



CASSPLUS Evaluation: Final Report

April 2022

About Crest Advisory

We are crime and justice specialists - equal parts research, strategy and communication. From police forces to public inquiries, from tech companies to devolved authorities, we believe all these organisations (and more) have their own part to play in building a safer, more secure society. As the UK's only consultancy with this focus, we are as much of a blend as the crime and justice sector itself.

Executive Summary

Background to CASSPLUS

CASSPLUS is an independent charity which provides free advice and support from magistrates' court settings for people involved (or at risk of involvement) in the criminal justice system in Devon & Cornwall. Service users are provided with practical help with managing issues like fine repayments and benefits, referral to long-term support for chronic issues like addiction, and support with the often difficult experiences that come with involvement in the criminal justice system. The organisation is made up of a small team of staff and a larger group of volunteers who are generally based in an office on site at the court.

Evaluation methods

Between July 2020 and January 2022, Crest Advisory conducted a process and outcomes evaluation of CASSPLUS.

The process evaluation consisted of:

- A client profile analysis - using client data to establish the profile of clients in terms of need and type of involvement in the criminal justice system
- An operating model assessment - interviews with staff to understand how the model works in practice, supplemented by data analysis of potential flows of clients into the service and financial data provided by CASSPLUS
- Theory of change - developing a theory of change to articulate the aims of the service and establish metrics to indicate success
- Identifying critical elements for replication - following interviews with staff, service users and other stakeholders we established the core drivers of success in the CASSPLUS model

The outcomes evaluation consisted of:

- Analysis of client needs assessments - we worked with CASSPLUS to develop a needs assessment process that staff could conduct at intervals throughout their work with a client. We analysed the first tranche of data from this process
- Client perceptions - we interviewed 25 CASSPLUS clients and a further 2 clients provided written answers to the interview questions via a survey platform
- Impact on local criminal justice system and wider partners - we interviewed 19 criminal justice system stakeholders and partners about the impact of CASSPLUS
- Cost-benefit Analysis - we used the Greater Manchester cost-benefit model to estimate some of the fiscal and public value benefits of CASSPLUS

Limitations

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on this evaluation. The methods used were tweaked to respond to the need to operate in a virtual environment, and in the same way the CASSPLUS model itself changed due to court closures. For a period of time there were no new clients coming into the service, and existing clients were receiving support virtually. This impacted the number of clients we were able to engage with as part of this evaluation. In addition, the number of volunteers reduced significantly during the pandemic which meant the needs assessment process was delayed due to the lack of capacity to support this.

The Ministry of Justice was also impacted by the pandemic and was unable to complete the reoffending analysis as planned. There is a hope that this will be completed in the near future and this report updated accordingly.

Finally, there are some significant limitations to the cost-benefit analyses conducted. There are two primary mechanisms by which CASSPLUS seeks to have an impact on the lives of its clients: direct support and advocacy, and referral and signposting to other services. Some of the intended outputs from CASSPLUS's direct support are extremely difficult to quantify or put even a rough fiscal or public benefit calculation on: for instance, greater emotional support for clients or an increased sense of procedural justice. We know there are likely to be fiscal and public value benefits to these since they are likely to reduce reoffending as well as demand on other parts of the system, but these will be indirect and difficult to capture. It was our intention to capture many of these indirect effects by looking at the actual reoffending rates of the CASSPLUS cohort over time and comparing it to a control group. However, as noted above, we were unable to get the results of this reoffending analysis in time for this report, which has further complicated assessing the cost-benefit ratio of these more indirect effects. The bulk of our cost-benefit analysis of the CASSPLUS service has therefore focused on its referral and signposting work and excludes the direct assistance work that CASSPLUS does alongside this. It is also important to note that measuring the impact of a referral is also complex as it relies on both the effectiveness of the organisation making the referral and the organisation receiving the referral.

The qualitative findings in this report speak for themselves as to the perceived impact of the service on clients and partners and should be read alongside the cost-benefit analysis. Government-published guidance on the use of cost-benefit analyses, in recognition of this

limitation, recommends that when evaluating interventions, we should consider more than just the benefit-cost ratio of the project. A range of perspectives, including qualitative feedback, strategic contribution and capacity to deliver, alongside the Net Present Value or Benefit Cost Ratio are equally as important in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the service.¹

Finally, the CASSPLUS database has only been in use since late 2018 and implementation has been gradual. This means that, although data quality has improved dramatically over time, these statistics may change as data quality continues to improve.

CASSPLUS Client Profile

We established the client profile by using data from 2019/20 to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. The average CASSPLUS client in 2019/20 was: under 50, unemployed, receiving 2 or more benefits, in rented accommodation; and with complex mental health and legal support needs.

The cohort as a whole was a mix of defendants / offenders and others who were in court or referred by other agencies - with 66% of clients as an offender / defendant. Of these clients involved in the CJS, 37% had previous convictions.

Looking specifically at the defendant clients, the offending profile was in line with the descriptions of interviewees: predominantly low-level offending, though violence against the person contains a range of degrees of offence.

Generally speaking the need profile was greater in the 2019/20 client cohort compared to the Plymouth cohort evaluated in 2014. Mental health was a particularly prevalent need across both cohorts: 59% of the defendant cohort had a mental health need, and 40% of the remaining cohort.

Theory of change

Through the process evaluation we developed a theory of change, setting out what the organisation does, and what impact those actions are intended to have in the short and long term.

CASSPLUS's primary aim is to reduce (re)offending by addressing clients needs. But CASSPLUS doesn't only work with offenders: it also supports victims, witnesses, families

¹ HM Treasury. *Supporting public service transformation: cost benefit analysis guidance for local partnerships* (2014)

— anyone in the court who needs their help or could be at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system. This is in service of CASSPLUS’s broader aim, which is to prevent social exclusion and support those who are socially excluded.

The theory of change sets out five long-term outcomes of CASSPLUS and seven short-term outcomes. These outcomes are driven by both direct intervention by the service itself, and through other agencies involved with the client.

CASSPLUS Actions	Short-term outcomes	Long-term outcomes
Referrals	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced criminogenic and other needs 2. Increased sense of procedural fairness 3. Better-informed sentencing 4. Better navigation of the court system 5. Increased number and uptake of referrals 6. More sustained engagement with other services 7. Greater emotional support for clients 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced re(offending) 2. Greater compliance with sentences and court orders 3. Improved client health and wellbeing 4. Clients have access to ongoing support in case of future crisis 5. Decreased burden on the criminal justice system by filling gaps in provision
Assistance with a need		
Assistance in understanding the criminal justice system process		
On-going mentoring/support		

Key findings

Short term outcomes

1. Client needs were improved during engagement with CASSPLUS:

Across most need types, a majority of clients with an identified need said that need had improved during the period they were in contact with CASSPLUS. The majority of service users also told us in interviews that CASSPLUS had improved their situation in some way, however 9 clients were able to also identify a need which had not improved over the time they were working with CASSPLUS.

2. Clients did not see an impact on their view of procedural fairness:

There was no significant evidence to suggest that CASSPLUS has a positive impact on perceptions of procedural fairness, however interviewees did outline

characteristics of the CASSPLUS service which suggested it supported the four principles of procedural fairness: voice, neutrality, respect and trustworthy motives.

3. **There was not enough evidence to suggest that CASSPLUS are able to drive better-informed sentencing, but court staff value the service:**

Some stakeholders felt that CASSPLUS are influential in the information the magistrate has before sentencing, but (although stating clear value in the service post-sentence) the magistrates we interviewed did not agree.

4. **Clients felt better able to navigate the court system:**

18 of the 27 clients we interviewed said that CASSPLUS had helped them understand what to expect at court, or helped them interpret what happened afterwards, indicating CASSPLUS has a positive impact on navigation of the court system. It's worth noting, whilst satisfied with the CASSPLUS service, some first time defendants expressed a desire for an even greater degree of support - in particular prior to the day at court.

5. **Stakeholders felt CASSPLUS drove up referrals and supported clients to follow through on referrals:**

We were not able to evidence whether CASSPLUS increases the volumes of referrals to services without a baseline. However in 2021 the CASSPLUS team made a total of 1,865 referrals, which equated to around 7 referrals per client. It is reasonable to assume that this number is greater than without CASSPLUS involvement, supported by the 24 of 27 clients interviewed who stated that they felt they were in need of help prior to engagement with CASSPLUS but were not getting any support. We were able to test the perceptions of stakeholders around the impact of CASSPLUS on the uptake of referrals and found a general consensus that the physical presence of staff makes service users much more likely to take up a referral.

6. **Similarly interviewees felt there was a positive impact on sustained engagement with services:**

In theory CASSPLUS supports sustained engagement with other services through regular check-ins and follow up calls. Many CASSPLUS clients have difficulties in managing appointment attendance, and CASSPLUS play a role in supporting clients to manage their time and communicate difficulties to other providers. We found evidence that these calls were often being made, and that some were effective, but weren't able to draw concrete conclusions on the actual impact on service engagement.

7. **CASSPLUS are highly effective at providing emotional support to clients at court and following court:**

CASSPLUS fills an important gap in being the only organisation present in Court with the aim of supporting defendants first and foremost, from a person-centric

standpoint. Stakeholders and clients alike agreed that CASSPLUS provides valuable emotional support to defendants (and also to victims and witnesses).

Long term outcomes

1. **We are not yet able to evidence the impact of CASSPLUS on reoffending:**
CASSPLUS cohort data has been submitted to the Ministry of Justice Data Lab to enable them to conduct the analysis, but this has been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic.
2. **We were not able to evidence the impact of CASSPLUS on compliance with sentences:**
We were not able to obtain sentence compliance statistics so were not able to evidence the impact of CASSPLUS on greater compliance with sentences and court orders. This is a recommendation for future evaluation work to consider.
3. **CASSPLUS has a positive impact on client wellbeing:**
21 of the 27 clients interviewed said that CASSPLUS had supported their general wellbeing. Clients frequently referred to their mental health having improved along with their outlook on life. Interview participants generally agreed that CASSPLUS had a positive impact on their ability to deal with problems in the longer term.
4. **CASSPLUS provides ongoing support to clients which they feel is accessible:**
Most of the clients we spoke to had engaged with CASSPLUS beyond the initial point of need. 21 of the 27 clients interviewed said that they felt they would have access to future support from CASSPLUS should they need it. A number of clients described an initial phase of support from CASSPLUS and then a break before re-contacting them with a different issue.
5. **CASSPLUS has a positive impact on reducing demand on some criminal justice system partners:**
A number of court-based service stakeholders that we interviewed articulated either how CASSPLUS were able to provide clients with a different kind of support that they couldn't offer, or felt that their workload was somehow reduced by the ability to refer individuals onto CASSPLUS. Thereby reducing demand on the criminal justice system and other services.

Secondary benefits

Beyond the outcomes identified in the theory of change, our evaluation also found that CASSPLUS has an impact on the *effectiveness* of other court services (on top of reducing the initial burden on the criminal justice system).

Referral routes are often two-way for CASSPLUS, as a result of having built strong relationships in the local area. As an example, CASSPLUS might refer a client to a drug and alcohol service one day, and the next day that same service may refer their clients to CASSPLUS to provide support around court attendance. Stakeholders also often referred to CASSPLUS as a fountain of local knowledge, indicating that they frequently call to ask what the CASSPLUS team knows about other local agencies. In this way, CASSPLUS not only acts directly on behalf of clients, but facilitates local networks of information-sharing and support.

Costs and benefits of CASSPLUS

We approached the cost-benefit analysis in two ways and so were able to stress test our results. It is important to note that neither analysis attempts to quantify the full value of CASSPLUS as a whole. Each method only accounts for a proportion of the work CASSPLUS does and for some of the outcomes achieved for a proportion of clients.

Our first method assessed the impact of CASSPLUS on 135 different needs across 64 clients. **For this cohort we found that for every £1 spent by CASSPLUS there was a public value benefit of £3.36.**

Our second method assessed the impact of CASSPLUS referrals to 3 other services, which accounted for 10% of CASSPLUS referrals in 2019/20. We found that for these services, CASSPLUS was responsible for a fiscal benefit of around £2,600 and a public value benefit of £33,000. We then extrapolated this figure upwards to gain an estimate for 100% of referrals. **Using this method, we estimated that for every £1 CASSPLUS spends, there is a public value benefit of £1.87.**

The two figures generated by our cost-benefit analyses are not comparable, but reassuringly both provide a positive assessment of the public value benefit delivered by the service. This, combined with the needs assessment data, sets out some promising initial findings on the value of CASSPLUS. However, we recommend that CASSPLUS continues to expand and quality assure its data collection so that a more robust assessment can be made in future. Both of our analyses had to be subject to significant optimism bias discounts to account for the lack of hard data available. This has resulted in a potentially conservative view of the fiscal and public value benefits.

Process evaluation

As well as developing the theory of change, our process evaluation identified the key elements of CASSPLUS operations which supported the aims of the service in terms of targeting, affordability and proportionality.

Targeting

We found that while there is no defined target cohort, CASSPLUS effectively identifies and prioritises those it deems most at risk, whilst still supporting anyone that requires help. Staff work with court agencies to identify those at risk, and prioritise dynamically to manage demand. This has proven effective with the majority of clients meeting at least one of the characteristics staff described as benefiting the most from CASSPLUS (i.e. defendants charged with low-level offences open to engaging with support services).

Affordability

We found that the model is low-cost with minimal capital expenditure (being based in courts) and can be delivered at scale by deploying a small team of expert staff who recruit and train a much larger number of skilled volunteers. In Plymouth courts increasing repeat demand has placed pressures on staff to maintain a caseload and offer support to new clients in court, but this has largely been resolved by the development of an appointments system.

Proportionality

We found that being client-led allows CASSPLUS to make effective prioritisation decisions according to clients' own assessments of their needs. In addition, offering a scaled approach to interventions, means CASSPLUS can be as proportionate to the level of need as possible, whilst accounting for individual levels of engagement and motivation. However, it is also worth noting that the extent to which CASSPLUS is proportionate to client needs also depends on the availability of the agencies they are referring clients to and the thresholds of other services. For some there may be a waiting list, and therefore a need for CASSPLUS to provide a source of support and motivation to clients whilst they wait to be seen. Equally, the client-led nature of the service may mean disproportionate resources are sometimes focused on certain clients or needs, but equally it can improve efficiency and effectiveness by creating greater client buy-in and ensuring more appropriate sequencing of interventions. This might include, for instance, addressing immediate food and housing needs before long-term mental health needs.

Critical success factors

We have identified six critical factors that drive success for CASSPLUS and should be retained as a core part of the operating model. They should also be a core part of any service development in other areas.

1. **Expert staff and volunteers** - the volunteer model is essential to have the required reach across potential clients, and to facilitate the other critical success factors. Staff must be highly knowledgeable in terms of the local service landscape.
2. **Generalist** - the service must be able to address multiple needs and act as a central repository of local information, with sign posting as a core capability.
3. **Responsive** - the service must be able to respond to clients and provide advice rapidly. Whilst clients should be able to make appointments if needed, the drop-in option is essential.
4. **Independent, non-statutory status** - the service must be independent from the criminal justice system and engagement must be voluntary.
5. **Localised** - The service must have detailed local knowledge to be able to answer a broad range of questions, and must also be a physical presence in court.
6. **Non-targeted** - The service must be available to anyone physically present in court - without any thresholds required to receive support.

Conclusions

Overall we found good evidence to suggest that **CASSPLUS is delivering well against 3 out of the 7 short term outcomes described in the theory of change:**

- Clients working with CASSPLUS saw a reduction in criminogenic and other needs
- Clients supported by CASSPLUS are better able to navigate the court system
- CASSPLUS provides valuable emotional support for clients in a court setting

There was **some evidence** to suggest that CASSPLUS is also:

- Increasing the number and uptake of referrals
- Supporting more sustained engagement with other services

There was **less evidence** that CASSPLUS is:

- Increasing a sense of procedural fairness
- Driving better sentencing

With the long term outcomes, we found evidence that CASSPLUS has a **positive impact on:**

- client wellbeing

- access to support
- decreasing the burden on some wider criminal justice system partners

We **did not find evidence** that CASSPLUS reduces reoffending or increases compliance with sentences and court orders due to a lack of data.

We were able to establish that CASSPLUS is very likely to have a positive cost-benefit ratio, in terms of providing additional public value benefits. However the findings were subject to considerable optimism bias adjustments, suggesting that that figure could be much higher in reality. We recommend further data is collected to support a future cost benefit analysis.

Recommendations

Going forward we recommend that CASSPLUS:

- Considers if there might be ways **remain a non-targeted organisation but increase outreach and support to those involved in the criminal justice system**, or at risk of involvement in a more intensive way
- **Maintains a physical presence in court, but also develops an approach to be able to access clients virtually** as virtual court hearings continue
- **Maintains and develops relationships locally**, and **leverages funding** from some of the agencies who describe seeing a positive impact on their own work as a result of CASSPLUS
- Continues to **collect and monitor outcomes data** to assess the performance of CASSPLUS in meeting different needs

We also recommend that any future evaluation considers:

- A **further evaluation** of the outcomes we were not able to evidence - around better **sentencing and increasing compliance with sentences**. This should include a focus on exploring the views of magistrates and probation staff views in more detail, as well as obtaining data on sentence concordance and compliance
- As assessment of the **representation of defendants** in the Criminal Justice System in Devon & Cornwall in the CASSPLUS cohort to establish if the service is successful in reaching and supporting all those who would benefit from engagement - this should include a focus on ethnicity
- A **longitudinal study** which could identify whether there might be certain **“sweet spot” timelines**, whereby if progress has not been made for a certain need within a certain timeframe, there may be an argument to focus resources on the needs where CASSPLUS is able to make the greatest impact

Note: An appendix to this report will be provided when the reoffending analysis is made available by the Ministry of Justice.

Contents

Executive Summary	3
Background to CASSPLUS	3
Evaluation methods	3
Limitations	4
CASSPLUS Client Profile	5
Theory of change	5
Key findings	6
Costs and benefits of CASSPLUS	9
Process evaluation	10
Critical success factors	11
Conclusions	11
Recommendations	12
Contents	14
Methodology	17
The impact of Covid-19 on the CASSPLUS service and this evaluation	17
Evaluation overview	18
Process evaluation methods	18
Client profile analysis	18
Operating model assessment	18
Theory of change	19
Identifying critical elements for replication	19
Outcomes evaluation methods	19
Needs assessments over time	19
Client perceptions of CASSPLUS	19
Impact on local criminal justice system and wider partners	20
Reoffending analysis	21
Cost-benefit analysis	21
CASSPLUS Overview	22
Operating model	22
Client profile	24
Meeting thresholds for support	25
Theory of Change	28
What works to reduce reoffending?	29
Promoting social inclusion	29
The Theory of Change	31

Overview of outcomes of CASSPLUS	33
Short term outcomes of CASSPLUS	35
Reduced criminogenic and other needs	35
Increased sense of procedural fairness	40
Better-informed sentencing	42
Clients better able to navigate court system	44
Increased number and uptake of referrals	45
More sustained engagement with other services	47
Greater emotional support for clients	49
Long term outcomes of CASSPLUS	51
Reduced reoffending	51
Greater compliance with sentences and court orders	51
Improved client health and well-being	52
Clients have access to on-going support in case of future crisis	54
Decreased burden on the Criminal Justice System and other services	55
Secondary benefits/outcomes	56
Impact on effectiveness of wider CJS and third sector	56
Process evaluation	58
Targeting	58
Proportionality	61
Efficiency	64
Cost-Benefit Analysis	66
Potential fiscal and public value benefits of CASSPLUS service	66
Methods	67
Results	70
Implications for CASSPLUS	71
Client profile and targeting in the future	71
Maintaining a physical presence in court and accessing clients virtually	72
Maintenance and development of relationships and networks	72
Implications for data collection against the theory of change going forward	73
Critical factors for service replication	73
Expert staff and volunteers	73
Generalist	74
Responsive	75

Independent, non-statutory status	76
Localised	77
Non-targeted	78
Recommendations for future evaluation	79
Appendices	81
Submission made to MoJ Justice Data Lab	81
Information given to clients who participated in interviews	90
Client profile breakdown used to randomly identify a representative sample for interviews	94
Client profile of the final 27 interview participants	98
Discussion guide for CASSPLUS client interviews	99
Discussion guide for CASSPLUS staff interviews	101
Discussion guide for CJS and wider stakeholder interviews	103
Assumptions, limitations, caveats for cost-benefit analyses	105

Methodology

The impact of Covid-19 on the CASSPLUS service and this evaluation

This evaluation was conducted during the Covid-19 pandemic. This meant that not only were evaluation methods affected by restrictions, but so too was the way in which the CASSPLUS service itself operated. In addition, the demand on the service was very different during the pandemic, due to court closures and the challenges lockdown caused for existing clients.

For extended periods of time during the evaluation, the magistrates' courts in Devon and Cornwall (as elsewhere in the country) were not operating at normal capacity. At times the courts were closed completely, or only open for essential face-to-face hearings. CASSPLUS staff reverted to working from home. This meant no face-to-face meetings with new or existing clients, with all work conducted via telephone. Despite some referrals from other organisations continuing to trickle through remotely, the number of defendants in court was drastically reduced in itself, and therefore the number of potential CASSPLUS clients dropped significantly.

The volunteer model was difficult to operate during this time. Volunteers are generally utilised to conduct much of the initial client-facing work - introducing individuals waiting for hearings at court to the service and conducting initial needs assessments. This became much more difficult during the stay at home restrictions and the dearth of incoming clients. Most of the existing cohort of volunteers therefore ceased volunteering during this time. At the same time the CASSPLUS staff team were inundated with calls for support from existing clients. This meant that the team was reduced in capacity, but dealing with an uplift in demand from those service users already engaged.

Once the courts started to return to business as usual and CASSPLUS resumed face-to-face work, they faced a challenge in recruiting a new cohort of volunteers from scratch. This meant that the available time for Coordinators to commit to the evaluation was still limited while the service got back up and running again. As a result, there were delays to some of the components of the evaluation requiring more input from CASSPLUS staff. At the same time, HMCTS advised CASSPLUS not to have too many people in the office to comply with social distancing measures, which meant a reduced number of volunteers were able to come in.

The pandemic also affected the evaluation process itself, as there was a much smaller throughput of new clients than anticipated. This impacted the number of clients who could

be included in the evaluation and therefore we had to extend the planned time allowance for some components to increase numbers.

The interviews with CASSPLUS clients were always intended to be conducted via telephone due to the geography of Devon and Cornwall, with clients spread across the counties with limited transportation options. However, we had planned to conduct more face-to-face work in the courts with the CASSPLUS team and other stakeholders. Some of this was still carried out in person, but at a much smaller scale than anticipated.

Evaluation overview

The evaluation was conducted between July 2020 and January 2022. It consisted of a process and outcomes evaluation.

Process evaluation methods

Client profile analysis

We conducted quantitative analysis of client profile data provided by CASSPLUS to establish the profile of CASSPLUS clients in terms of type of client (defendant, family, victim/witness, other), offence type, history of offending, need type (mental health, housing, employment, benefits, debt, drugs and alcohol, domestic abuse, learning, family needs), age and gender.

Operating model assessment

We interviewed the CASSPLUS CEO, administrator and the CASSPLUS Co-ordinators (at the time) at the Bodmin, Truro, Newton Abbot and Plymouth sites to understand how the CASSPLUS model works in practice. The discussion guide used for the interviews is included as an appendix.

We also interviewed the two coordinators of the Advice Service in Highbury Magistrates' Court, Islington to compare operating models.

We looked at published data to assess the potential flow of clients into the Criminal Justice System in Devon and Cornwall and specifically into the CASSPLUS cohort. We reviewed financial information provided by CASSPLUS to understand the costs and income of the service.

Theory of change

Based on the interviews conducted with CASSPLUS staff and the client profile analysis, we conducted a situation analysis, to understand the problems the service aims to address. We then conducted a rapid evidence review on 'what works to reduce reoffending'. Building on existing documentation detailing inputs and activities with the service and the intended outputs and outcomes, we developed a theory of change to inform the rest of the evaluation, and the service's on-going monitoring and evaluation.

Identifying critical elements for replication

During the first phase of the evaluation we found there were six critical factors for replication of the CASSPLUS model. This was based on interviews with CASSPLUS staff and other local criminal justice agency (and wider) stakeholders. In the second phase of the evaluation we developed these elements following further interviews with stakeholders and new interviews with clients.

Outcomes evaluation methods

Needs assessments over time

We worked with the CASSPLUS team to develop a needs assessment process which would enable the team to continue providing clients with a person-centred, holistic service, while starting to collect quantitative data on the level of need. The new needs assessment process was rolled out fully in July 2021. This was later than expected due to a longer trial and adjustment period being required to ensure the process did not have a negative impact on the service clients received. Following the initial needs assessment, CASSPLUS staff started to conduct follow up assessments via the phone after 2, 6 and 18 weeks. These time periods were expected to act as rough guides to allow the Coordinators to conduct their work efficiently and make best use of volunteer time when carrying out the follow up work.

We were provided with needs assessment data for 68 clients who had at least an initial needs assessment and one follow up needs assessment. The data outlines whether or not the level of need has changed following CASSPLUS intervention.

Client perceptions of CASSPLUS

We interviewed 25 CASSPLUS clients and a further 2 clients provided written answers to the interview questions via a survey platform. Interviews were semi-structured to ensure certain areas of feedback were explored consistently, but participants were also able to express views outside the interview structure.

Initially clients were selected to be a representative sample of the CASSPLUS total cohort client profile. For example: 13% of all new CASSPLUS clients in 2019/20 were between the ages of 18 and 25, so we randomly selected 7 clients out of a total of 46, who were in that same age bracket. We repeated this process looking at the number of interventions per client, gender, employment status, accommodation type, previous convictions, location (Devon or Cornwall) and types of need to ensure a representative spread across the cohort (the full breakdown is available as an appendix). We hoped to interview around 30 clients from the initial pool of 46. All 46 had given permission for CASSPLUS to contact them.

Once potential interview participants had been randomly selected, the list was shared with the CASSPLUS coordinator at each court site. The coordinators made contact with the clients by telephone, to ask them if they would be willing to share their views with the evaluation team. If the client gave permission the coordinators provided their contact details to us and we arranged an interview slot with the client. The coordinators also made an assessment around the suitability of the client for interview, taking into account factors such as on-going levels of need and risks around domestic abuse and mental health.

Before commencing the interview clients were provided with information about the research, and consent to participate was noted. Interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed by the Crest team. Interview participants were provided with a £20 gift voucher to thank them for their time.

However, from the batch of 46 potential interviewees, only 6 were conducted. This was due to difficulties in reaching clients whose phone numbers had changed or had moved away from the area. Due to the smaller numbers of services users in Bodmin, Truro and Newton Abbot courts, we were required to flex our approach to interview recruitment to boost the numbers in these areas. CASSPLUS coordinators were asked to identify recent clients who would be reachable and to seek consent from these clients to participate in an interview. With the Plymouth court the process was repeated to provide a second batch of representative clients. The profile of the 27 clients who participated is included at the appendix.

Impact on local criminal justice system and wider partners

We interviewed 19 local criminal justice stakeholders and partners in other third sector organisations to help understand the impact of CASSPLUS on these agencies and their clients. The discussion guide for these interviews is included as an appendix.

Role	Location	Number of interviews
Solicitor	Cornwall	2
Drug & Alcohol Support Worker	Cornwall	2
Magistrate	Cornwall	2
Magistrate	Devon	1
Probation Officer	Cornwall	2
Probation Officer	Devon	2
Court Security Staff	Cornwall	1
Fines	Devon	1
Witness Service (Citizens Advice)	Devon	1
Usher	Devon	2
Usher	Cornwall	1
Cells Custody Officer (Serco)	Cornwall	1 (3 participants)
Domestic Abuse Support Worker	Cornwall	1
	Total	19

Reoffending analysis

We submitted data on 324 CASSPLUS clients to the Ministry of Justice Data Lab. These individuals will be matched against a control group and reoffending rates will be compared between the CASSPLUS clients and the control group. The results will be published in due course, and this report updated.

Cost-benefit analysis

A detailed method for the cost-benefit analysis is included in the associated section of the report. In summary we used the Greater Manchester cost-benefit analysis tool to conduct a series of cost-benefit analyses:

- The first method was based on improvements in clients' core needs over the period they were engaging with CASSPLUS. We assumed that the reduction in need was

as a result of CASSPLUS referrals to other support services and assessed the benefit of these reductions in need level.

- The second method involved a series of mini cost-benefit analyses of the services CASSPLUS most often refers clients to. Based on our engagement with stakeholders and evidence from the RAND national evaluation of liaison and diversion services, we assumed that CASSPLUS drives an uplift in the number of referrals made to those services, and an uplift in sustained engagement with the service. We then modelled the aggregate cost/benefit of that increase in engagement across all the other services.

CASSPLUS Overview

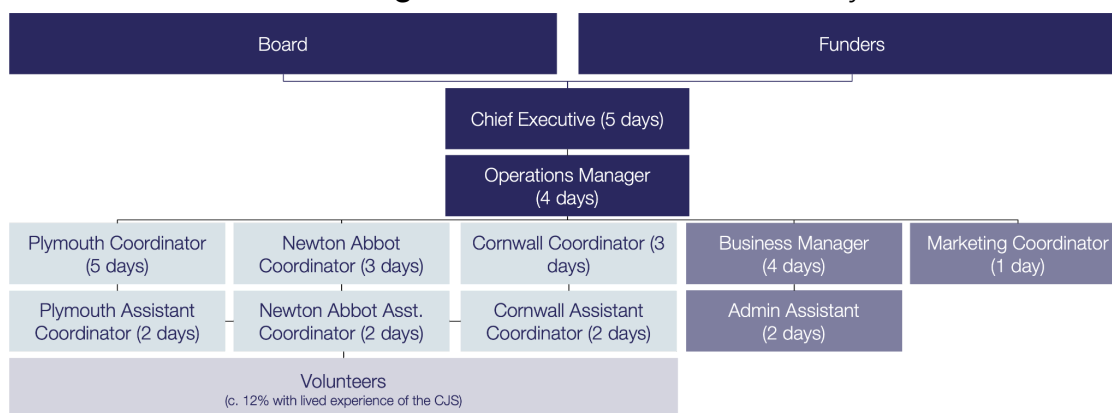
CASSPLUS's governing purpose is to promote social inclusion, by preventing exclusion and supporting people who are socially excluded. This applies in particular but not exclusively to people involved in the criminal justice system and their families. An important part of this is **reducing reoffending**, as well as providing general support and advice to people in the courts.

Operating model

CASSPLUS is a service which provides free advice and support from magistrates' court settings for people involved in the criminal justice system. Service users are provided with practical help with managing issues like fine repayments and benefits, referral to long-term support for chronic issues like addiction, and support with the often difficult experiences that come with involvement in the criminal justice system.

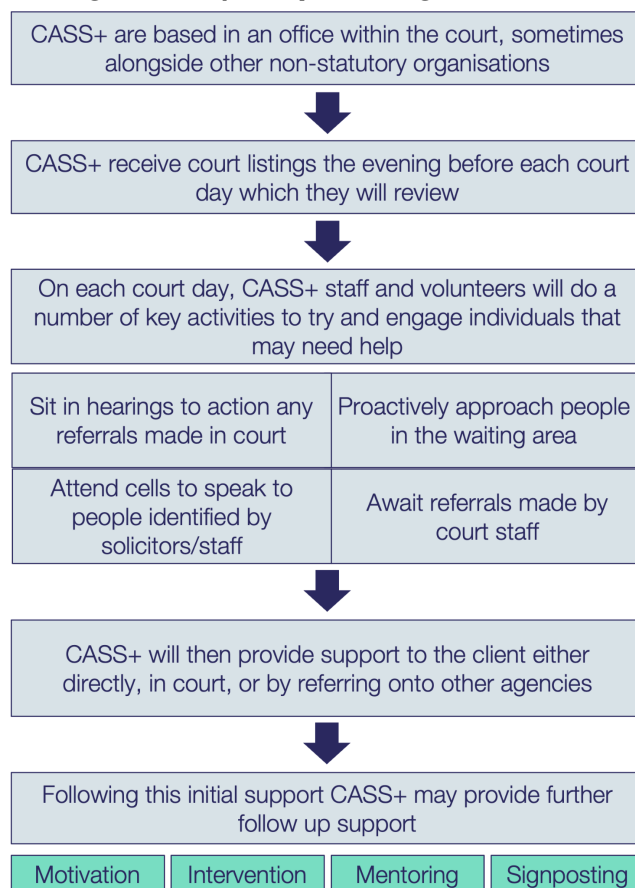
The organisation is made up of a small team of staff and a larger group of volunteers. Social work students from local universities also frequently participate in unpaid work placements as part of their studies.

CASSPLUS Organisational Chart as at January 2022²



Although there is variation between the courts, generally the model is as follows:

CASSPLUS Operating Model (except during Covid-19 related restrictions)



² Note: The Cornwall Coordinator works full time for CASSPLUS (rather than the 3 days a week outlines) and is supported by another Assistant Coordinator 1 day a week, but this work is commissioned separately and relates to victim support so has not been subject to this evaluation.

Client profile

Overall, the profile of clients has shifted slightly since the 2014 review; with clients less likely to have previous convictions, suggesting a shift towards earlier interventions. However, these clients also present higher levels of overall need. Building from Plymouth University's 2014 review of CASSPLUS data, we can see that most CASSPLUS clients (as of the 2019/20 database) are: under 50, unemployed, receiving 2 or more benefits, and are in rented accommodation; with complex mental health and legal support needs.

The CASSPLUS database has only been in use since late 2018 and implementation has been gradual. This means that, although data quality has improved dramatically over time, these statistics may change as data quality continues to improve.

These figures should be treated as an indicative client profile; it is important to be aware that the Covid-19 pandemic caused significant shifts in the CASSPLUS cohort and it is impossible to tell how far these will persist going forward.

The following are outlined within the client profile, according to the database, in terms of:

- Defendant status and previous convictions
- Offence type
- Needs
- Age
- Benefits
- Housing
- Employment

CASSPLUS clients (as expected) consisted of a mix of defendants / offenders and others who were in court or referred by other agencies. At least 66% of clients in the 2019/20 dataset were involved in the criminal justice system as an offender / defendant. Of these clients involved in the CJS, 37% had previous convictions. Of those for whom previous convictions had been known, disclosed and reported, 24% had one listed conviction. These figures are significantly higher than those observed in 2020/21, where only 46% of clients were involved in the criminal justice system. Additionally, of these clients involved in the CJS only 28% disclosed having had a previous conviction.

Looking specifically at the defendant clients, the offending profile was in line with the descriptions of interviewees: predominantly low-level offending, though violence against the person contains a range of degrees of offence. Of all offences recorded in 2019/20,

20% were vehicle crime, 14% violence against the person, 12% public order, and 7% theft offences. For 2020/21, vehicle crime remained at 20%, with slight increases noted in violence against the person (14.6%) and public order offences (13.7%). There was a substantial decrease in theft offences within this dataset, with only 0.04% of the recorded offences listed as theft. This may be a result of the types of cases prioritised to come through court during the pandemic.

According to the needs assessment included within the form, 42% of clients who were defendants had a mental health need, along with 37% of the rest of clients (2019/20). This differs from 2020/21 where 65% of clients who were defendants reported a mental health need, compared to 37% of the rest of clients.

Generally speaking the need profile is greater in the current client cohort compared to the Plymouth cohort evaluated in 2014. Mental health was a particularly prevalent need across both cohorts: 59% of the defendant cohort had a mental health need, and 40% of the remaining cohort.

Meeting thresholds for support

In our interim process evaluation report, we highlighted the increasing pressure on the criminal justice system and wider public services in recent years, due to budget cuts and increasing demand. Stakeholders had identified that this makes it harder for them to support people and adequately address the vulnerabilities which drive criminality.

“We’re the magistracy, we’re not social workers. Even though we desperately try to be as supportive [as possible] where appropriate to help people, we don’t have the resources. We don’t have the time to administer justice.”
- Magistrate

Thresholds for accessing support services seem to be higher, and larger caseloads are resulting in a reduced level of support, less emphasis on outreach and a lower tolerance for missed appointments or challenging behaviour.

“[Without CASSPLUS] you’d end up with more people, quite simply that didn’t have familial support to repair those relationships, didn’t have housing support and ended up homeless, didn’t have financial support, and so ended up in further debt.”
- Drug and Alcohol Support Service

“We have quite a group of people who just fall between all the services, like mental health because they're not mentally unwell enough or learning difficulties...just on the cusp.”

- Probation

“Unfortunately, because I wasn't in over 6,000 pounds worth of debt, I wasn't able to use any help from the money centre... [CASSPLUS] gave me lots and lots of advice.”

- CASSPLUS client

CASSPLUS staff told us that, often, the individual problems of their clients fall below the threshold to access services, even when the combination means they struggle in their everyday lives. One of the aims of the service is to support these individuals in gaining access to services. The CASSPLUS service is accessible and non-targeted, open to anyone in the court who needs assistance without any eligibility requirements or needs thresholds. The absence of eligibility thresholds, combined with the fact that CASSPLUS takes a broad approach not focused on any particular type of need, is particularly intended to address the needs of this cohort.

In the second part of the evaluation, we tested this hypothesis further with clients and other stakeholders. **We found that 18 out of the 27 clients we interviewed or surveyed (=66%) said that they were unable or struggled to access support from other services prior to engaging with CASSPLUS.**

“I went to [another support service] before [CASSPLUS] and they were rubbish...[I was receiving] no help at all [prior to CASSPLUS].”

- CASSPLUS Client

“I went to these other people. I can't remember what they were called. But he said to us on the phone that we're not going to win our case or whatever and that put a real downer on me to be honest. Because they had no hope in us. That was left as that really. My anxiety was over the roof with that. Then CASSPLUS stepped into help.”

- CASSPLUS Client

It wasn't always clear whether this was directly caused by threshold/criteria levels, but a number of interviewees did state this cause - most often in relation to accessing mental health services.

"I recommend CASSPLUS so highly, I do. Them and [mental health organisation] to me have been the best two. [The] mental health crisis team I don't think a lot of. It's a mental health team but they never answer the phone."

- CASSPLUS Client

"If I hadn't committed the crime, then the chances are I'd just be under the radar and I wouldn't even get recognised."

- CASSPLUS Client

We were only able to engage with a limited number of CASSPLUS clients, however it is interesting to note that a recent (much larger) evaluation of criminal justice liaison and diversion services found that **26%** of people referred to those services **had no previous health or social care service contacts recorded**.³ The CASSPLUS client cohort is likely to be similar.

A further characteristic of the CASSPLUS client cohort is that they often struggle to engage with services and attend appointments. This often leads to them being discharged from other support services and ineligible for further assistance. CASSPLUS's accessible approach, physical co-location in court buildings and drop-in model helps mitigate this problem and ensure people are not cut off from support.

"If someone is engaging with the various authorities and capable of following instructions and completing forms there's no problems. But the people we deal with, for various reasons, whether alcohol, mental illness or drug use are incapable of engaging. As soon as someone misses an appointment in the mental health system they are discharged. That's wrong. It's because of the [mental health] problem they can't attend."

- Defence Solicitor/Prosecutor

³ RAND Europe, *Outcome Evaluation of the National Model for Liaison and Diversion* (2021).

“[CASSPLUS] make it so easy... [People I refer in] come out saying, ‘Oh my god, they’re so welcoming, I was absolutely terrified to knock on the door, I’m so glad you did it for me.’”
- Court Usher

Theory of Change

As part of our process evaluation, we developed a **theory of change** for the CASSPLUS service. This sets out what the organisation does in terms of interventions, and what impact those are intended to have on the lives of service users. A theory of change defines explicitly what the aims of specific activities are, and how those activities are expected to result in certain outcomes and achieve an overall impact.

To establish the theory of change, we first conducted a 'situation analysis' to understand the problem the service aims to address, before reviewing the existing evidence base and setting out what we already know works. We then built on existing documentation on inputs and activities of the service, and interviews with staff to produce together a summary of the Theory of Change.

One of the critical aims of the CASSPLUS service is to reduce reoffending. Existing evidence on what works to reduce reoffending identifies four general mechanisms relevant to CASSPLUS:

- Addressing criminogenic needs
- Supportive networks and relationships,
- Perceptions of procedural justice and fairness,
- Holistic support

By providing interventions that support these areas, CASSPLUS aims to have a positive impact on the lives of service users and reduce reoffending among its cohort.

What works to reduce reoffending?

What the evidence says

Addressing
criminogenic needs

Addressing criminogenic needs is a vital means of reducing (re)offending. Safe accommodation, stable employment and reduced substance misuse all lower the risk of reoffending, as does fulfilling

What the evidence says	
	employment. ^{4 5 6}
Supportive networks and relationships	Supportive social networks and good family and intimate relationships can both reduce criminogenic needs and act as protective factors in their own right, e.g. prisoners who receive family visits are less likely to reoffend and more likely to have employment or training and accommodation upon release. ¹ Desistance theory suggests individuals with strong social ties, a sense of worth, hope and self-efficacy are more likely to desist from offending. ^{1 2 3}
Perceptions of procedural justice and fairness	Believing that policing and courts are fair can improve compliance with court orders and reduce reoffending, as well as victims' willingness to engage with the police. ^{7 8} Perceptions of fairness are increased when: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • decisions appear neutral and unbiased • people are treated with respect • they understand how decisions are made and what is expected of them • they are able to make their voice heard
Holistic support	Multi-modal or holistic interventions which address a range of problems linked to offending are particularly effective, and sequencing is also important - e.g. stabilising chaotic substance misuse or securing accommodation before enrolling a client in a behavioural programme. Integrated case management and multi-agency partnerships have both proven effective in reducing reoffending. ^{1 2}

Promoting social inclusion

CASSPLUS's primary aim is to reduce (re)offending by addressing clients' needs. But CASSPLUS doesn't only work with offenders: it also supports victims, witnesses, families — anyone in the court who needs their help. This may decrease offending: there is substantial overlap between victims and offenders, particularly for violent offences, and family members and victims may also have needs that may contribute to them offending themselves in future. Supporting victims can also decrease their chances of future victimisation, and so reduce offending in that way.

⁴ MoJ. *Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending* (2013).

⁵ Scottish Government. *What works to reduce reoffending: a summary of the evidence* (2015).

⁶ HMIP. *Reconciling Desistance and What Works* (2019).

⁷ HMPPS. *Guidance: Procedural justice* (2019).

⁸ Criminal Justice Alliance. *To be fair: procedural fairness in courts* (2014).

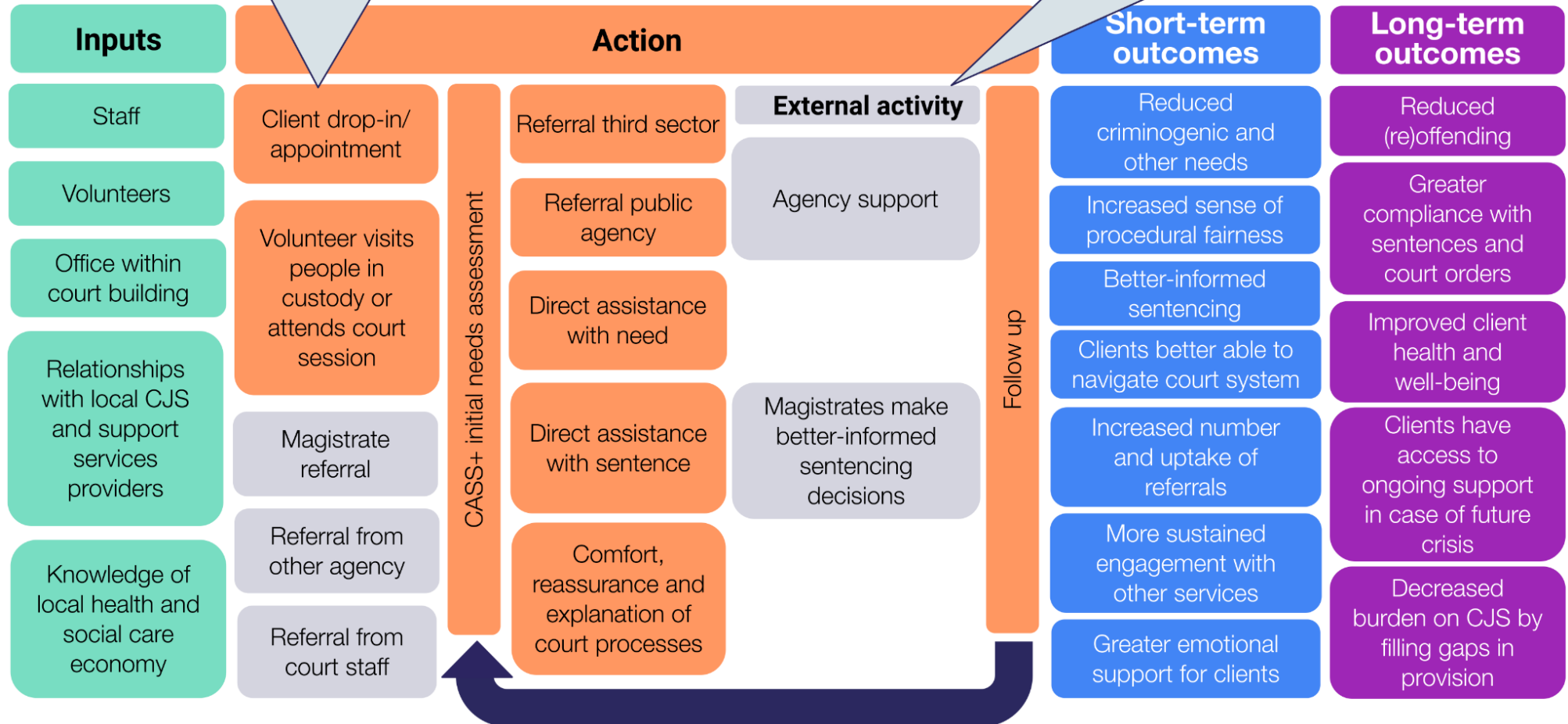
CASSPLUS doesn't limit its interventions to where it is likely to have an impact on future offending, however. It also acts to help people who come through the courts and seek support, whatever their situation. This is in service of CASSPLUS's broader aim, which is to prevent social exclusion and support those who are socially excluded. We have also included these clients within the CASSPLUS theory of change, as well as defendants.

The Theory of Change

CASS+ Theory of Change: promoting social inclusion

CASS+’s client group includes everyone in contact with the court, not only defendants or offenders

The CASS+ Theory of Change is interwoven with available external support/services.



CASSPLUS actions/interventions are in orange, while those of other services and agencies are in grey.

The CASSPLUS method

What works	CASSPLUS action	Explanation
Addressing criminogenic needs	<i>Direct assistance with need/ sentence</i> <i>Referrals</i>	CASSPLUS provides direct assistance applying for benefits and other financial help, as well as referrals to services for substance misuse, accommodation, mental health, and other criminogenic needs. They help clients develop fine payment plans and liaise with court staff.
Supportive networks and relationships	<i>Comfort, reassurance and explanation of court processes</i> <i>Referrals</i>	By providing a supportive presence within the court and a listening ear to their clients, CASSPLUS helps them cope with the immediate stress of the court. CASSPLUS also gives ongoing encouragement to many of their clients to help them stay positive and motivate themselves, and generally offers a positive and supportive relationship and connection to the community.
Perceptions of procedural justice and fairness	<i>Comfort, reassurance and explanation of court processes</i> <i>Direct assistance with sentence</i>	Clients often struggle to understand court proceedings and what decision has been reached. CASSPLUS helps explain legal terminology and the practicalities of sentencing, as well as sometimes advocating on behalf of clients when they lack other representation and making magistrates and court staff aware of mitigating factors where relevant.
Holistic support	<i>Direct assistance with need</i> <i>Referrals</i> <i>Comfort, reassurance and explanation of court processes</i>	Many support services are 'mono-problem' and time-limited, and struggle to deal with interconnections between multiple needs. CASSPLUS provides holistic support and informal case management for clients with multiple needs, offering a single point of contact or crisis management service for complex cases. They respond to clients' priorities in sequencing and simultaneously address contributing factors to their problems.

Overview of outcomes of CASSPLUS

	Outcome	Finding
Short-term	Reduced criminogenic and other needs	89% (n=24) felt that CASSPLUS had improved their situation, or had some kind of positive impact on their outcome. There was on average a reduction in need severity between first and last needs assessments across all need types.
	Increased sense of procedural fairness	We did not find an impact on perceptions of procedural fairness however, 7% (n=7) interviewed or surveyed felt that CASSPLUS had a positive impact on their understanding of the sentence given and what was required of them, and 67% (n=18) said that CASSPLUS had a positive impact on their understanding of court processes as a whole.
	Better-informed sentencing	7% (n=7) clients we spoke to explicitly said that a member of the CASSPLUS team had been in court with them for support and 4 of these said CASSPLUS spoke on behalf or provided information to the court. Magistrates did not agree that CASSPLUS had a direct impact on sentencing, but probation staff said CASSPLUS were helpful in sharing information for pre-sentence reports.
	Better navigation of the court system	67% (n=18) of clients we spoke to or surveyed said that CASSPLUS had either helped them understand what to expect at court, or helped them interpret what had happened afterward.
	Increased number and uptake of referrals	Between January 2021 and mid December 2021 the CASSPLUS team made a total of 1,865 referrals, equating to around 7 referrals per client. 89% (n=24) of clients interviewed or surveyed stated that they felt they were in need of help prior to engagement with CASSPLUS but not actually accessing any support.
	More sustained engagement with other services	93% (n=25) of people interviewed or surveyed reported having follow up calls from CASSPLUS and many of these referenced support staying in contact with other services.
	Greater emotional support for clients	89% (n=24) of clients we interviewed or surveyed said that they received emotional support or felt generally supported by CASSPLUS.

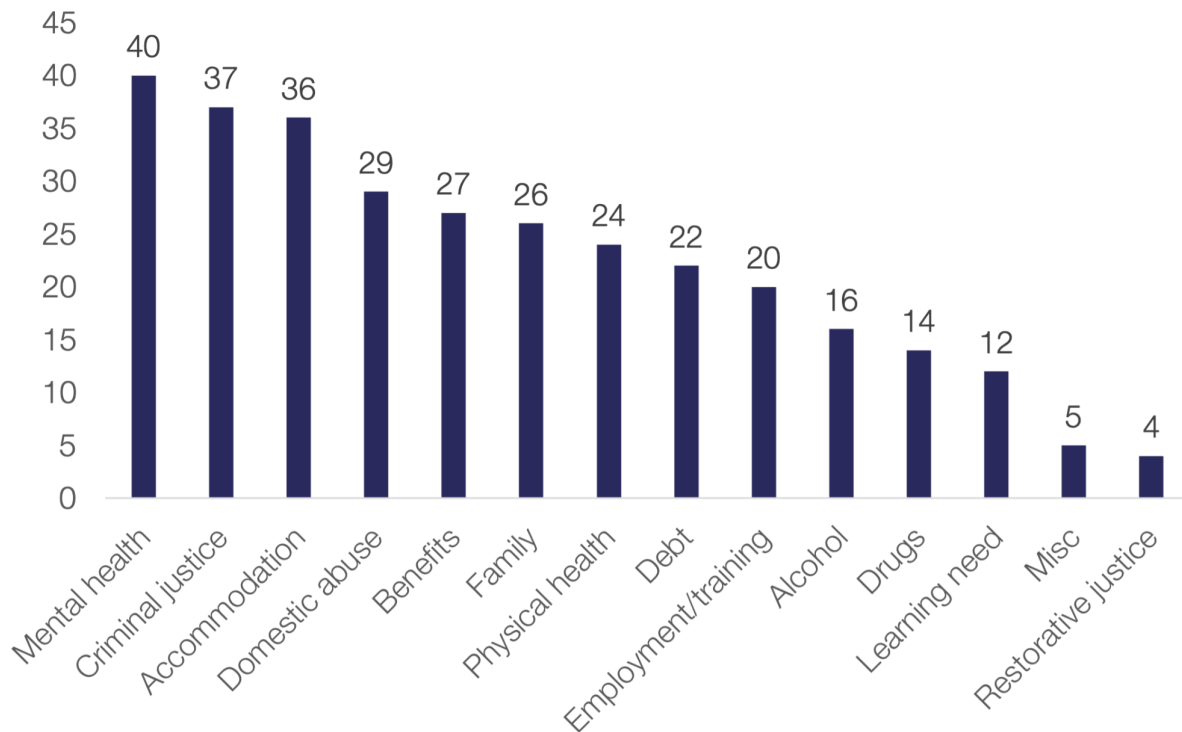
Long-term	Reduced re(offending)	<i>Not evidenced as yet in this evaluation (awaiting results from Ministry of Justice Data Lab)</i>
	Greater compliance with sentences and court orders	<i>Not evidenced in this evaluation.</i>
	Improved client health and wellbeing	78% (n=21) of clients we interviewed or surveyed said CASSPLUS helped with their general wellbeing.
	Clients have access to ongoing support in case of future crisis	78% (n=21) of clients we spoke to or surveyed said that they felt they would have access to future support from CASSPLUS should they need it.
	Decreased burden on the criminal justice system by filling gaps in provision	A number of court-based service stakeholders that we interviewed articulated either how CASSPLUS were able to provide clients with a different kind of support that they couldn't offer, or felt that their workload was somehow reduced by the ability to refer individuals onto CASSPLUS.

Short term outcomes of CASSPLUS

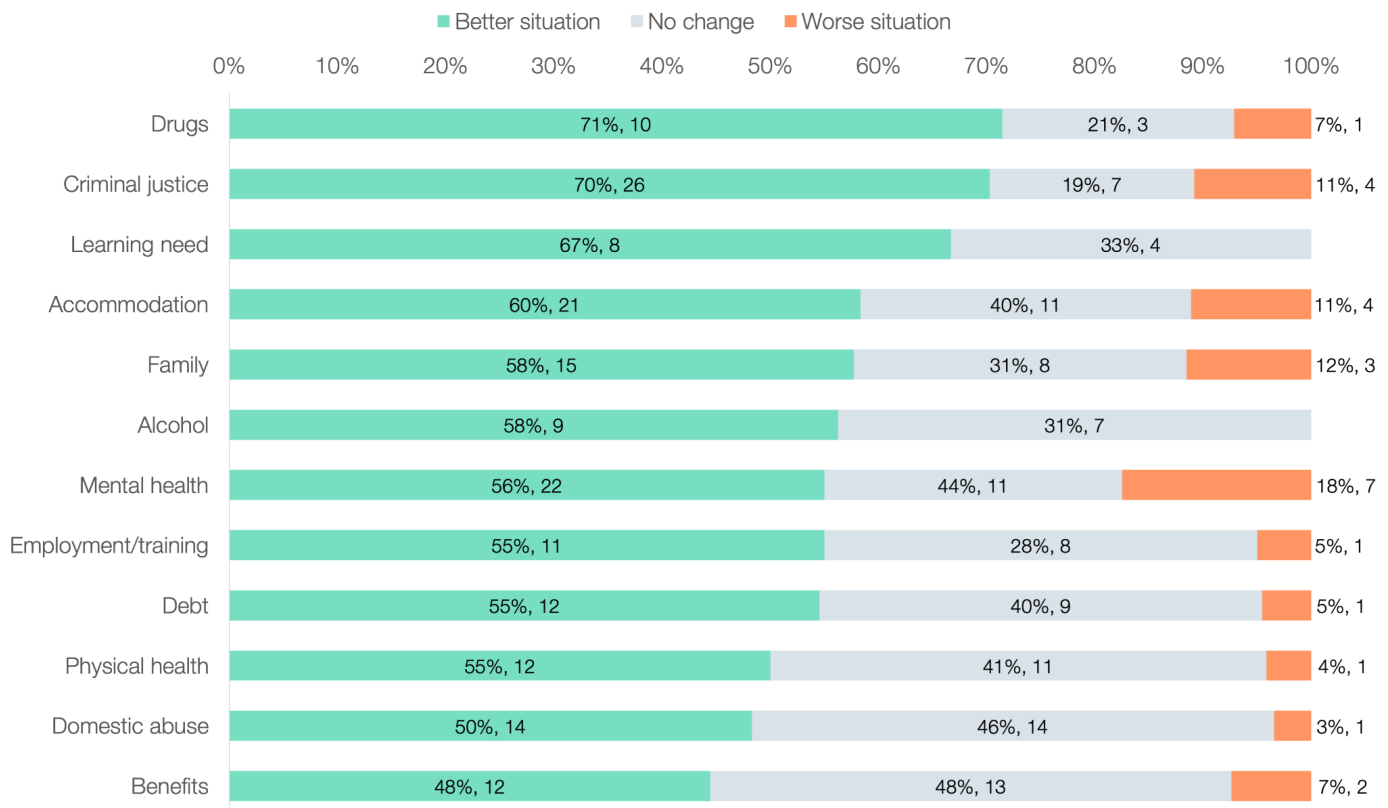
Reduced criminogenic and other needs

As described in the methods section, we worked together with the CASSPLUS team to develop a needs assessment process which would allow us to track how the level of need of clients changes over time during CASSPLUS intervention.

Number of clients with a need identified at first assessment and at least two needs assessments recorded, by need type



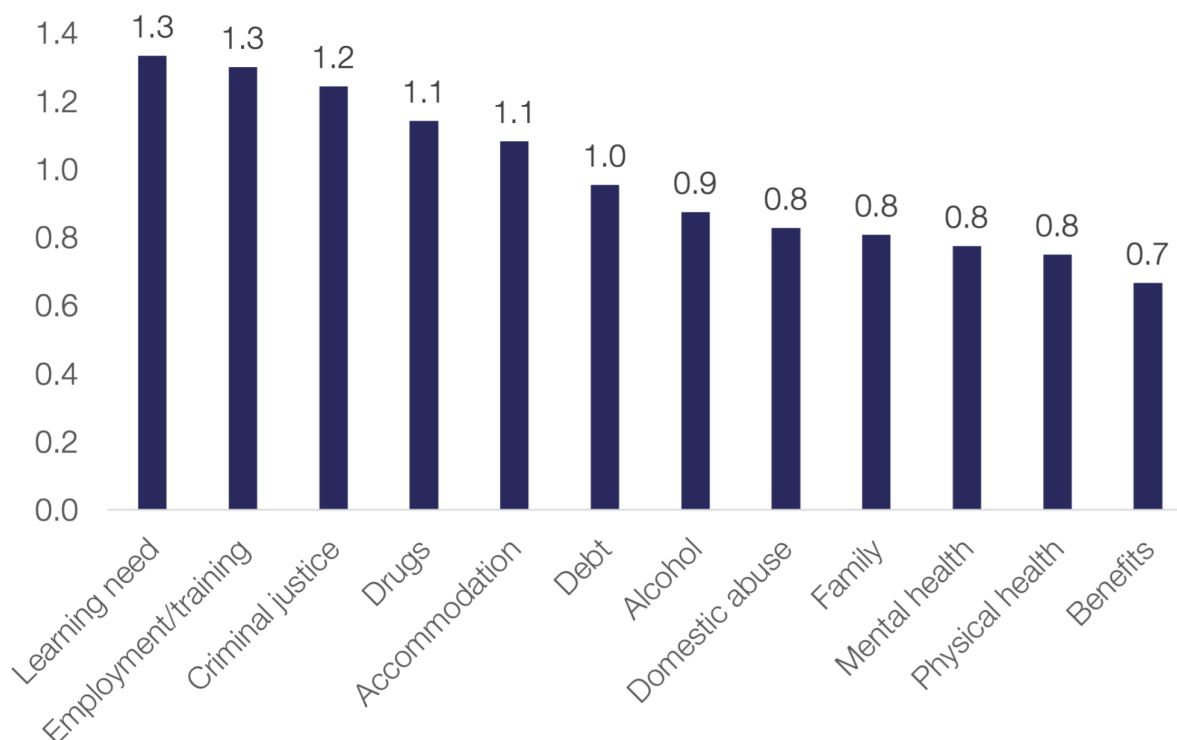
Number and proportion of clients with a need identified at first assessment whose need had improved, stayed the same or worsened, by need type



N.B. 'restorative justice' and 'miscellaneous' needs have been excluded due to small numbers. Only those with at least two assessments recorded have been included.

Across most need types, a majority of clients with an identified need said that need had improved during the period they were in contact with CASSPLUS. There was significant variation across need types, with drugs, criminal justice and learning needs most likely to have improved and physical health, domestic abuse and benefits least likely to have improved. For physical health and domestic abuse needs, this is to be expected given the difficulty of addressing these problems, especially in a short timeframe. The finding on benefits is more surprising, as it was frequently mentioned by staff as an important form of assistance CASSPLUS provides. However, all clients in receipt of benefits are flagged as having benefits needs; it is not necessarily an indication they require any particular support in this area. Approximately half (n=7) of those with a recorded benefit need that stayed the same fell into this category. The same applies to recorded domestic abuse needs: of the 14 individuals with an identified domestic abuse need that did not improve, 6 had experienced historic abuse with no current need. There is also the added challenge of benefits reduction, that means it can be difficult to find solutions for clients.

Average change in need severity on a 5-point scale for those with a need identified at first assessment. Positive value = reduced severity on average



N.B. 'restorative justice' and 'miscellaneous' needs have been excluded due to small numbers. Only those with at least two assessments recorded have been included.

There was on average a reduction in need severity between first and last assessments across all need types. Needs were ranked on a 5-point scale, so an improvement of 1 point is equivalent to moving up a quintile, e.g. from the bottom 20% (first quintile) in terms of need level to the lower-middle 20% (second quintile). For example, this could look like moving from being at risk of homelessness to being in temporary accommodation. The average improvement was greatest for learning, employment and criminal justice needs. Physical health and benefits needs had the smallest average improvement as well as being least likely to have improved, but there was still a significant positive change during the period of CASSPLUS's involvement.

In addition, we discussed the impact on needs in our interviews with CASSPLUS clients. **24 of the 27 clients we interviewed or surveyed (=89%) felt that CASSPLUS had improved their situation, or had some kind of positive impact on their outcome.** 20 of these clients stated specifically that at least one need they identified at initial engagement with CASSPLUS had improved as a result of CASSPLUS intervention. 10 clients said at least two needs had improved as a result of CASSPLUS intervention.

However, 9 clients were also able to identify a need which they felt had *not* improved over the time that they were engaged with CASSPLUS. This was often (though not always) described to have been because the resolution of the need was dependent on another service, and generally clients in these circumstances still felt that CASSPLUS has had an overall positive impact on them.

“[The CASSPLUS Coordinator] was speaking to every Tom, Dick and Harry, speaking to her supervisors, you know, whoever, trying to [help]. But she reached a bit of a dead end. You know what this country’s like, the housing crisis...She did her best, she kept trying and trying and didn’t get frustrated, but in the end couldn’t find anything. But she always told me exactly what she was going to do so I was always in the loop. I always felt optimistic. Each week I looked forward to speaking to her even though it was always bad news
- I just felt like someone was on my side.”
- CASSPLUS Client

“Even though [CASSPLUS Coordinator] tried her best, they wouldn’t even comply with her. There was only so much she could do, bless her. But she made me feel so supported...she would tell us encouraging words. It made all the difference really. It gave me a more positive outlook.”
- CASSPLUS Client

“Don’t get me wrong, the forklift course was fun to do. I was excited to get a job in forklifting. But obviously to find out after the course that you have to have experience to get a job. If you haven’t got a job you can’t get experience...At the time I was going through quite a lot and it would have helped out a lot if I could have been given more interview training. So then obviously interviews would have been a lot easier if you know what I mean. If they had referred me it would have been a lot easier. And like I say It would have been helpful if I was offered some mental health support as well. Because of the crime that was committed I didn’t have any support”
- CASSPLUS Client

Clearly the impact of the service is very much dependent on the availability of other services. Stakeholders are also keenly aware of this.

“If they were doing their job at its most efficient, the body they were referring to would be able to respond. They are a sticking plaster at the moment, bounded by the availability of other services.”

- Defence Solicitor

This is an important point for thinking about the operating model of the service. Part of the reason CASSPLUS has to remain open and free of thresholds is because it is vital for them to be able to keep those on waiting lists for other support services engaged and supported over what can often become a lengthy interim period. The demand on CASSPLUS will fluctuate in response to the availability of other services, with repeat demand taking up an increasing proportion of time when other services are full up. The Covid-19 pandemic was a good example of this happening in practice.

As discussed earlier in the report, the operating model functions not just to signpost clients, but to provide direct assistance to clients in accessing services or applying for benefits. The majority of clients referred in one way or another to the direct assistance provided, described it in a very positive light.

“It helped me feel confident in what I was doing as well because obviously if I just had to fill all the forms in myself, I wasn’t sure what the process was and I didn’t know what was going on right now. But I always felt confident and I always felt if I wasn’t sure about anything I could always ask them and they explained it really well.”

- CASSPLUS Client

“[CASSPLUS Coordinator] has a more direct approach. She would try on our behalf...She made me feel very supported, which made a lot of difference. We felt like we were pretty much left alone so it really does make all the difference.”

- CASSPLUS Client

Stakeholders in the courts also identified direct assistance as a core component of the CASSPLUS model, and one interpreted it as pro-social modelling:

“[CASSPLUS] will just get on the phone. They will start talking to a professional about it. And because they have problems with communications - if you show them you can make progress in that way you are pro-social modelling.

[Clients] are shown how to approach the problem. Learning how to problem-solve”
- Court Probation Officer

Increased sense of procedural fairness

In the first part of the evaluation, developing the theory of change for the CASSPLUS service, we looked at what we know works to reduce reoffending and the CASSPLUS approach to supporting clients pre- and post- court.

There is evidence that an increased perception of procedural justice and fairness can have a positive impact on the likelihood of reoffending.^{9, 10, 11, 12} Our early interviews with CASSPLUS staff and stakeholders found that clients were seen to often struggle to understand court proceedings and what decision has been reached. CASSPLUS helps explain legal terminology and the practicalities of sentencing to its clients.

We tested this theory in interviews conducted with CASSPLUS clients in the second phase of the evaluation, but did not find significant evidence to suggest that CASSPLUS has an impact on perceptions of procedural fairness.

The majority of defendants we interviewed during the evaluation were generally accepting of the sentence given and had admitted guilt either at the time or later down the line. The focus of the interviews was on the CASSPLUS service, and so did not investigate offence circumstances in detail, but it was interesting to hear the majority of service users being openly accepting of the court outcome.

We can conclude that the CASSPLUS clients we interviewed generally had a fairly positive perception of procedural justice, but none provided us with a clear steer that this was as a result of CASSPLUS intervention.

⁹ MoJ. Transforming Rehabilitation: a summary of evidence on reducing reoffending (2013).

¹⁰ HMPPS. Guidance: Procedural justice (2019).

¹¹ Criminal Justice Alliance, To be fair: procedural fairness in courts (2014).

¹² Scottish Government. What works to reduce reoffending: a summary of the evidence (2015).

However, according to procedural justice theory, there are four key elements of perceptions of procedural justice: voice, neutrality, respect and trustworthy motives.¹³ While our interviewees did not draw a direct link between positive perceptions of the court process or criminal justice system and CASSPLUS intervention, many did highlight that they felt ‘heard’ by CASSPLUS.

“I think the points that I’ve raised on my side of the story have definitely been taken into account....yeah, I definitely feel that I’ve been heard.”
- CASSPLUS Client

“I think it was the sort of friendly interactions from them. That made you feel like you were being listened to.”
- CASSPLUS Client

Perceptions of fairness can also be increased when the person can understand how decisions are made and what is expected of them. **7 of the 27 clients interviewed or surveyed felt that CASSPLUS had a positive impact on their understanding of the sentence given and what was required of them, and 18 said that CASSPLUS had a positive impact on their understanding of court processes as a whole.**

“They told me that they would be in court and that if I didn’t understand anything they would explain it to me. Then when I came out of court, they explained how long I had, how many days I had and all that [in relation to the sentence given].”
- CASS + Client

“In the past I’ve had solicitors who I felt like a burden to, to go and ask them what was going on and even then I didn’t really feel like I knew what was going on. But these guys just always kept me informed.”
- CASSPLUS Client

A learning for a future evaluation would be to test this hypothesis with a control group of defendants who did not engage with CASSPLUS and a sample of CASSPLUS clients, to evaluate whether there is a statistical difference between the numbers of defendants who have a positive or negative view of procedural justice following their case being heard at court.

¹³ Tyler, T.R. (2008). ‘Procedural justice and the courts’, Court Review, 44(1/2), pp. 26-31

Better-informed sentencing

The government set out five key principles of sentencing in its 2020 smarter sentencing white paper: punishment, reduction of crime, reparation, rehabilitation and public protection. The paper sets out three key issues with existing sentencing outcomes - one of these is “addressing the causes of offending”.

Our theory of change for the CASSPLUS service identified better-informed sentencing as an intended short-term outcome of the service. CASSPLUS staff often sit in court during hearings, in particular sentencing hearings, and are sometimes asked to share information with magistrates during the hearings. CASSPLUS also have strong relationships with probation services, and where probation have been asked to produce a pre-sentence report, CASSPLUS may share background information to feed into the report.

In theory, over the longer term, this results in the drivers of offending behaviour being addressed through a more appropriate sentence, and therefore less likelihood of recidivism.

Because CASSPLUS is a non-statutory service and not part of the criminal justice system, we did not have access to data on sentence concordance, or rate of Pre-Sentence Report requests from magistrates, to enable a comparison between cases with and without some form of CASSPLUS involvement with the defendant. However, we interviewed stakeholders and clients to test this hypothesis.

7 out of the 27 clients we spoke to explicitly said that a member of the CASSPLUS team had been in court with them for support and 4 of these said CASSPLUS spoke on behalf or provided information to the court.

“She [CASSPLUS Coordinator] was saying [to the court] that I was engaging with [a drug and alcohol service], and basically saying what I was involved with and basically that I’m sorry and things like that.”
- CASSPLUS Client

“The [CASSPLUS Coordinator] called me into an office before the court hearing, told me how the process would go and asked me if I wanted her to be in court with me. And it all went from there really. And then she went to

“speak to the court to say that she would be in there to kind of represent me and keep me calm and organise me with my emotions if you will.”
- CASSPLUS Client

“I think [CASSPLUS Coordinator] has spared me prison. Because if I was going up to answer the charges I’m facing tomorrow and I didn’t have anyone to represent me I think I would have been stuck. I think I would have been put inside by now but X was the one that contacted a Solicitor who advised me on what to do.”
- CASSPLUS Client

We also heard from some stakeholders in the courts that CASSPLUS are able to inform sentencing:

“Sometimes I will ask [CASSPLUS] to say a few words in court. [Magistrates] want confirmation of what [defendants] have or have not been doing. Little bits of information that can be confirmed are very helpful to the court. And the court prefers to get what I want to say from independent sources.”
- Defence Solicitor

CASSPLUS Coordinators talked about being able to influence outcomes in some cases:

“I prioritise people who are at risk of going to prison if we can potentially make a difference to the outcome.”
- CASSPLUS Staff

However the three magistrates we interviewed at different sites, while positive about the impact of CASSPLUS on addressing defendant needs, did not see them as influencing sentencing outcomes in the same way as was perceived by other stakeholders.

It is also worth noting that in many cases, CASSPLUS do not see clients until after sentencing. We were told it is often the case that clients may not see the opportunity to engage until directed to see CASSPLUS by magistrates during the sentencing hearing. Therefore there is a more limited pool of clients for whom CASSPLUS can impact the information provided in advance of sentencing.

Clients better able to navigate court system

Stakeholders had different views on the role of CASS in helping clients navigate the court system. Some felt that this wasn't a key part of the job, but something that CASSPLUS are equipped to do occasionally.

"Most people understand the system and the potential for custody. Most people understand it. But they will educate people too."
- Court Probation Officer

Others felt strongly that this was at the core of the mission, and highly impactful.

"A vast majority [of my clients] have learning difficulties. They live a disorganised life. They mention incidents of disorder in their lives...years gone by there was a Citizens Advice Bureau, but that's gone now."
- Defence Solicitor

"I work with individuals who struggle to access mainstream society. CASSPLUS hold their hands and they are a beacon of hope in the court environment."
- Court Probation Officer

Although CASSPLUS clients we interviewed did not clearly articulate an impact on perceptions of procedural fairness, many were clear that their understanding of the process and sentence had been positively impacted. **18 of the 27 clients we spoke to or surveyed said that CASSPLUS had either helped them understand what to expect at court, or helped them interpret what had happened afterward.**

"She [CASSPLUS] explained it properly to me. I understood a lot better so that was good...I was so paranoid obviously because I didn't know what was happening. I was concerned and they helped me through it really. Like explained it properly to me."
- CASSPLUS Client

"My solicitor was telling me. But I didn't know what she was on about. She was using fancy posh words and all that. So I rang up CASSPLUS and then they rang my solicitor and then CASS rang me back and they explained it a lot

better to me and I understood... I didn't understand why the Solicitor couldn't explain it that way."

- CASSPLUS Client

"I was quite nervous and I didn't know what was going to happen. But after speaking to [CASSPLUS Coordinator] she put it in a clearer picture for me."

- CASSPLUS Client

Whilst we expected this view to be particularly strong in first-time defendants, we actually found it dispersed across all types of clients. Some of the first time defendants we spoke to actually highlighted a need for even greater support. These clients seemed to have been particularly distressed by the court experience. The lack of information provided in advance of the court day had caused extremely high levels of anxiety. CASSPLUS seemed able to provide a degree of assistance on the day, but for these clients, in a sense, the damage had already been done. CASSPLUS should continue to work closely with police partners to ensure referrals come in from pre-court as well as on the day so that they can impact these cases too.

Increased number and uptake of referrals

CASSPLUS is fairly unusual in that the service it provides can be a bespoke mix of mentoring, direct assistance (advocacy-type work) and signposting/making referrals. In the development of the theory of change, we identified that the combination of these three elements together were perceived as an important factor in helping clients to access support from specialist organisations to help them address entrenched criminogenic needs.

Between January 2021 and mid December 2021 the CASSPLUS team made a total of 1,865 referrals, equating to around 7 referrals per client.

Due to the lack of any control group data, we cannot say whether CASSPLUS has impacted the uptake of referrals, however we are able to test through client and stakeholder interviews whether there was a *perceived* effect on uptake of referrals.

We found there was a general sense amongst court-based stakeholders, that CASSPLUS is providing a unique service in the court environment, and that therefore the perception is that referrals made, would not have been made without their intervention.

“I think knowing that somebody will take action on your issue straight away is really significant for a lot of people.”

“Signposting and advice can be done quickly and efficiently without people having to contact numerous different agencies, waiting for appointments, going to different places”

- Probation

“They are an asset to the court environment. We don’t have time as Ushers to talk them through stuff. [With CASSPLUS] you have the presence of a person. If you’re given a phone number you won’t follow it through. If you say here’s a person, you are much more likely to follow it through.”

- Court Usher

We cannot quantitatively evidence that the individuals supported by CASSPLUS and then referred onto other support organisations would not have been referred (or self-referred) to those services outside of the court setting. However, it is notable that **24 of the 27 clients interviewed or surveyed stated that they felt they were in need of help prior to engagement with CASSPLUS but not actually accessing any support**, and 16 clients were referred on to other agencies by CASSPLUS.

“I was receiving no help at all [prior to CASSPLUS engagement].”

- CASSPLUS Client

This was supported by stakeholders from some of the referral organisations.

“Unless people knew about us already, they wouldn’t necessarily find their way to us without CASSPLUS. Even if they did know, they might struggle to access the service without proactive support.”

- Drug and Alcohol Service

Some clients also felt more able to reach out to other organisations for help after CASSPLUS support.

“[After I spoke to CASSPLUS], I felt more able to reach out [to other organisations].”

- CASSPLUS Client

However, others were already accessing support prior to court and had no need for further referrals. Some were referred back to services that they had previously engaged with, but despite endorsement from CASSPLUS were refused access to services due to previously missed appointments.

“I thought actually with so much going on, I just left. With what I was doing with everything else I didn’t want to reel in more groups.”

- CASSPLUS Client

“I didn’t know my head from my elbow and I’d missed two appointments. You know, and I was very much like ‘Well actually, all you want to do is know my business and want it done. You don’t want to help.’ So it was quite frustrating.”

- CASSPLUS Client

More sustained engagement with other services

For clients who give permission for CASSPLUS to remain in contact after the day in court, there remains an option for on-going mentoring and motivation support. As set out in the theory of change, the intention behind this is to help clients sustain relationships with other support services in order to address needs in the longer term, thereby increasing the chances of rehabilitation and reducing the likelihood of reoffending (as well as providing direct emotional support and encouragement). Many CASSPLUS clients have difficulties in managing appointment attendance, and CASSPLUS play a role in supporting clients to manage their time and communicate difficulties to other providers.

“[The CASSPLUS Co-ordinator] asked me to call her on my day off to let me know if I got the place. It felt like I was talking to my gran or my auntie. It felt like she really cared.”

- CASSPLUS Client

“I’d say about 90% of people have followed through with referrals when I call them after three weeks. We also hear that through the services themselves. But that may just be in Cornwall.”

- CASSPLUS Co-ordinator

CASSPLUS also plays a role in the identification of need, and importantly in helping clients accept there is a need. This is likely to have an impact on the sustainability of engagement with support services.

“When I first came into contact with CASSPLUS, looking back, my mental health was [at its worst]. It had been a long on-going issue, and I think there was just a long deep-down barrier of suppression. But even just getting that leaflet off them and hearing about the Sunflower Centre and stuff, anytime I do feel a bit low I think oh yeah the Sunflower Centre - go down there. And it kind of opened the door to thinking ‘no - there’s needs, you’re not ok’ type of thing. Now I’m much better.”

- CASSPLUS Client

This identification and acceptance of need is outlined as a key part of Prochaska and Di Clemente’s stages of change. CASS PLUS is able to support clients through the stages from pre-contemplation of need, to awareness of the need, to developing the intention to address the need and finally taking action to address the issue. For some clients CASSPLUS also plays an active role in the maintenance of the action taken to address the issue.¹⁴

25 of the 27 people interviewed or surveyed reported having follow up calls from CASSPLUS. Clients reported that CASSPLUS frequently made contact with other services on their behalf. While this doesn’t always result in the intended outcome being achieved, it has meant on a number of occasions that support has been extended or the client re-engaged with a service. For example, one client, after self-referring to a substance misuse service, had not heard anything further. CASSPLUS were able to get in touch with the service and establish that the referral had been incorrectly dropped. The client was subsequently introduced to the service.

“[The CASSPLUS coordinators] have been helping me get in touch with my counsellor. [The counsellor] just keeps seeing me once and then I never hear from them again...but [the CASSPLUS Co-ordinator] gets me back in touch with my counsellor again.”

- CASSPLUS Client

Greater emotional support for clients

The Criminal Justice System is designed to serve justice, and the vast majority of agencies present in the courts are there in aid of the finding of fact and assisting in the

¹⁴ Prochaska, J & Di Clemente, C (1986) Towards a Comprehensive Model of Change

justice process. The process itself takes little account of the emotional wellbeing of members of the public involved, whether defendant, victim or witness.

Some emotional support is provided for victims and witnesses by the witness service (delivered nationally by Citizens Advice), but there is nothing in place nationally for defendants. The solicitors we interviewed as part of this evaluation referred to the clear need clients often have for emotional support and to their inability to provide it in their role. Existing research sets out the general practice and approach of UK solicitors in providing ‘objective and independent legal advice’, and not becoming involved on a moral or personal level. They are generally concerned with the provision of legal advice, and not the emotional or practical needs of their clients on the day.¹⁵

Some courts (Truro being a prime example) now have a plethora of agencies co-located in court to provide services to defendants. However, these are specific in nature and not always easily accessible. They are not designed to provide general emotional support to defendants on their day in court, but to address an identified need.

CASSPLUS fills an important gap in being the only organisation present in Court with the aim of supporting defendants first and foremost, from a person-centric standpoint. Stakeholders and clients alike agreed that CASSPLUS provides valuable emotional support to defendants (and also to victims and witnesses). The theory of change outlines the intended impact of the provision of emotional support in resulting in some of the other mid-long term outcomes. By supporting clients to cope emotionally with their day at court, they are more likely to be successful in addressing needs and making positive changes (as per the stages of change outlined above).

Our interviews with stakeholders in the courts suggest that CASSPLUS are seen to be overwhelmingly effective in the provision of emotional support to clients.

“A lot of the time because they are going in for a general chit chat, they think / *can chill out here and have a sit down and a cup of tea*. They always come out a lot better. They go in with tears, but never out.”
- Security Staff

“They show them a bit of kindness. Someone feels invested in them. Makes them feel seen.”

¹⁵ Pivaty, A (2020), *Criminal Defence at Police Stations: A Comparative and Empirical Study*.

- Probation

Helping clients to regulate emotions on the day of court itself is likely to ensure they have a better understanding of the process and outcome, and in the longer term are more likely to retain or develop connections with the community.

24 of the 27 clients we interviewed or surveyed said that they received emotional support or felt generally supported by CASSPLUS.

“When I found CASSPLUS a bit of light shone on me...just knowing they’re there I feel a lot better mentally.”

- CASSPLUS Client

“They were there to meet me in court and go through it with me and help me and, you know, calm the situation down and everything. Because it was quite traumatic.”

- CASSPLUS Client

“In the end it was OK because they helped me. And it was such a relief because I can’t usually go out of my house and I was on my own and in tears. So she really looked after me.”

- CASSPLUS Client

Clients also frequently referred to ongoing feelings of emotional support after the initial day at court alongside the practical help provided by CASSPLUS.

“It’s less on my mind. I can just relax more when I’m home because I know it’s been dealt with.”

- CASSPLUS Client

“I wouldn’t be alive if it wasn’t for them.”

- CASSPLUS Client

Long term outcomes of CASSPLUS

Reduced reoffending

As part of this evaluation we submitted data to the Ministry of Justice Data Lab. Due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic the Justice Data Lab is currently experiencing significant delays in conducting reoffending analysis. This report will be updated with the findings of the actual impact of CASSPLUS on reoffending in due course (if the results are deemed statistically significant).

We also explored with some clients we interviewed whether they perceived CASSPLUS to have had an impact on the likelihood of reoffending or returning to court. This is a difficult subject to discuss pragmatically with interviewees, and therefore findings are limited without the completed reoffending analysis. Three interviewees clearly stated that they felt CASSPLUS had a positive impact on reducing the likelihood of future involvement in the criminal justice system, but others found it difficult to answer such a theoretical question.

One client stated they had not had to return to Court since being supported by CASSPLUS and attributed this to a mix of the support provided by them as well as other agencies:

“I got support from CASSPLUS and the other people they referred me to, to realise I should keep myself away from trouble. I kept myself busy and stopped mixing with idiots.”
- CASSPLUS Client

Most other clients did not draw a direct connection between the service provided by CASSPLUS and any perceived risk of reoffending. Some felt confident that they were not at risk of reoffending but did not attribute this to CASSPLUS involvement or support.

Greater compliance with sentences and court orders

We were not able to obtain sentence or court order compliance statistics for this evaluation, though the reoffending analysis from the Justice Data Lab may provide an indication of the impact on sentence compliance by proxy.

However there is evidence (as per the theory of change) that believing that policing and the courts are fair can improve compliance.^{16 17} Perceptions of fairness are increased when:

- decisions appear neutral and unbiased
- people are treated with respect
- they understand how decisions are made and what is expected of them
- they are able to make their voice heard

As set out in the section covering the evidence around the short-term outcome of improved sense of procedural justice, CASSPLUS clients did feel that they had been 'heard' by CASSPLUS. We can therefore assume that this will have a small impact on perceptions of fairness and in turn on compliance with sentences, but are not able to quantify to what extent.

There were several examples given by clients of CASSPLUS assisting clients to pay fines, or to set up payment plans with the relevant authorities (in both criminal and civil cases). We can theorise, *though not prove*, that this will naturally increase rates of compliance compared to an absence of CASSPLUS involvement. Clients indicated that without CASSPLUS they wouldn't have known how to go about arranging a payment plan or where to speak to the right people. The visibility and accessibility of CASSPLUS means they become a single trusted point of contact for some clients who are more comfortable approaching a friendly face.

"I went in and said to her [CASSPLUS coordinator] about this car tax [overdue payment] and she said *oh ideal - the man from the DVLA is here today*. And so she took me to him there and then and he sorted it all out there and then. I didn't have to go to court or worry about it."
- CASSPLUS Client

Improved client health and well-being

21 of the 27 clients we interviewed or surveyed said CASSPLUS helped with their general wellbeing.

"CASSPLUS helped with my wellbeing. I felt reassured and I felt more confident in my day to day life."

¹⁶ HMPPS. *Guidance: Procedural justice* (2019).

¹⁷ Criminal Justice Alliance. *To be fair: procedural fairness in courts* (2014).

- CASSPLUS Client

Clients frequently referred to their mental health having improved along with their outlook on life:

“CASSPLUS definitely improved my wellbeing. [It has given me] peace of mind over it all to be honest. Like managing how to live properly without having to worry about other things with their help”

- CASSPLUS Client

“It gave me a more positive outlook...I think it was just down to her support and feeling that we'd been heard.”

- CASSPLUS Client

The theory of change also sets out the intention of CASSPLUS to set people up for the longer term by increasing their motivation and ability to manage situations independently. Interview participants generally agreed that CASSPLUS had a positive impact on their ability to deal with problems in the longer term:

“I think after the last 18 months...I'm fairly confident that there is always something that you're going to have to deal with, and you have to deal with it. And the support helps there, but ultimately you have to deal with it yourself and there's no magic wand. So it's a case of facing situations and dealing with them.”

- CASSPLUS Client

“I'm more comfortable now. In certain ways. Like down the phone - like speaking. They helped me...to be more confident in myself.”

- CASSPLUS Client

“I am learning to keep myself safe with the help of CASSPLUS.”

- CASSPLUS Client

Two clients we spoke to did not feel their general wellbeing had improved since CASSPLUS involvement. One of these stated that the practical help given (around preparing a CV) had been helpful, but didn't feel their general health and wellbeing had

been impacted. The other had a particularly traumatic experience of police custody and felt that the degree of support they were getting from mental health teams was not enough. They were satisfied with the provision of service by CASSPLUS but did not feel it had been enough to impact overall wellbeing.

Clients have access to on-going support in case of future crisis

21 of the 27 clients we spoke to or surveyed (=78%) said that they felt they would have access to future support from CASSPLUS should they need it. In 2021 the average (mean) number of interactions or interventions between a client and the CASSPLUS team was 12, indicating a degree of longer-term support provision.

Most of the clients we spoke to had engaged with CASSPLUS beyond an initial resolution of need at the time of the court appearance or initial referral. Sometimes this was to deal with needs that became apparent through further engagement and the building of a trusting relationship. Other times, there had been a break in engagement following the resolution of an initial need and a period of stability before the client re-engaged with the service to seek help with a different emerging issue.

“She’s helping me with a family solicitor and sorting arrangements with the kids. Because obviously my ex used to beat my son as well...I knew [CASSPLUS staff] dealt with that side of things as well. I knew she has other teams to the side of her on the women’s side.”
- CASSPLUS Client

This fits with the non-targeted nature of CASSPLUS support and their role as a sign-posting organisation. For those individuals who struggle accessing support, having a single, trusted point of contact to set them off in the right direction in the future is extremely useful.

“You might not need it [CASSPLUS] all the time, but knowing it’s there is invaluable.”
- CASSPLUS Client

“People working in council buildings are not equipped for a crisis. Being face to face is so important.”
- Court Probation Officer

Decreased burden on the Criminal Justice System and other services

A number of court-based service stakeholders that we interviewed articulated either how CASSPLUS were able to provide clients with a different kind of support that they couldn't offer, or felt that their workload was somehow reduced by the ability to refer individuals onto CASSPLUS.

"Sometimes I'm thinking where do we go now? So I say go and speak to CASSPLUS. It's that bit of compassion we can't do in our role. Leaving them with someone who can reassure them."

- Probation Officer

"Witnesses often have extensive needs, and I don't have the time to deal with them all."

- Witness Service (Citizens Advice)

"CASS are great at assisting and supporting people getting back on track, it certainly helps us as I think if they go on to being sentenced to Probation then at least we know at least they have sought some help and know where they can come if they need it."

- Probation Officer

Other agencies also commented on the ease of referral to CASSPLUS. We were told that CASSPLUS doesn't require as much information as other organisations to accept a referral and were therefore seen to be more efficient and effective, especially in resolving urgent issues. Their physical presence in court was again seen as a benefit and potential reduction in burden on other services, as referrals can be handed over and dealt with straight away. They also help reduce the burden on security staff.

"It definitely makes things a lot easier for us that we can refer someone to [CASSPLUS] and know that they're getting some help. You do get certain people in here who, you know, they just want some help."

- Cells Custody Officer (Serco)

“We had a girl who was being a bit...loud and boisterous. We talk [people] down, but can’t offer them what CASSPLUS can offer. So though they don’t manage the situation, they notice the situation and they get people to come in the office and chill out and chat to them.”
- Building Security Officer

Secondary benefits/outcomes

Impact on effectiveness of wider CJS and third sector

Many interviewees from other criminal justice agencies highlighted the very positive impact that the CASSPLUS service has on the effectiveness of their own work and ability to carry out their roles, rather than reducing the burden on their time (though as stated above - this was the case for some agencies).

“Having them in court saves time and makes our work more effective.”
- Witness Service (Citizens Advice)

“It helps because if some of the guys coming in think they could be losing their accommodation they start losing their minds. [CASSPLUS] makes our job easier because they have the answers. We don’t have them. And then [the defendants] aren’t so worried about aspects we can’t control.”
- Court Cells Security (Serco)

Referral routes are often two-way for CASSPLUS, as a result of having built strong relationships in the local area. As an example CASSPLUS might refer a client to a drug and alcohol service one day, and the next that same service may refer their clients to CASSPLUS to provide support around court attendance. Stakeholders also often referred to CASSPLUS as a fountain of local knowledge, indicating that they frequently call to ask what the CASSPLUS team know about other local agencies. In this way, CASSPLUS not only acts directly on behalf of clients, but facilitates local networks of information-sharing and support.

“I only know of the services available because of CASS. I probably wouldn’t have a clue [if they weren’t there].”
- Court Usher

“The [CASSPLUS] service is invaluable. I don't know what would happen if they weren't there...the whole system would just fall through.”
- Magistrate

“Without CASSPLUS I would have to develop 1-1 relationships with a variety of other stakeholders.”
- Witness Service (Citizens Advice)

“With my clients, obviously, there's potential to use substances in a reactionary form...my hope is that they can go to court, feel supported [by CASSPLUS] so that there's one less problem for them [which might lead] to use [of substances]. I'm hoping it will impact their recovery.”
- Drug and Alcohol Service

The organisation is also praised for information-sharing. The theory of change highlights explicitly the intention of CASSPLUS to provide information to the courts to inform sentencing decisions. Additionally, stakeholders referenced useful information being shared outside of this remit. This seems to result in an increased and more uniform understanding of individuals' circumstances and needs across the organisations involved.

“If I see an offender who's complex I will go over to CASSPLUS and say 'look this offender looks like they need some support'. We used to look at the court listings together which is a really effective way of identifying needs.”
- IDVA

“CASSPLUS have come up to us more than once with someone they were worried about - they shared the information in their notes.”
- Court Probation Officer

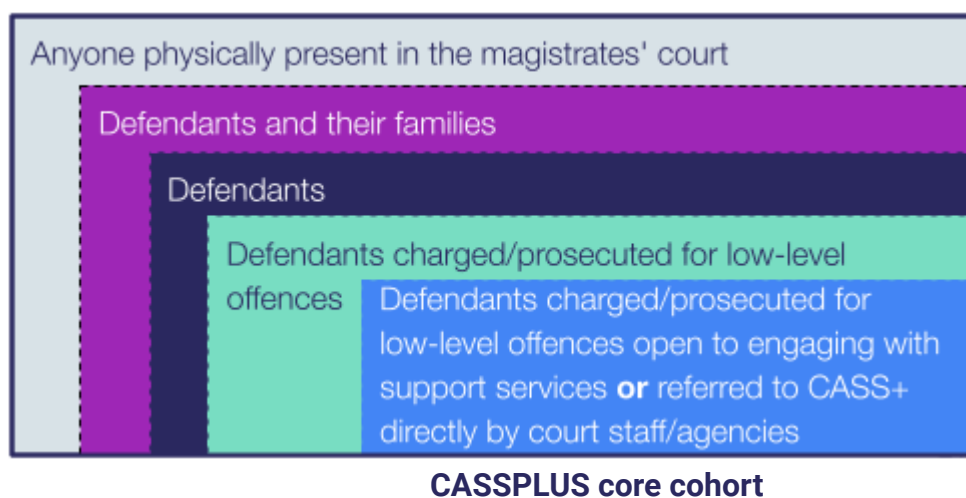
Process evaluation

Targeting

Staff and external stakeholders both indicated that CASSPLUS will support anyone, but that staff do prioritise when demand outstrips capacity. As shown in the diagram below, the core CASSPLUS cohort is defendants prosecuted for low-level offences who are open to engaging with support services and/or directly referred to CASSPLUS. It is important to note that there is substantial variation across the different CASSPLUS sites regarding their client cohorts (e.g. the balance between defendants and victims or witnesses, or those coming through the family court).

As a diversion service, CASSPLUS works principally with low-level offenders. It does not exclude those further along an offending journey, but it is intended as an early intervention service to prevent the escalation of offending. This is in contrast to criminal justice system resources, which are focused on the most serious and prolific offenders, rather than channelled into early intervention.

CASSPLUS prioritisation levels (lower = higher priority)



"We work firstly with people currently in CJS and their families, secondly anyone at the point of crisis."
- CASSPLUS Staff

CASSPLUS has a limited ability to target individuals: firstly, as a non-statutory service, it is limited in the information it can access about potential clients before they have agreed to

engage. This means it would struggle to target individuals based on particular characteristics or vulnerabilities. Secondly, CASSPLUS's accessible, open-to-all delivery model also prevents a high degree of targeting, though this is somewhat mitigated by the prioritisation strategy set out above. Nevertheless, CASSPLUS does conduct some degree of targeting to try to reach those most likely to benefit from its interventions.

The most basic of these forms of targeting is their place within the court building, which makes CASSPLUS well placed to capture people in crisis - particularly those who have been through the criminal justice system, but also a broader group who might be involved in the family court, tribunals, or have heard about the CASSPLUS service through word of mouth. CASSPLUS staff also do informal targeting and prioritisation within the court by visually identifying those who look vulnerable – for instance, those who are on their own or particularly young – or observing court listings to identify low-level offenders. However, CASSPLUS is dependent on the willingness of the client to engage, so whilst staff may seek to help some clients as a priority over others, the resulting client profile is unlikely to be 100% as intended.

A key means of indirect targeting used by CASSPLUS is through the strong relationships CASSPLUS coordinators have developed with statutory and non-statutory organisations. CASSPLUS is a well-embedded and known service within the three courts it has been working in for a longer period of time (Plymouth, Bodmin and Truro). In Newton Abbot the service was only rolled out in 2018 and has faced some initial barriers due to a lack of permanent space within the court to make the CASSPLUS service visible and accessible, and of course further limitations as a result of Covid-19, in particular with other services not being present at court.

In the other three courts, a key benefit of these well embedded networks and relationships is that statutory agencies are able to identify target clients on CASSPLUS's behalf. For example, magistrates, court and probation staff who identify outstanding offenders with support needs are able to refer directly to CASSPLUS. Similarly, CASSPLUS are generally provided with court listings the day before court so that they can identify potential clients.

How effective are these measures in ensuring CASSPLUS works with its target cohort?

	2019/20	2021 (January to October)
1. Those in contact with the Criminal Justice System (defendants, families, victims).	At least 66% of clients were defendants. Excluding cases where no answer was recorded, 81% of defendant clients had 5 convictions or fewer and 61% had 1 or none.	46% of clients were involved in the CJS as defendants. Of these clients only 28% disclosed having had a previous conviction. 87% of defendants had 5 or fewer convictions, and 64% had 1 or none.
2. Offenders committing low-level offences are unlikely to result in probation supervision.	Of all offences recorded, 20% were vehicle crime, 14% violence against the person, 12% public order, and 7% theft offences.	Of all offences recorded, 20% were vehicle crime, 15% violence against the person, 14% public order offences and only 0.04% of the recorded offences listed as theft.
3. Offenders with multiple and complex needs...	The average number of needs per client was 3.4 for all clients, whether stated as defendants or otherwise.	The average number of needs per client was 1.8, whether stated as defendants or otherwise.
4. ...specifically, problems with debt, housing, mental health, and/or substance misuse...	29% had a debt issue, 36% were on at least one benefit, 17% were homeless or of no fixed abode and 61% had a mental health issue. 19% had a drug need and 21% an alcohol need.	10% had a debt issue, 41% were on at least one benefit, 10% were homeless or of no fixed abode, 54% had a mental health need, 1% had a drug need and 2% an alcohol need.
5. ...but often with the level of need falling just short of thresholds for other statutory or third-sector services.	18 of 27 clients that we interviewed or surveyed stated that they were unable to access support elsewhere	
6. Those who would struggle to engage with services on their own.	At least 41% of CASSPLUS clients were not represented by a solicitor in 2019/20 and only 14% had a named	In the RAND evaluation of liaison and diversion services nationally, 26% of clients had no previous

	2019/20	2021 (January to October)
	probation officer. 12 of 27 interviewees said CASSPLUS made it easier for them to access support elsewhere.	health or social care service contacts recorded. ¹⁸ The CASSPLUS client cohort is likely to be similar.

The fact that CASSPLUS is open to anyone has been identified by interviewees as a critical success factor supporting perceptions of the approachability of the service. Essentially, in order to attract the most at-risk clients, CASSPLUS must cast its net wide. CASSPLUS may consider formalising a client prioritisation process to help focus the intervention of delivery on priority clients, without adversely impacting the operating model.

The needs assessment outcomes data supports this. For the vast majority of needs CASSPLUS clients identified, CASSPLUS were able to make some form of positive impact. There is some variance between the types of need, with seemingly the greatest impact being made on those with drugs needs. That said, it is important to note that data collection is still in its infancy. As time goes on CASSPLUS will be able to conduct a longitudinal study which could identify whether there might be certain “sweet spot” timelines, whereby if progress has not been made for a certain need within a certain timeframe, there may be an argument to focus resources on the needs where CASSPLUS is able to make the greatest impact.

Proportionality

CASSPLUS clients tend to follow one of four typical ‘journeys’. Which of the journeys a client takes is reflective of their level and type of need(s), as well as their willingness to engage with the service. It will often not be clear from an initial meeting whether the client is likely to end up having medium- or long-term support, and sometimes clients who initially had only a brief intervention or on-the-day support may return months or even years later for further support.

¹⁸ RAND Europe, *Outcome Evaluation of the National Model for Liaison and Diversion* (2021).

	1. Brief intervention	2. On-the-day support	3. Medium-term support	4. Long-term support
	Signposting	Signposting	Signposting	Signposting
		Direct assistance	Direct assistance	Direct assistance
			Mentoring	Mentoring
				Motivation
	Brief intervention	1 intervention	2-10 interactions	11+ interactions
2019/20	Unknown	TBC	TBC	TBC
2021 ¹⁹	Unknown	20 Clients (11%)	100 Clients (55%)	63 Clients (34%)

The proportion of clients on each of these pathways also varies depending on the court they attend. The courts in Cornwall are in more rural locations, so clients more frequently receive brief interventions and on-the-day support, with some follow-up over the phone, while in Devon (and in particular Plymouth) medium- and long-term clients often return to the court for follow-up meetings.

This **scaled approach** means that the level of CASSPLUS intervention can be adapted according to client needs, rather than taking a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. The CASSPLUS model is **client-led** in terms of how much support each client receives, and with what needs: there is no system of rationing the amount or kind of support available depending on the severity or nature of the client's needs. Demand stemming from ongoing long-term clients in Plymouth has been managed through the development of an appointments system, to limit the number of hours dedicated to ongoing clients each day and keeping time free for delivering 'on-the-day' work. However, this is a means of spreading demand rather than limiting the amount of support ultimately available to clients.

This model does have implications in terms of the proportionality of the service. A client with relatively limited support needs and/or a low likelihood of (re)offending is entitled to the same kind and degree of support as a more high-risk client. Equally, if a client keeps

¹⁹ This data covers all new clients January-October 2021. It is important to note some clients taken on towards the end of the year may continue to interact with CASSPLUS in 2022 and therefore some of those in the medium term bracket may shift into long-term support.

returning to CASSPLUS for more support, CASSPLUS will continue to provide it, even if this is in the form of ongoing mentoring or emotional support and the client's needs are not actually being reduced. Inevitably, therefore, the level of support provided will not always be proportionate to the degree of need or risk of (re)offending.

Nevertheless, being client-led does provide some advantages in terms of ensuring proportionality: clients are unlikely to spend time and energy seeking out support which they do not need, and the service can respond to new needs and changing circumstances as they become aware of them, rather than limiting support based on an initial needs assessment when there might be limited trust with the client. Moreover, CASSPLUS can focus their attention on clients who are willing to engage and want support, rather than spending time trying to engage those who are more resistant.

The **sequencing** of interventions is also client-led, so time and resources are not wasted trying to address less immediate problems before dealing with the fundamentals. For instance, mental health support is likely to be of limited use if someone is currently homeless or struggling to feed themselves due to debt or lack of income. Furthermore, sustained support is often needed to address criminogenic needs and support offenders. Desistance from offending is not often a straight line. Offenders are likely to have relapses. Support is therefore often most effective if it is available over an extended period of time, as well as taking a holistic approach to multiple need pathways.²⁰ Prochaska and Di Clemente's²¹ cycle of change illustrates how some people, despite maintenance of new behaviours can still relapse into old patterns of behaviour. But that an opportunity to go back through the stages of contemplation and preparation to change will often arise. The CASSPLUS model aligns closely with this theory by making support available to clients wherever they are in the cycle of change, and acknowledging where they are at that point in time.

Interviewees provided some examples of clients who had received longer-term support from CASSPLUS. These individuals were generally described as having multiple needs, but each either below the threshold of a service or with limited options due to failing to attend appointments in the past and being rejected as a repeat client. For these clients, CASSPLUS is the last point of call, and there is no other support available. Therefore the extent to which CASSPLUS is proportionate to client needs also depends on the availability of the agencies they are referring clients to and the thresholds of other

²⁰ Wong, K. (HMIP). *If reoffending is not the only outcome, what are the alternatives?* (2019).

²¹ Prochaska, J & Di Clemente, C. *Towards a Comprehensive Model of Change* (1986)

services. For some there may be a waiting list, and therefore a need for CASSPLUS to provide a source of support and motivation to clients while they wait to be seen.

Additionally, CASSPLUS sometimes manage long-term clients when they are rejected from other support services, unable to access the support required or not engaged in any formal way with another service. Given this, CASSPLUS should assess whether the operating model/theory of change should explicitly address the need for case management.

“Sometimes they [...] just want a little bit of help. Other times they run with you all day. Yeah, it really is individual.”
- CASSPLUS staff

Efficiency

Efficiency is a measure of impact achieved for resources expended. Targeting and proportionality are both key elements of efficiency, as they are means to avoid wasting resources. As discussed above, CASSPLUS is not a tightly targeted service and it does not explicitly tailor the intensity of its interventions to the level of need experienced by clients. However, CASSPLUS’s light-touch methods of targeting and resource allocation were identified by stakeholders as critical to the success of the organisation, and often highlighted by clients as part of what encouraged them to engage with the service. These methods are also themselves extremely low-resource and so provide an efficient means of maximising impact.

Targeting through co-location of the CASSPLUS offices in magistrates’ courts is a free and effective means of identifying people likely to benefit from the CASSPLUS service, and also saves money that would otherwise be spent on an office space. Prioritisation of those in the court by CASSPLUS staff and volunteers, during periods of high demand, is also a very low-cost form of targeting, and ensures staff and volunteers are still free to help those outside the immediate target cohort when they have capacity in quieter periods. Similarly, the client-led approach to proportionality minimises staff time and resources spent evaluating the ‘correct’ amount of support to provide to each client or each need. It is also likely to improve engagement by building trust with clients and focusing on their priorities, while reducing time spent with clients who do not want to engage.

The drop-in model might be presumed to be less efficient than an appointments-based system, as it may result in quiet periods for staff and volunteers. For CASSPLUS,

however, this is likely to be an efficient approach. Many CASSPLUS clients struggle to attend appointments or have unreliable access to post, telephone or internet contact, so drop-in, on-the-day support is extremely beneficial for this cohort. The time spent with each client is also highly variable, making a universal appointment system less appropriate. Equally, being seen quickly or receiving a rapid response is a critical element of securing engagement with a cohort like CASSPLUS's, and our interviews with stakeholders and clients both suggested that CASSPLUS is generally capable of meeting demand with its current drop-in approach (combined with occasional appointments for longer-term clients in some courts). Staff and volunteers also use quiet periods in court to conduct follow-up calls with clients, which are not typically scheduled in advance. The volunteer model is central to being able to flex to demand as needed, with the smaller number of paid staff always having administrative/management work to do during quieter court times.

“Previously [before lockdown] they always had 3-4 people in the office so if you had a number of enquiries you could always find someone to talk to.”
- Court Usher

“In regards to their responsiveness...they're just fantastic...there's never a delay of more than 24 hours in response from them and it's often within the same hour.”
- Drug and Alcohol Support Service

The CASSPLUS model includes provision of 'direct assistance' to support some clients through the whole process of accessing or applying for a service rather than simply making a referral or signposting. Arguably, this takes more time than providing a leaflet or submitting a short email to another organisation. However, if CASSPLUS achieves better outcomes, then this model of 'direct assistance' is therefore likely to be more efficient in the longer term.

“It is easy to say to somebody, oh you can call this number, or here's a leaflet, but when there's a person there, it's entirely different. Because those people who've got a problem, often haven't got the ability to address the problem by picking up the phone and making that call.”
- Defence solicitor

Clients in the CASSPLUS cohort often lead chaotic lives, and intervening faster is more likely to result in engagement. The model of direct assistance generally means that action is taken quicker than if clients are left to make referrals themselves, and this may have the added benefit of meaning they are more likely to remain engaged in the process.

The use of volunteers to deliver most client interventions makes CASSPLUS a relatively low-cost service to run. In the financial year 2019/20, CASSPLUS worked with at least 662 individuals, generating 2,633 referrals to a range of 354 different services. The total cost of CASSPLUS work in 2019/20 was £164,509. This means that the average cost of CASSPLUS per new client was £249 over the year (excluding brief interventions and existing clients).

There are potential efficiency savings to be made from greater use of IT and reduced reliance on paper records. Better record-keeping and digitisation would enable more efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation.

Looking at the Home Office cost of crime estimations from 2018, the lowest cost recorded for crimes most frequently linked to CASSPLUS clients is £870 for a theft from vehicle. The reoffending rate in Devon and Cornwall is currently 25.5%. At least 66% of the 662 individuals engaged with CASSPLUS were defendants. We could therefore expect around 109 individuals to reoffend, which even using the lowest estimate of £870 per offence, would cost society almost £95,000.

Cost-Benefit Analysis

Potential fiscal and public value benefits of CASSPLUS service

The overall objective of the service (as set out in the theory of change) is to promote social inclusion. CASSPLUS activities are designed to achieve the following longer-term outcomes, which each have a potential fiscal saving and public value benefit²²:

1. Reduced (re)offending: reduced costs to police, crown prosecution service and courts to investigate and prosecute crime, reduced cost to prisons and probation in overseeing sentences (Home Office and Ministry of Justice/Local Authorities).
2. Greater compliance with sentences and court orders: reduced cost to prisons and probation in overseeing sentences and responding to breaches (Home Office and Ministry of Justice)

²² Note: not all of these potential benefits were included in the cost benefit analyses, but have been considered in the wider evaluation.

3. Improved client health and well-being: reduced use of health services (Department for Health and Social Care) and the public value of an increase in general wellbeing
4. Clients have access to ongoing support in case of future crisis: reduced demand on crisis services - be it emergency housing, mental health provision or unemployment (Department for Housing, Communities and Local Government/Local Authorities, Department for Health and Social Care, Department for Work and Pensions). Public value benefits include things like improved wellbeing of individuals and communities and savings in terms of the costs to employers of absences, and the impact of domestic abuse on victims.
5. Decreased burden on the criminal justice system and wider services by filling gaps in provision: reduced costs in staffing for other agencies (Home Office and Ministry of Justice/Local Authorities)

Methods

As set out in the theory of change above, there are two primary mechanisms by which CASSPLUS seeks to have an impact on the lives of its clients: direct support and advocacy, and referral and signposting to other services. Some of the intended outputs from CASSPLUS's direct support are extremely difficult to quantify or put even a rough fiscal or public value calculation on: for instance, greater emotional support for clients or an increased sense of procedural justice. We know there are likely to be fiscal and public value benefits to these since they are likely to reduce reoffending as well as demand on other parts of the system, but these will be indirect and difficult to capture. It was our intention to capture many of these indirect effects by looking at the actual reoffending rates of the CASSPLUS cohort over time and comparing it to a control group. Due to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, we were unable to get the results of this reoffending analysis in time for this report, which has further complicated assessing the cost-benefit ratio of these more indirect effects.

The bulk of our cost-benefit analysis of the CASSPLUS service has therefore focused on its referral and signposting work. However, quantifying the value of a signposting/referral agency is challenging in a different way. cost-benefit analyses are not designed to easily isolate the value of a referral organisation from the value of other organisations involved in the delivery of a service.

Therefore, we approached the cost-benefit analysis in two ways and so were able to stress test our results. It is important to note that neither analysis attempts to quantify the full value of CASSPLUS as a whole. Each method only accounts for a small proportion of

the work CASSPLUS does and for some of the outcomes achieved for a proportion of clients.

The results from the two analyses are promising, but there are significant caveats to note. We recommend that CASSPLUS collects additional data alongside its partners, which would support a more robust analysis by tracking the engagement journeys of clients through multiple services.

Both of our methods utilised the Greater Manchester cost-benefit Analysis Model which has been recognised nationally as best practice in its approach to articulating the fiscal, public value of interventions. It was also supplementary guidance to HM Treasury's Green Book in 2014.

The model has been developed to enable it to work pre, during and at the end of delivery. This means that it can be calculated using either:

- Projected service use or targets (either to account for post-Covid capacity or because no historic data exists)
- Information already collected on actual use and impact on service users

The CBA model is used to understand the value for money provided by specific services or interventions, and the extent to which these approaches might generate savings and improved outcomes. As set out in the methods below we have then applied a further calculation to estimate the isolated benefit of CASSPLUS in increasing uptake and engagement of referrals to other services.

The model provides an output for both the fiscal and public value costs/benefits of the service. Fiscal benefits are those accrued to the public sector as a result of no longer having to fund certain payments or services. These include things like a reduction in unemployment payments when individuals gain employment. Public value benefits include individual elements of public value including economic and social benefits. Using the same example a public value benefit would be increased output resulting from increased employment or improved health and well-being as a result of increased employment. Because CASSPLUS is not a public sector organisation, though the fiscal cost-benefit ratio is still of interest, the public value benefits are the most relevant.

Method 1: Utilising needs assessment outcomes data from CASSPLUS

As outlined in the reduced criminogenic needs section, CASSPLUS has started to assess client needs with a 5-point scoring system at various points in their journey of engagement with CASSPLUS. This allowed us to understand whether CASSPLUS was

likely to be having an impact on the level of need over time. We found broadly positive results.

The Greater Manchester cost-benefit Analysis Tool incorporates the fiscal and public value benefits of a reduction in some key types of criminogenic need. The needs incorporated into the tool are: mental health, domestic violence, statutory homelessness, drug dependency and alcohol dependency.

We were therefore able to model the benefits of CASSPLUS in relation to improvements in these needs. The needs assessment outcome data provided by CASSPLUS showed a positive improvement in each of these need types. To establish the benefit, we modelled the number of clients who had achieved an improvement in need score in each of the relevant need areas. However, the output from the tool initially is the value of CASSPLUS combined with the value of the relevant service referred to.

To estimate the proportion of the value which is attributable to CASSPLUS, we looked at the RAND evaluation of the Liaison & Diversion (L&D) Service, which has some similar attributes as the CASSPLUS service. For example, RAND found that L&D improved the attendance of clients at mental health services by around 59%. We have assumed for the purposes of the modelling that CASSPLUS has at least the same impact on referral attendance with their clients for each relevant need. Therefore, we assume the initial model output is the value of CASSPLUS and the service addressing the need combined, and so we can isolate the CASSPLUS value by drawing out the additional 59% (in our mental health services example). We also applied an optimism bias correction at various points in the process to account for the fact that we don't have concrete data that relates directly to the CASSPLUS service to plug into the model in many areas (e.g. the impact on referral attendance).

A full list of assumptions and caveats around this method is provided at the annex.

Method 2: Assessing the impact of the services CASSPLUS refers clients to

Prior to having access to the CASSPLUS needs assessment data, we conducted a cost-benefit Analysis exercise which looked at the impact of the services that CASSPLUS refers clients to.

For each service we fed information on the service's delivery activity, costs and outcomes into the cost-benefit analysis tool. We then divided the aggregate fiscal and public value benefits calculated by the model by the number of people supported by the service to gain a value per person. To estimate the value of CASSPLUS we simply

multiplied the per person value by the number of people CASSPLUS referred to the service in that year.

CASSPLUS refers to over a hundred different organisations. Because an individual cost-benefit Analysis had to be conducted for each service we wanted to evaluate, we were not able to assess the value of CASSPLUS referrals to all services.

Initially, we examined CASSPLUS referral data, including the number of referrals to each service and a basic code explaining what that service was for (e.g. housing support, mental health, employment and skills). Focusing on the most frequently referred-to services across a range of different need types, we then conducted desk research and contacted the services directly to gather the necessary information on costs and impact to perform the cost-benefit calculations for each service. We then excluded those services for which we could not find sufficient information to conduct a reasonable calculation as to the cost-benefit. This means that the cost-benefit Analysis conducted using this method covers only 10% of all referrals made by CASSPLUS.

The quality of the data we relied on for each service-specific cost-benefit analysis was generally high, and since we were looking at the exact services referred to (rather than similar services or national averages), this significantly improves the accuracy of the analysis. However, there were some limitations in the quality of the data we were able to access, particularly around deadweight calculations. We applied a heavy optimism bias discount to address this where relevant.

Again, a full list of assumptions and caveats around this method is provided at the annex.

Results

Using method 1, we assessed the impact of CASSPLUS on 135 different needs across 64 clients. We estimated that for this group of clients, the cost of the provision of CASSPLUS services was approximately £14,000 (see annex for calculations).

We found that for this group of clients the fiscal benefit was around £11,500, and public value benefit was around £47,500, and therefore a *net* public value benefit of around £33,500. Since the costs of CASSPLUS are not borne by the public sector, the net fiscal benefit is the same as the total fiscal benefit at £11,500.

This equates to a return on investment of £3.36. For this cohort, every £1 spent by CASSPLUS produced a public value benefit of £3.36.

Using method 2, we assessed the impact of CASSPLUS referrals to 3 core services, which accounted for 10% of CASSPLUS referrals in 2019/20.

We found that for these services, CASSPLUS was responsible for a fiscal benefit of around £2,600 and a public value benefit of £33,000. We then extrapolated this figure upwards to gain an estimate for 100% of referrals (rather than 10%). We then applied an optimism bias of 40% to account for the lack of strong evidence that the remaining 90% of referrals were in line with the 10% we assessed.

This resulted in a total fiscal benefit of around £15,000 and a net public value benefit of £87,000. This results in a return-on-investment value of £1.87. For every £1 CASSPLUS spends on referrals, there is an estimated public benefit of at least £1.87.

The two figures generated by our cost-benefit analyses are not comparable, but reassuringly both provide a positive assessment of the public value benefits delivered by the service. This, combined with the needs assessment data, sets out some promising initial findings on the value of CASSPLUS. However, we recommend that CASSPLUS continues to expand and quality assure its data collection so that a more robust assessment can be made in future. Both of our analyses had to be subject to significant optimism bias discounts to account for the lack of hard data available. This has resulted in a potentially conservative view of the fiscal and public value impacts.

Implications for CASSPLUS

Client profile and targeting in the future

- Many of the recent clients we were able to speak to were not involved in the criminal justice system at all, with many being referred directly by family or friends, or coming through the family courts. While many of these clients said they had benefited from CASSPLUS's support, this work is not likely to have much of an impact in terms of future (re)offending rates.
- It is important to note that this shift in client profile is likely to have been in large part due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which reduced the number of people physically in court and so the number of walk-in clients. As such, it may naturally

shift back as in-person court hearings pick back up and magistrates' court throughput increases.

- Reducing reoffending is one of CASSPLUS's key service aims. Achieving this may require more of a deliberate emphasis on supporting defendants, including in communications with partners and referring agencies.
- However, we noted in our process evaluation that the approachability and accessibility of CASSPLUS is a critical success factor for the service: because there are no restrictions on eligibility, people feel much more comfortable approaching the service and those who 'fall through the gaps' with other services because they do not meet the need threshold or have too many overlapping needs can receive support from CASSPLUS. It would be important to preserve this approachability in any future reorientation back towards defendants, and for this reason the message would likely be best targeted towards partners and referring agencies rather than service users themselves.

Maintaining a physical presence in court and accessing clients virtually

- The physical presence of CASSPLUS staff in court has been identified as a critical factor in current operations, enabling greater access to hard to reach clients, and incentivising engagement with swift actions in response to identified needs.
- However, the ability to maintain a physical presence or visibility has been easier in some courts than others. The availability of space in courts is critical to CASSPLUS's success with in-person court hearings.
- Despite the pandemic waning, digital court appearances look to be here to stay for some cases. CASSPLUS will need to alter its model in order to respond to potential clients appearing via video link.

Maintenance and development of relationships and networks

- Another critical factor in the operating model, the effectiveness of the service is reliant on the extensive relationships and networks the teams have built. To ensure the sustainability of the service, adequate time should be inbuilt to the costs and planning cycles to ensure longevity of relationships.
- If the service were to expand into Courts in Exeter and Barnstaple, significant resources would be required up front to create the same networks as are available in the other court areas.
- CASSPLUS should consider how it might utilise its networks and the evidence gathered in the cost-benefit analysis to draw additional financial income or support from other services.

Implications for data collection against the theory of change going forward

- With a clear and well-evidenced theory of change now in place, CASSPLUS should continually review outcomes against the theory of change. A lot of work has now been done by the CASSPLUS team to start collecting needs score outcomes data. This should be sustained and reviewed over time.
- The needs score outcome data should be used to drive conversations with other services about appropriateness and effectiveness of referrals.
- Further data should also be collected for clients throughout their engagement with CASSPLUS, in particular the ability to track whether clients follow up on referrals (or attend appointments)
- CASSPLUS should also routinely collect client satisfaction data as well as surveying local stakeholders
- CASSPLUS should consider collecting data digitally in the first instance to ensure data is consistent and directly comparable. The lamplight database is a great asset which could be exploited further to better understand the needs and outcomes of clients.
- CASSPLUS should review processes around the collection of data on protected characteristics to inform an assessment of how well CASSPLUS reaches and meets the needs of all defendants in Devon & Cornwall.

Critical factors for service replication

Expert staff and volunteers

- Staff must be approachable, friendly, compassionate and motivated
- Staff and volunteers should have experience working with clients with multiple and complex needs, or have an effective training process in place
- A volunteer model is required to have adequate reach across potential clients

The factor that most consistently came across in our interviews with clients was how friendly, approachable and understanding CASSPLUS staff are. This is fundamental to the success of the service, and would be critical to ensure in establishing a similar service elsewhere. Clients repeatedly emphasised how important it was to have someone who was compassionate and non-judgemental, and took a personal approach, making them feel like they mattered.

“She was really nice, never rushed me off the phone...she was very supportive... I think she was genuinely concerned about me. She didn't really let me go until she knew I was alright.”

- CASSPLUS client

“I think it was sort of friendly interactions from them [that was most helpful]. That made you feel like you were being listened to and they could help you and whereas obviously a few places I've gone to it was just sort of like you were a number. Whereas [CASSPLUS] seem a lot more personal and interested and wanting to help rather than just being their nine to five.”

- CASSPLUS client

This welcoming and understanding approach is crucial to establishing positive, trusting relationships with clients and getting people to engage with the service. It also encourages people to return to CASSPLUS when they have problems in future, which can help prevent escalation or future crises.

“I think particularly locally, in Cornwall, the people that work for CASSPLUS are extremely compassionate, and very driven to do right by the people that they're working with... Our set up in Cornwall works brilliantly because of the people.”

- Drug and Alcohol Support Service

Having volunteers in addition to the paid staff is also an important element of the CASSPLUS model. It allows them to have sufficient capacity in the team to respond to demand, and frees up time among staff to hold the more complex cases and manage administrative tasks. Volunteers are also easier to deploy flexibly than staff members, making it easier to vary the size of the team according to need.

“The fact that we use volunteers means that we've got that breath within the team or the manpower within the team to be able to not have a waiting list”

- CASSPLUS staff

Generalist

- The service must be able to address multiple needs
- The service should function as a central repository of local information, with signposting as one of its core capabilities

As shown by the client profile data examined above, many CASSPLUS clients have multiple needs which they require support with. Many support services are need-specific, and do not work with clients to address other needs they have; some will refuse clients if they have certain additional needs (such as substance misuse). A signposting service must be able to manage and provide referrals for a range of problems in order to respond effectively to the diverse needs of its client base.

“When my colleagues are in court, they're there for substance use, whereas CASS is there for everything. And I don't think there is [another] service that provides that.”

- Drug and Alcohol Support Service

“There are services for [helping] people in different ways, but one place that does everything is really important.”

- Probation officer

Similarly, having CASSPLUS function as a central repository of information benefits other more specialist agencies in seeking additional support for their own clients when needed, and is part of the effective two way streams of information about clients and options for support.

The needs assessment outcomes data also showed that CASSPLUS is effective in addressing a wide range of needs. The average change in need level was positive for all need types, although more pronounced for some. Around 50% of clients indicated improvements for even the most intractable of issues such as domestic abuse. As stated earlier in the report, we recommend that CASSPLUS continues to record and monitor this data to assess if there are any longer term implications for the sustainability of the needs being met, which may have further implications for the extremities within with CASSPLUS operates as a generalist service.

Responsive

- The service must be able to respond to questions and provide advice rapidly
- The service should be easily accessible by both service users and other stakeholders
- The service must allow people to drop in

Accessibility and rapid response times are also critical success factors for a service like CASSPLUS. External stakeholders and clients both commented on CASSPLUS's responsiveness and ease of access being particularly helpful elements of the service. These factors are likely to be especially important with clients with the highest levels of need, who have the most acute need for support and also tend to struggle the most to attend appointments or engage with other services.

"I could speak to her, I could text her at any time or email and usually get a reply straight away."

- CASSPLUS client

"[The most helpful thing was] when I did send an email or when I did phone, they got back to me as quickly as possible... so it was literally like by the next day, or there was an email back or even if they couldn't, if they were on leave, or something, it was 'Oh, I'm on leave, but you can contact this person'... It's almost that peace of mind of knowing, it's not going to be a long time before I can just speak to someone about it."

- CASSPLUS client

"[It is very important you can] just pop in... [Signposting and advice] can be done quickly and efficiently without people...having to contact numerous agencies...waiting for appointments, going to different places."

- Probation officer

Independent, non-statutory status

- The service must be independent from the criminal justice system
- Engagement in the service must be voluntary

Relatively few CASSPLUS clients we spoke to emphasised the voluntary, non-statutory nature of the service or its independence from the criminal justice system directly. However, the importance of a non-judgemental approach was very clear, and it is likely that this could not be provided in the same way by an organisation within the criminal justice system. Many clients may be more inclined to trust an organisation external to the criminal justice system. Equally, some clients said CASSPLUS provided them with reassurance that a criminal conviction was 'not the end of the world' and that this was comforting; such reassurance is unlikely to come from a criminal justice agency, even for minor offences.

“[CASSPLUS staff member/volunteer] was really helpful, she tried to make it feel like it wasn't a big deal, and that it wasn't life-changing, as I was of course thinking the absolute worst.”
- CASSPLUS client

“It's a comfort. [Clients] know [CASSPLUS are] not part of the legal system but because they are in court it gives them a bit of reassurance that they are there to help them, rather than the official judicial process.”
- Probation officer

Being a non-statutory service may also be a necessary precursor to some of the other elements that make the CASSPLUS model successful. It likely allows for greater time to be spent with each client, since it would be hard to pursue a non-targeted, client-led approach within a statutory service.

Localised

- The service must have detailed local knowledge to be able to answer a broad range of questions
- The service should form strong relationships with other local agencies through its staff
- The service must have a physical presence in court

Our conversations with clients and stakeholders referring people to CASSPLUS highlighted the importance of a thorough knowledge of, and good relationships with, local support services. Clients present with a range of often overlapping needs, and an effective in-court liaison and diversion service needs to be able to match them with relevant support services based on the type and level of need, client characteristics, service capacity, responsiveness and eligibility requirements, as well as any additional complicating factors, such as previous contact the client has had with the service(s). For instance, many CASSPLUS clients struggle to engage with services and keep appointments, so they may have been barred from some services for failing to attend appointments.

“The fact is, support services crop up and disappear within five minutes. And so you have to have a very active knowledge of what kind of services are

available. And that's what CASSPLUS [does], a fantastic mapping and finding out about new services.”

- Drug and Alcohol Support Service

“There’s not many things I think of off the top of my head where [CASSPLUS] can’t point people in the right direction”

- Court Usher

Meeting this need requires a detailed knowledge of the local support service network and economy. It is also greatly helped by having strong relationships with other local agencies. These relationships not only support this thorough knowledge of existing services and what they can offer, but can also facilitate referrals. Some clients indicated that they had more success returning to services they had already been in contact with after they engaged with CASSPLUS, or that ongoing interaction between CASSPLUS and support services was beneficial.

“They spoke to the Plymouth domestic violence teams and stuff like that, helped me get information. She helped me get reports from the Cornwall council, for like LADO reports, stuff like that. It obviously helped me with trying to find a good solicitor as well.”

- CASSPLUS client

“[My drug use has] cut down because [CASSPLUS staff/volunteer] gets me back in touch with my counsellor.”

- CASSPLUS client

Having a physical presence in the court building is also crucial, and was highlighted by both external stakeholders and clients.

Non-targeted

- The service must be available to anyone in court without any thresholds required to be met to receive support

“I think the right word is approachability...[a key factor is] the availability to anyone who's a user of the court...So not just for people who've been

sentenced, but also for witnesses, victims, family members, anyone who's got that sort of connection.”
- Probation officer

We were able to compare the needs assessment data for a group of 23 individuals who were clients *not* involved in the criminal justice system, and 20 who were (whether first time defendants or otherwise). There was no significant difference between the two groups in terms of the impact CASSPLUS made on their level of need, and therefore there is no reason to suggest that CASSPLUS needs to shift towards a targeted approach in terms of the type of client.

However, there was more variance in effectiveness of CASSPLUS in terms of the type of need presented. At this stage we are still working with a small sample size, and suggest that the effectiveness of CASSPLUS in different areas of need is reviewed over time.

Whilst we recommend that CASSPLUS is non-targeted, we suggest that future data collection could support staff in developing an awareness about where and when they can have the most impact, ensuring disproportionate time is not spent on needs that are less likely to see significant improvement. For example, if an intervention is brief, it is likely worth doing, but if it takes a lot of time and is unlikely to be successful staff time may be better spent addressing other needs.

Recommendations for future evaluation

We recommend that any future evaluation considers:

- A **further evaluation** of the outcomes we were not able to evidence - around better **sentencing and increasing compliance with sentences**. This should include a focus on exploring the views of magistrates and probation staff views in more detail, as well as obtaining data on sentence concordance and compliance
- As assessment of the **representation of defendants** in the Criminal Justice System in Devon & Cornwall in the CASSPLUS cohort to establish if the service is successful in reaching and supporting all those who would benefit from engagement - this should include a focus on ethnicity
- A **longitudinal study** which could identify whether there might be certain “**sweet spot**” **timelines**, whereby if progress has not been made for a certain need within a certain timeframe, there may be an argument to focus resources on the needs where CASSPLUS is able to make the greatest impact

Note: An appendix to this report will be provided when the reoffending analysis is made available by the Ministry of Justice.

Appendices

[Submission made to MoJ Justice Data Lab](#)

What is the name of the intervention?

Community Advice and Support Service(CASSPLUS/CASSPLUS)

Please summarise the intervention in up to 400 words

CASSPLUS (Community Advice and Support Service) provides free advice and support from magistrates' court settings for people involved in the criminal justice system. Service users are provided with practical help with managing issues like fine repayments and benefits, referral to long-term support for chronic issues like addiction, and support with the often difficult experiences that come with involvement in the criminal justice system. The service is provided by small teams of staff and volunteers and is generally in person at court, but can also be provided over the phone or in the community.

CASSPLUS staff and volunteers are located in public areas within the court buildings, sometimes alongside other non-statutory organisations. CASSPLUS receive court listings the evening before each court day which they will review. On each court day, CASSPLUS staff and volunteers will do a number of key activities to try and engage individuals that may need help:

- Sit in hearings to action any referrals made in court.
- Proactively approach people in the waiting area.
- Attend cells to speak to people identified by solicitors/staff.
- Await referrals made by court staff.

CASSPLUS will then provide support to the client either directly, in court, or by referring onto other agencies. CASSPLUS support can be broadly grouped into:

- Motivation
- Intervention
- Mentoring
- Signposting

Following this initial on-the-day support CASSPLUS may provide further follow up support for a number of weeks or months after the initial meeting until any identified needs are resolved as far as possible.

How would you classify the intervention type?

A community advice service which offers practical advice, personal support and help to access services to court users

What sector does the intervention provider fall into?

Voluntary Community Sector

What was the nature of the work carried out as part of the intervention or service?

The nature of the work is essentially the provision of 1-1 support, advice and signposting. CASSPLUS staff meet with clients (following a self-referral, referral from other stakeholder/service or proactive outreach from CASSPLUS staff). At this meeting a CASSPLUS staff member or volunteer assesses the client's needs, in a conversation led by the client. Depending on other demands on the client and whether the conversation happens pre- or post-sentence, the CASSPLUS staff member will either then make a plan with the client to address the identified needs or suggest a follow up meeting. Support provided to resolve needs immediately will be one or a combination of:

1. Improving motivation for the client – helping them to see the value in addressing a need, seeking support or changing a behaviour
2. Intervention – this could be phoning a service on a client's behalf, liaising with the court fines team to discuss debt issues, helping a client to fill in a form to access benefits, making appointments on behalf of a client, etc.
3. Mentoring or coaching – CASSPLUS staff will just spend time talking to a client to ensure they feel listened to and to help them make an action plan for the future
4. Signposting – CASSPLUS staff can signpost clients to other services and coordinate multiple/complex referrals so they are manageable, timely and more likely to achieve positive outcomes.

After this initial meeting the client may return for follow up support any number of times until they feel their issues are resolved. Support can also be provided over the phone. The type of work CASSPLUS performs is not limited by any conditions. If the staff are able to intervene in a way which will help address the clients' needs they will do so.

Where did the intervention or service take place?

In the community working with people who have received non-custodial or suspended sentences

Please provide further information about the geographical location of the intervention

Devon & Cornwall

Specifically located at four magistrates' courts: Bodmin, Truro, Plymouth, Newton Abbot

What types of sentences had participants received?

Custodial Sentences

Fines

Conditional or Absolute Discharges

Do you have any further details about when and where the intervention takes place?

The intervention generally takes place inside the magistrates' court building. For some clients the intervention is a one-off provision of support/signposting/reassurance on the day of court. For some clients this happens before they are sentenced, for others afterwards. For some clients there are then follow up interventions over the course of any length of time following the first day at court. Service users can come back into court to receive follow up interventions, or they may receive them via telephone, or occasionally in the community.

How did individuals get referred to the service? Did the selection policy change over time?

There are a mixture of selection routes, but the main criteria for referral/selection is being physically present in the magistrates' court. Services are delivered from offices supplied by HMCTS in the public area of each magistrates' court. Service users can self-refer by approaching the service, and as long as the service has capacity to engage with them then the criteria is met. Other court staff are also aware of the service CASSPLUS provides and will either inform people in court that the service is available (which leads to them self-referring) or take the individual directly to the CASSPLUS office where, again, as long as the service has capacity to engage with them then the criteria is met. Magistrates may also recommend during sentencing that the defendant attends the CASSPLUS office after sentencing. Finally, CASSPLUS staff proactively engage with defendants and their families in the waiting area of the court, providing leaflets or verbal information about the service. There is also some engagement with local prisons, with prison services aware that CASSPLUS can also provide support for those in custody after they leave prison. In this case clients either self-refer or are referred by probation or other support services (such as drugs and alcohol). Sometimes clients are engaged prior to sentencing and, if this results in custody, these clients may get back in touch with CASSPLUS after release from custody (especially if in receipt of short sentences). These referral routes have all been available since the inception of CASSPLUS however the proportionate distribution may have changed over time, with more referrals coming from other services as they find out about what CASSPLUS offers.

What gender are the participants?

Both male and female

How old are the participants?

18+

Which of the following needs does your intervention target?

	Target of intervention	Need present?
Accommodation	Yes	Yes
Education	Yes	Yes
Employment	Yes	Yes
Relationships	Yes	Yes
Drugs	Yes	Yes
Alcohol	Yes	Yes
Mental Health	Yes	Yes
Financial Management	Yes	Yes

Please use this text box to explain any specifics of these needs:

It is worth noting that for some of the needs above they are a target of the intervention, but the support provided is signposting, rather than deliver of an intervention. For clarity please see below:

Accommodation: CASSPLUS will work with a client to identify and then address accommodation needs by advocating for them with the local authority or referring them to a third sector provider.

Education: CASSPLUS will work with a client to identify educational needs and then can arrange courses with partner organisations or support the client to sign up to and attend online learning.

Employment: CASSPLUS will work with a client to discuss employment status and can do things like supporting the client to perform job searches, provide assistance with application forms, and refer on to more specialist support.

Relationships: CASSPLUS often deals with clients who are victims or perpetrators of domestic abuse. They will refer these clients to other support services as well as encouraging them to make use of online learning materials and providing general mentoring coaching over time.

Drugs & Alcohol: CASSPLUS generally helps to identify these issues and refer clients onto other services. This can include attending the service with the client for the first appointment or registration.

Mental Health: Many of CASSPLUS clients have self-identified mental health needs which do not meet thresholds for mental health support or have been unable to access it for some reason. CASSPLUS will support the client in accessing mental health support and/or provide some mentoring support for those with mental health conditions.

Financial Management: CASSPLUS can actively help to resolve debt issues by making calls on a client's behalf (or with a client) as well as providing helpful information materials and going through them with the client. There is close working relationships with court fines teams.

Does the intervention involve working with vulnerable youths or vulnerable adults?

Yes – many CASSPLUS clients have some form of mental health issue or long term sickness

Does the intervention involve working with individuals who have mental health problems, including those being treated through the personality disorder programme?

Yes - it can do. Many clients have both diagnosed and undiagnosed mental health problems, but not all of them.

Does the intervention or service target individuals convicted of committing any of the following types of offences?

Terrorist offences - No

Gang related offences – Not generally but a self-referral would not be turned away

Domestic violence offences – Yes it can do

Sexual offences – Generally lower level offending, but again a self-referral would not be turned away

Does the intervention target those who are serving life sentences or sentences for indeterminate public protection?

No

Are there individuals you worked with that are not included in this template?

Yes. The two main groups that have been excluded are family members of defendants who CASSPLUS have supported; they have not necessarily offended in the first place and are secondary beneficiaries of the services. Secondly those individuals who receive a

'brief intervention' from one of the CASSPLUS team without their full details being obtained; for example, signposting or sharing of information on the day of court.

Has any previous research or analysis been used to evaluate the effectiveness of the service?

Yes. There have been several previous analyses and evaluations (as listed below). These have mostly consisted of process analyses, client profile and needs analysis and qualitative research to determine the impact of the service on service users and other stakeholders. No previous analysis of reoffending has been done.

Edwards Associates, 'The Community Advice and Support Service (CASS) at the Bodmin and Plymouth District Magistrates' Courts' (2007).

Centre for Mental Health, 'Keys to Diversion: Best practice for offenders with multiple needs' (2014).

Centre for Justice Innovation, 'Better Courts Case-study: Plymouth Community Advice and Support Service' (2015).

WestPoint, 'Stakeholder Evaluation of CASSPLUS Support Service Delivery' (2017).

How would information received back from the Justice Data Lab be used?

CASSPLUS is currently undergoing a process and outcomes evaluation conducted by crime and justice consultancy Crest Advisory. This work will culminate in an evaluation report at the end of 2021. The aim is to use the reoffending analysis conducted through the justice data lab within the final evaluation as part of the outcomes evaluation. This will all obviously be credited to the Justice Data Lab. The findings will also be used in a cost-benefit analysis of the service as part of the evaluation. Crest will be using financial and outcomes data to model the impact of the CASSPLUS service on other services and society generally. Crest are very happy to discuss the contents of the evaluation and how they would intend to incorporate MoJ Data Lab findings in the report. Please feel free to contact Eleanor.covell@crestadvisory.com directly. CASSPLUS would also likely use the findings in bids for funding from Trusts, the Police and Crime Commissioner and other possible funders. The findings will likely be published on the CASSPLUS website and used in external publicity/communications.

The data provided covers (as far as possible) for each individual:

Column header in data	Notes
First name	n/a

Last name	n/a
Date of birth	This is missing in some of the data – however where it is missing we do have the date of sentence, type of sentence and offence so this information may be able to be obtained from your sources.
Gender	n/a
Intervention start date	This is generally the date when the defendant appeared in court and engaged with CASSPLUS for the first time
Intervention end date	This is when service users were marked on the system as no longer requiring support from CASSPLUS. Sometimes this is on the same day, and sometimes this is after a number of months.
Number of interventions	This is the number of times the service user engaged with CASSPLUS between the intervention start and end date. For some service users they only receive support on the day at courts. This would therefore be 1 intervention. For others they may receive follow up support via phone or in person and each of these instances would be counted separately.
Age band	The age of the service user at the point they engaged with CASSPLUS
Length of intervention by days	The number of days between the first and last interaction between CASSPLUS and the service user
Offence type	The offence for which the service user was in court. It may be important to note that this is recorded as it is relayed to CASSPLUS staff via the service user rather than copied from official court documentation.
Sentence type	Type of sentence given to service user for the offence in questions. Again, on some occasions this information is relayed via the service user rather than via the court.
Primary need	This is the primary need as identified by the service user in conversation with CASSPLUS at the time of the first appointment. There may be multiple other needs per service user.

If possible, as well as an overall reoffending rate for the cohort of service users provided, we would ask that the MoJ Data Lab completes where possible some sub group analyses. These are set out below with the numbers of service users set out too. Green indicates where there are 60+ individuals in the group.

Sub group for possible analyses	Number of service users in this group in the data
Gender	97 female, 227 male
On-the-day interventions/single interventions	84 (76 complete records)
Short-term interventions (2-4)	93 (91 complete records)
Medium-term interventions (5-9)	84 (81 complete records)
Longer-term intervention (10+)	63 (62 complete records)
Location: Plymouth Cohort	227 (220 complete records)
Location: Cornwall Cohort	75 (69 complete records)
Location: Newton Abbot Cohort	18 (18 complete records)
Type of sentence: Fine (and fine + driving ban/points)	96 (90 complete records)
Type of sentence: Community Sentence (including community sentence + fine)	35 (33 complete records)
Type of sentence: Custody	16 (14 complete records)
Type of sentence: Conditional discharge	14 (14 complete records)
Type of sentence: Suspended Sentence	28 (28 complete records)
Primary need: Accommodation	42 (42 complete records)
Primary need: Mental Health	20 (19 complete records)
Primary need: Benefits and/or Debt	72 (67 complete records)
Primary need: Criminal Justice	48 (47 complete records)
Primary need: ETE/Learning	9 (8 complete records)

Primary need: Complex needs	102 (101 complete records)
Offence type: Public Order	44 (42 complete records)
Offence type: Theft	38 (38 complete records)
Offence type: Vehicle Crime	46 (45 complete records)
Offence type: Violence against the person	42 (41 complete records)
Age group: 18-26	72 (72 complete records)
Age group: 27-33	75 (75 complete records)
Age group: 34-43	71 (71 complete records)
Age group: 44+	83 (83 complete records)

If through the course of the analysis the Data Lab is able to fill in some of the gaps in the data to be able to provide enough information to conduct sub group analysis that would be welcomed, particularly by offence grouping to help understand if there is a certain cohort of offenders that CASSPLUS is most effective with.

In terms of order of priority for subgroup analysis, the CASSPLUS team would really appreciate following these priorities:

1. Total cohort
2. Number of interventions/length of intervention
3. Age group
4. Court location
5. Primary need
6. Type of offence
7. Type of sentence

Information given to clients who participated in interviews

Title of Research:

Evaluation of CASSPLUS

Name of Researchers:

Crest Advisory: Eleanor Covell, Cassia Rowland, Kobby Thomas

Invitation to be interviewed as part of the evaluation

As a current or former user of the CASSPLUS (Community Advice and Support Service) you have been invited to be interviewed as part of our evaluation of the effectiveness of the service.

Before you decide if you would like to participate, we would like you to understand why the research is being carried out and what it would involve for you to participate.

Therefore, this Participant Information Sheet for you to read and consider. Please get in touch with us if you have questions that aren't answered on this sheet, or if you wish to discuss the evaluation in more detail.

What is the purpose of the evaluation?

This purpose of the evaluation is to understand how effective the CASSPLUS service is at supporting people involved in the Criminal Justice System and helping resolve any needs or concerns those individuals have. The aim of interviewing former and present service users is to understand how the CASSPLUS service is perceived by people using the service and what impact it had on you. This will help CASSPLUS to know what it is doing well, and where there may be room for improvement in the service. The evaluation findings will also help other areas in the country who may be looking to set up and offer a similar service.

Why have I been invited?

You are being invited to take part because it is very important that the evaluation team hears from the people the CASSPLUS service is designed to support. The opinions and experiences of those the service is working for are a key part of the evaluation.

Do I have to take part?

No, taking part is voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you agree to take part, one of the evaluation team from Crest Advisory (listed at the top of this sheet), will contact you to arrange a convenient time for an interview. This could be over the phone or using a video conferencing software, depending on what is best for you. The interview will last between 30 minutes and 1 hour. The interviewer will take notes and record the meeting if you consent. The recording of the interview will be deleted immediately after the interviewer has typed up the notes.

What will I be asked in the interview?

If you choose to take part in the evaluation the researcher will ask a number of questions in the interview. These will cover the following areas:

- What led to your involvement with the CASSPLUS service
- What support you felt you needed from CASSPLUS
- What support was provided, and what impact that had on:
 - Your experience in court
 - Your wellbeing
 - Any needs you had
- Your experiences with any other services you were referred to around this time
- What you think CASSPLUS did well, and what might be done better

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The information and findings from this evaluation will be used to help inform the CASSPLUS service about what is working well, and what could be improved. This will mean the service is able to better support future service users and clearly demonstrate the impact of the service to funders and other stakeholders.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a concern about any aspect of the evaluation, you should speak to the researcher using the contact details at the bottom of this sheet who will do their best to answer your questions. If you remain unhappy and wish to complain formally, you can do this by contacting CASSPLUS.

Will my taking part in the study be kept confidential?

All information that is collected about you during the course of the research will be kept strictly confidential, stored in a secure office, and on password protected databases. Any information concerning yourself will have your personal details removed and a unique code will be used so that you cannot be identified via your data. Information you share during your interview will be used in the final evaluation report, but nothing that you say will be attributed to you. Interview participant names will not be included in the report and will remain confidential.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?

Your participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason, and without your legal rights being affected.

Will I be reimbursed for my time?

You will be sent a £20 voucher after the interview to thank you for giving up your time to participate in the evaluation.

What will happen to the results of the evaluation?

The results of the evaluation will be provided in a written report which will be published and available via the internet. The report will be used by CASSPLUS to demonstrate the impact of their work to interested parties, and also to help other areas who may be interested in setting up a similar service. Participant names will not be included in the report.

Who is carrying out and funding the evaluation?

This evaluation is being conducted by Crest Advisory and is being funded by the Lloyds Foundation (via the Centre for Justice Innovation) who are also one of the funders of the CASSPLUS service itself. Crest Advisory is an independent Crime and Justice Consultancy. You can find more information about each of the organisations here:

[Crest Advisory](#)

[Lloyds Foundation](#)

[Centre for Justice Innovation](#)

Further information and contact details:

Ellie Covell, Head of Strategy and Performance, Crest Advisory

e : eleanor.covell@crestadvisory.com

t : 07900 856452

For more information about Ellie see [here](#).

Cassia Rowland, Junior Analyst, Crest Advisory

e : cassia.rowland@crestadvisory.com

For more information about Cassia see [here](#).

Client profile breakdown used to randomly identify a representative sample for interviews

Number of interactions	Number of clients	% of clients
1	22	8.2%
2-5	105	39.3%
6-10	49	18.4%
11-15	91	34.1%
16+	62	23.2%
Age	Number of clients	% of clients
18-25	35	13.1%
26-35	70	26.2%
36-45	47	17.6%
46-55	28	10.5%
56-65	13	4.9%
66 and over	9	3.4%
Not Disclosed	58	21.7%
(blank)	7	2.6%
Gender	Number of clients	% of clients
Female	107	40.1%
Male	160	59.9%
Employment Status	Number of clients	% of clients
Full or part time paid employment	29	10.9%
Full time student or training	4	1.5%
Housewife, Househusband or carer	4	1.5%
Long-term sickness / disability	64	24.0%
Not Disclosed	81	30.3%
Other	1	0.4%
Retired	9	3.4%
Self-employed	11	4.1%
Unemployed	63	23.6%
(blank)	1	0.4%
Accommodation Status	Number of clients	% of clients
Family/Friends	7	2.6%
Homeless or no fixed abode	20	7.5%
Hostel	6	2.2%
Living with parents	12	4.5%
Long-term B&B	7	2.6%
Not Disclosed	90	33.7%
Own home	7	2.6%
Prison	8	3.0%

Renting	94	35.2%
Sleeping in Car	1	0.4%
Sofa-surfing	9	3.4%
Supported Accommodation	4	1.5%
(blank)	2	0.7%
Caring Responsibilities	Number of clients	% of clients
Caring for adults	4	1.5%
Caring for children	39	14.6%
Caring for children and adults	3	1.1%
None	109	40.8%
Not Disclosed	108	40.4%
(blank)	4	1.5%
Learning Need	Number of clients	% of clients
No	80	30.0%
Not Disclosed	139	52.1%
Yes	44	16.5%
(blank)	4	1.5%
Mental Health Need	Number of clients	% of clients
No	28	10.5%
Not Disclosed	108	40.4%
Yes	128	47.9%
(blank)	3	1.1%
Physical Health Need	Number of clients	% of clients
No	62	23.2%
Not Disclosed	130	48.7%
Yes	72	27.0%
(blank)	3	1.1%
Previous convictions	Number of clients	% of clients
11+ convictions	8	3.0%
2-5 convictions	1	0.4%
6-10 convictions	2	0.7%
No previous convictions	20	7.5%
Not Disclosed	68	25.5%
One conviction	10	3.7%
(blank)	158	59.2%
First Time Defendant	Number of clients	% of clients
	201	75.28%
No	48	17.98%
Yes	18	6.74%
Offences charged with	Number of clients	% of clients

	165	61.80%
Breach of an existing order	8	3.00%
Breach of an existing order, Public Order Offence (inc. alcohol related)	1	0.37%
Breach of an existing order, Violence against the person	1	0.37%
Burglary	1	0.37%
Burglary, Theft	1	0.37%
Criminal damage	1	0.37%
Criminal damage, Public Order Offence (inc. alcohol related)	1	0.37%
Criminal damage, Public Order Offence (inc. alcohol related), Violence against the person	1	0.37%
Criminal damage, Violence against the person	2	0.75%
Drug related	7	2.62%
Drug related, Public Order Offence (inc. alcohol related)	1	0.37%
Drug related, Vehicle crime	1	0.37%
Non payment of fines	2	0.75%
Non payment of fines, Other	1	0.37%
Not Disclosed	16	5.99%
Other	8	3.00%
Public Order Offence (inc. alcohol related)	5	1.87%
Public Order Offence (inc. alcohol related), Theft, Violence against the person	1	0.37%
Public Order Offence (inc. alcohol related), Violence against the person	3	1.12%
Sexual offence	4	1.50%
Theft	6	2.25%
Unknown	1	0.37%
Vehicle crime	17	6.37%
Violence against the person	11	4.12%
Violence against the person, Other	1	0.37%
Needs	Number of clients	% of clients
Physical health	8	3.0%
Debt	51	19.1%
Mental health	71	26.6%
Fines	28	10.5%

Accommodation	88	33.0%
Benefits	48	18.0%
Criminal justice	81	30.3%
Family	27	10.1%
Drugs	4	1.5%
Domestic abuse	16	6.0%
ETE	8	3.0%
Alcohol	4	1.5%
Misc	31	11.6%

Client profile of the final 27 interview participants

Type of client	12 defendants, 14 other, 1 anonymous
Court	17 Plymouth, 6 Cornwall, 3 Newton Abbot, 1 anonymous
Age	1 aged 18-25, 10 aged 26-35, 4 aged 36-45, 3 aged 46-55, 4 aged 56-65, 1 aged 66+, 3 not disclosed
Gender	15 male, 12 female
Employment	7 unemployed, 5 on long-term sick or disability allowance, 5 housewife/husband or carer, 4 in full-time or part-time employment, 1 retired, 5 not disclosed or other
Accommodation	14 renting, 3 in own home, 3 living with parents, 1 in supported accommodation, 6 not disclosed
Carer	6 caring for children, 6 caring for adults, 3 caring for children and adults, 9 unknown
Needs	7 with a learning need, 16 with a mental health need, 7 with a physical health need
Issues	Accommodation: 6 Benefits: 5 Criminal Justice: 10 Debt: 7 Domestic Abuse: 3 Employment: 4 Family: 6 Learning: 1 Mental Health: 9 Miscellaneous: 3 Physical Health: 4

Discussion guide for CASSPLUS client interviews

Theme	Question
Circumstances	<p>Can you tell us a bit about how you became involved with CASSPLUS?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did they approach you or did you approach them? • What happened during the first meeting? • What made you decide to engage with them at the time? • How long were you getting support from CASSPLUS for?
Court experience	<p>How did you find the process at Court?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you have a clear idea about what would happen beforehand? • Did anyone explain to you what was happening in court? <p>Did CASSPLUS change your experience at court?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did you think the court process in your case was fair?
Identifying needs	<p>Were you getting support from any other services before you attended court? If so, who were they? (record)</p> <p>Were there things that you needed support with that no one was helping you with before attending Court?</p>
Addressing needs	<p>What did CASSPLUS do for/with you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did CASSPLUS help you with anything directly? • Did CASSPLUS help you access (more support) the services that you needed? <p>How did the referral process work for you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How long did it take? • Did the services you were referred to help you? • Were there any services you needed who CASSPLUS could not refer you to? If so, what were they? (record) <p>Do you feel in a better place now than you were when you first came to Court? Why?</p> <p><i>Have there been any other changes to your life or interventions from other services that impacted you since your engagement with CASSPLUS?</i></p> <p>We would now like to ask you some specific questions about different needs that you may or may not have experienced. The needs we are looking at as part of the evaluation are as follows:</p>

	<p><u><i>Your safety:</i></u> This includes how you feel about accommodation, physical safety, and anything else that may affect your feelings of safety such as involvement with ex partners, experiences of discrimination etc</p> <p><u><i>Your health:</i></u> This includes your physical health, as well as how you feel about any drug or alcohol use</p> <p><u><i>Your relationships:</i></u> This includes how you feel about your family relationships, intimate or partner relationships and friendships/peer relationships</p> <p><u><i>Your finances:</i></u> This includes how you feel about any debt, financial security, money management and benefits</p> <p><u><i>Your connection to your community:</i></u> This includes how positive you feel about your connections within the community. It might include employment, training, education, volunteering, community group membership, hobbies etc.</p> <p>For each of these needs (that the client is happy to talk about):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Did you have a particular need/issue in this area when you first came into contact with CASSPLUS? ● Do you feel that need is better, worse or the same since CASSPLUS? ● Did CASSPLUS provide any support to address this need? ● If yes, what was that support? ● How did it impact you?
Wellbeing	<p>Did CASSPLUS (or any of the services they referred you to) have an impact on your general and emotional wellbeing?</p> <p>If so, how did CASSPLUS impact your wellbeing? If not, why not? How did other services impact your wellbeing?</p> <p>Did CASSPLUS help you deal with other problems later down the line? Did you feel more equipped to deal with them?</p> <p><i>Feeling positive about the future</i> <i>Feeling confident in dealing with problems</i> <i>Finding solutions to problems</i> <i>Achieving goals you set for yourself</i> <i>Able to deal with challenges</i> <i>Able to see others points of view</i> <i>Staying calm when facing difficult decisions</i> <i>Making good life choices</i></p>

	<i>Having a number of good qualities</i>
Desistance	<p><i>Have you had to go back to court since you first met CASSPLUS?</i></p> <p><i>Do you think that CASSPLUS made any difference to any future involvement in the Criminal Justice System <u>or</u> other courts?</i></p>
Quality of service	<p>Overall how did you find the support offered by CASSPLUS?</p> <p>What did you find most helpful about the service?</p> <p>How could CASSPLUS do better?</p>

Discussion guide for CASSPLUS staff interviews

Mission:

- Can you tell me what CASSPLUS's aims are?

Target population:

- Who do you consider to be your target population?
- Does this match the population you work with?
- Do you get repeat clients, and if so, how often?
- What happens if you have a repeat client that has reoffended?
- Are there any demographic barriers/ communities that you have stronger or weaker ties with?
- Has Covid-19 changed any of this?

Theory of change:

- How do you achieve those aims?
- What resources do you need/use to do so?
- What steps do you take to achieve the aims?
- What outcomes do those steps have?
- Can you talk me through a typical experience/pathway?
- Can you describe the three main journeys that people take?
- Has Covid-19 changed any of this?

Process/operating model: HOW

- How many staff do you have?
- How many volunteers do you have?
- How much time do you spend per client/intervention (3 main journeys)?
- How do you link in with other support agencies?

- How do you link up with CJS agencies?
- Are there obvious barriers/bottlenecks in the process? Why?
- How do you handle volunteer turnover?

Affordability:

- How much the whole operation costs and which pieces cost what?
- How many clients will you have on average per week? (difference between Bodmin and Plymouth)
- What takes the most staff and volunteer time?
- Do you meet the demand on the ground? When you think that you have too much demand, how do you deal with that?
- How do you prioritise demand/your time?
- Has Covid-19 changed any of this?

Proportionality:

- Do you think that CASSPLUS's engagement is proportionate to the clients' needs that are covered by CASSPLUS's mission? Why?
- How do you manage risks to your clients and to your operation?

Key/critical factors for your success:

- Can you tell me which aspects of your service are absolutely critical?
- Can you tell me which aspects of your service are 'nice to have'?

Questions for stakeholders receiving CASSPLUS referrals

Understanding the client profile and their target needs

- Can you describe the average client profile/need that is referred to you by CASSPLUS?
- On average, how many clients would be referred to you by CASSPLUS in a month?

Understanding how CASSPLUS operates in practice

- How did you build a relationship with CASSPLUS?
- How are people referred to you?
- Do you feed information back to CASSPLUS on the client journey?
- Do you refer back into CASSPLUS at any point?

Understanding the efficiency of the operating model

- Are the clients referred to you by CASSPLUS people who would probably find/not find your services without the referral?
- Do the entry pathways change based on CASSPLUS referral?/enough supply to meet their demand

Developing a theory of change

- Can you describe how people are referred to you?
- What is the aim of your intervention with clients?
- Do you think that your intervention with clients is effective to prevent them from offending/reoffending?

Identifying initial key elements for replication

- Do you think CASSPLUS is an effective/successful service?
- What do you perceive to be the most effective components of CASSPLUS?
- Would CASSPLUS work in any setting/context/geography?

Additional questions for stakeholders referring to CASSPLUS? (probation, solicitors, magistrates, court staff, legal advisors)

- Why do you refer people to Cass?
- How do you refer people to CASSPLUS? Is it easy to do so?
- Do you think it's effective to refer people to CASSPLUS? Do you think that there is enough capacity to respond to the demand those people place?

- Who do you perceive to be the target client group for CASSPLUS? Do you refer to people within this group?
- Is CASSPLUS more effective in supporting one group than others?
- Who would you refer people to if CASSPLUS were not there? Are there other people that you would refer to instead? Why?
- What do you perceive to be the most effective components of CASSPLUS?

Assumptions, limitations, caveats for cost-benefit analyses

Method 1

We assessed the impact of CASSPLUS on 5 types of client needs – mental health, domestic violence, homelessness, drug dependency, and alcohol dependency.

It is not possible to tell from the data whether any change in clients' need level is due to direct activities of CASSPLUS or due to a service they may have been referred on to. Since the costs will be much higher if the client has taken up a referral with another service, we have run our calculation on the basis that all clients whose need level reduced were provided with support by a third party organisation. This allows us to be fairly confident this is a **minimum level** of cost-benefit generated by CASSPLUS's activities, based on a high estimate of their costs. This will also cover those clients who took up a referral with a third party service but did not see an improvement in their need level.

Optimism bias applied to costs of CASSPLUS: We divided the costs of CASSPLUS to proportionately represent the number of clients/needs included in the benefits analysis. However we then applied an optimism bias to account for the fact that CASSPLUS staff did not typically assess the most high-risk clients against the outcomes framework. As such, the cohort about which we have data does not include the most hard-to-reach individuals.

For the Mental Health calculation, we used the following figures/assumptions.

Affected Population	Number of individuals recorded with a mental health need at first assessment by CASSPLUS (in the needs assessment outcomes data – note this was about half of the total CASSPLUS client cohort in a year) and with at least one follow up needs assessment.
Level of engagement	We used a 100% engagement rate as all clients were still engaging with CASSPLUS in order to have obtained the need score.
Impact	The percentage of the affected population with an improved need score between their first assessment and their most recent assessment. Note that this means that any temporary positive impact (e.g. if a client's need level is reduced at their second assessment but increases again by their third assessment) will not be included in the cost-benefit analysis.
Deadweight/proportion of clients who would have achieved the outcome with no intervention	22% figure is used based on a Citizens Advice Bureau Survey, which found that only 22% of clients suggested they could have resolved their problem without help

Impact of CASSPLUS on attendance of mental health referrals	59% figure is used based on average of figures from the RAND evaluation of Liaison & Diversion for the average increase in attendances at specialist mental health services and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT).
---	---

For the Domestic Violence calculation, we used the following figures/assumptions.

Affected Population	As above
Level of engagement	We used a 100% engagement rate as all clients were still engaging with CASSPLUS in order to have obtained the need score.
Impact	We used a conservative estimate of the prevention of 1 domestic violence incident per person in the affected population who had an improved need score between their first assessment and their most recent assessment. Note that this means that any temporary positive impact will not be included in the cost-benefit analysis.
Deadweight/proportion of clients who would have achieved the outcome with no intervention	35% figure is used based on a Citizens Advice Bureau Survey. There was no specific figure for domestic abuse so we used the highest possible figure.
Impact of CASSPLUS on attendance of domestic violence referrals	35% figure is used based on average of figures from the RAND evaluation of Liaison & Diversion for the average increase in attendances at referrals. We applied a 40% optimism bias here.

For the Homelessness calculation, we used the following figures/assumptions.

Affected Population	As above
Level of engagement	We used a 50% engagement rate based on the average proportion of people claiming statutory homelessness who are granted it. This is because the benefit calculated by the tool is due to reduction in statutory homelessness specifically, rather than general homelessness or rough sleeping.
Impact	The percentage of the affected population with an improved need score between the first assessment and the last assessment. Note that this means that any temporary positive impact will not be included in the cost-benefit analysis.

Deadweight/proportion of clients who would have achieved the outcome with no intervention	35% figure is used based on a Citizens Advice Bureau Survey. There was no specific figure for homelessness, so we used the highest possible figure.
Impact of CASSPLUS on attendance of homelessness referrals	35% figure is used based on average of figures from the RAND evaluation of Liaison & Diversion for the average increase in attendances at referrals. We applied a 40% optimism bias here.

For the Drugs calculation, we used the following figures/assumptions.

Affected Population	As above
Level of engagement	We used a 100% engagement rate as all clients were still engaging with CASSPLUS in order to have obtained the need score.
Impact	The percentage of the affected population with an improved need score between their first assessment and their last assessment. Note that this means that any temporary positive impact will not be included in the cost-benefit analysis.
Deadweight/proportion of clients who would have achieved the outcome with no intervention	18% is the average figure for spontaneous remission found in Walters (2000), 'Spontaneous Remission from Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Abuse: Seeking Quantitative Answers to Qualitative Questions', in <i>The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse</i> , 26(3):443-460.
Impact of CASSPLUS on attendance of drugs referrals	10% figure is based on the RAND evaluation of Liaison & Diversion, which finds an average increase in attendances at drug and alcohol treatment of approximately 10% among those with a liaison and diversion referral compared to the historical control group.

For the Alcohol calculation, we used the following figures/assumptions.

Affected Population	As above
Level of engagement	We used a 100% engagement rate as all clients were still engaging with CASSPLUS in order to have obtained the need score.
Impact	The percentage of the affected population with an improved need score between the first assessment and the last assessment. Note that this means that any temporary positive impact will not be included in the cost-benefit analysis.

Deadweight/proportion of clients who would have achieved the outcome with no intervention	18% figure is the average figure for spontaneous remission found in Walters (2000), 'Spontaneous Remission from Alcohol, Tobacco, and Other Drug Abuse: Seeking Quantitative Answers to Qualitative Questions', in <i>The American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse</i> , 26(3):443-460. used based on a Citizens Advice Bureau Survey.
Impact of CASSPLUS on attendance of alcohol referrals	10% figure is based on the RAND evaluation of Liaison & Diversion, which finds an average increase in attendances at drug and alcohol treatment of approximately 10% among those with a liaison and diversion referral compared to the historical control group.

Method 2

Method 2 assessed the value of CASSPLUS referrals to three services. The values of these three services themselves was assessed as follows:

Service 1 Fiscal Value

Used total value and no. of people helped from published cost-benefit analysis to calculate a figure for average value per person helped – £244.64

Multiplied this by the number of referrals made by CASSPLUS to Service 1 to get an overall figure for the value of CASSPLUS referrals to Service 1 – £244.64 x 11 (average yearly references, calculated from total made between 2018 and 2020)

This was adjusted to take into account “deadweight” i.e. the proportion of referrals that would have found Service 1 anyway without CASSPLUS. The deadweight figure was 22%, as estimated by Service 1 from their client survey

Fiscal value of CASSPLUS referrals to Service 1 = £244.64 x 11 x 0.78 = £2,099.01

Referrals to Service 1 made up 4.5% of all CASSPLUS referrals (between Jan 2018 and Dec 2020)

Service 1 Public Value

Used total value and no. of people helped from Service 1's published cost-benefit analysis to calculate a figure for average value per person helped – £1428.57

Multiplied this by the number of referrals made by CASSPLUS to Service 1 to get an overall figure for the value of CASSPLUS referrals to Service 1 – £1428.57 x 11 (average yearly references, calculated from total made between 2018 and 2020)

This was adjusted to take into account “deadweight” i.e. the proportion of referrals that would have found Service 1 anyway without CASSPLUS. The deadweight figure was 22%, as estimated by Service 1 from their client survey

Public value of CASSPLUS referrals to Service 1 = $£1428.57 \times 11 \times 0.78 = £12,257.13$

Referrals to Service 1 made up 4.5% of all CASSPLUS referrals (between Jan 2018 and Dec 2020)

Service 2 Fiscal Value

For Service 2 we also used the CAB cost-benefit analysis, as they are similar services. Though we slightly adjusted the per person value calculated with an optimism bias correction of -25% to account for them being not exactly the same organisations – $£244.64 \times 0.75$

In the same way as for CAB we then multiplied this by the number of referrals for Service 2 and made an adjustment downwards for deadweight, using the same 22% figure

Fiscal value of CASSPLUS referrals to Service 2 = $£244.64 \times 0.75 \times 7(\text{yearly referrals}) \times 0.78 = £1,001.80$

Referrals to Service 2 made up 2.8% of all CASSPLUS referrals (between Jan 2018 and Dec 2020)

Therefore £3,100.81 (£2,099.01 + £1,001.80) is the estimated value of 7.3% (4.5% + 2.8%) of all CASSPLUS referrals in one year (2019-20)

If we assumed the same value for the rest of CASSPLUS referrals, the total value estimate would be £42,476.85

Service 2 Public Value

For Service 2 we also used the CAB cost-benefit analysis, as they are similar services. Though we slightly adjusted the per person value calculated with an optimism bias correction of -25% to account for them being not exactly the same organisations – $£1428.57 \times 0.75$

In the same way as for CAB we then multiplied this by the number of referrals for Service 2 and made an adjustment downwards for deadweight, using the same 22% figure

Public value of CASSPLUS referrals to Service 2 = $£1428.57 \times 0.75 \times 7(\text{yearly referrals}) \times 0.78 = £5,849.99$

Referrals to Service 2 made up 2.8% of all CASSPLUS referrals (between Jan 2018 and Dec 2020)

Therefore £18,107.12 (£12,257.13 + £5,849.99) is the estimated value of 7.3% (4.5% + 2.8%) of all CASSPLUS referrals in one year (2019-20)

If we assumed the same value for the rest of CASSPLUS referrals, the total value estimate would be £248,042.74

Service 3 Fiscal Value

Ran through Greater Manchester CBA tool, which calculated that overall fiscal value in 2019-20 was -£2,930,814.87

Value per person helped was the above divided by 61,774 = -£47.44

CASSPLUS made 23 referrals to Service 3 between Jan 2018 and Dec 2020. Therefore 8 referrals per year.

Fiscal value of CASSPLUS referrals to Service 3 = £-47.44 x 8 x 1.22 (deadweight correction) = -£463.01

Our best guess is that Service 3 amounted to 3.3% of referrals in 2019/20

Our estimate is that 10.6% of CASSPLUS referrals resulted in £2,637.80 (£3,100.81 - £463.01) of value.

If we assumed the same value for the remaining proportion of referrals, overall value was £24,884.91

Service 3 Public Value

Ran through Greater Manchester CBA tool, which calculated that overall public value in 2019-20 was £148,017,119.10

Value per person helped was the above divided by 61,774 = £2,396.10

CASSPLUS made 23 referrals to Service 3 between Jan 2018 and Dec 2020. Therefore 8 referrals per year.

Public value of CASSPLUS referrals to Service 3 = £2,396.10 x 8 x 0.78 (deadweight correction) = £14,951.66

Our best guess is that Service 3 amounted to 3.3% of referrals in 2019/20

Our estimate is that 10.6% of CASSPLUS referrals resulted in £33,058.78 (£18,107.12 + £14,951.66) of value.

If we assumed the same value for the remaining proportion of referrals, overall value was £224,485.28