

Every month we will feature a different voluntary, community or faith sector organisation across the Bay. This time the spotlight is on... Cumbria Alcohol and Drug Advisory Service (CADAS).

CADAS was founded in 1979 by a group of concerned individuals and professionals who wanted to provide a service for the people of Cumbria struggling with the effects of alcohol and drugs. It was registered as a charity in the same year. Over the last 40+ years, we have grown to our current size with staff and volunteers operating from four centres across Cumbria.



What services does your organisation offer?

CADAS said: “CADAS is predominantly a Mental health charity that specialises in addiction. We offer recovery work where we help people who have been affected by their own addiction, but we also do quite a lot in terms of prevention. For example, we host workshops and training in schools and libraries. We start a conversation the light touch type way. We are an all-age service too and so offer a family service for young people who have been affected by addiction. What makes CADAS special and also relatable is that we are a ‘Lived Experience Recovery Organisation’ and approximately 75% of our staff members have been affected by their own or someone else’s addiction.

“In terms of Morecambe Bay, we can support anybody in centres in Barrow and Kendal and we can support people digitally from the coastal communities. We have some funding from the Walney Extension Fund and for the next two years, we will be training community volunteers with a view to having a more targeted focus in the South Cumbrian coastal communities. In addition to the volunteers that we already have, we would like to establish some in Ulverston, Grange-over-Sands, Millom and Milnthorpe from January 2022.”

How many people use your services every year?

CADAS said: “Approximately 500 people county-wide receive intensive support, which involves one-to-one support or they regularly attend and engage with groups. We also reach between 2,000 and 3,000 people each year via our brief intervention activities, which involves people calling the helpline or meeting us on training courses or workshops.”

Feedback from people using the service:

“I have enjoyed my first meeting. It is a relief to talk to people who know how you are feeling and listen to other people,” participant feedback about CADAS’ parent, carer and family support group.

Can you tell us about any future projects?

CADAS said: “We have a pilot project running now until March, focusing on the use of ‘Image Performance Enhancing Drugs (IPEDS)’ funded by Cumbria County Council. CADAS have launched a pilot project to better understand the needs of people using IPED in the county to reduce any potential harm they might cause to themselves. The scheme allows IPED users to obtain free, clean, medical-grade sharps and provides a place where used needles can be disposed of safely. People are also given information about how to use IPEDs safely and have the opportunity to talk to a CADAS professional about any issues they are concerned about.

“Our aim for the future is to be the go-to organisation for schools and youth clubs. We want schools to have a sustainable solution to help educate against drugs, alcohol and addiction. We appreciate it is a difficult subject and believe every school should have access to high-quality education around drugs and alcohol.”

Are there any opportunities to get involved?

CADAS said: “Absolutely. We are always looking for volunteers to get involved. A current list of our vacancies can be found [here](#).”