

CASS Handbook



This handbook is a working tool and point of reference for the CASSPLUS team. CASSPLUS continuously develops because of suggestions and input from everyone involved. Please feel free to contribute or raise suggestions to keep this information up to date and relevant.

Contents

Page

Welcome to CASSPLUS	3
Training	5
Supervision	6
Volunteer Role Description	6
Due Diligence	8
Record keeping	8
Volunteer Working Agreement	9
Equality and Diversity	9
Referral and Follow up forms	9
Housekeeping	9
Safe Working Practices	11
The Criminal Justice System	12
Magistrates' Courts – A Brief Introduction	12
Who's who in a Magistrates' Court?	14
Glossary of Terms	15
The Problem-Solving Model	17

- Appendix 1 Case Studies
- Appendix 2 Volunteer Working Agreement
- Appendix 3 Referral forms
- Appendix 4 Follow up forms
- Appendix 5 Action Sheets

Welcome to CASSPLUS.

Who is CASSPLUS?

The CASS+ desk is located within the court building and is staffed by staff and local volunteers who help to sign-post people involved with the Justice system to community resources. The service is targeted primarily at, but is not exclusive to, defendants whose offence is not serious enough to warrant a community order. Advice is given in a reasonably confidential setting, separated from the waiting area.

CASS+ provides advice and support in the courts to aid resettlement and reintegration with the aim of reducing offending. CASS+ works in partnership with local criminal justice agencies and communities. CASS+ also ensures that families and partners of prisoners are assisted at the point of sentence so they understand more about the court and prison systems and are better able to keep in touch.

The Plymouth, Truro and Bodmin Community Advice and Support Services (CASS+) were introduced to provide assistance to low-risk and repeat offenders and their families and close associates. The purpose of the service is to reduce re-offending by increasing access to whatever community services are most appropriate to each offender.

Plymouth was selected as one of the trial locations for a Community Court pilot. It is recognized that CASS has been integral to the successful operation of Community Justice Courts in this area. The service has worked closely in partnership with designated Police and Probation Officers as part of the problem-solving team. It is currently the sole provider of pre-sentence Problem Solving and a leading authority on post-sentence Problem Solving models nationally.

The functions of CASSPLUS are:

- making effective contact with potential clients;
- triaging support needs and providing initial advice on how to proceed;
- identifying relevant services;
- signposting and referring clients to these services;
- acting as a mentor or advocate where appropriate;
- monitoring client progress and providing follow-up support where needed;
- recruitment, training, and management of volunteers;
- development of links with agencies;
- reviewing, evaluating, and further developing the service in partnership with others.

Mission and Values of CASSPLUS

CASS+ has developed expertise in assisting clients to work out what problems are most troubling them and in providing effective referrals to support services to address these problems - whatever they are. We do not 'diagnose' or 'prescribe'. We work with individuals to work out what is going to be most effective in sorting out the difficulties they are experiencing. Our motto is '*access to answers*'.

CASS+ has five paid staff, who recruit, train and supervise a team of approximately 15-20 volunteers. Our volunteers give their own time freely to help us perform our work and, over the

years, have helped to shape the service and provided assistance to thousands of individuals and their families.

The Service focuses primarily but not exclusively on offenders and their families. County Courts and Tribunals are now co-located at Magistrates' Courts and we provide support for people attending these non-criminal hearings.

We consider ourselves to be experts in providing a new kind of service. We assist our clients to work out what problems they have most difficulty with. We listen, understand, advise and support without judgement. We work with our clients to ensure access to the services needed - whatever these might be - and we follow up as needed, so we keep on supporting our clients in improving their lives. Our aim is to help our clients to be able to help themselves.

CASSPLUS Background

CASS was introduced as an independent service at the Bodmin Magistrates' Court in 2005. This was followed in 2006 by the opening of a CASS desk at Plymouth Magistrates' Court. In 2012 the service extended to the Truro Magistrates' Court.

Although we are based in Magistrates' Courts (and Tribunals), we can support people in Crown and County Courts too, if requested.

Originally conceived by Mary Anne McFarlane and supported strongly by the Probation Service, Magistrates' Courts Committee (now HMCTS) and Devon & Cornwall Police Service, CASS continues to work in partnership with these organisations and others. CASS depends on building strong relationships with organisations that provide support services in order to be able to refer clients for assistance.

CASS was sponsored in the first instance by the Prison Advice and Care Trust, our more recent sponsor was Rethink Mental Illness. We are grateful to both of these organisations for their past support. From April 2015, CASS was re-launched as a completely new, independent Charity - CASS+. We continue to operate much as before but with exciting potential to extend our work to other sites and with more freedom to innovate.

Currently we are working with the University of Plymouth, the New Economics Foundation and the Centre for Justice Innovation to measure and further develop the effectiveness of our services.

Why volunteer with us?

From supporting people who offend, their families and victims, to increasing your skill set there are many reasons to volunteer for CASS+. Here are just a few:

Take active steps to make a difference in your community. CASS+ has a strong record of accomplishment of offering holistic support to people who offend, their families and their victims

Boost your confidence by learning new skills. We provide full training and support as required in a range of different skills such as: offering effective support and advice to clients, engagement and liaison with multi agencies, as well as expanding your knowledge of how criminal justice agencies work across Devon and Cornwall

Improve your employability and gain experience through working directly with criminal justice and health and social care providers across Devon and Cornwall. We have a range of different roles so there will be something to suit your interests and which may appeal to prospective

employers/universities in your chosen field.

Meeting new people, being part of a friendly team and having fun. We feel that volunteering is different from 'employment'. Although sometimes the roles can be challenging we want our volunteers to enjoy their work and allow it to boost their confidence and happiness.

Do something interesting with your spare time. CASS+ is here primarily to improve the experience of people who offend coming to magistrate court. By helping us you will be giving something back to your community, helping people who may otherwise not be helped and seeing and making a noticeable difference to people's lives.

What can CASSPLUS do for you?

We aim to support our volunteers in many ways, such as:

Provide a complete induction training package for all volunteers which includes training on the current Criminal Justice landscape. On completion of any training, certificates will be provided to enable individuals to build up a portfolio of evidence, if they so wish. Additional training packages relevant to each individual volunteer role which include Safeguarding, ASIST, DASH, Dementia Training, Drug and Alcohol, Mental Health.

Re-imbusement for all reasonable travel expenses incurred as a result of volunteering for CASS+. Ref: Volunteer Expenses Policy

Regular support either from our Coordinator and peer support. We have a team of volunteers and staff who have experience in many different areas and can provide support when needed.

Training

Training is delivered in-house by CASS+ staff, occasionally assisted by experienced team members. It takes place over two days and provides an introduction to the Criminal Justice System and some of the background and reasons why people offend. The training will also help to familiarise the volunteers with some of the skills needed to work effectively with offenders, victims, and family of offenders.

Some of the areas covered are;

- Discussion of who the public are within CASS+, the service users at the court e.g. defendants with a court appearance, defendants' families, and friends, public etc.
- Talk about the variety of issues that may be raised – look at the offender pathway.
- Difficulties that may arise – remaining open minded, assessing level of contact required, being sensitive to others, assessing body language/stress of those you are working with.
- Discussion of magistrates' court, staff involved and what their role is
- Our role at CASS+ & how we 'fit' with statutory partners.
- Housekeeping issues
- Discuss referrals to other agencies and forms used in CASS+.
- Importance of effective communication.
- Forms of aggression and how to handle these using policies in place.
- Common issues and questions raised in court.

Once a good foundation of training has been completed, the volunteer will then start to shadow within the CASS+ office, whilst a DBS check is processed, and will continue to do so until they are competent to fulfill the volunteer role.

Supervision

Volunteers will be offered supervision, on a regular basis e.g. to discuss difficult clients; stressful situations (personal or work related); supervision issues.

Always remember that supervision is a confidential arena between two parties, the supervisor and supervisee. The co-ordinator is responsible for supervision; however, these may be delegated to other members of staff to provide a line of communication between the co-ordinator and volunteers (at all sites).

Volunteers should also disclose any “personal risk” details in supervision e.g. history of DV, MH, any disabilities. Volunteers will be given copies of supervision.

CASSPLUS Volunteer Support Worker

Main duties and responsibilities

- The Support Worker provides free, impartial, and confidential signposting to clients on a wide range of issues, such as housing, family, alcohol/drugs, health/mental health, employment, education & training, benefits, and debts. CASS+ covers all offender pathways and is about offering sign-posting and advice on all relevant issues presented by this cohort. The volunteer support worker is expected to commit to at least 7 hrs. a week.

The work is varied, but typically falls into these categories:

- Information;
- Advice;
- Support
- Referral;
- Administration;
- Networking

Main activities

- Operate under the guidance and supervision of a CASS+ staff member.
- Ensure impartiality and confidentiality when dealing with clients.
- Maintain confidential case records and administrative systems.
- Provide information to clients, and internal/external agencies in person, on the phone and by email.
- Refer clients to other sources of help, for example solicitors, social workers, or other internal/external departments.
- Liaise with other internal departments and external organizations.
- Treat all clients’ information in strict confidence and only to be used for the purpose for which it was given (in line with CASS+ Confidentiality Policy.)
- Use effective communication skills, both written and oral.
- Prioritise own work, meet deadlines and manage workload in a pressured environment.

- Use IT in the provision of advice and the preparation of paperwork.
- Give and receive feedback objectively and sensitively and have a willingness to challenge constructively.
- Be able and willing to work as part of a multi-disciplinary team.
- Understand the issues affecting society and their implications for Clients and service provision.
- Complete client's paperwork accurately.
- Participate in training and development activities as necessary to ensure up to date knowledge and skills.
- Work as part of a team and attend team meetings (if possible).
- Interview clients, both face-to-face and on the telephone, and use a range of skills, to gain a full understanding of the Clients situation and key issues to help set priorities.
- With the assistance of a CASS+ staff and volunteer colleagues, identify appropriate options for clients.
- Act, where necessary, on behalf of the clients, to make telephone calls, negotiating with 3rd parties, drafting or writing letters or making appropriate referrals to other organizations.
- Agree action plans and/or follow up of any CASS+ actions.
- Familiarise and adhere to CASS+' aims and objectives, policies and procedures.
- Complete networking activities, if time allows, to gain better understanding and awareness of community resources.
- Conduct visits to cells, when requested.

For Case studies see [Appendix 1](#)

Skills and requirements:

- Good written English;
- Reliability;
- Able to understand and empathize with the needs of the clients;
- A commitment to the aims and principles of the CASS+ desk service;
- Excellent communication skills; ability to communicate clearly both verbally and in writing.
- Being open and approachable;
- Ability to sift through complex information and extract what is relevant
- Respect for views, values and cultures that are different to their own;
- An understanding of why confidentiality is important; able to treat all information relating to the clients confidentially;
- Ability to use computers on a regular basis;
- A positive attitude to self-development and assessment;
- Ability to recognize their own limits and boundaries in the role;
- An understanding of treating individuals equally and fairly;
- Punctuality;
- Willingness to undertake training.

DBS

All volunteers will be required to undertake a DBS check. This DBS check will enable volunteers to lone work with clients.

If the volunteer is a student with Plymouth University they will be required to present their DBS certificate at interview. The coordinator will record the DBS certificate number.

The Volunteer Support Worker will:

- Embrace good teamwork and lines of communication between all members of team.
- Abide by health and safety guidelines and share responsibility for own safety and that of colleagues.
- Attend regular supervision sessions with Co-coordinator; or request supervisions when identified as necessary
- To uphold and promote the aims, principles, and membership requirements of the CASS+ desk service and to ensure that all tasks are carried out within the service's Equal Opportunities Policies.
- Carry out any other tasks which may be within the scope of the post to ensure the effective delivery and development of the CASS+ Desk service.
- Ensure that the Co-coordinator is aware of volunteer availability. Volunteers are encouraged to put themselves onto the Rota to establish team availability on days that the service is operational.
- If, for any reason, volunteers need to change their day, or are unavailable, the Co-coordinator expects to be notified to ensure good cover on the day.

Due Diligence

Policies and Procedures

During your time at CASSPLUS, you will be asked to read a number of policies that relate to good working practice and give guidelines to different topics. The main policies that you should know and understand as a volunteer are as follows:

1. Volunteer Policy
2. Confidentiality Policy
3. Volunteer Expenses Policy
4. Code of Professional Conduct
5. Vulnerable Adult and Children Safeguarding Policy
6. Security protocol
7. Incident policy and incident form
8. Remote and lone working and driving policy

Record keeping

Attendance sheet

Volunteers will be required to sign an attendance sheet to ensure attendance is monitored. This enables CASSPLUS to gain a data base of volunteer hours used to support the service and identify gaps in provision.

Training

All training certificates will be photocopied and stored in each volunteer file

Next of kin

Each volunteer will be required to complete a next of kin form in case of emergencies at work

Volunteer Working Agreement

Each volunteer will be expected to sign a Volunteer Agreement. This is a description of the arrangement between CASSPLUS and each volunteer in relation to your voluntary work. The intention is in part to express appreciation of your working with us, and also to indicate our commitment to making your volunteering experience a positive one. This agreement is not intended as a legally binding contract between us. [See Appendix 2](#)

Equality and Diversity

CASSPLUS will ask each volunteer to complete an equality and diversity form as part of their recruitment. This form will be used for monitoring purposes. It is not compulsory to complete this form

Referral and follow up Forms

Client work is supported clear and concise record keeping. Each client will have the following forms attached to any work undertaken by a coordinator or volunteer. The coordinator will ensure that each volunteer is trained to complete the forms.

- [Referral Form. Appendix 3](#)
- [Follow up form. Appendix 4](#)
- [Action sheet. Appendix 5](#)

Housekeeping

- All sites have security teams and CCTV on site.
- Place all personal belongings in to filing cabinets, or in a safe place. It is your responsibility to safeguard personal belongings, e.g. mobile phones, handbags and wallets.
- A First Aider can be found at Reception opposite the main doors. There are also designated First Aiders within the team – speak to the coordinator for more information.
- Security in the office - hand-held security alarms are held at reception and should be collected with the office key in the morning. This can be used to raise the alarm with security when necessary (both in reception and at the security arch). This alarm is tested weekly by security staff. Hand-held devices are to be returned with the key at the end of the day.
- For discreet 'raising the alarm' when a client is in the office, team members should ask for the 'pink file'. This is an automatic indication that help is needed.
- When working with clients in the offices or in interview rooms it is good working practice, wherever possible, to operate with staff/volunteers located nearer to the doors (escape root) than the client. Always take hand-held alarms into interview rooms when working with clients.

Please find below some key information on the day to day running of the CASS+ offices.

Plymouth

- Collect the key from the Reception desk at the entrance; leave the key here at the close of business – the office key should never leave the building. Open the blinds (angled downwards so the Security Team can see what's going on)
- Open filing cabinets and read Team Book and Diary for updates and work to be done that day. Also, check the Court date folder for any cases due that day.
- Set up the computer. This screen should be facing away from the clients. Passwords are changed periodically.
- Awareness of security within and around the office. Personal belongings should be locked away where possible or put behind the desk. The office should be locked if staff leave it unattended.
- A clear desk policy is adhered to i.e. files and confidential material should be placed faced down when not in use.
- Dress code is smart. No jeans, hoodies, trainers, or flip flops should be worn.
- When in court, CASSPLUS staff should bow to the crest on entering and leaving. Other court staff afford the Crown the same respect. There should be no talking in court unless discussing details pertinent to a client or court case and should be done in a low whisper. There is no eating or drinking whilst in court. If other agencies i.e. AA or DAA do not adhere to these rules, please ask them to stop or speak to the Service Lead or a bank worker if you are unhappy about doing this yourself.
- The CCTV cameras are trained on the office and other internal court areas and are monitored by the Security Staff. The likelihood of a hostile situation is very rare and most anger is aimed at the court staff, not volunteers as we are helping the offender (a personal alarm can be found in the top drawer of the desk should it be needed).
- Should the Fire Alarm sound, and then you should leave the court via the nearest fire exit. The nearest one may be locked due to the nature of the court setting but will be immediately unlocked by security if there is a fire or evacuation alert. The main doors are also fire exits. In the event of evacuation, the CASSPLUS team should not re-enter the building unless instructed to do so by court staff.
- Confidentiality and boundary issues should be referred to the coordinator if necessary.
- When sharing information with other agencies, please always check for signed consent to share information, refer to the confidentiality policy and discuss all issues and concerns with the coordinator.
- Child protection issues must be passed at the earliest opportunity to the coordinator. We aren't the experts and this will be passed to the people that are. Ref to Vulnerable Adult and Children Safeguarding Policy.
- If the Coordinator is out of office, unavailable or on holiday volunteers can liaise with the line manager for advice and support. In this instance volunteers will be expected to follow Safeguarding Policy guidelines and make referrals if necessary. Safeguarding training is paramount to ensure volunteers are confident to make safeguarding referrals.
- Security in cells – GeoAmey is the agency responsible for the cells area. Visits to cells will only be permitted if staff/volunteers have Rethink photo I.D. on them.
- CASSPLUS policy is to visit, wherever possible, in pairs. Security alarms should be taken in on visits (and tested before entering cells). Coordinator should brief volunteers and GeoAmey regarding cells visits. Volunteers should be allowed the option of whether they visit cells or not.

- Team Book/Diary – These are tools for volunteers to use to communicate between each other and to co-ordinate the best approach to Service User support. These should be referred to every time a volunteer attends CASSPLUS and should be initialed to evidence that they've been read.
- If CASSPLUS identifies some use to a defendant within the courtroom (and subsequently follows them from the courtroom to offer assistance), ensure that solicitors or probation are given priority time with their client before making an approach.

Safe Working Practice

Volunteers that work for CASSPLUS come from a wide variety of backgrounds and each Volunteer brings a unique range of skills, life experiences and interests to the role. Each offender is also an individual so therefore has his or her own unique characteristics.

- It is not possible, or desirable, to try to teach volunteers how to act situations. Each situation will be different depending on the people that are involved. However, it is important that volunteers must work to common guidelines to reduce risk or misunderstanding when carrying out voluntary work.

The following points, which are guidelines only, should be read in conjunction with

- Security protocol
- Incident policy and incident form
- Remote and lone working and driving policy
- CASSPLUS' Code of Conduct

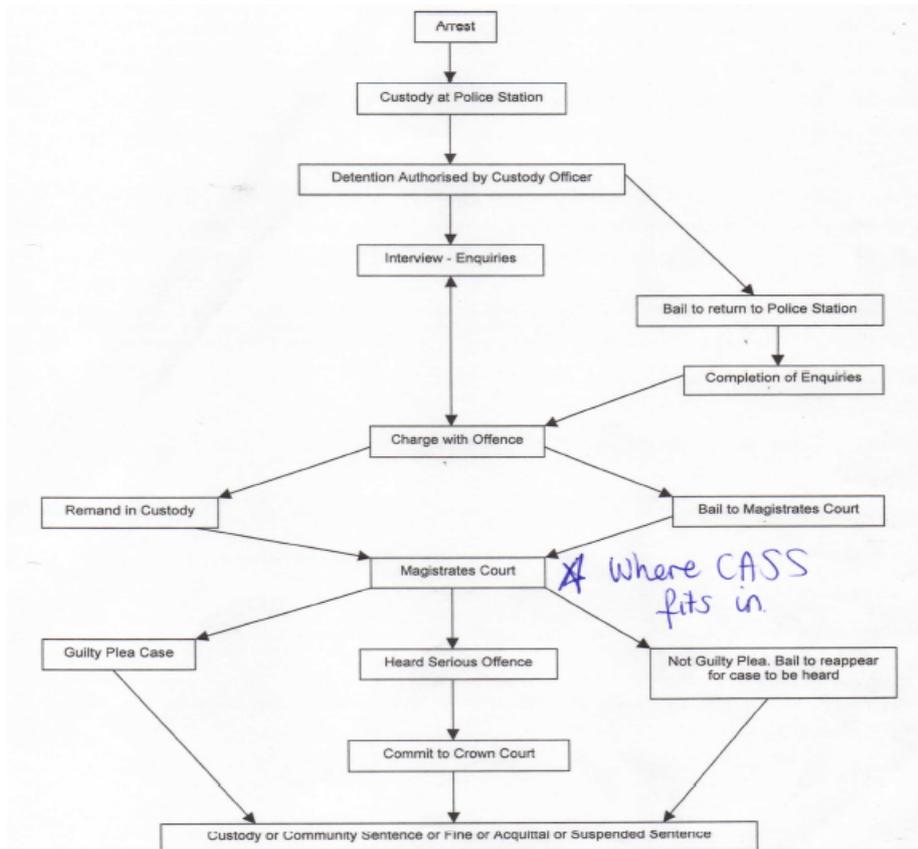
Personal Information/Communication Issues

- Do not give out your home address or phone number to offenders you are working with (use CASSPLUS landline or mobile phone).
- Do use the CASSPLUS addresses when corresponding by letter to offenders you are working with.
- Do not divulge information regarding your work to non-accredited persons.

Risk Issues

- Any verbal or physical abuse (which is unlikely) must be reported to the coordinator as soon as possible.
- Health and Safety issues must be reported to coordinators and subsequently the General Manager who is responsible for collating details on the shared site.
- Team Meetings – Health and Safety always on the agenda, also the opportunity for the team to raise and discuss Health and Safety/risk issues for shared learning.
- Any clients identified as 'risky' (for any reason) will be marked as such on client referral forms (red dot procedure).
- Discuss (with coordinator) if client is known to a volunteer or if the issues raised will be distressing to a volunteer.
- Teams to identify risk management/conflict resolution training (on going).
- Adhere to 'security in cells' and lone working procedures.
- Any incidents of risk must be registered on an incident form.

The Criminal Justice system



Pre-sentence Problem Solving (Plymouth)

- CASSPLUS attends weekly CJSSS courts, also known as the specialist Community Courts, in Plymouth. Defendants may be referred for interview during the sentencing process and before sentence is passed.
- We collate the relevant information and sometimes share it with other agencies, e.g. probation, to offer them the first option for 'feedback to magistrates'.
- If we have conducted a 'CASSPLUS only' interview, be sure to tell the court this so they are aware.
- If CASSPLUS is talking in court, we report the facts and our activities/suggestions – NEVER SENTENCING OPTIONS OR OPINIONS.
- Please ensure that PS paperwork is also kept in the CASSPLUS office and with the client file, as this is usually the start of further interventions and longer-term support.

Magistrates' Courts – A Brief Introduction

Magistrates sit in courts in their local area and come from all sorts of backgrounds and can be any age ranging from 18 to 70. Magistrates' courts do not use juries; they usually consist of a bench of three magistrates (including a chairman) or it could be a district judge. Magistrates are volunteers that do not have any legal qualifications. They are trained for their role and can seek information from the court's legal adviser. Alternatively, a district judge would be legally trained and normally deals with more complex cases.

A Magistrates' court can hear a variety of different cases, ranging from dealing with criminal cases, referring cases to Crown Court or dealing with civil and family disputes.

If someone is charged with a crime and the case goes to court, it will first go to a Magistrates' court. Criminal cases can range from petty crime such as minor assaults or motoring offences to cases involving theft and handling stolen goods. They will listen to the evidence; decide if a person is guilty and if so, they will decide on a punishment.

This could be anything from a fine or unpaid work in the community to prison for up to six months (or up to 12 months for more than one crime). If the magistrates feel a heavier sentence is needed, they can send the case to the Crown Court where a judge could send someone to prison for a much longer period. The more serious cases that come through to the Magistrates will always get sent to Crown Court.

When a defendant first appears before a magistrates' court, they will do so in one of three circumstances. They will either appear on bail, in response to a summons or in custody, having been refused bail by the police. If the defendant is on bail, s/he must first surrender to the custody of the court, which generally means stepping inside the dock of the court, which is usually locked until the hearing is concluded.

Whichever the circumstance, the first requirement is for the defendant to identify him/herself to the Court after which, it must consider the charges. If the charge(s) is a summary offence (a minor offence, dealt with by magistrates), the Court will generally expect a plea to be taken. If the plea is one of "not guilty", the Court will fix a date for trial, considering the number and availability of the witnesses.

If the charge is an either way offence (a more serious offence that magistrates' can deal with or can be seen at Crown Court), the "plea before venue" procedure is carried out. In this procedure, the defendant must indicate what his/her plea to the charge would be. If the defendant indicates a plea of "not guilty", or declines to indicate a plea, the Court hears an outline of the facts from the prosecution and representations from the defendant or his representative, and then determines whether the case is suitable for summary trial or not. The Court will decline to see the case if it decides that the sentencing powers of the magistrates' court are inadequate to deal with the case.

In such cases, the case will be adjourned for the prosecution to prepare the case for committal to the Crown Court. If the Magistrates' Court accepts the case, the defendant is still entitled to elect to have his/her case tried at the Crown Court in front of a jury.

For more information, please see:

http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/CrimeJusticeAndTheLaw/Goingtocourt/DG_196034

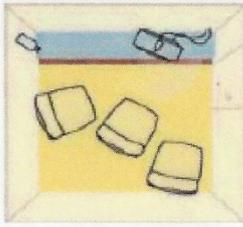
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magistrates%27_Court_\(England_and_Wales\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magistrates%27_Court_(England_and_Wales))





HM Courts & Tribunals Service

Who's who in a magistrates' court?



THE WITNESS
The witness answers questions from a place in the courtroom called the witness box. A young witness usually gives evidence from another room in the court building (shown right) using a TV link – somebody working in the court will usually sit with you. Your supporter may be able to sit with you, however, this will be up to the magistrates.

THE PROSECUTOR

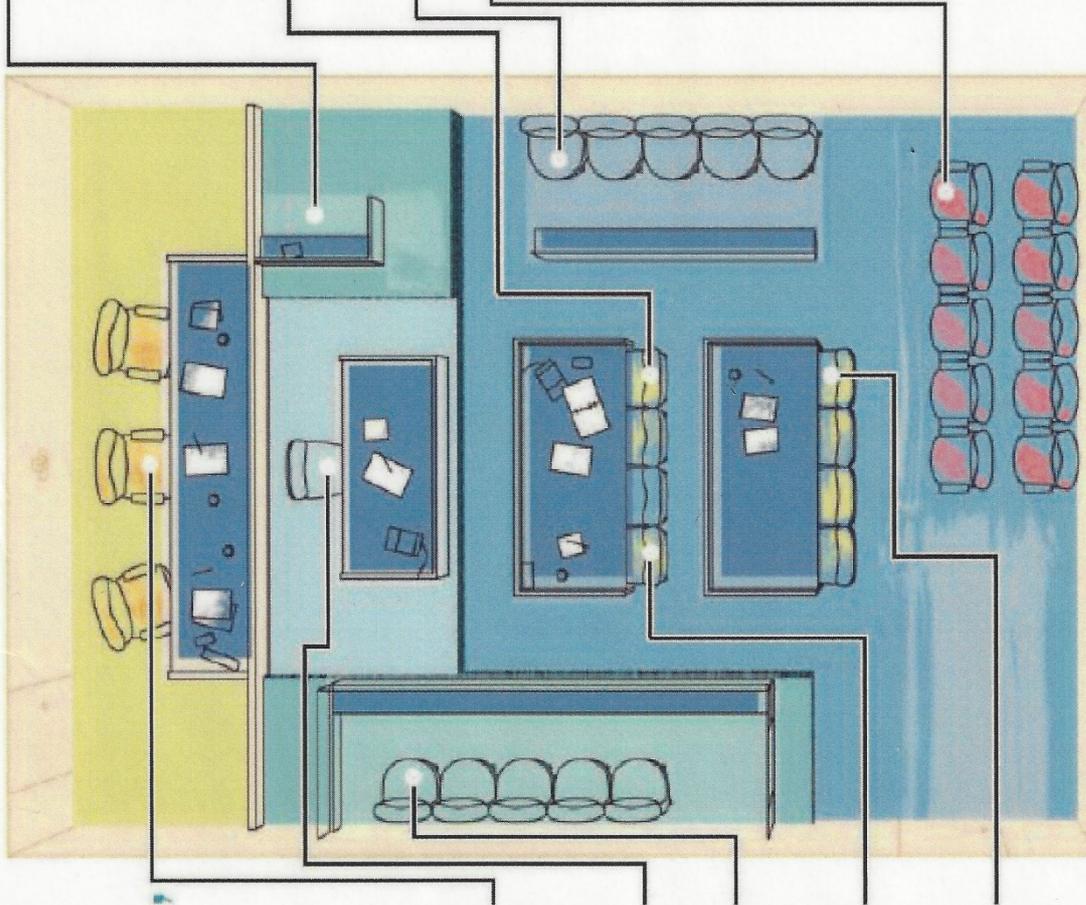
The prosecutor is a lawyer who tries to show the defendant has broken the law. He or she does this by presenting evidence and asking the witnesses questions about what they saw or heard, or what happened to them.

THE WITNESS' SUPPORTER

A supporter may be able to sit with a young witness while they are giving evidence.

THE PUBLIC

A magistrates' court is open to the public. They can sit quietly and listen at the back of the court.



THE MAGISTRATES

The magistrates are in charge of the courtroom. There are usually three magistrates, but there may be two or just one District Judge. They don't wear wigs or gowns like judges in the Crown Court. The magistrates decide if the defendant broke the law and how they are dealt with.

THE LEGAL ADVISER

The legal adviser advises the magistrates on the law and helps to manage proceedings in court.

THE DEFENDANT

The defendant is the person who has been accused of breaking the law. The defendant usually sits in the dock and is not allowed to speak to you, unless they are representing themselves. Sometimes a uniformed officer sits next to them.

THE DEFENCE LAWYER/SOLICITOR

It is the defence lawyer's job to help the defendant. This lawyer also asks the witnesses questions and acts in the defendant's interests. Sometimes a defendant will represent themselves but this is very rare.

THE USHER

The usher sometimes wears a black gown and will take you into the courtroom. While you are waiting, you can ask the usher for help if you need anything. If you leave the waiting area, you must let the usher know.

YOUTH COURT – THE DIFFERENCES

A youth court is a magistrates' court, which deals with people under the age of 18 who have been accused of breaking the law. The main differences are that in a youth court:

- the magistrates sit at a tablet;
- the defendant sits in front of the magistrates;
- a dock is not usually used;
- only people involved in the case are allowed in
- members of the public are not allowed in

In a youth court, young witnesses usually give evidence from behind a screen or by using a TV link. Otherwise, young witnesses may stand in the witness box or sit in a chair. Because this court is private, tell the usher if your supporter wants to come into the courtroom with you. The usher will ask the magistrates for permission

In addition to this, in a Community Court, you may see a few other faces.

Neighbourhood Police Officers – attend the court to give evidence, participate in problem solving meetings, observe proceedings, and accept arrest warrants for defendants who fail to attend court.

Probation Officer – advises the court of issues which may help with sentencing. Carries out problem solving meetings and helps the defendant to address any issues that might lead to reoffending.

Community Advice and Support Service representative – part of the problem-solving team and acts to signpost the offender to local support services. Helps the offender resolve situations which may lead to reoffending.



Glossary of Terms

Please find below a list of terms that you will frequently see abbreviated in conversation and on paperwork whilst in court.

AA – Alcoholics Anonymous
BME – Black and Ethnic Minority
CAB – Citizens Advice Bureau
CASS – Community Advice and Support Service
CLIENTS – Service User
CPS – Crown Prosecution Service
DBS – Disclosure and Barring Service
DAA – Drug Addicts Anonymous
DAAT – Drugs and Alcohol Team
DIP – Drug Intervention Programme
DLA – Disability Living Allowance
DRR – Drug Rehabilitation Requirement
DV – Domestic Violence/Abuse
ESA – Employment and Support Allowance
FDR – Fast Delivery Report
HMPS – Her Majesty's Prison Service
IOM – Integrated Offender Management
JSA – Job Seekers Allowance
MAPPA – Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements

NA- Narcotics Anonymous
MH – Mental Health
OM – Offender Manager
PIP – Personal Independence Payment
PPO – Prolific and Priority Offenders
PSR – Pre-Sentence Report
PTR – Pre-trial Review
ROB – Remanded on Bail
ROCB – Remanded on Conditional Bail

The Problem-Solving Model

There has been a recent drive towards extending the use of problem-solving approaches in magistrates' courts in England and Wales. Magistrates and their surrounding communities are aware that they frequently see the same offenders appearing in court again and again. It has been agreed that more needs to be done to help offenders tackle their underlying problems, to reduce the same patterns of offending and minimize further offences in the community.

The first thing that must be done is to identify the problems typically leading low-level offenders to commit crime – for example addiction, unemployment, or debt – and assist them to access help to address these problems. The problem-solving approach enables the court to help offenders focus on their problems, change their behaviour, stop offending against the community, and rejoin the law-abiding majority. Once it has been ascertained whether there are underlying issues to be addressed, the Magistrates' can then direct the offender to services, which will help them, take action to tackle their problems. This generally happens post-sentence.

However, one large part of this model is the use of a Community Justice Court. This court uses the same sentencing guidelines and laws as a normal Magistrates' Court but handles the cases slightly differently. The main distinction is the use of 'Problem Solving Teams' whose help may be offered to an offender during their hearing.

The team will have a meeting with an offender to give them the opportunity to identify any issues. The team will then work with this information to help signpost the person to support agencies such as local Drug and Alcohol Services, Citizens Advice Bureau, Job Centre, Housing Agencies and many more. In the past, the team has consisted of a member from the Probation team, a Police Officer, and a worker from the CASS desk. Any information or advice given is recorded on the relevant paperwork. The work is fed back to the court by a member of Probation or a Police Officer. On court days, members of Alcoholics Anonymous or Drug Addicts Anonymous will also be around to pick up any referrals or queries. Other agencies do not attend court but rather take their referrals through CASSPLUS.

<http://www.official-documents.gov.uk/document/cm75/7583/7583.pdf>

www.cjsonline.gov.uk/dclcb

Appendix 1

CASS CASE STUDY 1

Mr A was referred to CASS+ by the District Judge for support with current issues. During conversations with Mr A it became apparent that he is experiencing problems with his accommodation due to his Landlady refusing to do the necessary repairs. He stated that the flat is covered in damp and mould, he had no heating facilities and this was having a negative impact on his physical health. He stated that he had lived in the flat for the past 7 years and felt that he can no longer remain living there due to the environment having a detrimental impact on his mental health and emotional well-being. He stated that he was feeling 'stressed out' most of the time and was using alcohol as his coping mechanism. Mr A recognised that he is alcohol dependent and had made the first step in working towards addressing this by self referring to Addaction. He had his first appointment that week.

Mr A stated that he had received a letter from SW Water to say that he owed them just over £11,000. He was quite distressed about this as he believed that all of his bills would be included as part of his tenancy. Mr A stated that there is a water leak but his Landlady had refused to get this repaired. I supported Mr A to call SW Water to try and arrange a manageable repayment plan. However, this was not resolved on the day due to the leak having to be fixed first before a repayment plan could be arranged. Mr A was advised by SW Water to approach the council to report this as his Landlady has a legal obligation to get this repaired.

In regards to Mr A's housing; I suggested registering on Cornwall Homechoice to enable him to bid for social housing properties in desired locations. He was very keen to do this and I arranged a time for Mr A to come back the following week to complete this application.

To date, Mr A has been supported to register with Cornwall Homechoice and is awaiting a reply regarding his banding. He has been shown how to navigate the Homechoice website and how to bid for properties. He stated that he attended his first Addaction appointment and is willing to engage with them for support with his alcohol use. In regards to current accommodation, he stated that his Landlady received a letter from the council regarding the condition of his accommodation and she has acted on this. He stated that his bedroom, bathroom and hallway are in the midst of being redecorated and EDF are sorting out his heating. In regards to the water leak, this is still ongoing and CASS+ have advised Mr A to go back to the council to notify them again of the leak as his water bill will continue to increase until the leak has been resolved. The CASS+ team will continue to keep in contact with Mr A to review progress made.

CASSPLUS CASE STUDY 2

Mr T was a young man appearing in Community Court on a drink related charge. He has a record for court appearances but had not presented at court for a period of approximately 2 years.

The Magistrate challenged him about his alcohol misuse, as much of his previous offences had been alcohol related. He declared that, though he had previously struggled to "get help" he was now engaged with appropriate services. He also told the Bench that he was shortly to "go into the army". He received a Conditional Discharge.

CASSPLUS followed this young man out of court, as there was something about his response to the Bench that didn't seem right. Once outside of the court room he was extremely agitated and upset. We challenged him regarding his alcohol support and he admitted that he'd fabricated that, because if the court had insisted on him engaging with alcohol services it might have prevented his entering the army. In this event, the fact that he'd received a Conditional Discharge instead of a fine, which he'd been expecting, was going to "mess up" his application anyway! When asked why he hadn't explained this to the Magistrate he replied that there were people in the back of the court and 'he didn't want everyone knowing his business.'

We took him to our office and contacted the Army Recruitment Office (who knew that he was in court). They confirmed that he would have his application delayed by a year but that a simple fine would not complicate matters. We contacted the legal adviser team who re-opened the case in the same court sitting. The Magistrates heard the detail and re-sentenced him to a £60 fine, or one day in custody, which he was deemed to have served.

He left the court and went straight to the Army Recruitment Office, where he was able to process the rest of his application to sign up. This was a young man with the potential to re-offend without some structure in his life. He had been brought up in the care system, with no family support and he had made real inroads to gaining meaningful employment under his own steam. This case study demonstrates the need for a sign-posting service away from court sittings and outside of the austerity of a court room.

CASSPLUS CASE STUDY 3

Ms J was brought into us by a friend who heard about us through probation. She was in an incredibly emotional state and was very overwhelmed by a lot of debt and financial strain. The fact that she also had 3 children to support added to the stress, especially since her ex-partner had stopped paying towards them. We calmed her down and gave her reassurance that we would help her chip away at these issues so that they become more manageable for her. We made a referral to Money Advice Plymouth and said we would also do some research around child support matters. She left with a food voucher and with a feeling of relief.

Our first follow up call with Ms J was very positive. Her meeting with Money Advice Plymouth went well and she now has the confidence to phone the companies that she has debts with and arrange payment plans. She has also now been medicated for depression and is coping with life better. She also contacted the child support agency on the back of the information that we gave her and is waiting for them to get in contact.

Through her involvement with CASS+, Ms J is in a much better place and has gained the confidence to face her debts head on.



Community Advice and Support Services

Appendix 2

Volunteer Working Agreement

This Volunteer Agreement is a description of the arrangement between CASSPLUS and yourself

.....
.....

In relation to your voluntary work. The intention is in part to express appreciation of your working with us, and also to indicate our commitment to making your volunteering experience a positive one. This agreement is not intended as a legally binding contract between us.

I agree to serve as a CASSPLUS volunteer and am committed to the following:

- ❖ I will perform my duties to the best of my ability, respecting both the needs of the individual and agency expectations
- ❖ I agree to attend training sessions organised for me and adhere to the information that is given during these sessions
- ❖ I agree to adhere to CASSPLUS Policies, Procedures and Standards. I also agree to take responsibility to read any such policy that is available to me.
- ❖ I agree to meet agreed time commitments (other than in exceptional circumstances) and provide reasonable notice so alternative arrangements can be made.
- ❖ I agree to provide referees who may be contacted as agreed, and consent to a DBS check being carried out.

In return CASSPLUS (Community Advice and Support Service) will ensure that:

- ❖ CASSPLUS will ensure that regular support is available to you in the form of Supervisions and Team Meetings as well as informal meetings, updates and easy access to the General Manager.
- ❖ All reasonable expenses are paid. CASSPLUS will reimburse your travelling expenses, in accordance with the Expenses and Business Mileage Policies.

Agreed: (Volunteer)

On behalf of CASS: (Staff)

Date:



Community Advice and Support Services

Appendix 3

CASS CLIENT REFERRAL FORM

RIS number 1.1	Name	Date 1.2	Safety
PNC Number		Defendant? Yes No 1.3	Problem Solve? Yes No 1.4

Case management

Alcohol Intervention? Yes No 1.5	Been to CASS before? Yes No 1.6		
First follow up (2weeks after assessment – all clients) Date due _____ Date completed _____	2nd follow up (2 months after - all clients) Date due _____ Date completed _____	3rd follow up (6 months after – AI and long term clients only) Date due _____ Date completed _____	
Contact dates			
Court dates			
Dates food vouchers given			

Personal details

Address		Email	
Postcode _____		Phone number	
Neighbourhood _____ 1.7			
Alternative contact details		Date of Birth 1.8	Gender 1.9
Ethnicity (circle one) 1. White British 2. White Other 3. Asian or Asian British 4. Black, African, Caribbean 5. Mixed or Multiple ethnic groups 6. Other 1.10	Employment status (circle one) 1. Full or part time paid employment 2. Self-employed 3. Housewife, husband or carer 4. Full time student or training 5. Long-term sickness / disability 6. Retired 7. Unemployed 8. Other 1.11	Accommodation (circle one) 1. Own home 2. Renting 3. Living with parents 4. Hostel 5. Sofa-surfing 6. Squatting 7. Long-term B&B 8. Homeless or no fixed abode 1.12	
Marital status (circle one) 1. Single 2. Married or in a civil partnership	Caring responsibilities? (circle one) 1. None 2. Caring for children	Member of armed forces? (circle one)	

3. Living with partner 4. Divorced 5. Widowed 6. Separated 1.13	3. Caring for adults 4. Caring for children and adults 1.14	1. Currently serving 2. Veteran 3. Never served 1.15
---	---	---

How did you find out about CASS? (circle one)		
1. Community court 4. Probation 7. CPS	2. Non community court magistrate 5. Other courts staff 8. Word of mouth	3. Defence solicitor 6. CASS approached me 9. Other 1.16

Benefits

National Insurance number	List any benefits received

Criminal Justice Status (for defendants only)

Name of solicitor	Is assessment taking place pre or post sentence? (Circle one) 1. Pre sentence 2. Post sentence 1.17
--------------------------	---

Offenses charged with (circle all that apply)	
Public Order Offense (inc. alcohol related) Criminal damage Theft Burglary Sexual offense Arson Breach of an existing order Other (please specify) _____	Drug related Fraud and forgery Vehicle crime Robbery Violence against the person Murder / manslaughter Non payment of fines Unknown 1.18

First time defendant (Circle one) Yes No 1.19	Previous convictions? (circle one) No previous convictions 1 conviction 2-5 convictions 6-10 convictions 11+ convictions Unknown 1.20
---	---

Currently under an order or on license? (Circle one) Yes No 1.21	Name of probation officer
--	----------------------------------

Case outcome (for defendants only)

Plea (Circle one) 1. Guilty 2. Not guilty 3. No Plea 1.22	Outcome (Circle one) 1. Convicted 2. Not convicted 1.23
--	---

Sentence (Circle one) 1. Discharge 3. Suspended sentence 5. Immediate Custody 7. Unknown	2. Fine 4. Community Sentence 6. Other 1.24
---	--

Needs assessment

Physical health (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.25
Mental health (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.26
Drugs (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.27
Alcohol (make a brief note of any needs identified)	
Information Given Yes No	1.28
Employment, training and education (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.29
Domestic abuse (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.30
Debt (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.31

Benefits (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.32
Housing (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.33
Criminal Justice (make a brief note of any needs identified) Restorative justice	1.34
Other (make a brief note of any needs identified)	1.35

I give permission for CASS+ representatives to process my personal information under the provisions of the Data Protection Act. I understand that this data may concern my health and welfare. All my personal information will be stored securely and is subject to CASS+ Confidentiality Policy and Procedures. I give permission for CASS+ representatives to share this information to process referrals to relevant agencies, in order to action my concerns, and to provide services to me, whilst abiding within the confidentiality policies operated by this organisation.

Client's signature **Date**

CASS Representative

Appendix 4

FOLLOW-UP FORM

RIS number	Name	Date 2.1
-------------------	-------------	------------------------

Key quotes – Use this box to record things important things that clients say during the call – that might be things which show CASS is making a difference, things which suggest how the service can be improved, or anything else that you think is important. Try to get then word for word if you can.

Referral outcomes – Service 1

Check these details before starting the call

Date of referral	Name of service	Need referred for
-------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------

Ask these questions directly to the client – but you don't need to use the exact words

Have you been to the service? (Y/N)	If not, then why not?
Do you think you will be going back in the future? (Y/N)	Why / Why not?
What difference (if any) has the service made to you?	

Referral outcomes – Service 2

Check these details before starting the call

Date of referral	Name of service	Need referred for
-------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------

Ask these questions directly to the client– but you don't need to use the exact words

Have you been to the service? (Y/N)	If not, then why not?
Do you think you will visit the service in the future? (Y/N)	Why / Why not?A
What difference (if any) has the service made to you?	

Referral outcomes – Service 3

Check these details before starting the call

Date of referral	Name of service	Need referred for
-------------------------	------------------------	--------------------------

Ask these questions directly to the client– but you don't need to use the exact words

Have you been to the service? (Y/N)	If not, then why not?
Do you think you will visit the service in the future? (Y/N)	Why / Why not?
What difference (if any) has the service made to you?	



Community Advice and Support Services

CASE SUMMARY - *answer these questions after the call is finished*

What's changed since the last time they spoke to CASS?

What's got better?

Is there anything new they need help with?



Community Advice and Support Services

Date (inc. year) & Person Contacted	Appendix 5 Action Sheet Details of person, actions, contact or telephone call	Time spent on action.	CASS Worker Name & Signature