



# Carlisle City Council

## Report to People Panel

### Report details

Meeting Date: 14<sup>th</sup> July 2022  
Portfolio: Health & Wellbeing  
Key Decision: No  
Policy and Budget Framework: Yes  
Public / Private: Public

Title: FOOD SECURITY  
Report of: Deputy Chief Executive  
Report Number: CS 26/22

**Purpose / Summary:** To receive an update from the Chair of Carlisle Foodbank.

### Recommendations:

To receive the update of Carlisle Foodbank and the panel members are invited to advise on how Carlisle Foodbank may be able to offer further support due to the impact of the cost of living.

### Tracking

|            |         |
|------------|---------|
| Executive: |         |
| Scrutiny:  | 14/7/22 |
| Council:   |         |

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. As pressures on communities across Carlisle have increased in recent years, issues relating to local food security have also increased. This is exemplified by Carlisle Foodbank facing almost a doubling in demand for their support since January this year.
- 1.2. Foodbank Carlisle are a not-for-profit voluntary organisation, set up 12 years ago in response to growing needs amongst local people for essential food items. They provide emergency food parcels to people through a referral system that identifies households in most need of support.
- 1.3. The Foodbank recently set up as a Community Interest Organisation (CIO) which has provided them with increased governance and potential sustainability.
- 1.4. From their base on West Tower Street, Carlisle, they receive, repackage and distribute food parcels to those people who need them most. Although the project started as a temporary response to the needs at the time, over 12 years later they are still providing a service which is still in as much need as ever.

## **2. Impact and response to the Pandemic**

- 2.1. Lockdown was a particularly difficult time for many families, with food security issues leading to the creation of community-led responses, including the establishment of new, open-access affordable food outlets. Users of these facilities do not need to be referred.
- 2.2. The increase in activity around affordable food has also led to some confusion amongst donors about who they are donating to and creates risks of competition for finite supplies of donated items.
- 2.3. To help manage these potential problems effectively, a Food Security Network was established during the pandemic to bring together the different organisations involved in different aspects of addressing these issues. The hope is that this Network can provide a forum for better coordinating food outlets, understanding food needs across the City and educating people on the difference between affordable food and emergency food, so that they can make an informed choice on who they donate and/or refer those in need to.

## **3. Contribution to the Carlisle Plan Priorities**

- 3.1. "We will continue to prioritise the current response to and rapid recovery from the health and wellbeing impacts of Covid-19 pandemic"

**Contact details:**

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**Appendices attached to report:**

- Carlisle Food Bank report

Note: in compliance with section 100d of the Local Government Act 1972 the report has been prepared in part from the following papers:

- None

**Corporate Implications:**

Legal -

Property Services -

Finance -

Equality -

Information Governance-



## What do we do?

We are not for profit voluntary organisation set up in response to the growing need among local people for essential food items. From our base in Carlisle we receive, repackage and distribute food parcels to those people who need it the most. Although the project started as a temporary response to the needs at the time, over 12 years later we are still providing a service which is much needed.

We work on a referral system and all the households who access Carlisle Foodbank do so through referral from a recognised welfare support organisation. We endeavour to work with these organisations to ensure appropriate referrals are made and have regular contact with them. In the past few years our volunteer led referral system has become an online one which has helped increase the effectiveness of the referral process.

Working with the welfare support agencies is important as we know that the households accessing this emergency support are the people who need it the most. This system also reassures us that the people accessing Carlisle Foodbank are also accessing additional support services who may be able to provide them with the support they need into food security.

We work with over 50 referral agencies which include: Carlisle City Council, Citizens Advice Carlisle and Eden, Recovery Steps, Probation services, Ways to Welfare, Gateway, Cumbria County Council, Housing schemes, Schools, and Mental Health services.

In the past year the referrals from Carlisle City Council has more than doubled from just under 40 in January to just under 100 in May. We have seen increases from other referral agencies in this past year and through our positive relationships with these agencies we are aware of the challenges that they also have with increasing needs of support.

Premises: Carlisle Foodbank is now based on West Tower Street which provides an accessible space in the city centre near bus routes and not too far from major referral agencies. The base provides excellent space for storage of donated items, but does not allow for many people to access the building beyond being able to pick up their parcels. There is additional work and support that we (and other welfare partners) may be able to provide along side The Foodbank service which at present we are not able to meet. But we intend to continue to look and work with partners on how to make the most of these engagement opportunities so that each household has as much access to information, support and guidance if helpful.

# Use of Carlisle Foodbank

Fig1: Use of Carlisle Foodbank. The table below shows how referrals this year are looking to be the highest since 2017.

| Year | Referrals        |
|------|------------------|
| 2022 | 1897 (Jan - May) |
| 2021 | 2489             |
| 2020 | 3375             |
| 2019 | 3855             |
| 2018 | 3296             |

Fig 2: The chart below shows where the people accessing the foodbank services come from. It shows that some of the areas where the highest referrals come from are also classed as having higher levels of deprivation, but it also shows that referrals for the foodbank come from almost all areas of the City.

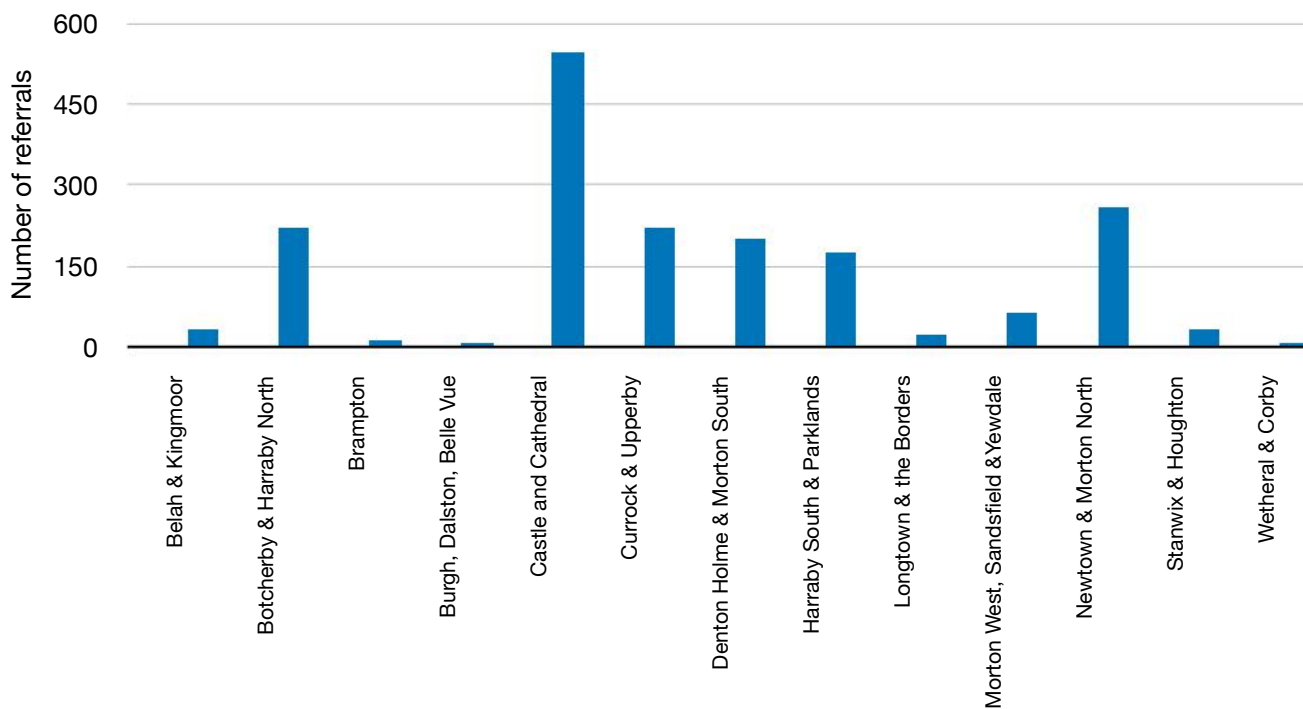


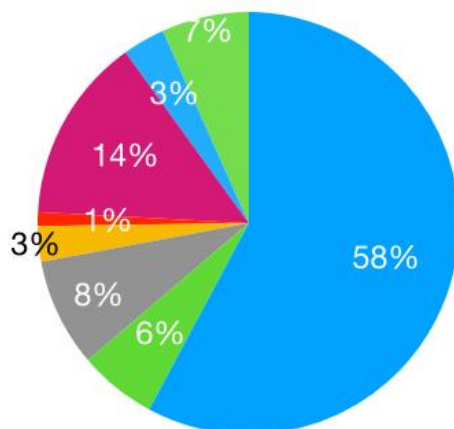
Fig 3 is a chart to show the main issue identified by the referral agency with 'budget' being the highest.

The referrals so far this year of 1897 includes support to households that include over 1100 children under 16 in.

We also support households with pets and have worked with local animal charities to provide food for over 700 pets.

We feel it is important that all food groups collect this level of data to understand the changing picture of emergency food and affordable food needs.

- Budget
- Delayed Benefit
- Reduced benefit
- Fuel Bank voucher
- Debt
- Stopped Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Other



# Donations

Donations: We are an organisations that relies on donations, and our own fundraising activities to be able to deliver what we do. The wide Carlisle community have been incredibly generous in supporting what we do through donations of food, funding and time. We also have good links with local supermarkets and businesses which are also incredibly important to provide food donations. However we know these are challenging times for all and that it can be increasingly difficult to donate.

Our key requirement is the donation of food that can be placed in to parcels to supported households accessing our service. However we have found that there is a reducing amount of food donations, at the same time as there is an increasing number of people needing support. This has meant we have had to increasingly purchase additional food from our funds to make up the short fall in donations.

We continue to work with businesses, supermarkets and food producers locally with donations scheme but we know we are one of a few food groups that are similarly accessing and asking for donations to support local communities.

Donation appeals:

We are trying different ideas in order to raise awareness and increase donation opportunities this includes:

Book the Bin: We recently launched a new initiative called 'Book the Bin'. This is a chance for local businesses or workplaces to book one of the Foodbank boxes for a week with the challenge to fill it up with urgent items. The first box went to Border Brite who filled it up within the week and several other businesses have booked the box for the over the weeks to come.

Bank the Food App: Download the 'Bank the Food' app which lets you know the real time needs of the foodbank, it will also ping your phone a list of urgent requirements when you are near a drop off point.



# Volunteers

Without the support of our volunteers we would not be able to deliver this work and we would like to thank them for their daily support

We need a range of volunteers to help us run our service. This includes people to help serve on food bank days; to help stock up the shelves; to pick up end of shelf life food from supermarkets; and help us fundraise. If you can help in any way please get in touch with us at [hello@carlislefoodbank.org.uk](mailto:hello@carlislefoodbank.org.uk).

## How to find us:

The foodbank is based at Tower Court, West Tower Street

## How to get in touch with us:

tel: 07512 552 449

email: [hello@carlislefoodbank.org.uk](mailto:hello@carlislefoodbank.org.uk)

## For more information about us:

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