

West Lothian Children's Services Plan Annual Report 2023-24



Getting it Right for West
Lothian's Children and Families



West Lothian
COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP

Children's Services Annual Report 2023-2024

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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 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 children are supported to achieve their full potential.

This Annual Report for 2023-2024 reflects the work and progress of the Children's Services Plan priorities and actions



Annual Reporting

As in previous years and in accordance with the Children and Young People's (Scotland) Act 2014, local and national partners who deliver services for West Lothian's children and families have come together to design and publish our revised Children's Services Plan for 2023 - 2026. The West Lothian Children's Services Plan does not exist in isolation, and this plan aligns with relevant existing plans and strategies across West Lothian and nationally.

This report outlines the key areas of work undertaken by the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group, the key factors that have impacted on this work and the progress made in taking forward the priorities of the West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2023-2026.

Planning Services for Children, Young People and Families

The multi-agency Children's Services Plan 2023/26 sets out the vision and priorities for the children's partnership.

As a product of partnership working amongst the community planning partners, the plan is agreed through the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group, reporting to the Community Planning Partnership.

The partnership listens to the voices of children and ensures that their views are valued and respected.

Partners have a shared commitment to achieving positive outcomes for children, young people and their families through active participation in joint planning for service delivery. The views of children and their families are at the heart of the decision-making process.

Across children's services there is strong focus on supporting whole families, supporting people to remain at home or in homely settings within their own communities as far as is possible, safe and in keeping with wishes and rights.

Children's services are committed to the provision of whole family intensive support to retain children within their own family network and community.

The necessary changes to practice in response to the pandemic, such as increased flexibility and use of technology have continued to have benefits in service delivery. Opportunities for further innovation will be considered and a commitment to continuous improvement.

Siobhan McGarty
Chair of the Children & Families
Strategic Planning Group



Our Vision

Partners in West Lothian 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 the 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.

Partners are committed to providing services that are holistic and developed with families 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, preventative work with families is valued and promoted, to support with the pressures of parenting and improve overall outcomes. There is a commitment to providing a high standard of statutory and child protection services when needed.

Our Principles

Central to the underpinning principles of the planning and delivery of services for children is targeted support to children and their families early enough 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:

- Re-distributing resources towards targeted activities with individuals, groups and communities
- Improved integrated working
- Improved 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:

- 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 priorities which have been agreed by partners as multi-agency actions
- Explains the way in which activity relating to each of these priorities 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: Children and Families Strategic Planning Group, Corporate Parenting Strategic Planning Group, Safer Communities Strategic Planning Group, Child Protection Committee, 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.

The West Lothian Children’s Services Plan 2023-2026:

- 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 priorities which have been agreed by partners as multi- agency actions
- Explains the way in which activity relating to each of these priorities will be linked to key outcomes, will be monitored through the use of meaningful performance indicators and will be driven by challenging targets

Our Vision underpins the national programmes of Curriculum for Excellence, Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Promise 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.

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	
PRINCIPLES that we will ensure the priorities are adheres to:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Re-distributing resources towards targeted activities with individuals, groups and communities ✓ Improving outcomes for the individual child and their family ✓ Improved Integrated working ✓ Focusing on early intervention by shifting resources from managing crisis to prevention and building resilience 	
PRIORITIES	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Protecting Children ✓ Strengthening Corporate Parenting ✓ Promoting Health and Wellbeing ✓ Reducing Harm for Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Raising Achievement and Attainment ✓ Promoting Children’s Rights and participation ✓ Reducing Harm from Substance Use
Themes running through all priorities	
<p>Early Intervention and Prevention Approaches GIRFEC / UNCRC / the Promise Partnership working and associated strategies and plans</p>	

Profile of Children, Young People & Families in West Lothian

In planning for the development and delivery of services, the profile of children and families in West Lothian has been considered. West Lothian has a population of approximately 181, 5720 (mid 2022) and is one of the fastest growing and youngest local authorities in the country. Between 2001 and 2022, the population of West Lothian has increased by 14.3%. This is the 5th highest percentage increase 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.

Based on 2022 mid-year population estimates of West Lothian population of children and young people aged 0-15 years was 33,742 which is 18.6% of the total population. This is a 3.5% decrease since 2001 compared with an 8.1% decrease of the 0-15-year-old population across Scotland for the same time period. The local profile is of importance in considering all areas of service design and developments.



14,632 people in West Lothian (8.1% of the county's population) live within the 15% most deprived areas in Scotland.

The most recent child poverty statistics (2022) show that 23.9% of West Lothian children are living in poverty. This is an increase of 2.8% from 2021 (21.1%)



Youth unemployment in West Lothian stands at 4.5%, which is slightly greater than the Scotland rate of 4.3% and lower than the UK rate of 5.2%



Babies exclusively breastfed at 6-8 weeks – this is 30.2% in West Lothian and 39.2% for NHS Lothian

332 of the total 0-17 years population in West Lothian were Looked After. The Scottish average for the same period was 340

West Lothian Youth Homelessness dropped to 30.3% which was 354 of 1169 applications. Applications from 16-17 year olds were at 5.4% and applications from those aged 18-25 were at 24.9%.

In West Lothian 93.8% of eligible children receive a 13-15 month review compared with 94.2% across Lothian and 90.8% of 27-30 month children receiving a developmental and wellbeing review compare with 92.9% across Lothian

Primary aged children registered for free school meals was 11,512 and 2045 within Secondary education

Partners in West Lothian are committed to ensuring that services are appropriately targeted, planned and delivered in partnership and focused on improved outcomes for children, young people and their families.

Strategic & Legislative Developments

There have been significant strategic and legislative developments during 2023/24 likely to impact on Children and Family Strategic Planning Group Partners service delivery in the future

The Promise Plan 24-30 will be launched in June 2024 and will build on the progress made by Plan 21-24. It will be flexible to respond to the ever-changing external environment and ensure it is appropriately supported by adequate resourcing. It will be specific about realising the vision of the promise and the roles and responsibilities required. It will include frequent milestones to make clear what needs to be done by who and by when. West Lothian work closely with The Promise Scotland Team to drive forward this work and support the practice and cultural changes that will be required to take forward this key area of improvement work.

To enhance multiagency collaboration the **GIRFEC Implementation Group** has established an online Practitioners Forum for front line workers across the spectrum of Children's Services. The initial focus is to address the inter-agency connections and knowledge lost during the pandemic and subsequent changes to working practices. Once established it is hoped that that the group will evolve to collaborate on local and national practice topics.

On 1 September 2020, the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill** was introduced to the Scottish Parliament and was passed unanimously on 16 March 2021. In October 2021, the UK Supreme Court found certain of the provisions in the Bill to be out with the legislative competence of the Scottish Parliament, as set out in the Scotland Act 1998. That judgment was addressed by returning a revised Bill to Parliament via the Parliamentary Reconsideration stage on 7 December 2023 when it was approved unanimously. It gained Royal Assent on 16 January 2024 and will come into force on 16 July 2024.

The UNCRIC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 ("the UNCRIC Act" or "the Act" for all references hereafter) places a duty on all public authorities to act compatibly with UNCRIC when delivering their functions, and to report on actions taken and planned to further advance and protect children's rights. It also provides legal remedies for children where they believe their rights have been breached.

The **National Child Protection Guidance** was published in 2021. The Edinburgh and Lothians Child Protection procedures were revised to reflect the changes in the National guidance and were launched in West Lothian on 22.01.2024. The revised procedures introduced changes to language, timescales, the format of meetings, paperwork and overall there is a greater focus on a strength's based approach.

The refresh of **Equally Safe**, in December 2023 enables us to adapt to changes in the social and legislative landscape without altering the strategy's valued aims and objectives. It ensures that the digital world, diverse identities and experiences of women and girls, and children's rights are central to the strategy.

In January 2024 **The Management of Offenders (Scotland) Act 2019** introduced the new Electronic Monitoring Order which can be imposed by a court as a condition of Bail. Section 3 of the Act widens the list of disposals and licences that will be able to be electronically monitored in Scotland. These include Restriction of Liberty Orders and Restricted Movement Requirement as part of other community sentences.

Moving Forward 2 Change (MF2C) Programme was accredited by the Scottish Advisory Panel on Offender Rehabilitation (SAPOR) in 2014 and was aimed at adult (18 years and over) males who have been convicted of a sexual offence or another offence with a sexual element and were assessed as Moderate to High on the Stable and Acute (SA07) risk assessment tool.

The development of a revised report template was part of a Scottish Government review, the '**Review of National Guidance for Court Based Social Work Services and Justice Social Work Reports**'. The new template, introduced in West Lothian in September 2023, allows report writers to provide a more direct, clear, professional 'conclusion' to support courts' decision-making about sentencing.

Early Intervention & Prevention

In West Lothian 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 and creating conditions to allow children and young people to thrive is recognised as the best outcome for the individual, the wider family and the community.

Partners 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 realise the strengths already present within the family to best improve outcomes.

In West Lothian there is a dedicated Mental Health Lead Officer who is driving forward the transformation of mental health services. This work is supported by the values and principles of the Community Young People's Mental Health & Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework and associated funding. Work is undertaken to ensure a connection to all national developments, including changes in legislation, policies, regulations and guidance; research evidence and best practice examples is maintained.

The priorities for this work were identified through the completion of a strategic needs assessment which provided a clear picture of what the needs of the families were in West Lothian. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation have ensured the services delivered continue to be based on the needs expressed by these families and that we remain focused on embedding a right based approach to service delivery. Families strengths are recognised to ensure they are supported appropriately when they are deciding what is required to improve the mental health and wellbeing of the family. Families are linked with their chosen support, if there is a waiting time, an alternative support can be agreed, this ensures families receive an appropriate support when they need it.

The Inclusion and Support Service is a prevention and early intervention service, providing support to children, young people and their families with additional support needs. The service provides educational support for children and young people and a range of other interventions can be put in place including outreach parenting support and family work, parenting group work and counselling. The service has a holistic approach and has developed interventions informed by assessed need and engagement with families.

West Lothian's Wellbeing Recovery Group provides a collective forum for professionals to meet, discuss and resource mental health and wellbeing referrals received by the Inclusion and support Service. A wide range of agencies are represented including from the voluntary sector, CAMHS, Practice Teams, Education (ASN) and DASAT. The group operates a needs-led approach which ensures young people have access to the correct supports and resources without delay.

All referrals to the Inclusion and Support Service are screened within a two-week period. Referrals for care experienced children and young people, many of who have trauma-related concerns are prioritised, however the majority of referrals are from universal services.



The following seven priorities are identified by the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group as key areas of work:

Protecting Children

Strengthening Corporate Parenting

Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Promoting Children's Rights and Participation

Raising Achievement and Attainment

Reducing Harm from Substance Use

Reducing Harm for Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law

The priorities and needs in the Children's Services Plan 2020 – 2023 were reviewed and the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group members confirmed that the Seven priorities agreed for the Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 are still relevant and meet the aims of the Plan 2023-2026 to tackle inequalities and give children and young people in West Lothian the best possible start in life.



Protecting Children

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

The CPC has 3 subcommittees to support its work: Quality Assurance & Self Evaluation (QASE), Practice and Training (P&T) and a Learning Review (LR) subcommittee. The CPC has strong links with the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group with its oversight and leadership of Getting It Right for Every Child in West Lothian.

Main developments in the period 2023/24

- In response to a Learning Review concluded in 2021, the CPC commenced a pilot of Core Group Supervision. Following feedback from this pilot, Core Group Supervision/reflection has now been incorporated into child protection practice and is facilitated by independent Reviewing Officers. A criteria and process has also been devised for teams around the child in complex or "stuck" GIRFEC cases.
- Revised Child Protection procedures went live in January 2024. The revised procedures reflect changes to legislation and the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland. All staff attended briefings about the changes to the procedures. Templates and information for staff and families has been updated. There is increased focus on identifying strengths with families and building on these, with increased participation from families throughout child protection processes.
- Multi-agency practice reflection sessions have been introduced, focused on a single theme and delivered virtually. Practitioners receive a short input on the topic followed by the chance to discuss and reflect on their own and local practice in small multi-agency groups. Themes during 2023/24 have included learning from case reviews involving infants and parental mental health. The feedback from these sessions has been positive.
- Learning from two case reviews has resulted in guidance for staff about having challenging conversations, updated guidance about the importance of professional curiosity and guidance about robust child protection planning. Practice reflection sessions in relation to these areas are planned.
- The CPC met with multi-agency practitioners to gather their views of the CPC's priorities and local challenges. A future event is being planned with young people.
- The CPC has oversight of developments in Bairns' Hoose and contextual safeguarding.
- The IRD review group meets fortnightly to review every open IRD and considers any themes, patterns, emerging trends and examples of effective multi-agency work.
- A variety of learning opportunities are offered to staff: webinars, podcasts, practice reflection sessions, supervision, core group supervision, 7-minute briefings to prompt team discussions, virtual training and face to face training.
- The CPC continues to be informed by management information, learning from case reviews and audit activity, feedback from children, families and professionals to inform its priorities for future years.

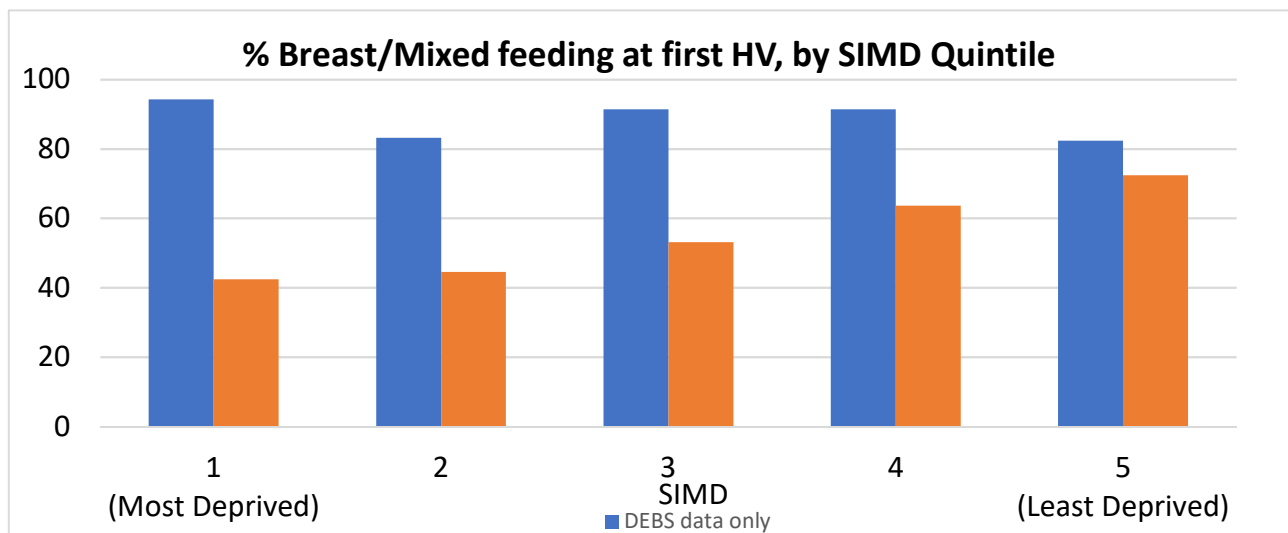
Promoting Health and Wellbeing

Good health and wellbeing are key to ensuring that children and young people in West Lothian have the best start in life. Children’s health and wellbeing starts prior to conception and is influenced by children’s wider social and economic environments. Health and wellbeing 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 environment. A strong sense of wellbeing provides children with confidence and optimism which maximise their learning potential and life chances.

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 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.

Main developments in the period 2023-2024:

- We now have 3 HENRY trainers within West Lothian now looking at how to increase number of courses moving forward. We have run 6 HENRY training sessions within West Lothian over the past year. HENRY training looks particularly at food and health and how practitioners can support families to support healthy eating. Evidence shows that HENRY:
 - Increased practitioner confidence to tackle complex and sensitive lifestyle issues following HENRY training
 - Health Visitors, and family support practitioners continue to use the knowledge and skills gained many years after they complete HENRY training
 - Tangible impact of HENRY training on family outcomes
 - Practitioners make sustained positive lifestyle changes in their personal lives, which enhances their credibility with parents
 - Positive changes to policy and practice in early years settings – including age-appropriate portion sizes, healthy snacks and strengthened team working
- Maternal and Infant Nutrition Service: The Delivering Early Breastfeeding Support Project (DEBS) is showing an impact on SIMD data related to Breast feeding rates (below). The Maternal and Infant Nutrition service is going for UNICEF accreditation within health visiting and Family nurse partnership.



- There has been a huge uptake in breastfeeding friendly premises within West Lothian. 100% of libraries, community centres, nurseries, leisure centres, GP practices, St Johns (including the cafe areas) are registered with scheme. This is an increase from the start of 2023.

	Total	NHS	Council	Other
West Lothian	211	37	144	30

- **WFWF** funding in place in Health Visiting team and a mapping of early years supports has been completed. A website has been set up for parents to access this information more easily and HV's giving out link at visits, also completed an audit with parents as to what support they would like, play and stay and more breastfeeding groups came out on top.
- **School Nurses** are delivering the 10 priority areas of pathway which are: Emotional/ Mental health and wellbeing, Substance misuse, Drugs alcohol and tobacco, Child Protection (neglect), Domestic Abuse , Care Experienced Children, Homelessness, Sexual health and wellbeing and pregnancy and parenthood, Youth Justice, Young Carers and Transitions.

The most request for assistance area for school nurses in West Lothian is for continence and mental health. School nurses deliver **Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM)** is a cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) informed intervention, for anxiety in children and young people, aimed at treating mild-moderate anxiety symptoms in primary and secondary school aged children 8 and 18 years old, particularly those who have been unable to access psychological interventions because they do not meet the severity criteria for a tier 3 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The LIAM programme which supports the wider partnership mental wellbeing outcomes.

- **The West Lothian Mental Health Oversight Group (MHOG)** maintains an oversight of the various mental health services across West Lothian for children and young people and ensure clear linkages exist and that good communication and partnership working is supported. The purpose of the group is to meet the following outcome which is one of the Health and Wellbeing priority of the Children's Services Plan: 'Support positive mental and emotional wellbeing of children and young people by establishing a Single Point of Access to ensure help is provided at the right time and by the most appropriate service' The group are currently developing a user friendly 'roadmap' of services to help children, young people and families and referring professionals to navigate the system. Key outcomes are:

- Clarity of referral processes for families and professionals in West Lothian
- Access to a single point of information as developed alongside young people who have been involved in the design of the process
- Current service flowcharts have been developed. The road map is in development and the group are collating all service criteria for current services to help identify a clearer process.
- A transitions workstream has developed actions which are almost complete and work is continuing to support transitions via various other workstreams
- There is a participation and engagement workstream which aims to develop mentally healthy communities where families, children and young people are empowered to seek effective support for their mental health
- This group have consulted with a wide range of children and young people across schools in West Lothian who have developed a vision for the 'one stop shop' for children and young people for all information and advice and referral routes for mental health and wellbeing. There has been engagement with 5 Clusters of P3-S6 Champs and 30 families and ongoing consultation planned with mini/midi and family champs and young people with lived experience
- They will have a QR code for easy access and the young people have designed it as below with work ongoing to identify a slogan and further develop the 9 apps



- The Mental Health Oversight Group Training and Staff Support workstream has continued to deliver training in the 3 main priority areas which includes Mental Health First Aid, Trauma Informed Practice and Suicide Prevention.
 - No of staff and community members completing mental health first aid training - 14 programmes have been delivered to staff from across the HSCP. 2 programmes have been greatly welcomed to our Foster Carers from across West Lothian.
 - No of staff trained as trainers – there are currently 17 staff trained in Mental Health First Aid, 5 trained in Trauma Informed Practice Level 2 and 25 places will be allocated for staff to complete trauma level 2 training the trainers in 2024
 - No of Staff reported feeling more informed & confident when supporting people’s mental health - The identified training provides space for delegates to reflect on their current practice and share knowledge and skills. All delegates have reporting that the training has been beneficial to them and bringing back knowledge to the forefront of the minds.
 - Work also includes delivery of level 1 Trauma Informed Practice (TIP) Nearly all education staff have completed TIP level 1 training. Roll out has begun across the HSCP priority being given to the Trauma Board Test of Change Sites, these include teams from Social Policy, Health, Housing, Third Sector and Education.
 - Staff from 3 high school clusters have participated in the Introduction to TIP Level 2 training.
 - Evaluations have been very positive of the training to date and there has been a real enthusiasm to learn more and become more involved in transformational change in views and work in mental health.
- The Lead Officer for Mental Health Development continues to be responsible for working with the community planning partners to redesign mental health services for young people, in line with the values and principles of the Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework. The implementation of The Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Supports and Services Framework values and principles has meant a time of learning and reflection of current practice and transformational change in practice, thinking and working culture ensuring we embed the national vision for mental health services of children young people and families. To date Roots, Listen and Link and Voice have been implemented and are providing a different approach to working with the whole family.
- Axiom Consultancy was commissioned to evaluate Listen & Link and Roots to establish their contribution at a system level to delivering the values and principles in the Framework, supporting local priorities and delivering the services which children, young people and families need to at the right time, in the right place and in the right way. The evaluation also needed to determine to what extent the development and delivery of Roots and Listen & Link reflect key underlying principles:
 - Placing children, young people and families at the centre of how Listen & Link and Roots operate, and how this reflects the principles of co-production and shared decision making
 - Facilitating early response to concerns/distress
 - Enabling effective accessibility and underpinning a “no wrong door” ethos.

The evaluation aimed to establish impact to aid future planning and funding of support provision, establish on what works and suggest actions to address any challenges in order to enable the future sustainability of support provision. The feedback in the evaluation highlighted the key role Roots and Listen & Link have played in addressing issues which have been impacting on the mental health and wellbeing of children, young people and their families for some time and which have had a significant impact on their quality of life. Examples of families and young people have demonstrated the benefits to them of being able to discuss their issues directly with practitioners, being made to feel that their opinions mattered and having the opportunity to choose the type, nature and frequency of support which they felt would make the biggest difference to them.

- A text service ‘VOICE’ was also set up through the Community Mental Health & Wellbeing Support. This is for young people who need help but prefer to text rather than talk to someone. Over the last year there have been 48 active rescues of young people who have suicidal ideation.
- **Self-Directed Support (SDS)** - The Listen and Link Service as part of their conversation have a self-directed support option. This provides staff with flexibility and creative to support positive wellbeing outcomes for young people and families. We are working with IN Control Scotland to evaluate our Self-Directed Support processes, and we continue to monitor the use of SDS. A deep dive analysis will be carried out before the summer of the SDS process.

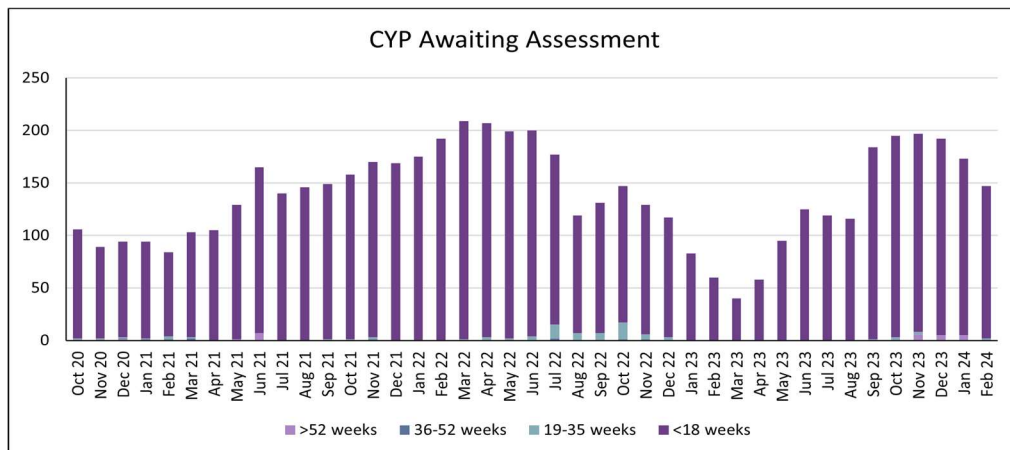
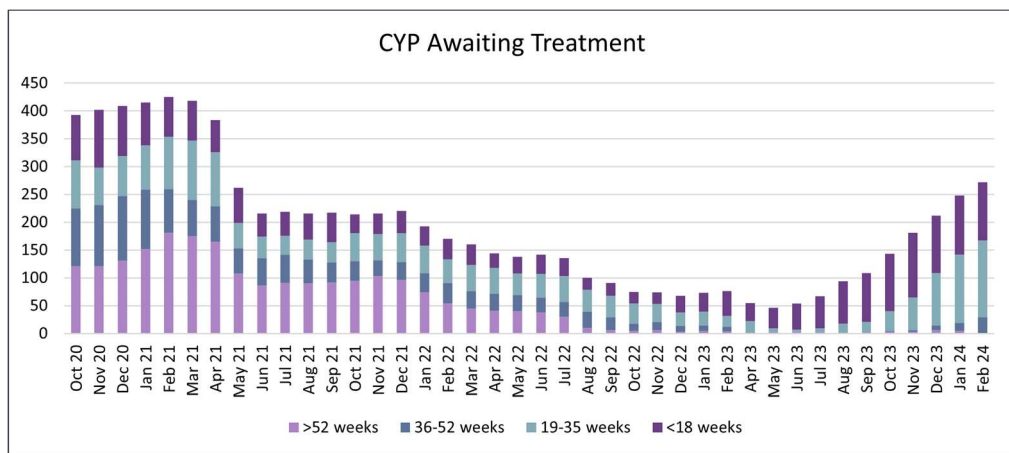
It is based on ‘small budget’ funding, and is up to £500 per child/young person. It is not means tested and there are no eligibility restrictions associated with child and family benefit funding. Examples where SDS funding has been used include:

- Equine/music therapy
- Gym passes/martial arts clothing
- Sensory regulation/support resources for the home
- Sensory tents and accessories
- Basketball hoop equipment to help manage stress and anxiety

- **Trauma Informed Practice Board**

- Test for change pilot in place where various services are involved in receiving support at all levels in trauma informed practice. This includes access to Level 1 NES training and STILT leadership training.
- WLC successful in securing a space on a Trauma Responsive Social Work Services early adopter pilot (only 4 spaces allocated in Scotland). Work began in May 2024 with a targeted part of the social policy workforce as part of their programme for trauma responsive change.
- Set up Trauma network – 3 events have been held in January and May and both have been very successful, planning has begun for a third event.
- A Trauma Resource Implementation Group has been developed to drive forward identified areas in our journey of becoming trauma informed and responsive in West Lothian.

- Work is ongoing through the Mental Health Oversight to try and get children and young people help earlier where outcomes are more likely to be better. CAMHS are involved in this process. Current CAMHS data shows there are 395 children and young people waiting, out of these 91 are waiting for an assessment and 305 are waiting for treatment. The number of rejected referrals has significantly reduced since the introduction of the CAMHS Tier 2 service which can see lower level referrals.



Raising Achievement and Attainment

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. The Raising Attainment Strategy is the mechanism by which attainment and achievement of all learners will be supported and Schools in West Lothian have consistently demonstrated their capacity to improve attainment. Annual progress towards the Strategy are contained within the National Improvement Framework Report and Plan for Education Services along with progress with the Scottish Attainment Challenge framework.

Main developments in the period 2023-2024:

- The partnership approach to Strategic Equity Funding planning has continued in order to collaborate with a range of services across the local authority including the anti-poverty team, social policy, community learning and development, educational psychologists and others. Collaborative projects have continued which have a specific targeted focus. A very successful Pupil Equity Fund sharing event took place in April to allow schools to network and share excellent practice.
- The Equity Team continues to provide universal and targeted support to schools and Early Learning & Childcare (ELC) settings in tackling the poverty-related attainment gap and making effective use of Pupil Equity Funding. A variety of supports and professional learning opportunities for school leaders, teachers, ELC practitioners, pupil support workers, family link workers, and partners including speech and language therapists has been provided. The number of targeted schools has increased and cluster approaches to universal support, building on a successful pilot in the Armadale cluster last session, are being supported.
- The Level-Up project is an intensive, multi-agency approach to re-engage our care experienced learners in the senior phase of their education. It is targeted at those with minimal engagement in their learning and at risk of care placement break down. Evidence to date continues to show improved educational attainment outcomes, including SQA qualifications and SCQF wider achievement Awards. The collaborative approach to improve outcomes in mainstream secondary schools which was introduced last session is demonstrating a robust support system for learners with an improved focus on tracking and monitoring outcomes.
- An officer from education services continues to work with the two staff posts which were created by Housing: The Youth Emergency Prevention officer works with 16 to 17 year olds and the Youth Housing Options Officer who works with 16 to 18 year olds. To support the youth team, secondary schools identify young people at risk of homelessness, who are also receiving support. In addition the Citizenship & Tenancy Award SCQF Level 4 has been delivered in most secondary schools within the authority as a targeted intervention. The Upstream project with the Rock Trust is supporting learners in Bathgate Academy and St Kentigern's Academy.
- The Mentors in Violence Prevention programme is now well supported in schools using a peer education model, within schools and community groups, to discuss important issues faced by young people in Scotland. This approach is working towards challenging gender-based violence.
- The new temporary post for supporting attendance has worked closely with partners regarding improvements. The focus has been on: Promoting a shared language & self-evaluation for wellbeing, inclusion & equality to improve attendance and engagement using reliable data to inform improvements; Building capacity within schools to improve attendance and engagement, whilst removing barriers for all through the expansion of robust systems, processes and interventions; Implementing a staged intervention model of excellence for improving attendance & engagement which aligns with the existing WL attendance policy and Raising awareness & practical application of creative, flexible solutions to inclusive timetabling, curriculum design and partnership supports which meet the needs of young people facing barriers to school attendance & engagement.
- A suite of cost of the school day (CoSD) support materials for schools has been produced to promote cost of the school day issues and to encourage learner voice. A swag has been shared with parents/carers to signpost them to sources of support. The first edition of a CoSD newsletter has been issued to share practice, spotlight the work of support organisations and remind schools of key CoSD messages. Enhanced professional learning opportunities have been offered to deepen understanding of CoSD issues including to the equity network, a presentation to CLD colleagues, SAC partners and HWB champions. All school staff have a requirement to engage with the Child Poverty Action Group CoSD e-learning module by December 2024. The impact of CoSD work has been positively evaluated in recent inspection reports and through local authority validated self-evaluation activity. Schools continue to measure impact using the PEF planning tool and officers are continuing to support this process.

Strengthening Corporate Parenting

The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 defines corporate parenting 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". This includes infants, children, young people and care leavers who are:

- in residential care, including secure care
- in foster care
- in kinship care, who live with a family member other than a parent
- looked after at home
- disabled and who receive overnight respite
- left care – up to the age of 26 years

In West Lothian, the Corporate Parenting Plan is developed by the multi-agency Corporate Parenting Strategic Group and with engagement with children and young people. West Lothian are proactively working in partnership to embed the Promise Scotland Change programme and ensure that children and young people grow up loved, safe and respected.

Main developments in the period 2023-2024

- There has been focused work reviewing the number and duration of children 'looked after' at home has contributed to an overall reduction in numbers (from 64 at the end of 2022/23 to 39 at the end of 2023/24). The increasing and improved use of Child Planning Meetings as alternative multi-agency forums to reviewing Child's Plans has also supported this work.
- West Lothian's Permanence and Care Excellence (PACE) work has been incorporated into a Co-corporate Parenting workstream to further ensure permanence practice development is multi-agency in nature. There is a dedicated social worker role focusing on tracking and monitoring all children as they become care experienced away from home, providing support, guidance and mentoring to staff to ensure earlier assessment and planning.
- Significant work has been undertaken to redesign and strengthen West Lothian family based care services providing care for young people who are looked after and accommodated, and their foster carers, kinship carers and adoptive families. Improvements to marketing, communication, recruitment and online information has resulted in a significant increase in foster carer enquiries, evidencing the work is having a positive impact. Developments include an Intensive Fostering Service to meet particularly complex needs.
- Through the establishment of Care Experienced Lead Teachers in every secondary school, there has been a specific focus on enhancing our tracking and monitoring of care experienced learners in the senior phase of education with a view to improving attainment and positive destinations for this group. Outcome data shows performance above national levels across all key literacy and numeracy attainment priorities. Performance in positive destinations has shown an internal improvement but sits below the national average. This will be a priority for improvement in next year's plans.
- Through specific funded initiatives, Education Services have also begun to broaden the tracking and monitoring of educational progress of our younger learners. This work has led to the establishment of a system for updating and maintaining accurate performance data regarding key literacy, numeracy and health & wellbeing progress measures for our care experienced learners in our primary schools. This work will be combined with the existing work in secondary schools next session with a view to improving communications at key transitions. There will also be enhanced professional learning offers available to all schools next session to coincide with the update of our care experienced policy guidance for schools and the roll out of service specific information on The Promise.
- The Improving the Health and Wellbeing of Looked After Children workstream within the Corporate Parenting Strategic Group have reported:
 - Improved consent and completion of CECYP health assessments
 - New Standardised Operating Procedure (SOP) which will ensure all CECYP are offered opportunity of annual review health assessment. Both CECYP Nursing and School Nursing teams will work collaboratively to achieve this.
 - New referral pathway between CECYP Nursing and the 'Active Schools' team supporting CECYP to have access to sport and leisure activities
- The Throughcare Aftercare Nurse has responded to 49 referrals during 2023/24, with common themes including: mental health, sexual health, substance/alcohol use and physical health.

- The Throughcare and Aftercare social work service has developed an information pack for young people, including supports the service can provide and on young people’s rights. This has been produced with young people and the process also highlighted positive feedback relating to the support and guidance provided by the service.
- The Throughcare and Aftercare social work service has a lead role in supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC). Resource capacity has been increased and there are now more accommodation options for UASC to meet demand, with support being provided in partnership with the 3rd sector. A graduate is appointed in the throughcare aftercare social work team who has developed materials to inform UASC transferring to West Lothian through the National Transfer Scheme on local supports and to assist staff in their knowledge relating to UASC countries of origin, which supports with age-assessments. A local multiagency UASC Networking and Practice Development Group has been established to review the supports for UASC and to promote continued learning in this area. The team is also connected with other local authorities to benchmark and develop best practice.



Promoting Children's Rights and Participation

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (Incorporation) (Scotland) Act 2024 was given Royal Assent on 16th January 2024 and the Act came into force on 16th July 2024. The Act ensures children's rights are fully embedded in the law of Scotland placing a duty on public authorities (or those acting on their behalf) to comply with UNCRC requirements when delivering devolved functions conferred by or under Acts of the Scottish Parliament or under common law powers. The Act provides legal remedies where it is felt children's rights have been breached and applies to everyone under the age of 18.

Promoting Children's Rights is a priority in the West Lothian Children's Services Plan 2023-2026. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children (UNCRC) sets out the specific rights that all children have to help fulfil their potential, including rights relating to health and education, leisure and play, fair and equal treatment, protection from exploitation and the right to be heard. 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

These rights are dependent on each other for their effectiveness therefore we must uphold them all, they are Indivisible, universal, unconditional, inalienable and inherent. Within West Lothian we have adopted a best practice approach.

Main developments in the period 2023-2024:

- West Lothian have a well-established multi agency children's rights working group with more than 20 representatives involved in delivering public authority services. The working groups approach is underpinned by the principles of the Forth Valley and West Lothian Youth Voice Charter. Over this reporting period it has overseen the establishment of an implementation sub group with a focus on developing a children's rights network. The working group has undertaken the following:
 - Supported the preparation and publication of the 2020-2023 West Lothian UNCRC 3 yearly report
 - Developed a user friendly version of the Children Services Plan which was consulted on with young people
 - Developed and circulated a 7 minute briefing to support awareness raising of the UNCRC Act
 - Worked on the roll out of an e-learning module and the updating of impact assessment guidance to ensure UNCRC compatibility.
 - Led on the collation of responses to the consultation on the UNCRC statutory guidance.
 - Supported the implementation sub group to increase engagement and participation of young people (e.g. in a competition to design CPC logo, informing the development of our family based care service, setting up a youth group in our residential houses, setting up of lived experience groups and promoting joining of the network)
 - Worked closely with the Promise Informed Practice (PIP) network to promote and raise awareness of the rights of care experienced young people.
- The working group are continuing to work on developing an action plan based on the improvement services UNCRC implementation framework with key performance indicators being established to support the measuring of progress. They are also overseeing the development of an appropriate website area to provide regular updates to interested parties on the work undertaken as well as supporting a child friendly complaints process which complies with the child friendly complaints handling principles developed by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPPSO) All of this work has supported Articles 2, 3, 6, 12 and 17.
- The implementation subgroup has begun to establish a children's rights network enabling children and young people to come together and provide a united voice about issues that are important to them. It also provides a central forum for adult decision makers to seek views of children and young people on strategic direction across West Lothian enabling the voice of the child to be at the heart of decision making ensuring we meet Articles 3 and 12 of the UNCRC. The subgroup held an event in Howden Park Centre called continuing the conversation where more than 40 young people attended to hear about the work ongoing to promote their rights and to enable their views to be gathered. A planned follow up event was held in May 2024 also at Howden Park Centre. Children and young people told us they were not aware of some of the work that was ongoing and they wished more opportunities to come together and continue the conversation.

- Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is the national approach to improving the wellbeing of children and young people to ensure children and families get the right help, at the right time, by the right person or service. West Lothian's GIRFEC multi-agency group meet regularly to collaborate on arising matters and practice developments. The group is currently reviewing GIRFEC guidance to incorporate broader practice direction, including the use of Reflective Professional's Meetings to provide a safe space for workers to reflect on practice, as well as to develop skills and knowledge. Reflective Professional's Meetings will be utilised in complex cases and cases where the child's plan is not achieving desired outcomes. The GIRFEC multi-agency group is also responsible for hosting regular online Practitioner's Forums where professionals across the spectrum of children's services present about their work, raising awareness, creating networking opportunities and highlighting practice topic. In April 2024 an inaugural annual GIRFEC Practitioner Event delivered input on important practice areas highlighted from local and nation-wide Learning Reviews.



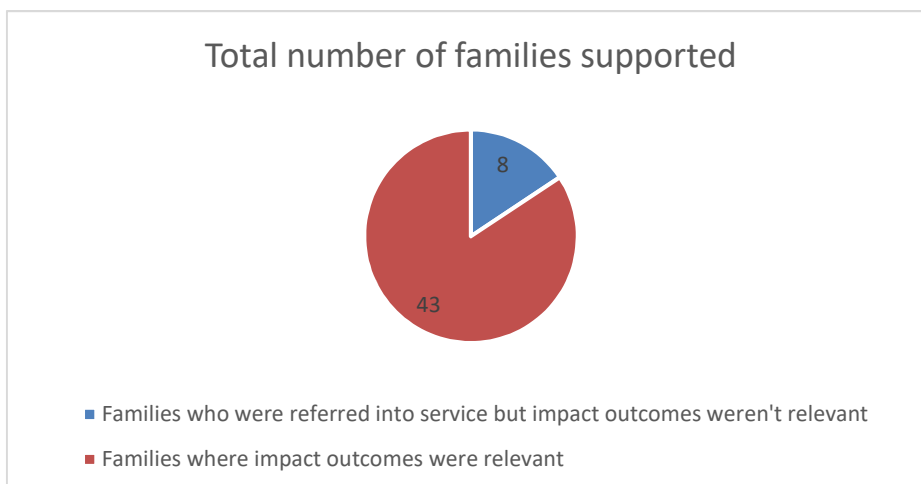
Reducing Harm from Substance Use

The West Lothian Alcohol and Drug Partnership (ADP) brings together multi-agency partners to support children and families impacted by harmful use of substances. The ADP have developed a Whole Family Approach Public Social Partnership (PSP) to coordinate existing approaches, and to trial a range of additional interventions. These services adopt preventative and early interventions strategies, as well as providing direct support to both children and their families who are using substances.

The PSP has commissioned a range of services and is developing an evaluation strategy. Some of the achievements are outlined below.

Main achievements in the period 2023-2024

- The family support service often termed 'Children affected by parental substance use' (CAPSU) service has 6 reporting areas agreed with ADP and report on a quarterly basis. *domestic abuse is captured as an additional reporting area.
- The Corra Foundation Children and Family Fund has awarded West Lothian Alcohol and Drug Partnership (WL ADP) partners a grant of £496, 508 over the next five years. A collaborative bid was submitted to the fund which was led by West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service (WLDAS) and included the Youth Action Project (YAP) and Circle Scotland. This 5-year project will focus on early intervention, prevention and family support for people with drug and alcohol problems. The funding will enable the recruitment of one new staff member in both WLDAS and YAP and 0.4 FTE in Circle. The project will be led by a project team and will report into the ADP structures in West Lothian. The funding is part of the Scottish Government's commitment to developing supports to reduce drug related deaths.
- The Corra Foundation – Drugs Mission Funding, Corra – PDI Main Grant & Whole Family Approach PSP has awarded Circle West Lothian funding for a full-time Specialist Fathers Post for 5 years which was piloted in April 2023. This service works in partnership with Fathers with historical or current substance use and their families. A dedicated Family Outreach Worker will work in partnership, to reduce barriers and support opportunities to build relationships with their family. Providing opportunities for Fathers to feel supported and gain confidence in their parenting role.
- The Whole Family Approach PSP awarded Circle funding for a Part-Time 0.6fte Pregnancy & Postnatal post which is currently funded for 3 years and piloted in March 2023. The service supports families affected by substance use, from pregnancy booking to two years postnatal. This support is offered in collaboration with key partners in adult addiction, maternity, neonatal and children and families services. The Family Outreach Worker will apply strengths-based interventions that focus on substance use/recovery, mother-infant attachment, parental mental health, father/couple relationship support, and kinship carer/wider family social support.
- Families supported by Circle from April 23 to March 2024
 - 51 families were supported
 - 82 Parents/Carers supported
 - 94 Children & Young People supported



Reducing Harm for Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law

Ensuring access to early intervention and prevention services in order to support whole families and reduce harm for children and young people in conflict with the law is a key priority for the youth justice service within West Lothian and their community safety partners. All are committed to diverting young people away from formal measures with the right supports at the right time using rights respecting approaches to enable young people to participate in decisions about them. Preventative approaches improve life chances for children and young people at risk of offending and promotes community safety.

The Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019 fully commenced on 17th December 2021 and services have adjusted and adapted to support the changes and ensure children are protected from the harmful effects of early criminalisation.

The Care and Justice Act 2024 came into force in June 2024. The Act brings into law the following provisions:-

- All children under the age of 18 will now have access to the Children's Hearings system if they require it
- Expanding the grounds of referral so that anyone under the age of 18 will be able to be referred to the Children's Reporter
- Young people under the age of 18 will no longer be placed in young offender's institutions on offence grounds, with secure care provision being the normal place of detention instead
- New reforms to support victims, including providing a clearer understanding of their right to request information from the Children's Reporter and providing a single point of service for victims in the Children's Hearing system

Services await the publication of Statutory guidance to further support them.

Main developments in the period 2023-2024

- Prosecution Diversion for Under 21 years has continued to increase in line with Advancing the Whole System Approach
- The service has continued to strengthen their partnership approach to early identification and prevention of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and diversion from Court processes for Young People at risk/charged with alleged offences. Work is progressing to understand and respond to children's experiences of significant harm beyond their family and home using a contextual safeguarding approach with the newly established Access and Connect Team (ACT) which is a project which is working in collaboration with West Lothian Youth Action Project (WLYAP) and Action for Children.
- There has been an increase in use of Structured Deferred Sentence for Young People under 21 years to prevent escalation through the Justice System
- Increased availability of Supervised Bail for Young People to prevent the use of Remand in line with the Whole System Approach
- Increased use of Movement Restriction Conditions (MRC) to prevent use of secure care and prevention of under 18's being remanded in young offenders institute by the use secure care as an alternative where the level of risk meets the criteria.
- Improved use of CARM (Care and Risk Management) for children/young people who come into conflict with the law.
- Referrals to our Early and Effective Intervention Service (EEI) remain high. We have had an increase in referrals this reporting year and despite this, performance remains consistently good. The main indicator measures the number of young people aged 12-17 years who do not go on to be referred to Youth Justice Services in the next 12 months. The results for this reporting period were 96%. This consists of data from the previous year and this is because the reporting takes place 12 months in arrears to allow monitoring of the young people over the intervening 12 months. This performance is similar to the preceding 3 years where the results were 94% and 97% respectively.
- Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) provides support for all referrals received for 12-17 year olds. In addition it continues to work with the Community Safety Partnership to identify and support children 8-11 years who are below the age of criminal responsibility so no longer eligible to work with the EEI service but who nonetheless may benefit from a whole family, early intervention service. We monitor police concern reports and then identify support services that may be appropriate. A performance indicator has been developed to capture this data and is reported on quarterly basis to the Safer Communities Strategic Planning group.
- New community payback orders between 2021 and 2022 have since increased by 90%. To accommodate the increase in new cases related to domestic abuse, and address the treatment needs of the existing cases, additional group work has now commenced. Justice Services staff are trained to deliver the Up2U programme, which is a programme for people who use domestically abusive and unhealthy behaviours in their relationships. The sessions are delivered in small group settings or

one to one and it seeks to reduce the incidents of domestic violence and prevent the cycle of abuse. Justice Services work closely with our colleagues in DASAT to ensure victim impact is retained within risk management.

- West Lothian Justice Services continue to donate refurbished bikes as part of their Community Payback Unpaid Work Bike project. The bikes are donated to young people referred by Social Policy, enabling them to travel around the community and connect with family and friends. The bikes are purchased from monies generated through the scrap metal programme. Unwanted bikes that are donated from around West Lothian are picked up and brought back to the work unit and dismantled by clients who have a Community Payback Order and attending Unpaid Work. All materials are recycled and the money that is generated from metals is accumulated throughout the year and then given back to the community. All children's bike donations include a safety helmet, hi-vi vest and a lock.
- A community justice strategic needs assessment has been completed which identified changes required in relation to unpaid work to better support the completion of orders. An unpaid work review was completed in November 2023 with recommendations implemented to ensure more flexible and accessible service delivery.



Performance Management

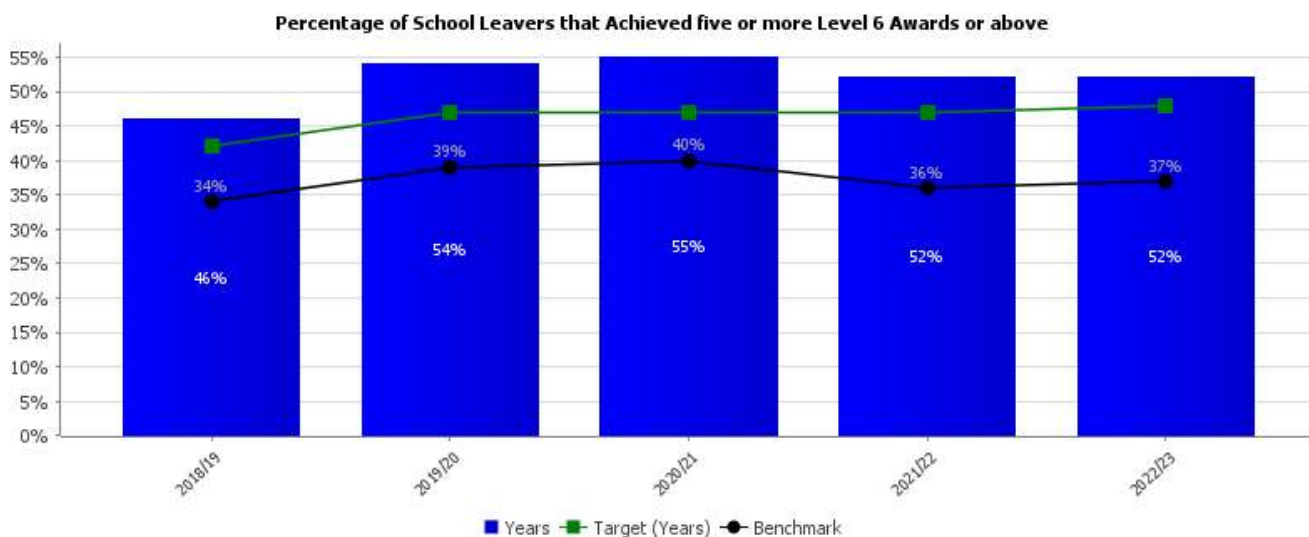
During 2021 the Scottish Government worked with COSLA and Children’s Services Planning Partnerships to develop a nationally agreed, Children, Young People and Families Outcomes Framework (CYPF) and a Core Wellbeing Indicator Set, which provide a holistic overview of wellbeing at local and national level and ensure they meaningfully reflect what matters to children, young people and families and enables measurement of progress.

The CYPF Outcomes Framework is being developed to provide an over-arching holistic picture and understanding of children and young people’s wellbeing in Scotland. Its approach is grounded within GIRFEC, with children’s rights at its core.

West Lothian 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, or are being developed to ensure we achieve our intended outcomes in meeting Children and Young People’s needs to achieve their potential. Indicators will be tracked through partner’s performance information systems. Performance reports on the progress of the plan and the indicators will be submitted regularly to the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group and Children’s Services Annual Reports and the 3-yearly UNCRC progress report will be submitted to the Community Planning Partnership to report progress of our Plan.

The West Lothian Assessment Model (WLAM) is a quality model that is used by West Lothian Council staff to improve the overall quality and performance of our services. The model and the process of self-assessment are part of a continuous improvement approach that helps the council and our stakeholders to monitor what we are delivering for West Lothian, particularly in our corporate priorities. The corporate Priorities are reviewed in consultation with key stakeholders every 5 years, in line with the corporate planning periods.

Raising Attainment



Performance in this indicator in 2022/23 was 52% which matches performance in 2021/22 of 52% but above the target of 48% due to our ongoing drive to raise attainment.

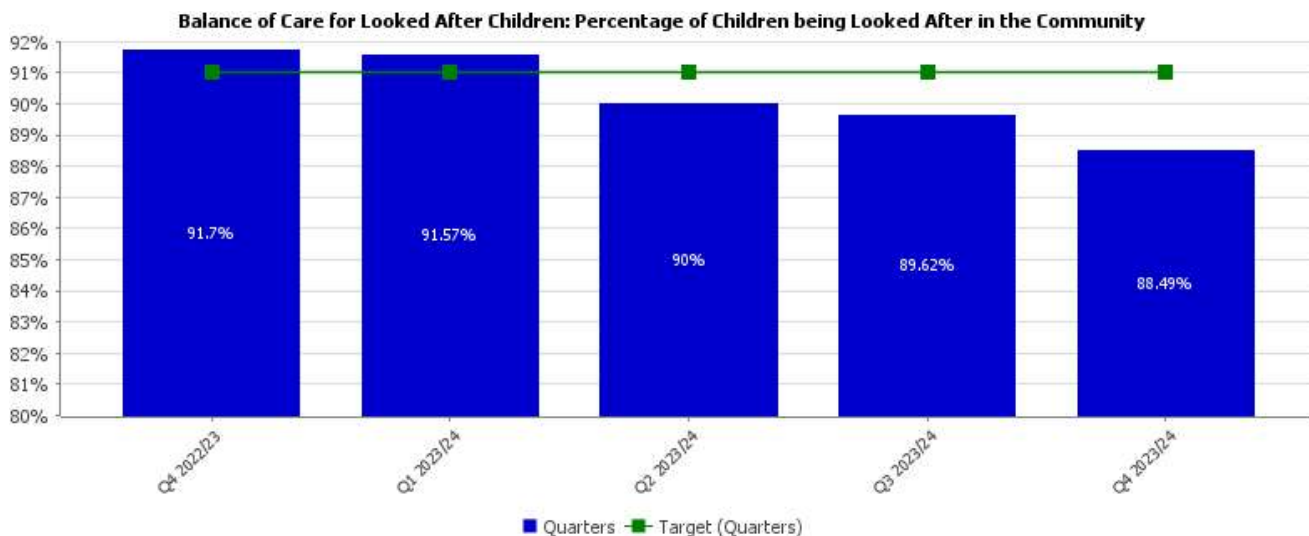
Entry and attainment figures for the years up to and including 2019 and 2022 are derived from different awarding approaches than 2020 and, separately, 2021. Comparisons of entries, attainment volumes and attainment rates should only be made with full consideration and recognition of each of these different approaches.

- 2022/23 cohort - 1112 of 2131 pupils achieving (52.18%)
- 2021/22 cohort - 1139 of 2184 pupils achieved (52.15%)
- 2020/21 cohort - 1131 of 2050 pupils achieved (55.17%)
- 2019/20 cohort - 1002 of 1855 pupils achieved (54.02%)
- 2018/19 cohort - 887 of 1925 pupils achieved (46.08%)

West Lothian performance in 2022/23 of 52% compares to Virtual Comparator performance of 37% and National performance of 38% - outperforming both, performance of West Lothian’s Virtual Comparator is shown as the benchmark line on the chart.

Performance information for 2023/24 will be available in March 2025. The target for 2023/24 is 48.5%

Corporate Parenting



This indicator has been created to build on the LGBF annual indicator that exists. By monitoring this figure quarterly it allows for a much more up to date view of this key strategic aim.

The percentage of children being looked after in the community in 2023/24, Q3 was 89.6%, a reduction from previous quarters when it was 90% in Q2, 91.5% in Q1 and 97.1% in Q4 of 2022/23.

Q3 of 2023/24 is consistent with the Scotland average in 2021/22 of 89.8%

Of note, the overall number of looked after has been reducing; 318 in Q3 2023/24; 319 in Q2 2023/24; 344 in Q1 2023/24 and 359 in Q3 of 2022/23. The reduction has included those children who are looked after at home reducing, which impacts on the balance of care: total of 41 in Q3 2023/24, 48 in Q2 2023/24; 62 in Q1 of 2023/24 and 60 in Q3 of 2022/23. The number of looked after children at home has reduced by half since Q1 of 2021/22.

The reduction in children being looked after at home is positive as families are being supported through GIRFEC planning processes. early and intensive support, without statutory measures being required.

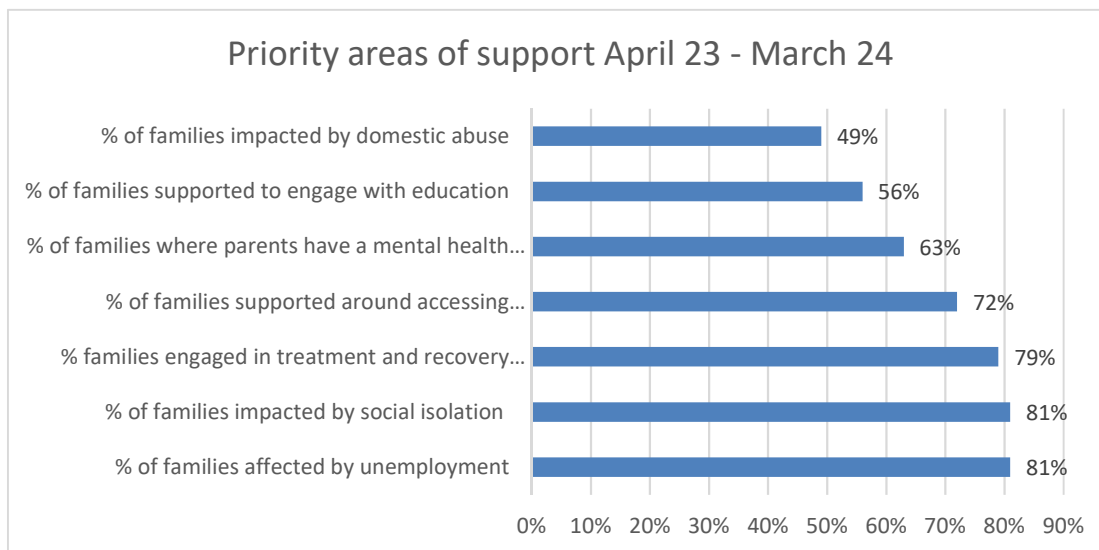
The service has been striving to sustain and improve to support children in community placements while reducing admissions to residential provision, particularly external provision. In Q3 there are 13 young people in external residential, a reduction from 14 in Q1 of 2023/24 and new admissions have decreased each year from this being 7 in 2020/21 to 4 in 2022/23 and 3 at Q3 of 2023/24.

There are challenges supporting young people to move on to independent living from residential placements when appropriate supported options are limited and there have also been circumstances where children have required specialist residential provision due to complex needs.

Performance in this area is under significant scrutiny and is being closely monitored. There is focus on reducing costs and promoting practice consistent with the Promise, to support positive outcomes for children and young people in their communities.

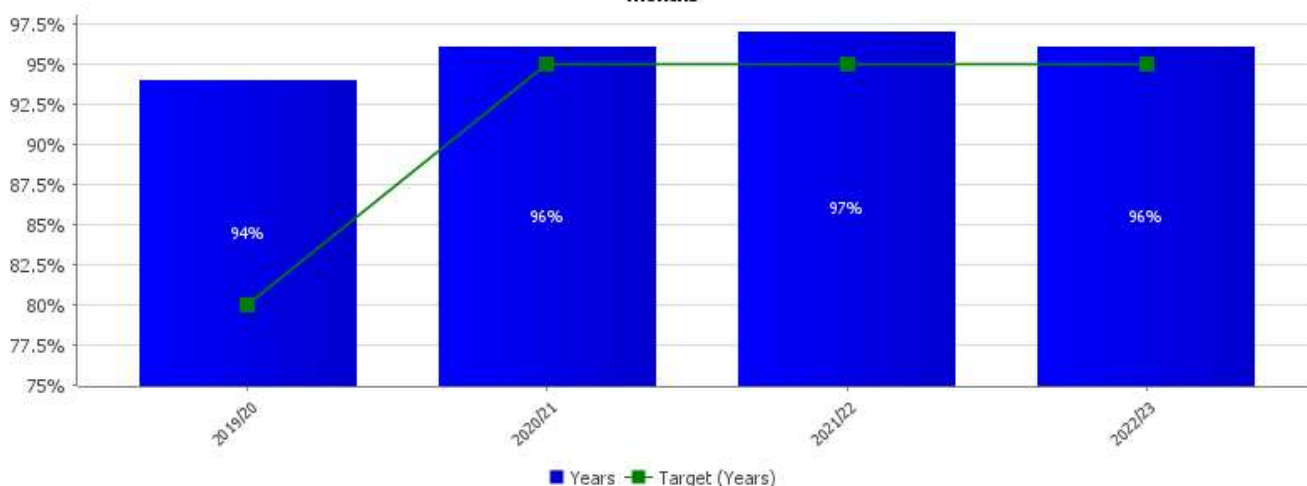
The target for 2023/24 remains at 91% as the service seeks improvement which has been demonstrated to be achievable.

Reducing Substance Misuse



Reducing Harm for Children and Young People in Conflict with the Law

Percentage of Early and Effective Intervention (EEI) cases 12 to 17 years who do not become known to the Youth Justice Team within 12 months



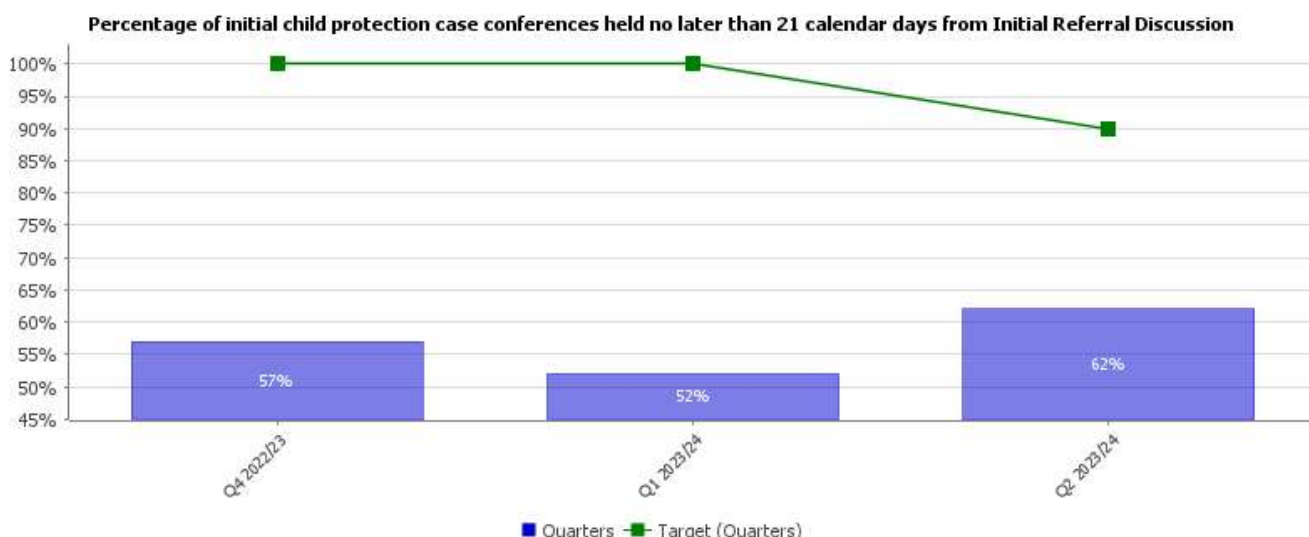
There is no published data available for this indicator for 2023/24. This is reported retrospectively. Appropriate indicators are under review to support this priority

This indicator has been developed to help the service assess the impact Early and Effective Intervention is having on supporting young people who have been in conflict with the law to ensure they do not reoffend. The target for this performance indicator was to achieve 95% by 2022/23 and this was set in the Council's Corporate Plan.

2021/2022 - 97% of referrals did not escalate which is a marginal improvement on results from 2020/2021. Only 4 of the 132 young people referred became known to Youth Justice Services in the intervening 12 months. It should be noted that this work has shown a strong performance over the previous 4 years. A trend has been noted of referrals being made to SCRA due to the criteria of what can be referred to EEI. There will be a focus in the coming year on looking at referrals and appropriate services to prevent any gaps in accessible early intervention services.

2020-2021 - 69 out of 72 referrals made in 2019-20 did not escalate. This resulted in an improvement to 96%. There is a downturn in numbers due in part to COVID - 19 but also work has been undertaken to ensure early signposting at all parts of our system. There has been a reduction in numbers of referrals due to changes in the age of criminal responsibility.

Child Protection



This indicator will change from February 2024 due to implementation of new Lothian Child Protection Guidance, which reflects the revised National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2021. The timescale will change from 21 days to 28 days.

The performance has been variable for this indicator; however the result can be strongly influenced by the number of child protection cases in any quarter and the circumstances of the case.

In Q2 of 2023-24, performance was 50%, a dip from the previous quarter when it was 52% and from all quarters in 2022-23 when it was 57% in Q4, 67% in Q3, 60% in Q2 and 65% in Q1

In the most recent quarter, there were 16 initial child protection case conferences and 8 took place out with timescales. Reasons for late case conferences have included staff illness and arranging at a time to support family to attend. There has been an emphasis on supporting and ensuring family attendance for the process to be meaningful and for engagement with planning, whilst aiming to be within timescales.

The quality assurance subcommittee of the child protection committee reviews all data to consider trends and possible actions for improvements. The extended timescale and fully staffed reviewing team should impact positively on performance.

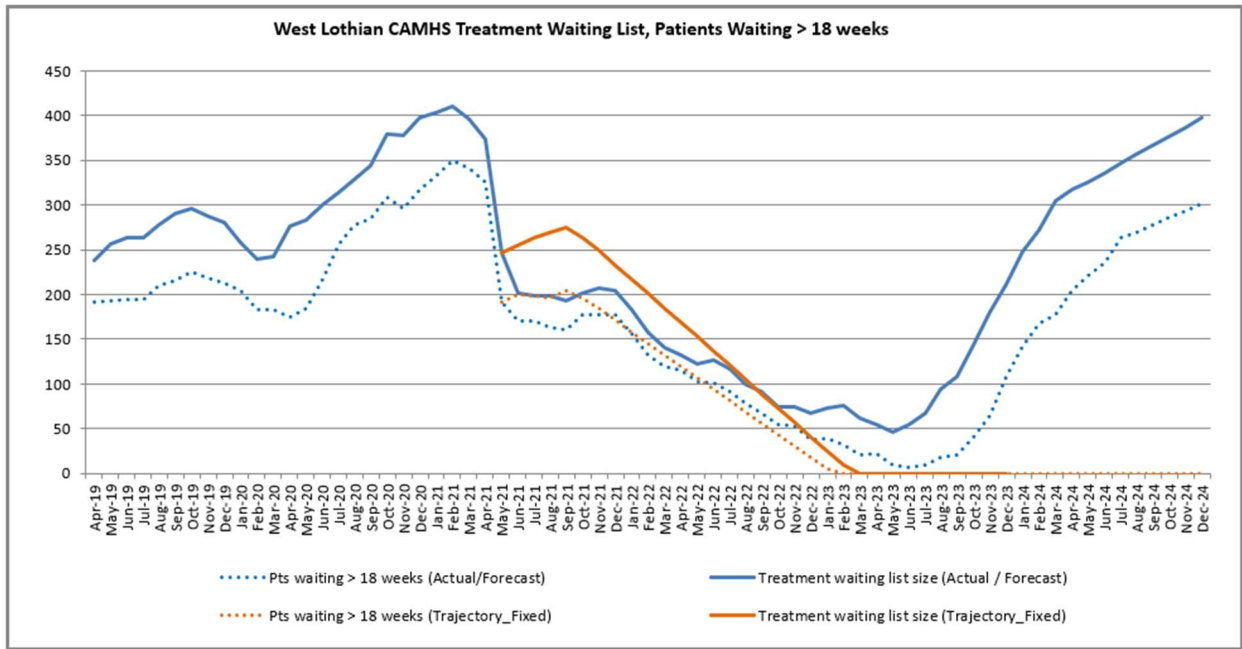
The target has been reviewed to be 90% This is to reflect that there will be circumstances when it is in the best interests of child protection planning for a review to be scheduled out with timescales rather than proceeding at an earlier date.

Children's Rights and Participation

Code	Key Performance Indicator	Value	Target	Latest Update	Status	Commentary
	Percentage S1-S6 children who say they feel safe when out in their local area <i>always or most of the time</i>	87%		2023		This is a national wellbeing indicator set by the SG. No targets have been agreed and the 2 nd year results are required to start seeing a trend.
	Percentage S1-S6 children who agree their local area is a good place to live	78%		2023		This is a national wellbeing indicator set by the SG. No targets have been agreed and the 2 nd year results are required to start seeing a trend.
	Percentage S1-S3 children who say they were bullied in the last year	42%		2023		This is a national wellbeing indicator set by the SG. No targets have been agreed and the 2 nd year results are required to start seeing a trend.
	Percentage P5-S6 children who agree adults are good at taking what they say into account	69%		2023		This is a national wellbeing indicator set by the SG. No targets have been agreed and the 2 nd year results are required to start seeing a trend.

Work is ongoing to develop an appropriate indicator to measure the percentage of children who are aware of their rights and feel that these are protected and promoted by the adults around them.

Promote Health and Wellbeing



In West Lothian, there was a decrease in referrals from 95 at end March to 86 at end April. However, referrals have been rising overall e.g., from 72 in January 2024 to 86 at end April 2024, with an average of 84 referrals per month over the same period.

During the period April 2023 / March 2024 referrals averaged 91 per month – this compares to an average of 79 referrals per month over the period April 2022 / March 2023.

Average number of additions to the Assessment List have risen over the same period i.e., during the period April 2023 / March 2024 there were 78 average additions to the assessment list – this compares to the April 2022 / March 2023 period with an average of 51 additions.

In terms of mental health treatment demand, at end April there were 29 additions to the Core MH treatment list; during the period April 2023 / March 2024 the average additions to the treatment list were 34 – this compares to an average of 17 during April 2022 / March 2023. This significant average increase has had an impact on waiting times improvement plans.

Performance Management

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
Safe Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community	Child Protection	(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
Healthy Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices	Promote Health and Wellbeing	(3) best interests of the child, (6) life, survival and development, (24) health and health services, (39) recovery and rehabilitation of child victims
Achieving Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community	Raising achievement and attainment	(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
Nurtured Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or, where possible, in a suitable care setting	Corporate Parenting	(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
Active Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community	Promote Health and Wellbeing	(3) best interests of the child, (23) children with disabilities, (31) leisure, play and culture
Respected Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them	Children's Rights Corporate Parenting	(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. 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
Responsible 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	Reduce Substance Misuse Reduce offending behaviour in Children and Young People	(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
Included Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn	Children's Rights Corporate Parenting	(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



Getting it Right for West Lothian's Children & Families 

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