of area students. We are getting a better cross section of volunteers coming through now as well, great to have some men on the team, and also people with different backgrounds.

I think being recognised for the Queen's Award has been excellent for morale within the team as this is such a great honour, and wonderful to have all the collective hard work recognised.

We have admin support now from the lovely Christine which makes a world of difference to everybody, so we now have improved recruitment processes in place, among other procedures and working practices.

Liz Co-ordinator

CASS has improved in the last year by firstly, winning the Queens Award for Voluntary Service. This has also led to funding for expansion into Newton Abbott.

Vicky Volunteer

This year has been an amazing year for CASS+; we attended the Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and what an honour it was to be part of such a fantastic experience. We received this nomination as a result of a stringent assessment by the Lord Lieutenants Office and alongside our Queen's Award for Voluntary Service. That is an amazing achievement for a charity that does so much to help and support defendants and their families.

Kirby Volunteer

I think that we have improved volunteer recruitment, put many essential policies and guidelines in place, and we have been able to look more critically to future needs.

Mary Anne Board Member

I feel that CASS+ has become more professional in the past year and is constantly striving to provide a better service. Huge advances in fundraising and recognition.

Peter Associate Trustee

CASSPLUS has grown a huge amount within the last year starting with the recognition achieved via the Queens Voluntary Award. From this, new paid roles are opening within the next year which is a huge improvement for those of us waiting for the opportunity to start a career in the criminal justice system. This allows existing volunteers to have the opportunity to apply and have the potential to move forward with CASSPLUS. This past year there have also been a variety of training opportunities which I believe have helped the service we provide; such as the 'INSIDE OUT' networking days within Dartmoor and Exeter prisons. This has given more insight to prison life and how a prison is run. This will be very valuable when helping clients who have the possibility of custody.

Jessica Volunteer

How could we improve in 2018?

- More office space / training room.
- Data base
- Branching out into other courts
- More paid staff (bank staff and assistant coordinators).
- Improved social networking
- More social events for the team, to include team building day.
- Improved I.T. system (shared calendars etc.)
- More funding to develop some of our ideas.
- More training opportunities.
- Better links with the police

Liz Co-ordinator

CASS can improve in 2018 by continuing to network and also by possibly getting a bigger office in Plymouth.

Vicky Volunteer

I think CASS+ can improve by having more interaction with the bench and talks from outside agencies, I feel this would be good for the volunteers and a way of improving training.

Gary Volunteer

I think for CASS+ to set up new electronic database will help modernise the way staff and volunteers work on client's files.

Will Social Work Student

We are seeing CASS+ expanding and the new service in Newton Abbott is due to open very soon. This is an exciting opportunity for the charity in that we are reaching out to other areas that desperately require this type of service in their local Magistrates court.

It is important that we always strive to be the best that we can be and therefore continue to explore ways of developing further. I feel that CASS+ can improve by:

- Being available on days that we are not currently assigned to due to busier court/s, higher demand from court staff and defence solicitors

- Recording referrals electronically instead of writing everything down. This would be a more efficient and time saving way of accessing client files and referring to when compiling the quarterly CASS+ report
- More chance to network with different agencies/ projects to enable us to learn about the service they provide while also promoting CASS+ and creating stronger partnership working
- Greater recognition of CASS+ Service in Cornwall by doing regular presentations to external agencies.

Kirby Volunteer

In regard to how CASS + could improve next year, I do feel that another room for us to use would be a big improvement because at the moment we can all only use the one office. The office is not big enough for us all to fit in, especially on busy days. We do need more room for us to take phone calls elsewhere for confidentiality purposes.

Rachel Volunteer

By going forward as a strong team. Through networking and getting our name out there. By bringing more diversity into the volunteer team (more male presence, volunteers from other races/cultures).

Karen Volunteer

We need to sort out our information management in the widest sense. We also need to establish a base in Newton Abbot and show that we are an organisation that can deliver, to reassure our funders. We also need another funder on top of Hadley.

Mary Anne Board Member

There are only 2 downsides to CASS+. One being the room in Plymouth. Sometimes this can get too crowded and I feel if we had an extra office, to complete paperwork and phone calls in, this would help a smoother running of the office and a much more pleasant environment for the clients. That said, I understand the complexities of this and feel all volunteers do brilliantly with the space we have. The second being there are no full time paid positions available, which I am sure many of us would scramble to apply for, as it is a very rewarding and fulfilling charity.

Clare Volunteer

Seek increased funding to further expand services. Seek yet more funding and expand to cover the whole of Devon & Cornwall, plan to expand beyond if funding allows. Add to the management team to better support volunteers. Develop web-based training packages and consultancy work (longer term). Develop the new database as a resource and USP. Develop the Board of Trustees.

Peter Associate Trustee

IT could be improved – think there has been some improvement recently. The IT is very important for the organisation so time is not wasted. Also feel volunteer recruitment should be high on the agenda as most volunteers are job hunting.

Mel Volunteer

I think the electronic developments that CASS+ is working hard to implement will work very well once everyone is used to it, I think it will be a lot easier to have one

main system and way of taking notes and updating client files, it will also enable staff and volunteers to be able to clearly see what cases need attention in regard to call backs etc.

Leighanne Social Work Student

What have been our biggest achievements this year?

Improved links with the community; building the team; more confidence in management skills such as interviewing, training, managing difficult situations and grasping the general strategic landscape in the CJS; being part of the team that has received the Queen's Award.

Liz Co-ordinator

I feel I have continued to grow in confidence when working with complex cases and also my knowledge has grown on benefit changes and the services that are available to people in Plymouth.

Vicky Volunteer

Being new to CASS+ I feel my learning curve has been very steep and since the beginning of October my confidence in working with clients on their issues has grown every week.

Will Social Work Student

My greatest accomplishments this year have been attending both the garden party at Buckingham Palace and the Queens Award Ceremony in Plymouth and I feel privileged to have been a part of both of these events. I am very passionate about the service that CASS+ provides and being able to be part of a person's journey is very rewarding.

Kirby Volunteer

I have achieved a lot since working for CASS +. I feel that CASS + has helped me with more hands-on experience within the criminal justice system which has also helped me with my University skills for my masters degree which I am doing in criminology.

Rachel Volunteer

My achievements are learning about a new Charity that does so much good for its local community. I hope to learn more. I find the organisation very friendly and accessible, which benefits those we are trying to help.

Jacki Volunteer

It has increased my self-confidence towards getting back into the workplace after a long period of depression. I have achieved a couple of outcomes for clients which I am very proud of, and have spread the word about CASS+ to all new professionals in the field that I encounter – even at social events!

Karen Volunteer

I've already developed a more positive and rational outlook on life and been able to apply this perspective within my personal life. I have also learnt that even the littlest of things can make a big difference. Just booking someone a doctor's appointment or making a phone call for them can help to improve their day or even their life.

Alice Volunteer

I feel I have achieved a lot during my short time at CASS+. I have not only developed my understanding and knowledge of the Criminal Justice System but the agencies and organisations that surround it. When I first started back in May 2017 I had limited awareness of many of the issues that we are faced with when working with clients, such as, debt, benefits and even much of how the CJ process works. I now understand this much more and have been able to learn this whilst working hands on with the clients.

Megan Volunteer

The added benefit of working with Cass is all the extra courses that are available to you. I have taken advantage of the first aid training, DASH training and the safeguarding training, and look forward to expanding my knowledge in 2018. Not only does this provide a great advantage with my University studies, but also enhances my abilities to help clients, making CASS a much more educated office.

Clare Volunteer

Supervisors have continued to work on skills and procedural developments. Support for the GM. Contribution to Trustees' work. Contribution to introduction of QuickBooks (book keeping) and work towards clinical supervision (stalled at present).

Peter Associate Trustee

I've been with CASS since about June. In that time, it's been thoroughly beneficial in my Recovery as an Alcoholic for 40 years; and now just celebrated 3years abstinence. It's been enormously helpful how its helped turn my life around and in turn I feel I am able to pass my experience on to people who are in the same position I was. Jail institutions, homelessness and benefits - a lot of positions I have been in! The people are great and I know a lot of the clients that come into CASS, so it's very rewarding for me and has helped me to build self-confidence and self-esteem.

Derrick Volunteer

This year I have continued to grow through CASSPLUS both in confidence and in working knowledge surrounding the criminal justice system. I am proud to be a part of a Charity that is recognised through the Queens Voluntary Award and I hold this as a great achievement as a member of the CASSPLUS team. I have also gained more in-depth knowledge and understanding of the role CASSPLUS plays within the SSC (Safer Stronger Consortium) and VCU (Victim Care Unit), helping victims of crime gain the support they need in order to come to terms with the crimes committed against them. Through this I have achieved further IT skills when working with the VCU dashboard and it has also deepened my knowledge of services available when referring clients.

Jessica Volunteer

Since my placement began at the end of October I feel as if I have personally developed a lot, I came into this placement not knowing a huge amount about the criminal justice system. However, with the training working alongside the brilliant team I have come a long way since then. It has taken me a while to feel fully comfortable with supporting clients on my own but I am so happy to say I have now begun to do this and it gives me such a feeling of self-worth as it is so nice to be able to support people, even if that is just a friendly face in the court room.

Leighanne Social Work Student

What do we want to achieve next year?

- Continued excellent reputation of CASS+ at the courts.
- Develop my management skills at all levels to be able to assist Carole more.
- Plymouth is working towards the Quality Mark Award, and the Health & Well Being Charter; I would like to have both of these next year.
- More training in areas that I feel that I need support, (trauma training in particular.)
- Pass my driving test so that I can be more mobile across sites!! **Liz Co-ordinator**

In 2018, I wish to achieve my degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice studies and hopefully apply for a job as a probation officer. **Vicky Volunteer**

I would like to find employment in supporting people with guidance or merchandising.

Gary Volunteer

Through CASS+ I would like to complete as many extra training sessions as possible. **Will Social Work Student**

I am reducing my hours with CASS+ in 2018 to form more of a work life balance. However, I am very passionate about the charity and am very committed to my volunteering role. I will continue to learn and develop further within my role.

Kirby Volunteer

In the upcoming year, I am hoping to provide more for CASS + I have recently enquired about the co-ordinator role at Newton Abbot but unfortunately, I was too late as recruitment was completed. **Rachel Volunteer**

I'd like to get more training under my belt, I feel a lot more confident now approaching conversations with clients, because I have attended training covering that topic. **Chloe Volunteer**

I would like to attend some more training sessions that are available through CASS+ such as alcohol awareness and adult safeguarding.

I would also like to attend some of the organisations that we signpost to, such as, Shekinah 24 and the One Stop Shop, to gain a deeper understanding and awareness of the type of support that's available to our clients. **Megan Volunteer**

With the experience I have gained through CASSPLUS over the past 2 years, I would like to achieve paid employment within the criminal justice industry. I thoroughly enjoy volunteering for both CASSPLUS and the VCU and would hope to still be available to volunteer for them if I were to achieve this. **Jessica Volunteer**

To continue with my placement until May and then volunteer throughout the summer. I will be so upset to leave CASS+ when my 3rd year placement begins in October 2018. I also think it would be particularly valuable to take part in some training around the benefit system. **Leighanne Social Work Student**

Capturing service users feedback

"I don't know why I am telling you this - I just feel comfortable talking to you"

"I know what direction to go in now- thanks for your help today, I feel so much calmer now"

"You guys are legends. You may not be qualified counsellors, but you are so easy to open up to, I have never spoken to anyone about that. Thank you - you actually listened"

CASS+ staff have helped me so much. I came to Bodmin court with masses of debt and no idea about budgeting. The CASS team sat with me and went through it all. I could have never have managed that by myself. Thank you so much for helping me when I thought I was at a point of no return.'

Commendations

I love you guys and don't know what I would do without you with not only my clients but also, I was the beneficiary of some great advice and support from you once a time ago - and I have never forgotten that.

Solicitor

A client has been accompanied to the office by a police officer who had not heard of CASS+. The officer said he was very impressed by the service we provided. He took some leaflets back to Charles Cross.

Police Officer

Networking

CASSPLUS teams make a habit of going out to visit agencies – it is a key part of volunteer inductions and the best way to learn about the client's journey and experiences.

We are continuously networking when making these visits, alongside the wide range of partnership meetings that we attend. CASSPLUS operations touch criminal justice – offenders and victims, health and mental health, housing, complex needs, and so the list goes on. We need to spread our nets widely to build the best working relationships.

This year has seen improved prison networking, something which has been lacking prior to 2017. 'Outside-In' events have been created by partnerships teams and has created an opportunity for us to network more widely with new agencies in Devon.

'Myself and the team attended the Outside-In Networking Day at Dartmoor Prison. This gave the team the opportunity to visit the prison and mix with the prisoners, offering advice and support to them in advance of release. It was a very successful event – with a comment from the Governor that CASS+ was the only Cornish service to attend. There is an Exeter Outside-In planned for December which I hope to attend with my team alongside Plymouth CASS+ colleagues.'

Debbie Cornwall Co-ordinator

The Outside-In event is always a great and informative experience. The CASSPLUS teams are able to gain insight into prison life which is invaluable knowledge to pass onto our clients from courts. The networking at these events allows us to share experiences with other agencies to create working relationships and connections for the benefits of our clients. Not only this, but we are able to build relations with prisoners who may need to use our service once leaving prison. It is always a very enjoyable day and very well run. I especially enjoy the tours of the prisons.'

Jessica Volunteer

How have we involved key stakeholders?

We held our first celebration event in July and approached a variety of local businesses for contributions. It was interesting to be able to engage with businesses who operate well outside of the sphere of courts and to promote our work. A new volunteer was recruited as a result of this and in the coming year CASS+ will be a nominated charity at a local supermarket where we have an opportunity to attract a small donation, depending on votes from the public.

CASSPLUS operates an outward facing approach to engaging with stakeholders and potential partners. It is the best way for us to keep ourselves abreast of political, economic and social changes – all of which directly impact our client group.

Co-ordinators circulate regular reports, with feedback and comments often received from stakeholders after these are distributed. Volunteer team meetings encourage input from all members of the team – our internal stakeholders! Client comments are collected and collated at varying points of contact. We are developing our marketing strategies to make best use of these within the charity and improve our reach into communities. We will be improving our website in the coming year.

There is continuous communication with court-based partners (ushers, probation, cells, etc) to adhere to court protocols and to evaluate our profile and client interface on site. External partners are consulted at partnership events and regular community meetings. We plan an improved newsletter system into 2018.

Strategically, we have been working more closely with HMCTS in recent months due to our expansion programme for 2018. We are also linking more widely across area with OPCC, and through their networks, and actively involved in devolution within the Criminal Justice arena. We are active within SSC (Safer Stronger Consortium) which generates consistent partnerships and collaboration. This structure, in particular, is strengthening our presence and reputation in Cornwall and will support partnerships, expansion and generally a better offer to vulnerable and complex clients across all sectors in the County.

Acknowledgments

The bulk of this Quality Account has been prepared and collated by the team. Their words, in the main, reflects the commitment and contribution that they have all made to working with us this year; from the Board, through staff, students and volunteers - we would not be the service that we are without them and we are incredibly proud of them all, most notably those who have since left us to take up positions of employment. Many thanks for the continued support as we continue our journey into 2018.

We must also acknowledge the continued support from our core funders, without whom there would be no service.

The team this year has consisted of;

Carole Edwards, Debbie Mullis, Liz Hand, Kim Goffin, Peter Edwards, Peter Hosegood, Mary Anne McFarlane, Pat Walker, Mike Thomas, Tim Auburn, Christine Nicholls, David Stevens, Georgie Rolls, Lauren Hawkins, Vicky Leggett, Rebekah Turner, Will Pike, Karen Bond, Bethany Reynolds, Caroline Adams, Gary Peters, Hannah French, Clare Addy, Rachel O’Nyons, Chloe Mooney, Megan McCormick, Derick Lawson, Melissa Wilce, Alice Hobbs, Sarah Westgate, Gloria Davenport, Jayne Zito, Leigh Rickard, Kirby Baldwin, Jessica Snell, Jessica Mullis, Penny Wilson, Mel Sandell, Rebekah Adamson, Jakki Lavender, Naomi Waters.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Leigh Rickard, Hannah French, Jayne Zito, Becca Turner and Jessica Mullis for their roles in CASS+ this year; you have been an asset within your varying roles and we wish you the best of luck with your continuing education and/or careers.

And finally, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous achievements of those clients we have worked with in 2017. There are some special people who have turned their lives around in this period – it has been a privilege to work with you!

Carole General Manager