



## ***Community Planning Partnership Board***

West Lothian Civic Centre  
Howden South Road  
LIVINGSTON  
EH54 6FF

16 February 2021

A meeting of the **Community Planning Partnership Board** of West Lothian Council will be held within the **Webex Virtual Meeting Room** on **Monday 22 February 2021** at **10:00am**.

For Chief Executive

### **BUSINESS**

#### **Public Session**

1. Apologies for Absence.
2. Declarations of Interest - Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration at the meeting, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest
3. Order of Business, including notice of urgent business and declarations of interest in any urgent business.
4. Confirm Draft Minute of Meeting of the Board held on 30 November 2020 (herewith).
5. Presentation - The 3rd sector Mental Health Forum - by Diane Cameron (herewith).
6. Presentation - Impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of young people - by Declan Harrigan (herewith).
7. Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 - report by Sharon Houston, Social Policy and James Cameron, Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources) (herewith).
8. COVID-19 Data Set - report by Martin Higgins, NHS Lothian (herewith).

9. Dates of Future Meetings -

Monday 24 May 2021

Monday 30 August 2021

Monday 15 November 2021

-----

NOTE **For further information please contact Lorraine McGrorty on 01506 281609 or email [lorraine.mcgrorty@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:lorraine.mcgrorty@westlothian.gov.uk)**

MINUTE of MEETING of the COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP BOARD  
held within VIRTUAL MEETING ROOM, on 30 NOVEMBER 2020.

Present –

Councillor Kirsteen Sullivan (Chair)	West Lothian Council
Councillor Tom Conn	West Lothian Council
Councillor Andrew McGuire	West Lothian Council
Councillor Moira Shemilt	West Lothian Council
Graham Hope (Chief Executive)	West Lothian Council
Elaine Cook (Depute Chief Executive)	West Lothian Council
Graeme Struthers	West Lothian Council
Craig McCorriston	West Lothian Council
Catrina Hatch	West Lothian Council
Jonathan Pryce	Scottish Government
Jim Stewart	SESTran
David Sharp	Scottish Fire & Rescue Service
Angus MacInnes	Police Scotland
Brenda Cumming	West Lothian Chamber of Commerce
John Sives	Joint Forum of Community Councils
Karen Morrison	Scottish Natural Heritage
Brenda Cumming	Chamber of Commerce
Jackie Galbraith	West Lothian College
Alan McCloskey	Voluntary Sector Gateway
Tim Dent	West Lothian Leisure
Allister Short	Integration Joint Board
Gillian Jardine	Jobcentre Plus

In Attendance –

Alice Mitchell	West Lothian Council
Susan Gordon	West Lothian Council
Gillian Amos	NHS Lothian
Martin Higgins	NHS Lothian
Greg Stark	NHS Lothian

Apologies –

Councillor Chris Horne	West Lothian Council
Donald Forrest	West Lothian Council
Neil Christison	Visit Scotland
Suzanne Mann	Jobcentre Plus
Cathi Rankin	Oatridge College
Bill Elliott	Scottish Water
Frank Beattie	Scottish Enterprise
Janice Winning	Scottish Natural Heritage
Neil Christison	Visit Scotland
Heather McNaughton	Historic Environment Scotland
Val Ormiston	Skills Development Scotland

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

2. MINUTE

The Board confirmed the Minute of its meeting held on 30 September

2020 as a correct record.

### 3. IMPACT OF COVID-19 - UPDATE

The Community Planning Partnership Board considered the Impact of Covid-19 report and a powerpoint presentation

The presentation and graphs within the report provided a useful insight into the impact of Covid-19 as at 30<sup>th</sup> November on benefit claimant rates; youth unemployment; furlough and self-employment income support scheme; food support; Scottish Welfare Fund crisis grants and community care grants; self-isolation support grant; school support education maintenance allowance and clothing grants; council tax and rent arrears.

The Board heard that that work was ongoing to look at where robust, reliable data could be captured at a more local level. More up to date data and intelligence on the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing was also being sought so that it could be recognised and better integrated and understood by the CPP.

The report was invited to note the report and presentation.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

### 4. MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Board considered the West Lothian Mental Health Covid-19 Response update report.

The report set out the service response during the pandemic and how services had been mobilised to ensure support remained available. It referred to the new Suicide Prevention Action Plan, which was subject of a separate report, and how this would tie in with the existing whole system approach around public mental health.

To conclude the report anticipated that there would be increased demand for mental health services post Covid-19 and the Health and Social Care Partnership was exploring how to model increase in demand while maximising service provision, including sharing online materials and using digital alternatives wherever possible. Third sector partners would be integral for providing support and care to vulnerable groups and work was ongoing to support their activities wherever possible.

The Board was asked to note the report.

#### Decision

To note the terms of the report.

5. MENTAL HEALTH AND SUICIDE PREVENTION GROUP

The Board considered the Mental Health and Suicide Prevention Group Update report.

The report recommended that the Board:-

1. Discuss and agree the proposed action plan
2. Support the plan by identifying what collective action the Community Planning Partnership could take to support mental health and wellbeing and suicide prevention.

It was suggested that Housing Services should be invited to join the Group as they would offer a valuable contribution, that the levels set out within the example tiered approach be bolstered and that timescales be included in the plan. The plan was a draft and the comments would be taken on board when the plan was being finalised.

Decision

To endorse the draft West Lothian Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2020-2023 subject to the above suggestions.

6. UPDATE ON THE NEW LOCAL OUTCOMES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Board considered the Update on the New Local Outcomes Improvement Plan report.

The Board was invited to:-

- (a) Note the update on progress with the new LOIP.
- (b) Agree that the development of the new LOIP would continue to be kept on hold and revisited in early 2021.

Arising from the discussion it was noted that the implications on the availability of alcohol at home and the impact of the closure of licensed premises would be raised with the Health & Well Being Partnership Group.

The Head of Planning, Economic Development & Regeneration confirmed that the council's Climate Change Group had recommenced meeting and of the plan to extend membership to include partners in the future.

Decision

To note the update and agree that the development of the Local Outcomes Improvement Plan be kept on hold and revisited in early 2021.

7. COMMUNITY JUSTICE ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20

The Board considered the Community Justice Outcome Activity Across Scotland Local Area Annual Report which provided an awareness of the annual report on the progress of the Community Justice Strategic Plan 2019-24 which acted as the Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP) which had been submitted in September 2021.

The CPP Board was asked to:-

- Note the Annual Report for the Community Justice Strategic Plan 2019-24 (including CJ OIP); and
- Note that a report would be submitted to the CPP Board each year on the annual report submitted to Community Justice Scotland.

Decision

To note the terms of the report.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

To note the dates of future meetings of the Board; these being:-

- 22 February 2021
- 24 May 2021



# **Mental Health Forum**

**(formerly West Lothian Third Sector  
Mental Health Support Providers  
Collaborative Group)**

# The Journey

- **“Peer support” from Social Enterprise Academy**
- **June 2020 - 9 Social Enterprises**
- **Key Driver – support is available to all who need it**
- **Today - 25 social enterprises & voluntary organisations**



## **What we've done – Engagement**

- **Greg Stark, NHS, Senior Development Mgr - Mental Health**
- **Wendy Carmichael – Community Wellbeing Hubs**
- **Dr Jane Christie – NHS/ WLHSCP/ GP Liaison**
- **Claire Beswick - Specialist Occupational Therapist**

## What we've done

- **Web - [www.wlsen.org.uk/mentalhealthforum](http://www.wlsen.org.uk/mentalhealthforum)**
- **Mapping – to share with professionals**
- **Leaflet – to distribute within community**

# Mental Health & Wellbeing Support

These are many community-based organisations across West Lothian able to provide support whether that be counselling, support sessions, therapeutic activities or learning.

More information here:  
[www.wlsen.org.uk/mentalhealthforum](http://www.wlsen.org.uk/mentalhealthforum)

or scan the QR code



One to One Counselling & Young People aged 11 to 24



Support & Counselling for disabled adults and unpaid carers including young carers



One to One Counselling for Adults living in West Lothian



Person Centred Counselling for adults living or working in the Polbeth area



Support for people bereaved by suicide

MENTAL HEALTH FORUM SUPPORTED BY **WLSN**



An outdoor woodland programme to support mental health



The Sounding Board provides unlimited support for anyone living in West Lothian



Supporting families with regular struggles



Group Activities & Support for Mental Health



Support aimed at reducing the harm caused by drugs, alcohol & tobacco



Support services and learning & development

**FIREFLYARTS**  
Enriching young lives...

Drama, music and digital project for young people



Support and advice to young people aged 10 to 21



Helping people affected by addiction through recovery



Support to clients over 60 with low moods



Support for young people with additional needs



Therapeutic Services



Therapeutic activities in a garden centre for people with chronic mental health conditions

## **The Future**

- **£100k – tender due - Third Sector Coordinator**
- **£389K – collaboration re CYP Mental Health**
- **Attract additional resource for members**

# S.M.I.L.E COUNSELLING

West Lothian  
Community Planning  
Partnership

# WHO ARE S.M.I.L.E COUNSELLING

- Free Counselling service based in West Lothian
- Created as a response to experiencing the limited access to mental health services for young people in West Lothian
- Offer free, bespoke counselling to 11–24-year-olds
- School's counselling
- Counselling and Mental Health Training

# OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Our aim is to offer a free, bespoke counselling service to children and young people across West Lothian
- To ensure that no child or young person is left behind and they get the support they need when they need it
- We want to take away the luxury that counselling is for the affluent
- Feedback from S3 children – change constitution





# OUR OFFICES



# S.M.I.L.E IMPACT ON LOCAL COMMUNITY

We celebrated our 5-year anniversary in June 2020

- Supported over 500 individuals with 1-2-1 counselling
- That's around 3800 counselling hours in total
- We have delivered group work to over 1500 young people
- Reached over 12,000 local children during lockdown with mental health resources

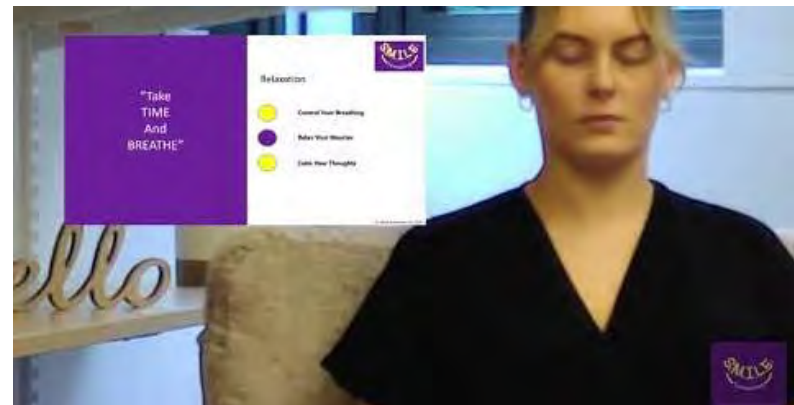


[www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)

## Search for SMILE Counselling



Recognising your own Anxieties



Relaxation



**Making our YouTube videos**



SMILE4SMILE











**We are delighted to be  
sponsoring the training kits of  
Blackburn 2010s this year with  
the amazing support  
from Workflo**







**THANK YOU FOR CHOOSING TO  
SUPPORT US**



## HOW WE ARE KEEPING YOU SAFE



**REMOTE  
WORKING**



**SOCIAL  
DISTANCING**



**GOOD  
HYGEINE**



# Raising Awareness with MSP's on local Mental Health during the COVID -19 Pandemic

# IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON CYP MENTAL HEALTH

- In 2020 S.M.I.L.E have seen a 130% increase in referrals
- 1 in 4 of these referrals have presented as high risk with suicidal thoughts / ideation with the majority being under 16
- Over 40% of these referrals have come from areas of multiple deprivation throughout West Lothian

# COUNSELLING IN SCHOOLS

S.M.I.L.E Counselling now deliver counselling services in one third of the high schools in West Lothian

- James Young High School
- Broxburn Academy
- Saint Margaret's Academy
- Whitburn Academy



## OUR TRAINING DIVISION

- We know that our sustainability cannot rely solely on grants funding forever.
- In Aug 2020 we launched our S.M.I.L.E Training Division delivering a professional counselling certificate accredited by COSCA.
- Our Training Division will create a source of income for our core service of delivering free counselling to CYP. As a result, all training fees charged will go directly back into counselling for CYP in West Lothian



# Our Training Courses



[www.smilecounselling.org.uk/training](http://www.smilecounselling.org.uk/training)



## OUR TRAINING DIVISION

- As well as delivering the COSCA professional counselling qualification we have also written our own Mental Health Training Course through 2020.
- S.M.I.L.E Mental Wellbeing and Health (M.W.A.H) Training
- M.W.A.H Training encompasses 2 qualifications, one in safeguarding level 2 and also an SQA Level 7 - HNC (tbc).
- Our aim is to increase knowledge, skills and understanding of topics many of us may encounter but not know how to approach

# OUR TRAINING DIVISION

## Mental Wellbeing and Health (M.W.A.H) Training

- ❑ Pre-course module 1 - Safeguarding Level 2 (required to be completed online 7 days prior to beginning the taught element of the course).
- ❑ Module 2- Wellbeing & Recovery
- ❑ Module 3 - Depression & Mood
- ❑ Module 4 - Suicide Awareness
- ❑ Module 5- Stress & Anxiety
- ❑ Module 6 - Understanding Young People & Self-harm
- ❑ Module 7 - Child Sexual Exploitation & Online Safety
- ❑ Module 8- Attachment & Relationships
- ❑ Module 9 - Bereavement & Loss



# OUR FUTURE PLANS

- ✓ Aim to fund a mobile counselling unit (RV / Camper style) to create a mobile counselling unit for areas hardest to reach and most deprived.
- ✓ Increase funding and capacity to support **ALL** CYP locally who need counselling support
- ✓ Deliver more counselling in schools
- ✓ Advocate for mental health qualifications in schools
- ✓ Move to a larger premise to ensure we can deliver more training and upskill our communities
- ✓ Increase training courses for people from areas of deprivation

# S.M.I.L.E COUNSELLING

Thank you for your time ...

Questions ...



## **WEST LOTHIAN CHILDREN'S SERVICES PLAN**

### **1. Purpose of Report**

The purpose of the report is to inform the Community Planning Partnership Board of the development of the West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020 in compliance with the requirements of Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.

### **2. Recommendations**

The Community Planning Partnership Board is asked to note the contents of the West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020-2023.

### **3. Discussion**

#### **Overview**

Part 3 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 seeks to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland by ensuring that local planning and delivery of services is:

- integrated,
- focused on securing quality and value through preventative approaches and
- dedicated to safeguarding, supporting and promoting child wellbeing.

In West Lothian we recognise that in order to effectively plan our services for children and young people a range of processes need to be undertaken, including:

- I. Carrying out a detailed assessment of the current position (population needs, community assets, service resources, etc.)
- II. Establishing a clear vision of what will be achieved by the end of the plan (i.e. the outcomes), identifying priorities, objectives and indicators (i.e. how progress will be measured).
- III. Agreeing what activities (services, interventions, etc.) will be delivered in order to realise that vision.
- IV. Deciding, through a coherent and transparent process, how those activities will be resourced over the course of the plan (including what areas will see disinvestment in order to shift resources towards prevention).
- V. Holding persons to account for delivery of activities, with governance over implementation of the plan embedded in existing structures (elected councillors, etc.).
- VI. Monitoring progress through a structured process of review and refinement, making sure the plan (with its outcomes and deliverables) continues to fit the context (needs, resources, etc.) which it seeks to affect.

#### **West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020-2023**

The West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020-23 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. The Plan has been developed to encompass the following principles:

- Getting the right balance between universal and targeted services
- Re-distributing resources towards targeted activities with individuals, groups and communities
- Improved integrated working
- Improving outcomes for the individual child and their family
- Focusing on early intervention by shifting resources from managing crisis to building resilience.

### **Developing the Plan**

To inform children's services planning in West Lothian the Children and Families Strategic Partnership has undertaken two strategic thematic needs assessments. The two needs assessments focused on services for Looked After Children and Young People and on Early Intervention and Prevention and the findings have been used to inform the development of services for children and young people in West Lothian.

The partnership also engaged in the Scottish Government's Realigning Children's Services Programme. The programme was established to support the wider agenda of improving the wellbeing of children through early intervention and preventative service delivery.

### **Participation and Engagement**

In February 2020 an extensive consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken to collate views and experiences to inform the development of the Children's Services Plan for 2020-2023. The feedback was used to inform the development of the key priorities detailed in the Plan and will also inform the development of the Children's Services Strategic Commissioning Plan. The Partnership recognises that it is essential that the development of local services takes account of local need, is aligned to national strategy and fits with the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership priorities.

The consultation exercise was designed around the eight wellbeing indicators Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included. These wellbeing indicators were developed as part of the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach which aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland.

All feedback was collated, analysed and used to inform the priorities and development of this plan.

### **Key Priorities**

This Plan is a continuation of the West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2017 to 2020. The priorities have been reviewed and updated to reflect the findings of the strategic needs assessments and engagement activities that have been undertaken. These priorities build on those detailed within the previous plan and remain focused on achieving the partnership's vision that children and young people in West Lothian have the best start in life, to enable them to have high aspirations, build the foundations for living well in the future and realise their potential. The seven high level priorities of the plan are:

- Child Protection
- Promote Health and Wellbeing
- Raising Achievement and Attainment
- Corporate Parenting

- Promoting Children's Rights
- Reduce Substance Misuse
- Reduce Offending Behaviour in Children and Young People

### **Review and Reporting**

It should be noted that children's services planning is an ongoing process, within which the plan is only a component, not the end in itself. By keeping the plan under structured review services will be able to meet the needs of children, young people and families in West Lothian while ensuring that collective responses can be put in place to respond to emerging needs.

## **4. Summary of Implications**

<b>Relevant LOIP outcome (s)</b>	Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed  We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities  People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances
<b>Relevant LOIP performance indicator (s)</b>	The priorities identified in the plan will contribute to LOIP performance indicators for children, young people and their families.
<b>Resources</b>	Existing budgets for the delivery of services for Children and Young People
<b>Link to prevention/community engagement</b>	The Plan is focused on early intervention and prevention and has been developed in conjunction with key stakeholders.
<b>Impact on inequalities</b>	The aim of the plan is to tackle health and social inequalities and give children and young people in West Lothian the best possible start in life.
<b>Key risks</b>	None

## **5. Consultations**

The Plan has been developed by the multi-agency Children and Families Strategic Planning Group. An extensive consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken to collate views and experiences to inform the development of Plan, this included children, young people and their families, staff and key partners.

## 6. Conclusions

The West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 focuses on how to provide children's services in West Lothian in a way which: best safeguards, supports or promotes the wellbeing of children; ensures that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, action is taken to prevent needs arising.

### Report written by/contact details/date

James Cameron  
Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources)

Sharon Houston  
Manager (Strategy Policy and Change)  
[sharon.houston@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:sharon.houston@westlothian.gov.uk)

22nd February 2021

**References**                      None

**Appendices**                      Appendix 1      West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2020-23

# **Children's Services Plan 2020-2023**

**Getting it Right for West Lothian's Children & Families**

**Contents**

	Page Number
Foreword	3
Introduction	4
Developing the Plan	6
Our Plan at a Glance	7
West Lothian Overview	8
National Strategic Context	9
Local Context	11
West Lothian Planning Landscape	14
Our Priorities	20
How We Work Together	28
Strategic Commissioning	29
Performance Management	31
Appendices	34
1. UNCRC / Wellbeing Indicators	



## Foreword

In West Lothian we recognise that investment in our children and young people is one of the most valuable long-term investments that we can make. By investing our shared resources in the delivery and development of services that focus on prevention and early intervention we can ensure that children's needs are met at the earliest opportunity and are supported to achieve their full potential.

### Planning Services for Children, Young People and Families

Our aim is to tackle health and social inequalities and give children and young people in West Lothian the best possible start in life, we want all children to be safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. Children and young people are the future of West Lothian. We listen to the voices of children, ensure their views are valued and respected and include them in the planning process.

This joint Children's Services Plan 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 (CPP).

In conjunction with this plan we are publishing West Lothian's Corporate Parenting Plan. As Corporate Parents we are committed to getting it right for every looked after child, young person and care leaver in West Lothian. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 puts Corporate Parenting on a statutory footing and is defined as **"the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers"**. We are committed and 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.

We are committed to supporting the Independent Care Review's 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 principles that underpin The Promise are consistent with the aspirations and ambitions that we have for our care experienced young people and their families in West Lothian.

We recognise that new challenges have emerged as a result of COVID-19, some of the families who were vulnerable prior to the pandemic are presenting with greater vulnerabilities now and families who would not have presented as vulnerable previously, now are. These changes will need to be 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. These new flexible working methods including increased use of technology will support the swifter adaption to potential new working ways.

This plan will be underpinned by a detailed action plan which reflects the priorities we have agreed and how we will achieve the best outcomes for children and young people in West Lothian.

**James Cameron**  
**Head of Education (Learning, Policy and Resources)**  
**Chair of the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group**

# Introduction

## Our Vision:

In West Lothian we believe that every child should have the best start in life to enable them to: have high aspirations, build the foundations for living well in the future and realise their potential.

This underpins the national programmes of Curriculum for Excellence and Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) with desired outcomes that all children become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens through being safe, nurtured, healthy, active, included, achieving, respected and responsible.

We are committed to providing services that are holistic and developed with families themselves and partner agencies; that tackle inequalities and focus on improved outcomes for children. To ensure that children and young people in need have a head start in life, we are focused on the importance of preventative work with families to help them cope with the pressures of parenting, as well as providing statutory early intervention and child protection services.



## Our Principles:

The underpinning principles of how we plan and deliver services for children revolve around how we target support to children and their families at an early enough point whilst recognising that there will always be a need to provide services for the ongoing problems that families may experience.

The West Lothian Children's Services Plan has been developed to encompass the following principles:

- Getting the right balance between universal and targeted services
- Re-distributing resources towards targeted activities with individuals, groups and communities
- Improved integrated working
- Improving outcomes for the individual child and their family
- Focusing on early intervention by shifting resources from managing crisis to prevention and building resilience

## The West Lothian Children's Services Plan:

- Highlights partners' commitment to delivering outcomes for children and young people in West Lothian through active participation in joint planning and delivery structures.
- Defines the approaches and mechanisms which partners use in West Lothian to plan and deliver those joint services, initiatives and activities geared towards the delivery of outcomes for children, young people and their families.
- Defines the key outcomes which have been agreed by partners as priorities for multi-agency action.
- Explains the way in which activity relating to each of these themes will be linked to key outcomes, will be monitored through the use of meaningful performance indicators and will be driven by challenging targets

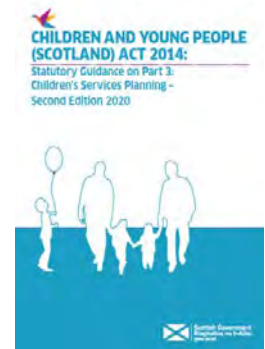
### Partnership Working:

The Children's Services Plan confirms the commitment of partners to:

- Actively participate in well-established joint service planning in West Lothian, through the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group, Corporate Parenting Strategic Planning Group, Safer Communities Strategic Planning Group, Integration Joint Board Strategic Planning Group, the Child Protection Committee and the Anti-Poverty Task Force and the Third Sector Strategy Group
- Investigate best practice in early intervention and preventative approaches, and implement such approaches across West Lothian.
- Build on previous successes and further demonstrate the added value from cooperative approaches to planning and delivering services and activity.

# Developing the Plan

To assist the Children's Services planning process the Scottish Government published guidance to help inform the planning process: [statutory-guidance-part-3-childrens-services-planning-second-edition-2020](#) . This states that while the overall responsibility for children's services planning rests with the local authority and its relevant health board, it is expected that they will work collaboratively with other members of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP), as well as with children, young people and their families at various stages of the plan's development and review.



To inform Children's Services Planning in West Lothian the Children and Families Strategic Partnership has undertaken two strategic thematic needs assessments. The two needs assessments focused on services for Looked After Children and Young People and on Early Intervention and Prevention and the findings have been used to inform the future development of services for children and young people in West Lothian.

The partnership also engaged in the Scottish Government's Realigning Children's Services Programme. The programme was established to support the wider agenda of improving the wellbeing of children through early intervention and preventative service delivery.

### Participation and Engagement:

In February 2020 an extensive consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken to collate views and experiences to inform the development of the Children's Services Plan for 2020-2023. The feedback was used to inform the development of the key priorities detailed in the Plan and will also inform the development of the Children's Services Strategic Commissioning Plan. The Partnership recognises that it is essential that the development of local services takes account of local need, is aligned to national strategy and fits with the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership priorities.

The consultation exercise was designed around the eight wellbeing indicators **Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included**. These wellbeing indicators were developed as part of the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) approach which aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people in Scotland.



All feedback was collated, analysed and used to inform the priorities and development of this plan.

This Plan is a continuation of the West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2017 to 2020. The priorities have been reviewed and updated to reflect the findings of the strategic needs assessments and engagement activities that have been undertaken. These priorities build on those detailed within the previous plan and remain focused on achieving the partnership's vision that children and young people in West Lothian have the best start in life, to enable them to have high aspirations, build the foundations for living well in the future and realise their potential. A high level overview of our priorities is detailed on page 7.

## Our Plan at a Glance

United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child (UNCRC)

### National Performance Framework Outcomes

Detailed on page 32

### West Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan

Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed

We are better educated and have access to increased and better-quality learning and employment opportunities

People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances

We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities

### Our Vision

We believe that every child should have the best start in life to enable them to have high aspirations, build the foundations for living well in the future and realise their potential

This underpins the national programmes of Curriculum for Excellence and Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) with desired outcomes that all children become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens through being safe, nurtured, healthy, active, included, achieving, respected and responsible.

We are committed to providing services that are holistic, and developed with families themselves and partner agencies; that tackle inequalities, and focus on improved outcomes for children. To ensure that children and young people in need have a head start in life, we are focused on the importance of preventative work with families to help them cope with the pressures of parenting, as well as providing statutory early intervention and child protection services.

### West Lothian Children's Services Priorities

Corporate Parenting

Child Protection

Raising achievement and attainment

Promote Health and Wellbeing

Reduce offending behaviour in Children and Young People

Reduce Substance Misuse

Promote Children's Rights

### Wellbeing Indicators

## West Lothian Overview

### West Lothian's Children – Profile

In planning for the development and delivery of services for children, young people and their families, the profile of West Lothian's children and families has been considered. West Lothian has a population of about 183,100 (mid-2019) and is one of the fastest growing and youngest in the country. Between 1998 and 2019, the population of West Lothian has increased by 19.5%. This is the 2nd highest percentage change out of the 32 council areas in Scotland. Over the same period, Scotland's population rose by 7.6%.

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

Based on 2019 mid-year population estimates of West Lothian's population of children and young people aged 0-15 years 35,494 which is 19.3% of the total population. This is a 5.2% increase since 1998 compared with an 8% decrease of the 0-15 year old population across Scotland for the same time period.

The impact of the demographic increase is significant as it will bring an increase in demand for services which is likely to exceed available resources if services are not fundamentally redesigned.

- 15,000 people in West Lothian (8% of the county's population) live within the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland.
- The most recent child poverty statistics (2018) show that 26.0% of West Lothian children are living in poverty. This is an increase of 3.2% from 2015 (22.8%)
- Youth unemployment in West Lothian stands at 10.9%, which is greater than the Scotland rate of 9.8% and the Great Britain rate of 9.4%.
- 1.1% of the total 0-17 years population in West Lothian were Looked After. The Scottish average for the same period was 1.5%.
- The percentage of mothers who stop breastfeeding by 6-8 weeks is higher in West Lothian at 29.9% compared to 25.9% across Lothian
- In West Lothian 91.3% of eligible children receive a 13-15 month review compared with 88.9% across Lothian and 93% of 27-30 month children receiving a developmental and wellbeing review compare with 88.9% across Lothian

The demographic profile of West Lothian coupled with life-stage specific challenges indicates that there will be an increase in the demand for services for children and families with additional needs. This means that we need to ensure that services are appropriately targeted, delivered and planned in partnership and focused on improved outcomes for children and their families.

## National Strategic Context

### Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014)

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act (2014) is the principle piece of legislation that relates to improving the wellbeing of children and young people. It also establishes the need to develop Children's Services Plans to ensure that partners work together to co-ordinate the planning and delivery of services. The Act aims to put children and young people at the heart of service planning and encourages a shift towards early intervention and prevention rather than crisis responses. The Act strengthens children's rights and ensures that public services work together to design, plan and deliver services for children and families in Scotland.

Since the development of the last Children's Services Plan the most significant legislative and policy changes include:

- **The Independent Care Review (ICR) and the Promise**

On 5 February 2020, the ICR launched its final conclusions and recommendations, and launched The Promise declaring that Scotland will do everything it can to make sure that the recommendations are fully implemented and to fulfil Scotland's ambition for children and young people to grow up loved, safe and respected so that they realise their full potential

#### **The Independent Care Review identified five foundations for change:**

**Voice:** Children must be listened to and involved in decision making.

**Family:** Where children are safe in their families, they must stay and families must be given support.

**Care:** Where living with family is not possible, siblings must be kept together.

**People:** Looked After Children must be actively supported to build relationships with their wider community.

**Scaffolding:** Children, Families and the workforce must be supported by the system when support is needed.



Partners in West Lothian are already working to improve outcomes for Looked after Children and Young People and are committed to working towards shifting the balance of care. We are reviewing how we position and provide services to ensure that families are supported at the earliest point and intensive support provided to ensure children at risk of being accommodated remain placed within their own families, family networks and communities.



While we recognise that there will be some challenges in aligning the focus of our partnership to keep the Promise the principles that underpin the Promise are consistent with the aspirations and ambitions that we have for our care experienced young people and their families in West Lothian

- **Child Poverty Scotland (2017) Act**

The act sets out the Scottish Government's intent to eradicate child poverty in Scotland by 2030.

- **Fairer Scotland Duty**

The Fairer Scotland Duty, Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, came into force in April 2018. The duty places a legal responsibility on particular public bodies in Scotland to actively consider how they can reduce inequalities of income, caused by socio-economic disadvantage, when making strategic decisions.

- **The National Public Health Priorities (2018)**

The National Public Health Priorities encourages the use of early intervention and prevention approaches rather than crisis responses and directing services toward to the early years of a child's life.

- **Scotland's National Performance Framework**

Scotland's National Performance Framework (NPF) which was last refreshed in 2018 articulates the vision of creating a more successful country by setting out eleven national outcomes that we will work towards collectively. All of the national outcomes are interlinked, and are all crucial to improving the lives of children and young people.



All priorities and actions detailed with the West Lothian Children's Services Plan are aligned with, and seek to deliver the ambitions contained in the National Performance Framework.



## Local Context

### Early Intervention and Prevention

Early intervention and prevention has been identified as a strategic theme that runs through all the priorities in the Children's Services Plan and is supported through robust multi-agency partnership working. The benefits of preventing crisis for children and young people is recognised as the best outcome for the individual, the wider family and the community.

Early intervention can take different forms, from home visiting programmes to support vulnerable parents, to school-based programmes to improve children's social and emotional skills, to mentoring schemes for young people who are vulnerable to involvement in crime. While some have argued that early intervention may have its strongest impact when offered during the first few years of life, the best evidence shows that effective interventions can improve children's life chances at any point during childhood and adolescence.

In West Lothian, we have embedded models of support which engage with families with very complex needs and with the most entrenched social issues using asset based, co-production ways of working. This has the benefit of working with families on their own terms, addressing issues that are live and important for the family by building strong and persistent relationships between professionals and families, supporting them to navigate and negotiate services and release the strengths already present within the family to best avoid periods of crisis.

Partners in West Lothian work together in a range of ways to focus on prevention and early intervention to ensure that children's needs are met at the earliest opportunity and are supported to achieve their full potential.

West Lothian's Mental Health and Mental Wellbeing Screening Group (MHMW) provides a collective forum for professionals to meet, discuss and resource mental health and wellbeing referrals. A wide range of agencies are represented and the group operates a needs-led approach which ensures young people have access to the correct supports and resources without delay. A streamlined referral process is in place and all referrals are screened within a two-week period.

Referrals for looked after children and young people, many of who have trauma-based issues are prioritised however, the majority of referrals come from universal services. The MHMW group has temporarily changed to become the "Wellbeing Recovery Group". It is further bolstered by representation from the Practice Teams, Education (ASN), DASAT and Voluntary Sector. Whilst many referrals will have a mental wellbeing basis, this group also considers referrals relating to physical care, deprivation, and financial hardship.

The Family Assessment and Support Service (FASS) is an amalgamation of Family Centre, Early Years and Parenting Groupwork services. The aim of this service is to capture and prioritise the needs of vulnerable children pre-birth up and to provide a singular referral route for professionals and family. The focus is on the family and providing community-based resources where possible. Whilst primarily an early intervention service, the service also undertake parenting and contact assessments in child protection, permanency and statutory cases.

### Early Learning and Childcare

A group of professionals from local authority (education and social policy), health board and child health meet regularly to standardise a Pan Lothian application process for eligible 2-year-old Early Learning and Childcare places. In West Lothian a joint working group was also established to examine the current procedures for eligible 2-year-old children and families were consulted. In West Lothian this has resulted in the streamlining of an online application form and further feedback from families found this process to be straightforward. A common pathway for Early Learning and Childcare for all eligible 2 children (encompassing all low-income criteria and children with Looked After Children or kinship care status) has been established. Automatic online referral to the Antipoverty Service is now available to any family applying for an Early Learning and Childcare place with money concerns. Promotion of eligibility criteria and work of antipoverty service to all professionals (health visitors and social policy teams) working with eligible families is now in place as is the promotion of eligible 2-year-old places with families via leaflets, posters and monthly promotion on social media channels. West Lothian Council has also established a process to deliver discretionary places for two-year olds who do not meet the eligibility criteria. Referrals for these places are made to the Family Assessment and Support Screening Group (FASS).

### Child and Adolescent Mental Health

The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) within West Lothian aims to provide Children and young people (0-18 years) specialist assessment/intervention as part of a tiered system, which can include consultation and advice prior to referral, and assessment appointment to establish clinical need and priority status.

CAMHS operates within Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) principles using a tiered model of intervention that includes the established staged approach which ensures that children receive both a stepped care approach and matched care approach

### Joint Inspection of Children's Services

On 29th August 2017 the Care Inspectorate published the inspection report of the Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People in West Lothian. The inspectors reported that they were confident that outcomes for many children, young people and families living in West Lothian were improved as a result of committed leadership, an ambitious shared vision and effective community planning arrangements.

The Inspection Team highlighted a number of strengths, in particular:

- a coherent shared vision to tackle inequalities, supported by a range of approaches and a commitment by partners to realign resources in order to achieve this;
- robust performance monitoring, management and reporting processes
- effective community planning arrangements, supported by strong leadership and robust governance across strategic groups
- innovative and effective early intervention and prevention programmes and services
- meaningful consultation, collaboration and inclusion of children and young people in policy and service development.

It was recommended that partners in West Lothian ensure that:

- quality assurance processes led to sustained improvement in the quality of assessments, children's plans and integrated chronologies
- staff understand and implement the processes for initiating, undertaking and recording inter-agency referral discussions and that a single quality assurance process is agreed and applied
- child sexual exploitation policy is reviewed and updated and practice is improved to ensure that vulnerable young people are kept safe
- sustained improvements are made to educational attainment of looked after children and outcomes for care leavers.

An Improvement Plan was developed and agreed with the Care Inspectorate to address the areas highlighted in the Inspection Report. The Children and Families Strategic Planning Group was responsible for monitoring the progress made in making these improvements.

# West Lothian Planning Landscape



The West Lothian Children’s Services Plan does not exist in isolation, in order to achieve the partnership’s vision for children, young people and their families in West Lothian it is essential that a whole system approach is taken to the planning and development of services. It is therefore intended that this Plan aligns with existing plans and strategies across the West Lothian, in particular:

## WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL OUTCOME IMPROVEMENT PLAN

West Lothian's Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) - Achieving Positive Outcomes - sets out how the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) will deliver improved outcomes for its communities.

The LOIP sets out the long-term outcomes we want to achieve in West Lothian and describes how the Partnership will plan and deliver on these outcomes. It is based on a shared understanding of our communities which has been developed through a rigorous process of data analysis and engagement.

The LOIP has identified 7 outcomes and 4 of which relate directly to Children and Young People and their families:



- **Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed**

For our children to have the best start in life we need to focus on key outcomes i.e. healthy pregnancies, nurturing and consistent parenting and be able to offer a suite of early intervention approaches. Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is founded on the principles of early intervention, which are appropriate, proportionate and timely.

In West Lothian, prevention and early intervention is supported through multi-agency working. Early access to maternity care, positive pregnancy outcomes, increased home visiting support to all families through the new universal pre-birth to preschool pathway, early learning and childcare and a range of support for parenting and early intervention programmes are all part of West Lothian's approach to ensuring our children have the best start in life.

- **We are better educated and have access to increased and better-quality learning and employment opportunities**

Good educational qualifications are essential for improving young people's employment prospects and life chances and for the economy in general. In recent years, West Lothian has consistently outperformed or equalled the attainment of comparator authorities. The challenge remains to maintain high performance where it exists and to continue to raise performance in areas where deprivation is a major factor.

- **We live in resilient, cohesive and safe communities**

Partners have come together to address crime, disorder and danger using the Joint Tasking and Co-ordination model utilised by the Police. This new way of working has led to greater co-ordination and better use of resources.

- **People most at risk are protected and supported to achieve improved life chances**

This outcome focusses on those in our society who are most at risk e.g. looked after young people, vulnerable adults, children, and women and children experiencing domestic violence. Various partnership arrangements are in place to ensure that we protect these vulnerable groups through child protection, adult protection and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

## **WEST LOTHIAN ANTI-POVERTY STRATEGY**

The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) refreshed the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy in 2018 to take into account the changing nature of poverty, notably the effects of social security changes and government austerity measures, and to consider the challenges which partners, stakeholders and those experiencing poverty face now and in the near future. One of the eight outcomes detailed within the strategy is to reduce the number of children living in relative poverty this is of relevance to the aims of the Children's Services Plan.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 sets out ambitious targets for the Scottish Government to significantly reduce child poverty in Scotland by 2030 and places a duty on local authorities to work with health boards to develop, produce and deliver a Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR). The West Lothian LCPAR describes actions taken to address child poverty. The report centres on the drivers of child poverty as set out by the Scottish Government which fall into three main categories: income from employment, cost of living and, income from social security benefits.

In West Lothian, 1 child in every 4 live with poverty. Evidence shows that children living in poverty are more likely to have lower educational attainment, poorer mental and physical health and less likely to participate in social and cultural opportunities. Poverty is fundamentally about a lack of disposable income.

In recognition of the potential long-term economic impacts of COVID-19, partners involved in the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Anti-Poverty Task Force and the Health and Wellbeing Partnership captured key activity during the first phase of the pandemic (March to August 2019) to identify future needs. An action plan has been developed which includes actions to combat child poverty in West Lothian as detailed below:

#### Anti-Poverty Service Outcome for Child Poverty:

OUTCOME: Reduce the number of children living in relative poverty		
Aim	Actions	Responsible
Families with low income are aware of and are supported to access financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase uptake of school clothing grant by extending eligibility criteria to include Council Tax Reduction Scheme</li> <li>• Improve accessibility of Education Maintenance Allowance through the development of an online claim form</li> <li>• Activity to promote the NEC card/ Young Scot card</li> <li>• Parents with children eligible for 2 year old early learning and childcare are offered a referral for financial advice</li> <li>• Work with Family Assessment and Support Services screening group to provide income maximisation for at-risk families</li> <li>• Looked after young people are offered one-to-one support to develop budgeting skills and become financially included</li> </ul>	Anti-Poverty Service
Families have access to tools and resources to improve their financial wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with West Calder High School and local partners to develop a family financial capability support hub.</li> <li>• Targeted campaign to focus on lone parent families and those with a disability to provide long term support.</li> <li>• Provide devices and connectivity for school pupils through Connecting Scotland.</li> </ul>	Anti-Poverty Service Adult Learning

Child Poverty has not been reflected as a stand-alone priority in this plan as this work is being undertaken as part of the Anti-Poverty Strategy.

#### THE WEST LOTHIAN CARERS STRATEGY 2020-2023 - YOUNG CARERS

The Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 came into effect on 1 April 2018. The purpose of the Act is to help carers continue in their caring role whilst being supported to look after their own health and wellbeing, this includes young carers. One of the strategic outcomes of the Act is that young carers are supported; and protected from inappropriate caring and negative impacts on their education, social lives and future development.



The West Lothian Carers Strategy 2020-2023 was approved in September 2020 and priority areas for young carers were identified as:

<b>OUTCOME: Young carers are supported and protected from inappropriate caring and from negative impacts on their education, social lives and future development</b>		
<b>Aim</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Responsible</b>
Young carers are supported to look after their own health and wellbeing whilst continuing their caring role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Involve young carers in individual decisions which affect them and encourage them to engage in strategic decisions, supporting young carers to engage and have their voices heard, including the Scottish Young Carers Festival and the Social Security Young Carer Experience Panel.</li> <li>• Schools actively play a key role to identify and support young carers and signpost / refer to the necessary support organisations.</li> <li>• Schools raise awareness of young carers role to peers and how this role can impact them and how to support a friend who is a carer</li> <li>• Ensure the necessary support for young carers when transitioning from school to their next positive destination; further and higher education or into employment</li> <li>• Promote the financial support available for young carers including; Young Carer grant, Young Scot Package, free bus travel</li> <li>• 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)</li> </ul>	<p>CoWL</p> <p>Education / HSCP</p> <p>Education / CoWL</p> <p>Education / CoWL</p> <p>Education / CoWL</p> <p>Education / CoWL</p>

Support for Young Carers has not been reflected as a stand-alone priority in this plan as this work is being undertaken as part of the West Lothian Carers Strategy. This Children's Services plan will align to the young carers priority areas to support young carers wellbeing to help them to continue in their caring roles and to be children first and receive the same opportunities as their peers to succeed in life.

### West Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan

The Plan outlines in detail the vision that Corporate Parents in West Lothian have for Looked After Children and Young People. It identifies the key priorities that the Corporate Parenting Strategic Group will take forward collectively to make a difference and deliver improvements to our looked after children's wellbeing and outcomes.

### NHS Lothian's Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 – 2020

The NHS Lothian Children and Young People's Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2014-20) is due for renewal. In the light of Covid-19 where there remains significant uncertainty and services have been required to reconfigure at short notice, the decision was taken to update the previous strategy with a two-year "tactical plan" for all services under the Children and Young People's umbrella. This plan will cover all services providing care and support to children and young people, in both acute and community settings, throughout Lothian. Whilst there are already operational Covid-19 "remobilisation and modernisation" plans, the tactical plan will aim to build on these plans, and additionally identify the critical

actions we must take in the short- to medium-term to ensure long-term service sustainability. Our ambition is to deliver world-class services for children and young people across Lothian. This plan will give stakeholders the opportunity to pitch their innovative ideas and describe how they think we can radically transform our services. The team are aiming to deliver a working draft of this plan by May 2021

### **The West Lothian Play Strategy**

Play is fundamental and essential for human development. Play is how children learn about life and the world around them and is therefore vital to the health and wellbeing of our children and young people. As play impacts on all aspects of a child's life, it contributes to all areas of health and wellbeing: Active; Respected; Responsible; Included; Safe; Healthy; Achieving; Nurtured.

West Lothian's Play Strategy aims to ensure that West Lothian is a place where play is valued as an essential, life enhancing daily experience for all of our children and young people. In it we prioritise children's needs to play freely, in a variety of ways and settings, to achieve their full potential, valuing the benefits that play brings to individuals and communities.

The strategy's Action Plan identifies a range of actions and aspirations for all partners across West Lothian.

### **Raising Attainment Strategy**

The West Lothian Council Raising Attainment Strategy (2018-2023) provides an increased strategic focus to Education Services' activities in raising attainment. The strategy was developed taking account of best practice in West Lothian schools, the professional knowledge and experience of school and centrally based staff, national practice and international perspectives and recommendations.

The Raising Attainment Strategy has four outcomes and these are:

- Raising Attainment for All in the Broad General Education (BGE) – Ensuring Excellence
- Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap in the BGE – Ensuring Equity
- Raising Attainment for All in the Senior Phase – Ensuring Excellence
- Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap in the Senior Phase – Ensuring Equity

In order to achieve these outcomes, the strategy will focus on the delivery of specific actions and activities directly linked to the six National Improvement Framework drivers:

School Improvement; School Leadership; Performance Information; Teacher Professionalism; Assessment of Children's Progress; Parental Engagement

### **West Lothian Economic Recovery Plan**

The Recovery Plan has been set up to try and forecast the economic position and put in place interventions to help the local economy respond and recover from the covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has brought about an unprecedented level of unemployment especially within the 16-24 year olds and targeted intervention has been introduced to support young people:

- Steps n2 Work will deliver 50 wage subsidies in 2020/21, further opportunities may exist through Kick Start funding
- Additional support provided for all 2020 summers school leavers
- Virtual Youth employment hubs being created with DWP for the provision of supporting young people currently on Universal Credit

- Developing the Young Workforce – Up2U programme
- Employability resource pack developed for young people

The Scottish Government initiative Young Person Guarantee: No One Left Behind was published on 2nd September 2020 which outlined a range of recommendations to implement the Youth Guarantee and to support the pledge funding of £60 million was also announced to support the Youth Guarantee.

## Our Priorities

In order to ensure that every child in West Lothian has the best start in life to enable them to have high aspirations, build the foundation for living well in the future and realise their potential the following priorities have been identified as key areas of work for the partnership:

The seven high level priorities are:

- Child Protection
- Promote Health and Wellbeing
- Raising Achievement and Attainment
- Corporate Parenting
- Promoting Children's Rights
- Reduce Substance Misuse
- Reduce Offending Behaviour in Children and Young People

The priorities for this Plan have been established following consultation and engagement with children and young people and their families, stakeholders, staff and other organisations involved in delivering Children's Services and in line with the National Performance Framework.

Our priorities have been reviewed to take account of the lessons learned during our collective response to COVID-19 in 2020. We are clear that robust partnership working is essential in order to deliver positive outcomes for children, young people and their families going forward. We are aware that the pandemic has had disproportionate impact on the most vulnerable families and that there is an increase in the number of families who, prior to the pandemic, would not have presented as vulnerable. Families caring for their children affected by significant and complex disabilities have experienced significant pressures as many of the usual routes for providing breaks from caring and support for them were reduced as a result of COVID-19.

As in other areas across Scotland, there has been a significant increase in the levels of domestic abuse being experienced by women and children during lockdown, this is evidenced by the increase in referrals to services supporting victims of domestic abuse throughout the period. This was a priority in the Children's Services Plan 2017-2020 and will now be taken forward as part of the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy that will be in place by April 2021.

Supporting and improving the health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families will continue to be essential in going forward and we will work together to consider how best to use our collective resources to do this.

In responding to the pandemic we have developed different ways of working and we will work together to capitalise on these, to build on what works well and how these lessons can be used to improve how we support children young people and their families in West Lothian in the future.

All of these priorities contribute directly to the Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI) and correlate with links to the UNCRC priorities of safeguarding children and young people as detailed in Appendix 1.

## Child Protection

To ensure that every child in West Lothian has the best start in life they must be safe.

Child protection is the responsibility of all who work with children, families and adults, regardless of whether that work brings them into direct contact with children.

Child protection must be seen within the wider context of supporting families and meeting children's needs through the principles of Getting It Right for Every Child by:

- putting children's needs first,
- ensuring that they are listened to,
- supporting them to understand decisions that affect them.
- making sure children get the right help when they need it.

Partnership working is at the heart of everything we do and plays a vital role in ensuring the protection of West Lothian's children and young people.

In 2020, West Lothian moved from having a single Public Protection Committee (PPC) to having four dedicated committees providing leadership in the areas of:

- Child Protection
- Adult Support and Protection
- Violence Against Women & Girls
- Offender Management (MAPPA)

The committees make sure that staff have up to date policies, procedures, guidance and training so 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.

A Significant Case Review on the theme of neglect was undertaken during 2019 and presented to the Child Protection Committee in 2020. Lessons learned will inform future plans to improve and develop practice.

IDENTIFIED ACTIONS
Reviewing the quality of information provided to Case Conferences with emphasis on the active engagement of children and their families
Implementation of new missing person protocol to ensure ongoing safety of children and young people
Ensuring that there is a confident and competent workforce that understands its role and responsibility in the area of child protection for all children, regardless of need and ability
Improving responses to neglect
Working together to prevent and address Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
Ensuring that Visually Recorded Interviews (VRI) are of a high and consistent standard
Considering practice in light of lessons learned from Initial Case Reviews and Significant Case Reviews

## Promote Health and Wellbeing

Good health and wellbeing is key to ensuring children and young people in West Lothian have the best start in life. Children's health and wellbeing starts with their family and includes good physical and mental health, feelings of happiness, satisfaction and successful social functioning. It influences the way children and young people interact in their environments. A strong sense of wellbeing provides children with confidence and optimism which maximise their learning potential.

We recognise that children growing up in secure, safe and loving environments will have better long term outcomes and have invested in a wide range of early years and early intervention approaches, these focus on:

- Ensuring access to an effective portfolio of early years services from pre-birth to school age
- Improving child/parent attachment
- Ensuring that children are supported to meet their developmental milestones
- Improving family learning
- Ensuring that children and parents access and are supported to play
- Ensuring access to Intensive parenting programmes for vulnerable parents
- Ensuring appropriate access for mental health and wellbeing supports in the community
- Addressing the poverty gap
- Addressing access to healthy eating options for children, young people and their families

Improving health and wellbeing is at the core of what we do and is where we focus the majority of our preventative work intervening and providing support, early enough to prevent deterioration or escalation. We recognise however that for some children and young people specialist help will be required to address more complex needs that impact health and wellbeing. Across the partnership support we have a range of services in place to support these young people and ensure that they get the right support at the right time, including the Wellbeing Recovery Group and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Work is currently underway to have more of a focus on the approach take to the provision of community mental health of children and young people. A dedicated Mental Health Officer will be recruited to support this work.

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic has been recognised as having multiple impacts on children, young people and their families and a key aspect of this is on the mental health and wellbeing of children and families. New services will have a focus on prevention, early intervention and the treatment of distress and will allow West Lothian to continue our work to support young people's and their families mental health and wellbeing needs.

### IDENTIFIED ACTIONS

Streamline access to supports across services
Increase accessibility of healthy food choices
Increase in the inclusivity of sport and physical activity
Ensure that all children have appropriate and safe opportunities for play
Support for parents/ caregivers of pre-school and all school aged children
Children's early years services are available to support children to have the best start in life and to meet their potential developmental milestones
Support positive mental and emotional wellbeing of parents, children and young people
Provide trauma informed and mental health support for staff, parents, children and young people

## Raising Achievement and Attainment

The council aims to help West Lothian's young people make the most of their opportunities and to go on to achieve positive outcomes in their lives and achieve their potential. We believe that the quality of learning and teaching that our young people receive in schools, pre-schools and nurseries is a critical factor in their ability to succeed.

The Raising Attainment Strategy 2018-2023 set out the activities that will take place to ensure that all learners are enabled to achieve positive outcomes through education.

In support of the council's Corporate Plan 2018/23 and the eight priorities, the Raising Attainment Strategy is the mechanism by which attainment and achievement of all learners will be supported. It will directly influence and impact on the delivery of the Council's number one priority of improving attainment and positive destinations. It aims to ensure that children and young people are well placed to move into adult life and employment or further/higher education. There is an expectation by West Lothian Council that effective learning and teaching throughout each young person's school experience enables them to maximise their potential.

West Lothian Council is committed to improving attainment for all children and young people in line with the National Improvement Framework and through the effective delivery of Curriculum for Excellence. Schools in West Lothian have consistently demonstrated their capacity to improve attainment. Within the strategy, the overarching themes are to raise the attainment of all in achieving excellence, and to ensure equity through closing the gap in education outcomes between children from the most and least deprived backgrounds.

### IDENTIFIED ACTIONS

Measuring the achievement and attainment of children and young people with significant Additional Support Needs (ASN)
Raising Attainment for All in the Broad General Education (BGE) Ensuring Excellence
Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap in the BGE – Ensuring Equity
Raising Attainment for All in the Senior Phase – Ensuring Excellence
Closing the Poverty Related Attainment Gap in the Senior Phase – Ensuring Equity



## Corporate Parenting

In West Lothian we believe that every child should have the best start in life to enable them to realise their potential and achieve their aspirations. We have an additional responsibility to children and young people who are looked after and who have left care. We are determined to look after them as we look after our own children.

Part 9 of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 Act puts Corporate Parenting on to a statutory basis in Scotland and establishes a framework of duties and responsibilities for public bodies, requiring them to be more proactive in their efforts to meet the needs of looked after children and care leavers. The Act defines Corporate Parenting as:

“An organisation’s performance of actions necessary to promote and support the wellbeing of a looked after child or care leaver, including their physical, emotional, spiritual, social and cognitive development”

And aims to improve the availability of opportunities, services and support for looked after children and care leavers to:

- be alert to matters which affect their wellbeing,
- assess their needs for services and support,
- promote their interests,
- seek to provide them with opportunities to participate in activities designed to promote their wellbeing,
- help them to:
  - access opportunities to improve their wellbeing,
  - make use of services, and access support.

Looked after Children and Young People represent one of the most vulnerable groups in our society and that we have a responsibility, in conjunction with our partners, to act in the best interests of these children or young person to ensure their wellbeing

The Multi-Agency Corporate Parenting Strategic Group has undertaken a range of activities to inform the development of the West Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan 2020 – 2023 to facilitate positive practice and ensure that looked after children and care leavers are supported to achieve their potential.

IDENTIFIED ACTIONS
Improving the quality of our care and care planning
Improving the health and wellbeing of looked after children
Raising attainment and promoting positive destinations
Providing effective through care and aftercare support and services

Promote Children’s Rights

Partners in West Lothian are committed to upholding and embedding the Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) at every level of our services.

The GIRFEC approach is based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), and requires those who work with children and young people to put children at the centre of their day-to-day practice. Putting children at the centre in particular meets the requirement to consider the best interests of the child (Article 3) and the need for children’s views to be considered when decisions are being made about matters which affect them (Article 12).

The UNCRC has 54 articles in all, each outlining in detail the basic rights of every child. These can be summarised into four core principles:

- Non-discrimination
- Devotion to the best interests of the child
- The right to life, survival and development
- Respect for the views of the child

The Scottish Government has committed to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and this will be imbedded into Scottish Domestic Law in 2021.

As a result of the engagement feedback and Scottish Government objectives, promoting Children’s Rights has been established as a priority in this Children’s Services Plan and priority areas and outcomes have been agreed and will be included in the Action Plan.

IDENTIFIED ACTIONS
Promote and incorporate the principles of the UNCRC to ensure every child knows their rights and is heard in matters affecting them
Reduce barriers and increase engagement with BAME children and families

## Reduce Substance Misuse

In West Lothian we recognise that substance misuse damages lives, families and communities, and can contribute to violence and crime. Most of those affected will have experienced difficult life circumstances, and are among the most vulnerable in society.

The misuse of drugs and or alcohol may adversely affect the ability of parents to attend to the emotional, physical and developmental needs of their children in both the short and long term. Improving outcomes for children affected by parental substance misuse (CAPSM), is a priority in West Lothian. Children who live with substance-misusing parents are among the most vulnerable in society and require particular care and support. Support to these families is provided in a range of ways through services identified in the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Commissioning Plan and delivered by Circle and the Social Work Addictions Team.

We recognise that some young people are at high risk of developing addiction issues in adulthood if not supported, these young people are generally already known to services and engaging in other risk-taking behaviours.

Evidence shows that young people at risk of addiction do not engage well with intervention models currently used for adults. They do however engage in services which offer them a persistent key working relationship, meaningful activities and assistance to improve their employability.

In West Lothian we have therefore invested in a range of holistic interventions including:

- WLDAS Young Person's Worker in their Therapeutic Support Services. This service provides counselling & support to young people in West Lothian, aged 12-18, who are using drugs or alcohol at levels which are impacting on family relationships, education, offending or mental health.
- The Families Together Service offers support to young women who are engaged in risk taking behaviour including substance use
- The Young Almond Project which offers support to young women who are engaged in risk taking behaviour including substance misuse.
- The Youth Inclusion Project which offers a consistent resource and support for vulnerable young people aged 16-25 and aims to break down and overcome barriers which can prevent them moving on.

### IDENTIFIED ACTIONS

Ensure that Young People referred to the Wellbeing Recovery Group & Families Together Screening Group who are affected by substance misuse have access to appropriate services

Continue to raise awareness of the issues associated with substance misuse

The Alcohol Drug Partnership (ADP) strategy was published in September 2020 and included Priority areas / actions targeted directly at Young People. These actions relate directly to this Children's Services Plan:

### ADP IDENTIFIED PRIORITY AREAS / ACTIONS

Ensure substance use (including prevention & early intervention) is included in work plans and other agenda's in relation to young people such as the WL Children and Family Management Group.

Continue to support Children Affected by Substance Misuse (CAPSM) service with a Family Support Service

Review the work of the new Young Person Worker with a view to increasing the resource if required

Pilot a Dads project with support from external funding

## Reduce Offending Behaviour in Children and Young People

Preventing offending behaviour is integral to West Lothian's vision to help make Scotland the best place to grow up. No single agency has sole responsibility for supporting young people to make positive lifestyle choices. For young people who become involved in offending behaviour they must be adequately supported through the Whole System Approach (WSA) with all partner agencies working collaboratively with the ultimate aim of reducing the level of offending and anti-social behaviour across West Lothian.

The introduction of the Whole System Approach (WSA) in West Lothian in 2011 was developed and implemented to ensure that partner agencies work collaboratively to put in place a streamlined and consistent planning, assessment and decision-making process for all young people under 21 who offend in West Lothian, ensuring they receive the right help at the right time.

The WSA covers six core areas:

- Early and Effective Intervention (EEI)
- Opportunities to divert young people from prosecution
- Court Support
- Community Alternatives to residential school, secure care and custody
- Managing high risk
- Improving reintegration back into the community

The ethos and principle of the Whole System Approach is that many young people could and should be diverted from statutory measures, prosecution and custody through early intervention and robust community alternatives that address risk and need.

The Youth Justice Team Development Plan is aligned to the key priority themes detailed within the National Youth Justice Strategy for Scotland – Preventing Offending: Getting it Right for Children and Young People. These key themes are:

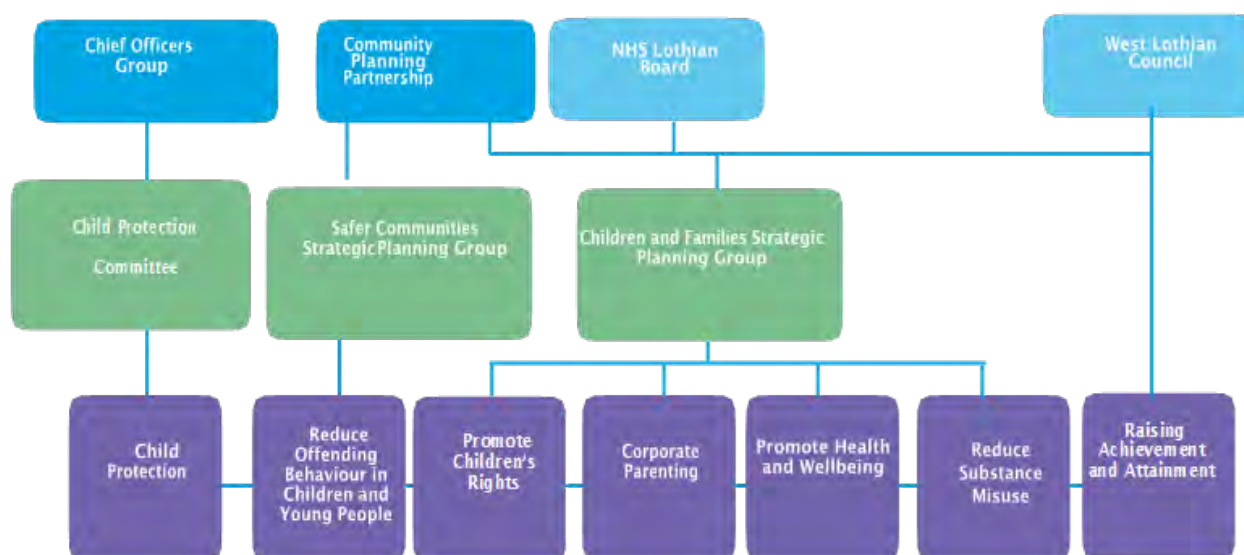
- Advancing and Extending the Whole System Approach
- Improving life chances for young people
- Developing capacity and improvement in the youth justice sector

IDENTIFIED ACTIONS
Develop the Whole System Approach (WSA)
Ensure and enhance streamlined processes for reintegration and transitions for young people
Recognise and divert young people from serious organised crime
Enhance Practitioners knowledge and skills in working with young people vulnerable to exploitation including sexual and criminal exploitation
Ensure timely, effective responses to the health and well-being needs of children and young people
Address and minimise the risk of substance misuse for children and young people, ensuring education on the harm and consequences of poly drug use
Promote and enhance victims and community confidence
Performance and Improvement Framework

## How We Work Together

The governance arrangements for the planning and delivery of services for children, young people and their families were reviewed in 2015 in light of the implementation of The Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) Act 2014 and The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Services for children, young people and families are planned and monitored at a West Lothian wide level by the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group (CFSPG) along with other partnership groups. We recognised that the planning landscape is complicated however our arrangements provide clear linkages to:

- Community Planning Partnership (CPP)
- West Lothian Council
- NHS Lothian Board
- The Chief Officer Group (COG) for Child Protection
- Safer Communities for Youth Justice for Reducing Offending Behaviour in Children and Young People.



The Children and Families Strategic Planning Group is responsible for integrated children's service planning in West Lothian and reports to the Community Planning Partnership.

Members are senior officers from key community planning partners with collective responsibility for:

- Monitoring key plans to take forward the vision and priorities of the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group
- Overseeing the progress of the Corporate Parenting Plan
- Developing Strategic Commissioning for children and families services
- Ensuring that progress towards achieving key outcomes is monitored and reported through the Community Planning Partnership
- Identifying cross cutting issues and develop integrated multi-agency solutions

- Identifying process improvements
- Promoting joint staff training and development and engaging with staff groups across the partnership.

### Our workforce:

We recognise that the quality and effectiveness of our services rely on the commitment, dedication and ability of staff across West Lothian. On a daily basis they make a difference to the lives of children, young people and their families. As a partnership we are committed to ensuring that our collective workforce has the necessary skills and knowledge to provide high quality services in this challenging environment.

## Strategic Commissioning

Strategic Commissioning is the term used for all of 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.

Commissioning is commonly described as a cycle of strategic activities similar to that shown below:



A Strategic Commissioning Plan is being developed and will be in place by summer 2021 to ensure that partners get the right balance between universal and targeted services and plan services which meet the needs of and improve the quality of life for children and families in West Lothian by:

- having the vision and commitment to improve services
- connecting with the needs and aspirations of users and carers
- making the best use of all available resources understanding demand and supply
- linking financial planning and service planning making relationships and working in partnership

- ensuring Best Value
- placing the equalities agenda at the centre of our service planning and delivery.

Our aim is to deliver high quality, appropriate and accessible services to meet current demand and to anticipate and identify future needs and expectations.

Commissioning is an ongoing and evolving process and our approach in developing the Children's Services Commissioning plans is based on an annual Analyse, Plan, Do and Review cycle



## Performance Management

Performance management is critical to the effective delivery of streamlined services. Performance data is vital management information that is used in planning and decision-making processes and it also helps to align resources, processes and employees to deliver our strategic priorities

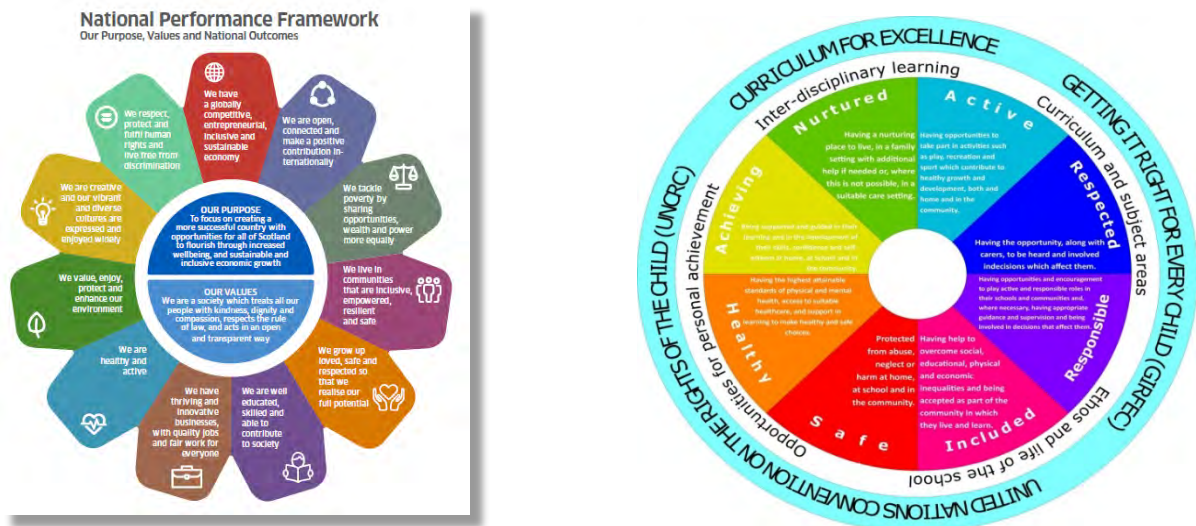
The Children and Families Strategic Planning Group has identified its specific contribution to the delivery of the outcomes detailed within The National Performance Framework (NPF) and West Lothian's Local Outcome Improvement Plan outcomes

Our priorities have been agreed and a robust suite of indicators using the SMART framework, aligned to the actions agreed in our action plan have been established or are being developed to ensure we achieve our intended outcomes in meeting Children and Young People's needs to achieve their potential.

To ensure that we make a positive difference in the lives of children and young people across West Lothian these indicators will be tracked through partner's performance information systems. Performance reports on the progress of the plan and the indicators will be submitted quarterly to the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group.

This reporting mechanism is not without its challenges and will require an in-depth review to the collecting, analysing and reporting of data from all partner agencies in the CPP. The CPP is made up all multiple partner organisations and there is no one system to collect data and information that crosses all partners.

Given the diversity of the various performance management systems across the CPP there is also an issue of sharing and storing information through the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and this presents as a challenge to a streamlined system to ensuring the best service possible to meet children and young people's needs.



This Children's Services Plan will be underpinned by an action plan which will expand on how we will achieve our priorities.

The Scottish Government National Performance Framework identifies eleven national outcomes. West Lothian Children's Services Planning and priorities directly correlate to seven of these outcomes:

National Outcome:	West Lothian Priorities	GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicator
<b>Children and Young People:</b> We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Child Protection</li> <li>Corporate Parenting</li> <li>Raising achievement and attainment</li> <li>Reduce Substance Misuse</li> <li>Reduce offending behaviour in Children and Young People</li> <li>Promote Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>Promote Children's Rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe</li> <li>Nurtured</li> <li>Achieving</li> <li>Responsible</li> <li>Responsible</li> <li>Healthy</li> <li>Respected</li> <li>Included</li> </ul>
<b>Poverty:</b> We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tackle Child Poverty (Anti-Poverty Strategy)</li> <li>Promote Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>Promote Children's Rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nurtured</li> <li>Included</li> <li>Respected</li> <li>Healthy</li> </ul>
<b>Education:</b> We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising Achievement and Attainment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Achieving</li> </ul>
<b>Health:</b> We are healthy and active	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Health and Wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Healthy</li> </ul>
<b>Human Rights:</b> We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Children's Rights</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respected</li> </ul>
<b>Communities:</b> We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Children's Rights</li> <li>Reduce Substance Misuse</li> <li>Reduce offending behaviour in Children and Young People</li> <li>Promote Health and Wellbeing</li> <li>Child Protection</li> <li>Corporate Parenting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Safe</li> <li>Nurtured</li> <li>Responsible</li> <li>Responsible</li> <li>Healthy</li> <li>Respected</li> <li>Included</li> </ul>
<b>Culture:</b> We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote Children's Rights</li> <li>Promote Health and Wellbeing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respected</li> <li>Included</li> </ul>
<b>Environment:</b> We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment		

<b>Economy:</b> We have a globally competitive, entrepreneurial, inclusive and sustainable economy		
<b>International:</b> We are open, connected and make a positive contribution internationally		
<b>Fair Work and Business:</b> We have thriving and innovative businesses, with quality jobs and fair work for everyone		

## Appendix 1 – UNCRC / Wellbeing Indicators

All West Lothian's priorities contribute directly to the Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI) and correlate with links to the UNCRC priorities of safeguarding children and young people:

Wellbeing Indicator	Priority	Suggested Links to the UNCRC
<b>SAFE</b>  Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community	<b>Child Protection</b>	(11) abduction and non-return of children, (19) protection from violence, abuse and neglect, (22) refugee children, (32) child labour, (33) drug abuse, (34) sexual exploitation, (35) abduction, sale and trafficking, (36) other forms of exploitation, (37) inhumane treatment and detention, (38) war and armed conflicts
<b>HEALTHY</b>  Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices	<b>Promote Health and Wellbeing</b>	(3) best interests of the child, (6) life, survival and development, (24) health and health services, (39) recovery and rehabilitation of child victims
<b>ACHIEVING</b>  Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community	<b>Raising achievement and attainment</b>	(4) Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights in systems that promote and protect these rights, (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance, (28) right to education, (29) goals of education
<b>NURTURED</b>  Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or, where possible, in a suitable care setting	<b>Corporate Parenting</b>	(4) Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights in systems that promote and protect these rights, (5) parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities, (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance, (20) children deprived of a family, (21) adoption, (25) review of treatment in care, (27) adequate standard of living
<b>ACTIVE</b>  Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and	<b>Promote Health and Wellbeing</b>	(3) best interests of the child, (23) children with disabilities, (31) leisure, play and culture

Wellbeing Indicator	Priority	Suggested Links to the UNCRC
sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community		
<b>RESPECTED</b>	<b>Children's Rights</b>	(2) non-discrimination, (3) best interests of the child, (4) Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights in systems that promote and protect those rights.
Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them	<b>Corporate Parenting</b>	parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities, (8) protection and preservation of identity, (12) respect for the views of the child, (13) freedom of expression, (14) freedom of thought, belief and religion, (16) right to privacy, (17) access to information; mass media, (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance, (30) the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family
<b>RESPONSIBLE</b>	<b>Reduce Substance Misuse</b>	(3) best interests of the child, (12) respect for the views of the child, (14) freedom of thought, conscience and religion, (15) freedom of association, (40) juvenile justice
Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decisions that affect them	<b>Reduce offending behaviour in Children and Young People</b>	
<b>INCLUDED</b>	<b>Children's Rights</b>	(3) best interests of the child, (6) life, survival and development, (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance, (23) children with disabilities, (26) social security, (27) adequate standard of living
Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn	<b>Corporate Parenting</b>	



## West Lothian COVID-19 sentinel dataset commentary

9 February 2021

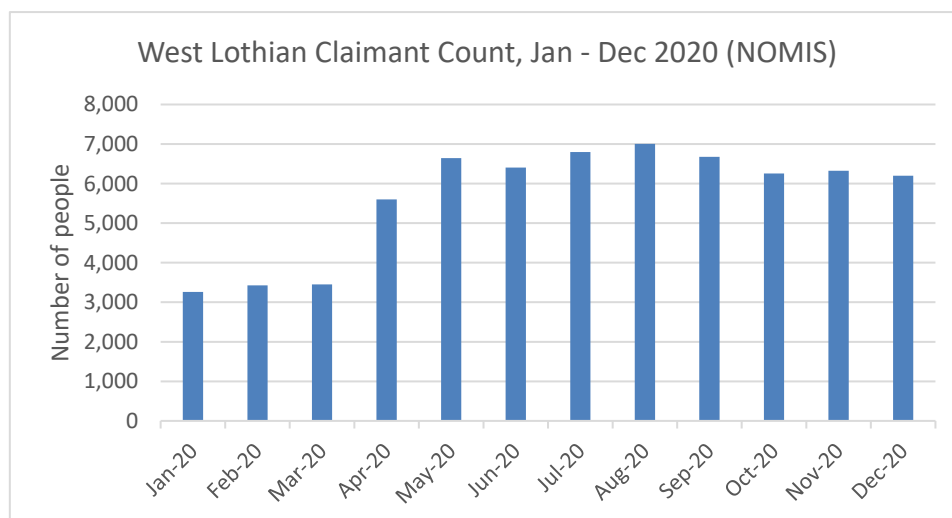
### Key Messages

- Claimant count has levelled off at around 5.3% - double the rate at February 2020. This could potentially rise again in figures for Jan/Feb.
- Youth unemployment continues to be above Scotland and UK rates
- There is uncertainty about the impact on the economy of the potential withdrawal of furlough and SEISS
- There is concern about the proposed withdrawal of increased Universal Credit payments on the most vulnerable citizens in West Lothian
- The majority of West Lothian residents' claims for COVID self-isolation support grants continue to be rejected
- Scottish Welfare Payments have surpassed all previous levels and January requests were as high as any period during the pandemic.

### Claimant Count

Since September 2019, unemployment claims have doubled in West Lothian. This upward trend started in April 2020. There were almost 7,000 people claiming unemployment related benefits by September (6,835). There was a levelling off of claimants rate in the lead up to Christmas, possibly due to seasonal work being available, and furlough support through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme / SEISS.

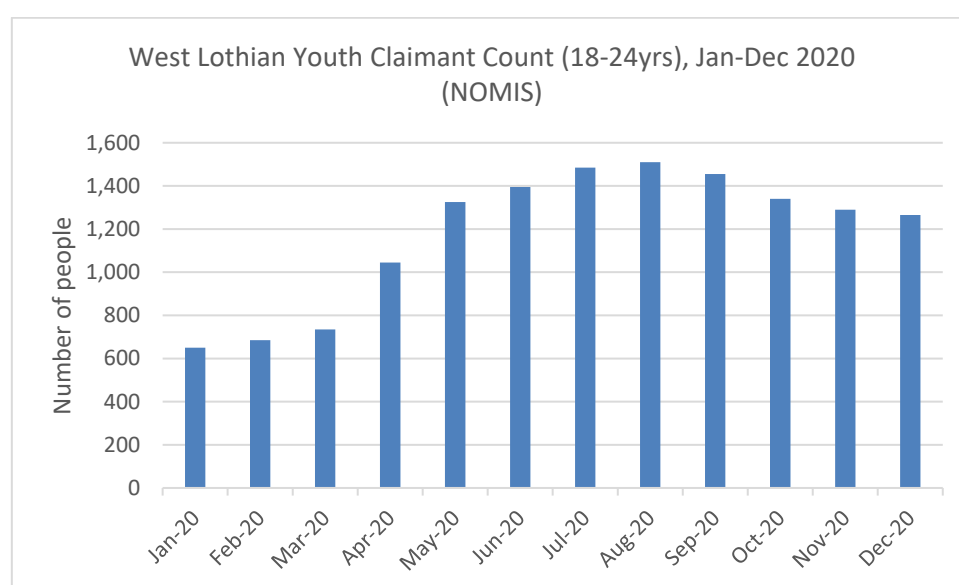
The end (and restart) of furlough may have had some impact on September and October numbers; there is also an annual reduction in unemployment claims as universities and colleges return in September. Most economic forecasters had suggested that there may be a significant rise in unemployment in January and February as seasonal employment comes to an end. We expect that we may see figures starting to rise if support schemes are not extended and tail off from March/April.





The 18-24 age group has been particularly affected by the COVID-19 economic downturn. Since September 2019, unemployment claims in this age group have also doubled. This upward trend started in March 2020 and now there are just under 1,300 young people claiming unemployment related benefits. At 9%, the West Lothian unemployment claimant rate is higher than Scotland (8.3%) and UK (8.9%) although a decrease in the rate from August 1,510 (10.7%) and September 1,455 (10.3%). The decrease in claimant figures over the November and December period are likely to be due to an increase in the availability of seasonal work during this period.

Many young people have been employed in sectors such as the hospitality and the retail sectors, which have both been hard hit by the lockdown. At the same time, job vacancies in the UK between April to December 2020 have been at the lowest levels since the ONS vacancies survey began in 2001. It is expected that the end of furlough support will also have an impact on youth unemployment.



The data has been analysed at ward and regeneration area level. Some areas have significantly higher claimant count levels than the West Lothian average, including Addiewell, Blackburn, Bridgend, Craigshill, Fauldhouse, Ladywell, Polbeth, Stoneyburn and Whitburn.

We are also currently exploring which claimant count data can be analysed by gender and age. Anecdotal information suggests that women with families in part-time, low paid employment are being significantly affected.

It should be noted that many West Lothian residents work in Edinburgh and Glasgow. Job cuts in Edinburgh may have impacted the West Lothian claimant count numbers.

### **Job Retention Furlough Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support**

By August 2020, 27,600 West Lothian jobs had been protected by the furlough scheme. But gradual withdrawal of support meant that the number of jobs protected dropped significantly to 6,800 in September, and also potentially due to a number of people going back to work as lockdown restrictions eased. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme was extended from November 2020 and

will continue until 30 April 2021. Take up has increased from November (7,700) to 9,100 in December.

The Self-Employment Income Support Grant Scheme began on 13 May 2020 and has provided support to the self-employed in West Lothian. Take up rate has been substantial, with 73% initial take up to June (4,400), peaking in in July and August at 76% (4,600). The average value of grant claims increased from £2,500 in October back up to £2,800 in November. SEISS was extended in the form of two further grants, each available for 3 month periods covering November 2020 to January 2021 and February 2021 to April 2021. There was a 71% take up rate for the second grant extension (with an average claim of £2,500) and 58% take up rate for the third grant extension (with an average claim of £2,700).

We would expect the end of these support schemes to have an impact on claimant count figures from March/April and will keep a close eye on this.

### **Total Employment**

The economic development team has been monitoring key employers in West Lothian. These 207 businesses employ almost 21,000 people in the area. 103 companies provide no cause for concern; 66 businesses are at amber status and 28 businesses are showing cause for concern. There is no information on the other 10 companies. There has not been much change in the status of these companies over the last few months.

There are signs of business growth in the pharmaceuticals and life sciences sector.

### **PACE data**

The PACE scheme means that Skills Development Scotland works with local economic development teams to support employees who face redundancy in companies with any number of employees. It is, however, difficult to monitor the economic wellbeing of smaller businesses as there is no system to identify their difficulties. It is possible that companies make redundancies below a level that instigates support so therefore not visible within PACE statistics. The West Lothian Business Gateway support team has identified some smaller companies that have made redundancies and is providing support to staff in these organisations. In addition, a local employability helpline via West Lothian Council's contact centre has been introduced. We are not seeing as many redundancies as other areas; however as noted above, job losses in surrounding areas may impact on job losses in West Lothian. There is now a local PACE contact in place and work is being carried out to review relevant redundancies in surrounding areas to report to the weekly economic recovery group.

### **Food Support**

Since food support started in mid-May until the end of December, 124,148 food parcels have been delivered in West Lothian. It is worth noting that the 'nature' of the need relating to food has changed. During lockdown (April to June) the need arose from the fact that people could not access food. More than 4,100 food parcels were delivered on average during each week in June. In recent months, the need has been due to people having less money and unable to afford food. December saw an unprecedented demand for food support, with 19,312 food parcels delivered. The council will continue to fund the food network until March 2021.

### **Scottish Welfare Fund**

There has been a significant increase in the amount of Scottish Welfare Funding disbursed in West Lothian. £1.6million has been granted between late March and the end of December with a significant increase in the crisis grants awarded and, as the 2020-21 financial year has progressed, and there has been movement in rented housing stock a steady rise in community care grants. In the first full week in January, the service received 372 applications for Crisis Grants, the highest amount for a week in the whole Covid period, and £40,155 was awarded. This is a 60% on the same week in the previous year. Grant requests appear to be declining but are still very high. Awards through Community Care Grants continue to be high with the average spend being over £1100.

People can apply for grants if they are advised to self-isolate by Test and Protect. But successful applicants are low – between 10 and 20% on a monthly basis – mostly due to challenges in meeting all the Scottish Government's eligibility criteria – even though these have been expanded.

### **Schools: Education Maintenance Allowance, Free School Meals and Clothing Grants**

The vast majority of those eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance have now applied. 685 payments have been made.

There has been an increase in the total number of children eating free school meals in this academic year. The eligibility criteria for clothing grants have been extended to include those receiving council tax reduction so that more children can receive this grant. This may have contributed to the increased uptake of over 10% year-on-year for this grant; 7,790 children in West Lothian have benefitted from this award. Families have received many ad hoc payments from West Lothian Council and the Scottish Government and many will be benefitting from the uplift in Universal Credit. There will be a huge impact on families if the uplift is not continued. There is already an increasing number of people coming to the Advice Shop due to (low level) debt that they have no way of paying back.

### **Rent and Council Tax Arrears**

Housing continues to maintain a high collection rate for rent, with the collection rate at 98%. Income management is being monitored continuously and corrective actions taken as needed. Income so far this year has been higher from customers and the average transaction value has increased. Both of these increases are over and above the previous year even after adjusting for the rent increase applied in April 2020.

Rent arrears increased from March, peaked in November and were lower in December/January, due to the first set of non-collection weeks. Rent arrears are currently within the forecast projections and the trend is stable. A very small percentage of customers are in high-end debt.

The largest real debt driver is the transition of customers from legacy Housing Benefit onto Universal Credit due to the break in benefits during the initial Universal Credit assessment period. Maximum debt on accounts has increased largely due to the removal of eviction actions while court processes are suspended.

Most wards are within target with only one ward, Breich Valley, underperforming at this stage. There are historical debt issues with this area so this underperformance cannot be attributed to the pandemic pressures.

There has been an increase in council tax arrears which is complemented by an increase in the council tax reduction caseload. The council's Revenues team is projecting a loss on council tax receipts due to COVID-19.

### **Ongoing Work on the Data Set**

There is a lack of useful, up to date data in relation to mental health and wellbeing. Existing data tends to focus on service/input measures, and the more acute aspect of mental health. There is less data and intelligence around whole population mental health and wellbeing. There may be some more useful information from the mental wellbeing hubs and this is currently being explored.

More work is also required to capture indicators pertaining to community physical and mental health and wellbeing. There are many third sector organisations that support their communities to address many of the health and wellbeing issues that are key to any preventative approach. But this work may be under the radar and many organisations may not even see their work in this light. For example, befriending, sport and exercise, community events, older people groups and youth activities all play a key role in prevention of poor health and promotion of wellbeing but are perhaps not captured statistically or reported elsewhere. It would be desirable to capture this activity needs so that it can be recognised, better integrated and understood by the CPP.

# **COVID-19 Sentinel Data Set**

**22 February 2021**

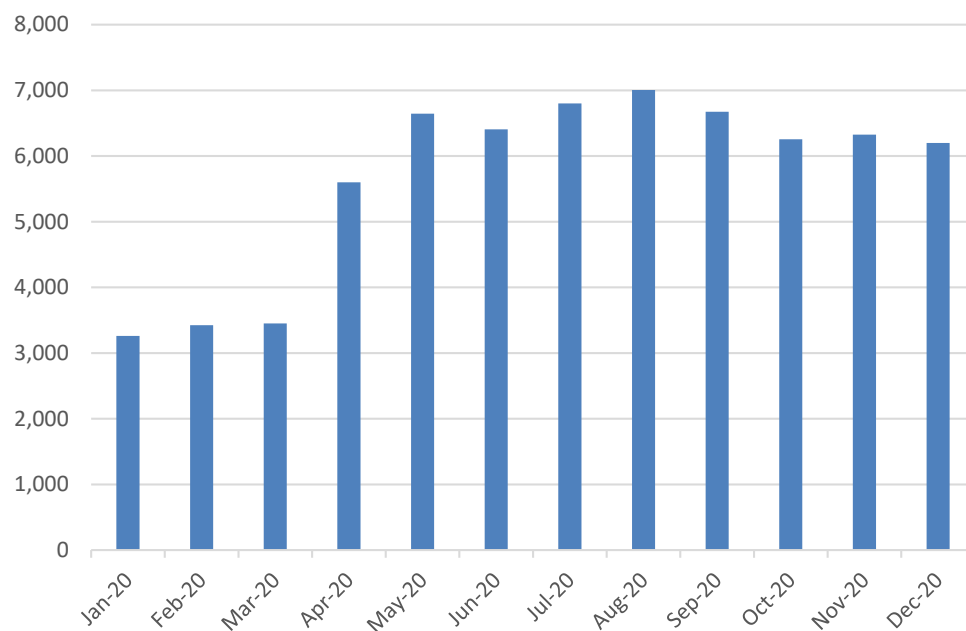


**West Lothian**  
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

# Claimant Count

	<b>West Lothian claimant count</b>	<b>West Lothian Claimant Rate</b>	<b>Scotland claimant rate</b>
Jan-20	3,260	2.8	3.2
Feb-20	3,425	2.9	3.3
Mar-20	3,450	3.0	3.3
Apr-20	5,600	4.8	5.4
May-20	6,645	5.7	6.1
Jun-20	6,405	5.5	6.1
Jul-20	6,800	5.8	6.3
Aug-20	7,005	6.0	6.4
Sep-20	6,675	5.7	6.2
Oct-20	6,255	5.3	5.9
Nov-20	6,325	5.4	6.0
Dec-20	6,200	5.3	5.9

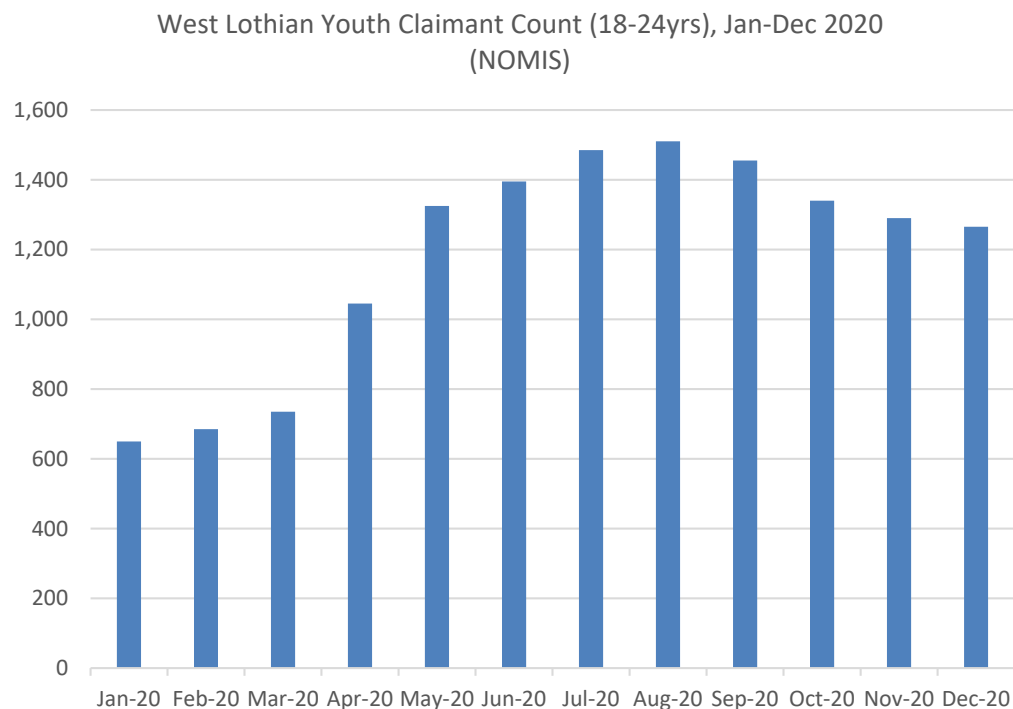
West Lothian Claimant Count, Jan - Dec 2020 (NOMIS)



# Youth Unemployment

Number of claimants aged 18 -24 in West Lothian

Youth Claimant Count (18-24)	West Lothian claimant count	West Lothian claimant rate	Scotland
Jan-20	650	4.6	4.3
Feb-20	685	4.9	4.5
Mar-20	735	5.2	4.6
Apr-20	1,045	7.4	7.1
May-20	1,325	9.4	8.4
Jun-20	1,395	9.9	9.1
Jul-20	1,485	10.6	9.7
Aug-20	1,510	10.7	9.6
Sep-20	1,455	10.3	9.1
Oct-20	1,340	9.5	8.6
Nov-20	1,290	9.2	8.4
Dec-20	1,265	9.0	8.3





# Furlough Scheme

## Job Retention – Furlough Scheme

Month	Total number of employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take up Rate
June*	21,700	88,400	25%
July	26,000	88,400	29%
August	27,600	88,400	31%
September	6,800	88,400	8%
October	5,900	88,400	7%
November	7,700	88,400	9%
December	9,100	88,400	10%

**\*Note:** breakdown by LA only began in June. Figures for June report include from the start of the scheme (20 April) up to 30 June 2020.

# SEISS

## WL SEISS 1 Claims to 31 Oct

Month	Total no. of claims made	Total potentially eligible population	Average value of claims	Take up Rate
June	4,400	6,000	2,800	73%
July	4,600	6,000	2,800	76%
August	4,600	6,000	2,800	76%
September	3,800	6,000	2,500	64%
October	4,100	6,000	2,500	69%
November	4,600	6,000	2,800	77%

## WL SEISS Claims for 2nd Grant extension (3 mth extension period Nov - Jan)

Month	Total no. of claims made	Total potentially eligible population	Average value of claims	Take up Rate
Published November 2020*	4,200	6,000	2,500	71%

## WL SEISS Claims for 3rd Grant extension (3 mth period Feb - April)

Month	Total no. of claims made	Total potentially eligible population	Average value of claims	Take up Rate
Published January 2021*	3,500	6,000	2,700	58%

\*Note: Claims received up to 31 October

# Food Support

Month	Food parcels
May-20	7725
Jun-20	16442
Jul-20	19498
Aug-20	14368
Sep-20	15591
October	15036
November	16176
December	19312

# Scottish Welfare Fund and Self Isolation

## Scottish Welfare Fund

	<b>Crisis Grants</b>		<b>Community Care Grants</b>	
<b>01 March – 31 December 2020</b>	10297	778,499.78	2348	830,742.04

## Self Isolation Support Grant

<b>Date</b>	<b>Oct</b>	<b>Nov</b>	<b>Dec</b>
<b>Self Isolation Applications</b>	265	273	167
Granted	41	54	35
Refused	204	197	118
Outstanding	0	0	0
<b>Reconsideration</b>	20	22	14
Awarded	3	2	1
Refused	17	20	13
<b>Applied for a Crisis Grant</b>	71	39	32
Awarded a Crisis	57	24	19
Refused a crisis	14	15	13
Awaiting Decision	0	0	0

# Schools Support

## Education Maintenance Allowance

Academic year	EMA payments
2019/20	701
2020/21	685

## Clothing Grants

Academic year	Children
2019/20	7035
2020/21	7790

## Free School Meals

Academic year	Children
2019/20	5637
2020/21	6684

# Council Tax

**Comparative cumulative percentage collection rates of the total amount due for the year at the end of each month.**

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>2019/20 Cumulative Collection Rate</b>	11.04%	19.79%	28.24%	36.99%	45.60%	54.58%	63.37%	72.08%	80.70%
<b>2020/21 Cumulative Collection Rate</b>	11%	19.35%	27.83%	36.35%	44.84%	53.87%	62.51%	71.13%	79.59%
<b>Movement in 2020/21 to 2019/20</b>	-0.04%	-0.44%	-0.41%	-0.64%	-0.76%	-0.71%	-0.86%	-0.95%	-1.11%

	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>2019/20 Council Tax Reduction Caseload</b>	14890	14787	14771	14645	14659	14596	14551	14457	14558
<b>2020/21 Council Tax Reduction Caseload</b>	15497	15645	15433	15533	15496	15411	15416	15420	15321
<b>Movement in caseload</b>	607	858	662	888	837	815	865	963	763

# Rent Arrears

## Current Arrears Overall (Mainstream + Temporary Accommodation)

	<b>Total</b>
<b>April</b>	£3,085,347
<b>May</b>	£3,382,486
<b>June</b>	£3,682,518
<b>July</b>	£3,930,730
<b>August</b>	£3,559,775
<b>September</b>	£3,716,171
<b>October</b>	£3,928,936
<b>November</b>	£3,988,322
<b>December</b>	£3,300,988
<b>January</b>	£3,516,718

