

Date: 12th January 2021
Enquiries to: Phil Quickenden
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Key Partners of Suffolk Social Care

Dear Colleagues,

RE: High levels of Demand in Customer First

I am writing to you to advise of some particular challenges currently faced in Customer First which are impacting on our ability to provide the level of service we would aim achieve. Customer First handle over 200,000 contacts a year in the form of telephone calls, emails, webchat and electronic referrals through our social care portals.

At the current time we are seeing steady increases in demand as we approach move into the busy winter period, which coupled with the additional challenges to our efficiency presented by the Covid-19 pandemic, staff training and sickness, has meant some operational staff have faced significant waiting times if choosing to contact us by telephone.

We are currently in the process of redeploying some resource into the contact centre, however partners can assist us in meeting these challenges by making use of our online referral portal when contacting Adult Social Care. Using our portals is more efficient for your staff and avoids time being lost simply waiting on the phone. Customer First ask for the same set of information during a call as the portal requires, so it is in practitioners' best interests to submit this electronically.

We would ask that our portal is the first port of call for any referral, except where there is an immediate urgency, in which case we ask that partners are patient with us as we handle calls as quickly as possible. Information on how to use the social care portal, along with instructional videos can be accessed at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/care-and-support-for-adults/how-social-care-can-help/suffolk-adult-care-portal/>

I thank you again for your patience and support in these challenging times.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Sue Cook".

Sue Cook
Executive Director, People Services