















Poverty Profile of West Lothian - 2020

1 Introduction - Poverty in West Lothian – Reductions from 2012

The West Lothian Anti-poverty Strategy and Action Plan was launched in 2012 and it is appropriate, therefore, to review the changes in the key indicators that help to map the nature and scale of poverty in West Lothian. Many of these indicators have a significant time lag and so it is difficult to judge the full impact of Covid-19 on the West Lothian Economy by looking at our traditional benchmark indicators.

West Lothian Trend data					
Indicator	2012	Previous	Latest	Change since 2012	Direction of travel
Children and families					
Children in out of work families (1)	7,000	6,200	3,800	-3200	
Children in working households receiving Working Tax Credit (1)	8,700	7,900	4,000	-4700	
Number of secondary school pupils registered for free school meals (3)	1,616	1,710	1,646	+30	
% of secondary school pupil registered for free school meals (3)	14.6%	16.0%	15.2%	+0.6%	
Working age people					
People in Work (4)	86,500	90,000	93,000	+6,500	
Employment rate – aged 16-64 (4)	74.2%	76.1%	78.4%	+4.2%	
% aged 16-64 who are employees (4)	67.3%	68.2%	66.6%	-0.7%	
% aged 16-64 who are self-employed (4)	6.8%	7.8%	9.5%	+2.7%	
% residents earning below The Living Wage (5)	18%	16.7%	15.0%	-3%	
Estimated number of residents earning below The Living Wage (5)	16,000	14,700	13,000	-3000	

Indicator	2012	Previous	Latest	Change since 2012	Direction of travel
Out of Work benefits					
ILO (International Labour Organisation) unemployment estimate (4)	7,000	4,000	3,000	-4,000	
Claimant count (6) (Post Covid)	4,010	3,297	6,485	2,485	
18-24 Claimants (2)	1,310	445	695	-615	
Pensioners					
Beneficiaries of top-up benefit (2)	8,660	5,870	4,590	-3,730	
% of beneficiaries of pension credit top-up (2)	31%	20%	16%	-15%	

Sources: (1) HMRC Number of children and families receiving Child or Working Tax Credits in each local authority, April 2020 (2) DWP benefit claimants - working age client group; (3) Scottish Government, School Meals Survey; (4) ONS annual population survey; (5) ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; (6) ONS Claimant Count including Universal Credit

These figures reveal a complex pattern of change. Between 2012 and 2019 there was a sustained reduction in the number of working age people claiming out-of-work benefits. The ILO estimate of unemployment has also fallen. Pre Covid-19 there was a small increase in claimant count figures as a result of methodology change with more people being transferred to Universal Credit from other benefits. Some previously available metrics are not now available or comparable to 2012.

There had previously been a small (1%) but noticeable increase in the number of secondary school pupils registered for free school meals, this may have been as a result of efforts to encourage registrations and uptake to those children who are eligible and has fallen back since the last poverty profile.

2 West Lothian in Context

West Lothian is in the centre of Scotland and has a mix of urban and rural communities, a significant jobs base in its own right and is well located relative to other parts of Scotland (especially Edinburgh) for jobs and services. The area's recent economic history has been one of industrial change. In addition, the area has experienced significant population growth,

which is set to continue over the next 15 years. Housing development and associated population growth has benefited all parts of West Lothian.

A common theme in relation to poverty and related indicators is that West Lothian as a whole is usually at or just below the Scottish average. This is illustrated by the summary statistics below:

Table1: Summary Statistics		
Population (1)	183,100	
Area (2)	42,733 hectares	
Households (6)	78,966	
Businesses (2)	5,965	
People in Work (4)	93,000	
	West Lothian	Scotland
Population growth 2001-2019 (1)	14%	7%
Population not white Scottish/British (3)	6.3%	8.2%
Population qualified to SVQ4 and above (4)	45,000 39.3%	43.7%
Population qualified to SVQ2 and above(4)	84,500 73.8%	75.5%
Population with no qualifications (4)	10,400 9.1%	9.9%
Residents in work (4)	93,000 78.4%	74.5%
Unemployment level (ILO based estimate) (4)	3,000 2.9%	3.3%
Average hourly wage levels residents (FT) (5)	£12.62 per hour	£13.54 per hour
Average hourly wage levels workplaces (FT) (5)	£12.44 per hour	£13.50 per hour

Sources: (1) National Records of Scotland mid-year estimates 2019; (2) ONS IDBR; (3) Census 2011; (4) Annual Population Survey ONS; (5) Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; (6) NRS 2019

There are still underlying issues of poverty and deprivation – with a core of individuals and households experiencing extreme hardship and wider groups experiencing financial difficulties and challenges. Low pay and underemployment as well as unemployment are key factors.

A number of indicators are presented in this report, including direct measures of poverty including, for example, levels of benefit dependency. Other indicators are proxy measures e.g. the prevalence of low skilled employment.

Analysis of a range of indicators suggests that West Lothian as a whole has levels of poverty that are generally just below the levels for Scotland as a whole. However, this general picture masks variations within West Lothian.

3 West Lothian Post Covid-19 Statistics

The only regular indicator from the Profile which has any post Covid data available is the experimental claimant count (including Universal Credit). This shows an increase from 3,297 claimants (April 2019-March 2020 average) to 6,485 claimants.

Scotland and UK wide statistics show significant falls in hours worked, earnings, total jobs etc so we would expect to see this patterns followed as local authority level statistics become available.

PACE have worked with 9 firms in West Lothian since lockdown to support 300 total redundancies.

The Improvement Service “Jobs at Risk” ranking for West Lothian showed 15,000 jobs at risk in VAT registered businesses and 4,000 jobs at risk in self employment for a total of 19,000 West Lothian jobs at risk.

Support is ongoing in West Lothian and in May 2020 1,706 Business Support Fund grants worth £19.36M had been issued in West Lothian.

4 Comparisons with other parts of Scotland

As noted in relation to a number of indicators, West Lothian as a whole tends to have slightly lower levels of material poverty to Scotland, i.e. typically 1 to 3 percentage points below the Scottish rate. West Lothian has similar levels of poverty to a number of other central Scotland local authority areas, which have been our traditional bench mark areas. Glasgow, continues to be the local authority with the highest number and proportion of households and individuals experiencing poverty.

The Post Covid-19 Claimant Count and pre Covid-19 Model based data provide an initial view on early impacts of the Covid-19 related downturn. This shows West Lothian to be undergoing a similar effect to comparator authorities with the differential in West Lothian being slightly above the GB average but below the Scottish average and below 4 out of 7 comparator authorities.

	Claimant Count (Post Covid-19) 1	Model based Unemployment (Pre Covid-19) 2	Difference
Clackmannanshire	6.7%	3.6%	+3.3%
City of Edinburgh	4.9%	2.4%	+2.5%
Falkirk	6.0%	3.6%	+2.4%
Fife	6.5%	4.0%	+2.5%
Midlothian	5.4%	2.5%	+2.9%
North Lanarkshire	6.9%	3.9%	+3.0%
South Lanarkshire	6.4%	3.0%	+3.4%
West Lothian	5.5%	2.9%	+2.6%
Scotland	6.2%	3.3%	+2.9%
GB	6.3%	3.9%	+2.4%

Sources: 1) ONS Annualised Claimant June 2020 (Post Covid-19); 2) Annual Population Survey Model based Unemployment April 2019-March 2020

4 Children and Families - Measuring Child Poverty at a Local Level

The Campaign to End Child Poverty publish data about relative child poverty. A child is deemed to be growing up in poverty if they live in a household whose income is 60% below the median income. <https://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-201415-20189/>

Estimates of local child poverty rates show that it is the highest in large cities, particularly in London, Birmingham and Manchester.

In West Lothian the 2018/19 rate is calculated to be 17.1%, an increase of 3.6% since 2014/15.

Previous reports by CECIP using different methodology included data at ward level, In 2017 the CECIP report showed that the distribution of child poverty by ward in West Lothian reflected the pattern for other measures of deprivation. Whitburn and Blackburn and Fauldhouse and Breich Valley Multi Member Wards have the highest rates. The Whitburn figure of just over 32% after housing costs places the ward in the 10% of wards across Scotland with the highest rates of child poverty.

Table 8: Percentage of children in poverty, 2017	Before HC	After HC
Whitburn and Blackburn	21%	32%
Fauldhouse and the Breich Valley	16%	26%
Livingston South	15%	24%
East Livingston and East Calder	14%	23%
Bathgate	14%	22%
Livingston North	12%	19%
Armadaledale and Blackridge	12%	19%
Broxburn, Uphall and Winchburgh	11%	18%
Linlithgow	6%	10%
West Lothian	14%	22%
Scotland		23%
Great Britain		28%

Source: Campaign to End Child Poverty

Free School Meals

With the introduction of free school meals for all pupils in P1 to P3, primary school data does not provide a particularly accurate picture of the incidence of disadvantage. However, free school meal data at secondary demonstrates a pattern of deprivation that we see in other measures of poverty such as SIMD and Benefit claimant statistics. EG Inveralmond with the highest level of FSM registrations has a catchment which includes Craigshill and Ladywell.

Table 10: Free school meal entitlement 2019		
Secondary School	Pupils registered for Free School Meals	% registered for Free school meals
Armadaledale Academy	145	14%
Bathgate Academy	124	14%
Broxburn Academy	121	14%
Deans Community High School	171	18%
Inveralmond Community High School	225	22%
Linlithgow Academy	87	7%
St Kentigern's Academy	222	19%

St Margaret's Academy	151	14%
The James Young High School	141	13%
West Calder High School	90	13%
Whitburn Academy	169	21%
West Lothian	1,646	15%

Source: Scottish Government, School Meals Survey 2019

5 – Foodbank Usage in West Lothian

Table 11: Foodbank vouchers distributed in West Lothian by Multi Member Ward

	No vouchers	Adults	Adults as % of adult popn.	Children	Children as % of child popn.	Total	Total as % of ward popn.
Armadale & Blackridge	298	383	1.51%	238	7.19%	621	3.96%
Bathgate	361	446	1.60%	217	4.44%	663	2.81%
Broxburn Uphall & Winchburgh	342	444	1.68%	155	4.34%	599	3.09%
East Livingston & East Calder	263	347	1.42%	218	5.61%	565	2.63%
Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	267	354	1.74%	250	8.67%	604	3.77%
Linlithgow	119	152	0.59%	55	1.79%	207	1.26%
Livingston North	185	242	0.78%	248	5.13%	490	2.09%
Livingston South	296	409	1.41%	255	5.15%	664	2.77%
Whitburn & Blackburn	517	645	4.81%	352	8.73%	997	4.68%
West Lothian	2,925	3,767	2.66%	2,118	5.35%	5,885	3.25%

Source: West Lothian Council, 2019

The number of foodbank vouchers distributed in West Lothian's wards in the financial year 2018/19 totalled 2,925. Of these, almost a fifth (517) were distributed in Whitburn and Blackburn, followed by 361 in Bathgate and 342 in Broxburn, Uphall & Winchburgh.

5,885 residents (3,767 adults and 2,118 children) - about 2.1% of the West Lothian population - were the beneficiaries of the food vouchers.

Within Whitburn and Blackburn, for example, 8.7% of the child population and 4.8% of the adult population received the help in the form of a food voucher.

6 Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation

The 2020 SIMD has 22 West Lothian Datazones in the 15% most deprived in Scotland, an increase of 6 from 2016.

There are 37 West Lothian Datazones in the 20% most deprived in Scotland a decrease of 1 from 2016

There has therefore been a number of datazones moving into the most deprived 15% from the 15-20% range with a slight decrease in total datazones in the most deprived 20%.

Looking at the movements of West Lothian datazones, there appears to be a trend of worsening income domain scores in some datazones. This can reflect aging population, with a contracting working age and an increase in those in low paid employment.

Overall, however, the number of West Lothian datazones in the most deprived 20% in Scotland has fallen since 2016.

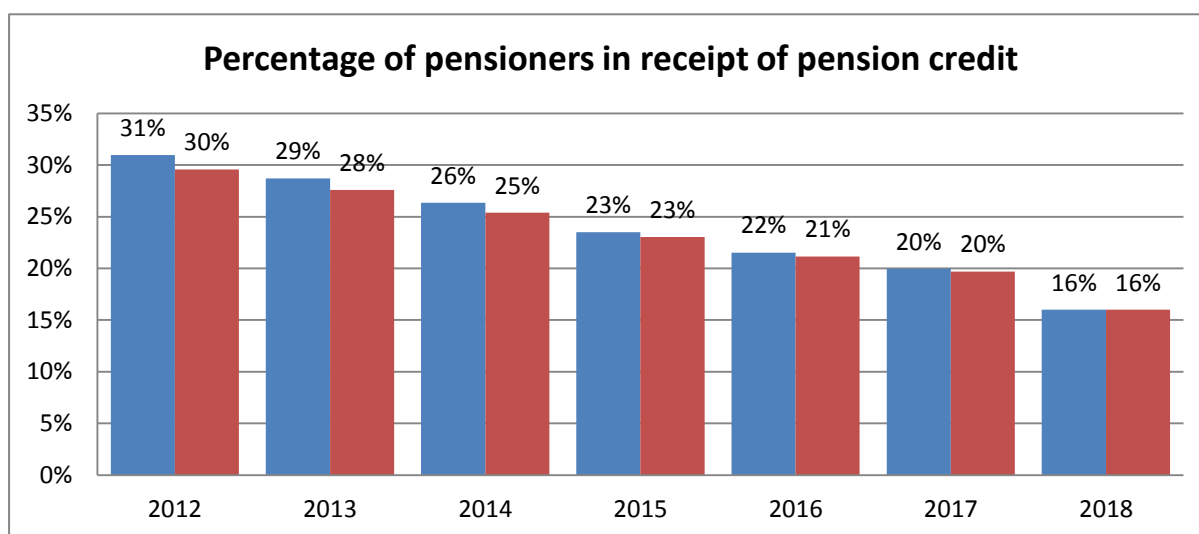
Change in distribution and number of data zones in most deprived 20% category

Area	Datazones in 2009	Datazones in 2012	Datazones in 2016	Datazones in 2020
Addiewell & Loganlea	1	1	1	1
Armadales	3	2	3	3
Bathgate	6 (3 in Boghall)	5 (2 in Boghall)	3 (0 in Boghall)	4 (1 in Boghall)
Blackburn	5	4	4	5
Blackridge	1	0	1	0
Bridgend	1	1	1	1
Broxburn	0	0	0	1
Fauldhouse	3	3	2	3
Livingston	11	11	15	13
Polbeth	2	1	1	0
Stoneyburn	1	1	1	1
Uphall	0	0	1	1
Whitburn	4	4	5	4
East Calder	1	0	0	0
TOTAL WEST LOTHIAN	39	33	38	37

The distribution of deprived data zones across West Lothian fits that seen in other indicators of poverty with more datazones in the West of West Lothian being found in the most deprived 20%. Over time there is relatively little movement in number of datazones by town with a small fall in Bathgate and Boghall being the most significant difference from 2009.

There are 29,210 people in West Lothian receiving the state pension. Of these, 4,590 (15.7%) receive Pension Credits to ensure a minimum income. This rate is equal to the Scottish level. The percentage has been falling both for West Lothian and Scotland since 2012. This might be due to a number of factors including:

- Lack of awareness of pension credit entitlement
- Equalisation of state pension age, which results in the Pension Credit qualifying age increasing
- Changes to the Savings Credit element of Pension Credit
- The introduction of new State Pension and general increases in the value of the basic state pension at a higher rate than benefits.



Source: DWP benefit claimants data

8 Housing Tenure and Benefits

Figures from 2016 show that West Lothian has approximately 20,000 affordable social rented sector homes, of which there are 13,106 council houses.

The pattern of housing tenure in West Lothian is generally similar to that for Scotland for social rented with a lower level of private rented accommodation and higher level of owner occupation. Generally, private rented is highest in cities where there is a large student resident population or market for young people. Nevertheless, in West Lothian the private rented sector has increased from 4% of households in 2008. The incidence of poverty amongst private rental residents has been noted at UK and Scottish level research. Increased rental levels mean that for working households on a modest net income of £20,000 might be paying 50% of that income towards housing costs.

	West Lothian	Scotland
Owner occupied	67.0%	61.0%
Social rented	21.0%	23.0%
Private rented	11.0%	15.0%

Source: Scottish House Conditions survey 2013-15

In considering the general pattern of poverty in West Lothian there appears to be a close relationship between housing tenure and economic status – social rented sector housing is much more likely to be occupied by people who are not in employment – unemployed, post retirement and others who are economically inactive through caring commitment or ill-health.

	% of adults In work	% of adults Unemployed	% adults Inactive
Owner occupied	69.8%	3.0%	27.2%
All Social rented	41.4%	10.9%	47.7%
Private rented	64.5%	8.3%	27.2%

Source: Census 2011

	Feb 2012		Feb 2017	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
All Social rented	12,374	64%	11,598	61%
Private rented	3,047	33%	2,697	34%
Total	15,421	54%	14,295	53%

Source: DWP 2017

The majority of social rental tenants and over one-third of private rented tenants are in receipt of housing benefit. West Lothian's has a higher proportion of households in receipt of housing benefit than Scotland as a whole where 58% of social rented and 27% of private tenancies receive this benefit.

10 Conclusions

The overall poverty picture outlined in this report suggests that overall West Lothian has slightly lower levels of poverty and deprivation than Scotland and Great Britain. Nevertheless a significant segment of the population experience challenging financial and material circumstances.

Covid-19 brings with it a challenging new set of economic circumstances and while initial data is scarce it seems likely at least in the short term that there will be a challenging economic situation in West Lothian that will worsen poverty levels in West Lothian.

In terms of relative levels of poverty, the pattern across West Lothian evidenced through the SIMD provides a basis for informing the targeting of interventions. Not surprisingly, the Whitburn and Blackburn area has the highest apparent levels of poverty (and the Linlithgow area having significantly lower levels than the West Lothian average). There are however local pockets of deprivation across West Lothian where higher levels of income deprivation are present.

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