**A note from a previous Intern at Oasis Project**

I came to work for the Oasis Project to complete a placement year as part of my degree at Sussex University. Following my placement I was lucky to receive an offer of paid employment for the charity and I still work here.

When I started I was unsure what to expect but quickly felt welcomed after receiving such a warm welcome from staff and clients. The organisation is a friendly place with staff members who are always happy to help and offer their professional wisdom. At Oasis staff members have a range of professions and experience. The team includes people who have trained as therapists, social workers and other professions, there are experts by experience and there are staff that have been here for many years and people just starting out on the career paths. The combination of the individuals allows you to learn a lot and can provide you invaluable advice regarding your future career.

Oasis is a well known charity which has links with many other health and social care settings in the East Sussex areas, this means that you will have the chance to interact with professionals in other fields meaning there is a chance to shadow other organisations. For example, during my placement I was able to shadow Pavilions and sit in medical assessments and titration clinic; this where they prescribe heroin substitutes such as methadone. This will help you build connections with other services which can further your experience.

Oasis is a busy environment with in which you need to be flexible to help with whatever task comes up, this means that no two days are ever the same. This is something I have found beneficial as it expands the variety of experience thus increasing your skills, the wide range of tasks also look good on a CV when applying for future jobs. During my time working here I have found Oasis to be open to what I want to experience and try to accommodate this where possible. During my time at Oasis I have worked across the organisation, some of the areas I have been able to work in include:

* Adult services – co-facilitating groups
* Admin
* Fundraising and Communications
* Crèche
* FLASH – an online project offering free HIV tests to sex workers in the UK
* Oasis Women’s recovery service

Working at Oasis allows you to have face-to-face contact with service users, for example, during my time for Oasis I have helped to co-facilitate two groups and have shadowed others. Working in groups is a unique experience as you never quite know what you will observe. I would say that I have learnt the most from sitting in groups as it provides a view of the service users experience and the issues they face, which often includes much more than substance misuse e.g. domestic violence, mental health etc. During my time I acted as first point of contact for services users, some of this included taking referrals and answering the phone to clients and/or professionals.

My placement has provided me with many opportunities including attending conferences and training courses and has widened my knowledge on substance misuse and issues that surround it. I believe that this experience has allowed me to grow both personally and professionally and is already proving to be beneficial in terms of my education and future career.