



West Lothian
Council



WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT 2020 – 2021



NOVEMBER 2021

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Section 1: Setting the scene

1.1 Child Poverty (Scotland) Act

Child poverty can have a detrimental impact on health and wellbeing, educational attainment, and the future life chances of children, young people, and their families. The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 was introduced to drive and monitor action to reduce the number of children living in poverty in Scotland. Four statutory income targets were set for 2030, and four interim income targets for 2023. These are:

- Less than 10% of children live in households that are in relative poverty by 2030 (18% by 2023)
- Less than 5% of children live in households that are in absolute poverty (14% by 2023)
- Less than 5% of children live in households that are in combined low income and material deprivation (8% by 2023)
- Less than 5% of children live in households that are in persistent poverty (8% by 2023)

The Act states that Scottish Ministers must publish child poverty delivery plans in 2018, 2022 and 2026, and report on them annually. The Act also places a duty on local authorities and health boards to jointly prepare an annual report on the activity they have taken, and will take, to reduce child poverty in their local area.

1.2 Drivers of child poverty and priority groups

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act and associated delivery plan sets out the three key drivers of child poverty that need to be addressed. These are:

- Income from employment – including consideration of hourly pay, number of hours worked, skills and qualifications and the labour market
- Costs of living – including housing, energy and food costs, affordable childcare and transport, digital inclusion, savings, affordable credit and debt management and the cost of the school day
- Income from social security and benefits in kind – maximising income by ensuring awareness and uptake of benefit entitlement

Some families are at higher than average risk of poverty and may require specific and targeted support to address their needs. These priority groups and the proportion of children living in poverty in Scotland is set out below in Table 1:

Priority group	Relative poverty (%)	Absolute poverty (%)	Low income + material deprivation (%)
Disabled person in household	30	27	20
3+ children in household	31	28	18
Baby aged under 1 in household	32	30	13
Minority ethnic household	44	41	23
Lone parent household	39	34	27
All children	24	21	12

Table 1: Percentage of children in poverty after housing costs 2016-19¹

1.3 West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy

Work to tackle child poverty in West Lothian sits within the broader anti-poverty work of West Lothian Community Planning Partnership and its Anti-Poverty Strategy. Much of the work in this report reflects that strategy and the infrastructure that surrounds it. There are links to other partnership plans including the Local Outcome Improvement Plan, Children's Services Plan and Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

Whist our ultimate goal remains unchanged – *working towards a West Lothian where fewer people experience poverty, where no-one experiences destitution and where everyone has the opportunity to build a future free of poverty* – the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our local communities and economy must be acknowledged. The challenge is now greater, progress has been hampered and we must do more and better to support children and families most in need.

The West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report 2019/20 was published in December 2020. The 2020/21 report summarises action taken in 2020/21 to prevent and mitigate the consequences of child poverty and provides an outline of actions that will be undertaken over the next two years in 2021/22 and 2022/23.

1. Family Resources Survey as referenced in Scottish Government. Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan Second year progress report 2019-20. [tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-second-year-progress-report-2019-20.pdf](#) (accessed August 2021).

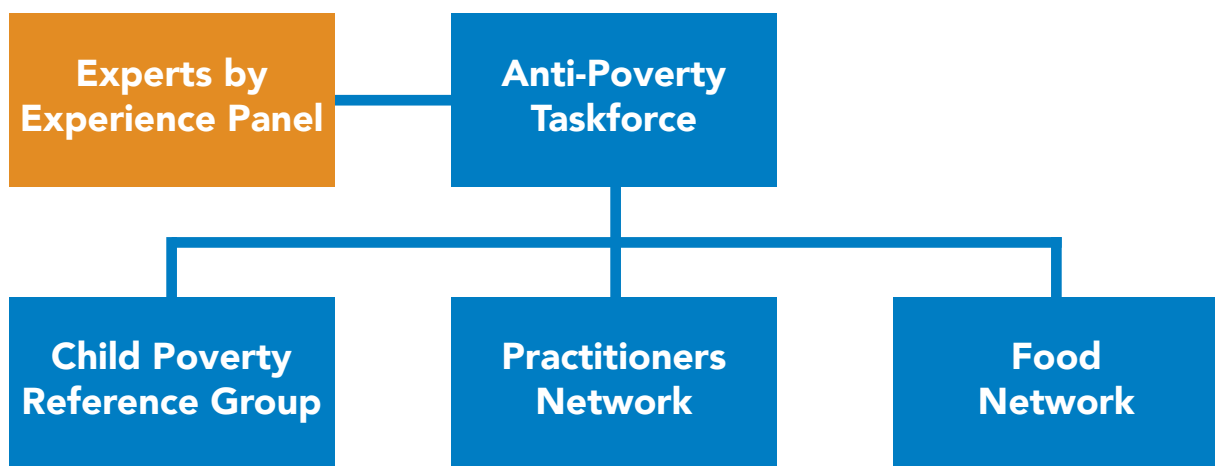
1.4 Lived experience

A key part of the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy was to establish an ‘Experts by Experience’ panel to gather the views of those who have had experience of poverty at some point in their lives and to provide a platform for local residents to have their say about how we address poverty at a local level.

The panel currently has ten members who meet regularly to discuss issues of importance to them and provide feedback on actions developed to mitigate the impact of poverty.

During 2020/21, the group was unable to meet face to face due to the COVID-19 restrictions, so new opportunities for remote engagement have been developed. The panel has continued to meet throughout the pandemic via video conferencing platforms and a new online forum has been developed to enable the Experts to start or contribute to discussion threads, take part in surveys and review documents.

The Experts regularly review new anti-poverty activity and provide feedback which is used to shape the anti-poverty action plan. During 2020/21, the Experts tested a range of online tools and resources including a self-help benefit calculator and budgeting planner, an interactive map of local community food resources and a crisis support toolkit developed in response to the pandemic. The diagram below illustrates how the Experts by Experience panel, as well as the Practitioners Network and Food Network help to inform the work of the Anti-Poverty Taskforce and Child Poverty Reference Group.



1.5 Learning from best practice

Consideration has been given to examples of policy and practice in other Scottish local authorities published by the Improvement Service. These, along with other examples of good practice, have been used to inform action in West Lothian.

Fuel Poverty

Learning from similar approaches from different local authorities, activity was developed to tackle fuel poverty in West Lothian during the pandemic. During 2020/21, the council's energy advice team supported those experiencing fuel poverty with energy efficiency advice and support. Good practice was identified from partner organisations such as Lone Parent Families Scotland and Home Energy Scotland, who delivered energy redress funds, offering one off grants to households struggling with increased energy costs. During 2020/21, energy advisors provided support to make 529 applications for grants from partner organisations, helping families and individuals in hardship to access financial assistance worth over £26,000 in total.

As a result of this example of good practice, West Lothian Council implemented a similar fund during winter 2020/21, offering grants of £100 to households identified as experiencing fuel poverty or being in danger of disconnection from their energy supply. In total £28,000 was distributed to 280 households in West Lothian experiencing fuel poverty or energy hardship.

Schools

Evidence from a pilot programme delivered in Glasgow has shown that a more regular and sustained presence offering income maximisation advice within the school setting can have a positive impact. Since the recruitment of a Financial Inclusion Officer based in one Glasgow high school in December 2019, families have been supported to maximise income by more than £400,000. Learning from this approach, a similar pilot has been developed for West Lothian to be delivered in 2021/22. The two-year West Lothian pilot will embed advice workers in school settings for families who are experiencing financial hardship to help them to become more financially confident. Young people will have the opportunity to undertake a Citizenship and Tenancy SQA qualification including a personal finance module.

Fast Online Referral Tracking

Good practice in relation to active referral mechanisms between advice and support agencies was identified in Fife where the Fast Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system has been in place for several years to strengthen partnership links between local organisations and improve the client journey toward financial security. The FORT system offers a secure online portal to send and receive referrals between local agencies with built in outcome tracking and a robust directory of support. The FORT system was introduced in West Lothian in 2019 and has grown exponentially in the last year. During 2020/21, 35 new partners have signed up and been trained to use the referral system resulting in 3,910 active referrals made for advice and support.

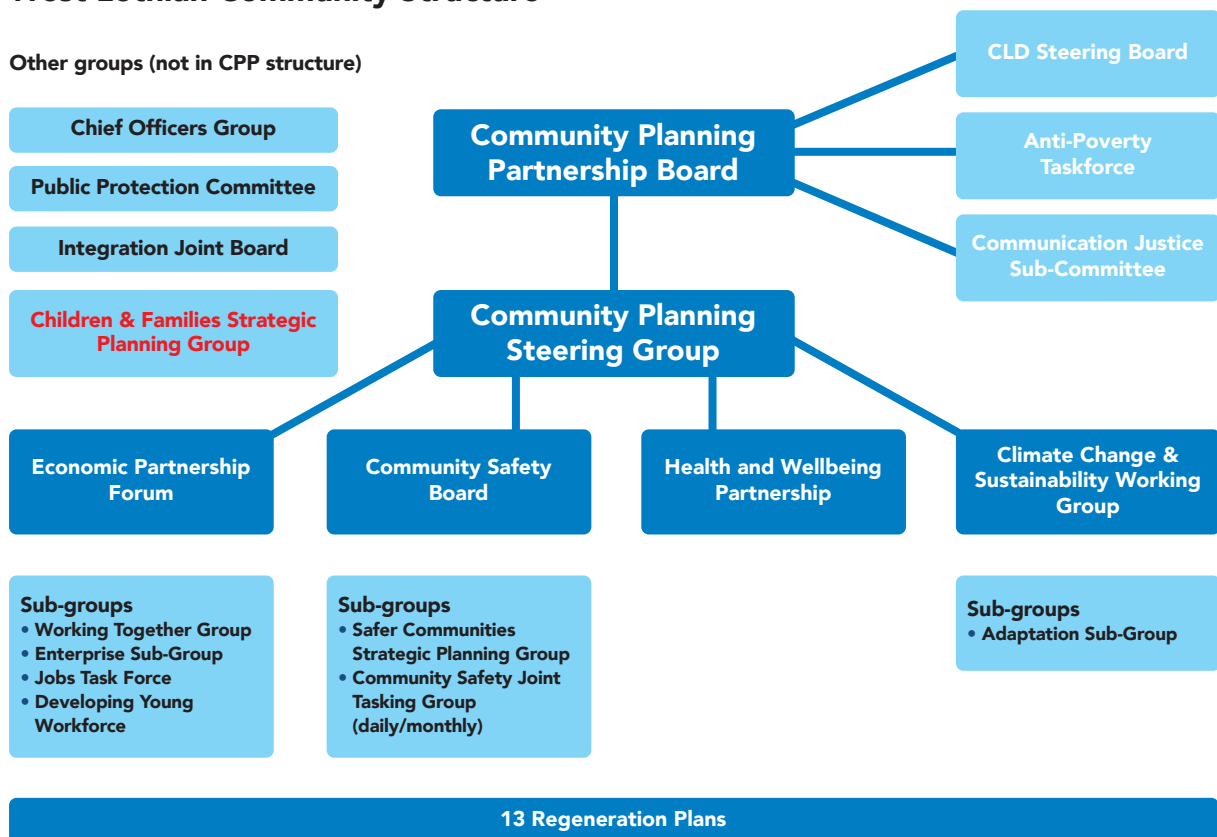
1.6 Child Poverty Reference Group

The Child Poverty Reference Group was refreshed in early 2021/22 and will:

- Contribute to the development of the West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report
- Identify gaps and develop solutions to prevent and mitigate the impact of child poverty in West Lothian
- Ensure the voices of those with lived experience of poverty are heard
- Ensure publication and dissemination of the Child Poverty Action Report (by June each year)
- Monitor the progress of actions in the West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report and support implementation of these where required
- Ensure key messages in relation to child poverty and the Local Child Poverty Action Report are communicated to groups and networks across West Lothian

The group reports progress to the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Taskforce which is embedded within the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership structure (see below).

West Lothian Community Structure



1.7 Community Wealth Building in West Lothian

Community Wealth Building is an approach which aims to tackle the challenges of rising inequality by placing a greater degree of control into the hands of local people, communities, businesses, and organisations. It has been developed in response to traditional approaches to economic development, which are often based on the need for constant economic growth, and the assumption that this will create wealth for all. However, evidence of ongoing, and increasing, poverty indicates that this wealth is not 'trickling down' to those most in need. In addition, the wealth that is generated locally, through wages and local business activity, is often channelled away from the communities that generate it through spend with national and international companies and the profit enjoyed elsewhere.

Community Wealth Building promotes working in partnership with communities and businesses to build a strong and resilient local economy which supports fair work, encourages local spend and uses land and property for the common good. Community Wealth Building seeks to use the economic levers available to local authorities and other 'anchor institutions' such as the NHS, further and higher education institutions, and larger private sector (and third sector) organisations to support their local economies, ensuring that wealth is locally retained and benefits the communities that generate it. The approach views anchor institutions as trailblazers that will exert influence and impact upon economic, social, and environmental priorities, generating community benefits and wealth.

A key focus of the West Lothian Jobs Task Force and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan 2020-2023 is to prioritise inclusive and sustainable economic change. Several activities are already being taken forward locally that are consistent with a Community Wealth Building approach and the Economic Recovery and Growth Plan includes additional relevant actions.

There is an opportunity to build on the positive work underway and explore a more strategic approach to Community Wealth Building in West Lothian, focused on the five 'pillars', which look at the ways in which we can create a more resilient local economy, diversify businesses, and offer training and employment to local communities.

As part of our COVID Recovery, the Community Wealth Building approach presents an opportunity to contribute to the economic empowerment of communities, encouraging plural ownership of community services and promoting socially just asset transfer, thus contributing to a circular economy that offers many additional social benefits.

1.8 NHS Lothian and the role of Anchor Institutions

NHS Lothian is strengthening its approach to tackling poverty and inequalities, both pre-existing and those exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. A key part of this overall approach is to develop its role as an anchor institution. Anchor institutions are described as 'large public sector organisations rooted in and connected to their local communities. They can improve health through their influence on local social and economic conditions by adapting the way they employ people, purchase goods and services, use buildings and spaces, reduce environmental impact, and work in partnership'. The anchor institution approach aligns with West Lothian Partnership's² commitment to Community Wealth Building to deliver inclusive economic growth across the local authority area.

Dedicated local public health teams are also being established to work with community planning partners to shape and influence policies that will tackle the wider determinants of health and wellbeing and reduce health inequalities, including, tackling poverty, income maximisation, employability, housing and education. Much of the Anchor Institution work will rely on partnerships with key community planning partners and, in some instances, the action might be better led by either the Health and Social Care Partnership or West Lothian Council. NHS Lothian is committed to playing a full part in the wider community wealth building approach in West Lothian.

Among the initial themes being considered for action in West Lothian are

- Extending the scope of community benefit clauses beyond construction programmes e.g. public health partnership teams can facilitate local intelligence from community and voluntary partners to inform NHS Lothian procurement lists that are approved on the NSS Community Benefits portal.
- Sustainable funding for welfare rights and income maximisation service provision at NHS Lothian hospitals.
- Ensure NHS Lothian's employability programmes provide entry level opportunities and development prospects across the whole organisation.

2. Allen M., et al, Anchors in a Storm: Lessons from anchor action during COVID-19. 2021, The Health Foundation: London.

Section 2: An overview of child poverty in West Lothian

The Anti-Poverty Strategy is supported by a scorecard, the most recent of which is provided in Appendix 1.

The sections that follow highlight data that continues to inform our approach to tackling child poverty in West Lothian and the future actions planned. Headline anti-poverty figures show that:

- 12% of the West Lothian population is income deprived³
- Almost 25% of children experience relative poverty³
- 74.6% of working age adults are in work⁵
- 13.5% of workers earn below the Living Wage⁶
- 19% of residents experience fuel poverty (fuel bill >10% of income after housing)⁷
- 9% of residents experience extreme fuel poverty (fuel bill >20% of income after housing)⁷

2.1 Child Poverty

Latest estimates indicate that 24.6% (n= 8740) of children in West Lothian were in relative poverty in 2019/20, compared to 24.3% in Scotland. This is the largest proportion of children living in relative poverty since 2014/15 and represents a 3.3% increase in the 5-year period between 2015 – 2020 (see Chart 1 below).⁸

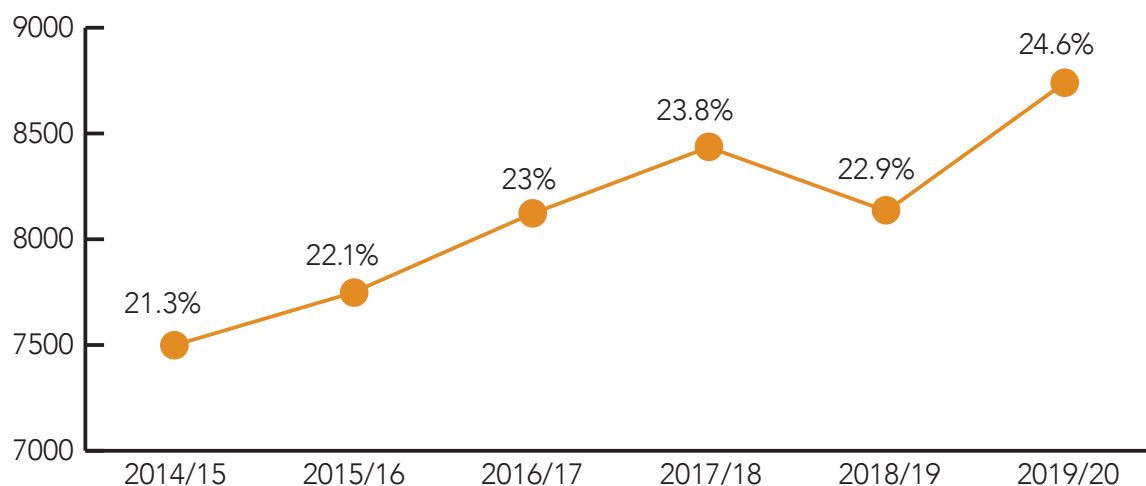


Chart 1: Proportion of children in relative poverty after housing costs

3. Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

4. End Child Poverty Campaign 2019/20

5. Office of National Statistics Annual Population Survey 2020

6. Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2020

7. Energy Savings Trust Home Analytics v3.7 (February 2021)

8. End Child Poverty. Child poverty in your area 2014/15-2019/20.

<https://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-2014-15-2019-20/> (accessed July 2021).

It is important to note that the latest child poverty data covers the period prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. Latest estimates show that the prevalence of child poverty was already on the increase, even before taking account of the financial impact of the pandemic.

2.2 Educational Attainment

Table 2 below shows the percentage of primary and secondary school pupils achieving in the literacy domain in 2020/21. Whilst improvement has been seen over time in relation to achievement of milestones, there are still clear inequalities in this area with pupils from the most deprived areas doing less well than pupils in the least deprived. For example, there is a 22.2 percentage point difference between the most and least deprived, in relation to achievement of expected literacy milestones in primary 7.

	% pupils achieving West Lothian	% pupils achieving quintile 1 (most deprived)	% pupils achieving quintile 5 (least deprived)
P1	77.70	70.03	89.83
P4	75.02	66.76	87.27
P7	76.04	64.83	87.07
S3 Third Level	93.81	86.12	98.30
S3 Fourth Level	61.31	42.78	79.37

Table 2: Percentage of pupils achieving in the literacy domain 2020/21

2.3 Claimant Count

The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent measures imposed to restrict the spread of the virus had a significant economic impact in the 2020/21 period. The claimant count for out of work benefits more than doubled from 2.9% in February 2020 to 6% at the peak in August 2020.

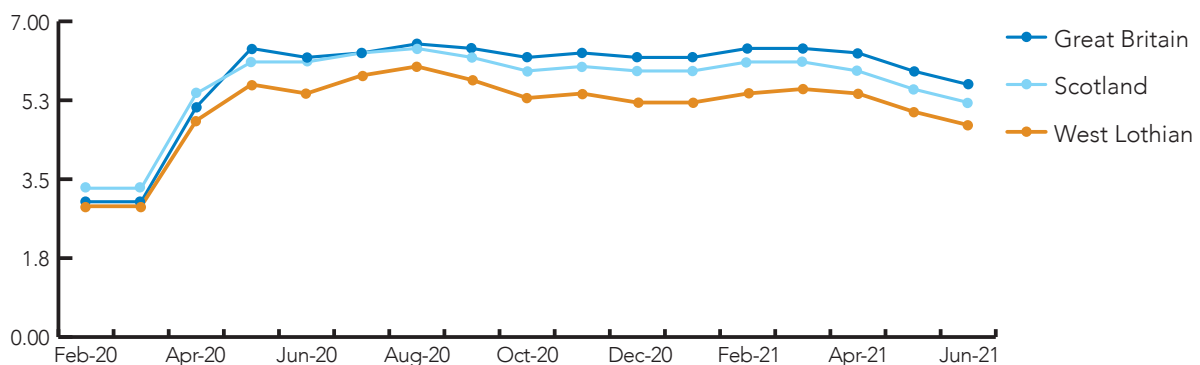


Chart 2: Out of work benefit claimant count

The claimant rate has started to decrease but has still not returned to pre-pandemic levels.⁹

Feb 2020		April 2021		May 2021		June 2021		% Change	
Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Count	Rate	Feb 20- June 21	May 21- June 21
3,425	2.9	6,345	5.4	5,915	5.0	5,490	4.7	60	-7

Table 3: Claimant count and percent change over time

In term of claimants who are young people aged 18-24 years, chart 3 below shows that claimant figures levelled off between November 2020 and February 2021, likely due to an increase in availability of seasonal work over this period. The latest increase in claimant count is attributable to the end of the seasonal period. During the COVID-19 pandemic, job losses in sectors such as hospitality and retail are likely to have affected young people most significantly. In March 2021, 9.8% of those 18-24 years in West Lothian were claiming out of work benefits (8.6% in Scotland) compared to 4.6% in January 2020. Youth unemployment has been consistently higher in West Lothian than Scotland for many years.

West Lothian Youth Claimant Count (18-24yrs), Jan 20 - Mar 21 (NOMIS)

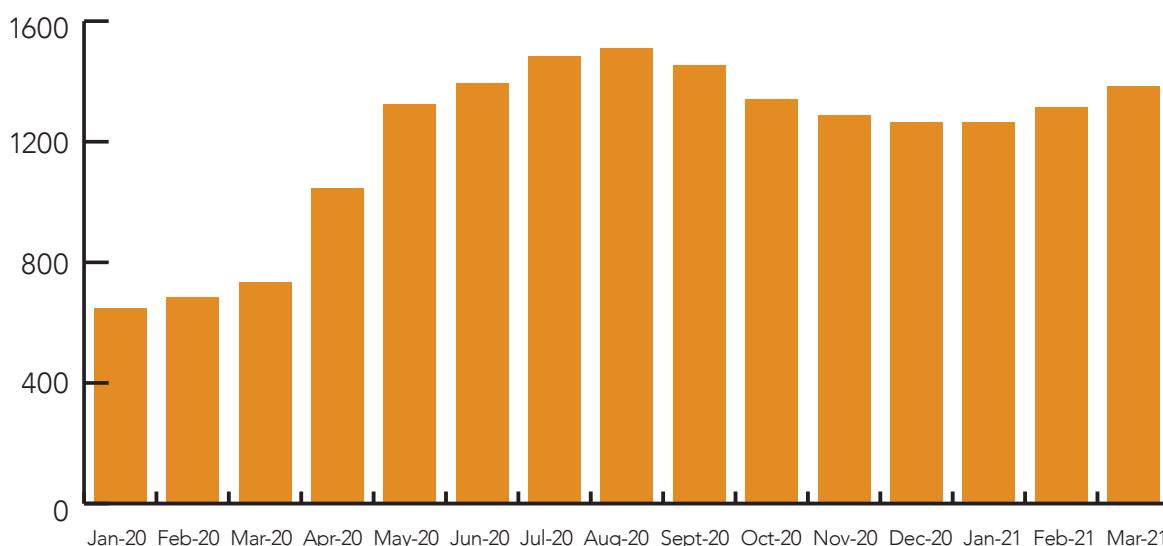


Chart 3: West Lothian Youth Claimant Count

9. Office for National Statistics. Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics. <https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157436/report.aspx> (accessed July 2021).

As at February 2021, 11,917 West Lothian households had Universal Credit in payment.

Forty percent of households with Universal Credit in payment have dependent children with a higher proportion of lone parents than couples with children.¹⁰

	Number	Percentage
Single with child dependent(s)	3,373	28.3
Couple with child dependent(s)	1,395	11.7
Single no child dependent	6,681	56.1
Couple no child dependent	468	3.9

Table 4: Universal credit payments

Several new benefits have been introduced for Scottish claimants, administered by Social Security Scotland. The claimant count and value of payments in West Lothian are shown below in table 5.¹¹

Benefit	Applications Received	Approval Rate (%)	Total Value of Payments
Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods	9720	70	£2,017,550
Scottish Child Payment	3865	92	£122,080
Young Carer Grant	225	70	£46,393
Job Start Payment	95	29	£7,300
Child Winter Heating Allowance	555	100	£110,000

Table 5: Social Security Scotland benefit payments

10. Universal Credit Official Statistics. Universal Credit: Households. <https://dwp-stats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=8560a06de0f2430ab71505772163e8b4> (accessed July 2021).

11. Scottish Government. Social Security Scotland statistics: publications. <https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-scotland-stats-publications/> (accessed July 2021).

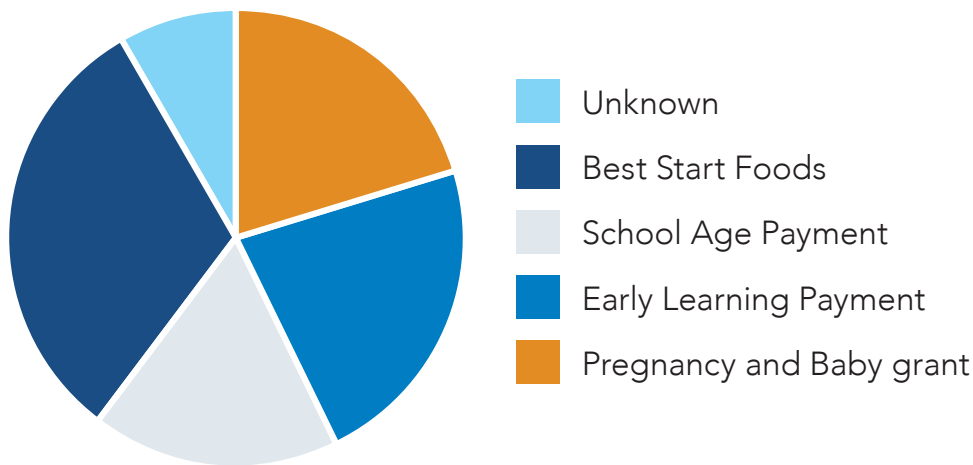


Chart 4: Best Start Grant payment type

Representatives from Social Security Scotland have joined the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Task Force, Child Poverty Reference Group and Practitioners Network and are committed to taking forward actions to raise awareness of, and support access to, the benefits available to West Lothian residents.

In the 2020/21 academic year, 7,921 clothing grants were provided. This is an increase from 2019/20 of 886 grants. The eligibility criteria for clothing grants was extended to include those receiving council tax reduction, increasing the number of children eligible for the grant. This is likely to have contributed to increased uptake.

2.4 Antenatal Data

More women were pregnant in 2020/21 than the previous year (see Table 6). West Lothian women accounted for 21% of all antenatal booking appointments in Lothian (an increase from 19% in 2019/20).

Issues relating to financial wellbeing are explored at the antenatal booking appointment. Of the 445 women in Lothian in need of financial advice in 2020/21, 24% were from West Lothian.

The number of women living in temporary housing at the time of antenatal booking increased from 66 in 2019/20 to 80 in 2020/21. The proportion of West Lothian women living in temporary housing at the time of antenatal booking increased to 4.2% in 2020/21 (compared to 4% across Lothian as a whole).

	2019/20		2020/21	
	West Lothian	Lothian	West Lothian	Lothian
Total pregnancies	1760	9030	1902	9136
In temporary housing	66	331	80	371

Table 6: Total antenatal booking appointments and temporary housing status (Source: LAS, 2021)

The proportion of women in West Lothian in need of further advice on finances, benefits or housing issues decreased in 2020/21 but remained higher than elsewhere in Lothian (see Table 7).

	East Lothian	Edinburgh	Midlothian	West Lothian	Lothian
2019/20	4.3	4.9	5.6	9.5	5.8
2020/21	5.4	4.5	4.6	5.7	4.9

Table 7: Antenatal booking: in need of further advice on finances, benefits, or housing issues (Source: LAS, 2021)

Thirteen percent of pregnant women in West Lothian qualified for Best Start Foods payments, compared to 11% in Lothian overall. Twenty-six percent of pregnant women living in the most deprived areas (SIMD 1) qualified for Best Start Foods payments.

Percentage qualifying for Best Start Foods payments by SIMD

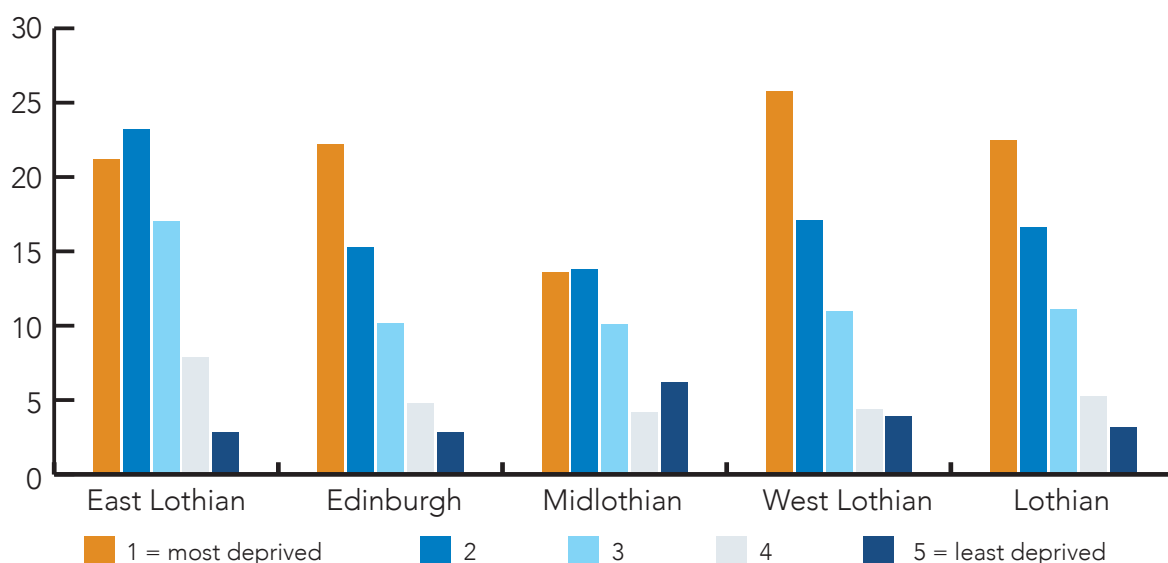


Chart 5: Percentage qualifying for Best Start Foods payments by SIMD

Chart 6 below illustrates the need for financial support during pregnancy for women in Lothian, and in particular West Lothian. In 2020/21, 4% (n=74) of West Lothian women were referred to income maximisation services at the time of antenatal booking, 3% (n=60) required money and debt advice, and 3% (n=52) needed financial capability support.

Percentage of women who have financial difficulties recorded at antenatal booking in financial year 2020/21

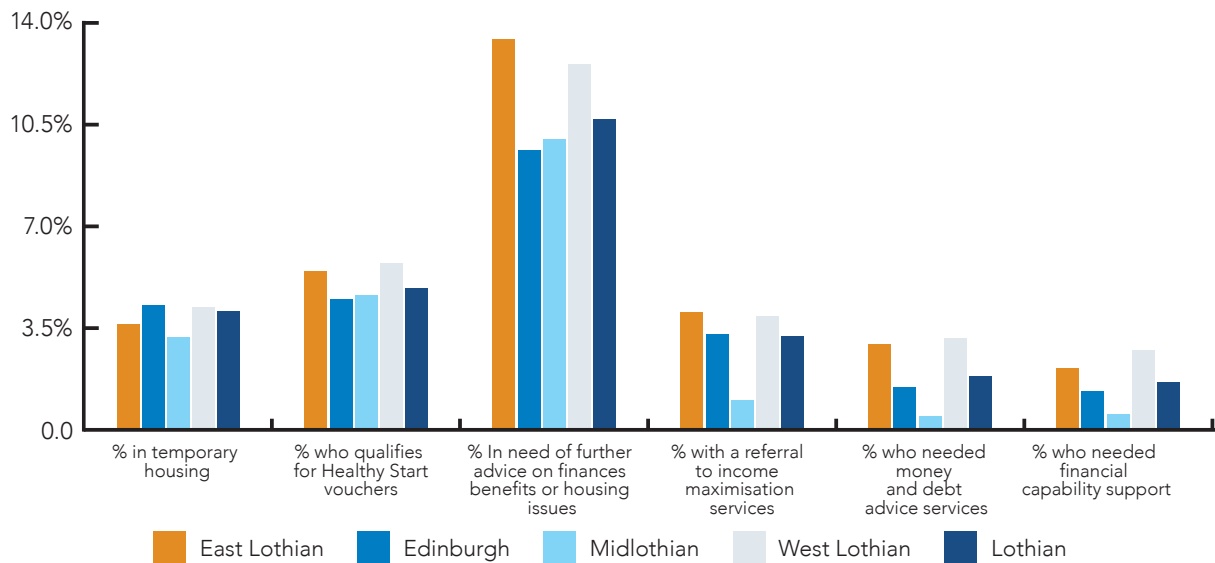


Chart 6: Percentage of women who have financial difficulties recorded at antenatal booking

2.5 Food insecurity

The Poverty and Inequality Commission commissioned the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) to undertake research to identify and share good practice and learning around providing free school meals. A range of ‘promising practice case studies’ gathered before and during the pandemic have been considered and the report makes a number of recommendations for schools and authorities looking to increase their free school meal uptake.

There has been an increase in the total number of children receiving free school meals in West Lothian. In the academic year 2020/21, 6,373 free school meals were provided, compared to 5,637 in 2019/20. This increases to 6,843 if universal P1-3 school meals are included.

West Lothian Food Network provided meals for 1,630 children over a 77-week period: averaging 7 meals per week for each child. This equates to 878,570 meals to children during the pandemic. This demand is likely to continue whilst we recover from the economic impact of the pandemic.

West Lothian Foodbank fulfilled 5,271 vouchers during 2020/21 (compared to 3,498 in 2019/20). Of the total number of vouchers, almost a fifth (19%) were distributed in Whitburn and Blackburn. These vouchers supported 6,659 adults and 3,481 children with emergency food aid (4.6% and 8.8% of the West Lothian adult and child population respectively). See table 8 below.

	No. vouchers	Adults	% adult popn.	Children	% child popn.	Total	% total ward popn.
Armadale & Blackridge	519	686	5.6	396	10.9	1082	6.9
Bathgate	910	1111	6.1	567	10.5	1678	7.1
Broxburn, Uphall & Winchburgh	496	641	4.1	376	9.3	1017	5.2
East Livingston & East Calder	486	654	3.7	349	7.9	1003	4.6
Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	492	634	4.9	353	10.9	987	6.1
Linlithgow	147	185	1.4	83	2.4	268	1.6
Livingston North	417	526	2.9	307	5.9	833	3.6
Livingston South	554	697	3.7	310	5.7	1007	4.2
Whitburn & Blackburn	1004	1244	7.2	654	14.2	1898	8.7
West Lothian	5271	6659	4.6	3481	8.8	10140	5.5

Table 8: West Lothian Food Bank Vouchers

Section 3: Activity Impacting Drivers of Poverty 2020-21

The tables and narrative below set out progress against actions in 2020/21 to tackle the drivers of child poverty. Whilst good progress has been made across the community planning partnership, it should be emphasised that local work alone will not result in the transformational change required to reduce and prevent child poverty at the pace and scale required. Action is required at Scotland and UK Government levels to support children and families, including but not limited to, support for those transitioning from furlough arrangements, mitigating the impact of proposed reductions to Universal Credit payments and rising fuel costs, and expediting increases to Scottish child payments.

3.1 Income from employment

Action	Desired Outcomes	Progress
Employability support is provided to individuals affected by the economic impact of COVID-19.	Tailored support provided to young people and those who have been made redundant, had their hours reduced or find their current work unsuitable.	<p>All delivery of Access2Employment workshops and training programmes has been conducted virtually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developed and delivered 41 employment based virtual workshops to 161 clients. Courses include Interview Skills, Customer Service, LinkedIn, and Effective Job Search & CV's • A new Wellbeing Workshop was developed for pre-employability clients and has been delivered 7 times to 45 clients • Women N2 Work, a six-week programme aimed to improve women's confidence and employability skills, has been completed 7 times • A 4-week Men N2 Work programme was launched at the start of the year and has been delivered once <p>The service has continued to support young people through No One left Behind as well as the Steps N2 Work programme and new delivery of Kickstart and Youth Guarantee.</p> <p>A vacancy bulletin was created to help clients, particularly those unemployed and furloughed. The bulletin highlights local vacancies, training, and relevant support available on a weekly basis using an easily accessible format. It reaches over 850 clients and 150 stakeholders.</p>

3.1.1 Access2Employment Service

The Access2Employment service offers tailored support to help its clients secure new or better employment, training, or educational opportunities. Since March 2020, the service has been delivered remotely, via telephone, email, and video conferencing. The service has continued to provide various forms of interaction to clients such as one-on-one support, workshops and short-term courses based on client's employment needs.

The WomenN2Work course was first delivered remotely in August 2020 and was delivered a further four times during the year. The six-week programme is aimed at women that are considering entering or returning to the labour market. The personal development aspect of the course is delivered by the Wellbeing Team and covers topics such as emotional and physical wellbeing, setting healthy boundaries, identifying unhelpful thinking and negative stories, creating healthy routines, goal setting, action planning and motivation. Once the personal development part of the course is completed it moves onto employability sessions. This part of the course covers topics such as job searching, preparing a CV and covering letter, completing application forms, and interview preparation and techniques.

The programme is extremely valuable to parents that are considering looking for work but lacking confidence in their abilities. In 2020/21, fourteen parents attended the course and the personal development aspects allowed them to identify their transferable skills and provided them with a feeling of worth before focusing on employability skills.

In 2021, Access2Employment launched an additional offer to employed and unemployed parents that identified under one of the following six client groups - lone parent, family where a member of the household is disabled, family with three or more children, minority ethnic family, family where the youngest child is under one, and family where parents are under 25 years. In 2020/21 the parental employment support service registered 17 eligible parents who are all being provided with intensive employment support. The support is voluntary and offered on a one-to-one basis online and via telephone. Delivery is person-centred and includes a personalised action plan based on the clients wants and needs. Assistance to parents includes all aspects of employability support, funding towards training and upskilling, workshops, group support, barrier removal and help finding affordable childcare and in-work support.

In 2021/22 the Parental Employment Support Team will deliver a targeted approach within the Whitburn area as this has been identified as having the highest levels of child deprivation in West Lothian. This will be delivered by creating links with the schools in the area and with external partners that have a significant presence.

2020/21 also saw the introduction of the intensive family support offer to the Access2Employment service. This service is delivered in conjunction with the Families Together Team within Social Policy. The programme targets the hardest to reach families that are engaging with the Families Together Team and provides

employability support. This support is provided to clients as a long term offer and takes into consideration that many of the clients will be extremely far removed from the labour market and will need intensive ongoing support to find work, training or education that suits them and their family. This is also the first time that the service has offered a full family approach and has begun working with children in the family to encourage a positive outlook with regards employability and what is required to pursue their chosen career.

3.2 Cost of living

Action	Desired Outcomes	Progress
Ensure that individuals in crisis can access appropriate, affordable solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children entitled to free school meals will be able to collect a packed lunch or takeaway hot meal as well as breakfast cereal or a cereal bar daily throughout the duration of coronavirus lockdown and during summer • Parents of children eligible for free school meals will receive a payment of £10 per child per week until end of July 2020 to help ease financial strain • Early School Clothing Grant payments will be paid automatically to all parents/carers who received a payment in the 2019/20 academic year to ease financial pressure caused by coronavirus • Increase uptake of school clothing grant by amending criteria to include council tax reduction 	<p>Takeaway hot meals, packed lunches and cereal bars were available from schools throughout lockdown.</p> <p>During the 2020 summer holiday, the service was accessible via 7 secondary schools and 34 primary schools, with an additional 5 primary schools continuing to distribute packed lunches only. Delivery arrangements continued for vulnerable children identified by Social Policy and Additional Support Needs (ASN) for Education. The uptake was 42% of those eligible and 2,400 meals were provided daily.</p> <p>In addition to this service, meal deliveries were made to Additional Support Needs (ASN) children with around 90 meals being delivered daily to 57 families.</p> <p>Payments were made to parents of children eligible for free school meals and on a low income. In total, £794,240 was paid in respect of 5637 children.</p> <p>Early payment of School Clothing Grant was made automatically to parents and carers who qualified in the 2019-20 academic year to help toward the costs of home learning. In total £534,820 was paid in respect of 4114 children.</p> <p>For new Clothing Grant applications, the qualifying criteria was amended to include Council Tax Reduction entitlement resulting in an additional 247 awards made on these criteria only.</p> <p>One off grant for energy costs and other expenses were made in respect of 809 households securing payments worth £54,104.</p>

Action	Desired Outcomes	Progress
Families have access to tools and resources to improve their financial wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with West Calder High School and local partners to develop a family support hub with a focus on financial capability • Implement a further phase of Connecting Scotland programme to provide devices and connectivity for school pupils. 	<p>Money Advice Scotland delivered 2 digital workshops for students covering a range of financial wellbeing topics including banking and bills and credit and borrowing.</p> <p>Feedback from students and teachers has been positive and has led to the development of a Citizenship and Tenancy qualification for young people including a personal finance module to be taken forward in 2021/22.</p>

3.2.1 Tackling food insecurity

The West Lothian Food Network has been developed by West Lothian Council and is led by West Lothian Foodbank SCIO (Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation). West Lothian Food Network aims to connect people and communities, reduce hunger and isolation, and alleviate poverty.

The Food Network’s first annual action plan was delivered during the 2020/21 period with much of the network activity informed by the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

During 2020/21, the Food Network has grown from 26 to 37 organisations. Working in partnership, network members fed an average of 4,094 people per week through food parcels, cooked meals, community pantries and community fridges, diverting 127 tons of food from landfill.

In the last year, 7 new community food pantries and 1 new community fridge have been set up in local communities with support from the Food Network. Service users can now access fresh fruit, vegetables, meat, fish, dairy, baked goods, ambient food, frozen food, baby goods, toiletries, cleaning products and sanitary products in every council ward.

In addition, all network organisations are signposting service users to local advice agencies for checks on eligibility for benefits and grants, to improve household income.

3.2.2 Cost of the School Day

The Schoolbank West Lothian is a volunteer led charity that aims to help West Lothian families experiencing financial hardship by providing brand new school uniforms and other clothing items and equipment required for the school day.

During the pandemic and the subsequent closure of schools, the Schoolbank experienced a sudden drop in referrals. It became apparent that there was a need for continued support for children from families experiencing financial hardship. The Schoolbank worked with local schools and partner organisations including Carers West Lothian, Bridge Community Project, Homestart and West Lothian Women's Aid to address the additional costs of living associated with families spending significantly more time at home.

The Schoolbank West Lothian secured £2,000 from STV Children's Appeal Community Well-being Fund and worked with local schools and partners to provide 250 basic stationery packs to support children in their home schooling including several maths sets and calculators. Activity packs were also distributed, including a range of arts and crafts materials and games equipment.

The Schoolbank and partners also identified a need to provide supermarket vouchers to children and families due to some families falling into poverty and others experiencing additional expenses for food needed whilst spending more time at home. The Scottish Government Community Winter Support Fund awarded West Lothian £5,150 and then a further £2,000, allowing the Schoolbank and partners to support 143 families by providing £50 Aldi vouchers.

When schools resumed in-person teaching, further work was undertaken to provide necessary resources for outdoor learning. The Schoolbank collaborated with Head Teachers at two local schools to provide waterproof clothing which allowed them to take more of their learning outdoors. Funding was secured from both the Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian and Community Funding Scotmid, allowing the Schoolbank to provide approximately 140 children in the Fauldhouse and Breich Valley area with waterproof trousers and jackets.

3.3 Income from social security

Action	Desired Outcomes	Progress
<p>Embed advice, support, and advocacy to improve early intervention and prevent poverty and focus on those who have been affected by COVID-19.</p>	<p>Monitor developments in the rollout plan for devolved Scottish Social Security benefits, particularly Scottish Child Payment which is expected in early 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver media take-up campaign following rollout of new Scottish benefits • Work with key partners to raise awareness of new benefits and encourage referrals through the FORT system for help to claim • Provide support and assistance to clients with the claim process <p>Develop close links with Access2 Employment to make onward referrals</p>	<p>Several new benefits delivered by Social Security Scotland have been introduced in the 2020/21 period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job Start Payment for 16-24 year olds • Scottish Child Payment for eligible families with children under 6 years old • Child Winter Heating Assistance, an automatic payment for eligible families with a child in receipt of highest rate care component of Disability Living Allowance <p>Best Start Grant has also continued to be delivered with payments available to eligible families at key life stages:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy and maternity • Early years • School age <p>Awareness raising has been primarily digital during 2020/21 due to COVID restrictions. Social media posts during the reporting period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best Start Grant – 2 posts; shared 42 times • Scottish Child Payment – 3 posts; shared 110 times • Job Start Payment – 1 post; shared 30 times <p>An article was also published in the WLC Bulletin to all households to promote the Scottish Child Payment and Child Winter Heating Allowance.</p> <p>The Fast Online Referral Tracking system has been used to promote active referrals from key partners who work with families. Referrals from partners including Signpost, Access2Employment, Family Support Workers and the Schoolbank West Lothian are made to a dedicated adviser to provide advice and support to claim.</p>

Action	Desired Outcomes	Progress
<p>Families with low income are aware of and are supported to access financial support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase uptake of school clothing grant by extending eligibility criteria to include Council Tax Reduction Scheme • Improve accessibility of Education Maintenance Allowance through the development of an online claim form • Promote the NEC card/ Young Scot card across a range of channels • Parents with children eligible for 2-year old early learning and childcare provision are offered a referral for financial advice • Work with Family Assessment and Support Services screening group to provide income maximisation for at-risk families • Looked after young people are offered one-to-one support to develop budgeting skills and become financially included 	<p>The qualifying criteria for School Clothing Grant applications has been amended to include Council Tax Reduction entitlement resulting in an additional 247 awards made on these criteria only.</p> <p>Online applications for Education Maintenance Allowance have been available since June 2020. This option has been widely promoted alongside digital access to make applications for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants easier. Social media promotion has been delivered at key points in the year, in July, September and January to encourage maximum uptake and posts have been shared over 350 times.</p> <p>Referral mechanism implemented in June 2020 for at-risk families through the Family Assessment and Support Service resulting in 43 referrals for income maximisation advice and support.</p>

Overall:

- Additional income of £31,665,005 was gained for West Lothian residents following engagement with income maximisation advice services
- Local debt advice agencies managed £7,402,707 worth of debt
- Following energy efficiency advice, £445,691 worth of savings was made on gas and electricity costs

3.3.1 Financial support for families impacted by the pandemic

Many families were affected financially by the pandemic; with low-income households often disproportionately affected. An unprecedented level of financial support for families was provided during 2020/21 to mitigate the impact on families at highest risk of poverty:

- Hot takeaway meals, packed lunches and cereal bars were available to be picked up from schools during lockdown and through the summer holiday with 2,400 meals provided daily. In addition, delivery arrangements were put in place for vulnerable children and an additional 90 meals were delivered daily to 57 families.
- Payments of £10 per week per child were made to families in receipt of free school meals with a total of £794,240 paid to 5,637 children up to the end of July 2020.
- Payments of £15 per week per child have since been made to families of eligible children on low incomes in receipt of free school meals starting in Autumn 2020. A total of £1,381,159 has been paid to families during school holidays or periods of school closures. This money has reached over 6,800 children.
- Early payment of School Clothing Grants was automatically made to parents and carers who qualified in the previous academic year to help toward the cost of home learning. In total £534,820 was paid to 4,114 children.
- There have been several one-off payments to those eligible for free school meals on a low income: winter and spring hardship payments were administered on behalf of the Scottish Government totalling £1,291,300. An additional winter clothing payment of £80 was paid in January 2021 to 7,776 children totalling £622,080.

Financial support to address the ongoing impact of the pandemic will continue into the 2021/22 period. Payments of £3 per day will be awarded to families of children who cannot attend school because they or their class are self-isolating.

3.3.2 The One2One Project

The One2One Project works with the most vulnerable residents of West Lothian, who are affected by severe and enduring mental ill health and have difficulties with engaging effectively with services. Our key target groups are lone parents, families in low income employment and workless households.

The project also aims to support where there are additional barriers to accessing services and support, such as having a physical disability, being a care leaver or a young parent without support. All our customers are offered intensive support with benefits, housing, debt, and energy issues.

During the 2020-21 period, the One2One project worked with a total of 98 families with dependent children. All these families had a household member with a physical or mental health disability, or both. In addition to this nine of these families were led by a lone parent, a further nine were from a minority ethnic background.

The One2One project worked closely with local partner organisations to ensure families in need can access relevant help and support.

3.3.3 Royal Hospital for Children and Young People Welfare Advice Service

In Lothian, the Scottish Government Healthier Wealthier Children Fund has been used to establish a hospital-based welfare advice service at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) in Edinburgh. The service benefits families experiencing poverty across the four local authority areas within Lothian and complements the existing welfare advice provision within the adult hospitals. Having a hospital-based service promotes access for those families who may struggle to engage with community-based services and/or who may find they are experiencing financial difficulties because of their child's illness or hospital stay.

The service offers free, independent, confidential, and non-judgemental advice across the hospital (inpatient and outpatients) and includes support on issues such as income maximisation, benefit entitlement, debt, employment, and housing. This not only supports vulnerable families at a time when they may be experiencing additional stress with a child in hospital, but also supports the work of clinical teams.

NHS Lothian is working in partnership with the Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI) to provide this service.

The intention had been for the welfare advice service to be fully embedded within the RHCYP and for the project worker to have a physical presence in the hospital. Unfortunately given the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions from March 2020, the welfare adviser has not been able to work from the hospital and has been operating remotely offering telephone-based support. This has impacted CHAI's ability to fully develop the project, but every effort has been made to raise awareness of the service and encourage referrals.

Thirty-two families across Lothian have received advice and support from the project and to date financial gains of £46,369 have been recorded (this will increase over time as further financial gains for this period accumulate). During this period, 160 appointments were offered to families across Lothian and various types of follow-up work completed. Non-financial gains for the period included suitable alternative housing being attained for one family whilst others received clothing and school uniforms. The adviser has provided support and advice on a range of issues including supporting a family with welfare advice issues relating to bereavement.

The project worker continues to promote the service and build referral pathways and contacts across the hospital. The adviser now attends regular multiagency meetings with RHCYP clinicians and as a result, more hospital departments are becoming aware of the service and referrals are gradually increasing.

3.4 Workforce development

3.4.1 Poverty Awareness Training for Education Settings

Latest estimates from the End Child Poverty coalition show that child poverty is a significant issue. Poverty rates have increased across all Scottish local authorities and almost a quarter of children in West Lothian now experience relative poverty.

In response to this, a poverty awareness training module was developed for education settings. In 2020, poverty awareness training was offered to Family Support Workers and Early Learning and Childcare practitioners with a view to improving understanding of poverty related issues and how best to help and support families experiencing financial difficulty.

The training aimed to raise awareness of the impact of poverty on families living on a low income and reduce the stigma related to talking about money worries by discussing the following topics:

- What is poverty?
- How does poverty affect people locally?
- How to spot the signs of poverty or deprivation
- How to start a conversation about money troubles
- How to support families in financial difficulty
- Where and how to refer for further help and support

Attendees were also given a demonstration of the Fast Online Referral Tracking (FORT) system which allows secure online referrals to be made to a wide range of local advice and support agencies as well as an overview of the financial self-help tools available to families.

In total, 31 practitioners from early years settings and nine Family Support Workers attended training between April and May 2020. Feedback from the training has been very positive with all participants indicating that the content was relevant to their job role and giving an average overall rating of 3.4 on a scale of 1 to 4.

One practitioner described how the course had been of use:

I've often wondered how we could support families and what was available to us in the way of providing support, so this was very helpful.

When asked what practitioner would do with the learning gained, the following examples were given:

I have spoken to all staff within my setting and let them know about relevant websites and places around us within the community which provide our families with help and support financially.

I will be more observant now and I will add this to my newsletter as well as personally direct any parents when the time should arise for help and advice.

The training was well received, and more active referrals have been made via the FORT system from Family Support Workers, who have access to the system. FORT access will be rolled out to all Early Learning and Childcare settings in August 2021 to allow more active referrals to be made, both quickly and securely.

There are still over 50 practitioners who require training in Early Learning and Childcare. The training sessions will be recorded to increase accessibility to staff across establishments.

3.5 The views of those with lived experience

3.5.1 Young People's Anti-Poverty Consultation

It is important that the voices of children and young people are heard and that they are able to not only influence actions to reduce the cost of the school day, but are also able to talk about the impact of poverty in other areas of their lives. The council's Community Learning and Development (CLD) Youth Services Team worked with a group of eight teenagers from the Armadale Youth Forum to find out more about young people's lived experience of poverty. This initial group took part in poverty awareness training and one youth ambassador took on a role in co-delivering training in youth clubs across West Lothian. This consultation project ran from October 2019 to January 2020 engaging with a total of 164 young people to hear their views and gather information to inform the ongoing direction of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The consultation focused on young people's experiences of poverty and deprivation outside of school and 91% said that a lack of money made it difficult for them to take part in activities which led to feelings of isolation and exclusion amongst peers. Socialisation was identified as the main part of life affected by poverty for young people in West Lothian. Following the consultation period, a short video was filmed with three young people from the Armadale Youth Forum to present the findings and reflect on the approach to the consultation. The young people involved have identified three key words to use going forward when engaging with young people about social issues: Learn, Think, Speak. The next stage was to involve young people in becoming peer advisors to help and support young people to have someone to talk to about issues relating to low income which were affecting them and their families and to help them access help and support.

A follow up survey was carried out online in partnership with Young Scot to explore how the pandemic was affecting young people in terms of their lived experience relating to accessing education, their financial circumstances, and how this was impacting on their feelings. The survey was carried out in May 2021 and was completed by 363 young people. Following on from the survey, the opportunity to become an Anti-Poverty Champion will be offered to young people across West Lothian. This role will involve young people, after receiving training from the Anti-Poverty Team, offering peer support to young people at local youth club level who are experiencing difficulties with poverty or money, either themselves or within their families. The young people who are trained as Anti-Poverty Champions will also form a steering group which will form part of the Youth Participation Strategy within the CLD Youth Services Team.

Section 4: Forward Planning 2021-23

The coronavirus pandemic has resulted in a major shift in the landscape of poverty. Necessary measures imposed to control the spread of the virus has led to a significant economic impact, the full scale of which is not yet clear. Moving forward, measures implemented to relieve some of the financial strain caused by the crisis will come to an end including the furlough job retention scheme and the temporary uplift to Universal Credit rates. This could lead to increased financial pressure for many families and it has been estimated that the removal of the Universal Credit uplift alone could cause 50,000 people to fall into poverty, including 10,000 children across Scotland.

In West Lothian, anti-poverty activity will have a continued focus on COVID response and recovery, targeting action at a local level that we believe will impact positively against drivers of poverty for key target groups. A two-year child poverty action plan has been produced with cognisance of the interim target milestone as set out in the Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 which aims to reduce the number of children in relative poverty to no more than 18% by 2023/24.

4.1 Income from employment

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Parental Employment Support Fund will support families experiencing or at risk of poverty to access employment or progress in work.	Access2Employment	Scottish Government resources, 2020/21 – £241,000 2021/22 – £241,000	The project has several performance indicators aligned to delivery including number of parents engaged and the outcomes achieved for each client	September 2022
Young people claiming Universal Credit will be able to access 6 months paid employment and employability support through the DWP Kick Start scheme.	DWP Economic Development & Regeneration West Lothian CAB	DWP resources are provided for each Kick Start place to cover salary and training costs	Number of places created and the sustainability of the places after the Kick Start support ends	December 2021

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
To support the creation of employment opportunities for unemployed residents in West Lothian. Opportunities will be created for all ages at Living Wage.	Economic Development and Regeneration Jobs Task Force	£1 million – West Lothian Council £1.7 million – Scottish Government Young Person’s guarantee	Number of opportunities created at real living wage Sustainability of the opportunities	December 2022
Deliver More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) to support young people move into a positive destination.	CLD Youth Services	More Choices More Chances Keyworker service	Increase in the percentage of MCMC young people achieving a positive destination and sustaining for 6 months	Ongoing
Support positive destinations for care experienced young people.	Inclusion & Support Service (ISS)	ISS resources	Increase in the percentage of care experienced young people achieving a positive destination	Ongoing

4.2 Cost of living

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Develop and deliver new SQA modules including tenancy awareness and personal finance award for identified young people.	Education Housing Anti-Poverty Service	£80,000 (1WTE for 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of young people receiving the accreditation Ongoing evaluation pre, during and post course 	March 2023
<p>Financial support options are available for families struggling with the cost of the school day:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> £3 meal payments will be made to children in receipt of free school meal entitlement if they cannot attend school due to self-isolation up to the end of the academic year. £6 will be paid to S1 to S6 children who will not attend school on two additional in-service days. £100 pandemic payments to be paid in summer and winter to those children who are eligible for free school meals and on a low income. Freeze/reduce the cost of free school meals and make payments to eligible families during school holiday periods. 	Anti-Poverty Service	Funded through Scottish Government/ West Lothian Council	National programme as part of COVID response	March 2023

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Development of a new West Lothian model for school holiday activity clubs to embed support for the most vulnerable children and young people in line with Scottish Government guidance.	Education Third sector partners	CLD Youth Services practitioners WLC Holiday Provision Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective identification and referral system to the programme is in place • A revised model of targeted summer activities to support vulnerable children and young people is established 	April 2022
Promote uptake of places for eligible 2-year olds and consider discretionary places for vulnerable families who do not meet the eligibility criteria, including families from the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP). <i>Expansion of early learning and childcare hours to 1140 hours across all settings for 3- and 4-year olds and eligible 2's implemented April 2021.</i>	Education Family Assessment and Support Screening (FASS) Group FNP	Funded ELC places including providing snack and lunches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of discretionary places allocated • Number of families from FNP 	June 2022
Continue to provide the Primary Schools 'Junior Squirrels' and Secondary Schools Credit Union Saving Scheme to encourage savings habit in students.	Schools West Lothian Credit Union/ Prior Communities Charity Robertson Trust (Part Funders)	Schools Co-ordinator (16 hours/week) through Prior Communities and school (parent) volunteers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students (new and existing) saving in credit union • Value of savings accrued in accounts 	June 2022

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Cost of the school day.	Education	Varies per school but may include: Up to 3% (£180,254) of Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) Budget (if schools choose to focus on cost of the school day as part of participatory budgeting) Contributions from school budget Fundraising contributions	Implementing action in Poverty Proofing Statements Financial impact plans PEF plans Processes for measuring impact of PEF initiatives	Sep 2021 – Jun 2022
Provide support to schools for PEF planning, monitoring, and evaluation e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Targeted support • Provision of supportive resources • Identification/delivery of training 	Education	Weekly commitment from Quality Improvement Officer (PEF) Attainment Advisor – Education Scotland	Feedback from Headteachers Processes for measuring impact of PEF initiatives	Sep 2021 – Jun 2022

4.3 Income from social security

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Income maximisation advice and support for families will be embedded in school settings.	Anti-Poverty Service Education	£240,000 (3WTE for 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial gains through income maximisation and debt managed for the families supported and additional support accessed Customer evaluations forms 	March 2023
Income maximisation advice and financial capability support is provided for young people facing homelessness to become financially resilient.	Anti-Poverty Service Housing	£80,000 (1WTE for 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial gains through income maximisation, housing outcomes achieved, and debt managed for the young people supported Reduction in the number of young people leaving their tenancy 	March 2023
Individuals with health concerns will be supported through the implementation of new health hubs and the Improving the Cancer Journey project.	Anti-Poverty Service Macmillan Cancer Support WL HSCP	£40,000 (1WTE for 1year)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creation of hubs and the number of people supported through the hubs and the additional support accessed Customer evaluations 	March 2022
Families struggling with debt or financial capability concerns will have access to a range of support.	West Lothian Debt Advice Forum West Lothian CAB	£160,000 (2 FTE for 2 years)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved engagement with debt advice Improved financial confidence 	March 2023

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Raise awareness of, and reduce barriers to, new benefits delivered by Social Security Scotland including Best Start Grant, Best Start Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment as these become available for West Lothian families.	Social Security Scotland Anti-Poverty Service Practitioners Network Food Network West Lothian CAB	Within existing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and numbers attending training events • Number of people taking up the new Social Security Scotland benefits 	March 2023
Implementation of the Social Security Scotland Local Delivery Advisory Service in West Lothian	Social Security Scotland Anti-Poverty Service Child Poverty Reference Group	National delivery partner and local resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awareness of Social Security Scotland benefits across communities and groups • Number of people taking up the new Social Security Scotland benefits • Improved joint working between Social Security Scotland and West Lothian anti-poverty partners 	November 2021
Provide a range of financial support options to support families to remain in their homes, which includes, income maximisation and affordability advice and sources of financial assistance such as discretionary housing payments.	Anti-Poverty Service	Within existing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial gains through income maximisation. Number of people who have received affordability advice and support and accessed sources of financial assistance • Ongoing customer evaluations will be undertaken 	March 2023

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Develop and deliver financial wellbeing pathways, training, referral system and data capture across midwifery and health visiting services to increase identification of, and support to, those in need.	Public health Midwifery Health visiting Anti-poverty service	Within existing resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of women referred for financial wellbeing support • Proportion of women taking up Best Start Foods • Financial gain 	Development complete March 2022 Implementation of pathways and systems December 2022
Provide welfare advice in GP practices	CAB NHS Lothian Public Health Anti-Poverty Service	£30k Health Improvement Funding (funds CAB 0.8WTE) 1WTE Anti-poverty Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals • Client financial gain • Debt management for customers • Customer and partner evaluations 	March 2022
Continue to deliver welfare advice in the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People	NHS Lothian Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI)	£34,040 from Scottish Government Healthier, Wealthier Children Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals • Appointments • Client financial gain • Staff awareness of the project • Client feedback 	March 2022
Deliver the Prevention and Intervention Money Advice Project (PIMAP)	West Lothian CAB NHS Lothian Anti-Poverty partners	£15,000 (funds CAB 0.5WTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals • Client financial gain • Debt management for customers • Customer and partner evaluations 	March 2022

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Deliver the 'Money Talks' project, a Scottish Government sponsored scheme which aims to maximise income to families or any other low-income household.	West Lothian CAB Anti-poverty partners	£15,000 (funds CAB 0.5WTE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals • Client financial gain • Debt management for customers • Customer and partner evaluations 	March 2022
Mapping of income maximisation services to inform future provision and communication to front-line staff and services.	NHS Lothian Public Health Anti-Poverty Service Child Poverty Reference Group	Within existing resources	Mapping complete and used to inform development of money advice services across West Lothian	March 2022

4.4 Lived experience

Action	Who is involved?	Resources allocated	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale
Collate results from young people's survey and identify young people to become Anti-Poverty Champions. Once identified, the champions will receive training and follow up support to link in with a youth club to carry out their role. The young people will also form a steering group which will be supported as part of the Participation Strategy within CLD Youth Services.	CLD Youth Services Anti-Poverty Service	Work with Young People Team - Youth Participation Worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity of anti-poverty champions training for young people is established • Number of young people completing Anti-Poverty Champions Training and contributing in the community in this role 	December 2022

APPENDIX 1

Outcome 1: Maximise financial resources of households on low incomes							
Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31st March 2021	Status	Commentary
Total value of income maximised following advice each year	£33,928,321	£27,000,000	£34,000,000	£33,000,000	£31,665,005	GREEN	25,420 residents accessed advice services in the 2020/21 period. West Lothian Advice Network partners have worked to maximise income through assistance with benefit claims and appeals resulting in extra income of £31,665,005, an average annual financial gain of £1245 per person
Total value of debt managed each year	£11,834,489	£10,000,000	£12,500,000	£14,000,000	£7,402,707	AMBER	Temporary legislation to restrict debt recovery for those financially impacted during the pandemic has been in place in Scotland for much of the 2020-21 reporting period which has resulted in fewer people seeking debt advice.
Percentage of the population who are income deprived (SOA1302_13)	12% (2015/16)	12%	11.5%	11%	12%	GREEN	Income deprivation is generally defined through qualification for a range of DWP benefits - including out of work benefits, pensioner credits and in work benefits. Initial analysis of SIMD 2020 data indicates that income deprivation levels in West Lothian remain static at 12% SIMD 2020 identifies 7 datazones with income deprivation levels of 30% or higher. These datazones are within Knightsridge, Blackburn (2x datazones), Craigshill, Ladywell, Whitburn and Armadale
Percentage of employees who earn less than the living wage (SOA1303_14)	17%	17%	17%	17%	13.5%	GREEN	The 2020 data showed that as the trend towards an increase in wage levels at the lower end of the pay spectrum continues, the percentage of West Lothian employees earning less than the Living Wage decreased to 13.5%. This is below the Scottish level - estimated to be 15%. West Lothian at 13.5% is lower than most other non-city central Scotland local authority areas.

Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31 st March 2021	Status	Commentary
Percentage of adults in receipt of key out of work benefits (SOA1302_02)	10.6%	11%	10%	9%	10.1%	GREEN	<p>The DWP dataset informing this indicator appears to have been discontinued in 2018. Broad economic indicators show the following:</p> <p>77.1% of the West Lothian population are economically active. This includes people in employment or self-employment and those looking for work.</p> <p>22.9% of the West Lothian population are economically inactive. This includes students, people who are sick, those with caring responsibilities and retired people. Of this group, 28.1% indicate that they want a job.</p> <p>The claimant count of those in receipt of benefits and looking for work at the end of March 2021 was recorded at 5.6%. The Covid-19 crisis has had a significant impact on the claimant count with a 90% increase on the same period in the previous year when the claimant count was recorded at 2.9%</p>

Outcome 2: Reduce out-going costs and the 'poverty premium' on low income households							
Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31st March 2021	Status	Commentary
Number of individuals who access affordable credit options	1012	1000	1500	2300	875	AMBER	Both Conduit Scotland CDFI and local credit unions have had less demand for loans resulting in reduced lending throughout the pandemic. It is worth noting, however that credit union member savings have increased during the same period.
Total value of loans from affordable lenders	£1,474,055	£1,400,000	£1,600,000	£1,800,000	£1,659,513	GREEN	
Percentage of tenants receiving a Discretionary Housing Payment to mitigate the impact of the 'bedroom tax' (CP:APS076_9b)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	GREEN	On top of the £316,446 DHP budget, Scottish Government provided additional Covid funding of £146,405 in June 20 and a further £86,315 in February 21. WLC also set aside £150,000 to top up the fund. This is hardship funding, underoccupancy remains mitigated in full

Outcome 3: Households on low incomes are managing finances appropriately and becoming financially resilient							
Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31 st Dec 2020	Status	Commentary
Number of new Credit Union members	470 new adult members	500	600	600	121	AMBER	Credit unions have been significantly impacted by Covid restrictions. Local offices had to close at the beginning of the first lockdown. This has impacted on new member numbers as engagement with members who prefer to join in person and use face to face collection points cash have been severely limited.
Total value of savings with local credit unions	£2,620,114	£2,600,000	£2,800,000	£3,000,000	£4,541,052	GREEN	Local credit unions have seen a drop in new member numbers during 2020/21 period. This has largely been due to the impact of Covid restrictions as offices closed from the end of March 2020 and pop-up collection points have been unable to operate whilst tier 4 restrictions have been in place. School collections also ended in March 2020. Restrictions have meant that credit union staff have not been allowed into schools and school staff have not been permitted to handle cash. This has resulted in no new Primary 1 savers and usual Primary 7 leavers closed accounts.

Outcome 4: Improve the opportunities for adults from low income backgrounds to be in good quality, sustained employment							
Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31st March 2021	Status	Commentary
Number of West Lothian residents supported into work through council employability programmes (SOA1302_12)	348	370	450	500	488 (2019/20 data latest available)	GREEN	<p>Alongside the work with jobless clients, funding through the European Social Fund enables people who are underemployed to be assisted. Given the targeting of provision towards young people and others who might require more intensive pre-employment support, many participants progress into education or training outcomes rather than employment e.g. accessing a college course.</p> <p>In 2019/20 the number of clients supported into work increased on the previous year to 488.</p>
Percentage of employability customers who progress to a positive destination (CP:EDR035_9b.1a)	58%	50%	50%	50%	48%	GREEN	<p>In the 2019/20 period, the service registered 855 new clients and supported 408 of their clients into a positive destination.</p> <p>This represents 48% of employability clients in this period progressing to a positive destination. Although this is slightly below the target of 50%, this represents an increase in performance from 36% of clients progressing to a positive destination in 2018/19.</p> <p>The Access2Employment service has welcomed 818 new clients to the service throughout 2020-21 reporting period. Data about positive destinations estimated on an annual basis with next update due summer 2021</p>

Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31 ST March 2021	Status	Commentary
Percentage of school leavers who enter a positive destination (CP:SOA1302_09)	93.3%	94%	94%	96%	92.9%	GREEN	<p>Initial destinations data for 2019/20 school leavers published in October 2020 showed that, of 1855 school leavers in West Lothian, 92.9% went into a positive destination.</p> <p>In addition, Monthly Participation Snapshot data for 16-17 year olds shows that in March 2021 a participation rate of 93.2% was recorded. This data also highlights a participation gap between the least and most deprived 20% SIMD datazones: 20% most deprived – 86.3% participation rate 20% least deprived – 97.8% participation rate Participation gap = 11.5%</p>
Percentage of care leavers entering a positive destination (SOA1305_07)	56%	85%	85%	78%	79.1%	AMBER	<p>The latest data is for academic year 2019/20.</p> <p>It is important to recognise that based on this data source (Scottish Government) only a small number of looked after children leave school each year so one additional positive outcome would result in a significant percentage point increase.</p> <p>All care leavers including those in negative destinations continue receive targeted support via key worker provision.</p>
Percentage of working age adults in work (SOA1302_01)	77.8%	75%	77%	78%	74.6%	AMBER	<p>The latest figures show that the estimated employment rate has decreased slightly from 77.8% in 2019 to 74.6%.</p> <p>The 2020 employment rate is based on an estimated 91,300 West Lothian residents being in employment. West Lothian is slightly higher than the overall Scottish level of 73.5% of working age adults in work.</p>

Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31 ST March 2021	Status	Commentary
Total number of jobs in West Lothian (SOA1303_06)	78,000	75,000	78,000	78,000	85,000	GREEN	<p>This indicator is measured annually. It is important to note that this is an economic health check indicator subject to wider economic forces and cannot be solely attributed to the intervention efforts of local partners.</p> <p>Latest data from the Office of National Statistics shows that in 2019, 85,000 jobs were available in West Lothian with a job density of 0.73, which represents the ratio of total jobs to population aged 16-64</p>

Outcome 5: Low income households are able to access services and be socially and financially included							
Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31st March 2021	Status	Commentary
Number of anti-poverty service web hits	48,760	48,000	52,000	54,000	87,702	GREEN	During the 2020-21 reporting period there were 87,702 visits to the Anti-Poverty Service web pages. The coronavirus pandemic has had a significant impact on the most visited online content, with a 22% increase in visits to the Scottish Welfare Fund page in the first quarter of 2020-21 compared to the previous 3 months. There was also increase in online self-referrals to the Advice Shop and visits to a new page dedicated to coronavirus financial help and support
Number of individuals who access advice through health settings	1013	1000	1500	1750	1121	AMBER	Delivery of advice in health settings was suspended from beginning of April 2020 due to Covid restrictions. Advice agencies reviewed referral mechanisms and service delivery channels and successfully engaged remotely with 1121 individuals referred via health settings resulting in financial gain of £1,349,148
Number of outreach advice sessions available across all multi-member ward areas	19	19	12	9	8	AMBER	At the end of March 2020, there were 24 outreach advice sessions delivered by West Lothian Advice Network partners with face to face advice sessions available within all 9 multi-member ward areas. Since the start of the covid-19 pandemic, face to face advice has been significantly restricted and the closure of public buildings has led to the suspension of all face to face outreach sessions. Remote digital outreach has been piloted with key organisations including Polbeth HUB and Carers West Lothian and appointments have continued to be offered via telephone wherever possible.
Number of people signposted and referred for support through the FORT system	N/A	200	350	1000	3910	GREEN	There are now 40 services/organisations signed up to use the FORT system and in total 3910 referrals via FORT since April 2020. Use of FORT referral and tracking has grown exponentially this year following the recruitment of a Digital Development Worker to focus on system implementation and growth. This web based platform has allowed more active referrals at a time when most needed in light of Covid restrictions and limited availability of face to face advice services.

Outcome 6: Increase the number of people who live in warm, affordable homes							
Indicators	Baseline 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31st March 2021	Status	Commentary
Number of new homes completed annually in West Lothian (SOA1303_07)	597 <i>2016/17</i>	500		1000	2254	GREEN	At 31 March 2021 2,254 out of 3000 homes have been completed, an increase of 30 since December 2020. Various new build sites are now completed or under development. Open Market Acquisition Scheme (OMAS) ongoing. Partnerships with local RSLs also under development. At the end of 2020/21, West Lothian's social landlord partners had delivered 43 new build units over three sites and 3 Open Market Purchases for Almond Housing Association.
Total value of savings as a result of energy advice	£363,738	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£445,691	GREEN	Energy Advice Forum partners (a sub-group of the West Lothian Advice Network) have assisted customers to make energy savings of £445,691 during 2020/21 representing an average saving of £243 per household per annum. These savings are achieved by supporting customers with applications for grants, advice and support to access energy efficiency measures, support to save money through tariff comparison and switching, and support with fuel debt.
Number of potential homeless situations prevented with intervention	372	560	120 <i>*reduced target</i>	560	53	AMBER	The target for 2020/21 was reduced to 15 per quarter as temporary COVID legislation has halted evictions. The reduced target was met during 2 quarters of the reporting period and a total of 53 potential homeless situations have been prevented following advice and intervention during 2020/21.
Percentage of new tenancies sustained for over one year (CP:HQSARC20.3_9b)	90%	93%	90%	90%	92.1%	GREEN	During the 2020/21 period, 333 new tenancies were created, 319 of which were sustained (95.8%). Overall, between new and existing tenancies, West Lothian Council stock continues to benefit from high levels of tenancy sustainment with a total 758 sustained tenancies during 2020/21 an increase of an increase in sustained tenancies of 29 compared to 2019/20. At 90% West Lothian continues to have one of the highest sustainment rates in Scotland.

Outcome 7: Reduce the number of children living in relative poverty							
Indicators	Baseline Performance 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31st Dec 2020	Status	Commentary
Percentage of children in poverty in West Lothian <i>(P:SOA1301_11)</i>	21.91%	22%	20%	18%	23.7%	RED	Households are living in relative poverty if their household income is less than 60% of the average household income. The Campaign to End Child Poverty published updated data on May 2019 which analysed the relative level of child poverty. Latest local estimates place West Lothian's level of child poverty at 23.7% after housing costs.
Percentage of parents/carers aware of Free School Meals <i>(EDPP330_6b.5)</i>	94%	94%	94%	94%	93%	GREEN	These indicators have now been archived and will be replaced in the 2021-22 scorecard with up to date relevant indicators
Percentage of parents/carers aware of School Clothing Grant <i>(EDPP331_6b.5)</i>	84%	80%	80%	80%	80%	GREEN	
Number of 2 year old children utilising early learning and childcare <i>(EDPP219_9b.1b)</i>	148	150	200	200	207	GREEN	This indicator shows the number of eligible children, aged 2 years, who are utilising their entitlement to 600 hours of free early learning and childcare (ELC). Children are eligible if their parents are in receipt of qualifying benefits. This data is collated at the end of the academic session. The target for 2020/21 was 210 with the data due to be recorded in October 2021.
Number of pregnant women and new parents engaged with advice	248	500	1000	500	1317	GREEN	A range of targeted intervention exists to engage with pregnant women and new parents. During 2020/21, 1317 individuals engaged with advice resulting in extra income gained of £836,280. This represents an average of £635 annual financial gain per family.

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Outcome 8: Increase opportunities for local people to fully participate in their communities and bring about change							
Indicators	Baseline 2017/18	Short Term Target 2018/19	Medium Term Target 2020/21	Long Term Target 2022/23	Position at 31 st March 2020	Status	Commentary
Percentage of residents who feel they can influence decisions	40%	46%	46%	47%	40%	RED	Data for these indicators is gathered through the Quality of Life survey which is carried out every three years. The latest was due to be carried out in 2019 but was put on hold whilst the Citizens Panel was reviewed.
Percentage of residents who feel we have an inclusive society	56%	56%	64%	68%	56%	GREEN	Plans to refresh the panel in early 2020 and then carry out the survey around August 2020 have been put on hold due to the coronavirus crisis. This action will be revisited after COVID-19 restrictions are eased, and going forward as part of the new LOIP, consideration will be given to how to measure inclusion and involvement to produce more regular data

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