

# Creating Hope Together in West Lothian

## West Lothian Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2025-2028



**POLICE**  
SCOTLAND  
Keeping people safe  
POILEAS ALBA



**West Lothian  
Council**

# Introduction

Suicide is a multifaceted and profoundly personal issue that affects individuals, families, and communities across Scotland. Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy, and its impact ripples far beyond those directly involved—leaving lasting emotional, social, and psychological effects on loved ones and the wider community. The nation strategy leads the way for development of local strategies and action plans with an outcome-based approach that emphasises that suicide is preventable, and that coordinated and collaborative efforts are essential to reduce risk and support those in distress.

This plan sets out West Lothian's long-term approach to suicide prevention for 2025-2028 building on the foundations of our short-term suicide prevention action plan and aligning with the four key outcomes of Scotland's National Suicide Prevention Strategy **Creating Hope Together: Scotland's Suicide Prevention Strategy 2022-2032**

## Outcome 1

The environment we live in promotes conditions which protect against suicide risk – this includes our psychological, social, cultural, economic, and physical environment.

## Outcome 2

Our communities have a clear understanding of suicide, risk factors and its prevention – so that people and organisations are more able to respond in helpful and informed ways when they, or others, need support.

## Outcome 3

Everyone affected by suicide can access high quality, compassionate, appropriate, and timely support – which promotes wellbeing and recovery. This applies to all children, young people and adults who experience suicidal thoughts and behaviour, anyone who cares for them, and anyone affected by suicide in other ways.

## Outcome 4

Our approach to suicide prevention is well planned and delivered, through close collaboration between national, local, and sectoral partners. Our work is designed with lived experience insight, practice, data, research, and intelligence. We improve our approach through regular monitoring, evaluation, and review.

# Our Vision

Our vision in West Lothian is for every person who is thinking about taking their own life to receive the help, support and compassion they need when they need it. By working in partnership across services, communities and the third sector, we aim to reduce inequalities, create hope and prevent suicide.

Suicide Prevention cannot be achieved by any single organisation. This plan is built on strong partnership working involving statutory partners such as West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership, West Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, Scottish Emergency Services and Education. We will also work closely with our third sector and community partners, media and wider partners such as employers, sports clubs and leisure services. Central to this approach is the inclusion of people with lived and living experience ensuring that those directly affected shape local interventions.



# Key Principles

**Addressing Inequalities:** Ensuring that our work in West Lothian will actively address the social and health inequalities that increase suicide risk in our community

**Partnership working:** Coordinated action across statutory bodies, NHS Lothian, West Lothian Council, Police Scotland, third sector partners and the lived and living experience networks

**Evidence informed interventions:** Actions guided by local data, national guidance and frameworks to ensure a targeted, efficient approach to work that helps those who need it the most as quickly as possible.

**Community focus:** Building capacity and resilience through volunteer champions and targeted awareness

**Time, Space and Compassion:** Our work will be guided by the principles of time, space and compassion creating environments where people feel safe, heard and supported.

The action plan takes a practical and coordinated approach leveraging existing services and support via all partners that aligns with the national strategy and meets the needs of West Lothian communities

# National and Local Strategies

The long term action plan sets out our key actions and identifies opportunities for collaborative work across partners and organisations to reduce the risk of suicide. Suicide prevention requires a whole of government and society approach in which prevention activity is embedded and visible across policy areas providing the foundation on which local suicide strategies are built. Many initiatives that contribute to suicide prevention are embedded within other local plans and strategies.

The West Lothian Local Outcome Improvement Plan, launched in 2023, has a vision of partners in West Lothian working together to **'improve the quality of life for everyone who lives, works, learns and does business in West Lothian'** with a focus on tackling inequalities.

Of the 4 thematic pillars and the outcomes identified to drive forward improvement, Suicide Prevention is addressed within the Improving Health and Wellbeing pillar and the associated performance indicators



In March 2023, the West Lothian Integrated Joint Board (IJB) published its strategic plan with a vision of **"Working in partnership to improve wellbeing and reduce health inequalities across all communities in West Lothian"**.

To achieve these three new strategic priorities were identified as:

1. Improving Health Inequalities in Partnership
2. A "Home First" Approach
3. Enabling High Quality Care, Support and Treatment

Suicide Prevention has key actions which contribute to meeting both priorities 1 and 3.

# Consultation and Engagement

The action plan was developed over a six-month period through a structured process of planning and consultation. This involved collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, including community partners, third sector organisations, statutory services, and members of the local workforce—such as NHS Lothian, West Lothian Council, independent businesses, and voluntary sector representatives. The consultation was open to all individuals living or working in the West Lothian area.

The development process followed a two-stage approach. The first stage began in April 2025 with an online consultation, during which two surveys were made available—one for community members and one for the workforce. Participants were invited to complete the survey most relevant to their role, with the option to choose either, but not both.

Over 200 responses were received, providing valuable insights that helped identify key themes. These themes formed the foundation of the plan's priorities and guided the second stage of the process: targeted engagement. This phase involved more in-depth discussions with specific groups, including Carers of West Lothian, the Alcohol and Drug Partnership, workforce representatives, and West Lothian Voluntary Sector Gateway.



# Governance and Delivery

Responsibility for the delivery of the action plan sits with the Suicide Prevention Lead and the Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (SPLG).

The leadership group, co-chaired by a statutory and third sector representative, will request updates on the action plan at each quarterly meeting of the SPLG to ensure effective implementation and evaluation of the plan.

The SPLG reports directly to the West Lothian Chief Officers Group (COG). COG will receive regular updates in line with Public Protection guidance or as and when requested. Annual updates on the plan will also be provided to West Lothian Integration Joint Board and the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership Board.



The plan sets out our key actions and identifies opportunities for collaborative work across partners and organisations to reduce the risk of suicide. It does not capture the full scope of suicide prevention efforts taking place across West Lothian. Many initiatives that contribute to suicide prevention are embedded with other local plans and strategies.

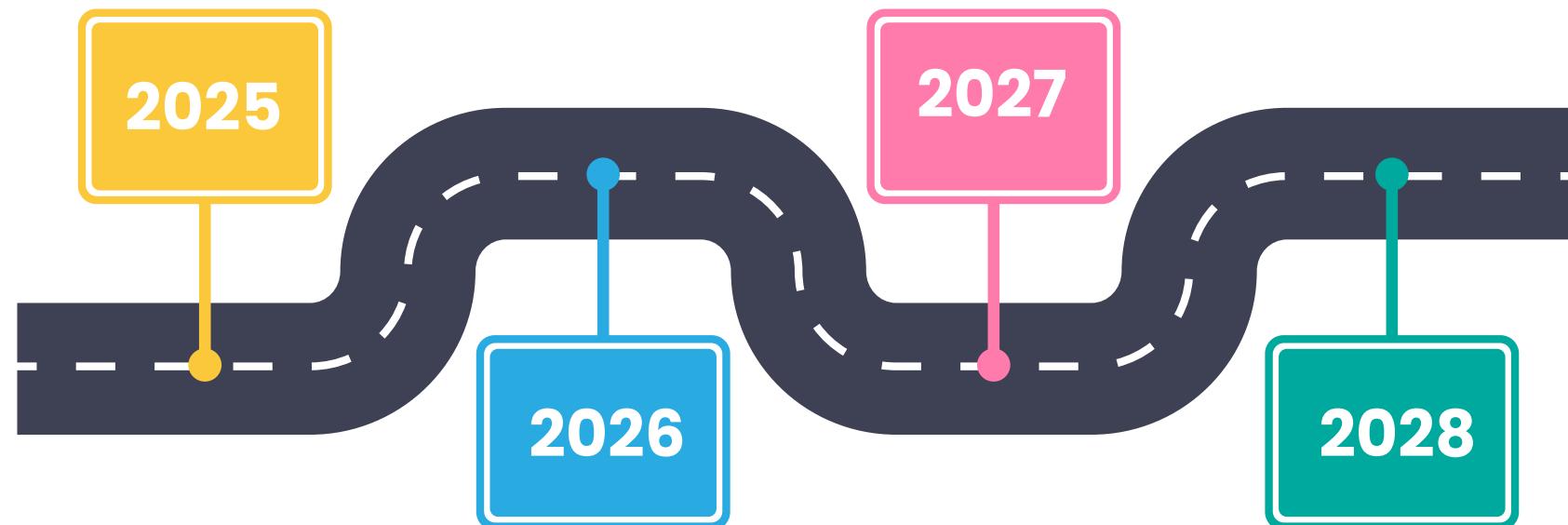
The action plan will continue to evolve as we gain new insights from emerging evidence, data and lived experience. The SPLG will regularly review and adapt the plan based on evaluation findings and learning from ongoing work to ensure it remains responsive to local needs. Additionally, some areas within the local plan may have a lighter focus, reflecting the complementary work being progressed at a national level, which is expected to bring direct benefits to West Lothian.

# How will we know we are making a difference?

The Suicide Prevention workstream operates within a complex system, making it challenging to directly attribute outcomes or impact to specific actions. Multiple influencing factors are at play, which means setting a target such as a percentage reduction in suicides is not appropriate. We are being advised to avoid reducing the impact of this work to numerical measures or linking outcomes solely to individual activities.

Instead, the focus should be on understanding how the actions taken contribute to broader outcomes and impact. This approach is essential in complex systems where direct attribution is not possible.

The Creating Hope Together national strategy and the West Lothian Suicide Prevention Action Plan are grounded in a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. The national strategy outlines a wide range of policy areas where suicide prevention efforts should be visible and integrated



Priorities	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome
<b>Outcome 1: The environment we live in promotes conditions which protect against suicide risk</b>				
1.1 Strengthen alignment between trauma and mental health work	<p>1.1.1 Continue to maintain and strengthen links between Suicide Prevention and existing Trauma Informed Practice groups</p> <p>1.1.2 Continue to maintain strong links between Suicide Prevention and Mental Health work via the Adult Mental Health Early Intervention and Prevention group and the Mental Health Oversight Group</p> <p>1.1.3 Share consistent key messages across suicide prevention, trauma and mental health workstreams to strengthen community and workforce understanding and ensure a joined-up approach</p>	Suicide Prevention Lead/ Trauma Lead/ Public Health Partners	2025-28	<p>Suicide Prevention activity in West Lothian is fully aligned with wider trauma informed and mental health work.</p> <p>Ensuring consistent messages, efficient use of resources and a joined-up approach across services and partners</p> <p>Individuals and communities' benefit from a more co-ordinated response that recognises the links between trauma, mental health and suicide risk.</p>

# Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2025-2028

Priorities	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome
<b>Outcome 1: The environment we live in promotes conditions which protect against suicide risk</b>				
1.2 Strengthen links with Children and Young People Statutory Services and Third Sector partners to ensure targeted prevention and postvention work for CYP	<p>1.2.1 Continue to work with the Mental Health Oversight Group and associated workstreams to ensure Children and Young Peoples needs around mental health and suicide prevention are fully accounted for.</p> <p>1.2.2 Review data, insights and learning from statutory services, schools, youth work and third sector providers to ensure children and young people are included in suicide prevention planning</p> <p>1.2.3 Involve young people with lived experience via youth groups, forums or peer representatives in shaping suicide prevention messaging and campaigns</p> <p>1.2.4 Share training opportunities tailored for staff and volunteers working with children and young people</p>	Suicide Prevention Lead/ Statutory and Third Sector Partners	2025-28	<p>Services supporting CYP are aligned with the wider suicide prevention work ensuring consistent and appropriate support.</p> <p>Young people, parents, carers and staff have greater awareness, confidence and access to compassionate help when needed.</p>

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<p><b>Outcome 2: Our communities have a clear understanding of suicide, risk factors and its prevention – so that people and organisations are more able to respond in helpful and informed ways when they, or others, need support</b></p>				
2.1 Engage with priority groups and reduce inequalities	<p>2.1.1 Carry out targeted engagement work with groups at higher risk of suicide, including men, young people and those experiencing socioeconomic inequalities</p> <p>2.1.2 Work in partnership with existing services to strengthen links and ensure individuals are signposted to appropriate help</p> <p>2.1.3 Gather feedback from priority groups to improve barriers and improve accessibility of existing support.</p>	Suicide Prevention Lead / Suicide Prevention Leadership Group	2025-26	<p>Improved reach into groups less likely to access or engage with services</p> <p>Clearer signposting pathways into existing support networks</p> <p>Reduce inequalities in suicide prevention access and response</p>

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<p>2.2 Develop a network of trained and supported Suicide Prevention Community Champions who raise awareness, challenge stigma and signpost to support</p>	<p>2.2.1 Recruit community champions from various settings for example schools, sports clubs, neighbourhood organisations, faith groups to ensure broad reach and inclusivity Provide basic suicide prevention awareness training aligned with the informed level of the Mental Health Knowledge and Skills Framework</p> <p>2.2.2 Equip champions with resources to undertake this role</p> <p>2.2.3 Champions act as approachable peer-level contacts who increase understanding of suicide and its risk factors. They will also encourage help seeking behaviour and promote and signpost to available resources and services.</p>	<p>Suicide Prevention Lead / Suicide Prevention Leadership Group</p>	<p>2026-27</p>	<p>A visible, accessible network of Community Champions embedded across everyday settings in West Lothian.</p> <p>Increased public understanding of suicide, risk factors and how to respond supportively</p> <p>Reduced stigma around suicide and mental health, encouraging earlier help-seeking</p> <p>Regular community insights feeding into governance and shaping local suicide prevention activity.</p>

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<b>Outcome 2: Our communities have a clear understanding of suicide, risk factors and its prevention – so that people and organisations are more able to respond in helpful and informed ways when they, or others, need support</b>				
2.2 Develop a network of trained and supported Suicide Prevention Community Champions who raise awareness, challenge stigma and signpost to support	2.2.4 Create opportunities for champions to feedback local insights and experience into the Suicide Prevention Leadership Group ensuring community voices inform future action.  2.2.5 Explore making links to United to Prevent Suicide to explore the development of the champions network	Suicide Prevention Lead / Suicide Prevention Leadership Group	2026-27	A visible, accessible network of Community Champions embedded across everyday settings in West Lothian.  Increased public understanding of suicide, risk factors and how to respond supportively  Reduced stigma around suicide and mental health, encouraging earlier help-seeking  Regular community insights feeding into governance and shaping local suicide prevention activity.

# Suicide Prevention Action Plan 2025–2028

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<p><b>Outcome 2: Our communities have a clear understanding of suicide, risk factors and its prevention – so that people and organisations are more able to respond in helpful and informed ways when they, or others, need support</b></p>				
<p>2.3a Build community and workforce knowledge, skills and confidence around suicide prevention at a level appropriate for everyone.</p> <p>2.3b Increase uptake and accessibility of Suicide Prevention training for those who work and live in West Lothian</p>	<p>2.3.1 Develop a Suicide Prevention Training Booklet aligned to the Mental Health Knowledge and Skills Framework</p> <p>2.3.2 Promote the booklet widely via SPLG members, partners and their networks.</p> <p>2.3.3 Refresh the training booklet on an annual basis</p> <p>2.3.4 Continue to signpost existing in person training</p> <p>2.3.5 Monitor uptake and target underrepresented sectors by collecting regular data on who is completing training and use this insight to identify gaps in individuals and groups who have less access</p>	<p>Suicide Prevention Lead / Suicide Prevention Leadership Group</p>	<p>2025-26</p>	<p>Consistent training signposting across West Lothian</p> <p>Increase in accessibility of training due to people knowing where and how to access training</p> <p>Increased uptake of suicide prevention training</p> <p>Continued improvement in workforce and community confidence in recognizing signs someone may be at risk of suicide</p> <p>Broader coverage of training beyond health and social care for example community groups, housing providers and sports groups.</p>

Priorities	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome
<p><b>Outcome 3: Everyone affected by suicide can access high quality, compassionate, appropriate, and timely support – which promotes wellbeing and recovery.</b></p>				
<p>3.1 Raise awareness through campaign and awareness raising</p>	<p>3.1.1 Continue to deliver campaigns aligned with national messaging such as The Baton of Hope, Suicide Prevention Awareness Week and World Suicide Prevention Day</p> <p>3.1.2 Work in partnership with partners to promote campaigns linked to suicide risk factors such as Mental Health Awareness Week, 16 Days of Action and Challenge Poverty Week</p> <p>3.1.3 Use champions, statutory and third sector partners to share messages</p> <p>3.1.4 Promote public awareness and reduced stigma through social media and local networks</p> <p>3.1.5 Utilise the assets of the national Suicide Prevention Scotland Campaign in raising awareness locally.</p>	<p>Third Sector Partners/Suicide Prevention Lead/Suicide Prevention Leadership group</p>	<p>2025-28</p>	<p>Increased public awareness and reduced stigma</p> <p>Greater visibility of suicide prevention messages</p> <p>Communities more confident in supporting help seeking.</p>

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<b>Outcome 3: Everyone affected by suicide can access high quality, compassionate, appropriate, and timely support – which promotes wellbeing and recovery.</b>				
3.2 Strengthen postvention support to those affected by Suicide in West Lothian	<p>3.2.1 Recruit Suicide Prevention Community Champions who can signpost to postvention support</p> <p>3.2.2 Develop Suicide Prevention Area on West Space which individuals can find a directory of support following experiencing loss by suicide</p> <p>3.2.3 Promote West Space via social media platforms, Police Scotland bereavement letter and develop a QR code to allow easy accessibility to the site.</p> <p>3.2.4 Ensure signposting to available support for bereaved staff by raising awareness among managers and Human Resources on available support.</p> <p>3.2.5 Ensure key professional groups have awareness of West Space in relation to Suicide bereavement and support.</p>	Third Sector Partners/Suicide Prevention Lead/Suicide Prevention Leadership group	2025-28	<p>Families, schools, workplaces and communities receive timely support following a suicide</p> <p>Family and friends feels supported following the loss of a loved one</p> <p>Early engagement with support services reduces isolation and mitigates longer term mental health risks for bereaved individuals</p>

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<p><b>Outcome 3: Everyone affected by suicide can access high quality, compassionate, appropriate, and timely support – which promotes wellbeing and recovery.</b></p>				
<p>3.3 Collaborate with Police colleagues in West Lothian to include signposting to local support services as part of the Suicide Bereavement Letter</p>	<p>3.3.1 Collaborate with Police Scotland colleagues in West Lothian to include clear signposting to local support services within the suicide bereavement letter ensuring that families and loved ones receive relevant information about help available.</p> <p>3.3.2 Review and update the content of the letter annually to ensure links and resources remain accurate and appropriate</p> <p>3.3.3 Work with third sector partners to ensure support services referenced remain accessible</p>	<p>Suicide Prevention Leadership Group/Police Scotland/Third Sector Partners</p>	<p>2025-28</p>	<p>Individuals bereaved by suicide are promptly directed to local, appropriate support</p> <p>Family and friends feels supported following the loss of a loved one</p> <p>Early engagement with support services reduces isolation and mitigates longer term mental health risks for bereaved individuals</p>

Priorities	Actions	Lead	Timeline	Outcome
<p><b>Outcome 4: Our approach to suicide prevention is well planned and delivered, through close collaboration between national, local, and sectoral partners. Our work is designed with lived experience insight, practice, data, research, and intelligence. We improve our approach through regular monitoring, evaluation, and review.</b></p>				
<p>4.1 Maintain governance and collaboration of Suicide Prevention activity and work</p>	<p>4.1.1 West Lothian Suicide Prevention Leadership Group continues to meet on a quarterly basis to oversee delivery of the action plan</p> <p>4.1.2 Continue to ensure representation from statutory partners, third sector organisations and the lived experience community</p> <p>4.1.3 Continue to maintain clear Terms of Reference outlining roles, responsibilities and decision-making processes</p>	<p>Suicide Prevention Lead/Chair of SPLG</p>	<p>2025-28</p>	<p>Sustained partnership working: Multi agency collaboration is embedded and maintained throughout the plan.</p> <p>Local activity is informed and improved by the voices of people with lived experience</p>

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4.2 Strengthen data sharing and learning considering surveillance for emerging trends suicide clusters and locations of concern	<p>4.2.1 Continue to build on the existing data sharing agreement with Police Scotland colleagues to inform prevention and postvention work</p> <p>4.2.2 Continue to explore data collected by other partners which could inform prevention and postvention work</p>	Suicide Prevention Lead/Chair of SPLG	2025-28	<p>Sustained partnership working: Multi agency collaboration is embedded and maintained throughout the plan.</p> <p>Local activity is informed and improved by the voices of people with lived experience</p>
4.3 Evaluate and improve practice	<p>4.3.1 Undertake a mid-plan review in 2027</p> <p>4.3.2 Complete a full evaluation in 2028 shaped by lived experience and data</p> <p>4.3.3 Report findings to COG, IJB and CPP and share findings with partners and communities across West Lothian</p>	Suicide Prevention Lead	2027-28	<p>Evidence based adjustments made during the plan period</p> <p>Transparency and accountability in delivery</p> <p>Next plan (2028-2031) informed by evaluation</p>

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<p>4.4 Engage with the National Suicide Prevention Network to strengthen learning and implementation of actions at a local level.</p>	<p>4.4.1 The Suicide Prevention Lead continues to actively participate in the National Suicide Prevention Network to share learning on emerging research, policy and best practice</p> <p>4.4.2 The Suicide Prevention Lead continues to report key insights, guidance back to the SPLG and recommendations</p> <p>4.4.3 Identify areas where national learning can be adapted and implemented locally to improve prevention, postvention and support</p>	<p>Suicide Prevention Lead/Chair of SPLG</p>	<p>2025-28</p>	<p>West Lothian suicide prevention activity is informed by the latest national policy, research and practical evidence.</p>

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health or feeling overwhelmed or suicidal, you're not alone – there's support and advice available

**ANDYSMANCLUB** is a volunteer led, male suicide prevention charity that offers free peer to peer support groups which meet every at various locations in West Lothian. Further information is available via the website or contacting [info@andysmanclub.co.uk](mailto:info@andysmanclub.co.uk)

**Neil's Hugs Foundation** is a West Lothian based charity which offers in person support to people with mild to moderate mental ill health and people who are affected by either the attempted or completed suicide of someone close to their heart. They can be contacted via telephone on 07446 717501 or email at [admin@neilshugsfoundation.com](mailto:admin@neilshugsfoundation.com)

**S.M.I.L.E** is a low cost counselling service offering support to children and young people aged 11-24. They are also the largest high schools counselling provider in West Lothian as well as a National Training centre for mental health and counselling training. Further information is available via the website or contacting [Info@smilecounselling.org.uk](mailto:Info@smilecounselling.org.uk)

**Nicola's** is a free, drop-in support group focusing on promoting mental health and wellbeing among women. The group aims to raise awareness of women's health issues and advocate for better support services. The charity also offers free activities and a supportive community to get involved in. Further information can be found on their website.

**Listen & Link** is an early help phone line service for children, young people and families who have concerns for the mental wellbeing of a child or young person in their household. Or, the child or young person may be worried about their own mental wellbeing. The service is self-referral. This means a young person or adult can make the call themselves, directly to the service. Please contact **01506 283160** or email [mentalhealthsupport@westlothian.gov.uk](mailto:mentalhealthsupport@westlothian.gov.uk)

**VOICE** is a 24/7 text message service for up to 24 year olds to text when they may be struggling with anxiety, loneliness or depression through to self-harm or suicidal thoughts. **Text Voice to 85258**. You can text VOICE 24hours and it is available everyday. Once you text you will get a reply within 5 minutes and you can chat for 1 hour through text. There's no charge to use VOICE 85258 and the service is discreet and easily accessible. It won't appear on a mobile bill and requires no app, data, password or registration.

**West Space** is an online space for mental health and wellbeing information in West Lothian, which provides information about local mental health and wellbeing services and provides resources to support self-help and self-management. <https://westspace.org.uk/>

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**Breathing Space** is Scotland's mental health helpline for individuals experiencing symptoms of low mood, depression, or anxiety, and offers free and confidential advice for those over the age of 16. They can be contacted on **0800 83 85 87, 6pm to 2am Monday to Thursday; and from 6pm Friday throughout the weekend to 6am Monday.**

**Samaritans** provide confidential non-judgmental emotional support 24 hours a day for people who are experiencing feelings of distress or despair. You can contact Samaritans free by phoning 116 123 or via email on [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

**NHS24 Mental Health Hub** Telephone advice and support on healthcare can be obtained from NHS24 by **phoning 111**; the Mental Health Hub is open 24/7.

**Childline** is a free service for children and young people, for whenever they need support or advice. It is open 24/7, and there are many ways to get support. You can call 0800 1111. Other ways are set out on their website: [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)