



Report to Council

Meeting Date: 1st March 2022

Public/Private*: Public

Title: **Communities, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder's Report –
Councillor Elizabeth Mallinson**

CUSTOMER SERVICES

Customer Services have been operating in secure bubbles as we navigate through the Omicron wave. This has been successful as we have isolated affected team members whilst maintaining their ability to work from home if the severity of their symptoms allows. This has allowed us to maintain services across all contact channels, including the Contact Centre, which has remained fully open throughout.

Footfall in the Contact Centre is approximately 65% of pre-covid levels, although we are seeing that increase over the last two weeks to around 75%. This is mainly due to our customers changing how they interact because of the Covid Pandemic. The majority of face-to-face visits centre around Benefits and Council Tax advice for the less digitally inclusive or more complicated cases, which validates our push to remain open.

Telephone, email, and web interactions are higher than pre-covid levels, with web interactions seeing the biggest rise of 111%.

Customer Service are preparing to support queries for the recent announcements surrounding Council Tax. We are also working closely with the departments responsible for administering Business Grants to provide the correct advice at the first point of contact.

DEFENCE EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME AND THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Carlisle City Council has submitted its Expression of Interest to apply for the Gold Award of the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. The scheme encourages employers to support defence and inspire others to do the same. The scheme recognises employer organisations that pledge, demonstrate or advocate support to defence and the armed forces community, and align their values with the [Armed Forces Covenant](#). The Council received the Silver Award in 2020, with the Gold Award application due to be submitted by the middle of March.

As part of the Council's advocacy work and action to achieve the Gold Award, the Council is re-signing the Covenant on 7th March 2022, and inviting partner organisations and businesses to sign it with us.

ARMED FORCES BILL 2021

The Armed Forces Act gained Royal Assent in Parliament on 15th December 2021. It enshrines the Armed Forces Covenant in law to help prevent service personnel and veterans being disadvantaged when accessing essential services like healthcare, education and housing. The Bill has also renewed the Armed Forces Act 2006, following the Acts of 2011 and 2016. Carlisle City Council will continue to work with partners and the Cumbria Armed Forces Covenant Partnership to respond to the duties within the Bill.

The Government has also launched a review into the treatment of LGBT veterans. The review will provide information and recommendations on:

- The potential impact that the ban may have had on LGBT veterans, including the consequences for their future lives
- The accessibility of veterans' services for LGBT ex-Service personnel
- How the government can ensure that LGBT veterans are recognised and fully accepted as members of the Armed Forces community

PARTNERSHIPS

The Place Coordinator has been recruited and started on Wednesday, 16th February. The post is to deliver the four-year Place Standard National Lottery funded project - hosted by the Carlisle Partnership.

The Business Administration Apprenticeship has been readvertised and generated a good response rate from applicants. Interviews are scheduled for Tuesday, 22nd February 2022. This post will support the work of Carlisle Partnership and City Council Partnerships activity. The Apprenticeship training will be delivered in partnership with Carlisle College.

The next Carlisle Partnership Executive will be hosted by the City Council in the Cathedral Room on Monday 7th March. This will be our first face to face gathering since the start of the pandemic and an opportunity to showcase the newly refurbished and developed Civic Centre ground floor. This will also be an opportunity to test hybrid meetings with the opportunity for those who can't attend in person to join us virtually.

The Carlisle Community Resilience Group (CaCRG) continues to meet monthly. The next meeting (date tbc) will now shift from the full forum to themed sub-groups only

- Communities Network,
- WHO Carlisle Health Forum,
- Children & Families
- Welfare Reform Board

these sub-groups feed into the Cumbria Wide Recovery Framework.

COMMUNITY NETWORK

The Healthy City Team has been working closely with both the CVS and Cumbria County Council on a proposal for a Community Network Event. Community groups were invited to an event last month at Tullie House to gauge interest in being involved in a community network. There was strong support for this and a steering group will be formed ahead of the first Community Network meeting.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY REFERRAL PATHWAY

We are continuing to work with the County Council, Community Development Team and Cumbria CVS to develop a physical activity on referral pathway for the City in partnership with the lead social prescribers from Carlisle Healthcare and Carlisle Network Primary Care Network (PCN). This is to be a pilot programme and is funded jointly by both City and County Council using underspent monies from the previous Sports Hardship Fund.

HEALTH WALKS

Both the Health Walks and the Tuesday Trundles restarted in January and both sets of walks are continuing to be well attended.

FOOD CARLISLE PARTNERSHIP

The partnership continues to be busy with the following updates:

- The Sustainable Food City Coordinator presented to the WHO Healthy Cities Network on food resilience and Covid 19 in the Carlisle District
- The partnership is planning a “Food at the Frontier” event – a celebration of the Hadrian’s Wall 1900th Anniversary and all things food along the wall
- Collaboration with Cumbria Organic Gardeners and Farmers, and Garden Organic, to increase community engagement on No-Dig Allotment and Soil Regeneration Site
- Shared learning on work linked to Healthy Weight Declaration to Food Active, working alongside Cumbria County Council