

West Lothian Local Child Poverty Action Report 2021-2022

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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	29	26	20
3+ children in household	32	29	19
Baby aged under 1 in household	34	30	13
Minority ethnic household	38	34	17
Lone parent household	38	35	26
All children	24	22	13

Table 1: Percentage of children in poverty after housing costs 2017-20¹

The West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report 2020-21 was published in November 2021. This report provides an update of the actions to prevent and mitigate the consequences of child poverty in the two-year action plan spanning 2021-2023.

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)

¹ Family Resources Survey as referenced in Scottish Government. Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan Third year progress report 2020-21. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/tackling-child-poverty-third-year-progress-report-2020-2021/pages/5/> (accessed April 2022).

- 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

1.7 Governance

The Local Child Poverty Action report has a governance process to go through for NHS Lothian and West Lothian Council for approval before the report is submitted to the Scottish Government.



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 deprived²
- Almost 25% of children experience relative poverty³
- 73.5% of working age adults are in work⁴
- 18% of employees earn below the Living Wage⁵
- 19% of resident experience fuel poverty (fuel bill >10% of income after housing)⁶
- 9% of residents experience extreme fuel poverty (fuel bill >20% of income after housing)⁷

2.1 Child Poverty

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).⁷ The data for 2020-2021 produced by the Scottish Government has the caveat of not being official statistics due to the poor quality of data collection throughout the pandemic, therefore the data is unreliable and will not be included in this report. The data will be updated for the 2022-2023 report, which will enable us to track progress.

² Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

³ End Child Poverty Campaign 2019/20

⁴ Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157436/report.aspx#tabempunemp> (accessed 14/04/22)

⁵ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2021

⁶ Energy Savings Trust Home Analytics v3.7 (February 2021)

⁷ 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).

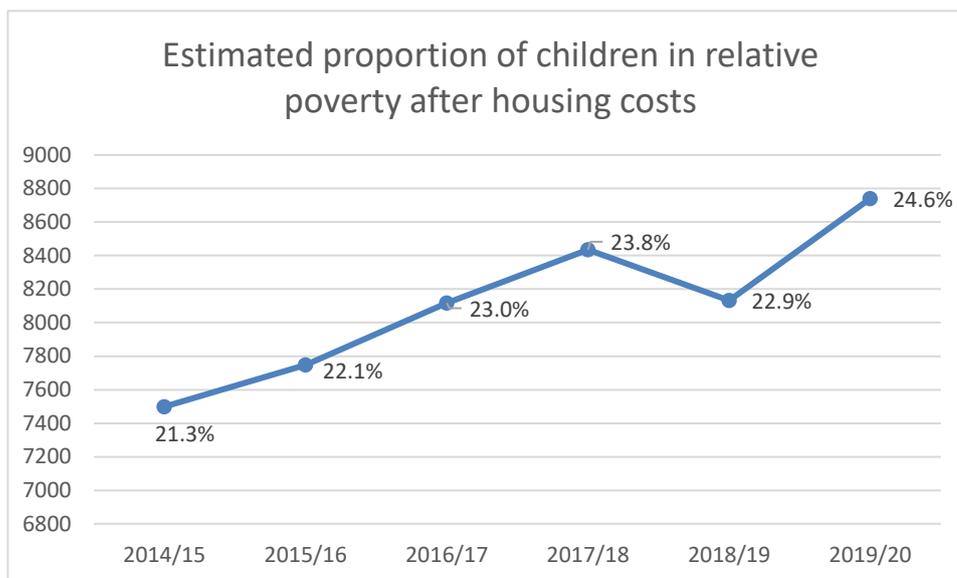


Chart 1: Proportion of children in relative poverty after housing costs

The prevalence of child poverty was already on the increase, even before taking account of the financial impact of the pandemic. The cost-of-living crisis is also likely to have a detrimental impact. Due to the lack of data this year we do not yet know the true impact of the pandemic.

2.2 Educational Attainment

This section has not been updated from the previous report as we are still in the same academic year. 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

In West Lothian, 3.2% (n=3,785) of the population were claiming out-of-work benefits compared with 3.9% of the population for Scotland as a whole (February 2022) ⁸.

Feb 2020		April 2021		May 2021		June 2021		Feb 2022		% Change Feb 2020- Feb 2022	
Count	Rate (%)	Count	Rate (%)	Count	Rate (%)	Count	Rate (%)	Count	Rate (%)	Count	Rate (%)
3,425	2.9	6,345	5.4	5,915	5.0	5,490	4.7	3,785	3.2	+360	+0.3

Table 3: West Lothian Claimant count and percent change over time

There were 635 people between the ages of 18-24 (4.6%) on out of work benefits in West Lothian as of February 2022 (4.5% in Scotland). In March 2021, 9.8% of 18–24-year-olds in West Lothian were claiming out of work benefits (8.6% in Scotland) compared to 4.6% in January 2020. Therefore, there is a significant decrease in claimants in West Lothian in the 18-24 age range, back to pre-pandemic levels. Youth unemployment has been consistently higher in West Lothian than Scotland for many years.

In November 2021, 10,973 West Lothian households were on Universal Credit payment. This is a decrease of 944 households⁹.

Forty percent of households with Universal Credit in payment have dependent children with a higher proportion of lone parents than couples with children¹⁰. Despite the numbers claiming universal credit falling in West Lothian, there has been an increase of 7.4% of lone parents claiming.

⁸ Office for National Statistics. Nomis Official Market Statistics.

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/imp/la/1946157436/reports.aspx#tabwab> (accessed April 2022)

⁹ The Department of Work and Pensions Stat-Xplore <https://www.stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jfs/tableView.html> (accessed April 2022)

¹⁰ Universal Credit Official Statistics. Universal Credit: Households. <https://dwp-stats.maps.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=8560a06de0f2430ab71505772163e8b4> (accessed April 2022).

	Number	Percentage	Change from February 2021 – November 2021
Single with child dependent(s)	3,918	35.71	+ 7.4%
Couple with child dependent(s)	1,276	11.6	-0.1 %
Single no child dependent	5,369	48.9	-7.2%
Couple no child dependent	406	3.7	-0.2%

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		Change in payments from 20-21-21-22
	20-21	21-22	20-21	21-22	20-21	21-22	
Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods	9,720	12,180	70	69	£2,017,550	£2,836,085	+ £818,535
Scottish Child Payment	3,865	5,390	92	87	£122,080	£1,641,740	+ £1,519,660
Young Carer Grant	225	340	70	68	£46,393	£67,347	+£20,954
Job Start Payment	95	245	29	-	£7,300	£26,682	+£19,382
Child Winter Heating Allowance	555	-	100	-	£111,000	-	-
Child Disability Payment	-	110	-	69	-	-	-

Table 5: Social Security Scotland benefit payments

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

¹¹ Scottish Government. Social Security Scotland statistics: publications.

<https://www.gov.scot/collections/social-security-scotland-stats-publications/> (accessed July 2021).

number of children eligible for the grant. This is likely to have contributed to an increased uptake. As we are in the same academic year as the 2020-21 report, this figure will be updated in the 2022-23 report.

2.5 Food insecurity

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. As we are in the same academic year as the 2020-21 report, this figure will be updated in the 2022-23 report.

West Lothian Foodbank fulfilled 5,659 vouchers during 2021-22. This is an increase of 388 vouchers from 2020-21. Of the total number of vouchers, 20% were distributed in Whitburn and Blackburn. This is a consistent trend from 2020-21. These vouchers supported 7,150 adults and 4,380 children with emergency food aid. This is an increase of 899 children from the previous year.

2.6 Examples of Good Practice

National Progression Award

A new National Progression Award in Tenancy at SCQF Level 4 has been successfully developed and launched. An analysis of recent school leavers by Education Inclusion and Wellbeing Skills Centre team highlighted vulnerable learners at the Skills Centre were at risk of homelessness and sought to add a new aspect to the curriculum. The team undertook extensive research to identify the most appropriate learning programme and worked with the SQA and other partners to develop the award which enables young people to be better prepared for life after school and to secure and sustain a tenancy.

The Skills Centre team has worked in partnership with the council's Anti-Poverty Service and Housing teams to support the delivery of the qualification and to ensure the learning experience relates to real life scenarios. Partnerships will be further strengthened to connect the learning to real life and also expand the use of the qualification to other vulnerable young people, including learners on the Level Up (Looked After Children) Project.

The success of the programme to date in West Lothian has led to e-Sgoil, Scotland's national e-learning programme, working with the team to explore how to add the Skills Centre programme approach to reach learners across Scotland.

Advice for Families and Young People

Advice agencies in West Lothian have secured extra income of over £645,000 for families in West Lothian through targeted activity.

The council's Anti-Poverty Service has developed a new approach in partnership with Education to embed advice and financial support services through education settings. Working with 7 pilot schools, the project aims to strengthen links with teaching and support staff to raise awareness of poverty and to establish robust referral mechanisms to ensure families and young people have access to advice to meet their needs.

Advisers are available to provide one to one advice and support to young people and their families with benefit and grant entitlements, debts and budgeting, and helping parents and senior pupils to improve their skills and support them in becoming more financially resilient.

To date the team have secured families in West Lothian an additional £60,050 in income and supported more than 60 families to access essential items including food and school uniform. Future plans are to extend the reach of the team by working closer with feeder primary schools, exploring expansion into further high schools and establishing a co-location agreement within West Lothian college.

Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian has launched a combined initiative to address child poverty and provide financial advice through the Money Talks service. The project will focus on the reduction and prevention of child poverty through targeted work with a range of key partners including health professionals. The project will provide a comprehensive financial inclusion and income maximization service to families where there is a risk of child poverty.

In addition, the project will also be responsible for the provision of a financial health check service for vulnerable families as part of the Scottish Government funded Money Talks project and will deal with referrals from within the bureau and from referral partners throughout the West Lothian area together with referrals from the Money Talks national helpline.

Section 3: Update on actions to reduce child poverty

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. The cost of living increase will also significantly impact child poverty.

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. This section provides a progress update on actions covering the last year (2021-2022).

3.1 Income from employment

Action	Who is involved?	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale	RAG Code (Green = on track, Amber = delays to progress but can recover Red = work delayed and won't recover)	Progress March 2022
Parental Employment Support Fund will support families experiencing or at risk of poverty to access employment or progress in work.	Access2Employment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The project has several performance indicators aligned to delivery including 	September 2022	Green	Three dedicated PES advisers were employed in January 2021, and following an induction period, PES activity commenced April 2021. The three advisers sought

		<p>number of parents engaged and the outcomes achieved for each client</p>			<p>to build up their client base whilst operating remotely, a delivery model that has had limitations in terms of client engagement and relationship building. Nevertheless, over the period April 2021 to March 2022, the team has engaged with 116 PES eligible clients, 92 of whom are not registered under other programmes of support. Of those, 79 are actively engaged and are receiving support, 33 are no longer engaged with the service due to it not being suitable for their needs. A further 6 have paused support due to personal circumstances including health conditions (both physical and mental), birth of a child or moving to/from temporary accommodation. Six PES clients have benefitted from childcare support to assist in their employability activities.</p>
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<p>Young people claiming Universal Credit will be able to access 6 months paid employment and employability support through the DWP Kick Start scheme.</p>	<p>DWP Economic Development & Regeneration West Lothian CAB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of places created and the sustainability of the places after the Kick Start support ends 	<p>December 2021</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>West Lothian Council has supported the delivery of DWP's national Kickstart programme. 45 places were initially approved, 15 internal to West Lothian Council and 30 external. Due to COVID, West Lothian Council reduced its commitment to ten positions, however extended those to a full years provision by adding a 6 month West Lothian Job Fund place on to the end of the Kickstart experience. 30 external positions were approved with 28 commencing. Employers are offered a STEPS N2 Work wage subsidy following the 6-month Kickstart experience to extend this work experience to a year. The programme has been reviewed by</p>
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					<p>DWP who are pleased with progress and quality of support.</p> <p>Kickstart is complete in that it is no longer recruiting employers or employing new young people. There are young people now completing their 6 month Kickstart work experience placement and some who have/are progressing onto Kickstart + (STEPS funded) extended placements which have provided an additional 6 month funded work placement.</p>
<p>To support the creation of employment opportunities for unemployed residents in West Lothian. Opportunities will be created for all ages at Living Wage.</p>	<p>Economic Development and Regeneration Jobs Task Force</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of opportunities created at real living wage • Sustainability of the opportunities 	<p>December 2022</p>		<p>West Lothian Council's Job Creation Fund has committed to supporting local businesses to create sustainable employment opportunities. There</p>

					<p>are two funds as part of the project for Volume Jobs Grant and Steps N2 Work Programme.</p> <p>Criteria for both funds include business must be located in West Lothian; be committed to funding a minimum of 26 hours per week; employ a West Lothian Resident and pay at least the Real Living Wage.</p> <p>Volume Jobs Grant is for individuals aged 25+ and the Steps N2 Work Programme is for individuals aged 16 – 24 years old.</p> <p>Two staged application with and Expression of Interest (EOI) approved prior to full application stage.</p>
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					<p>Total Number of Applications Received - 106</p> <p>Volume Job Grant Approved – 14</p> <p>Payment Awarded - £42,000</p> <p>Steps N2 Work Approved – 34</p> <p>Payment Awarded – £71,218.07</p> <p>EOI Approvals awaiting Application Stage - 25</p> <p>Approved Applications awaiting claim documentation – 61</p> <p>Pending Applications - 8</p> <p>EOI Declined – 6</p> <p>Applications Declined -6</p>
<p>Deliver More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) to support young people move into a positive destination.</p>	<p>CLD Youth Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the percentage of MCMC young people achieving a positive destination and sustaining for 6 months 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>This programme has achieved 86% of MCMC young people achieving a positive destination and sustaining it for more than 6 months. This has exceeded the target of 84%</p>

<p>Support positive destinations for care experienced young people.</p>	<p>Inclusion & Support Service (ISS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the percentage of care experienced young people achieving a positive destination 	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>In 2019-20, the project supported 24 young people, including 14 school leavers. 93% of the school leavers in June 2020 achieved positive destinations. There were 26 young people supported by the Project in 2020-21, 16 of whom were school leavers, and 81% of these school leavers in June 2021 achieved positive destinations. The project has allowed the most vulnerable learners to re-engage with education and achieve qualifications across SCQF Levels 3-5. The young people have also been supported to move on to positive destinations including college, training, and work programmes</p>
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3.2 Cost of living

Action	Who is involved?	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale	RAG Code (Green = on track, Amber = delays to progress but can recover Red = work delayed and won't recover)	Comments March 2022
Develop and deliver new SQA modules including tenancy awareness and personal finance award for identified young people.	Education Housing Anti-Poverty Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No of young people receiving the accreditation Ongoing evaluation pre, during and post course 	March 2023	Green	5 young people are completing the course (due to finish the course at the end of May and will complete the evaluation). Next steps are under discussion and materials for the course will be shared with The Level Up Team, The Trust Project and some of our ISS staff in Skills Stations and hopefully will be available on Teams.
Financial support options are available for families	Anti-Poverty Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National programme as 	March 2023	Green	£3 meal payments worth £13,722 have been made

<p>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. 		<p>part of Covid response</p>			<p>between April 2021 – March 2022 A total of £315,348 was paid in respect of the 2 extra in-service days on 31st May and 1st June 2021</p> <p>Pandemic payments worth a total of £4,296,830 have been made between Winter 2021 and Spring 2022 Winter 21: £608,200 Spring 21: £683,100 Summer 21: £683,100 Autumn 21: £808,000 Winter 22: £855,520 Spring 22: £712,010</p> <p>Holiday meal payments worth £1,463,310 have been paid between April 2021 and March 2022</p>
<p>Development of a new West Lothian model for school holiday activity clubs</p>	<p>CLD Third sector partners</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An effective identification and referral 	<p>April 2022</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Scottish Government Guidance and funding</p>

<p>to embed support for the most vulnerable children and young people in line with Scottish Government guidance.</p>		<p>system to the programme is in place</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A revised model of targeted summer activities to support vulnerable children and young people is established 			<p>allocation received 14 April.</p> <p>Council services are working collaboratively to ensure that there is a good range of provision across West Lothian, and that partner organisations and community groups are supported with the targeted elements.</p>
<p>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).</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Education Family Assessment and Support Screening (FASS) Group FNP</p> <p>Education</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of discretionary places allocated <p>Number of preschool children starting school who are on track for each of the core areas</p>	<p>June 2022</p> <p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>Green</p>	<p>39 discretionary eligible 2-year-old places for vulnerable families were granted.</p> <p>346 eligible places granted.</p> <p>From April 2021 all 3- and 4-year-olds and eligible two-year-olds have 1140 hours of Early Learning and Childcare.</p>

		(Literacy, Numeracy and H&WB).			Data will be available in August 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)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of students (new and existing) saving in credit union • Value of savings accrued in accounts 	June 2022	Amber	<p>There are 1096 students who are saving with the credit union. The total amount of savings is £183,440.</p> <p>The project is amber due to covid. Contact has been primarily with parents remotely, rather than in schools. Work is starting to progress in secondary schools now.</p>
Cost of the school day	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing action in Poverty Proofing Statements • Financial impact plans • PEF plans • Processes for measuring impact of PEF initiatives 	Sep 2021 – Jun 2022	Green	<p>Schools across all sectors implementing action in poverty proofing statements</p> <p>Action is focused on key themes as follows: Getting dressed for school Travelling to school Friendships at school</p>

				Green	<p>Learning at school School trips Fun events Eating at school School clubs Home learning Attitudes to poverty</p> <p>Equity Team network session focussed on Poverty Proofing – Cost of the School Day. Attendance covered a range of practitioners predominantly ELC, primary and ASN and included senior leaders, class teachers, early years practitioners and pupil support workers. Feedback was very positive. "left session inspired" "wonderful approaches" "great ideas to take away" "the course as a whole was great; gave great information, and ways</p>
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				Green	<p>we can all help financially in our schools and communities"</p> <p>"since session we have started work on expanding our food larder to include school uniforms and clothes"</p> <p>Question about cost of the school day to be included in WLC Parent/Carer Ethos surveys and Pupil Ethos surveys. To be issued in the summer term</p>
<p>Provide support to schools for Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) planning, monitoring, and evaluation e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings • Targeted support • Provision of supportive resources 	Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from Headteachers • Processes for measuring impact of PEF initiatives 	Sep 2021 – Jun 2022	Green Green	<p>Head Teachers have clearer understanding of PEF rationale, procedures, expectations</p> <p>Professional learning sessions and network opportunities are reinforcing key principles and practice e.g.</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification/delivery of training 				<p>Green</p> <p>Green</p>	<p>Data, Measures and Outcomes sessions and Tackling the poverty related attainment gap – Literacy/Numeracy</p> <p>Scottish Attainment Challenge refresh – to be launched nationally at the end of March. Will require new procedures to be developed and training to be delivered – Apr '22 onwards</p> <p>PEF impact to be reported on as part of Standards & Quality Reports in June</p>
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3.3 Income from social security

Action	Who is involved?	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale	RAG Code (Green = on track, Amber = delays to progress but can recover Red = work delayed and won't recover)	Comments March 2022
Income maximisation advice and support for families will be embedded in school settings.	Anti-Poverty Service Education	<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	Green	Dedicated school advisors were recruited between September 2021 and January 2022 and are now working with 6 secondary schools to provide advice and income maximisation to families and young people. To date extra income of £25,879 has been secured and families have been supported to access an additional £966 of one-off grants and vouchers for energy costs.
Income maximisation advice and financial capability support is	Anti-Poverty Service Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial gains through income maximisation, 	March 2023	Amber	Between April 2021 and March 2022, the Anti-Poverty Service has

<p>provided for young people facing homelessness to become financially resilient.</p>		<p>housing outcomes achieved, and debt managed for the young people supported</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of young people leaving their tenancy 			<p>worked with 168 young people between the ages of 16-24 who are experiencing homelessness and secured extra income worth £308,963</p> <p>A dedicated worker was recruited in January 2022 and is exploring options for early intervention to reduce the number of young people leaving their tenancy.</p>
<p>Individuals with health concerns will be supported through the implementation of new health hubs and the Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) project.</p>	<p>Anti-Poverty Service Macmillan Cancer Support WL HSCP</p>	<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 	<p>March 2022</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>231 referrals have been received in West Lothian through the Improving the Cancer Journey project between April 2021- March 2022. In total, these referrals have led to 161 initial appointments and 668 onward referrals/signposting to other services to meet wider needs.</p>

					ICJ customer evaluations have been carried out using standard customer evaluations. 8 Case studies completed to date.
Families struggling with debt or financial capability concerns will have access to a range of support.	West Lothian Debt Advice Forum West Lothian CAB	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved engagement with debt advice • Improved financial confidence 	March 2023	Green	<p>The rate of engagement with debt advice has improved since the implementation of the Improving the Debt Journey project from 50% to 55% engagement.</p> <p>CAB have supported 5999 clients with debt advice</p> <p>70% of clients who work with financial capability link workers report improved financial confidence.</p>
Raise awareness of, and reduce barriers to, new benefits delivered by Social Security Scotland including Best Start Grant, Best Start	Social Security Scotland Anti-Poverty Service Practitioners Network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and numbers attending training events 	March 2023	Green	Face to face restrictions lifted end of March 2022. Local Client Support Advisers providing

<p>Foods, Scottish Child Payment and Child Disability Payment as these become available for West Lothian families.</p>	<p>Food Network West Lothian CAB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people taking up the new Social Security Scotland benefits 			<p>assistance and advice across West Lothian Planned events expected to resume. Management information published on SSS website and updated quarterly.</p> <p>The Anti-Poverty Service has supported 260 clients with advice and support to claim Scottish benefits worth £240,467 in total.</p>
<p>Implementation of the Social Security Scotland (SSS) Local Delivery Advisory Service in West Lothian</p>	<p>Social Security Scotland Anti-Poverty Service Child Poverty Reference Group</p>	<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 	<p>November 2021</p>	<p>Complete</p>	<p>Face to face restrictions lifted end of March 2022. Local Client Support Advisers providing assistance and advice across West Lothian – client engagement positive</p> <p>Benefit rates to be increased in the main by 6% (above inflation) April 2022</p>

		<p>and West Lothian anti-poverty partners</p>			<p>Scottish Child Payment to increase from £10 to £20 per child under 6 years from 1 April 2022 and rolled out to under 16s by end of 2022</p> <p>Adult Disability Payment will launch in West Lothian August 2022 following initial Pilot from March 2022</p> <p>Regular updates to Stakeholders by Bulletin and social media updates</p> <p>Management information published on SSS website and are updated quarterly.</p> <p>Joint Meeting with Social Security Scotland and NHS Health and Social Care Managers 24/3/22 to agree closer working arrangements</p>
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<p>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.</p>	<p>Anti-Poverty Service</p>	<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 	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>4,306 clients have received income maximisation and affordability advice between April 2021 to March 2022 resulting in extra income of £26,717,848</p> <p>34 clients have had specialist financial capability advice resulting in 70% reporting improved financial confidence.</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>NHS Lothian Public health Midwifery FNP Health visiting Anti-poverty service CAB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of women referred for financial wellbeing support • Proportion of women taking up Best Start Foods • Financial gain 	<p>Development complete March 2022</p> <p>Implementation of pathways and systems December 2022</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>A scoping exercise has been completed which has led to a subgroup being established which will focus on the implementation of financial wellbeing pathways.</p>
<p>Provide welfare advice in GP practices</p>	<p>CAB NHS Lothian Public Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals 	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>CAB have supported 315 clients and the client financial gain is</p>

	Anti-Poverty Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client financial gain • Debt management for customers • Customer and partner evaluations 			<p>£232,798.27 for GP surgeries</p> <p>The Anti-Poverty Service has received 22 incoming referrals from NHS GP services.</p> <p>Between April 2021 and March 2022 £3,094,119 extra income has been secured for clients through advice in hospital settings and a dedicated adviser has now been recruited to expand this service into GP surgeries in West Lothian.</p>
Continue to deliver welfare advice in the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People	NHS Lothian Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referrals • Appointments • Client financial gain • Staff awareness of the project • Client feedback 	March 2023	Green (although this service is based in Edinburgh, West Lothian uptake is low)	<p>Total families supported during 2021/22 = 93 (total number of appointments = 712) Of those, 3 families were from West Lothian.</p> <p>Total financial gain for the project (first year of</p>

					benefit awards only) = £189,352.54 Current funding is to end September 2022. Project going well despite the challenges of covid. The service is predominantly phone based but that seems to work well for the parents/carers of the families referred.
Deliver the Prevention and Intervention Money Advice Project (PIMAP)	West Lothian CAB NHS Lothian Anti-Poverty partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals • Client financial gain • Debt management for customers • Customer and partner evaluations 	March 2023	Green	The project has received 55 referrals in 21-22 and has a client financial gain of £277,132.
Deliver the 'Money Talks' project, a Scottish Government sponsored scheme which aims to maximise income to	West Lothian CAB Anti-poverty partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of referrals • Client financial gain 	March 2023	Green	The project has received 466 referrals and has a client financial gain of £232,798.27

families or any other low-income household.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debt management for customers • Customer and partner evaluations 			
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping complete and used to inform development of money advice services across West Lothian 	March 2022	Green	Mapping is complete and recommendations will be taken to the Anti-Poverty Group.

3.4 Lived experience

Action	Who is involved?	How will impact be assessed?	Timescale	RAG Code (Green = on track, Amber = delays to progress but can recover Red = work delayed and won't recover)	Comments March 2022
<p>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.</p>	<p>CLD Youth Services Anti-Poverty Service</p>	<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 	<p>December 2022</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>5 young people completed Anti-Poverty Champions training in November 2021 and 3 have gone on to establish a presence in youth clubs in Winchburgh, Armadale and Livingston.</p> <p>Young people are providing peer support and signposting to appropriate services in relation to financial issues.</p>

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					Further Anti-Poverty Champions training has been scheduled throughout 2022-23
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Section 4: Forward Planning 2022-23

There are several areas that the Child Poverty Reference Group plan to take forward over the next year:

1. 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. A subgroup is being set up to look specifically at actions around referral pathways to financial advice for parents.
2. The group has recognised the financial impact of being a young carer and will look at including actions specifically to mitigate against this in 2022/2023.
3. Housing is recognised as a gap by the group, further scoping will be carried out to identify potential action areas to support priority groups in relation to adequate housing. Colleagues from West Lothian Council Housing services have joined the Child Poverty Reference Group.
4. Data from 2021/2022 identified that although the number of Universal Credit claimants has reduced slightly in West Lothian, there are more lone parents claiming. The group will work to identify appropriate actions to specifically support lone parents.
5. The group is committed to involving young people in child poverty discussions going forward by engaging them through the services that support them, such as Community Learning and Development.
6. The group will consider the new guidance from Scottish Government Best Start, Bright Futures – Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022 – 2026 and how this affects action on child poverty locally.
7. Review reporting requirements for the LCPAR and consider better integration with the Anti-Poverty Strategy.