

Headlines 2017-2018_{v2}



Circles

We coordinated 58 active Circles, of which 32 were newly established. 6 Circles closed earlier than planned. Circles were delivered in all five Police areas.

Core Members

We received 133 core member referral enquiries of which 66 converted into formal referrals. 32 (48%) were allocated to a new Circle. We were unable to proceed with 14 (21%) due to insufficient funding in specific areas. 72% of referrals were made by the National Probation Service.

Outcomes

Independent evaluation of Circles by the University of the West of England published in May 2016¹ concluded that *“CoSA assist in the reintegration of sexual offenders in the community by providing pro-social support, role modeling, a positive platform and grounded assistance. CoSA provide social and emotional support to the Core Members.... being in a stronger position to live offence free in the community than at the beginning of their Circle”* Dr Kieran McCartan, Professor of Criminology.

Volunteers

More than 200 Volunteers were active in 58 Circles. This represents more than 6,400 hours direct volunteering time which is equivalent to around £89,500 in-kind². We had an excellent Volunteer retention rate meaning that a significant group joined consecutive Circles. We trained new volunteers at a series of 2-day Training and Assessment Events and provided a programme of Volunteer Development Training. At the end of the year we had 179 retained, trained volunteers across the region.

Money

Our income for the year was £333,065. 30% of income was derived from statutory sources (e.g. Police & Crime Commissioners; National Probation Service; NHS; Local Authorities) and the other 70% from Trusts and Foundations.

Diversification

Our new pilot projects became well embedded in their second year: Circles for young people; Circles for adults with intellectual disabilities; and prison/through the gate Circles.

Jobs

1 new half-time post was created and all other posts remained the same.

Trustees

Two new Trustees joined the Board: Stephen Barry and Peter Estall. Diane Wills returned to the role.

Independent evaluation

Research in Practice gained Ministry of Justice National Research Council approval to undertake a 3 year process and impact evaluation of Circles South West.

Our Annual Report 2017-2018 provides further information about our progress & achievements

¹ Circles of Support and Accountability: Cabinet Office – Social Action Fund Evaluation, Dr K McCartan, 2016 (University of the West of England)

² Using formulas recommended by Circles UK and Volunteering England

What our stakeholders say

Core Members

“They [the Circle] help me not to re-offend by making me think more...I now step back whereas before I would go straight for it...I need to listen more, they are helping me to divert from situations that wouldn't be good for me”

“Circles has helped to give me the skills, experience and confidence to make positive changes in my life. [The Circle is] an environment where I can talk honestly about anything that remotely relates to my offending past..... I have to honour and respect and live up to the support [volunteers] are giving me in the Circle”

“It has made an enormous difference. Ideally everyone coming out of prison should have a Circle”

“I don't know where I would be now without Circles - I wouldn't have achieved the milestones without your help, belief and support. It is only once a week but was on my mind everyday – I looked forward to the meetings even though I knew they would be difficult – the key was that I could always talk freely. Thanks so much for everything”.

Volunteers

“If you want to stop the community from being hurt the best way is to try and help stop people reoffending. And people deserve a second chance. And it is good to help, so why not be a part of that?”

“Personally I have a great belief in restorative justice.... and this is a practical way of the community taking responsibility for the reintegration of offenders”

“The training was enlightening re previous Circles [I have volunteered with] and provided useful material for work with current core member... really loved all of it”

“Thank you ever so much for the opportunity that Circles gives us to help others in such a helpful manner. It's nice to see an organisation with different perceptions and methods that are so effective”

Other stakeholders

“Circles is a proven way of not only enhancing risk management of high risk offenders within the community, but ensuring that they develop the necessary skills to manage their own risk in the longer term” MAPPA Coordinator, Dorset

"Let's be under no doubt about the importance of what you do: you are re-integrating sex offenders back into the community and, critically, helping them to steer clear from reoffending. Put simply, you are protecting people in your midst, including children, from serious sexual harm" Angus Macpherson, Police & Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon, 2018

“Wasn't it a great celebration of a life transformed! I would like to extend immense gratitude to you and your volunteers for the unstinting, selfless, commitment shown by all; which has enabled a young man who struggled to see life beyond his 4 walls and likelihood of further offending, develop the social skills and confidence that has seen him thrive and become a mature and responsible member of society, with a life ahead to enjoy. You must all be very proud of this amazing achievement. The support I have felt by your team in helping manage Y within the community cannot be underestimated, along with the total professionalism displayed throughout”. Police Offender Manager, Avon & Somerset, 2018

“Keep up the fantastic work, our community needs you. We are grateful” Alison Hernandez, Police & Crime Commissioner for Devon & Cornwall, 2018