

# Tavistock Area Support Services

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## Impact Report 2025/2026



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## Our Vision

*A community where older people and those with disabilities or vulnerabilities can maintain independence, stay connected with others and have better health and wellbeing.*



## Our Mission

*To deliver outstanding activities, vital support services and provide safe community spaces to reduce loneliness and social isolation, promoting inclusion and equality.*



## Tavistock Area Support Services

*Supporting the health and wellbeing of older people and those living with disabilities*

### Patrons

English broadcaster, former newsreader, writer and journalist

**Angela Rippon OBE CBE**

Former Royal Marine and multiple world-record endurance athlete

**Lee Spencer BEM**

*commonly known as 'The Rowing Marine'*

### Trustees

Chair of Trustees

**Jan Gasper**

Acting Treasurer

**Val Dodds**

**Sue Lake**

**Darashna Moodley**

### Staff

General Manager

**Deb Morris**

Charity Centre Co-Ordinators

**Laura Wilkinson**

**Charlotte Bradbury**

Life Stories Co-Ordinator

**Emma Shaw**

Café Co-Ordinator

**Andrea Robinson**

Maintenance

**Ian Davidson**

Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS) is registered in England and Wales as a Charitable Company

Charity No 1129175

Company No 6779873

Registered Office is at The Anchorage Centre, Chapel Street, Devon, PL19 8AG



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[www.tasstavistock.org.uk](http://www.tasstavistock.org.uk)



tavistockareasupportservices

## About TASS

Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS) is a long-established local charity, founded in 1985 and based at The Anchorage Centre in Tavistock, Devon. For over forty years, TASS has been at the heart of the West Devon community, supporting older people and adults with disabilities to maintain independence and improve health and wellbeing. We serve Tavistock and surrounding rural areas, offering vital social and practical support, including wellbeing clubs, support groups, activities, community transport, mobility aid hire, befriending services, and welfare support. Our Community Café in Tavistock's Pannier Market, and our two rural village drop-in centres, provides further welcoming, inclusive spaces for residents to meet, socialise, and engage with the community. Relying on volunteers, donations, and local partnerships, TASS works tirelessly to reduce loneliness and isolation, promoting active, connected living for some of the area's most vulnerable residents. The drop-in centres provide lunch and refreshments every week, fun group activities and arrange regular outings around the area.

### Our key aims:

- Improve wellbeing by connecting people and reducing social isolation.
- Providing opportunities for the community to be more intergenerational and inclusive to all.
- Promote learning, independence and self-confidence.
- Increase access to health and wellbeing activities.



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER

This Impact Report highlights the hard work and effort from everyone involved with the charity over the past 12 months, including Trustees, staff and our amazing team of extraordinary volunteers. Everyone's continued dedication is immensely appreciated, their commitment to our vision and mission is how we continue to provide vital activities and support services to the older, disabled and vulnerable people within our community.

TASS has navigated through some particularly challenging economic situations over the past year, with rising operational costs, the cost-of-living crisis impacting fundraising results, the increased competition for funding grants, a reduction in local authority funding, and several unexpected financial hurdles.

Whilst these difficulties have tested our resilience, we have taken decisive, proactive measures such as restructuring our team and reviewing all service charges to protect core charity functions and stabilise our cash flow. We remain deeply grateful for the continued generosity of our supporters and other professional organisations we have partnerships with as we work to restore long-term financial health.

Adult social care in England faces a severe and persistent funding and resources gap affecting older people and disabled people, this then creates massive knock-on pressure for all other health and community services. Independent health foundations and charities including The Health Foundation, The King's Funds and Nuffield Trust frequently report that real-term cuts to local authority budgets have left an estimated one million older people with unmet care needs, and at least two in five disabled adults without their basic daily needs met. The Health Foundation estimate an annual funding gap of £8.4 billion for adult social care, while the government state that persistent in-year deficits routinely leave local authorities facing hundreds of millions in overspends.

Because social care is severely underfunded, hospitals struggle to discharge elderly and medically fit patients into community or social care settings. This "bed-blocking" contributes heavily to the wider NHS waiting lists and emergency care backlogs. As the funding fails to keep pace with delivery costs, access to care remains constrained, forcing many people to go without needed support, exhaust personal savings, or sell their homes.

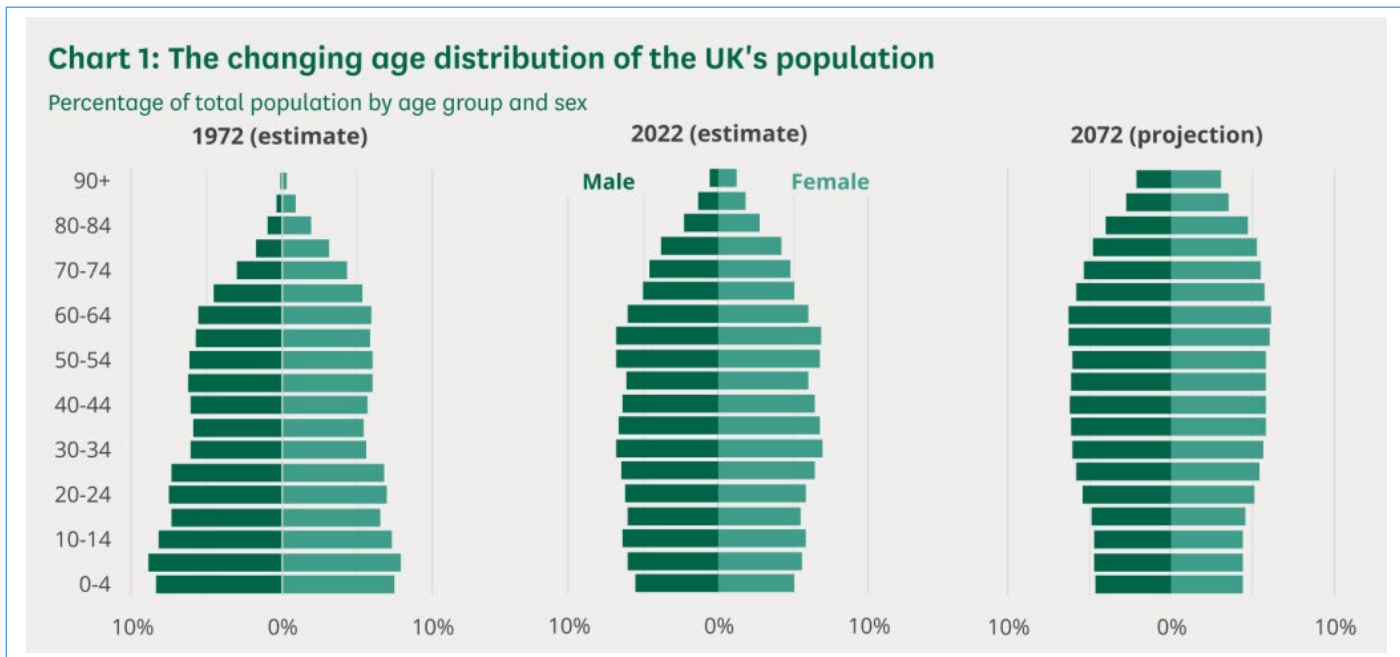
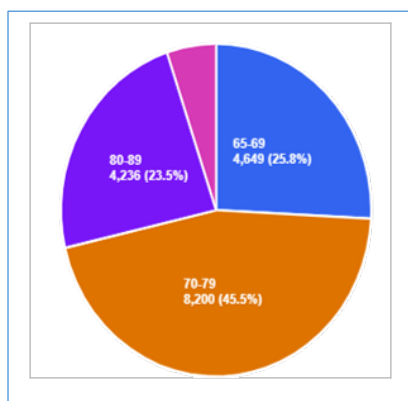
According to the Institute for Government Performance Tracker, the trend is set to continue. The total spending on the sector rose inline with local authorities' spending in 2024/25 increasing by 3.6%. Using that data, and assuming that adult social care receives a proportional increase in funding, they expect spending to rise again by 4.6% bringing spending on adult social care to just under £30bn in 2025/26.

The vulnerable individuals and their unpaid carers whose needs aren't being met, then turn to local charities and voluntary organisations like TASS to fill the safety net. As local authorities struggle to plug their budget deficits, they cut non-statutory services, and reduce commissioning budgets, this limits the grants available to charities, so although the demand is vastly increasing, the financial support is dramatically decreasing. As a local charity, the escalating operational costs, such as higher provider fees, wage pressures, and policy changes like employer national insurance contributions are making it more difficult to sustain essential frontline services for older and disabled people.



*Deb Morris*  
General Manager

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) the UK population was around 67.6 million in 2022, and they estimate it will reach 70 million by 2026. They confirmed that the population is aging, in 2022 there were approximately 12.7 million people aged 65 or over making up 19% of the entire UK population. They project that by 2072 this could rise to 22.1 million, or 27% of the population.

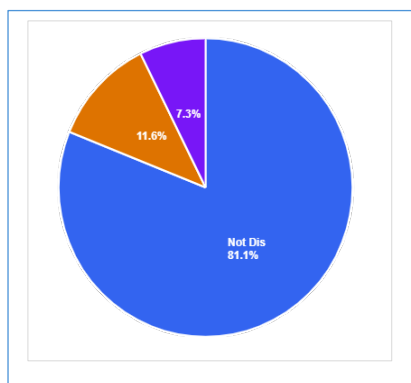


In comparison, based on 2022 data, Devon's population is projected to increase by 20% by 2047. The number of people aged over 65 is expected to rise by 47%, while people aged over 85 are projected to increase by 111%

Across Devon, more than a quarter (26.3%) of the population is 65 or older. This high concentration places increasing demand on adult social care services and shifts the ratio of working-age adults to dependents.

West Devon shares the joint-highest median age in the Southwest at 52 years old. Local strategies focus heavily on expansion of adult social care for age-related disabilities.

● Not Disabled (Not Dis) : 81.1% ● Disabled (Limited a little) : 11.6% ● Disabled (Limited a lot) : 7.3%

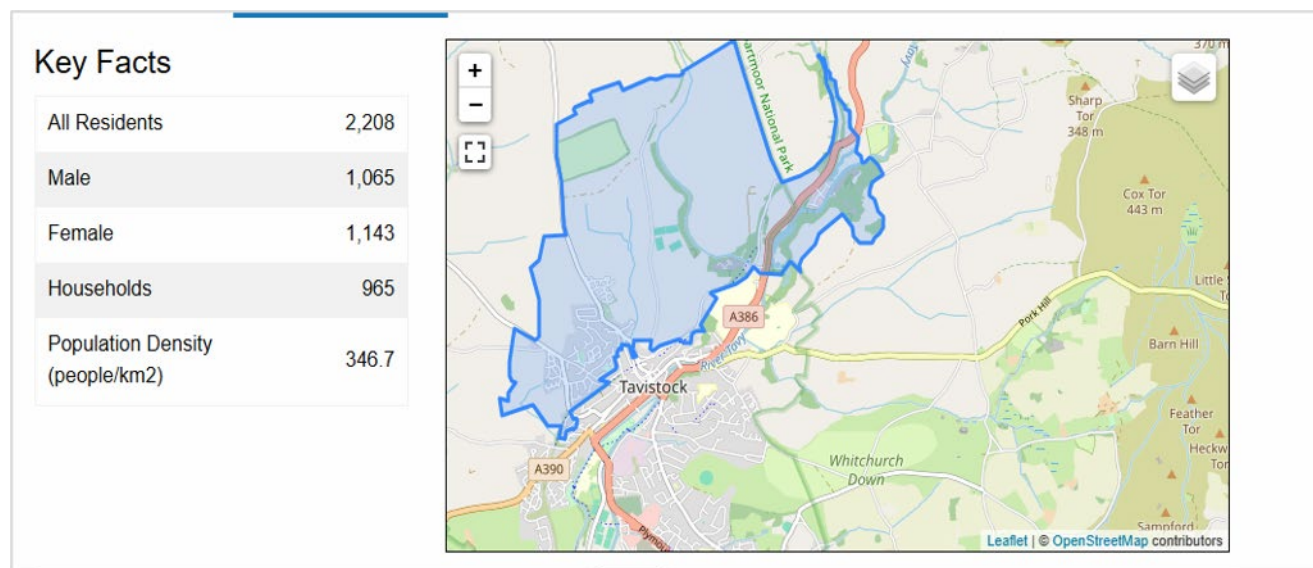


West Devon Borough Council's disabled population consists of 18.9% of the total area residents, according to the latest official localized metrics. The breakdown of disability status across the local population breaks down into three distinct categories under standard reporting frameworks:

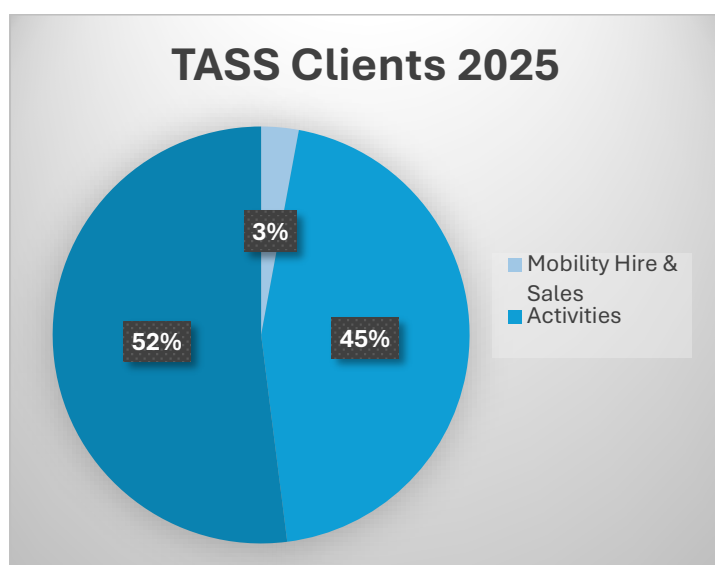
- Disabled (Day-to-day activities limited a little): 11.6%
- Disabled (Day-to-day activities limited a lot): 7.3%

## West Devon 005B: Disability

This dataset provides Census 2021 estimates that classify usual residents in England and Wales by long-term health problems or disabilities. The estimates are as at Census Day, 21 March 2021.



|                                                                                                                                  |       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|
| Disability: Total: All usual residents                                                                                           | 2,208 |
| Disabled under the Equality Act                                                                                                  | 378   |
| Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a lot                                                             | 109   |
| Disabled under the Equality Act: Day-to-day activities limited a little                                                          | 269   |
| Not disabled under the Equality Act                                                                                              | 1,830 |
| Not disabled under the Equality Act: Has long term physical or mental health condition but day-to-day activities are not limited | 223   |
| Not disabled under the Equality Act: No long term physical or mental health conditions                                           | 1,607 |



In 2025, TASS had approximately 1,972 clients listed as attending various weekly clubs, groups and activities at our Anchorage Centre and 2 rural drop-in centres. Our 'Optimise' community transport database indicates that we have 2,137 clients and 126 shop mobility clients including our rehoming donation scheme. All client numbers have been increasing throughout 2026. The 'Optimise, community database currently has 2,638 clients.

Thank you



## Summary of our past YEAR

TASS celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2025, and never have we been prouder of the work we do and the impact we make on the lives of older people and those living with disabilities and vulnerabilities who we support in Tavistock and the broader West Devon area. To mark the occasion, we held a Gala Dinner and Charity Auction at the Bedford Hotel, Tavistock with the Tavistock Mayor and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Devon and their wives as our guests of honour. BBC Radio Presenter David FitzGerald took to the podium as our celebrity auctioneer, and we were delighted that we managed to raise over £2,000 to put towards the TASS services. In July we invited our clients and other guests to celebrate our anniversary at a lovely Garden Party at the Tavistock Sensory Garden and the Tavistock Sir Francis Drake Bowling Club. Everyone enjoyed a scrumptious Devon cream tea whilst being entertained by students from Mount Kelly singing and playing musical instruments. After, all the clients, volunteers and students joined together to learn and play lawn bowls with the help of the Tavistock bowling members.

These events both saw the start of one of our new 2025 incentives our **Edy's** Friends project, where we bring together the **E**lderly, **D**isabled and **Y**oung people from the community in carefully planned intergenerational activities. Following on from the Gala Dinner and Garden Party, in August we launched our Friday luncheon club, where we provided a 2-course home cooked meal for our clients, followed by a prearranged activity or entertainment. Students from local secondary schools and SEN schools would join us, helping staff and volunteers to plan menus, prepare, cook and serve food, then run planed after lunch activities and entertainment as well as eating and socialising with the clients.



The luncheon club have proven to be so successful, with more and more people joining us every time. On Friday 12 December 2025 we held our first TASS Christmas Lunch, the original 40 tickets sold out very quickly and due to a lot of disappointment we agreed to sell more places, resulting in us cooking Roast Turkey with all the trimmings followed by homemade trifle for 63 clients. The wonderful Mount Kelly students who had broken up for Christmas the previous day, gave up their personal time to still come and help TASS staff and volunteers set up, cook and serve the dinner, after lunch they then sang and played various musical instruments to entertain our very full and happy guests. Due to its ongoing popularity, this year TASS has arranged and already sold out for two separate Christmas lunches during the festive period.



In addition to the students attending the luncheon club, we were also asked by Tavistock College and Mount Kelly to become one of their certified work experience placements for their year 10 students and official placement provider for any of their Duke of Edinburgh students needing to carry out voluntary work experience in the community.

The Edy's Friends incentive evolved from the success of TASS being asked to host First Year Medical Students from the University of Plymouth Peninsula Medical School on 5 year BMBS Bachelor of Medicine Degrees on Community based placements. This started with 62 students in the academic year September 2024 to June 2025. TASS were delighted to host the students, during each placement the students gave valuable support to the TASS staff and volunteers aiding clients who were participating in daily activities or using our services. The university agreed that the community placements was a great achievement and in August 2025, they requested that we take a further 116 students in the next academic year from September 2025 to June 2026, and this year we have been allocated 180 students.

## **TASS Armed Forces & Emergency Services VETERANS HUB**

In March, TASS opened a brand new Armed Forces and Emergency Services Veterans Hub, starting with a fortnightly breakfast and Banter on Tuesdays and once-a-month on Saturdays. In addition to veterans, we welcome serving personnel, cadets and their family members. We also invite other charities and organisations to attend, including the RMA- The Royal Marines Charity, the Royal British Legion, SAAFA, and Help for Heroes, and other professionals including, the Tavistock Mayor, local MPs, councillors, and the Armed Forces Champion from the Department of Working Pensions.

Other local companies and professionals also regularly attend our information and support hub to offer useful advice to the members, such as RM Builders, Tamar Energy, and the clinical lead from Abbey Surgery which is a newly Veterans Accredited GP.



*TASS Veteran 'Norman' celebrating his 91<sup>st</sup> Birthday*

*A former soldier from the Dorset Regiment Mortar Unit, he served in Hong Kong, Japan and Korea*



# Armed Forces Veterans Support & Advice Hub

## Overview & Objectives

This project supports local Armed Forces Veterans living in Tavistock and outlying rural communities. Our primary objectives are to:

1. **Reduce loneliness and isolation** across rural areas.
2. **Support mental health** by creating a welcoming, positive social network.
3. **Build an enduring peer support network** driven by veterans themselves.

### Key Achievements & Growth

- **Create an Accessible Drop-In:** Established a low-cost, subscription-free "drop-in style" breakfast club specifically designed for veterans meeting three times a month.
- **Over 250% Growth:** Registered veteran attendance grew significantly from 20 participants to 60 within a very short period of time.
- **Develop a Self-Supporting Model:** Initial momentum was driven by dedicated general volunteers from TASS. Today, the group is empowered and run effectively by veteran volunteers who actively engage in leading activities.

### Collaborative Support & The Veteran Hub

To address deeper social, financial, and medical needs, we expanded our reach by collaborating with established charities and government agencies, including **SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity)**, **Veterans UK**, **The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)**, **Military vs Cancer**, and **Combat Stress**.

- **Volunteer Training:** Combat Stress provided essential, certificated training for our volunteers, establishing a strong foundation to manage dynamic groups and effectively signpost or refer veterans to specialized financial, medical, and social support.
- **The Hub:** Developed directly from the breakfast club, our Hub listens to individual needs and offers tailored guidance. Six veterans have already self-referred through the Hub for further support.
- **National Accreditation & Outreach**  
The project has strengthened its community presence through formal registration and affiliation with **COBSEO (The Confederation of Service Charities)**, **ASDIC (Association of Drop-In Centres)**, **Pride in Veterans**, and **Armed Forces Breakfast Clubs**. These affiliations help us extend our outreach further into hard-to-reach rural communities

### Looking Ahead

Moving toward 2026, we plan to expand our collaborative networks to include groups like **Dartmoor Mountain Rescue** and **Prison Service Veterans**.

We remain committed to deepening social cohesion, cultivating a true sense of belonging, and offering continuous peer-to-peer training and support that benefits both our veterans and the wider community.





## Tavistock Area Support Services: 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary VE Day celebrations



To celebrate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of VE Day, TASS held a special afternoon tea at the Anchorage Centre with a 1940's singalong by popular local performer Brian Burley.



Whilst the staff and volunteers at the TASS Community Café at the Pannier Market laid on a fantastic 1940's themed spread.



## New TASS Activities: TASS Music Club & Digital Lives

In January we commenced a brand-new Music club every Monday afternoon in the main hall at our Anchorage Centre. This is open to any aspiring musician from beginners to more experienced levels, basically everyone is welcome. Members can bring their own instrument or just come along and learn to play a percussion instrument with our volunteer who is a fully qualified music teacher of 30 years.

Studies have discovered that playing an instrument is a fantastic way to reduce stress and improve cognitive functions. Learning an instrument can significantly bolster your self-esteem, can enhance your confidence and reinforces your self-worth. Playing an instrument is a workout for your brain. Research statistics have proven that it improves memory and can enhance cognitive functions by up to 50%. This can translate into areas like academics and professional tasks or by making everyday challenges more manageable. Music is a profound way to express emotions that words might fail to capture, this creative outlet can help you process emotions rather than bottle them up. Engaging with music has been shown to reduce feelings of anxiety and depression. The shared experience of making music promotes social connections, fosters relationships, whilst improving health and wellbeing. Unlike many temporary fixes, music can provide ongoing emotional support, enhance confidence, and strengthen social bonds.

### TAVISTOCK TIMES GAZETTE

# New music group strikes the right note

GUY BOSWELL

A new music group for beginners and experienced musicians to learn to read music and play instruments has been set up by a Tavistock charity.

TASS (Tavistock Area Support Services) is hosting weekly Monday afternoon sessions for everyone to attend under the guidance of tutor Angela Thompson.

The students are starting off with mini-xylophones with simple-to-follow exercises and colour-coded diagrams. As Angela demonstrates, they gradually learn to read and follow music.

Anyone who also plays an instrument is invited to attend, so they can accompany the others to practise their learning. So far students have brought a flute and an accordion. Ultimately, Angela says she would like her students to play as a group for a public audience to showcase their new-found skills.

Flute player Sarah Turner, a high street bank worker, brought

along her instrument. She said: "I am involved with TASS as a volunteer and I'm musical, so I thought I'd give this new group a go with a friend. So far it's been a lot of fun and I'm meeting some new people. I brought my flute and hope to play it along with the others. But I haven't picked it up for 30 years."

"This is the perfect environment to start playing again and reading music gradually. It's very informal and Angela's a great teacher and goes at the right pace."

Sarah's friend Linda Pick, a retired catering worker, is learning to play the xylophone: "This is only my second time and I'm slowly getting there. I'm a complete beginner, but then so are most of us and Angela makes it easy."

Angela, a TASS volunteer and former primary school music teacher said: "These sessions are for anyone to learn to read and play music and for anyone to play their own instruments. Music is good for mentally stimulating the older people at TASS and brings joy to all."



A new music group for beginners and experienced musicians to learn to read music and play instruments has been set up at TASS HQ (Tavistock Area Support Services). Pictured L to R are Sarah Turner tutor Angela Thompson and Linda Pick.

our **Digital Lives** project (funded by Neighbourhood Watch) is a 10-month community initiative designed to build online confidence, raise awareness of digital and in-person scams, and promote safer online practices. Led by Anthony Purnell, a Cyberhood Watch Ambassador & L3 NCFE Cyber Security Certificate Holder. The project delivers monthly interactive sessions alongside targeted community outreach and specialised workshops.



### Core Aims & Key Objectives

The primary goal was to empower local residents to navigate the digital world safely and confidently.

- **Safer Online Habits:** Taught effective password management, prompt installation of security updates, and the importance of using supported operating systems and hardware.
- **Scam & Fraud Awareness:** Created safe spaces for objective learning and subjective discussions on recognising, avoiding, and reporting both online and in-person fraud and suspected scams.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Built practical skills to encourage the use of life-enhancing tools, including the NHS App and local library services and useful A. I.
- **Community Reporting:** Promoted direct reporting of online fraud to relevant authorities i.e. 159 for suspected banking fraud, Action Fraud.

## Key Achievements & Reach

| Metric / Activity         | Reach & Impact                                                                                                               |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Main Workshop Series      | 10 monthly free sessions - key demographic: males & females aged 65+                                                         |
| Memory Care Workshops     | 2 specialised sessions for 21 carers at the Memory Cafe, focusing on Telephone Scams and Power of Attorney considerations.   |
| Outreach & Awareness      | 1 interactive stall at Bedford Square during the Tavistock Multi-Agency & Emergency Services Day (June 20, 2026).            |
| Info & Recruitment Stalls | 2 sessions at TASS Cafe during the TASS Volunteer Recruitment Drive (June 19–20, 2026), engaging ~30 visitors.               |
| Community Integration     | Introduced 5 new individuals to other TASS services. 6 Armed Forces Veterans (encouraging cross-engagement activity at TASS) |

## Strategic Partnerships & Collaboration

The success and sustainability of Digital Lives relied on strong inter-agency collaboration:

- **TASS:** Provided venue space, administrative assistance, advertising, audience refreshments, outreach support and the workshop leader / Cyberhood Watch Ambassador
- **Neighbourhood Watch** provided funding for the project
- **Crimestoppers UK & SSAFA (The Armed Forces Charity):** Co-funded a dedicated smart TV to enhance presentation delivery and supported community outreach events.
- **Devon & Cornwall Police Cyber Protection Officers:** Delivered specialist guest talks on current threat landscapes.
- **The Yorkshire Building Society:** Provided expert advice on financial scam prevention and safe banking practices.

## Key Outcomes

1. **Enhanced Digital Literacy:** Improved participants' confidence in using daily applications (e.g., NHS App) and maintaining device hygiene.
2. **Targeted Protection for Vulnerable Groups:** Equipped carers of individuals with memory loss to safeguard loved ones against targeted financial and telephone scams.
3. **Broader Community Engagement:** Successfully bridged community safety organisations (Tavistock Police, Crimestoppers-UK, Neighbourhood Watch) directly with elderly and vulnerable demographics in Tavistock.

## ***TASS Christmas wreath making workshop***

As a special event, TASS held a Christmas wreath making workshop, where clients could come along to our centre on a Saturday afternoon to be given instructions and support to make their very own festive door wreath. We provided all the materials, decorations and foliage and each guest was treated to a luxurious Christmas hot chocolate and mince pie.



## ***Other TASS activities***

Alongside the new incentives, our usual activities continued to be popular with our service users, some of these include groups such as our 'Love to Move' where we provide a weekly seated movement to music programme for approximately 30 people with Dementia and other physical disabilities. The class provides exercise, fun and stimulation and the facilitators are all trained by the British Gymnastics Association. This is the first cognitive enhancement exercise programme of its kind in the UK, based on scientific research.

On 17<sup>th</sup> December, our charity patron, Plymouth born award-winning TV presenter and author of 14 books, Angela Rippon OBE CBE, came to visit, she joined our seated exercise class and stayed to chat over a cuppa and mince pie.



Some of our other groups clubs and activities such as Art for fun pictured left, Love to Sing, Chair Exercise, Seated Yoga, Qi Gong, and the 4 Parkinson's Groups are also very popular with TASS clients.

In our main hall and upper lounge, we also host other Groups' activities such as Tavistock Friendship Group, Stroke Club, Macular Disease Society, Tavistock Memory Café, Physically Challenged Group, Tavistock Seniors Club, Devon Sensory Team, Learn Devon, Bluebells Health and Wellbeing and Tavistock foot clinic, who all provide specialist support to the people in our community.



## ***The Christmas Tree Festival 2025 at the St Eustachius Church, Tavistock***



The member and volunteers of our Art for Fun club made each individual decoration for the TASS Christmas tree.

There were 56 different decorated trees created and sponsored by different local schools, charities and community organisations. Visitors to the festival voted for their favourite tree, and although TASS didn't win, our Art club members were extremely happy with the amazing response we received for our tree.

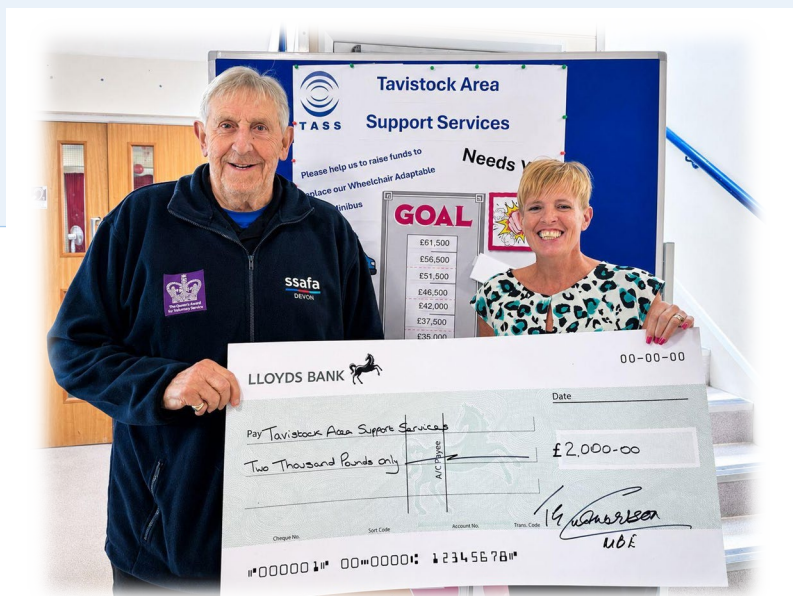
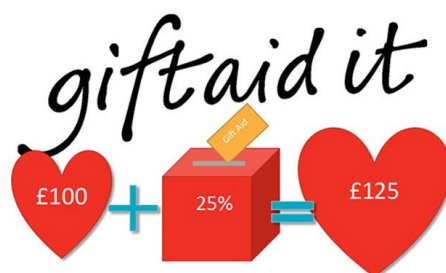
Finishing a creative project like this or participating in any arts and crafts validates personal ideas and choices and gives people a sense of self-worth. Creating art can lower stress and anxiety, depression and tension, it can improve mood, support long term recovery and well-being alongside or outside of traditional medical care.

## Other TASS Services

Our community transport scheme database currently has 2,683 clients listed who use either our volunteer community cars, or our wheelchair adaptable Berlingo van to attend medical appointments, outings, or to attend TASS activities, our Community Café or our rural drop-in centres.

Unfortunately, due to the rise in living costs, and because of the increased retirement age we have many fewer volunteer drivers than previous years which means we are unable to fulfil a vast percentage of the requests for transportation. This was also impacted by the fact that we had to sell our aging wheelchair accessible minibus due to the vast amount of money it was costing annually to keep it on the road.

There is no other wheelchair adaptable transport service in our area or anywhere where we or clients can hire an appropriate vehicle to use temporarily. Ideally, we need to achieve enough funding to purchase at least one new accessible minibus that we can use alongside the existing vehicle, with the hope that we can purchase another in the very near future. With more vehicles in our fleet, we will be able to fulfil the ever-increasing demand in our community. To achieve this, we will need to raise an additional £61,500 to purchase a new accessible minibus that adapts to take two wheelchair users. We have already begun fundraising for the minibus and have raised £17,000 so far.



Our TASS shopmobility service provides electric mobility scooters, and wheelchairs for hire. Our community mobility donation scheme is where we accept in, check, service and rehome previously owned mobility equipment and aids to anyone in need.

We have two rural Drop-in Outreach Centres, one at the Horrabridge Village Hall and the other at the Milton Abbot Village. Both centres welcome residents from their local communities and surrounding areas, the groups use the TASS Berlingo Vehicle, which is adapted to take one wheelchair user and 3 other passengers, to collect the members with mobility issues that would otherwise be confined to their home and unable to attend any activity. The centres provide lunch and refreshments every week, fun group activities and arrange regular outings around the area.

Our drop-in centres are vital for older adults because they combat intense social isolation, support mental and physical well-being, and fill critical gaps left by limited public infrastructure and health services in rural areas. Many villages face sparse populations, reduced public transport, and the loss of public amenities like post offices or pubs. Our drop ins provide a reliable, structured reason to leave the house and interact with peers.



Our weekly telephone befriending service is an essential provision which helps to reduce loneliness and social isolation to anyone unable to leave their own home.

Regular phone calls from a trained volunteer can improve wellbeing and low self-esteem and studies show that feeling connected positively influences overall health.

Telephone befriending requires no computer literacy or expensive equipment, making it lower cost and easy for older adults or visually impaired individuals to use.

Regular check-ins allow volunteers to spot changes in a person's well-being, offer basic reassurance, and raise safeguarding concerns if someone is unwell or needs extra support.

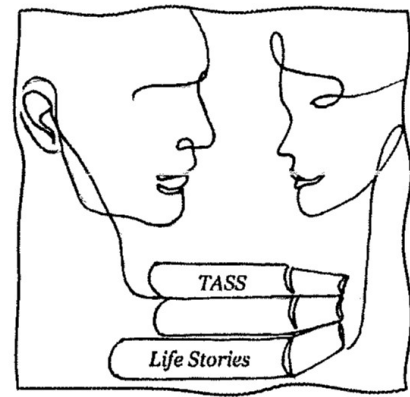


## TASS Life Stories Project

The **TASS Life Stories Projects** have been successfully running for over 15 years, recording and transcribing hundreds of stories about the lives of people in our community.

The latest specialist project, '**Preserving Precious Memories**', is a two-year project which has been funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. This is one of several specialist projects under the banner of TASS Life Stories, which has covered the lives of people of Dolvin Road Bedford Cottage residents, ex-agricultural workers and former school pupils. The current project is designed to save the memories of people living with dementia, which might otherwise be lost and is supported by partners such as Tavistock Dementia Alliance, Tavistock memory Café, Tavistock Heritage Trust and residential homes such as Hart Care in Yelverton.

Asking people living with dementia to recall their past is also beneficial to stimulate them, enhance their feeling of self-worth and reinforcing a sense of purpose, linking them with new friends and enabling them to live as well as possible. Carers and family members can also be included.



Precious  
Memories



Preserving Precious Memories can assist in the future care, support and consideration of a person with dementia, as their memory recall declines. Already in the residential home we are working with, staff have found that encouraging residents to talk about their life stories has opened up new avenues to activities they didn't know the person was interested in, new friendships of residents with similar interests and staff feel they are able to provide more bespoke activities to enrich the lives of those in their care. Storytelling allows people with dementia to express themselves, reinforcing their sense of self. Sharing memories helps preserve aspects of their personality, values and life history that might otherwise fade. It creates opportunities for connection, even as memory or communication becomes more difficult.

## The TASS Community Café



Our Community Café, located within Tavistock Pannier Market, provides an important, welcoming space that supports connections, inclusion, and wellbeing within the local community. Open Tuesday to Friday from 10:00am to 4:00pm and Saturdays from 10:00am to 3:00pm, the café offers a relaxed and accessible environment where people can meet, reduce isolation, and feel part of their community. While we are limited to serving drinks and pre-packaged snacks, the café plays a vital role as a social hub, particularly for older residents, carers, and those who may otherwise have limited opportunities for interaction. Beyond refreshments, the café acts as a gateway to wider support, with staff and volunteers providing a friendly presence and informal signposting to other services where appropriate. Its location within the busy Pannier Market increases visibility and accessibility, helping us engage with a broad cross-section of the community. The café therefore contributes not only to social wellbeing but also to early intervention and community resilience by creating a safe, inclusive space where people feel comfortable to connect and seek support.

The stunning mural inside the TASS café was designed and painted by a group of students from the local Mount Kelly school. The mural depicts many iconic Tavistock landmarks including the river, the moor and the market.

One of the students said *"It's very fulfilling to help out in a project for a good cause. The mural is a nice addition, and I hope it will make people's day."*

## ***Dickensian Evening***

Everyone enjoyed another wonderful Dickensian Evening at Tavistock, including joining the TASS staff and amazing volunteers at the TASS Community Café. On Friday 5 December, the café remained open until 8pm and we all dressed in appropriate Victorian attire to welcome any of our regular café users and anyone else from the area who was bracing the December evening to come together to enjoy the traditional town event. Despite the wet weather, many people did come out, and our cozy café was the ideal place to escape the rain to enjoy a lovely hot chocolate, a mince pie or any of our other scrumptious festive treats.

Dickensian evening is a magical late-night shopping and entertainment evening that transports you back in time. The traditional Christmas experience makes the town come alive with food & drink and gift stalls, the smell of delicious foods cooking and chestnuts roasting on a steam engine waft through the crowded streets as people watch a lantern parade, silt walkers, choirs, bands, and street entertainers all performing.



## New Objectives

It is extremely important that TASS can demonstrate our value, showing how imperative our work and services are within the community and our beneficiaries.

To achieve this, TASS is moving forward from the traditional paper client feedback communication questionnaires to include the use of more online feedback technology. All gathered data will then be recorded as comprehensive key performance indicators (KPI's) which will enable us to track and measure all our key outcomes comprising of financial health, programme outcomes, fundraising performance and operational efficiency. We have already introduced a simple online form accessed via a QR code, for the First-Year Medical Students who attend TASS on Community placements to give us their valuable feedback based on their experiences at TASS.

**TASS**  
Tavistock Area Support Services  
Supporting older people in our community

Friendship  
Support  
Independence  
A stronger community

**Thank you for  
spending time with TASS**

**Medical Student Placement Feedback**  
Your experience matters to us!

 Help us **improve** placements for future medical students

 Tell us how the experience supports your **learning and communication skills**

 Help us demonstrate **the difference** TASS makes to our community



 **Scan here**  
to give your feedback

 It takes just **3-5 minutes**

**Thank you!**

Your feedback will help shape future placements and support our work with older people.

Tavistock Area Support Services (TASS)  
Registered Charity No. 1129175

Supporting older people  
and our community

**We asked:**

*'What was the most valuable aspect of your placement at TASS?'*

Some of the students' responses included:

*'Seeing how community hubs are essential to the local people'*

*'Seeing how empathetic and loving the volunteers and staff are towards treating the local community'*

*'Interacting with those that use the service and how meaningful it is to them, especially how the service helps them to also keep up with the modern society and its evolving changes & challenges'*

**We asked:**

*'Has your experience at TASS changed how you think about communicating or caring for older people?'*

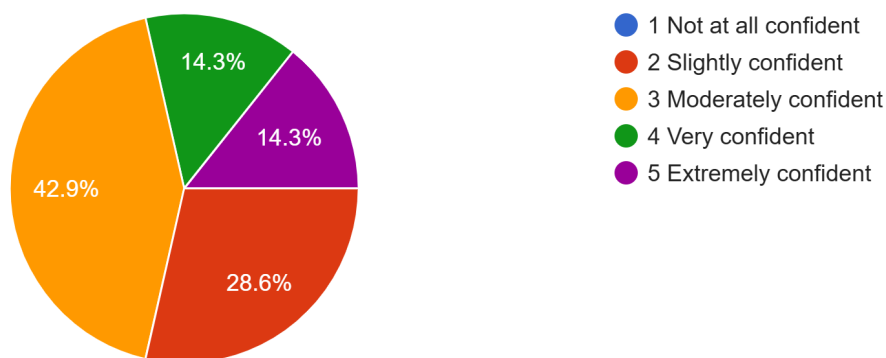
Some of the students' responses included:

*'Yes, they're just like everyone else. They love to chat. They want to be acknowledged.'*

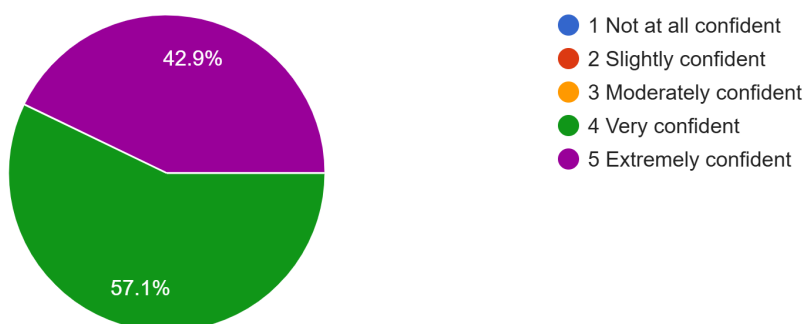
*'It reminded me that communication with older people is so valuable and that you always have something to learn from them.'*

*'Yes, sometimes we think of the elderly as people who need extra support and yes that is true, but they are people who are capable of working and thinking critically. To be able to give support whether it's in motility or awareness about real world problems. I think that is excellent and it has moved me in ways I cannot comprehend now. But it has caused a major shift in my thinking for the better good.'*

Thinking back to BEFORE your placement at TASS, how confident did you feel communicating face-to-face with older people?



NOW that you have completed your placement at TASS, how confident do you feel communicating face-to-face with older people?



We are now creating online feedback forms for our other various student placements which in addition to the first-year medical university students now include mainstream secondary school and Plymouth City College work experience and Dutchy of Edinburgh placements, bespoke tailored placements for students from a Special Educational Needs school and student Officers from Police Community Engagement Initial Training Team. We will also create an online version of our existing client feedback questionnaire.



## ***TASS Partners & Supporters***

Although all the services we provide are in greater demand than ever before, and the demand continues to rise, it is also becoming more difficult to achieve the financial support to ensure their continuance. Like all charities and non-profit organisations, rising costs, falling income, and donor fatigue are all contributing to our fundraising difficulties. Grants are more competitive, often oversubscribed and as a small independent charity we struggle to divert precious time from our frontline service delivery to complete often unsuccessful funding applications. The larger core grant application processes can be overly complex and resource-intensive, but the short-term funding cycles keep being reduced and fail to cover core costs or enable sustainability. It is becoming more difficult to secure match-funding which is increasingly required by major funders creating a catch-22 where we need to find funding to get funding.

***We give thanks to the funders that have given TASS funding over the last financial year***



**West Devon**  
Borough Council



**Tavistock**  
Town Council



**Garfield Weston**  
FOUNDATION



**COMMUNITY**  
FUND

**Devon**  
County Council



**WE ARE  
DEVON**  
Community  
Foundation





**SAMWORTH  
BROTHERS**  
*Cornwall*



**ssafa**  
the  
**Armed Forces**  
charity  
**DEVON**



**Plasterdown Grouped Parish Council**



**West  
Devon** **CVS**  
Community & Voluntary Services



**STREET  
PASTORS**



**Tavistock Dementia Alliance**  
creating a dementia-friendly community



**Stroke**  
Association

## How to support TASS

- Regular Giving Program
- Donate Now
- Wills & legacies
- easyfundraising app
- Create Your Own Fundraising Event

### regular giving

If you can give every month  
TASS can be there every day



A regular donation to TASS can help us to plan long-term. This ensures that we can continue to provide our vital services, supporting many people from our community for years to come.



Gifts left for TASS is a powerful way to help others who may be less fortunate as yourself. The gifts we receive play a vital role in enabling TASS to continue to provide the essential services we offer to help tackle the issues that the elderly and disabled people in our community are facing, including loneliness and isolation. A gift to TASS not only helps a crucial cause, but it could reduce your inheritance tax.



Shop with your favourite retailers  
and you'll raise donations for  
**Tavistock Area Support Services**



Scan the QR code to visit our cause page



Make a difference, sign up today!

Shop with thousands of brands



Simply scan the QR code above and sign up and support this cause, raising vital funds for TASS when purchasing your normal shopping.



### ‘Giving 4 Living’ Create your own fundraising event

Contact us for our ‘Giving 4 Living’ complete guide to creating your own fundraising event to support TASS.

For more information, please contact us:

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T: 01822 616958

W: [www.tasstavistock.org.uk](http://www.tasstavistock.org.uk)

Registered charity no: 1129175