

Briefing: Finance Committee visit to Kilkeel Banking Hub

Event: Finance Committee Visit to Kilkeel Banking Hub

Date: Wednesday 2 April 2025, 12.30pm - 1pm

Location: 6-8 Newry Street, Kilkeel, BT34 4DN

Meeting background

Cash Access UK is delighted to welcome the Finance Committee to visit the Kilkeel banking hub to show members of the committee the hub and the services and benefits it offers to the local community.

Attendance

Lesley Wilson, Regional Manager, Cash Access UK

Banking Hub Operators: Heather and Eamy Dorran

The banks in attendance:

Ulster Bank:

Terry Robb – Regional Director
Sean McDonnell – Branch Manager
Noeleen Cotter – Community Banker

AIB:

Community Banker
Lynn Leatham – Head of NI Branches

Barclays:

Daniel Wallace, Deputy Customer Care
Director for N.I

Bank of Ireland:

Gillian Orr, Corporate Affairs Manager
UK
Community Banker

Background information

- Cash Access UK, the organization set up to protect access to cash across the UK, opened the Kilkeel banking hub in November 2023, the first hub to open in Northern Ireland. On average, over 50 people use the hub every day and feedback is very positive, especially around convenience and friendly service.
- There are now 7 banking hubs open in Northern Ireland, with a new hub recently recommended for Larne.
- There are 144 banking hubs open across the UK, with 224 recommended in total.
- There are also 113 operational deposit services, with 146 recommended.

- Cash Access UK is a not-for-profit company owned and funded by major banks. Our work is part of a new, collective approach to protecting access to cash. We provide shared services in communities where they are needed most.
- **What is a banking hub?**
 - A banking hub is a shared banking space on the high street.
 - Hubs offer a counter service operated by the Post Office, where customers of all major banks and building societies can carry out regular cash transactions, Monday to Friday.
 - The hubs also offer a community banker service where customers can talk to their own bank about more complicated banking issues.
 - The community bankers work on rotation, with a different bank available on each day of the week. Community bankers are usually provided by the banks with the most customers in the local area. In Kilkeel the community banker schedule is:
 - Monday – Barclays
 - Tuesday – Ulster Bank
 - Wednesday – AIB NI (am), Santander (pm)
 - Thursday – Bank of Ireland
 - Friday – Danske Bank
- **Why are banking hubs needed?**
 - Cash is still important to millions of people in the UK. Between 5 and 6 million adults say they rely on cash in their day-to-day lives.
 - Digital or online solutions don't yet work for everyone all the time. We've found that banking hubs can make a real difference to individuals, small businesses and the communities they live in.
 - Cash Access UK has undertaken research to understand how the opening of the banking hubs have improved local high streets and benefited communities and businesses:
 - Focusing on Brixham (Devon) and Rochford (Essex), two of the earliest hubs to open, the feedback is overwhelmingly positive
 - 3 in 10 people say they visit and spend more on the local high street because of the hub

- Almost half (47%) of businesses surveyed said they have experienced an increase in footfall thanks to the banking hub. This is despite the fact that, UK wide, weekday footfall has fallen 18% compared with pre-Covid levels
- Banking hubs also receive exceptional customer satisfaction, and 90% of users consider them essential to their communities.
- LINK, the UK's cash machine network, decides where new services are needed. LINK is an independent, regulated company with many years' experience in assessing communities' cash needs. LINK reviews the impact of every proposed branch closure. A community can also ask to LINK to carry out an assessment of the community if they feel they need better access to cash.
- When a banking hub is recommended by LINK as a result of the last bank in town closing, the banking hub will be ready before that last bank closes. Where a banking hub is recommended as a result of a community request, a hub will be delivered within three months – this will initially be a temporary banking hub, while plans for a permanent hub progress.
- Cash Access UK is planning a communications campaign in Northern Ireland to help people better understand the services banking hubs provide to individuals and businesses.

Open hubs in Northern Ireland – usage

Hub	Kilkeel	Warrenpoint	Portrush	Comber	Newcastle	Ballynahinch
Open date	Nov 23	Sep 24	Sep 24	Temp Dec 24, perm Feb 2025	Nov 24	Mar 25
Av. Daily Run Rate Feb 25 (no. customer transactions)	54	94	33	43	49	No data available