

## Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement

Meeting to be held on 7 March 2017

Electoral Division affected: All
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### Customer Access Performance Report

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#### Executive Summary

This report provides an update for the Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement on the operation and performance of the Customer Access Service.

#### Recommendation

The Cabinet Committee on Performance Improvement are asked to comment on and note the contents of this report.

### Background and Advice

**Customer Access Service (CAS)** is the first point of contact for 60% of all incoming telephony and email enquiries to Lancashire County Council. Our Service strategic plan has been for additional services to be delivered by CAS in order to better serve the citizens of Lancashire whilst improving costs and efficiency. The service is structured and divided into two distinct operational areas:

1. Within the dedicated **Social Care Centre** a highly specialised and sensitive service is delivered, offering information, advice and assistance on all matters relating to Adult & Children's Social Care. Requests ranging from simple ones such as meals on wheels applications are processed all the way through to handling more complex child and adult contacts.
2. Within the **Customer Contact Centre** twenty six services are delivered including: Highways, Ask HR, Libraries, NoWcard Concessionary Travel, Registration, Certificates, Waste, and Welfare Rights. Alongside these also sits a signposting service to direct customers to other agencies across the public sector, district councils and partner organisations.

The following table illustrates the volume of contacts presented for all services delivered through the Customer Access Service, April to December 2016, along with comparisons with the corresponding period from the previous year.

### Customer Access Service Performance - Up to the end of Quarter 3

	2015/16	2016/17
<b>Telephone Calls Offered</b>	723,793	743,914
<b>Telephone Calls Answered</b>	683,197	665,032
<b>% Answered</b>	94.4%	89.4%
<b>emails Received</b>	128,464	139,316
<b>emails Completed</b>	129,463	139,986
<b>% Completed</b>	100.8% <sup>1</sup>	100.5% <sup>1</sup>
<b>Total Contacts Received</b>	<b>852,257</b>	<b>883,906</b>

<sup>1</sup> This figure is over 100% due to a small carry-over of emails from the previous year.

From the above table the overall % of calls answered has reduced by 5%. This does not mean that 5% of the calls were never answered, these callers abandoned after their initial call attempt either on hearing the welcome messages acknowledging that they have dialled the wrong number. Other customers will abandon their initial call choosing not to wait and re-try later.

The above table also illustrates an overall reduction in calls answered and an increase in emails processed, this is as a result of ongoing vacancies reducing the resource to answer calls, and also the increase in emails received in Social Care. These emails are mainly from professionals and at times need follow up telephone calls or emails to progress which requires more resource than dealing with a telephone call, CAS are working closely with both Children's and Adults Social Care to consider more effective and structured professional referral processes.

Both operational areas have a requirement for staff to handle all manner of requests of varying complexities and as such a comprehensive training programme is in place supported by a commitment to their ongoing professional development. This in turn supports the delivery of a high quality service to customers to meet and hopefully exceed their expectations.

Customer Service Advisors (CSAs) are supported by a dedicated training team who provide bespoke training packages for each of the services provided.

We continually measure performance so that:

- We can tell that enquiries are handled without undue delay. This is as a result of the accurate forecasting of call volumes by 15 minute interval by day. We then compare the forecast to the actual performance.
- Customer experience is assessed, analysing data from our customer satisfaction surveys, and services re-engineered to deliver the optimum experience.
- Regular communication and feedback from senior managers is taken on board. We meet periodically with Heads of Service to discuss the specific service needs.

## Performance, Transformation & Improvement

The service is actively involved with delivering requirements to support the following work areas within the above programme:

### Adult & Children's Social Care

Since April 2016 CAS have resolved **74.90%** of Adult Social Care contacts and **71.99%** of Children's Social Care contacts, an increase in both areas from the previous year.

Area	2015 - 2016	2016 - 2017	Increase
Adult Social Care	69.63%	74.90%	+5.27%
Children's Social Care	68.08%	71.99%	+3.91%

Contacts handled by CAS for Social Care have increased overall, with a reduction in telephone calls and an increase in email referrals.

- April to Decembers **2016 – 76,714** contacts relating to **Children**
- April to December 2015 – 70,968 contacts relating to Children
  
- April to December **2016 – 136,787** contacts relating to **Adults**
- April to December 2015 – 131,121 contacts relating to Adults

There has been continued successful engagement with both Social Care services to ensure that the volume of **non-complex** work resolved by CAS at first point of contact has increased whilst still ensuring the delivery of a **safe**, effective service.

There has been close integration with Adult Social Care on the **Passport to Independence** project managed by **Newton Europe**. Customer Access participated in a 'sandbox' or trial process over several months to test and develop more effective, streamlined processes. This will enable **amendments to care packages** and commissioning of **respite** to be undertaken at first point of contact.

CAS have also worked closely with Children's Social Care, building a **standard referral tool** as well as engaging with partner agencies to implement **new referral procedures**. The referral arrangements have been changed to take account of the introduction of the 'risk sensible' approach supported by the Lancashire Safeguarding Children's Board and Ofsted.

### Blue Badge Service

Improvements in application processing time, waiting times and the **87% uptake** of the Blue Badge online application system continues to be sustained in CAS. CAS have met with elected members in this period to discuss how the Blue Badge scheme is being operated.

The **average approval rate** of Blue Badge applications is **88%**.

- **£178,060 of income** has been generated from the introduction of the £10 charge for Blue Badges, since 1 March 2016 and up to 31 December 2016, this income recovers approximately 58% of the annual cost of administering the Blue Badge scheme.

<b>Payment Method</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>(£)</b>	<b>(%)</b>
Online (Card)	13,963	139,630	78.4
Telephone (Card)	3,388	33,880	19.0
Cheque	439	4,390	2.5
Postal Order	18	180	0.1
Cash	11	110	-
Refunds	-13	-130	-
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,806</b>	<b>178,060</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**97.4%** of all payments made to the Blue Badge Service have been **card payments** made **online (78.4%)** or over **the telephone (19.0%)**.

The Blue Badge Service continues to offer a **fast track application process** for terminally ill Blue Badge applicants (also known as palliative care applications). This fast track process includes:

- Applications being made on behalf of terminally ill customers, for example, by Macmillan Nurses and Hospice staff using a simple emailed form.
- Terminally ill applicants are not required to complete the usual online application form or submit any additional documentary evidence themselves.
- Palliative care applications do not require a photograph to be submitted.
- These applications are processed by the Blue Badge Service within 24 hours of receipt.
- A priority postal service is used to ensure customers receive their badge in the post as soon as possible.
- The £10 Blue Badge being waived for badges issued under the palliative care criteria.

## **Crisis Support**

The **administrative and financial delivery of the Crisis Support scheme** was **transferred into the CAS in January 2017**. This replaced the Care and Urgent Needs scheme (CAUNSS) that had been in place since April 2013 and for which CAS have delivered first point of contact telephony for the service throughout this time.

To support the transition, the CSAs receiving telephone calls at the first point of contact have been trained on declining and signposting applications in specific circumstances where the basic criteria for the service is not met.

**Applications received and assessed** by the back office team has seen a **39.71% decrease**. This is because CSAs at the first point of contact are managing applications more effectively, declining those that do not meet the basic criteria. Where appropriate customers declined are signposted to other more relevant services that may be able to offer the support they have requested, for example the Wellbeing Service.

The **percentage of refusals and awards overall has remained static** between January 2016 and January 2017. This suggests that refusals at the first point of contact are consistent and accurate with decision making that is being made at the back office. It also suggests that those customers who most need it are receiving support.

### **Emergency Planning - Exercise Kingfisher**

CAS took part in Exercise Kingfisher, a multi-agency exercise to test the emergency plan for Heysham Power Station on 17 January 2017. The role of CAS in the exercise was to develop and communicate the tactical response to the emergency along with colleagues from Health, Safety and Resilience, Children's Services, Adult Services and Communications. To replicate the service which CAS would provide in an emergency, Customer Access involved staff based at Lancashire House – from Corporate Contact Centre, Social Care and Information and Training in the exercise and they responded with likely scenarios based on their knowledge and experience of customers and the services we deliver. The exercise is executed in a way to replicate a real scenario, which is the CSAs receive random calls with no prior briefing. The CAS Information Manager liaises in real time with a corresponding Emergency Planning Officer, updating the responses for the CSAs and also informing the Emergency Planning team of the queries and concerns being raised by members of the public, which in turn informs some of the tactical response.

### **Genesys New Technology – Phase 1**

Genesys is the new telephony, workforce planning, social media, and contact automation toolkit procured for the authority in December 2015. The first phase of the New Technology project was implemented in **September 2016** and has delivered a suite of new systems to support improved:

- Handling of customer contact by telephone and email
- Work force management for forecasting, resourcing and scheduling
- Reporting and Management Information

The LCC Accounts Payable and Procurement Services are also using the system to manage their customer contact by telephone as are the Local Pension Partnership and BTLS ICT Services. The snagging period of this phase is drawing to a close and work has commenced by BTLS to develop the detailed scope proposal for the second phase of the project.

The project delivery to date has been challenging, the program of work had been impacted by initial delays in hardware being delivered. Also some technical issues regarding specific elements of the software implementation. CAS have committed significant resource to resolve the issues as they presented themselves. CA have also insisted from both BTLS and the vendor, that moving forward lessons learnt in phase 1 inform the approach for delivery in phase 2.

## Online Booking Notification of Marriage

The Registration Service launched a new online Notice of Marriage booking form on 5 December 2016. This online form **allows customers to book their Notice of Marriage appointment and pay the fee online**. This is now also used by CAS to process bookings over the telephone. Prior to this, Notice of Marriage appointments had to be booked by customers over the telephone or in person.

**62%** of Notice of Marriage appointments have been booked by customers using the **online self-service** option:

Source of booking	No.	(%)
Self Service	546	<b>62</b>
CAS	241	<b>27</b>
Other	100	<b>11</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>887</b>	<b>100</b>

**11%** of Notice of Marriage appointments booked since the online booking form went live have been booked **by the Registration Service**. Prior to 05 December 2016, **100%** of Notice of Marriage appointments were made by back office staff in the Registration Service.

## Property Asset Management System (PAMS)

CAS continue to play an active role in monitoring the experience of customers, suppliers and other LCC service areas following the implementation of PAMS. CAS are presented with approximately **660 calls** per week regarding property management and building faults across Lancashire. These calls are presented by schools, residential care homes, and other Authority maintained buildings. CAS determine at the first point whether the fault is an emergency against agreed criteria. Contacts meeting the emergency criteria result in a call as well as a system request to a contractor with the appropriately skilled workforce, for example a residential care home where the heating has failed, or a school with a building defect that impacts on the safety of the children and staff.

## Lancashire Parking Service (LPS)

In January Lancashire Parking Services requested telephony support from CAS to help deal with an increase in call volumes they were experiencing due to the new **Fishergate Central Gateway Project**. CAS were able to design and implement new Interactive Voice Response (IVR) software build through the Genesys telephony platform, improving the customer experience and directing call volumes to the appropriate channels.

Three options were added to the IVR:

- Option1 Automated payment line, removing the necessity for customers to speak to a CSA.
- Option 2 Fishergate project, these calls are presented to CAS.  
A detailed message regarding the Fishergate project has been added here prior to connecting to CAS, this is to encourage self-service by

directing customers to the website, however still connecting through to CAS once the message is played for those customers who wish to speak to an advisor.

- Option3 Resident parking permits and all other enquiries (Route to LPS).  
A resident parking permit message has been added to play here advising customers they can apply for permits online, the call then connects to LPS.

Since the new IVR was launched on the 18 January 2017, CAS have handled **190 calls** relating the Fishergate project. In addition **464 callers** have chosen to select the automated payment line a service not offered previously. Prior to this calls would have been presented to an advisor working in the LPS team.

To give some context to the increase in calls as a result of the Fishergate project, LPS prior to this were offered on average, **330 calls per week**. Following the changes to traffic management in Fishergate this rose to an average weekly figure of **610 calls per week**. The busiest week was week commencing 21/11/2016 and **1,181 calls** were received. Since the second week in January the volumes of calls are reducing.

### De-commissioning of 0800 and 0845 telephone numbers

The overall take up of the **0300 lines** has steadily increased over the period April to December **2016**, and was on average **92.1%**, the detail of which, is show below.

	Number dialling 0845	Number dialling 0300	Total	% 0300 Uptake
<b>Apr-16</b>	8,032	69,353	77,385	89.6
<b>May-16</b>	7,905	72,736	80,641	90.2
<b>Jun-16</b>	8,054	78,143	86,197	90.7
<b>Jul-16</b>	7,397	92,764	100,161	92.6
<b>Aug-16</b>	7,537	76,480	84,017	91
<b>Sep-16</b>	6,571	69,806	76,377	91.4
<b>Oct-16</b>	4,662	81,326	85,988	94.6
<b>Nov-16</b>	4,254	76,682	80,936	94.7
<b>Dec-16</b>	3,591	60,158	63,749	94.4

### Automated Surveys

Customers are offered the opportunity to complete a survey based upon their perception and opinion of the service they experience during their contact with the council. This provides an unbiased gauge and view of the service we deliver.

In the period April to December 2016, **26,844** surveys were completed. The tables following provide the detail along with the percentage of calls which were **resolved at first point of contact from a customer perspective**.

### Customer Satisfaction

Target of Calls Resolved at the First Point of Contact - Apr to Dec 2016	Percentage of Calls Resolved at the First Point of Contact Apr to Dec 2016	Surveys Completed - Apr to Dec 2016
<b>Customer Contact Centre and AskHR combined</b>		
90%	91.6%	14,688
<b>Social Care</b>		
83%	84.5%	12,156

### Compliments and Complaints

The number of overall **compliments** the Customer Access Service has received so far during 2016/2017 is **32**. The number of **complaints** received so far during 2016/2017 is **41** out of a total number of **883,906** contacts received.

#### April to December 2016

		Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	TOTAL
Social Care	Complaints	1	2	1	4
	Compliments	2	6	8	16
Customer Contact Centre	Complaints	9	17	9	35
	Compliments	3	5	4	12
HR	Complaints	2	0	0	2
	Compliments	1	2	1	4

#### April to December 2015

		Apr-Jun	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	TOTAL
Social Care	Complaints	10	8	8	26
	Compliments	5	6	10	21
Customer Contact Centre	Complaints	11	17	8	36
	Compliments	2	8	5	15
HR	Complaints	1	3	3	7
	Compliments	21	14	7	42



## Performance 2016/2017

### Telephony – April to December 2016

	Offered	Answered	% Answered	% SLA
Overall	743,914	665,032	89.4%	n/a
Social Care	299,681	257,248	85.8%	87.5%
Customer Contact	380,359	348,813	91.7%	90%
HR	63,874	58,971	92.3%	95%

### Telephony – October to December 2016

	Offered	Answered	% Answered	% SLA
Overall	231,638	211,358	91.2%	n/a
Social Care	96,649	82,716	85.6%	87.5%
Customer Contact	115,017	109,583	95.3%	90%
HR	19,972	19,059	95.4%	95%

### Email - up to and including Quarter 3

	Received	Completed	% Answered
Overall	139,316	139,986	100.5% <sup>1</sup>
Social Care	67,073	66,783	99.6% <sup>1</sup>
Customer Contact	39,540	40,214	101.7% <sup>1</sup>
HR	32,703	32,989	100.9% <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This figure is over 100% due to a small carry-over of emails from the previous year.

### Email - Quarter 3

	Received	Completed	% Answered
Overall	47,510	47,868	100.8%
Social Care	23,128	23,386	101.1% <sup>1</sup>
Customer Contact	13,918	13,853	99.5%
HR	10,464	10,629	101.6% <sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This figure is over 100% due to a small carry-over of emails from the previous period.

## Future Improvements

### Highways Asset Management System (HAMS)

CAS are the first point of contact for **Lancashire Highways and Countryside services**. The service is currently in the process of implementing their new asset management system HAMS. CAS have been heavily involved in the implementation to ensure the transition from the current system to HAMS is seamless with minimal impact to service delivery.

**All User Acceptance Testing has been completed and any defects identified have been resolved**, performance testing is due to take place from Lancashire House which will ensure the system is compatible with other CAS applications and systems and that response times are acceptable.

The system implementation has been an opportunity for CAS to review current business processes and streamline these where possible to realise benefits and efficiencies. As a result of the implementation CAS will:

- **Resolve more enquiries at first point of contact** using information available in the system and information resources.
- **Reduce call handling times** by:
  - Maximising the workflow functionality to escalate urgent enquiries reducing the need to make calls to Area offices.
  - Using functionality to handle from customers and decommission additional processes.

The operational go-live date is planned for early March 2017, CAS are finalising the training programme and scheduling for delivery to circa 60 advisors. Early indications are that the new system and toolkit will enhance both the customer and staff experience.

### MASH

CAS are actively involved in the **MASH steering group**, redesigning the front door for the multi-agency safeguarding hub.

This has incorporated **internal process reviews** within Children's Social Care and Lancashire Constabulary as well as researching working practises in other authorities. Following a set of agreed design principles, the MASH structure will be developed over the next six months to reduce **duplication**, streamline processes and create a **safer**, more effective **information sharing** environment.

## Customer Access Service Plan and Vision

The 2017/18 service plan will support a customer focused approach to service delivery contributing to and enabling the authority's **Digital Strategy**. It will also demonstrate the CAS contribution and commitment to the council's key Customer Access objectives, of **increasing and improving** 'access channel change', **reducing** the cost of service delivery by **promoting self-service and automation** for specific services and ensuring that the services provided keep the citizens of Lancashire at the core of what we do. However, customers will not be excluded because they do not have internet access at home. Where appropriate, our most vulnerable citizens will have telephone access to CSAs who understand specific services areas.

## Genesys New technology – Phase 2

CAS and BTLS are working on the detailed scope proposal for the second phase of the project which will look to deliver:

- New customer contact channels for:
  - Web Chat
  - Social Media
- Telephony 'Auto attendant' to enable an element of speech direction for some calls
- Integration with Skype telephony

## New Education Management System Project

The CAS Change team have attended **workshops** for the Education Management System Review. This review will re-implement the system used to handle school admissions (Impulse).

CAS are providing input with regards to **analysing customer journeys** through the admissions process and will be working with ICTS, Core Systems and Pupil Access teams to identify opportunities to **reduce the volume of telephony contacts** being handled by back office staff and **review the scope** of the telephony support service currently offered by CAS for online school admissions.

Most of the parents and guardians applying for schools places in Lancashire apply on line (**95 %+**). Moving forward it is proposed that this system will pull together all services linked with starting school and moving schools, for example transport and benefits, providing parents and guardians with one point of access for all schools associated services.

## Recruitment

CAS are working closely with the authority's **HR and Learning and Development** managers, to react positively to the ongoing challenges around recruitment and retention. Work has also commenced with partners in the Job Centre Plus and **Lancashire Adult Learning**. Specifically looking at employability schemes that prepare people not in a work environment for some time to become job ready, focusing on IT and customer service skills. Customer Access will present to some of the

colleges and other further education institutes, an overview of working for Lancashire County Council's Customer Access Service, giving an overview of the benefits of a career path in customer services.

### **Consultations**

Internal/external customers and service areas, including CAS, HR and Pensions staff.

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

### **Risk management**

This report is for noting and therefore a risk analysis in relation to the content on this report has not been required.

### **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

### **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Directorate/Tel
Nil		
Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate		
N/A.		