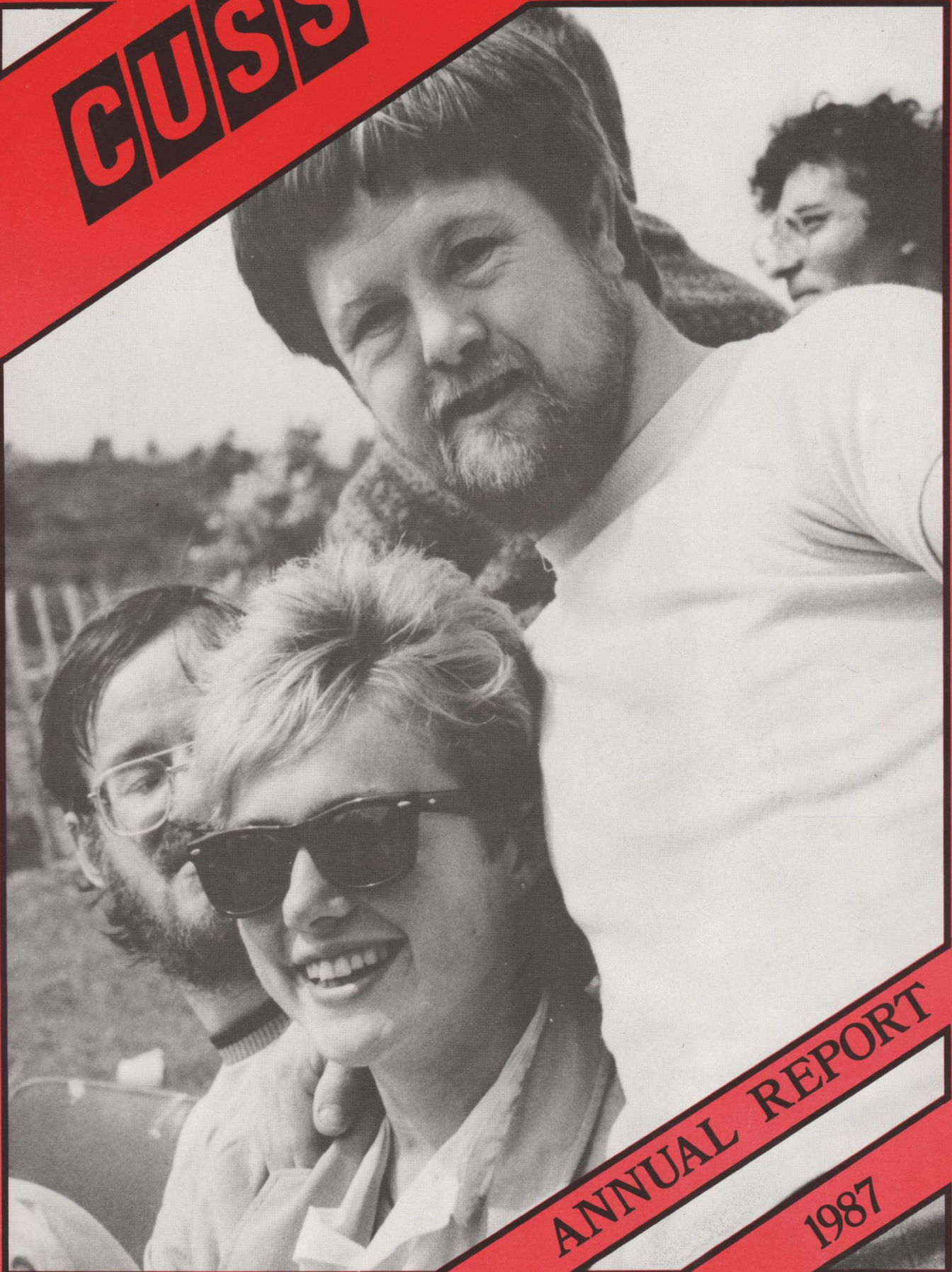


CUS



ANNUAL REPORT

1987

Cardiff Universities Social Services, J.S.U., Park Place, Cardiff.

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INTRODUCTION

1987 has been a year in which CUSS has greatly expanded its work in collaboration with other agencies both statutory and voluntary. We have been able to use our experience and expertise to enable them to provide new services in the community for people with a mental handicap.

One of our principal aims, in addition to maintaining the high quality of service CUSS provides, has been to ensure that the models we have developed are more widely disseminated and implemented across Wales.

We have greatly expanded our capacity to publicise our work in 1987, through the production of a series of videos and exhibition materials, which have been widely distributed and very well received, thanks to a grant from the Welsh Office. The videos and exhibition were launched at a well attended premiere at Chapter Arts centre in February.

In the early summer we also published, in conjunction with Mencap in Wales, a guide to establishing community living schemes called "Homework". The book is designed to offer practical guidance to those wishing to provide opportunities for people with a mental handicap to have a home of their choice in the community.

We hope that this book will be the first of a series of "how to" guides for service providers drawing on the experience of CUSS and other examples of good practice.

Further collaboration work with Mencap in Wales is in hand aimed towards establishing a new community living agency for Wales to be called Cartrefi Cymru.

Other examples of CUSS involvement in service development in Wales during the year include a new Short Term Care scheme for Gwynedd Social Services due to open in April, 1988 and another due to open in Cardiff later the same year.

This seems particularly appropriate as 1987 marks the tenth anniversary of the opening of the CUSS Short Term Care house which has gone from strength to strength. This has now been established as the most commonly used model in giving adults with mental handicaps regular, enjoyable breaks from home.

CUSS is concerned that this should not be the only model and is pleased to report that the holiday project described in our last annual report has been developed to provide more

individualised holidays for people with a mental handicap during the summer.

The CUSS Executive has not lost sight of the original purpose for which CUSS was established, a concern about the conditions in which people were kept in specialist hospitals. Collaboration with service personnel in South Glamorgan has continued and we welcome the initiatives it has taken to provide some people currently in hospital, with opportunities to live in their own homes. We are particularly pleased to note that there are finally no children from South Glamorgan living in Ely Hospital. To further the movement of people out of hospital, CUSS has been working with staff at Hensol Hospital in Mid Glamorgan, helping them formulate proposals for the re-settlement of some of its residents and providing practical assistance on their first schemes.

We are particularly pleased to see the growth of SCoVO as an important element in developing links between voluntary agencies in Wales and giving voice to their concerns. The recent publication of their newsletter Llais has been a welcome step in this direction and we hope that CUSS's term as their host agency has provided them with a secure base to consolidate this work.

The existing CUSS projects have all seen another successful year with a continuous effort on the part of all staff and volunteers to ensure that the innovation for which CUSS has become known continues. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their imagination and commitment, particularly in light of the additional work involved.

In conclusion this year we wish to draw attention to the requests made to us by the people for whom we work, to abandon the use of the term mental handicap, which they see as demeaning. Following discussion with, in particular, the residents of the house who are supported by CUSS we propose in future to use what they consider to be more accurate term of learning difficulty which recognises their concerns.



Gerry Evans
Chairman

WEDNESDAY PROJECT

This project has been running since CUSS was formed in 1969. It was originally aimed mainly at children living in Ely Hospital. Consequently, activities at this time tended to be based around the needs of children, especially play. Recently though the number of children at the hospital has reduced as more and more children remain with their families in the community. Therefore, rather than providing predominantly play based activity we now attempt to concentrate on getting out into the community in small groups using ordinary community facilities.

The project is organised from the CUSS office and is run by volunteers every Wednesday afternoon, though it does include occasional evening and weekend sessions as well. Going to the pub for a game of skittles is a very popular evening out. A timetable is prepared at the beginning of each college term and published in DisCuss, the CUSS Newsletter.

Volunteers are encouraged to form friendships with individuals from the hospital and on occasion to see the person on a one to one basis, perhaps inviting them to their house or flat for tea.

The aim of the project is to give people with a mental handicap in hospital an opportunity to

participate in the life of their own community. Given the current moves to enable more people to move on from the hospital it is important to give hospital residents the possibility to see just what an ordinary life means.

With 5 of the residents from Ely Hospital whom CUSS works with every other week we use a CUSS house and its local shops and there the people from Ely Hospital are encouraged to do what they want, whether it is just listening to the radio for the afternoon, baking a cake, or catching a bus into the city centre for a cup of coffee.

Even for those who are unlikely to move into the community in the near future, due to the shortage of appropriate support, this project provides new friendships and a welcome break from hospital routine. Last year volunteers worked alongside 5 other residents from Ely Hospital exploring drama, movement and the basis of communication.

Although this may only be for a couple of hours a week, it gives the people from Ely Hospital a chance to see life outside the hospital environment.



COMMUNITY LIVING PROJECT

Anyone familiar with previous annual reports, or indeed with CUSS activities over the last 13 years, may have flicked through this year's report, looking for the heading "Group Home", and been surprised to find that there isn't one. This is because, in 1987, the project underwent two major changes which make the old heading redundant.

Firstly, the residents all resigned from their Adult Training Centre, and thereby created a shift in our work priorities away from the "home-life" of evenings and weekends. And secondly, one of the residents moved out of the house and into a flat, so that we are now supporting a group of people in two different places, rather than supporting a "home".

These have been the two most significant occurrences of the year, and will be looked at in some detail, along with a general report on the project's usual elements.

THE HOUSE

Overall, the project supports four people with learning difficulties. Three are men, and they live together in the same house, along with another man who pays rent and uses the house as his home, without any responsibility for his co-residents. The house has six bedrooms. One is used by staff sleeping-in each night, and one is being kept vacant for a while, just in case the move to the flat does not work out.

All the residents take an equal part in the domestic activities of the house, with staff helping as necessary. Laying the table, cooking, washing up, etc, is taken in turns on a rota basis. For cleaning, each resident is paired with two members of staff, and between them they are responsible for tidying a specific area of the house. For example, "Bill" is responsible for the dining room and bathroom, with Steve and Adrian's help.

The residents receive an allowance from the DHSS each week, some of which they pay into a household kitty. The residents do all the shopping, either alone or with help. They also put some money each week into their own savings accounts, to pay for fuel bills and save for holidays etc. The remaining personal spending money is at their disposal, although in some cases a system of budgeting is used so that they are not penniless before the week is out.

No one has been especially ill this year, just the usual colds and stomach aches. Appointments

for dentists and chiropodists are kept on a routine basis, along with six-monthly checks at the University Hospital for two residents, one of whom is diabetic, and the other epileptic.

The residents' social skills have remained at a high level. There has been a need for counselling on sexual matters from time to time, and a watchful eye kept on the amount of beer consumed by one resident! But otherwise, the residents more than get by in the community on their own, having made many friendly acquaintances in shops, pubs, cafes, post offices and neighbouring houses. Within the house itself, some problems persist, such as attention seeking behaviour. Staff continue to apply consistent strategies for such problems, and the result has been a slow but steady improvement.

Individual plan meetings have continued to be used as a forum for residents to express their wants, but now that the residents have left their Training Centre, the meetings have lost their previous "cross-professional" composition. One solution has been to invite a member of CUSS management from outside the house to attend. Another has been to set up a series of Quality Action meetings, which all three house residents have attended, along with two members of staff and an "outsider" with experience of the Q.A. process. These meetings have entailed discussion of priorities for improving the quality of people's lives, deciding on action required, and allocating tasks. The main area decided upon was day-time activities, but there has also been some work put into diets and upkeep of the house.

Summer holidays were organised as usual around the preferences of each resident, rather than as a group. One resident went to Scotland for a week; two went to Pwllheli; and the fourth, who doesn't like being away for very long, invited a friend to come and stay for a fortnight, interspersed with trips to Bath and West Wales.

Family contact has followed a long established pattern, with one resident seeing his family every week; two keeping in touch by telephone with holidays home at Easter and Christmas; and the fourth with no family contact. The pattern of friendships is also fairly stable. Two women with learning difficulties, living alone, are regular visitors, whilst other friends from the residents' old ATC are seen regularly at the CUSS short-term care house nearby, and at the monthly Bluebirds club. One resident has a girl friend whom he invites around for tea most weeks, and some old volunteers have kept in

touch for so long that they have moved into the "genuine friend" category.

THE FLAT

In 1984, when one of the original residents of the project moved home to her parents, the remaining female resident decided that she too would like to move out from the new male stronghold. It was agreed that the resident would need to share any new accommodation with another woman, but despite much searching, no-one satisfactory could be found.

By this time last year, despite applying to all the local housing associations, and making referrals to a range of service providers, there was no real sign of either a flat or a flat-mate. It seemed as though we could not get a two bedroom flat without having two residents, and we couldn't recruit a potential flatmate without having a flat to entice people with. However, in April, after a further round of applications, Taff Housing Association accepted our applicant for nomination rights for a two bedroom flat without demanding a named second resident, and suddenly everything started happening.

Whilst cooperating with a Social Services staffed house on an employment project, a chance conversation about needing a flatmate led us straight to a woman of much the same age and ability who wished to move into a flat. They both even knew each other from attending the same ATC. Arrangements for them to re-establish contact and ascertain their compatibility were made, and both proved to be very happy with the idea of sharing. Also, as the reality of the move approached, there was a need to discuss it once more with the residents' parents, to ensure that they were happy with the level of support which would be provided. This too proved satisfactory.

The flat became ready at the beginning of September, and it was only necessary to acquire all the furniture, sort out things like Housing Benefit, and discuss the details of supporting the flat between two staff groups: one from CUSS and the other from Social Services. Some financial assistance was forthcoming from the DHSS, and it has been possible to furnish the flat very nicely. The two women have now moved in, and whilst it is still early days, both are very happy indeed at their new situation. For those of us who have been working towards this for over two years, it is also a great pleasure to knock on the door of the end product.

DAY-TIME ACTIVITIES

This year, partly through discussion at Individual Planning meetings and partly spontaneously, all the residents decided to resign from their Adult Training Centre. Two residents already had part-time jobs provided by CUSS: one cleaned the offices every Friday and the other carried out mailing duties for the CUSTOMERS publications distribution service. All the residents expressed an interest in looking for more work of this sort.

The first task was to change staffing rotas to provide cover during the day-time. As the residents have all become less dependant with time, the level of staffing at evenings and weekends could be reduced without significantly detracting from the quality of life of the residents.



Then a training programme was devised to increase staff's knowledge of employment projects, the effect on benefits, and of the models of practise successfully developed elsewhere. Both staff and residents visited a number of projects including the Pengwern Hall cafe and the Gillygate cooperative among others.

Once the staff had gained some confidence, they began to follow up the particular preferences of each resident. Approaches were made to shops, hotels, caterers and some offices, but to no immediate avail. One resident was found a place at the Employment Rehabilitation Centre for a week's assessment, but the standard proved too high for him. Then,

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finally, we had some success: a resident was taken on at Chapter Arts Centre, working with the maintenance engineer, doing simple tasks like changing light bulbs. This job is only one day a week, but the resident is still enjoying it, and hopefully will be extended. Another resident has been given an interview as a creche worker, on the strength of his abilities at playing records, making tea, and generally being friendly. Two other jobs in the pipeline are waitressing at a cafe, and manual work at the Community Support Anti-Waste Scheme. Negotiations are in progress with the employers.

On the job creation front, during the summer, in conjunction with some former NIMROD houses, we rented a stall at an antiques market in Canton and sold handcrafts and clothes. The residents manned the stall, and also made ear-rings, badges, candles, etc. The stall ran for several months, and was a useful experience for both staff and residents, but insufficient sales meant we had to close. The idea has not been abandoned however, and we now plan to build up better stock and then have another go.

All in all we have gained some useful experience at job-hunting over the past year, and had some success. We are a long way

from finding all the residents full-time employment, but the search goes on, and with continued staff input in the day-time enabling the residents to pursue different leisure activities as well, there is no sign of the residents regretting their decision to give up attending their ATC.

THE STAFF

There are five full-time care-workers for the project, plus an organiser. This year there has been a complete change amongst the care-workers, with two going in January and the other three in August. Such a large-scale change is unprecedented for the project since it became staffed in 1983, and the reason for it can be summed up as this: C.Q.S.W. courses. Four out of the five leavers are now engaged in full-time social work studies, which may say something about the calibre of our workers but also indicates that their experience with CUSS is a positive one. As for the new staff, they have all settled in well, and we are likely to have another long period of stability for the project. Supporting a house, and a flat, plus finding lots of interesting job opportunities for the residents, should keep us all busy for another year.

SHORT TERM CARE

The Cardiff Universities Social Services Short Term Care project is ten years old this year. When the project was set up in the mid-seventies there was a very limited amount of short term care provided in hospitals and hostels, usually alongside long term care. Short term and long term residents have very different needs and this causes a lot of stress for both groups of residents and for staff trying to cope with differing demands. We have been demonstrating that there can be a more constructive approach to providing short term care, and indeed that planned short term care provides not only a 2 week break for the family, but also a very positive experience for the person with a mental handicap. A short term admission to hospital was often seen as a very last resort by a family experiencing difficulties, and the majority of long-term admissions began as a short term measure.

The CUSS short term care house is based in a very typical terraced house not far from the

centre of Cardiff. here we provide a "home from home" for up to four adults with a mental handicap at a time, for periods not exceeding two weeks at any time.

Our three principal aims are:-

1. To provide breaks to people with a mental handicap and their families.
2. To increase residents' independence.
3. To prepare them for a possible eventual break from their family.

Until the summer of 1983 we relied largely on grants and donations, but since then we have been funded under the All Wales Strategy. The long term nature of the funding has helped in the development and maturation of the project, and given it the recognition it deserves.

SHORT TERM CARE

RESPONSES TO THE SERVICE

During the first seven years of the project contact was made with over two hundred families, and there are currently about eighty families who regularly use the service. The project has proved extremely successful with residents and their families and there has been no let up in the demand for similar houses to be set up. Two years ago South Glamorgan Social Services opened a similar house in Rhoose, which has over one hundred users at present. Continuing high demand has led to development towards a house in East Cardiff, which began last February, and should be completed by mid - 1988.

THE RESIDENTS.

The people who stay in the CUSS short-term house are all adults with a mental handicap who normally live with their families in South Glamorgan. Residents staying during the week must have some form of day time occupation and most of them attend one of the day centres in Cardiff. This restriction does not apply at weekends, when we can accommodate someone who does not have a regular day-time activity. During the summer we also have a week with some extra staff input to allow some people who usually only come for a weekend to have a slightly longer break.

In the past year about eighty different people have come to stay at the house, and there are as many different interests, likes and dislikes as there are people! A few new people have been to stay in the past year, but most people have been regular visitors for a few years now. Having a fixed number of people visiting the project on a regular basis has had some very marked advantages for the development of the service. We have been able to get to know people and their families better, and are more able to encourage and develop interests and skills and carry these on from one stay to the next. Age alone can vary from eighteen to sixty-five, though the majority are between twenty and forty and the types of activities we offer vary as much as the people who stay. People are encouraged to take part in the running of the house and also to pursue their own interests inside and outside the house, and we try to concentrate on using ordinary community facilities. People enjoy a whole range of activities including cooking, shopping, housework, football, swimming, walks, trips to the cinema, theatre or museums and of course the pub is always a great favourite!

The stress we are able to place on individual interests and building friendships are two of our biggest advantages over a larger and more institutional setting. We have more scope to



SHORT TERM CARE

follow up peoples ideas and help them to develop independence. There are several people who have stayed with us in the past who have moved from their family homes into either staffed or unstaffed accommodation. While we cannot take all the credit for this, the experience of the stays they have had definitely played its part towards increasing their independence.

One of the concerns most frequently expressed by families is what will happen to their relative when they can no longer care for them. Short term care is one very positive way of preparing both the person with a mental handicap and their family for the break from each other when the need arises or when they feel the time has arrived to live more independently of each other.

THE STAFF.

There are five full time care workers and a project organiser who all take part in the day to day running of the project plus a pool of relief workers we can call on in times of staff illness and so on.

Staff work closely together, with a usual ratio of three staff to four residents. This is a good working ratio and residents treat staff as friends because of the close contacts they can make. This is reinforced by the informal working practices in the house, where form filling and red tape is kept to a minimum. We hold a weekly team meeting to discuss day to day issues, plan and review stays and decide what needs doing round the house, and then every few months have supplementary meetings to discuss wider issues and longer term plans.

The turn over of staff in the house is quite good for a residential setting, with people staying for at least two years, and half have been there for more than three years. we seem to lose most people to social work training courses - including two this summer. When choosing new staff we try and involve as many interested parties as possible and all new staff have been chosen by a mixture of parents, residents and staff. It makes interviews complicated, but then everyone has their say in the choice.

CONTACT WITH OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS.

The CUSS short-term care house has been an example to service providers throughout Wales and also outside the country. Over the past four years the CUSS Co-Ordinator and the Short Term Care Organiser have been frequently

called upon to talk at meetings and conferences or to talk to individuals who visit and want to know more about the project.

Information has gone to people showing an interest in places as far apart as Norway and Australia, but the biggest impact has been in places a bit nearer home. The house in South Glamorgan has been running for two years now, and a bungalow in Mid-Glamorgan - and both of these projects had a lot of contact with CUSS at the outset, including staff coming on placement to the CUSS short term care house.

This past year has seen contact with even more groups interested in Short-Term care development. Last November we visited Truro in Cornwall, where they are now setting up a house. CUSS is to be involved more directly in setting up some further houses in Wales. Several people from CUSS have been involved in the committee to develop the house on the East of Cardiff, and discussions are taking place with the Development officer in Gwynedd. The CUSS Short-Term Care Organiser is to be seconded to Gwynedd to set up one short-term care house in the Arfon Vanguard Area, to advise on setting up a second in that area and perhaps a third in the Llandudno area.

CONCLUSION.

The CUSS short term care house began gingerly ten years ago, wondering if they would be able to keep booked-up - but they didn't have to worry for long. Word spread quickly and soon it became apparent that even two houses would not be enough. Obviously some people were sceptical to begin with, but I think the last ten years has proved the value of planned periods of short-term care to people with a mental handicap and their families. Short-term care is an important part in any community care development, and like all developments it needs to be planned and reviewed so that it is not a crisis intervention service, but rather that it continues to provide a positive experience for everyone involved.

THURSDAY YOUTH PROJECT

On Thursday evening a Youth Club is held in a local community hall owned by Cardiff Mencap.

The aim of the club is to allow children and young people with a mental handicap to benefit from an ordinary Youth Club environment.

We have been fortunate in having a good number of volunteers throughout the year of whom most were students, however, a number of volunteers were from the community in general. Whilst also using the Plasnewydd Community centre in conjunction with PLAYBUS and the inflatables a number of local young people joined in on the activities as well.

About 15-20 people with a mental handicap regularly attend the club, ranging from 8 years old to 20 years old. On average half of the club users are provided with transport to and from the club. To this end we have been greatly helped by Cardiff Mencap who have allowed us to use their minibus in addition to providing the hall and we are very grateful to them for this.

All members of the club have enjoyed trips out. We regularly go swimming, have visited the Ice Rink, Theatre, Park, Barry Island etc. We try to encourage everyone in the club to use ordinary community facilities that will bring them into contact with a wide range of other people.

The Thursday Youth club provides enjoyable evenings for both volunteers and members alike.



HOME SUPPORT SERVICE

The Home Support Service provides a home and community teaching service to people with a mental handicap living in East Cardiff. It came into operation in September, 1983, being one of the first services to receive funding from the Welsh Office as part of the All Wales Strategy.

Our aim is that people with a mental handicap should maximise their independence and their ability to integrate into the community through the acquisition of new skills.

INDEPENDENCE AND INTEGRATION.

These terms are often misunderstood. Maximising an individual's independence does not necessarily mean that they will live completely independent lives without support, although this may be possible for some. It

depends on one's abilities and one's opportunities to learn. For one person, 'independence' may mean using a spoon correctly or cleaning one's own teeth; for another it may mean using a supermarket unaided or using public transport. In all cases we aim to allow people to do as much as possible for themselves.

By 'integration' we mean that people will have access to the same facilities that you and I take for granted. So for example if someone wanted to learn to shop for themselves our first step would be to visit a supermarket with them. There are two reasons for this:

- i. we believe that everyone has a right to access to facilities regardless of whether they know how to use them (yet!).

HOME SUPPORT SERVICE

- ii. that in any case people learn much more quickly when exposed to 'real' situations.

STEP BY STEP TEACHING

People rarely learn to do new things 'overnight' particularly if their learning opportunities have been limited in the past. Though it is often surprising how quickly people can learn!

Anyone who has moved from a small village to a city will experience some anxiety when entering a large supermarket, though most of us will end up with the items we want eventually, perhaps after receiving a little help and direction from others.

We aim to reduce potential anxiety by giving people as much support as they need in a given situation. So on the first occasion we might simply ask someone to take a few items off the shelves for us. It depends on how much someone feels comfortable with. No one is ever forced to do something they don't want to do.

However, nobody ever learns to do anything without trying to do it themselves so we are equally careful not to over-protect people. Therefore, the support that we give is gradually reduced until the point is reached where the task can be completed as independently as possible.

TIME LIMITED INVOLVEMENT.

An important element of our service is that our involvement is intensive and time limited. The actual amount of time we spend working with an individual will vary, depending on what is being taught. For example, if someone wanted to learn to catch the bus to her day centre each morning, we might carry out teaching every morning for a few weeks. On the other hand, someone who wanted to do the weekly shopping might be taught once a week. Of course, the above will also be affected by the constraints of our timetable e.g. ideally we might wish to teach the bus journey every day but we might in practice only be able to offer two mornings a week.

Whenever we begin working with someone, we make a clear statement, in writing, of what we will do and when. Normally we state our expectation of how long the teaching will take but in any case we carry out a review of each individual's progress after six months, sometimes earlier. In this way we try to ensure

that everyone involved is clear about what we are doing and avoid simply visiting people without purpose - the written statement is also a reminder to ourselves that we must reach our stated objectives in a given time.

QUALITY ACTION.

We consider it very important that we establish and maintain high standards of working practice and for this reason we formed a 'Quality Action' group last year to monitor our work.

The group consisted of the Home Support Team, consumer representatives and two researchers from the Mental Handicap in Wales Applied Research Unit. The work of the group has been described in the pamphlet 'Pursuing Quality' published by the Independent Development Council.

A number of aspects of our work were examined and some of the findings have resulted in direct changes in working practice. For example, contrary to our intentions, we found that a small number of people had been on our books for a very long time. This situation arose because we have given priority to these people not receiving a day service and we became reluctant to withdraw our service and leave people with no input, even after our stated goals were achieved. This was clearly unsatisfactory. We now make a written statement at the commencement of our intervention so that there is a clear expectation that our input is temporary. We also liaise more closely with the local Community Mental Handicap Teams to ensure that everyone has a key worker who can take responsibility for matters not directly related to teaching. In one case we have accepted keyworker responsibility ourselves, though we do not envisage that this will become a prominent part of our work in the foreseeable future.

Other outcomes of Quality Action were the commencement of joint training sessions with workers from other agencies in order to facilitate greater understanding and closer liaison, the widespread showing of a Home Support video which explains our work, and regular attendance of the Community Mental Handicap Team meetings.

The Quality Action group now meets annually but the Home Support team carry out quarterly Quality Action reviews and report back to the main groups so that the maintaining process continues on a regular basis.

HOME SUPPORT SERVICE

INDEPENDENT LIVING CLASSES.

One of the main developments of the Home Support Service in the last year has been the commencement of Independent Living Classes.

The idea began when some of the clients wanted to enrol for community based cookery classes and found that many of the classes offered very specialist options only e.g. @Chinese dishes for vegetarians'. There seemed to very little available for intermediate or advanced 'ordinary' cooking.

So we drew up a terms programme of classes and distributed it to the local day centres and Community Mental Handicap Teams (our principal source of referrals). Students enrol for one 'term' i.e. ten sessions, pay a small fee to cover expenses and are taught in a small group in an ordinary house (the CUSS Short Term Care house).

The advantages of this scheme are many fold.

- i. We can offer greater flexibility by teaching in a group in addition to our usual one-to-one teaching.
- ii. We offer a programme of classes not readily available in the community.
- iii. People have the opportunity to teach and learn from one another as well as simply from ourselves.
- iv. A number of elements are combined in each session i.e. everyone -

a. travels independently to the class or is taught to do so.

b. makes a shopping list and buys ingredients in a local shop.

c. Helps to cook lunch.

d. Clears away afterwards.

e. Compiles a recipe book.

We feel that this scheme will be of particular use to people who have recently moved to more independent accommodation and will perhaps be learning to live with a small group and who are able to cook only fairly basic meals. It also allows an opportunity to 'brush up' on literacy skills at the same time.

CONCLUSIONS.

In the past year we have improved our publicity via the video, have continued to liaise closely with other agencies, have progressed with the Quality Action evaluation and have started teaching in small groups in the 'Independent Living;' classes.

The Home Support Organiser has also played a key role in the development of Local Planning and in preparing an Advocacy scheme.

The model of service we have developed has the potential to form an important element of comprehensive services. We shall continue to monitor progress in the coming year so that people with a mental handicap can maintain higher levels of independence and improve the quality of their lives.



BEFRIENDERS

As its name suggests, it is a project to quite simply find friends for people with a mental handicap.

Developing friendships is a very important component in promoting the integration of people with a mental handicap. For many people with a mental handicap leisure time will be spent with families or other people with a mental handicap.

Befrienders gives people real opportunities to make friends and enjoy the ordinary leisure pursuits which you and I take for granted. People are linked who share similar interests, who live near each other and maybe of similar age. They take part in various leisure activities together, including sport, going to the pub or the cinema, night classes or simply meeting for a cup of tea and a chat.

Initially, the friends meet for a couple of hours a week but more often than not this increases as the friendship develops. It also gives the person with a mental handicap the opportunity to meet other non-handicapped people and so hopefully develop further friendships.

The friendships have a 3-4 week trial period to enable both people to see how they get on. Both then have the opportunity to decide whether or not to continue.

However, demand for this service far exceeds our current capacity to supply volunteers who are willing to work on a one to one basis. Recently though, recruitment drives have proved quite successful with an increase in the number of volunteers expressing interest in this project and hopefully this trend will continue.

CUSSTOMERS

CUSStomers, the specialist book service that CUSS has been operating for several years now continues to flourish. The most important event of the last year has been the addition of a title published by CUSS - 'Homework'. Homework is a handbook that provides a step by step guide starting from identifying individual requirements and working through the acquisition of property and finance; the design of support packages and how to fit in with what else is available. The research for the book was commissioned jointly by CUSS and Mencap in Wales with the financial support of the Welsh Office. It is hoped that its use will lead to more people with mental handicaps moving into a home of their choice and benefitting from services designed to meet their own individual needs. Many copies have already been distributed throughout Wales, and CUSStomers is now dealing with requests from further afield.

During the year CUSStomers have also added a number of other new titles to the catalogue, including the latest publications from the Mental Handicap in Wales Applied Research Unit, British Institute of Mental Handicap and MIND to mention a few. CUSS has also featured in a publication from the Independent Development Council titled Pursuing Quality which includes a description of the Quality Action programme undertaken in the Home Support Service.

The Video Catalogue has been launched at last featuring the CUSS videos that have been in extensive use since their launch early this year. We hope to add further titles to this catalogue next year.

It should be remembered that CUSStomers is also intended to create an employment opportunity for people with mental handicaps. In this respect the scheme is not reaching its potential due mainly to the limited number of orders that are currently being processed. Each new development improves the situation and during the next year we hope to attract more orders.



HOLIDAY PROJECT

The demand for short term care is always higher during the summer months, this summer once again CUSS was able to offer some additional breaks through a holiday scheme.

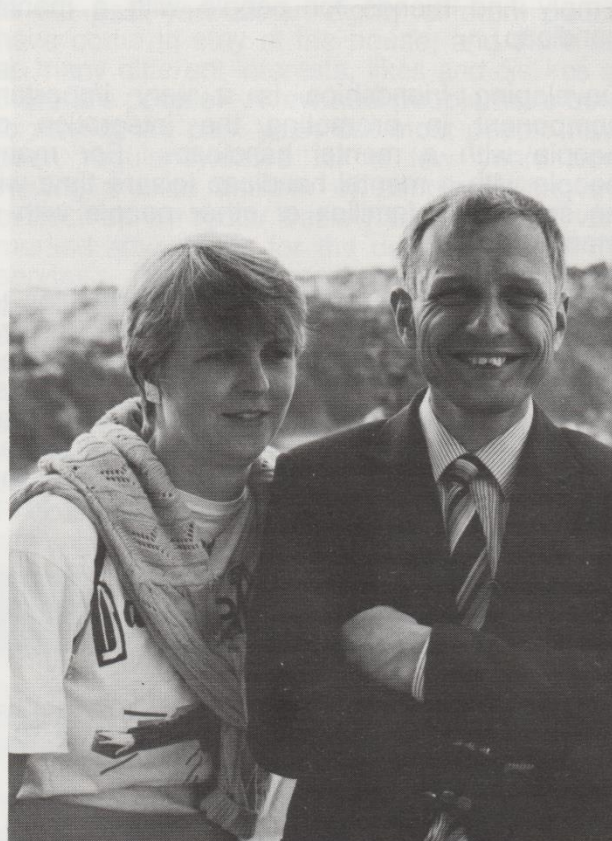
Last year we launched this project with holidays chosen by us in advance due to the short time available but this year we were determined to increase the element of personal choice. A bit like a CUSS Travel Agency in fact.

Volunteers were recruited, generally from Wednesday and Thursday projects and the people with a mental handicap chose the places themselves and were then paired off with another person with a mental handicap who was of similar age, and common interests. (A bit like a computer dating agency).

They were then introduced to the volunteers. Usually 2 people with a mental handicap went away with 3 or 4 volunteers,

Places visited between July and September, included Tenby, Aberaeron, Spain, Butlins in Minehead, Porthcawl, Oxford, Aberystwyth and Paignton.

There was a very positive response from the people with a mental handicap and also from the volunteers and we believe it has an even bigger potential for expansion next year.



COMPUTERS

CUSS has continued to play a leading role, enabling computers to be used in a variety of settings by people with mental handicaps and within organisations. In CUSS the BBC micro computer at Home Support continues to be used by people with mental handicaps and provides a valuable teaching aid to the staff at Home Support.

It is with great pleasure that we can report that the course at Rumney College that we were involved in initiating is now running and that the students are enjoying the opportunities that the course is able to offer. The first year has just come to an end and a number of students are now seeking employment.

During the year CUSS has provided a number of training courses for staff of organisations working in this field, to enable them to use

computer for wordprocessing and databases. Our lead in introducing new technology to increase the efficiency of our administration has meant that a number of other organisations look to us for help when they undertake a similar task. The Training Support Unit is one example, they requested help in designing their computerised information system.

Our own use of computers has also progressed. We are now using an IBM compatible PC for wordprocessing, keeping mailing lists and our accounts. We also have an Atari which is used for desktop publishing and has enabled us to produce this report.

We will continue to introduce new technology to all areas of our work as and when it is appropriate to ensure that we maintain our efficiency.

WORK WITH OTHER AGENCIES

One of the desirable consequences of the All Wales Strategy has been the greatly increased co-operation and joint working between agencies, both statutory and voluntary. CUSS has been at the forefront of this development and has helped to bring together the voluntary sector in South Glamorgan through the Intervol Mental Handicap Forum and this year we are again chairing the forum and representing it on the Joint Management Board.

The Joint Management Board which comprises representatives of the principal statutory body and consumers oversees all services in South Glamorgan for people with mental handicaps and is an example of the levels of co-operation which can be achieved. One of its most important measures was a review of all services funded through the All Wales Strategy and a similar review of existing services is now planned. This brings us much closer to the aspiration contained in the All Wales Strategy for a comprehensive network of services.

Opportunity Housing Trust is another example of co-operation with many different agencies providing an input. Nonetheless, CUSS has been closely involved with it since its launch and in the absence of paid staff has carried out much work on its behalf as it has demonstrated its capacity to meet the housing needs of people with mental handicaps.

Our work with Hensol Hospital and in the development of Short Term Care are covered below and are indicative of the demand for the expertise gained by CUSS over the years.

This report can only cover a small proportion of our work with other agencies. We believe that the demand is a clear indication of a welcome change in the attitudes of service providing agencies who increasingly acknowledge that future care for people with mental handicaps must be provided in their own communities.

SHORT TERM CARE DEVELOPMENT

One of the most striking features of the consultation exercises undertaken as a consequence of the introduction of the All Wales Strategy has been the demand for community based Short Term Care Provision. As CUSS has been running a successful scheme for ten years we have received many requests for advice and assistance in establishing short term care houses throughout Wales. In previous reports we have covered our work with South Glamorgan Social Services department in launching their highly successful Rhose

project which provides a service for the Vale of Glamorgan.

This year we have received a request from Opportunity Housing Trust to take responsibility for the development work and initial operation of their house for Cardiff East which will complement the service provided by Hamilton Street. We have been very pleased to take this task on board and will be appointing a Project Organiser in the near future to begin detailed work leading to an opening early in the next financial year. A property has already been acquired and conversion work is due to start shortly.

We are also pleased to report that Gwynedd Social Services have given us a grant to open a short term care house in the Arfon area by April of next year. Based closely on the CUSS house it will be handed over to a local committee within three years.

The timescale is very tight indeed but we are confident of our capacity to get the service on stream in time. Arfon forms a part of two vanguard areas identified by the All Wales Strategy to develop models of a comprehensive community based service for people with mental handicaps and it is gratifying that both of these areas have chosen to adopt the CUSS model.

It is clear to us that demand for information on high quality schemes of this sort is on the increase and that this would justify the publication of a book on this subject and we will be approaching grant giving bodies in the course of the coming year.

HENSOL HOSPITAL

Hensol Hospital is a large institution set in rural isolation in the Vale of Glamorgan. Home to more than four hundred people with a mental handicap it is a typical example of the old style hospital. In the recent past consideration has been given to providing some of the residents with opportunities to live in ordinary homes in the community.

In conjunction with the All Wales Strategy Vanguard area in the Rhondda several residents had returned to their area of origin and a comprehensive survey of all West Glamorgan residents had been conducted by a special project funded through the Strategy to look at possible resettlement. In addition a number of residents had moved out on a more informal basis over the years.

WORK WITH OTHER AGENCIES

It was decided that the hospital itself should begin the process of finding new homes for its residents and a grant was obtained to provide accommodation for a group of profoundly handicapped residents living on one of the smaller wards. CUSS were invited to become involved in this process and bring some of our experience to bear.

It was clear from the outset that new structures would be required within the hospital to manage the process of resettlement and a steering group was established which included the CUSS Co-ordinator. A code of practice was drawn up by CUSS and modified by the group which was designed to ensure that the preferences of people with mental handicaps were respected and that a high quality of

support was provided. The Code of Practice requires all resettlement proposals to be based on individual plans and these are now being produced with the residents concerned and their families with a view to the first residents moving from the hospital in the Spring of 1988. It is heartening to note that the people moving out are some of the most handicapped residents of the hospital.

CUSS has also provided considerable assistance in drafting an ambitious set of proposals to provide opportunities for many other residents of Hensol to move in the future should the application for funding be successful. We look forward to the day when people with mental handicaps are no longer forced to live in institutions of this kind.

TREASURERS REPORT

During the last financial year ending 31st March 1987, the major source of income has continued to come from the Welsh Office. The Welsh Office funding has been through the All Wales Strategy for people with a mental handicap, to provide staff and associated costs at the Community Living Project, Short Term Care House, the Home Support Service and part of the Co-ordinators costs. CUSS has had continued support from the two students Unions - University College and University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology. The Joint Students Union must also be thanked for the provision of office accommodation with heat and light included.

In the previous financial year the Welsh Office made two grants available ; the first enabled us to commission a number of videos and an exhibition, the second covered the cost of researching and publishing a book about community living. Both these projects have now been completed.

The annual audited accounts reveal that a surplus of income over expenditure on the all but the Co-ordinators account. The overall aggregate position shows a healthy surplus. However much of this surplus has enabled us to organise a holiday project over the summer. It is expected by the end of the current financial year that much of this surplus will have been used.

Once again it gives me great pleasure to thank individuals who have raised funds for CUSS.

CUSS also received support from a number of Trusts and Individuals, some of whom are mentioned below.

Cardiff Rag

Donation to help volunteer projects

South Glamorgan Social Services and South Glamorgan Health Authority

Joint financing of a Social Work input to the Community Living Project (Group Home)

South Glamorgan Community Welfare Trust

For the Thursday Project

Principality Building Society

for collecting Waste paper and disposing of it through CSAWS.

During the current financial year there is one major development which will have an impact on the future financial position, this is the opening of a Short Term Care House in Arfon, Gwynedd which is detailed in another part of this report. We look forward to a friendly relationship with Gwynedd, the County Council and all those involved with this project.

We are grateful to our accountants Curitz Berg & Co. who have given us much help over the years.

M. Pendlebury