



West Lothian Local Child Poverty Action Report 2022-2023

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Section 1 Setting the scene

1.1 Child Poverty (Scotland) Act

Child Poverty can have a detrimental impact on children, young people, and their families, including health and wellbeing, educational attainment, and future life chances.

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 was introduced to drive forward and monitor action to reduce the number of children and their families living in poverty across Scotland. Four statutory targets were set for 2030 with four interim targets set 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 requires Scottish Ministers to 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 produce annual reports on activity undertaken and planned, to reduce child poverty in their local areas.

1.2 Drivers of child poverty and priority groups

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act and associated delivery plans set out three key drivers 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.

Across Scotland, there are some families who have a higher-than-average risk of poverty and may require targeted or specific support to address their needs. These priority groups and the proportion living in Scotland are set out in Table 1.

Priority Group	Relative poverty (%)	Absolute poverty (%)	Low income + Material Deprivation (%)
Disabled person in household	28	24	18
3+ children in household	34	32	18
Baby aged under 1 in household	34	30	13
Minority ethnic household	39	34	16
Lone parent household	38	36	23
All children	24	21	11

Table 1: Percentage of children in Scotland in poverty after housing costs 2019-2022¹

¹ The Scottish Government, 2023. Additional child poverty analysis 2023 Family Resources Survey Data. <https://www.gov.scot/publications/additional-child-poverty-analysis-2023/#page-top> (accessed May 30 2023)

The West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report 2021-2022 was published in autumn 2022. This report provides an update of the actions to prevent and mitigate the consequences of child poverty within a two-year action plan cycle spanning 2021-2023.

1.3 Child Poverty Reference Group

The Child Poverty Reference Group was refreshed in early 2021-22 and continues to drive child poverty activity. The group 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.

1.4 Governance

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



Section 2 An overview of child poverty in West Lothian

2.1 Poverty in West Lothian

Data continues to inform our approach and action to tackle child poverty in West Lothian. The current Anti-Poverty Strategy for West Lothian (2018-2023) is supported by a scorecard. The most recent scorecard is provided in Appendix 2.

Headline anti-poverty figures indicate that:

- 12% of the West Lothian population is income deprived²
- 21% of children experience relative poverty³
- 75.1% of working age adults are in work⁴
- 18% of employees earn below the Living Wage⁵
- 19% of residents 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

The 2023-2028 Anti-Poverty Strategy for West Lothian is currently in development and will support high level actions which will impact on the reduction of child poverty.

In 2023 an area for development will be to explore better ways to align the new five-year West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy and Local Child Poverty Action Reports, ensuring that the structures and focus of mitigating child poverty is enhanced.

2.2 Child Poverty

It is estimated that 21.1% (n=7263) of children in West Lothian were living in relative poverty (after housing costs) in 2021-2022, compared to 21% in Scotland. See Chart 1.

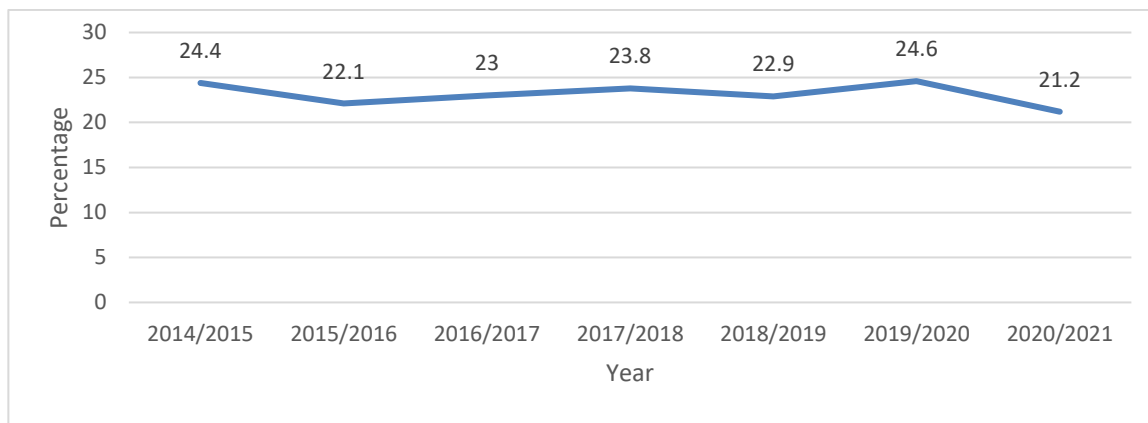


Chart 1: Proportion of children in relative poverty after housing costs

² Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020

³ End Child Poverty Campaign 2020-2021

⁴ Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics

https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157436/subreports/ea_time_series/report.aspx? (accessed 04/04/23)

⁵ Scottish Government <https://statistics.gov.scot/slice?dataset=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fdata%2Fliving-wage&http%3A%2F%2Fpurl.org%2Flinked-data%2Fcube%23measureType=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fdef%2Fmeasure-properties%2Fpercent&http%3A%2F%2Fpurl.org%2Flinked-data%2Fsdmx%2F2009%2Fdimension%23refPeriod=http%3A%2F%2Freference.data.gov.uk%2Fid%2Fyear%2F2021&http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fdef%2Fdimension%2Fgender=http%3A%2F%2Fstatistics.gov.scot%2Fdef%2Fconcept%2Fgender%2Fall> (accessed 04/04/2023)

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)

The prevalence of child poverty was increasing pre covid, and while the data from 2020-2021 shows a slight decrease it is not known yet what the combined impact of the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis will be. In the coming year data will help determine where and how to target activity, for example there are areas in West Lothian with rates of child poverty over 50%⁸.

2.3 Educational Attainment

Information in this section relates to the academic session 2021-2022 as we are within the current academic year 2022-2023. Table 2 shows the percentage of primary and secondary school pupils achieving in literacy. The data shows that inequalities remain between pupils from the most deprived areas compared to pupils living in the least deprived areas. For example, there is a 21.2 percentage point difference between the most deprived and least deprived, in relation to achievement of literacy domain for P7 pupils and a 27.6 percentage point difference for S3 Fourth level pupils.

One area that should be noted is the reduction in achieving literacy levels at P1 both for pupils living in the most deprived and least deprived areas. This may be due to the impact of the pandemic.

	% of Pupils achieving West Lothian		% of Pupils achieving quintile 1 (most deprived)		% of Pupils achieving quintile 5 (least deprived)	
	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22	2020-21	2021-22
P1	77.70	78.70	70.03	68.07	89.83	86.50
P4	75.02	76.69	66.76	69.54	87.27	89.23
P7	76.04	81.02	64.83	71.63	87.07	92.82
S3 Third Level	93.81	96.39	86.12	94.64	98.30	98.67
S3 Fourth Level	61.31	68.05	42.78	56.57	79.37	84.26

Table 2: Percentage of pupils achieving in the literacy domain 2021-2022.

2.4 Claimant Count

In West Lothian, there has been a small decrease in claimants for out of work benefits, nearer to pre-pandemic levels. In February 2023, 2.6% (n=3,080) of the West Lothian population were claiming out of work benefits compared to 3.2% of the population for Scotland (February 2023)⁹.

Feb 2020		April 2021		May 2021		June 2021		Feb 2022		Feb 2023		% Change Feb 2020-Feb 2021	
Count	Rate %	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	3,080	2.6	- 345	-0.3

Table 3: West Lothian claimant count and percentage change over time.

In February 2023, 4.4% of 18–24-year-olds (n=615) claimed out of work benefits (4.3% in Scotland) compared to February 2022 when 4.6% of 18–24-year-olds claimed out of work benefits (4.5% in Scotland).

⁸ Improvement Service. <https://scotland.shinyapps.io/is-Child-Poverty-Map/>

⁹ Office for National Statistics. Nomis Official Market Statistics

<https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157436/report.aspx#tabwab> (Accessed 27/03/2023)

In November 2022, 11,990 West Lothian households were on Universal Credit payment. This is an increase of 1,017 households¹⁰ compared to November 2021.

Forty-eight percentage of households with Universal Credit payments have dependents, with a higher proportion of lone parents than couples with children.

	Number	Percentage	Changes in % from Nov 2021 – Nov 2022
Single with dependant (s)	4,543	37.9	+ 2.19
Couple with dependant (s)	1,304	10.9	- 0.7
Single with no dependant (s)	5,707	37.9	- 1.3
Couple with no dependant (s)	436	3.6	- 0.1

Table 4: Universal Credit Payments

Social Security Scotland administer several devolved benefits for Scottish claimants. The claimant count and value of payments for West Lothian are shown below in Table 5.

Benefit	Applications Received		Approval Rate (%)		Total Value of Payments		Change in payments from 2022-2023
	2021-22	2022-23	2021-22	2022-23	2021-2022	2022-23	
Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods	12,180	16,555	69	68	£2,836,085	£4,170,490	+ £1,334,405
Scottish Child Payment	5,390	5,145	87	88	£1,641,740	£3,601,105	+ £1,959,365
Young Carer Grant	340	135	68	69	£67,347	£28,141	- £39,206
Job Start Payment	245	35	-	31	£26,682	£6,174	- £20,508
Child Winter Heating Allowance	-	-	-	-	£305,000	-	-
Child Disability Payment	110	1,110	69	83	-	£5,682,660* ¹¹	-

Table 5: Social Security benefit payments

Figures indicate an increase in uptake of Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods. This may be due to the number of families who have children who present at eligibility age dates, the introduction of a new automatic prompt and joint application process of Best Start Grants, Foods and Scottish Child Payment, and both WL Advice Shop and WL CAB supporting both the publicity and enabling clients with applications. There has also been an increase in Scottish Child Payments which may be due to the additional advertising in raising the age limit to 16 years old in November 2022.

There has been a decrease in benefit payments for Young Carer Grant and Job Start Payment. These payments are reliant on publicising them locally in relevant places to encourage uptake for eligible clients, therefore more opportunities to raise awareness of these benefits will be

¹⁰ The Department of Work and Pensions <https://stat-xplore.dwp.gov.uk/webapi/jsf/tableView/tableView.xhtml> (accessed 4th May 2023)

¹¹ *figure to 31st of December 2022, start date for data unclear.

welcomed. There is no comparable data for the Child Winter Heating Allowance and the Child Disability Payment as these benefits have only just transferred over to Social Security Scotland.

For the period April 2022 – March 2023, 7,449 clothing grants were processed¹², while this is a decrease of 1505 from the number processed between April 2021- March 2022 (n=8954)¹² the total spend was £1,206,450 representing the highest ever take up of this grant. West Lothian Council will continue to publicise the opportunity of the clothing grant to maximise the opportunity for eligible families.

2.5 Food insecurity

For the academic years spanning April 2022- March 2023, 5,662¹² free school meals were provided in comparison to 6,778 in the academic years spanning April 2021-March¹². While there is no explanation for this reduction in numbers, West Lothian Council will continue to carry out take up campaigns to publicise opportunities for eligible families. It should also be recognised that the data presented does not follow academic years.

West Lothian Foodbank fulfilled 5,885 emergency food vouchers during 2022-23. This is an increase of 226 vouchers from 2021-22. Of the total number of vouchers, 19.7% were distributed in Whitburn and Blackburn. This is a consistent trend from 2020-21. These vouchers supported 7,219 adults and 3,743 children with emergency food aid. This is a decrease of 637 children from the previous year.

Section 3: Update on actions to reduce child poverty

In West Lothian, activity to tackle poverty will continue to target action at a local level on the main drivers of poverty for key priority groups. A two-year child poverty action plan was 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.

There has been positive progress to help alleviate child poverty in West Lothian with strong partnership working key to developing approaches that make a difference. Examples include:

- The Anti-Poverty Service, West Lothian CAB and Social Security Scotland have supported families access income maximisation services and claim Scottish Benefits
- Referral pathways are being developed between NHS services and West Lothian Council/WL CAB for income maximisation services
- A new model for school holiday activity clubs has been developed that has embedded support for the most vulnerable children and young people
- Extending the commitment to improve education and wellbeing outcomes and achieve positive destinations for a wider group of care experienced individuals.
- West Lothian Council's Job Creation Fund has committed to supporting local businesses to create sustainable employment opportunities. There are two funds as part of the project: Volume Jobs Grant for individuals aged 25+ and Steps N2 Work Programme for 16 -19-year-olds

Where progress has been slow due to challenges, for example engaging volunteers, these will be reviewed to identify how best to provide better support going forward.

For the complete update on each action progressed during 2022-2023 please refer to Appendix 1 – Child Poverty Action Plan 2021-2023.

¹² West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy Scorecard 2022/23

3.1 Example of Good Practice

Parental Employment Call for Views

West Lothian Council recently submitted a response to a call for views on tackling child poverty through parental employment from the Social Security and Social Justice Committee. The council's Anti-Poverty Service and Access2Employment service worked with local residents to gather views to inform a response to the call for views.

Conversations with Access2Employment clients and the results of a wide-reach online survey highlighted some key issues.

1. Availability and affordability of transport and childcare
2. Complexity in navigating the welfare benefit system can create a barrier to employment for parents
3. Availability of appropriate employment opportunities that offer flexibility for parents
4. In-work poverty; many parents who are working are still struggling to manage day to day living costs, particularly in the midst of the cost-of-living crisis

Analysis of this feedback was used to draft the response to the Social Security and Social Justice Committee and has also been used to inform priorities for tackling poverty over the next year. Parental employment will be a key focus for 2023/24, particularly in light of the ongoing cost of living crisis and recently announced welfare reforms.

Section 4: Forward Planning 2023-2024

There are key areas that the Child Poverty Reference group plan to take forward during 2023-2024.

- To explore ways to better align the LCPAR with the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy.
- To make better use of child poverty data in West Lothian, to target activity to areas and population groups in greatest need within local communities.
- To undertake a deep dive into the support provided to lone parents and identify improvement actions as appropriate.
- To mitigate the impact of future changes to Universal Credit in relation to childcare payments and the work-related requirements for parents of pre and school aged children.
- A focus on helping people to access opportunities for retraining and upskilling, maximise income to combat in-work poverty and secure opportunities for secure employment

Appendix 1 – Child Poverty Action Plan 2021-2023

Income from employment

Action	Who is Involved?	How will impact be assessed	Timescale	Status	Progress March 2023
Parental Employment Support Fund will support families experiencing or at risk of poverty to access employment or progress in work.	Access2Employment	The project has several performance indicators aligned to delivery including number of parents engaged and the outcomes achieved for each client	March 23	Green	<p>PESF activity has focused on areas of deprivation and communities in the West of West Lothian. Face to face opportunities and online support has been welcomed as services recover from the pandemic.</p> <p>Engagement with client group in key locations (partnership hubs, foodbanks, community fridge schools, charities) has supported clients who would not traditionally access employment or training for example working with Kidzeco who support families with young children who experience hardship.</p> <p>Upskilling support for parents who are owners/workers in micro businesses to enable them to secure family income was launched in July 2022. This will be promoted further during 2023/24</p> <p>PESF advisers are liaising with school clusters (nursery/primary/secondary) to engage with the parents/carer population via parents' nights and events.</p> <p>Family friendly recruitment events across West Lothian involving 40+ employers supported over 300 job seekers, many of whom were parents.</p> <p>A significant focus has been working with and supporting Ukrainian families (including English skills) into employment opportunities that support their skills and abilities.</p> <p>Targeted sector specific employment provision has created employment opportunities with support from Health and Social Care colleagues and enabled 26 individuals into sustainable, well-paid, family friendly employment in the HGV and PCV driver sector.</p> <p>Long-Term Unemployment Employer Recruitment Incentive programme has supported 59 clients who have been out of the labour market for an extended period, back into work.</p> <p>Intensive Family Support via intensive key workers have helped 58 individuals and families toward sustainable employment</p> <p>The team has engaged with 106 new PES eligible clients in addition to their existing client base.</p> <p>Sixty-nine achieved positive outcomes with 42 entering employment.</p>

<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>	<p>Number of places created and the sustainability of the places after the Kick Start support ends</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>West Lothian CAB have recruited 2 advisers through the Kick Start Scheme</p> <p>Two young people gained long term employment via this approach.</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>	<p>Number of opportunities created at real living wage</p> <p>Sustainability of the opportunities</p>	<p>March 23</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>West Lothian Council's Job Creation Fund has committed to supporting local businesses to create sustainable employment opportunities. There are two funds as part of the project for Volume Jobs Grant for individuals aged 25+ and Steps N2 Work Programme for 16 -19-year-olds. 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>Two staged application, with an Expression of Interest (EOI) approved prior to full application stage.</p> <p>Total Number of Applications Received - 241</p> <p>Volume Job Grant Approved – 34</p> <p>Payment Awarded - £119,000</p> <p>Steps N2 Work Approved – 25</p> <p>Payment Awarded – £87,517.28</p> <p>EOI Approvals awaiting Application Stage - 34</p> <p>Approved Applications awaiting claim documentation – 94</p> <p>Pending Applications - 0</p> <p>EOI Declined – 47</p> <p>Applications Declined – 22</p>

<p>Deliver More Choices, More Chances (MCMC) to support young people move into a positive destination.</p>	<p>CLD Youth Service</p>	<p>Increase in the percentage of MCMC young people achieving a positive destination and sustaining for 6 months</p>	<p>March 23</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>90% achieved against the target set for 2022/23 which was 86%</p>
<p>Support positive destinations for care experienced young people.</p>	<p>Inclusion & Support Service (ISS)</p>	<p>Increase in the percentage of care experienced young people achieving a positive destination</p>	<p>March 23</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>In 2020/21, 82% of looked after school leavers achieved initial positive destinations (3 months point). During the same period, 70% of looked after pupils were in follow up positive destinations, (6-month point) (national average = 71%)</p> <p>As part of the 2022 Scottish Attainment Challenge refresh, West Lothian was able to extend their commitment to improving educational and wellbeing outcomes and achieve positive destinations for a wider group of care experienced learners in secondary schools. A key outcome for both the Level Up project and the new secondary mainstream project is to support young people into positive destinations with the aim to increase pupil achievement in learning, access wider opportunities in employability programmes and support health and wellbeing.</p> <p>Positive destinations for young people: include college, training and work programmes.</p>

Cost of Living

Action	Who is Involved?	How will impact be assessed	Timescale	Status	Progress March 2023
Develop and deliver new SQA modules including tenancy awareness and personal finance award for identified young people.	Education Housing Anti-Poverty Service	No of young people receiving the accreditation Ongoing evaluation pre, during and post course	March 2023	Green	In 2022/2023 we have continued with the course - now called The Tenancy Award. To date 4 young people have passed and achieved the award. Teaching materials have been shared with The Level Up Team, The Trust Project and all mainstream schools in West Lothian. The Level Up Team have used the materials and have presented a further 5 young people for the award this session. Mainstream schools plan to run the course next academic session.
Financial support options are available for families struggling with the cost of the school day: - £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	Anti-Poverty Service	National programme as part of Covid response	March 2023	Green	School holiday meal payments worth £1,323,237 were paid in respect of the Summer, October, Winter, February and Easter breaks Payments worth £101,007 were paid to families entitled to free school meals impacted by the teaching strike days Scottish Government Bridging Payments worth £2,860,550 were paid in summer, autumn and winter 2022 An additional £80 winter clothing grant was paid to families who received a School Clothing Grant in January 2023 worth £577,280 in total

<p>school on two additional in-service days.</p> <p>-£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.</p> <p>-Freeze/ reduce the cost of free school meals and make payments to eligible families during school holiday periods.</p>					
<p>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.</p>	<p>CLD Third sector partners</p>	<p>An effective identification and referral system to the programme is in place</p> <p>A revised model of targeted summer activities to support vulnerable children and young people is established</p>	<p>March 23</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Provision was targeted in the 20% most disadvantaged data zones across West Lothian.</p> <p>Entitlement to clothing grant and free school meals was used to support partners in targeting children and young people in low-income households.</p> <p>Information and support to enable families to access holiday provision appropriate to their needs was facilitated by key workers, schools, social policy, placed based organisations and those working with specific targeted groups.</p> <p>West Lothian Food Network received free swimming vouchers to distribute to families throughout the school summer holidays.</p> <p>5542 children and young people benefited from the summer programme. 20015 meals and snacks were provided.</p> <p>1695 leisure passes were given out to low-income families and those with children with additional support needs.</p>

<p>Promote uptake of early year 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>Education Family Assessment and Support Screening (FASS) Group FNP</p>	<p>Number of discretionary places allocated</p>	<p>March 23</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>The number of eligible 2-year-old places has increased. 51 discretionary eligible 2-year-old places were granted. 437 eligible places granted.</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</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>March 23</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>West Lothian Council offers a full 'ELC place' to each eligible child whose parent/carer applies. Several attendance patterns are offered: 1. morning place (AM), 2. afternoon place (PM), 3. 2 full day place (2FD), 4. 4 full day place (4FD) [38-week establishments only) or 5. 'funding to attend' a private partner or childminder place</p>
<p>Cost of the school day</p>	<p>Education</p>	<p>Implementing action in Poverty Proofing Statements Financial impact plans</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>School leads for Cost of the School Day have been identified in all schools to promote best practice, share resources and facilitate information sharing. 100% of all schools have submitted a poverty proofing statement outlining action to remove or reduce the cost of the school day barriers. Analysis of poverty proofing statements has identified key themes and effective and interesting practice. Data collected indicates that 72% of schools currently have a school clothing bank</p>

		PEF plans Processes for measuring impact of PEF initiatives			
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)	Number of students (new and existing) saving in credit union Value of savings accrued in accounts	March 2023	Amber	There are 1015 junior savers with the credit union. The total amount of savings is £164,360. More schools are actively participating in this scheme including 8 active primary school and 1 secondary school. This involves actively engaging volunteers in the schools to help set up and support the collections. There are 8 schools who are re-starting or joining by the new academic term. (August 23) The project is amber because of funding and getting school volunteers to carry out the collections in schools.
Provide support to schools for Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) planning, monitoring, and evaluation e.g. Meetings Targeted support Provision of supportive resources Identification /delivery of training	Education	Feedback from Headteachers Processes for measuring impact of PEF initiatives	March 2023	Green	Professional dialogue focused on Cost of the School Day (CoSD) and Participatory Budgeting has been undertaken as part of a programme of PEF support visits. This has involved all primary and ASN head teachers and discussion has been focused on each school's unique context, current practice and has explored associated opportunities and challenges. PEF support visits with schools have identified: the need for regular communication around the Cost of the School Day (CoSD) activities at all levels. The use of language in relation to CoSD to be carefully considered to help remove stigma and promote engagement.

Income from social security

Action	Who is Involved?	How will impact be assessed	Timescale	Status	Progress March 22023
Income maximisation advice and support for families will be embedded in school settings.	Education Anti-Poverty Service	Financial gains through income maximisation and debt managed for the families supported and additional support accessed Customer evaluations forms	March 2023	Green	6 school clusters across West Lothian have advice and income maximisation services for families and young people. To date £548,650 of extra income from social security benefits and payments, discounts and grants to help with living costs. Additional support with food and energy has been provided with 200 food parcels/fuel vouchers having been secured in this period for families in need
Income maximisation advice and financial capability support is provided for young people facing homelessness to become financially resilient.	Anti-Poverty Service housing	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	Green	37 young people experiencing homelessness engaged with advice from the Anti-Poverty Service in 2022-23 resulting in additional income of £128,602 from social security benefits 29 young people aged 16-24 received support to deal with debt worth £127,675 during 2022-23 A dedicated advisor is now in post to embed advice for young people through key partnerships. Referral routes are now in place through the Youth Emergency Prevention homelessness pathway and through West Lothian College.
Individuals with health concerns will be supported through the implementation of new health hubs and the Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ) project.	Anti-Poverty Service Macmillan Cancer Support WL HSCP	Creation of hubs and the number of people supported through the hubs and the additional support accessed Customer evaluations	March 2023	Green	263 referrals were received in Year 2 of the ICJ project, between April 2022-March 2023. This led to 712 onward referrals/signposting to other services for support. A new process has been devised in conjunction with Evaluation Scotland to better measure the effectiveness of the service. ICJ West Lothian are trialling a customer service as part of this, and the current return rate has been 50% so this is progressing well. A new storytelling project is also being piloted to gather feedback in the customers own words.

					<p>The Community Connections long term health conditions hubs are now up and running in all 12 locations across West Lothian, with the addition of a near me hub to compliment this.</p> <p>13 volunteers have been recruited and trained to support these hubs and a wide range of council and third sector services are staffing the hubs.</p> <p>Data from the first 3 months of the hubs showed 79 contacts with customers with a wide range of needs. Of these 46 were supported with a benefit check or benefits/energy advice.</p> <p>Onward referrals from the hubs have been to the Advice Shop, Occupational therapy, Social Work, housing, Carers of West Lothian, the Food Train, Social Security Scotland, Shelter Scotland, Access 2 Employment, Adult Basic Education and many more.</p>
Families struggling with debt or financial capability concerns will have access to a range of support.	West Lothian Debt Advice Forum West Lothian CAB	Improved engagement with debt advice Improved financial confidence	March 2023	Green	<p>WLCAB have supported 1356 clients with debt advice and provided financial gains of £89,000</p> <p>The Anti-Poverty Service supported 608 clients with £4,979,893 of personal debt, leading to a reduction in payments worth £1,089,080.</p>
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	Training and numbers attending training events Number of people taking up the new Social Security Scotland benefits	March 23	Green	<p>WL CAB have supported 1014 clients to claim benefits through Social Security Scotland</p> <p>WL Advice Shop supported 1422 clients to claim Social Security Scotland benefits, resulting in £2,582,738 extra income. A focus has been to promote the Best Start School Aged Grant including followed up with 178 existing eligible customers with children of relevant age to support the claim process.</p> <p>WL Advice Shop have delivered cost of living awareness briefings which included information on Social Security benefits.</p> <p>193 people attended training.</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>	<p>Awareness of Social Security Scotland benefits across communities and groups</p> <p>Number of people taking up the new Social Security Scotland benefits</p> <p>Improved joint working between Social Security Scotland and West Lothian anti-poverty partners</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>Local Delivery Client Support Advisors continue to provide assistance and advice across West Lothian – appointments are offered via phone, video, home visit or at one of 7 venues. Twelve Scottish Government benefits were increased by 10.1% on 1 April 2023.</p> <p>In Nov 22 - Scottish Child Payment increased to £25 each week per child and extended to children under the age of 16 (for families who get tax credits or certain benefits). This was a 150% increase. Adult Disability Payment launched in West Lothian in August 2022. Case transfers from DWP continue. £50 Winter Heating Payment was introduced (Payments Feb/March/April 2023) National Engagement Team continue to deliver awareness sessions about our benefits to stakeholders. Local Delivery staff attended a range of community drop ins, events and information sessions throughout the year. (Including cost of living joint partner events). Regular newsletters and social media updates continue to inform stakeholders and the public about benefits. Close working with partners and stakeholders continues across the Local Authority Area. Strategic meeting with Partners including NHS midwives and health visitors in Dec 2022 to discuss referral routes and summary of support available.</p>
<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>	<p>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>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>4,358 clients have had income maximised following advice resulting in financial gains of £23,375,344 between April 2022 and March 2023</p> <p>181 West Lothian Council tenants have engaged with new tenant affordability and income maximisation checks, generating extra income of £465,599</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>	<p>Proportion of women referred for financial wellbeing support</p> <p>Proportion of women taking up Best Start Foods</p> <p>Financial gain</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>A Data Protection Impact Assessment is currently being undertaken between NHS Lothian and West Lothian Fast Online Referral Tracking (WL FORT) system to enable referrals between NHS services and financial wellbeing services in West Lothian. Alongside this work, training will be developed along with referral pathway guidance.</p>
<p>Continue to deliver welfare advice in the Royal Hospital for Children and</p>	<p>NHS Lothian Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI)</p>	<p>Referrals</p> <p>Appointments</p> <p>Client financial gain</p> <p>Staff awareness of the project</p> <p>Client feedback</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p> <p>Edinburgh based service. West Lothian uptake is lower in relation to the other 3 Lothian local authority areas</p>	<p>Total families supported 2022/23 = 154 (total number of appointments = 758) Of those 8 families were from West Lothian. Total financial gain for the project = £263,897.82. Project referrals are increasing with cases often complex.</p>
<p>Deliver the Prevention and Intervention Money Advice Project (PIMAP)</p>	<p>West Lothian CAB NHS Lothian Anti-Poverty partners</p>	<p>Number of referrals</p> <p>Client financial gain</p> <p>Debt management for customers</p> <p>Customer and partner evaluations</p>	<p>March 2023</p>	<p>Green</p>	<p>The project has assisted 235 clients resulting in a client financial gain of £322,422.</p>

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	Mapping complete and used to inform development of money advice services across West Lothian	March 2023	Green	Mapping completed and recommendations presented to the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Group for discussion and agreement on future improvement action.
Provide welfare advice in GP practices	CAB NHS Lothian Public Health Anti-Poverty Service	Number of referrals Client financial gain Debt management for customers Customer and partner evaluations	March 2023	Green	CAB has supported 268 clients at GP surgeries resulting in a financial gain of £150,000. The Anti-Poverty Service has handled 206 enquiries via healthcare settings resulting in financial gains. A new hospital service in St John's Hospital, Livingston has been established with 3 years funding.

Lived Experience

Action	Who is Involved?	How will impact be assessed	Timescale	Status	Progress March 2023
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.	Education CLD Youth Services Anti-Poverty Service	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	March 2023	Green	Further opportunities for young people to become anti-poverty champions were promoted but have not been taken up in 2022/2023. This programme will be refreshed in 2023/2024 to help increase engagement.

The young people will also form a steering group which will be supported as part of the Participation Strategy within CLD Youth Services

Appendix 2: Anti-Poverty Strategy Scorecard 2022/2023

CPP Anti-Poverty Strategy Scorecard 2018/19 – 2022/23

End of Year Progress Report: April 2022 – March 2023

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 2023	Status	Commentary
Percentage of employees who earn less than the living wage (SOA1303_14)	17%	17%	17%	17%	9.4%	GREEN	<p>Latest available data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2022 showed that the percentage of employees earning less than the Living Wage Foundation rate had decreased to 9.4% from 18% recorded in the previous year.</p> <p>It is likely that this improvement can be attributed to the end of the furlough scheme and implementation of remobilisation plans for many businesses that saw employees return to the workplace. Estimates are calculated based on actual payments made to employees and the hours upon which this pay was calculated.</p>
Percentage of adults in receipt of key out of work benefits (SOA1302_02)	10.6%	11%	10%	9%		GREEN	<p>The DWP dataset informing this indicator appears to have been discontinued in 2018. Broad economic indicators show the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 77% of the West Lothian population are economically active. This includes people in employment or self-employment and those looking for work. • 23% 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, 23.1% indicate that they want a job. • The claimant count of those in receipt of benefits and looking for work at the end of March 2022 was recorded at 2.6%. This indicates a slight downward trend from the same period in March 2022 when the claimant count was 3%

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 2023	Status	Commentary
Total value of income maximised following advice each year	£33,928,321	£27,000,000	£34,000,000	£24,000,000	£25,822,129	GREEN	Advice providers supported individuals to maximise income £25,822,129. This extra income is secured through new claims for social security benefits and outcomes of appeals to challenge benefit decisions.
Total value of debt managed each year	£11,834,489	£10,000,000	£12,500,000	£4,000,000	£7,113,384	GREEN	Customers were supported to deal with £7,113,384 of problem debt during 2023/24. Debt advice providers have reported a changing demographic of debt advice customers, with more people in-work looking for help to manage debts. This has led to a change in the most common debt solutions from formal solutions such as sequestration toward more negotiation with creditors and access to financial hardship grants such as energy supplier hardship grants and other benevolent funds.
Percentage of the population who are income deprived (SOA1302_13)	12% (2015/16)	12%	11.5%	11%	12%	GREEN	<p>Income deprivation is generally defined through qualification of a range of DWP benefits, including out of work benefits, pension credits and in-work benefits. Latest available SIMD data from January 2020 indicates that income deprivation levels in West Lothian remain static at 12%</p> <p>SIMD 2020 identifies 7 datazones in West Lothian with deprivation levels of 30% or higher. These datazones are within Blackburn (2x datazones), Whitburn, Armadale and the Knightsridge, Ladywell and Craigshill areas of Livingston. It is important to note that the latest available SIMD data is from the pre-pandemic period so the impact of covid on levels of deprivation is not yet fully known. New SIMD data is released on a four year cycle.</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 31 st March 2023	Status	Commentary
Number of individuals who access affordable credit options	1012	1000	1500	2300	608	AMBER	West Lothian Credit Union has seen improvement in new member numbers and both saving and loan activity has progressed well through predominantly digital platforms.
Total value of loans from affordable lenders	£1,474,055	£1,400,000	£1,600,000	£1,800,000	£1,322,913		Awaiting data from Blackburn, Seafield and District Credit Union and Conduit Scotland.
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	Performance was 100% against a target of 100%. Reports were produced each month to ensure that all customers impacted by the "bedroom tax" received full mitigation for any period involved. Joint working with social sector landlords also identified any tenant in receipt of Universal Credit who was subject to a bedroom tax reduction. Discretionary Housing Payment is now also available to fully mitigate the impact of the under-occupancy deduction for affected households.

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 March 2023	Status	Commentary
Number of new Credit Union members	470 new adult members	500	600	600	574	GREEN	Membership of local credit unions has recovered well following the pandemic with the move to a more digital working platform working well for members. 574 new members joined West Lothian Credit Union in 2022/23. Up front joining fees were removed in this period which has led to good uptake of membership. The cost of living crisis may have had some impact on savings as many residents have struggled more to save over the last year.
Total value of savings with local credit unions	£2,620,114	£2,600,000	£2,800,000	£3,000,000	£2,856,000	GREEN	

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 31 st March 2023	Status	Commentary
Number of West Lothian residents supported into work through council employability programmes (SOA1302_12)	348	370	450	500	786	GREEN	The council's Access2Employment service registered 786 new clients in the 2022/23 period and provided ongoing support for a further 686 existing clients. 61.7% of Access2Employment clients progressed to a positive destination such as education, training or employment during this period.
Percentage of employability customers who progress to a positive destination (CP:EDR035_9b.1a)	58%	50%	50%	50%	61.7%	GREEN	

Percentage of school leavers who enter a positive destination (CP:SOA1302_09)	93.3%	94%	94%	96%	91.3%	GREEN	<p>Latest available Summary Statistics for Attainment and Initial Leaver Destinations 2020-21 show 95.3% of 2050 school leavers progressed to a positive destination. Full initial destinations can be broken down as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44.7% higher education • 21.2% further education • 4% training • 24.5% employment • 0.4% voluntary work • 0.5% personal skills development • 2.3% unemployed seeking work • 2.4% unemployed not seeking work <p>Additional data from the 2021 Annual Participation Measure showed that of the 8,236 16-19-year olds in West Lothian 91.3% were in education, employment or training and personal development</p>
Percentage of care leavers entering a positive destination (SOA1305_07)	56%	85%	85%	93%	79%	GREEN	<p>Latest available data for 2020-21 shows that 79% of care experienced young people leaving school progressed to a positive destination.</p> <p>It should be noted that the number of young people involved in these statistics is small. Numbers have varied between 10 and 37 annually over the last seven years and a change of one young person either way can change the outcome by several percentage points.</p> <p>The target for this performance indicator is to achieve 93% by 2022/23, and this was set in the development of the council's Corporate Plan.</p>
Percentage of working age adults in work (SOA1302_01)	77.8%	75%	77%	78%	75.1%	GREEN	<p>NOMIS figures available at September 2022 indicate that 75.1% of West Lothian adults aged 16-64 are in employment, an increase from from 73.5% for the same period in the pervious year.</p>

Total number of jobs in West Lothian (SOA1303_06)	78,000	75,000	78,000	75,000	77,000	GREEN	<p>This performance indicator measures the number of jobs in West Lothian is an indicator of the overall level of economic activity in the area, and underpins other SOA objectives, for example: the proportion of working age adults in work. Increasing the positive destinations for young people, is both dependent on a wide a range of job opportunities locally.</p> <p>West Lothian, like many other parts of Scotland, experienced the impact of the credit crunch and subsequent recession – with substantial job losses and a rise in local levels of unemployment. The headline unemployment level has fallen since 2013, though the level may have bottomed-out. There is a concern that the medium- term prospects might be less positive given the uncertain business climate and likely economic headwinds that are predicted in the next few years.</p>
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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 31 st March 2023	Status	Commentary
Number of anti-poverty service web hits	48,760	48,000	52,000	54,000	474,612	GREEN	<p>The Anti-Poverty Service has experienced increased web traffic since the start of the pandemic with 474,612 web hits during the 2022-23 period.</p> <p>There has been a focus on digital accessibility this year through the development of online self-service tools including an appointment booking system and improved access to central resources such as the Cost of Living online hub.</p>

Number of individuals who access advice through health settings	1013	1000	1500	1750	1744	GREEN	In the 2022/23 period, advice agencies supported 744 individuals through health care settings including GP surgeries, hospitals and community health hubs, resulting in total financial gains of £3,227,256
Number of outreach advice sessions available across all multi-member ward areas	19	19	12	9	20	GREEN	<p>There has been a continued focus on co-location of services with key partners in the 2022-23 period including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School settings • West Lothian Foodbank • Some community food outlets • GP surgeries • Some community development trusts <p>Additionally, the Community Connections service has been embedded in 2022/23 with 13 hubs now available in local communities. Volunteers are available through the hubs to offer tea/coffee, a friendly listening ear and a referral service to link customers with appropriate support.</p>
Number of people signposted and referred for support through the FORT system	N/A	200	350	1000	4894	GREEN	In the 2022/23 period, 31 new organisations signed up to use the FORT system to make and track active referrals, meaning that over 100 services now use FORT with 872 active users. In the last year, 4894 referrals were generated through the FORT system.

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 31 st March 2023	Status	Commentary
Number of new homes completed annually in West Lothian (SOA1303_07)	597 <i>2016/17</i>	500		3000	3008	GREEN	Since the start of 2012/13 to the end of Quarter 4 2021/22, 3,008 homes within the Affordable Housing programme were either complete or under construction, with 81% already occupied. In the 2022/23 period, 189 homes were scheduled for completion across 6 sites. Moving forward, RSL partners have identified a number of development opportunities for the provision of additional affordable homes and the Council also has a programme of new build Council housing, with work underway on the development of a future affordable housing programme
Total value of savings as a result of energy advice	£363,738	£350,000	£350,000	£350,000	£505,370	GREEN	Energy advice providers in West Lothian supported householders to make savings of £505,370 on fuel costs through energy efficiency advice and provision of financial support through one off grants to help with energy costs during the cost of living crisis.
Number of potential homeless situations prevented with intervention	372	560	120 <i>*reduced target</i>	560	328	GREEN	Advice providers in West Lothian successfully supported 328 tenants and homeowners at risk of homelessness to remain in their homes. This is achieved through income maximisation, negotiation of repayment of arrears and access to funds such Discretionary Housing Payment.
Percentage of new tenancies sustained for over one year (CP:HQSARC20.3_9b)	90%	93%	90%	90%	92.9%	GREEN	No current data available

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 31 st March 2023	Status	Commentary
Percentage of children in poverty in West Lothian (P:SOA1301_11)	21.91%	22%	20%	18%	21.1%	RED	<p>Latest available data for 2020/21 estimates 21.1% of children in West Lothian were estimated to experience relative poverty. This is a decrease on the previous year which is broadly in line with Scotland as a whole.</p> <p>The child poverty reference group continues to report on progress of a dedicated two-year child poverty action plan through the Local Child Poverty Action Report to the Scottish Government which is produced annually.</p>
Number of EMA applications processed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A			<p>This suite of indicators replaces previously reported indicators relating to education benefits. This is a data only performance measure with no set target. The council has no influence on the number of applications received or awarded for Education Maintenance Allowance, Clothing Grant or Free School Meals but will carry out take up campaigns to maximise the number of awards made.</p> <p>In 2022/23, Clothing grant spend was £1,206,450, which represents the highest ever take-up of this grant.</p>
Number of School Clothing Grant applications processed	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	7449	GREEN	
Number of pupils in receipt of Free School Meals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5662	GREEN	
Number of 2 year old children utilising early learning and childcare (EDPP219_9b.1b)	148	150	200	200	354	GREEN	<p>Eligible children used to access up to 600 hours per annum and this was increased to 1000 hours from August 2020 with any provider (as per Funding follows the Child), then in 1140 hours from April 2021.</p> <p>In school session 2021/22, 422 eligible and discretionary children were provided a funded placement.</p>

Number of pregnant women and parents engaged with advice	248	500	1000	500	1020	GREEN	Advice agencies engaged with 947 pregnant women and parents during the 2022/23 period securing total financial gains of over £828,501 from sources including; Best Start Grant, Scottish Child Payment, Child Disability Payment, Carers Allowance and Universal Credit.
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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 2023	Status	Commentary
Percentage of residents who feel they can influence decisions	40%	46%	46%	47%			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%			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 going forward as part of the new LOIP, consideration will be given to how to measure inclusion and involvement to produce more regular data