

REPORT TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 13 JUNE 2022

REPORT ON: IMPROVING SERVICES THROUGH LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS AND SERVICE USERS

REPORT BY: CHIEF EXECUTIVE

REPORT NO: 106-2022

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To highlight improvements which have been made to Council services as a result of listening to the views of customers and service users over the past year.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Committee:

- (i) note the contents of this report, and agree that similar reports should continue to be submitted annually.
- (ii) agree that highlights from the report, as set out in Appendix 1, are published on the 'we listened, we acted' page of the Council's website.
- (iii) encourage services to maintain their efforts to listen to and respond to feedback, and to identify any further customers who should be consulted with a view to ensuring that services continue to be improved in response to the views of users.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Each service makes provision for any costs of customer consultation within their existing revenue budgets.

4. LISTENING TO CUSTOMERS AND SERVICE USERS

4.1 The Council uses a wide range of methods to gather feedback from those who use its services, including:

- surveys and feedback forms
- focus groups
- public consultations
- involvement of users in planning new services and facilities
- meetings with representative groups eg tenants, carers, parents and people with disabilities
- meetings with partners
- analysis of individual complaints, comments and suggestions

This report gives examples of how this feedback has been used in the past year to improve services, demonstrating that the Council listens, learns from and acts on feedback received from whatever source.

4.2 As in the past twelve years, the Chief Executive's Service asked 'customer facing' services to identify any changes made in response to the views of customers and service users. For obvious reasons, there was less scope for direct face-to-face engagement with the public over the past year, as in most of 2020. However, the detailed returns set out in Appendix 2 to this report continue to demonstrate a commitment to making improvements through listening.

- 4.3 The Council publicises examples of using customer feedback through a "we listened, we acted" page on its website. Highlights from this report, grouped into themes, are set out in Appendix 1 and it is proposed that these are published on the "we listened, we acted" page.
- 4.4 The improvements highlighted in Appendix 1, and the many more which are set out in detail in Appendix 2, illustrate the value of listening to the views of service users. It is recommended that services should maintain their efforts to do this with a view to achieving continuous improvement.
- 4.5 The regular reports on complaints which are submitted to the Scrutiny Committee give further evidence of how customer feedback is used to identify service improvements with the aim of preventing the same complaints recurring.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This report has been subject to an assessment of any impacts on Equality and Diversity, Fairness and Poverty, Environment and Corporate Risk. There are no major issues.
- 5.2 Equalities should be taken into account in the planning, delivery and monitoring of all services, so customer satisfaction research should aim to capture the views of those from protected characteristic groups. Where possible, consultation should aim to capture the views of people who do not currently use services, as well as those who do.

6. CONSULTATIONS

The Council Leadership Team were consulted in the preparation of this report.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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HIGHLIGHTS



IMPROVED ACCESS TO SERVICES

- Business Gateway adapted its services, delivering workshops as online webinars and introducing new topics including guidance on furlough and information on diversification to trading online. The Survive and Thrive Programme was introduced to provide one-to-one support to businesses from a dedicated adviser. Further support was provided for businesses to return and build back, including new opportunities to diversify and grow.
- Customer Services introduced a new online appointment system to allow customers to book a date and time suitable for them, along with voicemail facilities to allow customers to leave a message for an advisor to call them back rather than having to wait for their call to be answered.
- The National Entitlement Card team listened to customers' feedback regarding the NEC website, which now includes a more user-friendly way for customers to find out what they can use their card for within their own area by entering their postcode.
- The arrangements for supply of free period products were enhanced to include a home delivery service.
- During lockdown, employees at Turriff House responded to residents' requests by developing new activities including a virtual cafe, a socially distanced marathon, pen-pal letter writing between residents and pupils at St Clement's Primary which led to virtual maths and English classes led by the residents, and an outdoor Christmas Market.
- Staff from the Community Mental Health Teams for Older People created the 'Stay at Home, Stay Safe and Have a Cuppy' packs, which included seated exercises and yoga, word searches and quizzes, colouring sets, poems and carer stress tips, along with coffee and tea.

IMPROVED COMMUNICATION

- For those who could not return to school or nursery during the first few months of 2021, employees were in frequent contact with young people and parents to adapt learning and teaching.
- During and beyond lockdowns, closer engagement with young people and their families has provided a deeper understanding of children's individual contexts, allowing schools to provide more dedicated and focused support to meet their needs.
- Environment employees used feedback from Bonnie Dundee volunteers to agree a plan to take forward Dundee's 2021 Beautiful Scotland entry, and supported their preparations for Beautiful Scotland judging.
- Communications for digitally excluded and vulnerable audiences were prioritised, including the use of radio and bus stop advertising, following feedback from the Fairness Commissioners. The Communications team also launched a TikTok account following feedback on the best ways to interact with younger audiences.
- Social Prescribing Link Workers moved to telephone/online support during the pandemic and extended their coverage to an additional nine GP practices, meaning all practices now have access to link worker support.

SERVICE USERS SHAPING SERVICES

- Parents, children and the wider school community told us what they would like the new East End Community Campus to be like, and their ideas were considered within the design process in partnership with the V&A Dundee, in advance of the wider public consultation.
- The Young Person's Participation Group liaised with the Care Inspectorate on effective care planning, including the development of rich, rewarding and meaningful personal care plans.
- Partnership work with care experienced young people and Children's Hearing Scotland led to young people becoming actively involved in the selection of Children's Panel members.
- Community engagement with the parents of Fintry Primary School, Fintry Community Council, and stakeholders including Police Scotland shaped the design of the School Streets scheme to prohibit traffic around the school at the start and end of the school day. This work has informed the Council's strategy for traffic management interventions at other schools.
- Completion of "Support Needs Questionnaires" at the start of every Community Justice Order has increased greatly and provided a discussion tool for workers to agree the intervention plan with each individual service user.
- The Engage Dundee Survey showed the profound impact of the pandemic on people's mental and physical health and wellbeing, social connections and sense of security, as well as their material circumstances. In response, the Get on Track course was developed by the Community Health Team and was offered in community centres once restrictions had lifted.

MORE RESPONSIVE SERVICES

- A review of the Out of Hours Social Work service led to a revised model of service. The review examined the nature and pattern of referrals, considered the levels of risk and the proportionality of response, and used this to reconsider optimum staffing levels, with more staff available at peak times to meet the changing pattern of referrals and demand.
- The New Beginnings team at Linlathen Resource Centre remained open during lockdown as a safe haven for pregnant women and new mothers experiencing social isolation due to the restrictions combined with lack of family supports. In addition, staff were creative in the use of socially distanced walks to ensure those most in need had social connection and support where essential.
- Supervised family contact arrangements were adapted after restrictions on household mixing limited the number of contacts that were able to take place at indoor venues. In consultation with parents, an outdoor space at Linlathen was adapted to provide a generous space for family contacts, incorporating a screened outdoor play area.
- As a result of listening to the Champions Board, Dundee City Council now has a guaranteed interview scheme for care experienced young people who meet the essential criteria, which supports care leavers into employment.
- The timing of the Fuel Well scheme was brought forward from the year before because feedback said the provision of money in January was, in some cases, too late to have the best impact. Over 3,500 payments were made prior to Christmas 2021. Revised criteria were also co-produced with the Fairness Commissioners.
- A new policy was developed to support those affected by domestic abuse in Council housing, reflecting the views of those with lived experience.
- Dundee Non-Fatal Overdose Rapid Response Team was established. This multi-agency virtual team meets every week-day to discuss all individuals who have experienced a non-fatal overdose and a team of assertive outreach workers aims to contact the individuals quickly to offer a safety plan.

IMPROVEMENTS MADE AS A RESULT OF CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

1. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S SERVICE

1.1 National Entitlement Card

- The team improved communication with all 32 local authorities by setting up a Stakeholder Forum with regular meetings. Information can be easily shared across all councils and they have the opportunity to raise any issues.
- Dedicated online sessions were arranged with all 32 local authorities for training and awareness-raising while transitioning to new systems and implementing the operational readiness for the new Young Persons' Concessionary travel scheme which launched in January 2022.
- Communication with partners (Transport Scotland, Improvement Service, Young Scot) was improved with regular meetings involving representation from all partners to align communications.
- The team listened to customers' feedback regarding the NEC website and has updated nec.scot. In particular, this now includes a more user-friendly way for customers to find out what they can use their NEC for within their own area by simply entering their postcode.

1.2 Communications

- Supported regular requests for signage to encourage compliance with coronavirus restrictions and safety arrangements. Over 120 posters have been created.
- Bespoke messaging on social media in response to coronavirus issues raised by the public eg mask wearing on buses/in shops.
- Prioritised communications for digitally excluded and vulnerable audiences, including the use of radio and bus stop advertising, following feedback from the Fairness Commissioners.
- Created a new resource pack for recruitment to inform employment candidates and answer frequently asked questions about the city and the Council.
- Produced a weekly round-up email for staff, giving a comprehensive summary of the latest news, policy updates and learning resources.
- Launched a corporate TikTok account in response to feedback about the best ways to interact with younger online audiences.
- Ran specific activity on our channels addressing issues raised by members of the public, such as dog fouling.
- Continued use of video/animation to promote key messaging, in line with social media engagement data.
- Used engagement statistics and user feedback to shape city marketing activity, including the areas and demographics targeted, key messages and channels used.
- Adapted the annual budget consultation, in response to comments from members of the public, to provide greater flexibility in how the form is completed.

1.3 Period Products

- Ensured that the provision of free period products continued during lockdown, in particular to those who were in need and/or were required to shield. Staff from various services along with DVVA established a home delivery service in a short time.

- Positive messages highlighted that this was providing a dignified way of accessing period products, particularly to those with health, income and other inequality issues. The service therefore has continued to operate with over 1,200 households receiving products to date.

2. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

2.1 Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE)

- The PACE quality improvement programme - focused on improving outcomes in terms of achieving timely permanence plans for children whether at home, in kinship care, long-term fostering or adoptive care - has been extended to teenagers, with improvements in engagement with young people about their long-term and/or permanent planning. Tests of change are underway where staff, children and parents/carers are consulted on the change to permanence planning processes, and feedback is Informing future models of intervention.

2.2 Inspection Feedback

- Following several developments over the last 2 years, the Care Inspectorate's joint inspection of services for children and young people at risk of harm concluded that the impact of support is 'Good' and identified overwhelmingly positive relationships between young people and staff, involving consistent and continuous trust, respect and support. It also recommended that we need to improve approaches to how children, young people and families visibly inform both day-to-day decisions and wider strategic developments. Fathers in particular were not always included. This is informing future developments, which will align approaches towards children and young people at risk of harm with wider approaches such as Your Voice Our Promise.

2.3 Multi-Agency Screening Hub (MASH)

- The MASH team - Dundee's single point of contact for child protection referrals - surveyed the main users of the service (i.e. staff from the various agencies that work directly with children and young people). 95% of respondents felt the advice and support from MASH was clear, with a range of positive feedback given, helped provide assurance about the quality of the service.

2.4 Pause Dundee

- In 2019, in partnership with TCA, the Robertson Trust and Pause UK, we commissioned a "Pause Dundee" service to work with women who had had 2 or more children removed from their care for reasons relating to the presence of significant risks to the child. Pause involves an 18-month intensive support programme with each woman to build relationships and support them to tackle the issues impacting on their lives. An "Impact Report" noted that 21 women had successfully completed the programme, and that participation in Pause has led to improvements in their lives.

2.5 Review of Out of Hours Social Work

- A review of the Out of Hours Social Work service examined the nature and pattern of referrals, considered the levels of risk and the proportionality of response, and used this information to consider the optimum staffing levels for the service. The revised model of service means the service has more staff available at peak times (i.e. through the day on Saturday and Sunday) to help meet the changing pattern of referrals and demand.

2.6 Children's and Community Justice Social Work Teams

- At the beginning of the pandemic, all social work teams had to drastically adapt working practices. The New Beginnings team based at Linlathen Resource Centre remained open as a safe haven for pregnant women and new mothers who were experiencing social isolation due to the restrictions combined with lack of family supports. Expectations regarding frequency of contact with families were introduced by the social work service through "Minimum Practice Requirements" which advised and supported staff in relation to risk and vulnerability. In addition to use of the resource base, employees were creative in the use of socially distanced walks to ensure those most in need had social connection and support where this was deemed essential.

- Throughout this period, there was significant engagement with service users about how the service could adapt to meet their needs. Financial and practical help and support was a key request for many women, and links were made with a wide range of agencies to secure financial, practical, food or technical supports to reduce some of the adverse impacts. The need to adapt “supervised contact” arrangements was also highlighted. The restrictions on household mixing limited the number of contacts that were able to take place at indoor venues, so, in consultation with parents, an outdoor space at Linlathen was cleared and adapted to provide a generous space incorporating a screened outdoor play area.

2.7 Dundee Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service/Locality Nurse Pilot

- Staff were surveyed about this service whereby specialist DDARS nurses are co-located and work jointly with social work teams. The pilot has been received extremely well by both social work and health employees, with the majority wishing this service to continue. The service is improving joint working across the partnership, with work now to progress on quantifying how it improves outcomes. In response to requests to widen the criteria, the pilot has been extended with the addition of support employees.

2.8 Schools and Nurseries

Listening and responding to children, young people and their families is a core feature of what schools and nurseries do - and they have continued to take account of the impact of the pandemic over the last year. Examples include:

- Implementing fairness plans to address pressures for families in the cost of the school day.
- Remote learning: for those who could not return to school during the first few months of 2021, school and nursery employees were in frequent contact with children, young people and parents to adapt learning and teaching so that access and engagement helped with continuity in both learning and relationships. A number of Dundee schools featured on Education Scotland’s website National Overview of Practice in Remote Learning (education.gov.scot).
- During and beyond lockdowns, closer engagement with young people and their families has provided a deeper understanding of children’s individual contexts allowing schools to provide more dedicated and focussed support to meet their needs. Parents say they have had more information on their child, for example through SEESAW and virtual information evenings. Schools and nurseries have connected with children and families through both in-person and virtual contact, with a high level of attendance of vulnerable children and young people at schools and nurseries throughout this time. This has served as a protective factor for many children and families in relation to mental health and wellbeing.
- Care-experienced young people in secondary schools were asked about support offered to them in school, resulting in some becoming involved in the city-wide Young Person’s Participation Group. The results will be shared with the Your Voice Our Promise Team and secondary school Pupil Support Coordinators. The PSCs will invite those who would like to join a school-based group to do so, and those young people who indicated they’d like to join the city-wide YPPG will be supported to do so.
- Employees from the Accessibility and Inclusion Service provided colleagues with resources to make sure that children and young people with English as an Additional Language and those with sight and hearing loss were able to access their learning online.
- Remote learning for children with additional support needs who did not attend school or nursery during lockdowns was, as far as possible, matched to their needs as evidenced in the examples gathered in Education Scotland’s thematic review of practice in remote learning for complex needs (education.gov.scot).
- Implementation of Counselling in Schools services for children age 10 years+ has been in place for the last year and indicates that the predominant presenting issues have been: anxiety/stress; interpersonal relationships; family issues; and self-esteem. These are the issues that counsellors would expect to be prevalent amongst children and young people at the ages and stages of those engaging, regardless of pandemic impact. The most significant pandemic-related issues identified were: increased anxiety; worry about school work/exams; sense of removal of support networks; and loneliness. A range of individual outcomes have been

formulated through children and young people working with counsellors to identify what may help such as:

- being more aware of feelings/behaviour; being able to cope better; being more positive; and being better able to solve problems.
- Education Support/Officers have participated in and recorded sessions answering questions raised by Young Carers and their families, especially relating to Autism Spectrum Disorder, transition and return to school which has fed into the strategic approach to transitions.
- Parents, children and the wider school community have told us what they would like the new East End Community Campus to be like, and their ideas were considered within the design process in partnership with the V&A Dundee, in advance of wider public consultation.

2.9 Dundee Champions Board

Significant progress has been made by the Champions Board with reference to Care Experienced Young People (CEYP). Actions include the development of an overarching engagement strategy for all care experienced children and young people and further development of the Champions Board model. Over the last 3 years, progress has included:

- Quarterly Champions Board Meetings led by the Chief Executive, with widening representation and a growing sense of collaboration and accountability between partners and care experienced children and young people.
- Support for a Young Person's Participation Group consisting of young people who help to coordinate, deliver presentations and facilitate discussions at Champions Board Meetings. In the last 12 months, 60 young people have participated.
- The previous CEYP Coordinator and Assistant have engaged with the Independent Care Review, contributing key messages on the importance of family support and effective relationships which has influenced The Promise.
- The YPPG consulted and liaised with the Care Inspectorate on effective care planning, including the development of rich, rewarding and meaningful care plans that are personal to them.
- In response to views expressed in the Champions Board, consistent approaches have been taken to our looked after and accommodated young people by ensuring that children in Residential Houses receive the same birthday and Christmas monies as others.
- As a direct result of Champions Board work, Dundee City Council now has a guaranteed interview scheme for CEYPs who meet the essential criteria which supports care leavers into employment.
- Working with 'The Corner' to introduce the prioritisation of counselling services for CEYPs, given the prevalence of poor mental health for carer leavers, alongside counselling and psychotherapy from the Throughcare and Aftercare Team.
- Supporting Care Leavers to meet with the First Minister during a visit to Dundee. This strengthened the campaign for Council Tax exemption for Care Leavers which was announced as a policy shortly afterwards.
- Leisure and Culture Dundee are now active partners in the Champions Board. Care Experienced Young People are a priority focus for their future interventions and they now have concession rate gym memberships.
- Media projects such as the films 'Experiences of Care' and 'GRIT' have highlighted issues, sparked discussion, raised awareness and reduced the stigma for CEYPs. These are used across our secondary schools to raise awareness.

- CEYPs now play an active role in the recruitment of Dundee City Council employees working with care experienced young people, with the concept of “compassionate care” embedded within the recruitment and interview process.
- Partnership work with Children’s Hearing Scotland and CEYPs has led to young people becoming actively involved in the selection of Children’s Panel members. This work has been recognised nationally.
- Worked in partnership with the Pupil Support Workers to help schools develop Champions Boards and to raise awareness of the additional needs of CEYPs within education settings.
- Three secondary schools have established their own Champions Board groups, with the aim for all secondary schools to offer this opportunity to their pupils if they wish to do so.
- We have established a strong social media presence for all Care Experienced Young People to engage with us, using social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, allowing us to hear their views across a variety of different forums.
- We have commissioned the Mind Of My Own digital app that will allow all care experienced young people to provide their views in a fashion that they are familiar with.

2.10 **Advocacy**

- The service commissions advocacy services from Who Cares Scotland, and during the pandemic they have advocated or represented children and young people at 17 Children’s Hearings, 14 Looked After Child Reviews, 3 Care Planning Meetings, 5 GIRFEC Meetings and 9 other meetings representing a child or young person’s view. They have also produced 2 video inputs for Dundee’s Champions Board on children’s and young people’s experiences of Covid, including the impact on their mental health and wellbeing. They have delivered advocacy relating to a wide range of themes over 411 tasks on behalf of 48 young people, of which 8 are living outwith the city.

2.11 **Community Justice Service**

- MAPPAs - the Tayside MAPPA Self-Evaluation group - tasked all partners (SPS, NHS, Police, the three local authorities) to ask their service users to complete a questionnaire to better understand how service users had experienced support and monitoring during Covid. The questions explored specific issues of contact during Covid, asked how well-informed individuals felt about MAPPAs and whether they felt supported by the contact. For Dundee CJS and all MAPPA agencies the survey provided evidence that the majority of service users appreciated the support (to not re-offend/to manage their lives) and while the majority felt well-informed about their MAPPA management, some felt fuller explanation/transparency would help.
- Unpaid Work - Dundee CJS collects end of placement feedback from individuals who have completed unpaid work and also collects feedback from recipients of unpaid work. The number of responses was reduced in 2020-2021 due to the Covid related reduction in unpaid work but responses received included: ‘I couldn’t fault the placement I was given. Completing my hours gave a feeling of reward, you get a real sense of helping the community ... you’re given the opportunity to learn new skills, meet new people ... it was a good experience, it taught me a lot and added a personal journey.’ ‘You had loads of knowledge of things I needed including the recovery road map.’
- Service User Self-Evaluation - employees help service users complete a “Support Needs Questionnaire” at the start and end of every Order. Completion of these questionnaires has increased greatly in the last year, with 95 being completed in 2021 compared to 21 the year before. The same questionnaire is completed at the end of Order to provide a tool to examine progress across the domains on finance, attitude to offending, mental health, general health, housing, relationships, employment/education, substance use. As yet we only have 13 questionnaires from end of Order, so it is difficult to make large scale comments on aggregated progress. On an individual level the scores and comments collected do provide a discussion tool for workers to agree the intervention plan with each individual service user. Self-report of poor mental health emerges as a common theme from the completed questionnaires, adding extra evidence to the need to strengthen links to mental health supports.

2.12 What Matters To You (WM2u)

- WM2u is a community-based systems change initiative working alongside families, practitioners, and senior leaders in two localities including Dundee. During the summer of 2021, WM2u were alongside families in the Charleston community. Families were involved in an independent family budget initiative, which involved asking them what mattered to them and their families during summer. Each of the families were then given monetary assistance from the Make It Happen Fund to use the money for what mattered. Some chose a family holiday, others driving lessons for the parents or swimming lessons for their children and others chose home improvements, household items or school uniforms/accessories for their children.
- In December 2021, families attended the Charleston Community Collective sessions run by Community Learning & Development. They were given the platform to be heard by voicing their views on what matters to them, their families, and their local community. These views were recorded and incorporated into the Local Plan.
- What Matters To You is interested in the views of the front-line employees and practitioners. There are two groups of employees who are called Change Makers and they bring their ideas and suggested tests of change to improve outcomes for the children and families they serve to a forum called Communities of Practice or Learning Communities. The WM2u Learning Communities are an important part of the approach to action and learning that help us to 'Grow as We Go'.
- Parents comments from their involvement so far include: 'There are people actually listening to me and respecting what I say. It took away the fear of interacting in a group'; 'I felt safe; 'I am less isolated now'. 'Group members are really supportive'; 'I was isolated but this group has been part of the change and my overcoming my isolation'.

3. CITY DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Business Gateway Tayside

- With the lockdown commencing in March 2020 it was necessary to ensure that local businesses were able to access appropriate support and guidance.
- Business Gateway Tayside very quickly adapted its services taking all of its workshops and delivering them as webinars online. It was also necessary to introduce new topics which largely featured HR related webinars, including guidance on furlough and information on diversifying to trading online. There were over 110 webinars delivered across the region including workshops, Networking events and Masterclasses delivered between April 2020 and March 2021.
- At the same time the Covid-19 Survive and Thrive Programme was also introduced. This provided one-to-one support to businesses from a dedicated business adviser. The service experienced a huge surge in enquiries from businesses in panic mode and was able to help them navigate and access the complex support and grants that were introduced by the UK and Scottish Governments to support businesses during the pandemic. They were also able to offer support in terms of guidance on diversification of the business and help businesses to identify new opportunities and ways of doing business.
- In April 2021 there was then a need to ensure support was in place for businesses to return and build back. The Business Boost service was introduced, to ensure that those clients and businesses who were still experiencing difficulties would continue to have that support. It was also recognised that some businesses had found new opportunities from diversifying the business and it was important that they also had support to raise their ambitions and grow the business further.

3.2 Consultation and Engagement - Fintry Primary School, School Streets

- Community engagement during the 2018 Dundee Decides consultation recorded 692 votes for a project to reduce traffic congestion around Fintry PS.
- Further community engagement was held with the employees and parents of Fintry Primary School, Fintry Community Council, and stakeholders including Police Scotland. These

consultations shaped the design of the School Streets scheme to prohibit traffic around the school during the start and end of the school day. Further statutory consultation was completed in 2020 which included public notices and publication of detailed plans for the scheme.

- Final consultations were undertaken prior to the launch at Fintry Primary School in September 2021. Meetings were held with Fintry Community Council, employees and parents of Fintry Primary School and the School Parent Council to outline the final implementation decisions.
- The consultation and engagement exercise undertaken at Fintry Primary School has shaped and informed the Council's strategy for further traffic management interventions at primary schools across the city. A policy for School Streets was approved by the City Development Committee in 2021 and engagement continues with the Pupil Safety and School Parking Working Group to identify a prioritised programme for further interventions.

4. CORPORATE SERVICES

4.1 Customer Services

- A new online appointment system was introduced to allow customers to book an appointment at a date and time that is suitable for them.
- Voicemail facilities were added to skillsets to allow customers to leave a voicemail for an advisor to call them back rather than having to wait for call to be answered.

4.2 Benefit Delivery Team

- In response to a complaint from a customer about receiving a reminder letter for Council Tax, the team worked collaboratively with other service areas to reduce similar complaints in future.
- Dealing with other complaints from customers has also enhanced partnership working to ensure that supporting customers is the key focus, as the complaints have spanned various topics.

4.3 Council Advice Services

- Dundee Money Action exit forms showed that customers who worked with them had gained additional skills, changed their spending and saving habits, and are now more in control of their money.
- Changes were made to the Fuel Well assessment form following collaboration with Dundee Fighting for Fairness Commission. These changes reflected changing priorities and improvements made to questions based on feedback from the year before.
- The Fuel Well scheme was also brought forward from the year before as it was felt that the provision of money issued in January was, in some cases, too late to have the best impact for customers. As a result, over 3,500 payments were made prior to Christmas 2021.
- Criteria for the scheme were also co-produced with the Fairness Commissioners this year. As customers applying would generally be claiming means tested benefits, there was an acknowledgement that some who are struggling the most may be just above the threshold for means testing but still be fuel poor, therefore some discretion was used in decision making. Those on low income benefits will benefit from the scheme but it was agreed that there needed to be some discretion where there are cases of customers struggling to make ends meet for other reasons.
- Discussions with the Fairness Commissioners also highlighted the digital divide sometimes experienced by older customers. When we subsequently reviewed the profile of Fuel Well customer data, it showed that only 6% of applicants were over 65. This led to recommendations to make targeted fuel cash first payments to vulnerable older customers who were in receipt of Council Tax reduction using additional Covid funding.

5. HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PARTNERSHIP

5.1 Overall

- The constraints of lockdown meant that our usual partnership and consultation practices were restricted. However, efforts were still made to continue to engage with citizens and their carers, in collaboration with partners who, alongside the Health and Social Care Partnership, deliver supports to people across the city.
- Over the past year Social Work, Social Care and Health services engaged with many individuals, their families and carers, listening to their views on how to improve service delivery. Although face-to-face activities have been limited, other methods of engagement continued to be undertaken including the carrying out surveys, questionnaires, hosting education/information sessions and hosting telephone and or video interviews with people.
- The Engage Dundee survey was placed online during August 2020 and was a partnership exercise between Community Learning and Development, the Health and Social Care Partnership and NHS Tayside Public Health. It was circulated widely across a number of digital platforms and limited paper copies were made available through some local teams and voluntary sector partners. The survey aimed to explore the impact of the pandemic, particularly in determining whether individuals had accessed specific services during lockdown, their experiences both positive and negative, whether there had been impacts on mental health and wellbeing and in what ways, any positive developments over the lockdown period, and to help assess the priorities of individuals, families and communities going forward. Many improvements have been made as a result of the findings of this survey.

5.2 Unpaid Carers

- A number of engagements with carers were undertaken throughout 2021. This included the Carers Covid Engagement work as well as work related to the Dundee Carers strategy 'A Caring Dundee 2'.
- The Dundee Carers Engagement included responses from 116 unpaid carers who completed an online survey, while 41 carers participated in focus group discussions. We learned that:
 - 63% of carers who took part in the engagement also balanced other commitments alongside their caring role;
 - 38% had to reduce employment due caring commitments; and
 - 60% reported negative impacts on their mental, and social wellbeing due to feeling socially isolated and the majority of them felt worried and anxious.

The Dundee Carers Partnership workstreams developed proposals based on the findings from this engagement.

- In addition, Dundee Carers Centre provided one-to-one sessions and held group supports online and by telephone. Dundee Carers Centre developed "Virtual Hubs". Sessions via Facebook Live have also proved highly successful, according to feedback from carers.
- Young carers reported that some of them were feeling socially isolated during the pandemic as they did not have appropriate technologies to connect with the outside world. The Carers Centre responded by redirecting some of the Carers Act Funding (allocated from DH&SCP) towards making sure all young carers known to them had access to an appropriate digital device.
- Dundee Carers Partnership developed A Caring Dundee with ongoing formal and informal involvement of carers and stakeholders over the last few years. The final consultation paper was circulated to over 600 individuals/agencies in Dundee and advertised widely.

5.3 Substance Use

- 'We are With You' developed a weekly recovery group programme which was well attended. Activities hosted include: hill walking with Ancrum Outdoor Centre, cycling, allotment gardening, fitness with Street Soccer and walking with the Keep Well team.

- 100 hygiene packs were handed out to people who access the service and during outreach. These packs consisted of: a reusable purple bag, two reusable face masks, hand sanitiser, 2 in 1 shampoo and conditioner, toothbrushes and toothpaste, a face cloth, a pack of razors, deodorant, hair brush, bar of soap and a lip balm. These packs allowed those facing financial hardship during the pandemic to continue practicing good hygiene.
- The Dundee Non-Fatal Overdose Rapid Response Team was developed, implemented and evaluated. This is a multi-agency virtual team that meets every week-day to discuss all individuals where NFODs has been newly identified and develop a safety plan that will be offered to each individual that has experienced a NFOD.
- A team of assertive outreach workers are linked to this response and aim to contact the individuals within 72 hours of the NFOD. The work of the NFOD Rapid Response team has been evaluated and a working group set up to progress the recommendations.

5.4 Trauma

- Listening to people with lived experience of homelessness highlighted that many who end up in the revolving door of homelessness have experienced some form of Adverse Childhood Experience or significant trauma in their lives that has never been addressed.
- The Trauma Steering Group has broadened its remit to develop and support the implementation of an action plan around organisational change relating to trauma informed leadership and trauma informed practice. Trauma training is being delivered to key employees and the development of a leadership plan around implementing trauma informed practice will be undertaken.

5.5 Protecting People

- On Sexual Exploitation, the Protecting People Team have continued their collaboration with the University of Dundee on PhD research looking at the barriers women face to exiting prostitution.
- The Scottie Centre Project was formed in July 2019 to increase the support locally for women who are involved in commercial sexual exploitation. To effectively help these vulnerable women, whilst balancing community concerns, a focused partnership approach was formed by We Are With You, Maryfield Community Police Team and the Maryfield NHS Keep Well Team. Supported by Vice Versa, The Scottie Centre Project offers women a safe place to drop-in and access a range of supports including substance use, health assessments, benefit and housing advice. They also have access to food and toiletries, sanitary products, condoms and clothes.
- Other responses to sexual exploitation include:
 - Development of a fast track sexual health pathway for vulnerable women.
 - Development of multi-agency guidance for supporting people involved in commercial sexual exploitation (CSE) which was launched in January 2021.
<https://www.dvawp.co.uk/professional/guidance-documents>

5.6 Gendered Based Service Developments

- We have been able to fund a Gendered Services development post, through the CORRA fund. The project aims to work with services to improve their gendered approach and responses to women in the city. The project is working with women with lived experience to shape the project and we now have around eight women with complex needs who regularly engage.

5.7 Care Homes

- During lockdown, employees at Turriff House responded to residents' requests and developed new activities. These included a Chatty Café for residents to have a virtual cafe catch up via video call, a socially distanced fundraising mad March marathon (relay style over a few weeks) including Olympic style torch and employees dressing up "118 style", pen-pal letter writing between residents and St Clement's Primary which led to virtual maths and English classes led

by the residents, washable Christmas decorations and an outdoor Christmas Market which served German sausage, churros and hot chocolate and a 'Strictly' style (singles) dancing competition.

5.8 Discharge from Hospital

- Feedback from engagement at assessments has determined that further improvement in discharge pathways is necessary to maximise the resources available and promote better outcomes for patients. The Home First strategic programme is now underway. This pathway will be focused on community rehabilitation in order to promote independence and has replaced the previous 28 bedded Intermediate Care Unit which was closed in March 2020.

5.9 Community Responses

- During the pandemic, employees became aware of a wide range of challenges being encountered by individuals through their engagement with local people. This engagement occurred over the telephone, in foodbanks, and as evidenced through the findings reported in the Engage Dundee Survey which was completed by over 800 residents. The survey showed that the pandemic was having a profound impact on the mental and physical health and wellbeing of residents, their social connections and sense of security, and the material circumstances of their lives. The Get on Track course was developed by the Community Health Team to help address some of the issues captured as part of this engagement. The course was offered in community centres once restrictions had lifted and used a range of activities to explore topics. The aim was to build the capacity of participants to cope with and address their own needs by working together, supporting one another, learning new skills, and accessing information. Group members could opt to participate in all or selected parts of the course and were able to progress onto the accredited Health Issues in the Community Course if they wished to. Sessions included: Getting to know one another; Looking after yourself; Knowing where to go for support; Making informed health choices; What influences our health and wellbeing?; and, Taking control.
- Other improvements to community response included:
 - The Community Health Team produced an online directory of real-time service changes during lockdown covering public, voluntary and private sector. A telephone support system was developed for Community Learning and Development employees to enable them to support callers struggling to cope by connecting them with a wide range of services.
 - Social Prescribing Link Workers (Sources of Support) moved to telephone/online support and extended their coverage to an additional nine GP practices. This means that all practices in Dundee now have access to link worker support.
 - During the pandemic, Keep Well/Health and Homeless Outreach Team nurses worked in partnership with community workers and third sector organisations at food distribution points where money advice, mental health and wellbeing leaflets and other information was inserted into food bags. The nurses also worked in partnership with the Housing Options service due to the increased demand for temporary accommodation during the pandemic, and accessed funding for wellbeing packs to drop off at people's homes and undertake assessments at the same time.

5.10 Hot Meal Service

- A meal delivery service was established at the start of the pandemic which delivered around 320 hot meals daily until July 2020 to the most vulnerable children and young people who were unable to access or attend Community Support Hubs to collect food supplies. A parent of a one parent family, who experienced severe Covid-19 symptoms and was unable to prepare meals for their young children, said: "I don't know what I would have done without support while I was ill with Covid, the meals provided me and my children with a lifeline when I had no other support in place".

5.11 Community Mental Health Team

- Employees from the Community Mental Health Teams for Older People created the 'Stay at Home, Stay Safe and Have a Cuppy' packs. The packs included seated exercises, seated yoga, word searches, quizzes, colouring pictures and pens, poems, carer stress tips and life story questions. They also contained a coffee sachet, tea bags and a biscuit to encourage people to make time to do something nice in the day.

5.12 Improving access to supports

- Part of the assessment process is to ask clients about their mental health and they are then triaged. Clients identified as high risk and who possibly have suicidal ideation are given priority in being allocated to a counsellor.

5.13 Care at Home

- 746 service users participated in the Care at Home Covid-19 Survey. To make services more joined up with partners in Occupational and Physiotherapy, the service has been working completely in partnership with these other professions. This focuses on undertaking a functional assessment which tests individuals' capabilities to do daily living tasks.

5.14 Reducing health inequalities of young people

- Responding to feedback from young people throughout the pandemic the following improvements have been implemented:
 - The Corner's website was launched in January 2021 and the number of followers on social media platforms (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter) have increased. The most engaged posts included suicide prevention, World Bipolar Day, Stress Awareness Month and our Wellbeing Boxes being delivered to young carers.
 - The number of young people accessing The Corner is also increasing and increased 300% between January 2021 (66) and March 2021 (187).
 - To mark Young Carers Awareness Day, The Corner teamed up with the Dundee Carers Centre to provide every young carer in Dundee with a Wellbeing Box, containing items such as a stress ball, a mindfulness colouring book and leaflets to use if people are feeling upset or anxious, to help them relax and to promote positive mental health and self-care. Dundee Health and Social Care Partnership provided the project with additional funding to provide all young carers living in Dundee with a box.
 - The Corner is now Carer Aware and now has signed up to the Local Carers Charter and worked in collaboration with CAMHS, Dundee Carers - Family Feelings group.
 - The Humanitarian Team is creating content for the 'new Dundonian' tab within The Corner website which includes the Scottish Refugee Council link and the Dundee Resettlement group link which offers support to refugees.
 - A Google translate function has been created and is now available on The Corner website. Information leaflets have also been created and have been adapted for different languages. 45 Health and Wellbeing Boxes were delivered to young refugees, with contents including; pencils, mindfulness colouring books, hug in a mug, aromatherapy fragrance, Lush products, healing crystal, stress balls, bubbles, mints, lip salve, thoughts diary, and positive memes.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

6.1 Council Housing Domestic Abuse Policy

- A new policy was developed to support those affected by domestic abuse in Council housing. Having produced a draft policy, a consultation strategy was developed to ensure that the policy was shared widely amongst key partners, including those with lived experience of domestic abuse, and to give them the chance to feedback their comments and/or suggestions.
- Initially the draft policy was shared along with an online questionnaire for feedback and tele-conferencing was used for briefings. With the easing of lockdown, a focus group of those with

lived experience of domestic abuse was able to meet and discuss the policy and were then able to complete the online questionnaire individually. Feedback proved invaluable in the final preparation of the policy, which has been revised and amended to reflect the input received.

6.2 Sheltered Housing

- The sheltered service had to adapt to safeguard employees and tenants. This included the closure of all complexes to the tenants and general public.
- During first phase of lockdown, the service carried out a telephone survey of as many sheltered tenants as possible to see how they coped, how well the service supported tenants and what we could do differently to deliver an effective, tailored support service. 98.4% of sheltered tenants were contacted.
- To help understand what tenants thought about complexes potentially reopening, the service contacted tenants by telephone and using the intercom systems. 843 responses were collated. Tenants were asked if they planned to use the complexes once they safely reopened. 68.5% answered yes and 31.5% answered no. Tenants were also asked if they had any concerns about safety and wellbeing regarding reopening and 19.9% answered yes and 80.1% said no.
- After the survey, the service worked in collaboration with colleagues from Health & Safety to help create safe environments and working systems to begin to allow tenants back into the complexes for activities. Furniture in lounges was set up to adhere to social distancing, sanitising stations were set up and cleaning regimes were implemented to ensure strict infection control was carried out. Complex kitchens remained out of use for tenants.
- From 1 September 2021, activities in the lounges resumed where tenants pre-booked to attend activities that took place at set times/days. Tenants were consulted by letter about the controlled reopening of lounges for activities. The letter informed tenants of the safety measures in place and encouraged them to give feedback on the phased reopening. The planned activities remained under monitor and review so that the service could gauge how well the phased reopening was going. After the first 4 weeks of monitoring, tenants said they were pleased to be able to use the complex again, albeit in a controlled way, and were glad to have the opportunity of mixing with neighbours and friends.
- A lot of tenants mentioned that they would like to be able to enjoy a cup of tea/coffee when attending activities. In light of this feedback, further collaborative work was done with Health and Safety to see how the service could safely provide refreshments for tenants attending activities. It was decided the safest way to do this was to provide disposable cups, stirrers, individual sachets of coffee, sugar, tea and portions of milk. This prevented cross contamination and items were disposed of immediately after use. Feedback from tenants was positive as they were able to enjoy refreshments while attending activities.
- Due to the emergence of the Omicron variant in December 2021, complexes were once again closed and the phased reopening of complexes is currently under review. Tenants were advised of the closure and we will continue to seek their feedback when complexes reopen. We are consistently informing and listening to our tenants as we take small steps towards easing safety measures whilst keeping the focus on safety for all.

6.3 Rent Consultation 2022-2023

- The Council strives to provide a continually high standard of service by consulting and engaging with tenants on decisions which involve them, such as the Annual Rent Consultation. A level of compromise in strategy and approach was necessary again this year to ensure customers had sufficient opportunity and methods to get involved and have their say while observing Covid-19 restrictions. Consultation with tenants on budget proposals, rent levels and other housing charges was carried out through:
 - telephone surveying, either directly or when tenants contact the Council.
 - information displayed on the Dundee City Council website.
 - targeted use of relevant social media platforms.

- information displays in those offices that were open to public and in communal areas of other buildings eg multi-storey developments.
 - postcard delivery to tenants in multi-properties and ballot boxes provided for them to participate in the consultation.
 - leaflets with details on how to get involved being issued to tenants at housing interviews, by post and by Council tradesmen who were carrying out repairs in their homes.
 - publication of updated guidance (HRA Methodology) for tenants to understand what their rent pays for.
 - continued collaboration with Dundee Federation of Tenants' Association and Registered Tenants' Organisations.
- The rent consultation was held between October and December. The total number of tenants who participated this year was 2,171. This equates to 17% of the housing stock and represents stability given last year was also 17%. This can be considered extremely positive, considering the challenges over the last couple of years. The continued high participation rate reflects the effective teamwork across Neighbourhood Services, other Council service areas and from both the Dundee Federation of Tenant Associations and other Registered Tenant Organisations.

6.4 **Scottish Housing Day**

- Scottish Housing Day, in September 2021, aimed to raise awareness of challenges and successes in the housing sector and raise people's awareness of their housing options. This year the focus was on housing and the climate emergency. Private and social landlords, tenants and residents' organisations, developers, third sector organisations, advice agencies and individuals were encouraged to show their support by organising online events, Q&A sessions, sharing stories and blogs through a dedicated social media hashtag: #ScottishHousingDay. There were seminars and talks arranged by the Chartered Institute of Housing, which could be accessed via their website and signposted from dedicated Council web pages.
- The event narrative was distributed across all Council social media portals and promoted via DFTA and Registered Tenant Organisations, with web links #tags and QR codes for customers to connect and interact with the event via whichever medium they had access to. Included were a series of articles written in recognition of the Climate Emergency whilst promoting the steps being taken by Dundee to mitigate its effects and work towards a net zero carbon culture.

6.5 **Working with Environment/Horticultural Groups**

- Dundee's environmental/horticultural groups find it beneficial to share best practice, highlight their work, and be made aware of initiatives and funding opportunities. The Take Pride in Your City monthly bulletin continues to highlight Dundee's projects and encourage participation. In addition, it features relevant articles and links which may benefit developing community environmental projects. Groups have also been encouraged to attend national networking events.
- Environment employees and Bonnie Dundee group volunteers met following feedback from the group, who felt there was a disconnect between the parties in taking forward Dundee's 2021 Beautiful Scotland entry. Areas of concern were resolved and a plan agreed going forward. Subsequent feedback highlighted the group found this meeting very beneficial and the Council's efforts to support their work and prepare for Beautiful Scotland judging were appreciated.
- Due to the pandemic, the 2021 Dundee Flower and Food Festival was held as a virtual online event. This allowed participation from a range of groups and organisations usually involved in the festival and provided positive opportunities for public participation and for environmental/horticultural groups to highlight their activities.
- Environmental/horticultural groups were asked for feedback on their partnership with the Council. Feedback was largely positive, in particular having good links with a named Council officer. Areas for improvement were put forward, and will be considered to improve this aspect of our service. For example, a school garden representative reported issues with acquiring

Discovery Compost for their project. This was promptly dealt with by providing them with the relevant contact details for future requests and the volunteer was happy with this outcome.

- Community and Friends of Parks are included in the Green Flag Award and Internal Quality Audit process where relevant. This provides opportunities for the Council and these groups to identify improvements, consider how working relationships can be developed and fostered and acts as a vehicle for each party to provide feedback.
- The Countryside Rangers continue to enable practical volunteer work in Dundee's parks and greenspaces by supporting existing volunteer groups, such as Friends of Parks, and responding to requests for volunteering opportunities, for instance from organisations implementing their Corporate and Social Responsibility policies. Bespoke outdoor learning opportunities are also developed in response from schools.

6.6 **Biodiversity**

- In late 2020, the Environment Service led a consultation on developing biodiversity grasslands/naturalised grasslands in 27 of Dundee's parks and greenspaces. Whilst the responses were overwhelmingly positive, officers have continued to engage with communities and have refined proposals to take account of local circumstances.