



Date	10 January 2023
Agenda Item	17

Report to West Lothian Integration Joint Board

Report Title: Chief Social Work Officer's Annual Report 2021-2022

Report By: Chief Social Work Officer

Summary of Report and Implications	
Purpose	This report: (tick any that apply).
	- seeks a decision <input type="checkbox"/>
	- is to provide assurance <input type="checkbox"/>
	- is for information <input type="checkbox"/>
	- is for discussion <input type="checkbox"/>
	This report provides the Integration Joint Board with the opportunity to note the contents of the Chief Social Work Officer's annual report. This report provides an overview of the statutory work undertaken during the period 2021 -2022.
Recommendations	<p>It is recommended that the Board:</p> <p>note the contents of the Chief Social Work Officer's annual report for 2021 - 2022;</p> <p>note that the report was presented to West Lothian Council on 22 November 2022;</p> <p>note that the report has been submitted to the Scottish Government Chief Social Work Advisor</p>

Directions to NHS Lothian and/or West Lothian Council	A direction is not required.
Resource/ Finance/ Staffing	None
Policy/Legal	No new implications; Equality Impact Assessments will be applied to specific commitments where appropriate.
Risk	No new risks have been identified
Equality, Health Inequalities, Environmental and Sustainability Issues	The report has been assessed as having little or no relevance with regard to equality or the Public Sector Equality Duty. As a result, an equality impact assessment has not been conducted.
Strategic Planning and Commissioning	The services covered by the report contribute to the delivery of the Strategic Plan Outcomes.
Locality Planning	The services covered by the report contribute to the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan.
Engagement	The report has been considered at the meeting of West Lothian Council on 22 November 2022.

Terms of Report	
1.	Background
1.2	The legislation governing the delivery of Social Work Services requires the Chief Social Work Officer to exercise a general level of oversight.
1.3	The Scottish Government published national guidance for local authorities on the appointment and responsibilities of Chief Social Work Officers, including related reporting arrangements. The arrangements in West Lothian are consistent with this guidance.
2.	Service Overview
2.1	The role of Social Work Services is to support, care for and protect people of all ages, by providing or purchasing services designed to promote their safety, dignity and independence, and to contribute to community safety by reducing offending and managing the risk posed by known offenders.

2.2 Services are delivered within a framework of statutory duties and powers imposed on the Council. Services are required to meet national standards and to provide best value. Where possible, services are delivered in partnership with a range of stakeholders, including, most importantly, people who use them.

3. Chief Social Work Officer Duties

3.1 The role of the Chief Social Work Officer is to provide professional governance, leadership and accountability for the delivery of social work and social care services, whether these be provided by the local authority or purchased from the voluntary or private sectors.

3.2 In addition, there is a small number of duties and decisions that relate primarily to the curtailment of individual freedom and the protection of both individuals and the public, which must be made either by the Chief Social Work Officer or by a professionally qualified social worker to whom responsibility has been appropriately delegated.

3.3 The Council's scheme of delegation provides for senior social work staff to make certain decisions on behalf of the local authority in the following areas:

- Adults with incapacity;
- Mental health;
- Adoption
- Secure accommodation and emergency placement of children.
- Protection and Risk Management:

- Child Protection
 - Adult Protection
 - MAPPA

4. Chief Social Work Officer Report

4.1 The Chief Social Work Officer Report provides an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Chief Social Work Officer and outlines the governance arrangements that are in place in West Lothian. The report highlights Council's statutory duties, the decisions that are delegated to the Chief Social Work Officer and gives a summary of service performance.

5. Conclusion

5.1 2021/22 has been another challenging year for social work and social care services in West Lothian. The service has continued to manage the changing impact of the Pandemic, manage the demands resulting from this, return to more usual ways of working, continue to focus on service developments, make improvements to practice and address pandemic related performance dips.

5.2 Looking forward the role of the Chief Social Work Officer will be significant in ensuring that there is stability across the profession and a continued focus on critical priorities whilst the direction of the future in terms of the National Care Service is decided upon and implemented. It will be important to mitigate against risks presented by uncertainty as the detail of the most significant changes to the professions of social work and social care is awaited.

Appendices	Appendix 1: Chief Social Work Officer's Report 2021/2022
References	N/A
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Chief Social Work Officer Annual Report

01/04/21 – 31/03/22

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Chief Social Work Officer's Introduction

The annual Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) report provides an overview of social work services in West Lothian over the period 2021/22.

The years 2020/21 and 2021/22 have presented the most challenging circumstances for social work and social care as a result of the Covid-19 global pandemic and its impact on individuals, communities and services. These impacts overlay existing pre-pandemic pressures.

The Health and Social Care Partnership has continued to manage high levels of risk in relation to shortages of critical resources and this has been most marked in the provision of care at home support. Significant work has continued over the year to mitigate and manage this area of high risk. Workforce challenges and the impact of them have been a key feature of the year and actions are ongoing over a number of fronts to impact on this.

Although there have been pandemic related challenges to delivering transformational change, the service has delivered programmes of change working in partnership to meet the needs of service users. These have been developed or delivered within the context of financial constraints and some clearly linked to the delivery of agreed savings measures. Commitment to ongoing improvement remains a key priority alongside delivering on strategic priorities set out by the Community Planning Partnership, Council and the West Lothian IJB with the backdrop of ambitious and stretching national strategic programmes of transformation.

Services have also responded again at pace and with flexibility to some of the new demands that have emerged over the end of the reporting year and into the new year and this includes responses and support provision for Ukrainian citizens who have come to West Lothian in response to the situation within their homeland.

During this reporting period, a consultation on the proposed National Care Service for Scotland has been launched. The detail has been considered by social workers and social care staff at all levels across all services. The focus on improving the experiences of users of services and carers and recognition of the need for significant investment to achieve this is welcomed. The proposals, due to their significance in terms of potential future change and the lack of detail on key areas, bring uncertainty in relation to future structures, employment arrangements, governance and accountability.

Despite these complexities and uncertainties, the social work and social care workforce in West Lothian during the year has again shown leadership, resilience and creativity as they have worked hard to provide services, to further develop positive practice and approaches aimed to improve outcomes and experiences for all ages.

1. Governance and Accountability

1.1 Overview of governance arrangements

Social Policy encompasses a wide range of social work services planned and delivered for a large number of people with a spectrum of differing needs. Together with health services managed locally, it is part of the council's Health and Social Care Partnership Directorate.

The Directorate is headed by the council's Depute Chief Executive who is also the Chief Officer of the Integration Joint Board and is accountable to the Chief Executives of the council and NHS Lothian. The Chief Social Work Officer, in the dual role of Head of Social Policy, and the Head of Health Services report to the Depute Chief Executive. Four senior managers

reporting to the Head of Social Policy have responsibility for defined aspects of Social Policy services: Adults services, Older People services, Children and Families /Inclusion and Support Service and Justice Services including some aspects of children's services. Mental Health and Addictions Services are managed under integrated management arrangements reporting to the Head of Health with links to the CSWO.

The Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) is focused on the delivery of integrated health and care services that will improve the wellbeing, safety and quality of life for people living in West Lothian, particularly those most at risk in society. Social Policy contributes to the aims of the HSCP. Those include, delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years; improving the quality of life for older people; minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality, reducing crime and improving community safety and delivering positive outcomes on health.

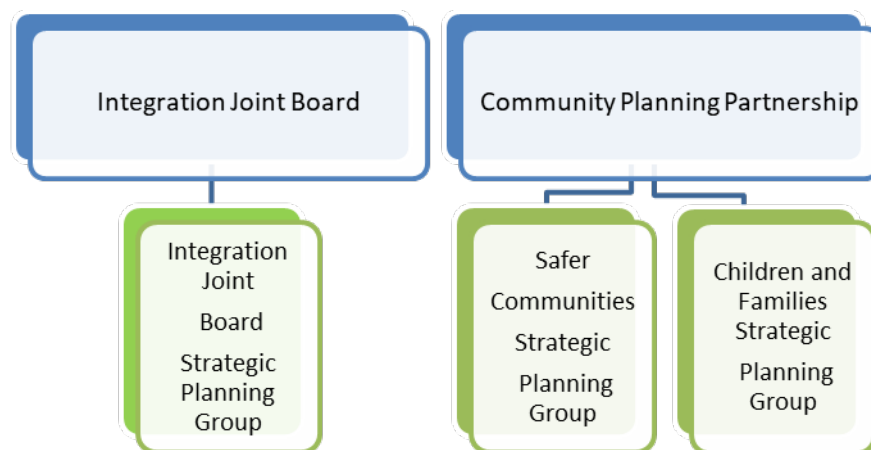
The service contributes with key partners to a number of strategic plans including:

- The Council's Corporate Plan
- The Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan and its Engagement Strategy
- The Children's Services Plan
- The Community Justice Plan
- The Plans agreed by all West Lothian Public Protection Committees
- The Council's Transformation Programme and Digital Transformation Strategy
- Joint Commissioning Plans

Partnership

Social Policy has a key role to play in the wider Community Planning system. The service contributes to partnership working in three key strategic planning partnerships: The Integration Joint Board and its Strategic Planning Group; the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group; and the Safer Communities Strategic Planning Group.

Figure 1 – Strategic Planning Structure



West Lothian Integration Joint Board

The Integration Joint Board (IJB) is a separate statutory body responsible for carrying out health and social care functions delegated by the council and the health board. The delegated functions are set out in the West Lothian Integration Scheme, a statutory agreement between

council and health board and approved by the Scottish Ministers. The Scheme of Integration has been reviewed during this reporting period and no changes made to the functions delegated to the IJB. The IJB sets the strategic direction and priorities for those functions and issues statutory directions to council and health board for their delivery. The delegated functions cover all Social Policy services for adults and older people, domestic abuse and health improvement functions.

The IJB approved its Strategic Plan for the period 2019-23 in April 2019 and also approved a planning structure to support the achievement of the strategic priorities. The plan details how high-level outcomes are to be achieved through a process of strategic commissioning plans.

West Lothian Integration Joint Board Strategic Planning Group

The West Lothian Integration Joint Board Strategic Planning Group (IJB SPG) has a significant statutory role in the IJB's delivery against National Health and Wellbeing Outcomes and in accordance with the Integration Delivery Principles. It is responsible for the following:

- Developing the IJB's Strategic Plan and Strategic Commissioning Priorities
- Developing and overseeing the related three-year Action Plan
- Localities-based activity
- Monitoring performance against national outcomes and locally agreed outputs
- Reviewing the Strategic Plan and the three-year action plan
- Providing input to the IJB in responding to emerging policy and regulations
- Linking with staff on service changes and organisational development

West Lothian Integration Joint Board - Health and Care Governance Group

The Health and Care Governance Group (IJB HCGG) and Care Governance Framework was established in 2017 and it was reviewed and revised in June 2019. It aims to provide assurance to the IJB on quality of care, planning and delivery of services and maintenance of professional standards and regulation of staff. It builds on existing duties, systems and processes already in place in the council and health board for the proactive promotion of safe, high quality, integrated care. It sets out explicit local lines of accountability across health and social care, with clear paths of escalation where evidence of risk is beginning to rise. An action plan has been put in place to further develop the processes required to give that assurance. It focuses on providing transparency and maintaining a culture which supports the safe and effective delivery of care.

West Lothian Children and Families Strategic Planning Group

The West Lothian Children and Families Strategic Planning Group (C&F SPG) is part of the West Lothian Community Planning structure. It can therefore draw on partnership working with community planning partners. It oversees the development of Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) across West Lothian and has responsibility for the duties in the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, including the development of a joint Children's Services Plan and Corporate Parenting Plan. It is responsible for the statutory duty to report on progress on the seven priorities in the West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 which are:

- Corporate Parenting
- Child Protection
- Raise achievement and attainment
- Promote health and wellbeing
- Reduce offending behaviour in children and young people
- Reduce substance misuse
- Promote children's rights

The plan reflects the commitment to providing services that are holistic and developed with families themselves and partner agencies; that tackle inequalities, and focus on improved outcomes for children through early intervention and protection services when these are necessary.

Community Justice

Since April 2017, statutory Community Planning Partnership arrangements have ensured oversight of the Community Justice Partnership Service delivering Community Safety and of compliance with multi-agency Justice and Youth Justice arrangements. It does so through the Community Justice Strategy 2018/23 and its supporting West Lothian Community Justice Strategic Plan 2019-2024.

The vision in the plan is to make communities safer and more resilient and to support people with criminal convictions to change their behaviour and become valued citizens. The plan sets out a clear commitment to effective partnership. Its principles cover utilising all available resources from the public, private and third sectors, individuals, groups and communities. The principles also cover working closely with individuals and communities to better understand their needs, making best use of talents and resources, supporting self-reliance and building resilience. It emphasises the need for early intervention and prevention approaches.

Public Protection

There are four dedicated public protection committees reporting to the West Lothian Chief Officer Group (COG) and providing leadership across Adult Support and Protection, Child Protection, Gender Based Violence and Offender Management (MAPPA). The committees ensure that staff have up to date policies, procedures, guidance and training to ensure that they are equipped to work in partnership to protect those at risk of abuse and harm. They are also responsible for quality assurance and making sure that members of the public have access to relevant information and know who to contact if they have any concerns that a child or adult may be at risk of harm.

The West Lothian Alcohol and Drug Partnership (WLADP) also reports to the COG and their key responsibilities are to minimise alcohol and drug related harm and usage in West Lothian and improve the lives of those in West Lothian harmed by substance misuse with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

Figure 2 – Public Protection



The Chief Officers' Group oversees the work of the Public Protection Committees and the WLADP. The COG comprises Chief Officers from Council, Health Board and Police Scotland. The CSWO is a member. The COG is responsible for ensuring that all agencies, individually and collectively, work collaboratively to protect the children, young people and vulnerable adults of West Lothian. Strong connections remain across the areas ensuring a holistic and joined up public protection approach.

1.2 The Role of the Chief Social Work Officer

Overview

The Chief Social Work Officer (CSWO) in West Lothian is responsible for monitoring all social work and social care service activity across the council and within any integrated arrangements.

The CSWO is by law a non-voting member of the IJB. The CSWO also has a defined role in professional and clinical and care leadership and has a key role to play in the IJB's Health and Care Governance systems, currently chairing the Health and Care Governance Group.

From the commencement of the local clinical and care oversight group arrangements for care homes, the CSWO has contributed on a daily and now twice weekly basis to the collective oversight of the position of each West Lothian care home in terms of infection control arrangements, staffing capacity and resident health and wellbeing. This commitment has enabled the CSWO to be fully sighted on the impact of COVID 19 on the care home sector and contribute to the support and assurance activity provided by the Health and Social Care Partnership. The CSWO has reported through governance structures on a regular basis on the work of the oversight group and requirement to use any of the intervention powers introduced by the Coronavirus (Scotland) (No 2) Act 2020. None of the powers in relation to interventions concerning care provisions have been applied within West Lothian.

The CSWO is a member of a number of significant decision-making teams and groups, both within the council and in multi-agency settings. These include internal senior corporate and service management meetings; attendance at council, committee and panel meetings; meetings of the IJB and its committees and groups; strategic planning groups and scrutiny and oversight meetings such as the Protection of Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Referral Panel, the Child Protection and Adult Protection Committees and the Edinburgh, Lothian and Scottish Borders Strategic Oversight Group. The CSWO is Chair of the West Lothian CPC, the Health and Care Governance Group and interim Chair of the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group.

There are a range of other roles undertaken by the CSWO and these include:

- Significant case reviews: signing off all significant case review reports across Social Policy and chairing the Child Protection Committee and its Learning Review sub-committee
- External audits and inspections: leading on all social work-related audits and inspections and liaising with inspecting agencies
- Human resources: ensuring 'Safer Recruitment' practices within the council including involvement in all instances where referral of a staff member is being considered to the Scottish Social Services Council (professional standards and conduct), the Central Barring Unit (protection of vulnerable groups legislation), or the Disqualified from Working with Children List

Planned Reports: Statutory Decision Making

The CSWO must monitor the statutory decision-making aspects of the remit which have been delegated on a day-to-day basis to managers across the council. This is achieved by regular summaries of activity. The main areas for monitoring are listed below. There are some other less frequent statutory decisions which are delegated and discussed with relevant managers to ensure oversight.

- Complaints: receiving regular reports on social work complaints, complaint outcomes, the actions taken forward and any learning to be applied. In addition, the CSWO is sighted on any local Scottish Public Services Ombudsman decisions and disseminates decisions involving other authorities for learning
- Secure accommodation authorisations: convening a Secure Care Panel where secure care is being considered for a child to review and consider all of the information presented. This supports the CSWO to decide if the legal test has been satisfied and if secure care best meets the child's needs. Regular reviews are carried out to ensure both that the legal test for continued secure care is still met and that the child's needs are met through secure care
- Emergency movement of children subject to a supervision requirement: receiving and scrutinising a quarterly summarised report
- Adoption and fostering: overseeing decisions made through authority delegated to senior managers
- Mental Health Officer decisions: overseeing decisions made through authority delegated to senior managers by receiving quarterly reports
- Adults with Incapacity Act decisions: scrutinising quarterly reports summarising decisions made
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA): receiving quarterly reports in relation to all high and very high-risk offenders and attending MAPPA Level 3 case conferences

Critical Incident Reporting

Critical Incident Reports ensure the CSWO can advise and support staff and determine if additional measures need to be put in place and whether other agencies need to be informed.

- The CSWO must be informed at the earliest possible time of the death of, or serious harm, to a child looked after by the council or a young person who has experienced care; on the Child Protection Register; receiving a service from the council; or referred for a service. This will take the form of a written report detailing the facts of the incident and the actions put in place.
- The CSWO must be informed of the death of, or serious harm, to an adult subject to a statutory order under the mental health legislation; in residential or supported accommodation, whether provided or purchased by the council; receiving a service; or referred for a service, but awaiting allocation. This will take the form of a report detailing the facts of the incident and the actions put in place.
- The CSWO must be informed of any very high-risk offenders defaulting from their risk management plans. Critical incidents where the case is likely to be high profile, attract media interest or likely to represent a risk to West Lothian Council and cases that meet the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) Level 3 category where the CSWO would be involved.
- The CSWO must be informed of any potentially adverse media attention to social work services.

- The CSWO must be informed of serious adverse staffing matters, such as the suspension of a member of staff, which may attract media interest or where the continued running of a service is under threat.

Corporate Governance

In West Lothian, it is recognised that good governance is not merely an auditing requirement; it is crucial for effective public services and achieving the social outcomes which are the council's objective. The council has adopted the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting (CIPFA)/Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) Framework. It has developed a Code of Corporate Governance in which each principle has a number of specific requirements which have to be met for the council to show that it complies with the code, and for each of those requirements, a responsible officer in the council has been identified.

The statutory CSWO role is currently combined with the management position of Head of Social Policy. The combined role is described in the council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers.

The CSWO is required to report annually to the council and the arrangements set out here will form the basis of the content of the annual report. The CSWO also reports annually to the IJB. Statute guarantees the right of the CSWO to have access in the council to senior managers and elected members and to report to them whenever required. Similar provision has been made in the IJB's Standing Orders. The council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers ensures the independence of the CSWO and CSWO decisions form senior management control in relation to the statutory functions in the CSWO remit.

2. Service Quality and Performance

2.1 Service Performance

Performance during the year is monitored and reported using the council's performance management system, Pentana. The Social Policy Management Plan outlines how services contribute to delivering these outcomes. The Management Plan is reported to the relevant Policy Development Scrutiny Panels. There is alignment between Management Plans, Activity Budgets and services, providing a link between resources, performance targets and outcomes.

The following information is an extract from the Social Policy Management Plan for 2022/23 and provides an overview of key activities, outcomes and resources required to deliver these over the period. Social Policy makes a meaningful and measurable contribution to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan 2018/23 and other key strategic plans previously listed as detailed in the following tables:

Alignment with Corporate Priorities / Enablers						
Council priority / enabler	Deliverable	Social Policy key activities / processes	Indicator(s)	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 Target
2 Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years	(P2.1) Providing sustainable models of parenting support work within home, community and education settings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Inclusion and Support Service.■ Family Placement Team■ Families Together■ Child Care and Protection Teams■ Residential Houses	SPCF096_9b Balance of Care for Looked After Children: Percentage of Children being Looked After in the Community	93%	91%	93%

Alignment with Corporate Priorities / Enablers

Council priority / enabler	Deliverable	Social Policy key activities / processes	Indicator(s)	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 Target
2 Delivering positive outcomes and early interventions for early years	(P2.2) Providing support for vulnerable children and young people to achieve sustainable positive outcomes and destinations in line with priorities in the West Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Care and Protection Teams Child Disability Service Reviewing Officers Team Domestic and Sexual Assault Team Social Care Emergency Team Residential Houses Inclusion and Aftercare Service 	P:SPCF138_9b.1c Percentage of children involved with the Families Together service who have avoided becoming accommodated who were assessed as being at high risk of being accommodated.	90%	80%	85%
3 Minimising poverty, the cycle of deprivation and promoting equality	(P3.6) Contributes to providing a route out of poverty through work and continuing to support those further from the labour market to progress towards work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Families Together Aftercare Service Inclusion and Support Service Youth Justice Team Community Payback Team Support to adults with physical disabilities, learning disabilities and mental health issues Domestic and Sexual Assault Team Community Addictions Services West Lothian 	SPCF127_9b.1c Percentage of young people eligible for Aftercare identified as homeless as at 31st July	2%	2%	2%
4 Improving the quality of life for older people	(P4.1) Through the delivery of the Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan, older people are able to live independently in the community with an improved quality of life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment and Care Management Services (including Self Directed Support and compliance with the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016) Facilitating Hospital Discharge Care Homes Housing with Care Day care and personalised support 	P:SPCC017_6a.7 Percentage of customers who rated overall satisfaction with the Older People's service they received as good or excellent.	98%	88%	100%

Alignment with Corporate Priorities / Enablers

Council priority / enabler	Deliverable	Social Policy key activities / processes	Indicator(s)	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 Target
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care at Home and specialist provision 	SW03a Percentage of People Aged 65+ with long-term care needs who are receiving personal care at home	64%	62.74%* ¹	66%
4 Improving the quality of life for older people	(P4.3) Redesigning services for older people with a focus on supporting those most in need and maximising the use of technology enabled care where appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Home Safety Service and further development of Telecare Services Reablement and Crisis Care Services Occupational Therapy Service Home Safety and Technology Enabled Care programme 	CP:SPCC100_9b.2a The number of people aged 75+ supported by technology to remain at home	2,775	2,294	2,993
4 Improving the quality of life for older people	(P4.4) Developing a more sustainable service delivery model targeted to those most in need with an increased emphasis on reablement to retain or regain independence within their home or community setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of Home Safety Service and further development of Telecare Services Reablement and Crisis Care Services Occupational Therapy Service Home Safety and Technology Enabled Care programme 	CP:SPCC014_6b.5 Percentage of Occupational Therapy assessments allocated within 6 weeks of referral. P:SPCC024_9a.1a Net cost per head of population of services for older people.	70%	52%	70%
				£1,423	£1,513	£1,423

¹ * data is for the period 2020/21

Alignment with Corporate Priorities / Enablers

Council priority / enabler	Deliverable	Social Policy key activities / processes	Indicator(s)	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 Target
4 Improving the quality of life for older people	(P4.5) As part of the delivery of the Integration Joint Board Commissioning Plan for Older People, the council will focus on:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment and Care Management services for older people ■ Reablement and Crisis Care ■ Short Breaks/Respite and Day Care ■ Housing with Care 	CP:SPCC101_9b.2 The number of carers of older people who have an adult carer support plan.	175	186	200
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Improving dementia care, with particular emphasis on improving post-diagnostic support; b) Expanding use of technology-enabled care to support older people and carers of older people; c) Supporting older people to live at home or in a homely setting for longer; d) Ensuring specialist mental health provision for the over 65's; e) Ensuring support needs of carers are met, particularly carers of those with dementia; f) Developing single points of information for all older peoples' service provision. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Redesign of Post Diagnostic Support Service ■ Provision of Home Safety Services and development of Telecare 	CP:SPCC019_9b.1a Average number per month of West Lothian patients whose discharge from hospital is delayed	10	27	10

Alignment with Corporate Priorities / Enablers

Council priority / enabler	Deliverable	Social Policy key activities / processes	Indicator(s)	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 Target
6 Delivering positive outcomes on health	(P6.1) The development of more targeted care at home, the use of assistive technology and provision of reablement will positively contribute to improved outcomes for people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Reablement and Crisis Care ■ Home Safety Service and Development of Technology 	P:SPCC015_9b.2a Number of households receiving telecare.	4,000	3,632	4,000
6 Delivering positive outcomes on health	(P6.2) Through the delivery of the Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan, increase well-being and reduce health inequalities across all communities in West Lothian. Locality planning will provide a key mechanism for strong local, clinical, professional and community leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Assessment and Care Management ■ Improve % of Personalised Care Options ■ Develop Core and Cluster Housing Models ■ Access to Employment ■ Community Addictions Services West Lothian 	SOA1307_19 Premature mortality rate (European Age Standardised Rate per 100,000 population <75)	411	438 ²	411
6 Delivering positive outcomes on health	(P6.3) Improving our approach to integrated models for mental health services for children, young people and adults recognising the importance of mental health and wellbeing on people achieving positive outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Acute Care and Support Team ■ Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service ■ Older People Acute Care Team ■ Post Diagnostic Support (Dementia) ■ Development of Core and Cluster ■ Domestic and Sexual Assault Team ■ Criminal and Youth Justice Service 	SPCJ124_9b Percentage of women with mental health issues receiving Almond Project support who report improvement in mental health and wellbeing.	100%	100%	97%

² * data is for the period 2020/21

Alignment with Corporate Priorities / Enablers

Council priority / enabler	Deliverable	Social Policy key activities / processes	Indicator(s)	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 Target
6 Delivering positive outcomes on health	(P6.4) Improving support to carers over the next five years through improved identification of carers, assessment, information and advice, health and well-being, carer support, participation and partnership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support to adults with physical disability and mental health issues Assessment and Care Management Carer Assessment and development of Carer Support Plans 	CP:SPCC101_9b.2 The number of carers of older people who have an adult carer support plan.	175	186	200
			SOA1306_17 Percentage of carers who feel supported in their care role	46%	25%	46%
6 Delivering positive outcomes on health	(P6.5) Delivering effective and integrated equipment and technology solutions to promote independence, support the ongoing shift in the balance of care, reduce and prevent hospital admissions and facilitate speedier hospital discharge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day care and personalised support plans Occupational Therapy Services Access to Employment Short Breaks from Caring Provision of HSS and development of Telecare Joint management of the Community Equipment Store 	P:SPCC002_6b.5 Percentage of Care Inspectorate Inspections undertaken within Registered Learning Disability Services graded good or above.	100%	N/A	100%
6 Delivering positive outcomes on health	(P6.6) Improving the health and well-being of service users through rehabilitation and reablement, which will, in turn, have a positive impact on carers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reablement and Crisis Care Joint Management of Equipment Store Development of Independent Housing Options 	P:SPCC015_9b.2a Number of households receiving telecare.	4,000	3,632	4,000

Alignment with Corporate Priorities / Enablers

Council priority / enabler	Deliverable	Social Policy key activities / processes	Indicator(s)	2021/22 Target	2021/22 Performance	2022/23 Target
7 Reducing crime and improving community safety	(P7.4) Protecting those in our community who are most at risk by providing effective interventions across the four main strands of public protection; Child Protection, Adult Support and Protection, Violence Against Women and Girls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Child Care and Protection Teams Prison based Social Work Team at HMP Addiewell Criminal Justice Throughcare Team Domestic and Sexual Assault Team Public Protection Team 	SOA1305_04 Percentage of women who report that they feel safer as a result of intervention by the Domestic and Sexual Assault Team	100%	99%	100%
7 Reducing crime and improving community safety	(P7.5) Working with our partner agencies to deliver the priorities agreed in the Community Justice Strategy; focused on ensuring that those over the age of 16 involved in the justice system are best supported not to reoffend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Justice Team Community Payback Team Unpaid Work Order Team Assessment and Early Intervention Early and Effective Intervention 	CP:SPCJ158a_9b Percentage of Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) cases 12 to 17 years who do not become known to the Youth Justice Team within 12 months CP:SPCJ144_9b.1a Percentage of Community based supervision Orders supervised by the Justice Service with a successful termination.	95%	97%	95%
				80%	66%	80%

Service Quality and Performance

Service performance is monitored on a monthly basis at Senior Management Team meetings. All service risks and high risks are regularly reviewed by the Senior Management Team with input from the Council's Risk and Governance Manager to that process.

The Social Policy Management Plan 2022 - 23 is the key document that details the strategic direction for service delivery and plans to improve outcomes and services. The Management Plan does not stand alone and is part of a wider planning and service development approach.

The wider Health and Social Care Partnership Senior Management Team also meet on a monthly basis and routinely consider service performance measures to enable challenges to be identified at the earliest opportunity. Work has been undertaken to review the performance measures used across the partnership and an integrated performance framework will be developed to underpin the new IJB Strategic Plan.

Regulation, Inspection and Improvement Activity

During the pandemic, the Care Inspectorate undertook targeted inspections that were short, focused and carried out with Health Improvement Scotland and Health Protection Scotland to assess care and support for people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In terms of directly provided services, the following were subject to inspection in the reporting year. Craigmair Interim Care Home for older people was subject to a targeted inspection during 2021/22 and was awarded a grade of 4 (Good) for How good is our care and support during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Whitrigg House, a residential house for young people was subject to an announced (short notice) inspection on 18 March 2022. The service was inspected on the following areas and awarded the relevant grade:

How well do we support children and young people's wellbeing? 4 (Good)
How good is our leadership? 4 (Good)
How good is our staff team? 4 (Good)
How good is our setting? 3 (Adequate)
How well is our care planned? 3 (Adequate)

Inspection reports are analysed and action plans, to address any recommendations, are produced by the relevant service. Reports on inspection activity are routinely reported to elected members who have the opportunity to scrutinise progress.

In addition to external scrutiny, the social work service has a range of internal mechanisms to monitor the quality of provision and any improvement activity required. These include:

- Direct supervision of front-line practice by team managers
- Individual reviews of care plans and packages of care by case managers
- Analysis of social work complaints
- Monitoring of service level agreement and contracts for the purchase of care
- Case file audits
- Routine performance monitoring
- Self-evaluation through Customer Service Excellence/West Lothian Assessment Model

- Multi-agency self-evaluation and quality assurance activity in relation to adult and child protection

Joint Inspection

No Joint Inspections were undertaken during this reporting period.

The Partnership was advised in April 2022 by the Care Inspectorate and inspection partners of their intention to undertake a joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection in West Lothian Partnership over a fifteen-week period from May 2022 to July 2022 with report publication in September 2022. The key improvement actions from this inspection process will be translated into an action plan overseen by the APC to address inspection findings and key messages. Detail in relation to the findings of the inspection is covered in section 2.4.

2.2 Improvement and Performance Activity

Contract Monitoring

Contract monitoring and review is a fundamental function in the commissioning of social care services. It is required to evidence best value to the council and its regulators as well as ensuring the delivery of outcomes for vulnerable people living in West Lothian.

The purpose of the Contract Monitoring Framework in place is to provide a consistent approach to the monitoring of externally purchased care and support services across Social Policy. It is recognised that due to the impact on the quality of life, health and wellbeing of service users and their carers, the procurement of care and support service requires specialist consideration in order to ensure a focus on outcomes.

The contract monitoring framework aims to ensure that service users receive the highest quality of service, which demonstrates value for money, meets contractual standards and is continuously improved.

West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM)

The West Lothian Assessment Model is the council's self-assessment framework which helps services to ensure that they provide good quality and improving services for the people and local communities in West Lothian.

West Lothian Council recognises that there is always a way to make better and more efficient services for the people we serve, balancing quality of service provision with value for money.

The West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) helps the council to do this by providing a consistent and challenging set of questions or statements that services will use to identify their strengths, areas for improvement and importantly it also provides a structure for improvement.

The WLAM is used by all council services to self-assess:

- The way that services are delivered
- How they are performing in key results and outcomes
- How change is managed
- The way services prepare for the future

A new framework, WLAM 2022-25, has been developed in line with the new European Foundation Quality Management (EFQM) 2020 Model which is intended to offer a more flexible and updated approach to improvement.

Self-assessment is an important part of the council's improvement strategy, as it encourages innovation from within.

Social Policy has four WLAM Units within the service, Children and Families, the newly formed Inclusion and Support service, Community Care and Justice services. All of the Social Policy WLAM units have demonstrated an improvement after each cycle of assessment as highlighted by the increase in WLAM scores across the service.

WLAM Unit	Cycle	WLAM	Change
Children and Families	2014/17	482	+57
	2017/20	539	
Community Care Services	2014/17	456	+72
	2017/20	528	
Criminal and Youth Justice	2014/17	488	+65
	2017/20	553	

A new WLAM programme has been developed:

WLAM Unit	Cycle
Community Care Services	2022/23
Children and Families	2023/24
Justice Services	2023/24
Inclusion & Support	2024/25

External Assessment

To supplement internal improvement processes, the council undertakes planned external assessment on a periodic basis. This ensures that the council is scrutinised across different standards and frameworks promoting excellence and the highest standards of practice. It also allows comparison with the best performers across all sectors in the UK and beyond.

The key external assessment process for the council is:

Assessment	Assessment Method	Improvement focus	Assessed level
Customer Service Excellence	Three-year programme of corporate assessment	Assessment of the organisation's customer focus and overall standards of customer service and delivery.	CSE standard (2022)

Complaints

Social Policy adopts the council's Model Complaints Handling Procedure which was revised in April 2021 in line with The Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) guidance. This remains a two-stage process:

- Stage 1: Frontline Resolution
- Stage 2: Investigation

The SPSO remains the final stage for complaints about public services in Scotland. The council's social work services are required by statute to report annually on statutory complaints received from service users, would-be service users, their carers and representatives. Improvement activity is ongoing with regard to resolution timeframes as well as tracking themes to better identify and address any issues with effective action. Training is also being rolled out to all staff involved in the complaints process.

The council is committed to improving social work services for the people of West Lothian and recognises that complaints are an important source of customer feedback.

The following table provides an overview of the complaints received during 2021/22 and their outcome.

Total number of complaints	93
Percentage of complaints upheld	29%
Percentage of complaints partially upheld	28%
Percentage of complaints not upheld	43%
Percentage of complaints resolved within timescale	67.7%

2.3 Service Developments and Progress

2.3.1 Services for Adults and Older People

Work continues to redesign services to ensure that they best meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable in society and are sustainable for the future. Social Policy actively engages customers and potential customers in the delivery and redesign of services to ensure that these are accessible and focused on their needs and preferences.

Coming Home Developments

In relation to services for adults, the strategic focus remains around shifting the balance of care from hospital to community-based services supporting the Royal Edinburgh Campus Redesign Programme. This is a collaborative approach to remodel services focusing on people accessing care, support and treatment within the West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership.

Plans were approved in June 2019 for a new £3 million housing project for people with learning disabilities who have complex care needs. The proposed accommodation consists of sixteen one-bedroom tenancies that each provides a main living room, separate double bedroom, galley kitchen, built in storage and toilet/bathroom. All will have their own small separate garden area as well as access to the wider garden grounds. Support to individuals will be person centred with individuals being able to make informed decisions as far as they are able to on their own model of care and delivery of this. In order for this to be achieved, the

identification of those individuals who will be moving to their own tenancy has commenced; this being undertaken in conjunction with the individual and their extended family.

The original target for completion of the build was Autumn 2021. However, due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, the completion date has been revised to Winter 2022/23.

Adults Day services modernisation

West Lothian was one of five local authorities working with Health Improvement Scotland on the second phase of the Day Services Collaborative. Whilst we have not progressed to the third phase with the Collaborative, the service remains committed to transformational change in the delivery of day care services and learning gained through this work will help guide future delivery. Over the coming year the intention is to support individuals into more community-based activities designed to meet the aspirations and outcomes of individuals.

The supported employment service continues to provide specialist employability and training support for individuals with a range of disabilities. Over the course of the pandemic they have continued to provide this support adapting their face to face and group work activity online. The hard work and dedication of the team has once again been acknowledged, this time at an international level with the team being invited to join the online Global Award Ceremony Achievement Awards. They achieved an Excellent Outcome Award for supporting 77% of participants into paid employment, which given that all support was undertaken online, is a remarkable achievement.

The Community Equipment Store continues to work in partnership with the council's Digital Transformation Team and health colleagues to explore digital solutions to improve service delivery and support people remaining at home with additional support or leaving hospital at the earliest time with supportive equipment when fit to do so.

Care Homes

The Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on older people and in particular people living in care homes. The partnership worked with all care home providers for adults and older people to deliver enhanced support throughout and the CSWO has contributed to this work.

Daily review meetings were held over the course of the pandemic period and now continue on a twice weekly basis with the Chief Nurse, Chief Social Work Officer, and other senior staff to identify emerging issues and to determine the appropriate response. The delivery of safe and effective care for people who live in care homes remains an ongoing priority for the HSCP.

The oversight group has engaged with local care home providers to review the current oversight and support arrangements to ensure that they are appropriate, reflect current practice, are sustainable and ultimately continue to add value for people supported by social care supports. This includes support to implement the 'Open with Care' visiting guidance to enable residents to receive regular, meaningful contact with friends and family

The Partnership has committed to continuing enhanced assurance and support for care homes into the future, with a model of integrated nursing and social work assurance and support implemented. Joint visits are completed by health and social care staff and outcomes scrutinised by the oversight group. The assurance visit process has strengthened oversight arrangements and promoted collaborative working across care homes in West Lothian.

The Scottish Government has confirmed multi-disciplinary oversight arrangements require to remain in place until March 2023.

Care at home

From the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, the position in relation to care at home services, unmet need and delayed discharge performance improved. It is likely this was, in part, as a consequence of the unique economic and employment circumstances created by the furlough scheme, closure of retail and hospitality sectors and people working from home. Since early summer 2021, however, pressures have become increasingly apparent with a shortage of care at home capacity to meet the needs of people living in the community and those at risk of their discharge from hospital being delayed.

In West Lothian, in line with the national position, providers highlighted that they face competition for staff from within the social care sector itself in addition to competition from other sectors, such as retail and hospitality.

A weekly Care at Home oversight meeting was established on 14 June 2021 with the aim of better understanding the risk and developing actions to mitigate risk and improve the situation. This has included active engagement with care at home providers, with the aim of facilitating market stability and improving supply. An intense focus of activity has been around recruitment and retention strategies to increase capacity in the care at home sector as well as the creation of alternative interim step-down arrangements to support those in hospital facing a delay in their discharge.

The group continues to focus on enhancing arrangements to support care at home provision within West Lothian with better analysis and scrutiny of key data across the whole care at home system.

In collaboration with key stakeholders, work has started to develop a revised contractual framework over the course of the next 12 months. Benchmarking across other similar organisations will take place with an aim to implement best practice and provide the best possible care at home contracted provision.

An Assessment and Review Team has been established to focus specifically on the assessment and review of service users and needs which are unmet in relation to care at home provision. The team will ensure assessments focus upon the functional ability of the person and promote existing strengths, community supports or technology to their maximum to promote independence.

Assessments will be undertaken by a multi-disciplinary team of social workers, occupational therapists and reablement officers all working in a collaborative manner. The team will aim to reduce waiting times for individuals requiring an assessment and ensure individual needs are managed where possible without dependency on formal care and support. In addition, the team will review existing care at home services in a timely manner, ensuring supports continue to meet the individuals assessed need whilst also ensuring that those with an unmet need are monitored and that any change in need is captured at the appropriate time.

Home First

The Home First transformational approach focuses on prevention and early intervention to support people to remain in their own homes or community setting wherever possible. It focuses on developing new ways of working and models of care to proactively assess and manage people in the community, with admission to an acute hospital only where there is clinical need. The norm should be to receive care and support at home to prevent hospital admission, wherever appropriate. Where hospital admission is clinically appropriate and unavoidable, responsive support should be available to facilitate discharge and allow people to return to a community setting without delay.

The principles of Home First are:

- Greater focus on better, integrated and evidence-based outcomes for service users
- Promoting flexibility and agile ways of working to meet surges in demand and changes in need
- Maximising digital solutions
- Whole system approach and benefit realisation

There are specific programmes being developed under the Home First approach and these include

Community Single Point of Contact

West Lothian is developing an integrated community urgent care Single Point of Contact (SPoC) This allows for professional referrers to access community health, social care and third sector services with the SPoC screening and developing a plan - communicated back to the referrer, family and carers within two to four hours, to prevent unnecessary hospital presentation/admission. The approach will be subject to a pilot test.

The intention is that the SPoC developments will bring benefits to both the people and referring professionals of West Lothian. The aim is to provide timely access to coordinated community pathways, support and personalised plans within a short time period in order to prevent further deterioration and safely manage a person at home, wherever possible.

Review of bed-based resources

Whilst the key priority remains to support people at home as far as is possible, work commenced to review the bed-based provision for people in West Lothian to ensure that commissioning and resources are realigned to enable people to be cared for in the right bed-based resource when that is needed. A whole system approach is being taken to fully cost and model Intermediate Care beds and Hospital-Based Continuing Complex Care (HBCCC) in the community, Local Authority and Independent Care Home beds, and the Acute Medical and Rehabilitation beds in West Lothian.

This review will develop a new community bed-based delivery model and access criteria for intermediate care and longer-term beds, as well as identifying whether existing care and pathways can be better delivered in alternative settings. It will also develop a bed model for Frail Elderly People/People living with Dementia.

The Home First Programme Team is working closely with performance and data analyst colleagues across the council and NHS Lothian. This work will be data dependent and a 5 year (pre and post Covid) historical acute bed baseline and minimum data set will be established before beginning the whole system modelling and costing bed-base for the short, medium and long term.

Integrated Hospital Front Door Model

This project aims to develop an integrated (acute and community) 'Home First' model at the front doors of St. John's Hospital (SJH), which include Accident & Emergency (A&E), Emergency Medical Assessment (EMA) & Same Day Emergency Care (SDEC).

The integrated front door approach will enable front door community teams (nursing, therapy and social work) - working in situ and in partnership with front door acute colleagues – to support joint decision making and facilitate a person being placed onto a community pathway once acute medical needs/diagnostics have been met.

The aim is to reduce unnecessary hospital presentation/admission and improve direct access to community health and social care services and third sector supports. This project also seeks to build pathways between the Integrated Hospital Discharge Hub (IDH) and the integrated front door team ensuring that, where people are placed on admission pathways, they are known to the IDH at point of admission and a Planned Date of Discharge (PDD) is set at the earliest opportunity and monitored closely to reduce unnecessary transfer to medical wards.

Community Connections Hubs

The West Lothian HSCP identified a need for improved access to information, advice and signposting within communities to support early intervention, self-management and to reduce reliance on statutory services where alternative community supports might be available. The approach is a multi-agency one including services and staff from council, health, 3rd sector and also with volunteer's participation.

The model in development involves the set-up of informal 'pop up' hubs in locations throughout West Lothian, based on learning from other local authority areas.

Community Connections Hubs are now established in two locations and there is ongoing engagement with community partners to promote and raise awareness of the hubs. There is also ongoing work to identify other appropriate local venues to deliver the service and a mapping exercise is being carried out of existing community resources to avoid duplication of services.

Digital and Technology supporting care

During the pandemic period, the service participated in the Connecting Scotland Programme providing laptops, iPads and support to individuals in the community to increase digital skills and reduce isolation.

The service continues to research and explore emerging technologies to support individuals to live as independently as possible at home. This includes telecare alarms and a range of sensors to raise an alert when help is required or monitor the environment, the application of intelligent medication administration, safer walking through GPS and activity monitoring to inform care planning.

In November 2021 the service began the transition from analogue to digital telecare with the upgrade of the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC), following this was a sustained period of testing and trialling of new digital telecare alarms which will begin to be deployed in the community from May 2022 onwards.

To develop the use to technology enabled care further, a TEC Board has been formed to explore and take forward further innovation of technology which can support independence at home.

Mental Health Services

Supported accommodation

The West Lothian HSCP Mental Health teams have delivered significant change to support those living under supported accommodation arrangements within West Lothian. In October 2021 over 160 service users moved from previous block contract arrangements to Self-Directed Support payments to enhance the choice and control around both where they live and who supports them. Fourteen service users have also moved from previous shared

accommodation units to new build properties, supported by the West Lothian Council housing team. This joint working from both the HSCP and housing colleagues has allowed service users to move to properties that better link them to their local community.

Community Mental health teams

The Community Mental Health Teams (CMHT) are also working through a quality improvement (QI) project to better ensure those receiving care in the community for a mental health condition are accessing the correct and most appropriate physical health checks and screening programmes through primary care. The QI project has seen amendments made to care planning documentation to ensure physical health checks are at the forefront of the delivery of care and support to ensure better long-term outcomes.

Multi-disciplinary team working

Additional efforts have also been undertaken to improve multidisciplinary team working across West Lothian Mental Health services to ensure health, social and personal outcomes are at the forefront of service delivery. Examples including embedding social work within emergency psychiatric assessment and a dedicated Mental Health Officer within the Integrated Discharge Hub are examples of this.

Crisis interventions

The HSCP is working with colleagues across Lothian to ensure that those in distress in their community can be seen by the right service at the right time and most importantly, first time. This is achieved in two ways. Firstly, to support those accessing the NHS 24 Mental Health Hub (24-hour support line) and secondly those accessing the unscheduled care team (ACAST) at the front door of St John's Hospital.

In 2021 the ACAST team moved their service delivery from 0800-2000 model to a 24-hour service which ensures that those at the highest level of distress can be seen by a Registered Mental Health nurse at any time. Ongoing work with social work teams, both in and out of hours, will further improve the pathways for people into crisis services.

Supporting community wellbeing

On Friday 26 November 2021 the Mental Health and Communities Fund launched in West Lothian. The £470,000 fund was allocated to the West Lothian Gateway to support community mental health and wellbeing. The fund was broken into two grants:

1. The small grant (£2,000 – £9,999)
2. The large grant (£10,000 - £50,000).

The purpose of the fund is to support small and medium sized community organisations including, 3rd sector organisations, registered charities, community councils, partner councils and other bodies that can make a positive difference to mental wellbeing in a local community. The Gateway (West Lothian's third sector interface) will administer the funds in line with Scottish Government guidance.

Alcohol and Drug Services

The immediate post lockdown environment has been challenging for addictions services, with increased referrals to treatment services and many supporting or preventative activities still unable to be offered. The main indicator for drug and alcohol treatment service, the A11 standard, (that no one should wait more than 3 weeks for treatment for drug or alcohol

misuse), dipped through 2021-22. This was due to a significant increase in referrals. It returned to compliance in the last 2 months of the quarter 1 period.

Unfortunately, the trend of increasing drug related deaths in Scotland and West Lothian continues. The National Record of Scotland shows that there were once again 32 'drug misuse' deaths in West Lothian in 2021, the same figure as for 2020 and an increase of 9 compared to the previous year.

Evidence indicates that being in some form of drug treatment reduces the risk of death. The mainstay of West Lothian's response to reduce drug related deaths is to fully implement the MAT standards for Medication Assisted Treatment and is making good progress against this. Open access drop in now operate four days a week and will shortly be offered five days. These offer significantly simpler access to Medication Assisted Treatment for people who are seeking it.

The West Lothian ADP is recruiting an additional officer to address the need to expand prevention activity as well as continuing the focus on treatment. A newly constituted ADP Executive is intended to widen the reach of the ADPs influence to support preventative approaches. We are also progressing with a Public Social Partnership to develop and evaluate services for the whole family where it is impacted by drug or alcohol use.

Alcohol related deaths in West Lothian fell from 45 to 40 in 2021, but this remains an increase on recent years. There is increased access to psychological support for people who use alcohol and drugs to keep up with rising demand. We await the Scottish Government's planned new guidelines for treating alcohol dependence.

2.3.2 Services for Children, Young People and Families

The West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 outlines the work of the West Lothian Children and Families Strategic Planning Group and follows an outcome-based approach to planning as led by the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership. There is a clear focus on multi-agency collaborative partnership working allowing the provision of more seamless responses to individuals with multiple and complex needs.

We recognise that new challenges have emerged as a result of the pandemic. Some of the families who were vulnerable prior to the pandemic are presenting with greater difficulties now. Families who would not have presented as vulnerable previously, now are. These changes are considered in planning of services going forward.

The experience of Covid-19 has highlighted the flexible and innovative ways of working that staff, volunteers, carers and services have undertaken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and families has been maintained.

GIRFEC

In response to messages from Learning Review processes in West Lothian, a multiagency GIRFEC group was established this year to refresh and develop revised guidance for Child's Planning Meetings, to assist practitioners in understanding the role and function of planning meetings and to ensure timely and effective use of meetings. The guidance defines the named person and lead professional and outlines timescales. The voice of the child is highlighted and prioritised within the preparation, delivery and recording of Child Planning Meetings in line with The Promise. Care Planning Meetings will produce a consistent Child Plan document compiled by the Named Person or Lead Professional. The guidance introduces the option for

a professional Reflective Core Group to be utilised in cases professionals will benefit from a facilitated discussion. These meetings will be chaired by an independent manager to allow for third party perspective and scrutiny. The guidance is currently being consulted on within agencies prior to roll out following feedback.

Corporate Parenting

As Corporate Parents we are committed to getting it right for every looked after child, young person and care leaver in West Lothian and are determined to improve the life experiences of our looked after children by narrowing the gap in outcomes between looked after children and young people and their peers. For us this means more love, better understanding of rights and less stigma. We are committed to supporting the Independent Care Reviews vision of Scotland leading the way to be the 'best care system in the world' and incorporating recommendations from The Promise into working practices throughout West Lothian

The West Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan builds on the previous plan and it is focussed on how partners will work together to tackle the identified outcomes gap. The four priorities in the plan are:

- Improving quality of care and care planning
- Improving health and wellbeing
- Raising attainment and promoting positive destinations
- Providing effective throughcare & aftercare support and services

Workstreams are established for each priority and progress on each priority is overseen by the Corporate Parenting Strategic Group. Each of the work streams has a detailed action plan in place which sets out specific actions and activities to drive forward identified areas of improvements.

In this reporting period a focus has been on emerging from the pandemic and implementing the Promise, as well as recruiting additional staff, reviewing processes, updating guidance for staff and rolling out new and refresher training to ensure we meet the needs of our looked after children and care experienced people.

The Promise, West Lothian

The Promise Scotland launched Plan 21-24, on 31 March 2021 which sets out the Five Priority Areas and Five Fundamentals which will be essential to achieving the transformation change required to improve outcomes for care experienced children and young people.

The Promise articulates the need for cultural change. Therefore, in addition to the tangible actions outlined in Plan 21-24, this process will enable opportunities for change in relation to thinking and approaches. A dedicated time limited role was developed in West Lothian to support the system, practice and cultural changes that will be required to take forward this key priority area of improvement work. As a result of this, a detailed plan was produced.

In support of the local development work, sessions on The Promise Plan 21-24 were rolled out across Social Policy and involved corporate parents during 2021 to raise awareness. There is work underway with Promise Scotland to drive forward this transformational change and progress with implementation of the West Lothian plan. In line with this the service continues to strengthen community based, holistic services work in partnership across the authority to provide a variety of services to support families at the right

time for them. There have been a number of new developments that have been established and are continually evolving by ongoing dialogue directly from children and their families

Children's Rights and Participation

Promoting Children's Rights is a priority in the West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 and the associated action plan prioritises embedding the articles of the UNCRC into practice. The UNCRC sets out the specific rights that all children have to help fulfil their potential, including rights relating to health and education, leisure and play, fair and equal treatment, protection from exploitation and the right to be heard.

In terms of examples of practice, Social Policy have a children rights officer for court ordered contact to ensure children have a voice in decisions that are being made about them in Child Welfare Hearings. The model is based on a research project with children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse and have court ordered contact. The service works collaboratively with Education, Health, Police and the Domestic and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT). The approach is informed by the Lundy model of child and young people's participation. This has been a positive development and working relationships have been developed with Sheriffs with views of the child provided directly to the Sheriff in a letter. Since its inception in 2018, there have been 289 referrals and the officer has worked with 40 young people in this reporting period. The youngest child referred was 3 years old. Feedback received from parents, social work professionals, Sheriffs and young people is positive with examples provided of success in having contact changed in response to the child's view or arranged safely with the child's wishes and views central to the process.

Children's Rights across Social Policy continues to be integrated within practice. Children are asked their view during 'my planning' meetings and discussions with any professional workers supporting them (i.e. social workers, family support workers, children and young people's workers, residential care workers). Sessions on working knowledge of the UNCRC was rolled out across children and families social work during 2021. There is close working with an independent organisation who advocate for our care experienced young people supporting and representing them at meetings and Children's Hearings.

West Lothian's Having Your Say care experienced participation group has been running for 19 years. Although there were adjustments during the pandemic the group continued to meet on a fortnightly basis virtually. Young people lead this group and they set the agenda for sessions. The young people supported Children's Hearing panel member training and contributed to Scottish Government consultations on such topics as the Children (Scotland) Act 2020 and the Rights of Siblings. The meetings of the group have now resumed on a face to face basis.

Early intervention approaches

Social Policy and Education Services have worked together to develop the new Inclusion and Support Service (ISS) The aim is to maximise resources to provide an appropriate framework of support for children, young people and their families to enable a holistic view of family need and provide support at an earlier point.

The Inclusion and Support Service launched on 19 April 2021. The service enables a holistic approach to early intervention and support for young people and their families to prevent escalation. The service, with a single vision of family need, will strengthen professional links and a co-ordinated response to identified need. This is supported through new systems and processes for information sharing, screening, prioritisation and service matching as well as

links to wider agencies and services that form part of the service delivery model. Through this new model, it is anticipated that there will be impact on direct work to support children and their families. One single referral pathway will prevent duplication of resources and offer a simplified customer orientated approach. Working with partner agencies, it will streamline processes, make more efficient use of resources and ensure consistency of approach and equity of opportunity across West Lothian. The impact of the new service has yet to be evaluated and this will be undertaken.

Children with a disability

From the outset of the pandemic, the service has been very aware of the impact on families caring for children with disabilities. The social work Child Disability Service have accessed short term funding to better support families. The service has also been able to maximise holiday play spaces for children and young people through the Get into Summer programme funded by West Lothian Council and the Scottish Government. This has provided social opportunities for children and young people and also support/respite for families when term time activities are not available.

The service has reviewed processes and systems to improve practice, for example to ensure timely referrals to Adult Services, with the aim of improving transitions and providing continuity of support. Adults services have created new posts to support more effective transition planning.

Supporting Mental Health and Wellbeing

In recognition of the impact of the pandemic on the mental wellbeing of children and young people, a children and young people's mental health strategic needs assessment was carried out in June 2021 which provided a clearer picture of what the needs of the families were in West Lothian. In addition, data was collected from the Wellbeing Recovery Group (WRG), the multi-agency group of professionals that meet regularly to match the most appropriate services to children and young people who are referred to the Inclusion and Support Service for additional support. This, along with the national drivers, led to changes within the service provision and participation and engagement became a priority in West Lothian

The WRG identified an increase in demand for mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and their families. To respond to this demand, it was agreed that a partnership of third sector partners with the provision of a new model of accessible, multi-agency support based on local need in West Lothian could help to manage the demand.

Following the implementation of the Community Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Support and Services Framework values and principles, and using learning from assessments and evaluations, a new Public Social Partnership (PSP), of 11 partner agencies was formed called Roots with referrals being screened via the WRG.

The Roots model provides services that meet the needs of children, young people and their families. The services are available when/where families need it, and are provided by people with the right knowledge, skills and experience. Through discussion with the families we have ensured the received support is embedded in the community either close to their home, education, or employment.

To compliment the work of the Roots PSP, five Listen and Link workers have been recruited to take forward the newly developed self-referral phone line for young people and their families. This service will empower families to manage their own wellbeing by providing a

listening ear, signposting to appropriate services that meet their needs and providing further support where required.

Whole Family Approach – substance misuse

In January 2021, the Scottish Government announced a new National Mission to reduce drug related deaths and harms with associated funding available to support the implementation of the 'Whole Family Approach' to ensure families affected by alcohol and drugs are supported in holistic, family centred ways and there is support for the whole family. In West Lothian there was an investment of £109,727 per annum to WLADP. In November 2021, a Public Social Partnership (PSP) model was approved to manage the 'Whole Family Approach' monies in West Lothian for 3 years (2022/25). The PSP's steering group membership includes partners in the NHS, Council, third sector and chaired by an independent Professor from Stirling University.

Intensive support – Families Together

There has been a longstanding commitment in West Lothian to strengthening whole family approaches to prevent children having to be placed out with their home and family network. It is a priority to support more young people in non-residential settings and in their local communities. This drive and direction has partly involved realigning resources in children's services by reducing capacity within our Residential House care provision and developing the Families Together service. This has enabled an increase of staffing compliment in the Families Together Service during 2021/22. The service priority has been to provide intensive support for families but also crisis intervention when necessary so we can respond in a timely way when support is required, have availability to build relationships with families that will enable them and to assist in building capacity within family networks to prevent children being accommodated.

In 2021-22, the service has supported 107 children, of which 22 became looked after and accommodated. The service has been involved in higher numbers of crisis intervention, particularly relating to teenage children and relationship breakdowns within families. Families together have remained involved when children and young people have been accommodated and have been successful in supporting some children to return home after short periods. The service has been successful in sustaining kinship placements and for a high number of children to remain at home.

Family Group Decision Making

As an early intervention approach, West Lothian is committed to utilising family group decision making (FGDM), a service provided by Children 1st. This is intensive work with a family to draw on the wider network in deciding how best to care and support a child. The focus is on the family network, finding solutions to difficulties and developing a plan with a co-ordinator. In 21/22, 110 children from 68 families were supported in FGDM work. Although some of the children were from the same families, the approach was different as it required specific plans to be created for each child. Children 1st also provide Lifelong Links for children and young people to support building and sustaining relationships, recognising the value positive support networks have into adulthood.

Supporting kinship arrangements

Over the reporting time period, the service has continued to work closely with an independent organisation in delivering kinship support to approximately 40 families per year. Despite this however, over the reporting period there was a notable increase in difficulties experienced and disruption of kinship arrangements. Additional short-term council funding enabled the

appointment of additional support workers to complement the existing supports. The workers have been in post since 1 November 2021 and in the reporting period, supported more than 60 families providing practical and emotional support, parenting support, one to one work with children and young people and supporting kinship carers at meetings. The feedback has been very positive from kinship carers and has included comments around feeling less stressed, wishing they had access to the support sooner, feeling more knowledgeable in meetings and in understanding processes and benefiting from support groups. The kinship services have facilitated monthly support groups, provided financial support and arranged numerous events and activities for families to meet up. The extension of the service has improved the support and training on offer and has supported better participation and engagement from kinship carers.

Foster Care

During the reporting period, recruitment of foster carers has continued although this has been challenging. There are seven assessments of potential fostering households ongoing which started during this reporting period. A revised mandatory training programme has been rolled out which carers have advised has provided them additional support and strengthened their knowledge and confidence in undertaking their caring role. To support children and young people, we have developed a revised welcome booklet and also have been completing carer profiles for all our carers. A number of processes have been refreshed as part of ongoing work to support us in keeping The Promise. The service continues to run monthly support groups, virtually during the pandemic but these and carer consultative forums are back up and running face to face driven by the views of our carer population. The family placement team have run a number of events which there has been positive feedback, one of which included a picnic in the park for carers, children and young people.

Residential houses

Due to organisational change following redesign in keeping with shifting the balance of care and the impact of the pandemic, only one of the residential houses was open for a significant period. A full staffing group has now been recruited to enabling both houses with a stable and consistent staff group to be operating at full capacity. All staff have been involved in Promise sessions contributing fully to the necessary changes required moving forward.

Missing young person's training has been rolled out and there is some evidence this may be having a positive impact on reducing the number of young people being reported as missing. A new protocol is being rolled out across a range of professionals including Residential Houses, Social Care Emergency Team (SCET), children's services teams and Police colleagues. A multi-agency group meets on a monthly basis to discuss cases where there are repeated incidents of someone going missing with a view to addressing the causes. This considers all children going missing including children who are looked after.

Level Up

The Level Up Attainment Project is a partnership between Education and Social Policy services, using Scottish Attainment Challenge funding to support West Lothian's Looked After Children. It is a multi-agency team made up of an Inclusion Officer, Teachers and Family Support Workers. The main aim of the project is to maximise the attainment of Looked After Children through a creative and flexible approach. However, there is an increased focus on supporting wider achievements and promoting all areas of health and wellbeing.

In 2021/22, the project has supported a cohort of 25 young people: 9 have now left school and progressed to positive destinations and some are continuing to be supported by the

project to explore further employment and training opportunities; 16 are still at school, 10 of which continue to receive support from one or more of the project team. The young people have had opportunities to be involved in the Duke of Edinburgh Award Programme and Rural & Urban Training Scheme in addition to activities such as curling and rock climbing.

Young carers

An action plan was established to underpin the West Lothian Carers Strategy 2020-2023 and the actions are grouped in areas of priority, of which one is Young Carers. The strategic outcome is that Young Carers are supported and protected from inappropriate caring and from negative impacts on their education, social lives and future development.

A review of the referral pathways for young carer statements was completed and a new statement has been produced. An information session was delivered by a trainee Educational Psychologist and the YC worker from Carers of West Lothian to secondary school head teachers to raise awareness of the new processes and referral mechanisms to support young carers complete a statement if required.

Throughout this reporting period, other actions were prioritised which include:

- Ensuring young carers voices are heard and they have the opportunity to engage in strategic decisions that will affect them
- Schools actively play a key role to identify and support young carers and signpost / refer to the necessary support organisations
- Ensure the necessary support for young carers is in place when transitioning from school to their next positive destination; further and higher education or into employment
- Promote the financial support available for young carers including; Young Carer grant, Young Scot Package, free bus travel
- Young Carers are made aware of their Children's Rights in line with the GIRFEC principles which reflect the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)

Aligned to the work of "The Promise" and as a key action of the Children's services Plan, a children's rights group has been established. This group will also be tasked with considering the rights of young carers and ensuring their voices and experiences are recognised and considered in matters that affect their lives.

Supporting older young people

There has been a longstanding commitment to recruiting carers to provide supported accommodation and support for young people aged 16 years and over. The approach was initiated prior to the introduction of formal continuing care and originally focused on ensuring children in foster care settings would be able to remain there past their 18th birthday. The service has developed over the years and is no longer only about offering supporting living for children in foster care over age 18 years. A new coordinator has been appointed and work has begun on updating key processes and creating a handbook that supports work in keeping The Promise. The focus is on recruitment activity and developing a recruitment plan to ensure there is a larger group of supported young adult carers. In addition, we have strengthened our supported adult placement panel and are working on developing training.

We continue to build on the successful implementation of the Housing First Model which enables young people with multiple and complex needs, who are homeless or care experienced to access and sustain permanent accommodation. The service builds on the success of a pilot project, run in partnership between The Rock Trust and Almond Housing Association, which launched in 2017 and was the first of its kind in the UK. Young people are

supported into a permanent tenancy, without condition, and provided with the high-intensity, wrap around support for as long as they require it. Funding allocated through the West Lothian Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan and Social Policy has allowed the service to grow and there are now 17 young people supported through the project.

Anti-Poverty work

With support from the Anti-Poverty Service, West Calder High School has developed the role of pupil 'Challenge Poverty Ambassadors' who aim to support the school community to promote inclusion and equality and address barriers and stigma associated with poverty. During Challenge Poverty Week 2021, Challenge Poverty Ambassadors delivered poverty awareness training around the cost of the school day to their teachers in the school and created a display board to raise awareness of poverty related issues.

A targeted campaign to focus on lone parent families and those with a disability to provide long term support, was taken forward in the 2021-22 period with the recruitment of 3 new Campaign Development Officers who will work directly with 6 high schools to embed advice and support services for families and young people directly through the school setting.

Ukrainian support work

West Lothian Council prepared for welcoming and supporting people displaced from Ukraine, working with partners and communities. Social Policy, Housing and other services have worked closely together to quickly establish systems to ensure a co-ordinated approach for Ukrainians coming to West Lothian via the UK Homes for Ukraine Scheme where households have directly registered to be hosts and matched with Ukrainians and also the Scottish Government Super Sponsor Scheme, allowing Ukrainians to apply for visas without prior matching. Social Policy staff have a key role in undertaking safeguarding checks for hosts, providing guests with direct practical, financial and emotional support and signposting to other services as required.

Domestic Abuse

The long-established Social Policy Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT) have worked to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic and supported a total of 2055 people in West Lothian during 2021/22. This is an increase of 16% compared to the previous year when 1773 referrals were received and is an increase of 28% compared to the same period in 2019/20.

Covid-19 impacted on the referrals received by DASAT with a change in the demographic of service users noted. This included individuals and their children who have not previously accessed the service and an increased number of older individuals being referred. Additionally, there has also been an increase in the number of people who experience additional barriers such as substance misuse and mental health issues and those who require the support of translation services. Professionals faced significant challenges during 2021/22 in providing effective responses due to delays with cases involved in the Justice System.

To support increased demand, the Council invested short term resources to allow additional support worker posts to be added to the team to support recovery and reduce waiting times. The team have also been awarded funding for 2 years from Inspiring Scotland and have attracted further 1-year funding from Scottish Government to tackle waiting lists as a result of the pandemic. Short term funding was also identified to employ a part time lead officer for gender-based violence for a two-year period. This has had a positive impact on the work of DASAT.

DASAT have changed their delivery of service in response to the backlog of cases in the court system and longer waiting times. A pilot virtual court support group has been established which is offered to women receiving support from the duty service and court advocacy service. The initial pilot was well received with 8 women taking part in February and March 2022. This was evaluated positively with plans to develop this and offer a Court Support Group quarterly.

The team offers a range of services including:

The Court Advocacy Service

The Court Advocacy Service works closely with the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit within Police Scotland, and the Procurator Fiscal's Officer to deliver a high-quality service for victims of domestic abuse involved in the court process. The service received and supported 780 referrals during the period 2021/22, this is an increase of 2%. This is still a significant increase from pre-pandemic figures of 615 referrals with a total of a 27% increase. The court advocacy workers continue to provide support throughout the court process and ensure that the views and the voices of individuals (victims/survivors) are represented in court.

Living in Safe Accommodation (LISA)

The LISA service aims to keep women and children safe in their own homes and provide other housing options to support women.

In 2021/22 the LISA project supported 230 women. This is an increase of 7% on the previous period and an 11% increase on pre-pandemic figures. West Lothian Council introduced a new housing allocation policy in 2020/21 which allocated higher point levels to people fleeing Domestic Abuse. As a result of this new policy, people experiencing domestic abuse are no longer presenting with homeless services and are being offered permanent accommodation in an area of their choice. This had a positive impact on the families supported by DASAT as it reduces the number of housing moves required, reduces the disruption to children's education and access to child care and employment.

Court Contact Children's Right's Service

Although not accountable to the DASAT service, the Court Contact Children's Right's Officer (CCCRO) is very closely aligned. This role aims to increase awareness of domestic abuse in the context of child contact improving outcomes and highlighting patterns of coercive control perpetrated through child contact. The worker ensures that children's voices are heard and their rights upheld within an adult judicial system by allowing Sheriffs to hear directly from the child so decisions can be made in a child's best interests. During 2021/22 the CCCRO received 114 referrals and supported 40 children. The role has been part of a research group within Edinburgh University.

DASAT Children's Services

DASAT children's service supported 126 children, either in the form of intensive 1-1 support, groupwork or both. 1-1 support typically takes place within schools or community-based resources and is relationships based, building trust and exploring experiences of abuse to tailor the focused work on children's ability to understand and process. The nurture group is a 6-week programme, allowing young children to express their feelings and includes work around safe people, worries and emotions. A nurture parents' group is also offered which supports parents in understanding the needs of their children and how domestic abuse can impact on the child's development. For older young people, groupwork runs for 8 weeks and includes sessions around personal and online safety, healthy and unhealthy relationships, anxiety, self-esteem and resilience.

CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery)

CEDAR is a group work model for children who have experienced domestic abuse. During 2021/22 COVID 19 continued to impact on group work and support offered had to be adapted resulting in delivery remotely via online platforms or 1:1 support with children within their education setting. It is noted that face to face delivery is more effective.

Trauma Therapist

The trauma therapist provides a high-quality holistic service for young people within the judicial system who have experienced sexual abuse. This early intervention at the point of reporting abuse, allows the service support to be optimised. Working in partnership with the sexual violence service ensures that people are supported in practical ways, preparing them for any legal process as well as offering a therapeutic response to support them to process and recover from their experiences of abuse. The trauma therapist has provided a safe consistent space for young people engaged in the service with sessions being flexible to fit round young people's education and/or child care issues. The focus is on young people in pre or post court conditions as well as young people who have had their cases deemed as not proceeding by Police/Procurator Fiscal. An increase in funding allowed for an increase in service provision by volume and age of people being referred which is now for ages 13-25 years. The trauma therapist also facilitates consultation to the DASAT team on a monthly basis helping them to process and work in a trauma informed way.

MARAC is a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference to discuss how to help victims at high risk of death or serious harm. In West Lothian there is a number of people who require the support and protection of a multiagency framework, ensuring safety planning and highlighting the behaviour of abuse perpetrators.

During 2021/22, DASAT supported 202 people presented to MARAC conference, which is a 35% increase on 2020/21. During the pandemic there has been an increase in repeat offenders, an increase of people referred to MARAC generally and an increase in the number of referrals where there are additional barriers to support such as substance misuse, mental health issues. There has also been an increase in people from minority ethnic backgrounds being presented.

2.3.3 Justice Services

Children and Young People under the age of 18 years who come into conflict with the law and are subject to Compulsory Measures of Supervision via the Children's Hearing system, continue to be supervised and supported by the Youth Justice Team. The use of Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) remains in place with key agencies to address earlier concerns, where appropriate.

The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 took effect on 17 December 2021. The Act raised the age of criminal responsibility from 8 to 12 years and provides new specific investigative powers for Police investigating the most serious cases of harmful behaviour and new duties for Local Authorities. This included considering appropriate Places of Safety arrangements. Within West Lothian, dependent on levels of risk and need, we would consider various options as an appropriate place of safety including family home, kinship care, foster care, and residential care.

Justice and Youth Justice services continue to maintain high levels of contact with those subject to statutory supervision. The criminal courts over 2021/22 returned to running at pre-

pandemic levels and they have in place a recovery programme with recovery courts.

As levels of pre-pandemic operation have returned, those serving long term prison sentences or short-term sentences subject to statutory post release supervision are being released at their due date on parole or other licences.

The unpaid work order scheme which had been significantly impacted upon in 2020/2021 has returned to being fully operational in 2021/22 from an organisational perspective. There has continued to be an impact on attendance to unpaid work due to COVID cases which fluctuate dependant on outbreaks. This has been managed with increased health and safety measures and reducing numbers sharing transport or being in close proximity to each other.

The Red, Amber, Green (RAG) analysis has also continued to be undertaken in line with National Outcomes and Standards and presenting levels of risk. In some circumstances video calling continued to be used where a risk assessment dictated that seeing internal physical environments was necessary and this was not possible due to COVID status. In the main face to face visits resumed.

Multi Agency Public Protection Agency (MAPPA) continued to operate at all levels through virtual meetings and those presenting as a risk supervised appropriately.

Over the reporting period the justice service maintained a presence in courts so that a response could be provided to those appearing from custody.

2.3.4 Whole Service Developments

Self-Directed Support (SDS)

The Social Care (Self-directed Support) (Scotland) Act 2013 came into effect on 1st April 2014. In March 2021 the Scottish Government published the Self-Directed Support Framework of Standards. This framework consists of a set of standards (including practice statements and core components) written specifically for local authorities to provide an overarching structure, aligned to legislation and statutory guidance, for further implementation of the self-directed support approach and principles.

Social Policy is committed to the principles of SDS and recognises that when people have more control over how they live their lives and any support they may require, they are likely to achieve better outcomes.

An SDS Project Board has recently been established with an aim to further embed SDS across all relevant service areas and ensure that we are delivering services of a high standard in line with the Framework of Standards. The project board is currently in its 'discovery phase' and an action plan has been developed which will initially focus on engagement with practice teams and people receiving support under SDS as well as third sector and community-based providers. It is envisaged that information gathered as a result of this engagement will help to shape and further develop the action plan as it progresses. The board aims to develop an SDS Training Strategy for staff that will be informed in part by identifying training and development needs through engagement with staff and people receiving support. The board also plans to explore opportunities to expand the use of technology in relation to SDS and the type of supports that people are choosing. This will be done by working jointly with the TEC Board to explore ways of delivering new innovative technology to promote independence, self-management and wellbeing.

Unpaid Carers

Social Policy values the vital role that carers play within West Lothian and in particular how they enable the people they care for to enjoy a quality of life and independence that would otherwise not be possible. However, we recognise that without appropriate support there can be a cost to the carer in terms of their own health and well-being. In recognition of this, Social Policy and key partners are working together to identify how best the statutory and the voluntary sector could support carers in their caring role and ensure compliance with the requirements of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016.

With input from internal and external partners and more importantly carers themselves, the West Lothian Carers Strategy and Carers Short Breaks Statement were approved by the IJB in August 2020 and sets out our vision and aims for unpaid carers in West Lothian. The Carers Strategy is underpinned by an Implementation Plan which is overseen by the West Lothian Carer Strategy Implementation Group (CSIG). The group was established in May 2021 and will ensure that aims and objectives of the strategy are implemented in West Lothian and will:

- Develop a coordinated approach for the implementation of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016
- Develop a coordinated approach for the implementation of West Lothian's Carer Strategy and Action Plan.
- Project manage the implementation of the priorities and actions included in the Action Plan and monitor progress made in implementing the strategy.
- Communicate and engage with partner organisations to ensure a broad range of carer experience is represented on the group
- Develop and implement performance management systems with all key partners to collate and prepare performance information to report to the Integration Joint Board (IJB) and Community Planning Partnership (CPP)
- Develop processes which maintain a regular and effective means of communication
- Oversee the development of performance reports and annual reports
- Act as a key consultative group for national and local policy development

The critical role carers play in the health and social care system has never been more apparent than during Covid-19 and the subsequent emergence from the pandemic. People have reported feeling increasingly isolated over the past year and are concerned about their mental health and wellbeing. To ensure that unpaid carers can access the help that they need to maintain and improve their mental health and wellbeing, investment has been made in a range of early intervention and prevention supports, in particular the Unpaid Carer Health and Wellbeing Fund. The fund will be open to all local, community-based organisations with the aim of encouraging the development of innovative ways to support carers to have short breaks from caring to support their health and wellbeing. The fund was launched at the end of April 2022.

To better understand the needs of carers and prepare for the review and refresh of the next Carers Strategy, a survey was undertaken from January to March 2022 where people in West Lothian who help care for others were asked to share their experiences of their caring role. The aim of the survey was to provide a better understanding of the level of care that is currently being delivered by unpaid carers in West Lothian and also to determine the supports that they require to enable them to continue with their caring role and stay in good health themselves. 592 people responded to the survey and the results have given meaningful information especially around the information, advice and support needed by carers. The findings will be used to shape the next Carers Strategy 2023-2026.

Rights, Participation and Engagement

The pandemic undoubtedly impacted our ability to undertake engagement activity in our standardised way but it has also provided new opportunities to look at different ways to communicate with and engage with partners and stakeholders and in particular explore digital solutions. Social Policy services continue to work in close partnership with other agencies, service users and their carers to ensure that the support and care services provided are as person centred and flexible as possible.

Overall, across Social Policy, work continues to redesign services to ensure that they best meet the needs of those who are most vulnerable in our society and are sustainable for the future. Social Policy actively engages customers and potential customers in the delivery and redesign of services to ensure that these are accessible and focused on their needs and preferences.

We have commissioned advocacy services to provide support to the most vulnerable groups of people who need our support to ensure they have a voice to have their views expressed:

- Adults up to age 65 with mental health issues
- older adults (over 65)/ adults with physical disabilities
- adults up to age 65 with learning disabilities
- care experienced children and young people and children involved in child protection

2.4 Delivery of Statutory Functions

The council's scheme of delegation allows senior social work staff to make certain decisions on behalf of the local authority in the following areas:

- Mental health
- Looked After Children and Young People:
 - Adoption
 - Secure accommodation and emergency placement of children
- Protection and Risk Management:
 - Child Protection
 - Adult Protection
 - MAPPA

Details of the annual monitoring in these areas are included in the subsequent paragraphs.

2.4.1 Mental Health

Section 32 of the Mental Health Care & Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003 places a statutory duty upon local authorities to appoint a sufficient number of Mental Health Officers (MHO) within their area to appropriately discharge the functions of Mental Health Officers.

The core tasks and responsibilities of Mental Health Officers stem from 3 main Acts of the Scottish Parliament and these are:

- Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003
- Criminal Procedures (Scotland) Act 1995
- Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000

The Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 has also brought significant additional duties and responsibilities for all council staff including MHOs. There has been consistent demand on MHO services to consider measures under the Adults with Incapacity Act for service users under the multi-agency Adult Protection procedures where Welfare and/or Financial Guardianship is considered necessary to provide safeguarding measures.

A duty Mental Health Officer is available 24 hours a day across the whole council area. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, the MHO service has operated a 'hybrid' model of working involving a blend of office based and home-based working and there has been no impact on the continued delivery of the Duty MHO service.

MHO's continue to undertake the full remit of work under the Mental Health Care and Treatment (Scotland) Act 2003. There has been a decrease in the number of practising MHO's across the Council over the past year due to a number of MHO's leaving the council to take up alternative employment, in some cases leaving the social work profession and in other cases to take promoted posts with other agencies. However, the decrease in absolute numbers of practising MHO's in the Council has been balanced with an increase in FTE numbers of MHOs due to investment and successful recruitment to two dedicated MHO posts, one in the Integrated Discharge Hub at St John's Hospital and another in the dedicated MHO Team. Local pressures in relation to the numbers of practising MHO's in West Lothian remains similar to the national picture where there are significant issues with the demographic of the MHO workforce and recruitment and retention of MHO's. While this is a national issue, West Lothian Council continues to prioritise the training of MHO's with a further two candidates in place to undertake the 2022/2023 MHO course and with two candidates in the process of completing their training from the 2021/22 intake. The establishment of a full-time MHO at the Integrated Discharge Hub at St John's Hospital to assertively progress Guardianship applications and offer advice and guidance in relation to lawful discharges from hospital has been well-received.

A short-life group continues to operate to implement change in relation to the findings of the Mental Welfare Commission; Authority to Discharge Report, 2021. A training needs analysis has been completed and a rolling programme of training related to the recommendations of the Report has been implemented. There is ongoing work related to the introduction of improved recording practices and of audit procedures related to hospital discharges where an issue related to 'mental incapacity' has been identified.

The numbers of Emergency Detentions under the Mental Health Act have continued to rise nationally but these detentions are increasingly done without MHO involvement although the number of recorded MHO assessments in this regard in West Lothian has remained relatively static since 2020/21. There has been a slight decrease in the number of Short-Term Detentions completed locally over the past year but a significant increase in the number of Compulsory Treatment Order applications over the same period. The Mental Welfare Commission reports a national increase in the rates of detention for Emergency Detention, Short-Term Detention and Compulsory Treatment Orders.

A significant part of the work and responsibility of a Mental Health Officer is work emanating from the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000. Under the Act, the council has a protective function towards those adults who lack capacity. The largest area of work for MHOs under the 2000 Act continues to fall within Part 6 of the Act, namely Intervention Orders and Guardianship Orders.

Since the introduction of the 2000 Act, the trend in Guardianships has changed significantly and the number of applications granted by the Sheriff Courts continue to rise year on year. Guardianships are now routinely granted for a time limited period by the Court which has led to an increase in demand in relation to provision of MHO reports for renewal of Guardianship applications.

Over the current reporting period there has been an increase of over 40% in renewal applications on the previous year. There has also been a significant increase in the total number of applications for Guardianship and Intervention Orders made within the Council area in the past year, rising from 73 in the previous reporting period to 121 in the current period. This increase is likely to reflect in some part the return to 'normal business' in the Court system following the Covid pandemic but also reflects a greater awareness of the need for legal measures to protect the human rights of adults who lack capacity.

There has also been an increase in the number of younger adults with learning disabilities being made subject to Guardianship due to a greater awareness of legal rights and safeguards for service users transitioning from child to adult services.

There remains a trend towards an increased number of private applications for Guardianship as opposed to local authority applications which is consistent with the picture across Scotland. Local authority applications continue to tend to relate to individuals where there are significant vulnerabilities and safeguarding issues where Guardianship is viewed as a protective measure.

The increase in the staffing establishment of the MHO resource within the Council over the reporting period has meant that there has been a marked improvement in the reduction of waiting times for the allocation of MHOs to prepare statutory reports in relation to applications under the 2000 Act by the end of this reporting period. There have also been marked improvements in relation to local authority responsibilities in relation to the supervision of Welfare Guardians due to investment in staffing and successful recruitment within the MHO service.

The following table indicates assessments undertaken under the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
New Guardianships granted	Private 69 CSWO 12	Private 50 CSWO 19	Private 90 CSWO 26
Total	81	69	116
Existing Guardianships	Private 269 CSWO 57	Private 326 CSWO 66	Private 350 CSWO 73
Total	326	392	423
New Intervention Orders	10	8	4

The following table indicates assessments undertaken under the Mental Health (Care & Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Emergency Detention Certificates – Sec 36	44	38	56	54
Short term Detention Certificates – Sec 44	153	163	210	199
Compulsory Treatment Orders (new applications)	48	37	39	64
Assessments (Sect 86, 92, 95)	352	336	431	471

2.4.2 Looked After Children and Young People

Local Authorities are responsible for providing care and support for Looked After Children whether at home, within their kinship network, residing in foster care, residential houses or school and in secure care accommodation. The number of looked after children in West Lothian has reduced by 6% overall from on average 411 in 2020/21 to 384 in 2021/22. A contributing factor to this is the reduction in children who are looked after at home.

The total number of Children Looked After in West Lothian at 31/03/2021 and 31/03/2022 by statute and length of time under statute is detailed in the table below:

Looked After Children												
	Under 1		1-4		5-11		12-15		16+		Total	
	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022
At Home with parents	1	1	14	7	40	24	23	21	4	4	82	57
Away from home – Community setting	12	13	48	65	110	105	71	72	29	32	270	287
Away from home – Residential setting	0	0	0	0	3	1	18	22	9	9	30	32
Secure care	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Total	13	14	62	72	153	129	112	115	43	45	383	376

In line with the findings and recommendations of the Independent Care Review (2020), West Lothian is committed to delivering services for children and families in line with The Promise. There has been investment by resource shifting from residential services to earlier intervention and intensive family support services to prevent children becoming looked after.

The percentage of children being looked after in the community for 2021/22 is 91% which is a slight decrease from 92% in 2020/21. It continues to be a priority in West Lothian for children and young people to be cared for in their family and community with Family Group Decision Making routinely being utilised to enable families to come together to make plans to prevent children becoming accommodated or to promote a return home at the earliest opportunity. New kinship care support staff have been appointed who are providing support for children and carers. Four weekly review meetings are taking place with the team around the child for all children looked after away from home. This is in addition to formal My Planning Meetings to ensure timely progression of care plans with the aim of identifying and addressing any problems in planning as they arise and supporting return home to family or kinship networks where that is possible.

The service is committed to reducing the number of children and young people placed out with West Lothian in external foster care and residential placements. Ongoing recruitment campaigns aim to increase the number of West Lothian foster carers and supported young adult placements, alongside a focus on utilising and supporting family and kinship placements. The appointment of a Transitions Worker will further target the return of children home or into an internal provision more local to their home communities.

For children and young people accommodated out with West Lothian, care plans are continually reviewed to explore a return to care and support locally. Young people who are looked after are being supported with transitions to independent living through close partnership with Housing and third sector. This includes stabilising current care arrangements, support with independent living skills, assessing need and support with appropriate move on options at the right time. This has allowed matching young people to suitable support packages and accommodation provision when making the transition from being looked after.

In November 2021, the National Transfer Scheme became mandatory for all Local Authorities due to the increasing numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) entering the UK. West Lothian Council is allocated children through a rota-based system. To date 4 young people are being supported by the service and cared for by internal and partner resources. It is anticipated that the rate of young people arriving in West Lothian through this program will further increase due to the high numbers of arrivals by boat to the UK.

In the design of its services, Social Policy is taking account of responsibilities for unaccompanied children and is working with its accommodation providers in relation to how young people can transition to independent living successfully at the right time.

Permanence planning and adoption

Achieving early permanence and stability is crucial to enhancing the life chances of care experienced children and young people. Towards this aim, West Lothian Council continues to implement the aims of the Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) programme, applying improvement methodology to identify and address any areas of delay in securing permanence for looked after children. Initial improvements have been impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic. The target for all children (under the age of 12) to have a timely decision regarding permanence in 2019 was 62.9 weeks from the date the child was accommodated. By 31 March 2020 this figure had been reduced to 53.4 weeks. On 31 March 2022 the length of time for children requiring a permanence decision has increased to 71.6 weeks. Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021 children looked after and under the age of 5 in need of permanence through an Adoption or Permanence Order, had this decision made within 43.1 weeks. By the 31 March 2022 this timescale increased to 57.2 weeks.

The Covid 19 pandemic presented immediate challenges in service delivery and performance to the targets set. Initial lockdowns and restrictions directly impacted on capacity to undertake the rigorous assessments needed to inform permanence planning and the intensity of support that could be provided to families leading to many assessments and plans becoming outdated. This has hampered the speed at which permanence planning could progress. Consequently, there has been delays in assessment and planning and in the numbers of children being presented at the Adoption and Permanence Panel. Simultaneously the pandemic has impacted staffing, and the functioning or reduced capacity of partner agencies to operate including the Courts.

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Children registered for adoption	7	6	4
Children matched to adopters	6	6	5
Children registered for permanence order with authority to adopt	6	4	3
All children under the age of 12 registered for permanence excluding kinship/residence orders	7	11	6

Despite the challenges West Lothian Council has been able to make some progress reducing the timescales in lodging legal applications in Court to slightly below pre-pandemic levels.

West Lothian Council continues to have a 100% success rate in family finding for children requiring adoption. This has been achieved by improvements in the use of Child Assessment and Permanence Reports (CAPR), matching considerations reports alongside the ongoing commitment to working in partnership with Adoptions Agencies.

Social work services continue to work in partnership with St Andrew's Children's Society to deliver concurrent planning, avoiding unnecessary delay in making permanent plans for very young children in families where children have previously been removed on a permanent basis. Children are placed with concurrent carers who will be their foster carers while West Lothian Council pursues a rehabilitation plan with the parents. If the child cannot return to birth parents, the concurrent carers, who are already caring for the child petition the Court to adopt the child in line with their wishes. There are currently two children placed with concurrent carers.

West Lothian Council is currently looking at ways to build upon and broaden the adoption service. Including examining how this service currently operates, reviewing existing policy and procedure, staff knowledge and skills and the support provided for adopted children and their families. Work is ongoing to ensure we deliver high quality, robust assessments and advance the knowledge, skills and confidence of our workforce. Consultation and peer support is routinely made available. Every adopted child has an adoption support plan. Adopted children requiring therapeutic services are routed through the Mental Health and Wellbeing screening group. This includes counselling, parenting, play therapy and resilience services. Post adoption support is also provided via arrangements with partner adoption agencies.

Continuing Care

Continuing Care was established by the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 and offers looked after young people the right to remain in their care setting until aged 21 years. On 31 March 2022, West Lothian were supporting 34 young people in continuing care placements: 15 remained with foster carers, 12 with kinship carers and 7 in residential care. For the young people, the benefits of continuing care include continuity of care and provision of a stable home and the opportunity for further preparation for leaving care at the right time for them.

There are challenges in relation to the available funding supporting legal duties placed on local authorities and this and resulting capacity pressures contributes to the budget pressures experienced by children and families social work services in West Lothian.

Through Care and After Care

The throughcare and aftercare service continue to support young people transitioning from being looked after and those previously looked after. The service works closely with housing and third sector partners to support moving towards independence and also to sustain tenancies. Staff are

also working with partners to support young people in further education/employment, budgeting and financial matters, as well as many aspects of health and wellbeing. On 31 March 2022, of the 309 young people eligible for aftercare, 122 were in receipt of a service. During the pandemic, throughcare staff made contact with those who were not in receipt of a service and maintained links with young people who were open to having ongoing contact. The service is reviewing the capacity for this going forward and also considering other ways to support young people, for example, a drop-in resource with partners.

Secure Accommodation of Children

Secure care placements have been used in specific circumstances of high risk during the last year where it is assessed there is no safe alternative for care. There have been three young people in Secure Care during the reporting year, with two of these being new placements. The Children and Young People's Commissioner Scotland undertook an investigation into secure care across Scotland between 2018 and 2019 and published its report, Statutory Duties in Secure Accommodation: Unlocking Children's Rights, in 2021 making recommendations for local authorities and Scottish Government. Since this investigation, there has been full review of local guidance, processes and recording requirements to ensure compliance with legal duties and competence of staff in assessing the need for secure care and ensuring the rights of children and their families are promoted and upheld throughout these processes.

2.4.3 Protection and Risk Management

The assessment and management of risk posed to individual children, adults at risk of harm and the wider community, are part of the core functions of social work.

The effective management of risk depends on a number of factors, including:

- Qualified, trained and supported staff, with effective professional supervision
- Clear policies and procedures and use of agreed or accredited assessment tools and processes
- Consistency of standards and thresholds across teams, service and organisational boundaries
- Effective recording and information sharing
- Good quality performance management data to inform resource allocation and service improvement
- Multi-disciplinary and inter-agency trust and collaboration.

Reflecting the importance of joint working, the following multi-agency mechanisms are well established in West Lothian:

- West Lothian Chief Officers Group
- West Lothian Child Protection Committee
- West Lothian Adult Support and Protection Committee
- Gender Based Violence Committee
- Offender Management (MAPPA) Committee
- Community Justice Partnership

Membership of the Chief Officers Group (COG) allows the Chief Social Work Officer to have an overview of related risk management activity, both within the council and across agencies. As Chair of the Child Protection Committee, the CSWO also meets quarterly with the Chairs

of all the public protection committees in West Lothian and the ADP Chair to share relevant learning, identify cross cutting themes and consider any actions needed.

Each of the areas of Public Protection has a performance framework in place with regular reporting to the COG and Community Planning Strategic Group.

Child Protection

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Child protection referrals	413	422	410	428
Joint Investigations	193	173	156	180
Initial and Pre-birth Child Protection Case Conferences	84	122	101	119

The West Lothian CPC is the local body for developing, implementing and improving child protection strategy across and between agencies and the local community. The CPC performs a number of crucial functions in order to jointly identify and manage risk to children and young people, monitor and improve performance and promote the ethos that “its everyone’s job to make sure I’m alright”.

The key functions of the West Lothian CPC are; continuous improvement, public information, engagement and participation, strategic planning and connections and reporting annually on the work of the CPC. West Lothian CPC has 3 subcommittees to support its work: Quality Assurance & Self Evaluation (QASE), Practice and Training (P&T) and a Learning Review (LR) subcommittee. A multi-agency group of senior staff meets fortnightly to review all IRDs for quality assurance purposes, to monitor practice and to identify emerging themes which are reported to the Child Protection Committee. A management Information Group analyses data on a quarterly basis and reports to the CPC.

The CPC has strong links with the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group with its overall oversight and leadership of Getting It Right for Every Child in West Lothian and promotes partnership working to keep children and young people safe, provide strong and clear leadership and direction, ensures staff learning and development, evaluates performance and ensures continuous improvement and communicates and engages with children, young people and families.

There has been a range of improvement activity started and completed over the reporting year. This has included taking forward learning from an SCR themed on child neglect, auditing and evaluating practice in cases where children’s names were reregistered on the child protection register, embedding improvements after developing revised approaches to reports and chronologies at child protection core groups. A pilot to produce a multi-agency chronology and core group report for 6-month child protection review case conferences was positively evaluated by the Quality Assurance Self Evaluation (QASE) subcommittee, partners and parents and is now embedded in practice. Parental attendance is encouraged at CPCCs and barriers to non-attendance explored after each CPCC. Participation of children and young people is being reviewed to ensure there is meaningful engagement.

It was identified that the role of case conference chairs should be strengthened to be more robust in case conferences to ensure plans address identified risks and are reviewed to

evidence impact. Audit activity identified that some reports were lengthy and a need to refocus on analysis of information to improve the quality of some assessments.

Two cases met the criteria for a Significant Case Review. It was agreed that both cases should be considered as part of a wider review to identify the barriers to changing culture and practice. The review report was completed in December 2021 and the subcommittees have been developing plans, incorporated into the CPC Improvement Plan 2022-2024 to address the issues identified in the report. There were several messages to emerge from case reviews, feedback and surveys undertaken about the barriers to embedding learning into practice. Work has begun to more embed a learning culture to ensure that staff are involved in and aware of the need for any practice changes and how it will be achieved and how we can better engage them in this work. Staff have consistently spoken of the benefits of multi-agency events allowing them to build relationships, understand each other's roles and responsibilities and hear different perspectives. It is also recognised that one off formal training increases knowledge but to embed change, this learning also needs to be talked about, reinforced and reiterated by managers and practitioners.

The CPC also recognises that for the different professionals involved in child protection core groups there are varying levels of supervision in place for time to reflect. Core group supervision will be built into the child protection process, delivered by a Social Work Team Manager independent of the case and a template and approach developed to support this. The impact of this change will be evaluated.

The new approach to joint interviewing of children (Scottish Child Interview Model) has been implemented in West Lothian following a commitment to the intensive training programme for police and social work staff. Further work is needed and planned as to the development of the Bairn's Hoose concept in West Lothian.

The updated 2021 National Child Protection Guidance has been published, incorporating UNCRC and fundamentals of the Promise. In light of this the Edinburgh and the Lothian child protection procedures are in process of being updated and implications for local practice assessed and planned for.

Adults Support and Protection

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Adult Protection Referrals	732	799	1,116	1,491
Inter-agency Referral Discussions (IRDs)	147	195	171	139
Adult Protection Case Conferences				
(this includes Adult Protection Case Conference Reviews)	82	82	70	75

The Adult Protection Committee (APC) has a leadership role in working with partners to ensure the continuous improvement of adult protection services in West Lothian. The Committee provides links with wider adult support services and reinforces and develops, through joint multi-agency practice, the integration of adult support and protection services across West Lothian.

The APC works in close collaboration with the West Lothian Child Protection Committee, Gender Based Violence Committee and Offender Management Committee, sharing information, communicating and co-ordinating protection policies and practices for adults, children and family services, and justice services.

The APC in the delivery of its key objectives is supported by the work of its Quality Assurance subcommittee and a practice and training subcommittee.

The Quality Assurance Subcommittee is responsible for audit and quality assurance activity in relation to the key processes associated with Adult Support and Protection. Audit activity provides assurance to the APC that key processes are meeting their agreed aims in protecting adults at risk of harm. The subcommittee also considers the learning from other National sources such as published Significant Case Reviews.

Over the reporting period, West Lothian has not undertaken any significant case reviews, however has progressed two initial case reviews. These have provided important learning actions. For example, highlighting the importance of multi-agency information sharing to ensure continued focus on Adult Support and Protection when working with individuals who find it difficult to engage with support they receive.

Whilst there have been no Large-Scale Investigations over this reporting period, there has been one multi agency meeting held under the terms of the Large-Scale Investigation protocol. Multi-agency meetings provide a robust framework to share information, identify risks and determine if any immediate action is necessary to minimise risk.

The Practice and Training subcommittee links with the quality assurance sub-committee to ensure their work plan reflects necessary training. To date this has informed key activities relating to the strengthening of Adult Support and Protection process including – Duty to Inquire, use of chronologies and risk assessment.

Understanding the experiences of individuals, families and carers who come into contact with adult support and protection arrangements is a key area of development we will also focus on over the next reporting period.

A full review of local Adult Support and Protection procedures has been progressed to ensure these align with developing practice and revised codes of practice.

West Lothian's Appropriate Adult service deploys an Appropriate Adult to support people to understand what is happening and to be understood, during police investigations. They provide support to people aged 16 years and over with communication support needs.

The purpose of the West Lothian statutory Appropriate Adult service is to fulfil the duties from the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 (Support for Vulnerable Persons) Regulations 2019 to Local Authorities - which came into force on 10 January 2020.

West Lothian continues to have representation at national and Pan Lothian Appropriate Adult groups and forums. The Appropriate Adult Coordinator holds meetings with Appropriate Adults and circulates the COSLA Appropriate Adult newsletter to support them in their role and remit. New Appropriate Adults will be trained using the national eLearning training programme.

During 2021/22 there has been a further increase in the number of Adult Support and Protection referrals compared to the previous year, a trend that is replicated nationally.

Additional Scottish Government funding has been utilised to strengthen our approach to managing adult support and protection concerns. A centralised team has been developed to ensure there is a robust and consistent approach to all aspects of ASP activity. The team are located with the Adult Social Care Enquiry Team (ASCET) to ensure early identification of adult protection issues at initial point of referral. The team will work closely with both multi agency partners and other teams to ensure individuals receive the necessary levels of support and protection.

The Care Inspectorate with partners from Healthcare Improvement Scotland and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland undertook a joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection arrangements within West Lothian in May 2022. The findings from this inspection were published by the Care Inspectorate in September 2022.

The inspection report identifies a number of key strengths and identified areas for improvement. Against the two quality indicators the inspectors identified weaknesses within key processes, whilst assessing that there was effective strategic leadership with clear strengths in supporting positive experiences and outcomes.

A social work improvement plan has been drafted with key actions to address the necessary improvements for social work services. This work will be monitored by a social work leadership board. The APC will oversee the development and review of the partnership improvement plan which will contain the single agency social work improvements.

Justice Services - Statutory Supervision

The responsibility for Community Justice rests with the Community Planning Partnership. In West Lothian this has been undertaken by the Community Justice Partnership which is part of the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership structure. The revised National Strategy for Community Justice was launched in June 2022 and it includes four national aims and associated priority actions. The West Lothian *Community Justice Outcome Activity Annual Report* has been submitted. The Community Justice planning partnership is now working on a revised action plan and will ensure this aligns to the Outcome Performance Improvement Framework (OPIF) when it is revised in April 2023.

	At 31 March 2020			At 31 March 2021			At 31 March 2022		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
CPO requirement for supervision	269	48	317	136	27	163	266	41	307
CPO with a requirement for unpaid work	253	28	281	94	3	97	189	18	207
Drug treatment and testing orders	13	0	13	6	1	7	7	3	10
Number of individuals subject to Statutory Through Care	160	3	163	153	2	155	159	2	161

The figures in the table detail the new orders put in place during the period April 2021 to March 2022 and does not reflect existing orders that can be in place for up to 3 years. Post custodial sentence (Justice Throughcare) can be for life.

In respect of the volume of new cases that could be processed through the courts, this is now back up to almost pre-pandemic levels. The Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 provisions which allowed for the early release of specific prisoners, and a 35% reduction of some unpaid work orders and the extension of time to complete said orders has now expired.

The Scottish Government committed in its 2019-20 Programme for Government to extend the presumption against short sentence of 12 months or less, once additional safeguards for victims in the Domestic Abuse (Scotland) Act 2018 were in force. We anticipate a likely increase in the need for more community-based support. In the last two years, Justice nationally has developed and implemented a range of alternatives to custody. Enhanced Direct Measures including the expansion and further development of bail which includes supervision and electronic monitoring along with a national drive to increase the uptake of Diversion from Prosecution is in progress. In addition, the introduction of Structured Deferred Sentences should afford further options for community sentencing alongside Community Payback Order and Drug Treatment and Testing Orders.

The management of high risk sexual and violent offenders in the community is one of the highest priorities for Justice services and Police working together. Housing and Health services along with other statutory agencies also play a significant role in the detailed multi-agency public protection procedures which are followed in West Lothian. This activity requires to be reported to Scottish Ministers.

When subject to statutory supervision on release from prison or community supervision, such individuals require to comply with any conditions attached to their licence / orders. They are subject to robust risk management which is regularly reviewed. If the individual breaches any of the conditions imposed on them, they may be subject to further investigation or a recall to prison, either by Scottish Ministers, the Parole Board or the Courts.

Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) are defined in legislation and national guidance currently applies to the management of all registered sex offenders. In West Lothian these arrangements are well established. In the last few years Scotland has now implemented MAPPA Category 3 which covers very high-risk violent offenders. This supports multi-agency risk management of the critical few which can include high risk domestic cases. Justice Services along with Police and Health are the key responsible authorities that manage those subject to MAPPA in the community.

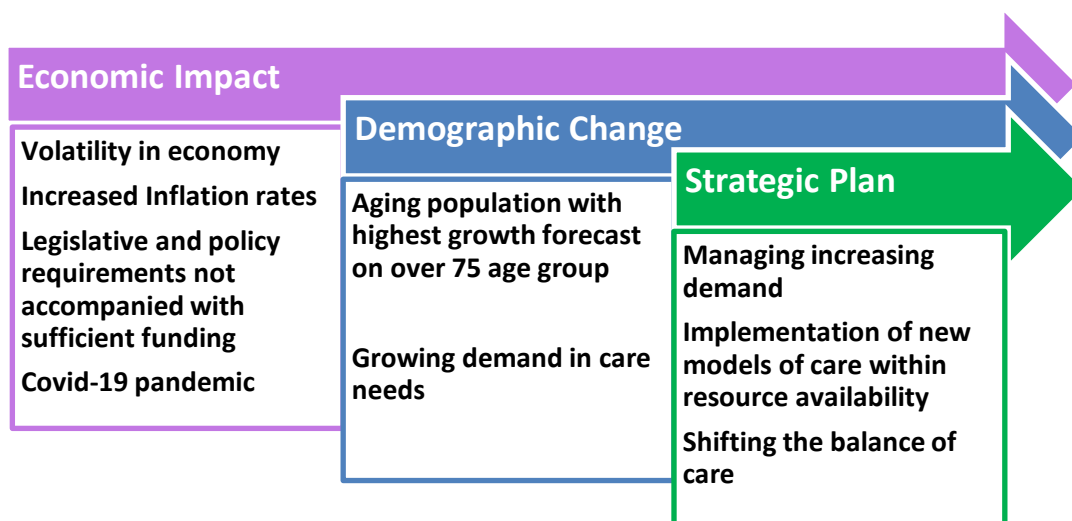
Young people in conflict with the law are also managed through either the above MAPPA Process or in line with the Young Person Risk Management Procedure (YPRMP) depending on age and stage of development or the statutory and legal status of the child/young person. The impact of the change in Age of Criminal Responsibility has required us to review how we support children who will no longer meet the threshold for Early and Effective interventions. Whilst small numbers, the ethos of early intervention has resulted in close partnership working with local Police to ensure these cases are still identified. For young people in the adult justice system, the national focus of the new pre and post sentence orders are particularly welcomed to support young people. The Youth Justice Team provide the knowledge and skill required to work with young people and support them to engage with any statutory requirement imposed by the Procurator Fiscal or the Courts. No young people received a custodial sentence between 2021 and 2022.

The Up2U Domestic Abuse programme is established within the Justice Service. The Courts and Parole services are now actively mandating attendance via community disposals / licence conditions. The programme can be tailored to work with both males and females from the age of 16 years and can also be delivered for people who use domestically abusive behaviours in same sex relationships. No evaluation of the programme was possible due to the limited number of clients who completed the programme over the last year. Now that pandemic restrictions have eased, an increase in delivery including group work is anticipated which will allow for evaluation.

3. Resources

The medium-term financial plan plays an important role in informing the planning and prioritisation of future service delivery, and strategic planning and commissioning. Financial planning assumptions are reviewed on an ongoing basis to take account of events such as changes to funding levels, economic forecasts, care demands and policy decisions impacting on the delivery of social work services.

Medium-term financial planning requires to take account of a number of risks as summarised below:



In February 2018 West Lothian Council agreed a five-year revenue budget strategy including measures to address a budget gap of £65.3 million over the five years from 2018/19 to 2022/23. The Social Policy element of these savings was £23.3 million. Social Policy delivered £5,583,000 of these savings in 2021/22. The council is now in the fifth year of this strategy and continues with its ambitious project management approach to ensuring a break-even budget is achieved at the end of each financial year.

The total net expenditure for Social Policy in 2021/22 was £114,549,000 which represented an overspend of £79,000, due to pressures in external placements for children within residential schools, continuing care and foster care placements.

There remain a number of significant pressure areas as outlined below

3.1 Financial Pressures

- External Placements for Looked After Children
- Residential Care for Older People
- Care at Home for Adults with Learning Disabilities

These areas are all subject to ongoing monitoring and all form part of the council's redesign programme that will ensure that we can continue to deliver quality services within the available budget.

During a time that has been particularly challenging, due to the disproportionate effect that the pandemic has had on vulnerable people, social care resources continue to be focused on supporting those most in need. The health and social care joint strategic commissioning plans are focused on supporting people through this difficult time, whilst also continuing to deliver services in new and innovative ways such as expanding the use of technology. The increasing complexity of care requirements means that there will be an ongoing need to develop more sustainable delivery models. This will result in a greater emphasis on prevention and supporting people within their home environment.

3.2 Social Services Delivery Landscape

West Lothian is in Central Scotland, has a population of approximately 183,820 (National Records of Scotland 2020 mid-year estimate). This is an increase of 0.4% from 183,100 in 2019.

It covers an area of 165 square miles, two thirds of which are predominantly used for agriculture and a tenth of the area is taken up by urban development. In the east-central band there is a large shale oil field, whilst the area in the west is dominated by Scotland's central coalfield. Both of these natural resources were greatly exploited in the 19th and early 20th centuries and contributed to the development of a number of West Lothian's communities. The rapid development of these 'boom' communities meant the loss of these industries was felt heavily, and this legacy has resulted in some small but prominent concentrations of deprivation.

Between 2018 and 2028, the population of West Lothian is projected to increase from 182,140 to 192,812. This is an increase of 5.9%, which compares to a projected increase of 1.8% for Scotland as a whole.

West Lothian had the 9th highest population in 2020, out of all 32 council areas in Scotland. Between 1998 and 2020, the population of West Lothian has increased by 20.0%. This is the 2nd highest percentage change out of the 32 council areas in Scotland. Over the same period, Scotland's population rose by 7.7%.

Between 2018 and 2028, the 0 to 15 age group is projected to see the largest percentage decrease (-5.4%) and the 75 and over age group is projected to see the largest percentage increase (+39.4%). In terms of size, however, 45 to 64 is projected to remain the largest age group.

Inequalities

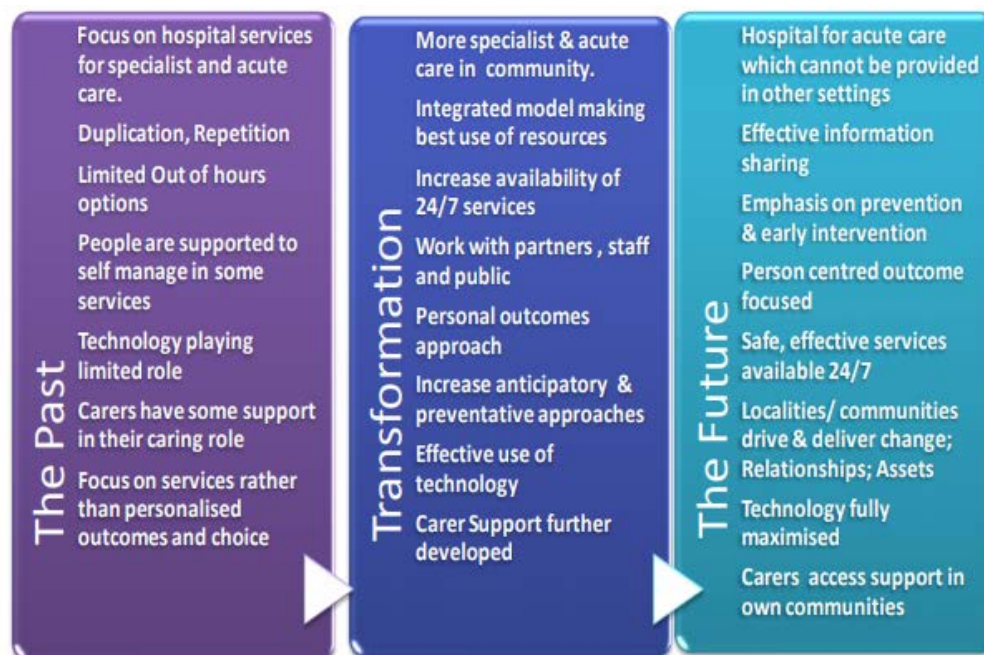
There is increasing evidence that the impact of Covid-19 is likely to widen existing inequalities and may have a disproportionate impact on groups of people already facing challenge and disadvantage. It is as yet unclear what the lasting impact of Coronavirus will be but there will undoubtedly be poorer health and economic outcomes for some. It is recognised that we will need to collaborate closely with stakeholders across health and social care, community planning and the third sector to build new ways of working to support people.

- Latest estimates (2020/21) show that 21.1% of children in West Lothian experience poverty. This is a reduction from 24.6% in 2019/20. This is likely due to the implementation of Scottish policies such as the Scottish Child Payment as rates appears to be lower across all 32 Scottish local authorities.
- SIMD 2020 shows that West Lothian has 35 data zones in the 20% most deprived areas.
- 19% of West Lothian residents experience fuel poverty and 9% experience extreme fuel poverty
- 14.5% earn below living wage (2021 – latest estimates)

Social Policy is committed to contributing to the delivery of the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy 2018-23 and the Child Poverty Action Plan.

Strategic Commissioning

Strategic commissioning is the term used for all the activities involved in assessing and forecasting needs, linking investment to agreed outcomes, considering options, planning the nature, range and quality of future services and working in partnership to put these in place. This includes challenging historical spending patterns in light of what we know about our population needs and in particular managing the major trends of a growing, ageing population with increasing comorbidity.



A strategic approach has been taken to commissioning and there is commitment to working with partners to:

- Empower people to live independently through applying the principles of personalisation in the way in which we commission services.
- Undertake appropriate consultation and involvement with service users and their carers to achieve their agreed outcomes when commissioning services.
- Engage positively with providers of health and social care services in the public, voluntary and private sector.
- Adhere to relevant procurement legislation and guidance and ensure that services are commissioned in a way that is fair, transparent and open;
- Ensure that quality, equality and best value principles are embedded through our commissioning processes.

Commissioning is an ongoing and evolving process and our approach is based on an annual Analyse, Plan, Do and Review cycle

Strategic Commissioning Plans

The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 placed a duty on Integration Authorities to develop a 'strategic plan' for integrated functions and budgets under their control. In compliance with this requirement, strategic commissioning plans have been developed for all adult care groups. These strategic commissioning plans incorporate the important role of informal, community capacity building and asset-based approaches, to deliver more effective

preventative and anticipatory interventions, in order to optimise wellbeing and the potential to reduce unnecessary demand at the 'front door' of the formal health and social care system.

The IJB's strategic plan and strategic commissioning plans will help inform decisions around prioritisation of resources, new models of service delivery and disinvestment decisions, all of which will be necessary in the medium-term financial planning process associated with health and social care services. The implications arising from Covid-19 on delivery of care services are being taken account of in the ongoing review of strategic commissioning plans.

With regard to future years, health and social care services will be faced with significant challenges to meet demands and operate within tight fiscal constraints for the foreseeable future. The implications associated with Covid-19 will further increase the financial challenges and may impact on current plans to meet demands. In line with the Board's agreed approach to IJB financial planning, budget plans have been and continue to be developed across IJB health and social care functions with the objective that overall health and social care considerations are taken into account in joint IJB / Partner financial planning.

In 2022/23 strategic commissioning plans will be developed for services for children and families and also for Community Justice services.

4. Workforce

4.1 Workforce Planning and development

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the workforce planning context for health and social care services has changed radically.

In recognition of these unprecedented circumstances, Scottish Government has asked for all Health and Social Care Partnerships to provide workforce plans outlining within a local context how they intend to meet the challenges of this change. All HSCPs are asked to provide integrated workforce plans for the period 2022-25. A working group has been established across the Health and Social Care Partnership to take this work forward.

The initial development of the plan was formed through a series of engagement events with staff groups and a short online survey to gauge views on what skills the workforce will require as we progress, what career paths and development staff would like to see and what would good look like for them and the development of their service. Virtual meetings based on these questions were held with senior and group managers and an e-survey circulated amongst staff. The plan has been developed following this feedback with 4 emerging themes of: Effective Management; The right structure for teams; A nurtured and empowered workforce; A workforce that can deliver excellence.

Health and Social Care services have been under increasing recruitment pressures that have been exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Recruitment in this area is challenging and is an area of national concern. Efforts have focussed on identifying potential routes into social care and where there might be success in recruiting new people. These include those returning to the workforce, those seeking a career change, those impacted by the pandemic and in attracting younger people to the profession.

A new Business Support Officer post has been recruited to support Careers in Care. This post will support the recruitment of unqualified staff to Care Homes and Care at Home Service and

the undertaking of SVQ2 Social Care and Health qualification achievement to support SSSC registration requirements for these staff. The post incorporates a mentoring scheme to support staff in their new role and support the retention of staff.

Lothian Care Academy Mentoring Programme

The mentoring programme is linked to the development of Lothian Care Academy whose main objectives are;

1. To agree the soft skills required to take on a role in care and identify the means where staff are able to develop these skills.
2. To understand pastoral workplace support, required for health and social care workers.
3. To identify the initial barriers for a career in care and how to alleviate these barriers.

The workstream taking forward this work has progressed over the past year with the aim of launching a mentoring programme and this began in May 2022. The Mentoring Programme has 2 pilots running, one within Social Policy Business Support Customer and Community team and one within a Care Home in Edinburgh. The Edinburgh pilot is trialling an 'in house' support with experienced carers supporting new care staff. West Lothian Council are providing external mentoring support for both Care Homes and Support at Home.

Mentoring roles have now been established in both pilots with the Edinburgh Care Home identifying 5 mentors, with 1 mentor currently matched with 1 mentee. West Lothian have 1 mentor matched to 12 mentees', this has been developing over a longer period from February 2022. The evaluation of the mentorship programme will take place in August 2022, with the aim; 'By 30 August 2022 the Lothian Care Academy will develop a mentorship programme to increase the recruitment, retention and support for 75% of participating staff to increase the retention rate by 5%'.

In the longer term, the post will seek to expand opportunities for careers in care with the young workforce and those looking for new career direction and the continuing development of the Lothian Care Academy.

There have been several recruitment campaigns across social media, on council website, on advertising boards in shopping centres and banners developed for use in and around Council and NHS premises. The autumn 2021 social media campaign reached over 100,000 people and was shared over 4,000 times. The campaign resulted in 66 enquiries, 34 applications and 23 appointments. Further campaigns have resulted in the recruitment of 8 additional care workers.

An internal recruitment campaign for staff working across the council resulted in 65 inquiries and 20 applications to assist with providing cover for sickness absence and annual leave. This campaign has recruited 15 people to support these services. Work is now underway to incorporate these staff into the existing Locum Bureau.

There are established links with Access2Employment, in particular for young people who would be supported through the Jobs Fund process. This fund is aimed at young people aged 16-25 years to support them into work. Young people are paid an allowance and are supported to achieve qualifications leading to permanent employment. Four opportunities have been created in Care Homes and 5 in Care at Home. As a consequence, opportunities were explored to support adults within the long-term unemployment programme to provide adults aged 25 years+ with a 6-month placement of between 16 and 30hrs per week paid at

Living Wage rate. Two placements are now established within the Home Safety Service supporting enhancement and roll out of TEC supports.

A programme of HNC/HND placements for students from West Lothian College has been developed. All four of the directly provided Care Homes are taking part in this with 7 students on placement within the care homes 2 days per week for the next 6 months. It is hoped that on completion of their studies, students will have enjoyed their experience of working in our care homes and will be better placed to seek full time employment.

A partnership programme was established with West Lothian College to develop opportunities through the Skills Boost programme. Two courses have been developed. An introduction to technology that linked with a pilot project to issue tablets/iPads to care workers and the drive towards more digital processes within the service. Staff used their allocated tablets and participated in various sessions including introduction to ICT, staying safe online, the use of MS Teams and connecting with people, Wellbeing and taking care of yourself whilst working in social care, PVG applications, SSSC and use of MyHR.

The 2nd course is a two-week social care (Skill Boost Programme) induction course for new staff which will form part of their induction. The first session took place in May 2022 for 20 members of staff from Support at Home, Care Homes and Housing with Care. The second session will take place in October 2023 and this will form part of our into work recruitment programme for care homes and care at home.

There is a planned programme of work to support the recruitment of new social workers with a dedicated post to support this at the heart of it. In 2021 a concentrated effort was made to increase the number of social work student placements available. A review of current Practice Educators (PE) was carried out and opportunities for experienced social workers to become link workers as part of the SSSC regulations on the resumption of social work student placements. This gave staff the experience of supervising students and resulted in an increase in applications for the Post-graduate course in Practice Education. As a result of this, 13 student placements were offered in 2021 and 5 candidates undertook the PE course. A new Practice Learning (PL) course has been introduced at Edinburgh Napier University and 3 candidates started this course in January 2022.

It is envisioned that the current cycle of student placements will continue and the number of placements increased over the next 2 years to 24 placements per year.

Initial discussions have taken place with the Open University to establish a pathway for existing staff to progress and study for a degree in Social work. Staff do undertake this degree route at present, although difficulties can arise with the requirements of a longer placement as studies progress with one candidate currently accommodated on a 6-month placement. It is hoped to establish reciprocal arrangements across Social Policy service areas to allow staff to work in another service area other than their own to complete the placement requirement.

As well as these routes into Social work, it would be our intention to re-introduce a process to recruit and support 2 candidates per year to study for a degree in Social work.

5. Conclusion

2021/22 has been another challenging year for social work and social care services in West Lothian. The service has continued to manage the changing impact of the Pandemic, manage the demands resulting from this, return to more usual ways of working, continue to focus on

service developments, make improvements to practice and address pandemic related performance dips. This has taken place against a backdrop of a challenging budget position, managing significant areas of demand related pressure, staff recruitment challenges whilst also managing the requirement to meet statutory obligations.

There are many examples of good practice developed or implemented over the last year and these are referenced in this year's report. The impact of some of this work may not yet be fully realised but services are moving forward with a clear strength based strategic direction focused on delivering care and support informed by GIRFEC, The Promise, Coming Home, Home First and Community Justice focus. There is a strong connected theme running through the work social work and social care is engaged in whatever the age range of people being supported or the focus of work. Much of this work will be a continuing priority moving forward as will developing the workforce.

Services delivering protection for West Lothian citizens are of the highest priority and there is ongoing self-evaluation and improvement work in all those areas. A strong focus will remain on strengthening the learning culture across all areas to enable learning opportunities to be fully identified and ensure improvement is embedded and sustained. Addressing the findings of the joint inspection of Adult Support and Protection in West Lothian are of the utmost priority to the Adult Support and Protection Partnership and the CSWO.

The CSWO and relevant managers keep abreast with the progress of the Scottish Child abuse Inquiry and have taken opportunity to reflect on foster care and kinship practice.

The responsiveness and flexibility of teams and leaders continues to be significant and bodes well for the future. This is exemplified by responses to new events such as supporting those from the Ukraine into our communities and also in the persistence and resilience of all those working to identify options to address very enduring and complex issues of workforce availability or complex social work practice improvements.

We will continue in our work to improve and enhance the participation and engagement of service users and carers in decisions affecting their own lives and in informing service planning.

Looking ahead, the role of the Chief Social Work Officer will be significant in ensuring that there is stability across the profession and a continued focus on critical priorities whilst the direction of the future in terms of the National Care Service is decided upon and implemented. It will be important to mitigate against risks presented by uncertainty as the detail of the most significant changes to the professions of social work and social care is awaited.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank all for the excellent work undertaken by social work and social care teams in West Lothian over this last year. The flexibility, dedication, compassion and professionalism they have all shown has been truly outstanding.