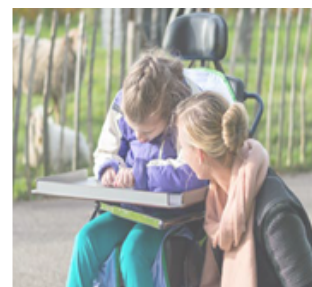


# West Lothian

## SHORT BREAKS SERVICES STATEMENT 2023-26

Information for carers  
thinking about or planning a short break



**Supporting  
people  
who care  
for others**



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# PURPOSE

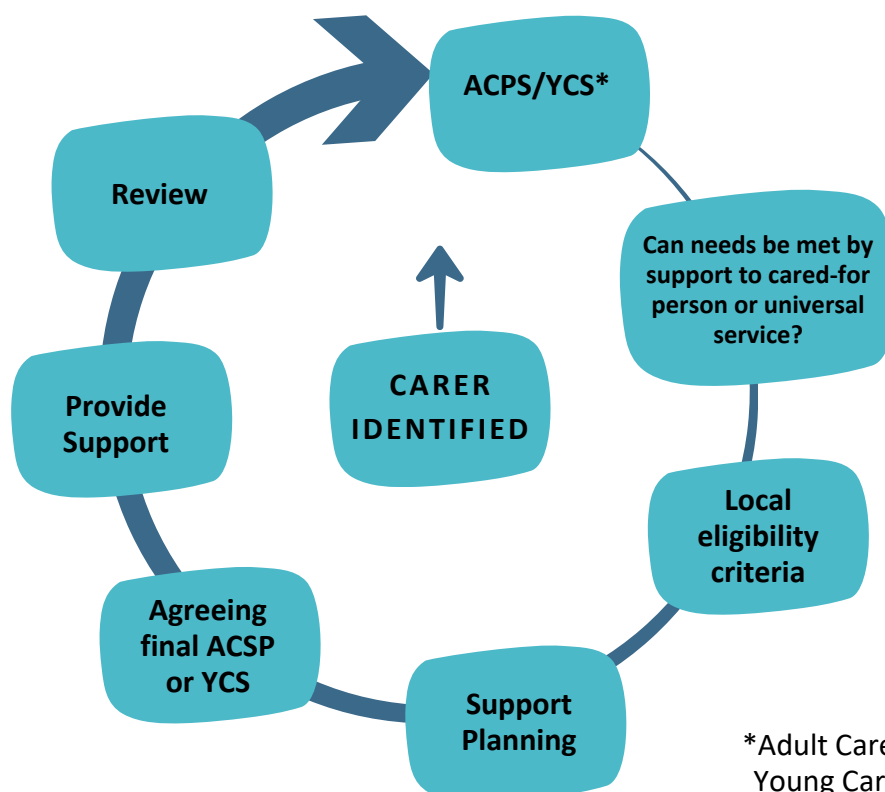
In determining support that should be provided to carers under the Act, the council is required to consider in particular whether the support should take the form of or include a break from caring. The purpose of this Short Break Services Statement is to support short break planning and to provide information about short breaks to carers of all ages and to the people they care for so that they:

- Know they can have a break in a variety of ways
- Are informed about the short breaks that are available
- Have choice in the support they access
- Can decide what a short break means for them and how they can be supported to meet their identified needs and achieve their outcomes

**West Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP)** recognises the significant contribution made by unpaid carers to enabling the people they care for to remain living independently in their own homes and communities. The HSCP is committed to supporting carers so that they are able to both have a life alongside caring including take up or maintenance of meaningful employment and to continue in their caring role. This support includes providing access to short breaks delivered in ways which work best for carers and those they care for.

When considering short breaks, carers are aware that their taking a break may involve the need for alternative support to be provided to the person they care for whilst they do so. How this alternative support (sometimes called replacement care) will be delivered, how it will affect the cared-for person or what impact it will have on them is a key concern for carers and how willing and able they feel to take a break. In supporting carers to access short breaks, the council will also ensure that carers are actively involved in planning and decisions about how the cared-for person will be supported whilst they are taking their break.

## CARER SUPPORT PATHWAY



\*Adult Carer Support Plan  
Young Carers Statement

# BACKGROUND

This Short Breaks Services Statement (SBSS) has been developed following the introduction of **the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016 (The Act)**, which came into effect on 1st April 2018. Section 35 of the Act requires each local authority to prepare, publish and review a SBSS setting out information about short breaks services available for local carers and cared-for people.

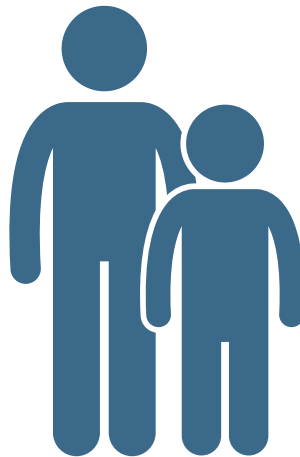
This SBSS includes information for both adult and young carers, has been prepared in partnership with them and carer representatives and will continue to be reviewed in light of further feedback. The aim of the Statement is to help carers and supported people to understand:

- What short breaks are
- Who can access short breaks
- What short breaks are available locally and in Scotland
- How they can access short breaks and find further information

## THE ACT DEFINES THE MEANING OF:

### an 'adult carer' as:

The Act defines an adult carer as a carer who is at least 18 years old but is not a young carer.



### a 'young carer' as:

#### Meaning of a 'young carer'

The Act defines a young carer as a carer who -

- a) is under 18 years old, or
- b) has attained the age of 18 years while a pupil at school and has since attained that age remained a pupil at school

This SBSS also signposts local sources of information about what services you and the cared-for person can expect from a range of local agencies, including education, health and social care. Knowing what is available gives you more choice and control over what support is right for you.

Unpaid carers are people who provide help and support to someone they know, such as a family member or friend, but who are not employed to do this or an organisation.

The Scottish Government views carers as equal partners in care, recognising their knowledge and expertise. It is the Scottish Government's intention that:

- Scotland's estimated **690,000 carers**, including **29,000 young carers**, are better supported on a more consistent basis so that they can continue to care, if they so wish, in good health and wellbeing, allowing them to have a life alongside care.
- Young carers have a childhood similar to their non-carer peers and are enabled to be children and young people first and foremost, relieved of any inappropriate caring roles to allow them to have a quality of life.

There are an estimated **21,000 adult carers** and **800 young carers** in West Lothian who support many local people with a wide range of needs and outcomes. This SBSS intends to inform carers of all ages of the role short breaks can play in supporting you to maintain your own health and wellbeing and to continue in your caring role.

# WHAT IS A SHORT BREAK?

## DEFINITION

*"Any form of service or assistance which enables the carer(s) to have periods away from their caring routines or responsibilities."*

## PURPOSE

*"....to support the caring relationship and promote the health and wellbeing of the carer, the supported person and other family members affected by the caring situation."*

*"A short break can take any number of forms in order to achieve the carer's desired outcomes. The purpose is for carers to have a life outside or alongside their caring role, supporting their health and wellbeing. This can also benefit the cared-for person and others (e.g. family members) and can sustain the caring relationship."*

## - Shared Care Scotland

Carer short breaks can be personalised to their own needs and outcomes, can be planned around what matters to them and take the form that works best for them and the people they care for. Breaks from caring may:

✓ Allow the carer a break away with replacement care if required

✓ Take place during the day or overnight

✓ Be for short or extended periods

✓ Take the form of the carer & cared-for person having a break together\*

✓ Involve the cared-for person having a break away from home and time for themselves

\*With assistance if necessary, to provide a break from the demands of their daily caring routines



### Planned Short Breaks

Planned Short Breaks for eligible carers are considered and arranged in partnership with carers by local health and social care staff, the local carer support service and / or providers. Planned Short breaks for non-eligible carers can be applied for through Carers of West Lothian funded short break projects which include Time Out and Respite.

### Emergency breaks

Whilst local support to carers includes planned short breaks, there will be occasions where carers will require emergency support or support at very short notice due to a sudden change in their own circumstances or health or those of the person they care for.

To minimise the stress and anxiety which can be generated by emergencies, it is important that carers have plans prepared in advance that outline what contingency arrangements are in place for emergency situations which include any relevant options for emergency care provision. Having a recorded emergency plan which can be accessed by the relevant people or agencies can help prevent an emergency becoming a crisis.

The HSCP is committed to supporting carers to prepare their own emergency plans and will discuss and offer an emergency planning toolkit as part of our conversation with carers as will the local carer support service. Carers will be encouraged to develop their own contingency and emergency plans so that the arrangements which are put in place should the need arise are those the carer would wish.

Developing their own emergency plan can give carers a helpful way into a discussion with friends and family members about what support they may be able to offer in an emergency or at short notice. This can also help to promote conversations about longer term and future planning. The completed plan can be shared with involved friends and family and with the relevant health and social care agencies and professionals.





# SHORT BREAK EXAMPLES

234 carers received a Short Breaks Fund Time to Live Grant from Shared Care Scotland (via Carers of West Lothian) in 2023/24. The average grant was £350, with a total of £83,690 awarded. 291 carers met the SDS eligibility criteria, receiving an SDS budget to achieve their outcomes identified in their Adult Carer Support Plan in 2023/24.

## Examples of short break uses include:

- Breaks away from home (with or without the cared for person)
- Day service respite
- Attending events/conferences for learning/support purposes
- Therapeutic and leisure breaks e.g. Reiki sessions
- Leisure or fitness activities
- Entertainment
- Purchase of equipment
- Other purchases
- Classes or lessons



In addition, Carers of West Lothian organise and host various social gatherings including gardening, meet and eat and coffee mornings to support carers Health and Wellbeing and reduce isolation sometimes caused as a result of having a caring role.

## Carer Case Studies:

***"I can't get to the gym as I am needed a lot at home, my husband has short term memory problems, bipolar and schizophrenia, and my son has had severe mental health problems too. It was a huge surprise to know that I was entitled to this grant and furthermore to this amazing treadmill, what a surprise! It has helps me feel valued as a person, it helps me to keep fit which then helps myself esteem and confidence, and this also helped my son who uses the treadmill too. I never dreamed I could be able to afford a treadmill, and it seemed such a waste of money to spend it on me. I would never have done this, and I never have done this in my life."***

***"I live with and care full time for my sister who has down syndrome, autism and a profound learning disability. I found the weekend a much-needed break from my caring responsibilities, a complete break away from my usual routine and day to day stress and strain. Doing various mindfulness practices over the weekend really improved my wellbeing and left me feeling better able to cope with my caring role."***

A husband who supported his wife required support in his own right to have time to rest due to his own health issues, specifically a recent heart problem which made it difficult for him to walk his dog or keep up with housework due to fatigue. The carer opted for his wife to attend a day centre to give him a break and the support of a cleaning service and dog walker to ease practical stresses. Their feedback was:

***"I just thought I would give you a quick update to let you know that my wife has settled into the day care centre and is enjoying it. On top of the personal care, the two hours of cleaning and the extra dog walking have really made a difference. I am beginning to feel the stress starting to reduce."***

K is 15 and a young carer who lives alone with her gran and is her gran's main carer. K's gran had cancer and, although this is in remission, has been left with some health issues – her bladder was damaged and she is now incontinent and prone to recurring urine infections. K feels her caring role has become more difficult recently and that the demands on her are increasing. K feels more isolated and gets very upset as she has to do more to help her gran.

K attends a young carer group and gets a lot out of meeting other young carers, making new friends and getting regular time away from her responsibilities. K started Irish Dancing classes last year but her gran was struggling to pay for these – they were supported to apply to a short breaks fund to help pay for the classes, shoes and dance costumes.

Initially K had described her mental health and emotional wellbeing as 'ok' and the balance between caring and time out as 'ok'. K said that her dance classes are very important in helping her to cope as they help her to get time away and to de-stress. K said that the fund made it possible for her to go to her classes as her gran had struggled to pay for them and she didn't want to put financial pressure on her gran.

K feels her dancing helps her to relax and to feel more confident as she has been encouraged to take part in competitions and dance shows. K now describes her mental health and emotional wellbeing and the balance between caring and time out as 'good'.





# ELIGIBILITY

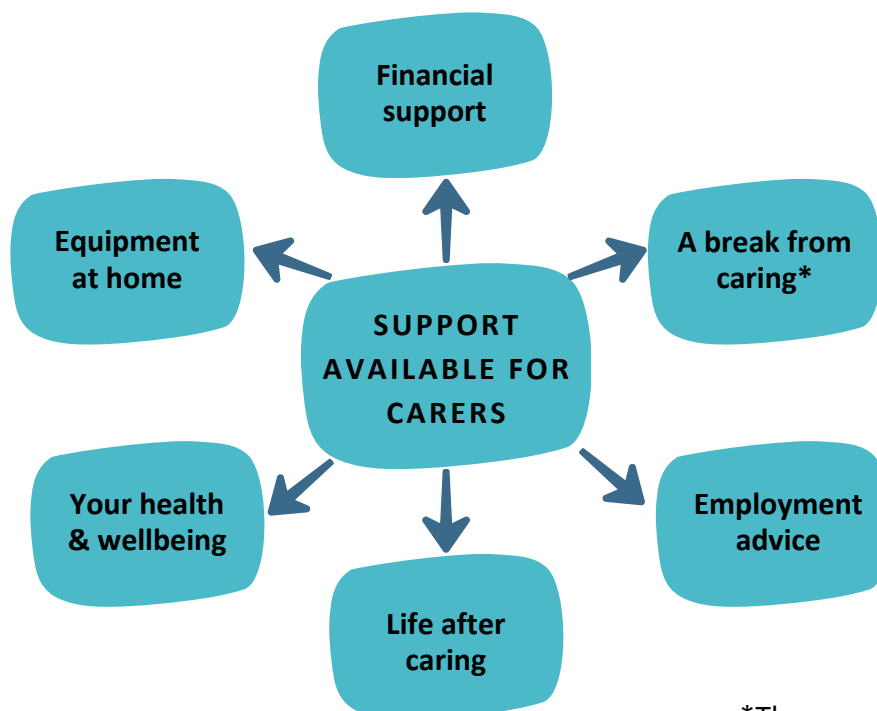
In line with the requirements of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016, the council has published local eligibility criteria for carer support as summarised below. West Lothian's eligibility criteria for carer support are based on the National Carer Organisations best practice framework.

Short breaks will be discussed as part of the outcomes-focused conversations carers will have with carer support organisations and/or social work departments when completing Adult Carer Support Plans or Young Carer Statements. These conversations will help to identify:

- The impact of caring on the carer's health, wellbeing, relationships, employment and ability to socialise
- The carer's relationships with the person they care for and/or their wider family and if these are becoming difficult
- The amount of time spent caring each week
- How long it has been since the carer last had a break
- If the carer is the only person caring or if the carer is caring for more than one person
- The level of need for support
- The thresholds which must be met to be eligible for support

Some of the carer's needs and outcomes may be met through accessing universal services. Universal services are those which are provided to everyone, e.g. health services, leisure and recreation facilities, support groups, neighbourhood networks, voluntary organisations and so on.

Where a carer is eligible for funded support from the council following completion of an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement, they will be able to choose how they would like this support to be provided to them. The carer will be advised of their estimated support budget, which is based on their individual assessed eligible needs and outcomes. This is called Self-directed Support.



\*The purpose of this SBSS

# SELF-DIRECTED SUPPORT (SDS)

This is the process by which social care is delivered. The aim is to achieve better quality care and support and an improvement in the outcomes people achieve by giving them greater choice and control over how their support needs are met and by whom. There is the opportunity to pick from four options:

## OPTION 1 - DIRECT PAYMENT

*The making of a direct payment by the council to the carer for the provision of support.*

## OPTION 2 - INDIVIDUAL BUDGET/INDIVIDUAL SERVICE FUND

*The selection of support by the carer, the making of arrangements for the provision of it by the council on behalf of the carer and, where it is provided by someone other than the council, the payment by the council of the relevant amount in respect of the cost of that provision.*

## OPTION 3 - ARRANGED SERVICE DELIVERY

*The selection of support for the carer by the council, the making of arrangements for the provision of it by the council and, where it is provided by someone other than the council, the payment by the council of the relevant amount in respect of the cost of that provision.*

## OPTION 4 - COMBINATION OF ABOVE

*The selection by the carer of Option 1, 2 or 3 for each type of support and, where it is provided by someone other than the council, the payment by the council of the relevant amount in respect of the cost of the support.*

Where a carer is not eligible for funded support, they will be signposted to other sources of support including relevant universal services and Carers of West Lothian.

### Support for cared-for people

The eligibility criteria for carers are consistent with those for supported people. If, as a result of the Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement, it appears that the cared-for person may also have social care needs which are not already being addressed, they can be referred for an assessment (or a review if they already have some support in place) in their own right.

# CONTRIBUTIONS POLICY

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When offering support and services to cared-for adults and older people assessed as having eligible needs and outcomes West Lothian Council operates a Contributions Policy and financially assesses everyone to determine whether they require to make a contribution towards the cost of their non-residential care and support. Support which takes the form of personal and nursing care, however, is exempt from contribution.

## Waiving of Charges to Carers

The Carers (Waiving of Charges for Support) (Scotland) Regulations 2014 require the council to waive charges (or contributions) relating to support provided to carers to meet any eligible needs and personal outcomes they have in relation to their caring role – these needs and outcomes will ordinarily be identified by completion of an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement.

The support to carers for which charges must be waived includes short breaks from caring.

West Lothian's Contributions Policy, therefore, will not apply to carers where the support they are receiving is being provided on the basis of the carer's eligibility for support in relation to continuing in their caring role.

## Contributions and Replacement Care

Replacement care is care provided to the cared-for person which replaces the care which the carer is otherwise willing and able to provide so that the carer can have a break from caring. Therefore, care would not be considered replacement care if, for example, the carer was not willing or able to provide care because –

- The carer wishes to work full or part-time and to reduce the amount of care they provide
- The carer is ill, in hospital or recovering at home
- The carer can no longer provide the same level or type of care due to health or other reasons

In such cases, the care provided to the cared-for person would be subject to the council's Contributions Policy.



# AVAILABLE SUPPORT

Breaks from caring come in many forms and can be planned around the particular needs and circumstances of the carer and the person(s) they care for. Some carers may choose to have a break that allows them to get away for a few days, others may prefer to attend a club, leisure activity or social outing on a more regular basis, while some carers may want to purchase a piece of equipment which will make their caring role easier or more manageable. The following list gives examples of the different ways that breaks can be provided. There may be eligibility criteria attached to some of these.

## BEFRIENDING SCHEMES WHERE VOLUNTEERS PROVIDE SHORT BREAKS



Befriending normally involves a paid worker or volunteer assisting someone with care and support needs to have access to activities, for example going to the cinema, meeting friends, shopping, swimming and other such leisure pursuits. Befriending can be on a one-to-one basis or as part of a group.



## BREAKS IN THE HOME OF ANOTHER INDIVIDUAL OR FAMILY

These involve overnight breaks provided by paid or volunteer carers in their own home. These are sometimes referred to as shared lives, family based or adult placement schemes. Families or individuals offering this support are carefully recruited and registered – normally by the local authority or through voluntary sector organisations.

## BREAKS PROVIDED AT HOME THROUGH A CARE WORKER/SITTING SERVICE



This includes individual support provided in the home of the cared-for person for periods of a few hours or overnight. The purpose may be to provide support while the carer is away, or to support the carer in other ways, e.g. by enabling the carer to have an undisturbed night's sleep.



These opportunities might focus on a particular activity (e.g. sports clubs, leisure activities) and may be based in a community building. These generally take place over a few hours perhaps once or twice a week or, in the case of disabled children, they may be planned over the school holidays. The availability of adapted equipment or trained workers can help people with support needs to enjoy these activities.

## SUPPORTED ACCESS TO CLUBS, INTEREST OR ACTIVITY GROUPS



## HOLIDAY BREAKS

These include opportunities for people to have a short break together, or independently. These breaks can be supported in different ways – through an agency specialising in breaks for people with particular needs; in adapted accommodation; or in ordinary hotels and guest houses, perhaps with additional equipment. More mainstream breaks may also be possible with the support of a paid carer or companion.



## DAY SUPPORT

Day support is typically based in a community building and provided by a local authority or voluntary organisation. The degree of flexibility varies; most are characterised by fixed opening hours on particular days; some offer a drop-in service whereby people can attend for part of the day only. Day care is not generally provided for short break or respite purposes but services which offer more flexible arrangements, designed around the needs of both the supported person and carer, can achieve this purpose.



## ALTERNATIVE BREAKS

Increasingly, with the development of Self-directed Support, more people are finding creative ways to take a break that don't necessarily involve external services. For example, they might use leisure equipment, computers, gardens or anything else that provides a break from routine. Self Directed Support Option 1, Direct Payment, can be used for the carer to arrange these breaks from caring.

# OUTCOMES

West Lothian is committed to supporting carers to access short breaks from their caring role and responsibilities and will do so by talking to carers about their caring situation and the potential benefits, also known as outcomes, of short breaks. Carers will be supported to understand the range of options to them and to make informed choices so that the support provided is what works best for them. The benefits of any short breaks taken will be discussed with carers as part of the review of their Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement.

## BEFORE THE BREAK



People who look after others recognise they are carers



Carers are more informed about their choices and rights



Carers and others have increased acceptance that is okay to take short breaks



Carers are more able to make informed choices about short breaks



Carers have more choices for short breaks and better, more equal access



Carers have more opportunities to enjoy a life outside their caring role



Carers feel better supported



Carers have improved confidence and morale



Carers have increased ability to cope in their caring role



Carers can stay in employment if appropriate

## TAKING THE BREAK

## AFTER THE BREAK



Carers have reduced social isolation/loneliness, with increased social connections & activities



Carers feel more able to maintain the caring relationship and sustain their caring role



Stronger relationships between carers and cared-for people



Cared-for people have an improved experience of care



Improved health & wellbeing



Improved quality of life



Reduce likelihood of breakdown and crisis in caring role



Enable people to remain in employment

## LONGER TERM



## OTHER SUPPORT



Carers of West Lothian is the local carer support organisation and can offer information, advice and support to carers on a wide range of relevant topics including short breaks.

Visit their [website](http://www.carers-westlothian.com) to check the eligible criteria or contact **01506 284 000/office@carers-westlothian.com**.



Adult and Young Carers who may be eligible for paid support, including short breaks, can contact their local social work office for more information and to request an Adult Carer Support Plan or Young Carer Statement. Visit the [Health and Social Care Partnership website](http://www.westlothian.gov.uk/health-social-care-partnership) for more information, or reach out via the Community Connection hubs:

- **Blackburn, Partnership Centre**, Ashgrove, Blackburn, EH47 7LL Tuesday mornings between 10am – 12pm
- **Broxburn, Strathbrock Partnership Centre**, 189A West Main St, Broxburn, EH52 5LH Monday afternoons between 2pm – 4pm
- **Fauldhouse, The Hub**, 10 Main St, Fauldhouse, EH47 9HX Tuesday mornings between 10am – 12pm
- **Livingston, North Partnership Centre** Carmondean Centre Rd, Deans, Livingston, EH54 8PT Tuesday afternoons between 2pm – 4pm
- **Strathbrock Partnership Centre**, 189A W Main St, Broxburn EH52 5LH Mondays 2pm – 4pm
- **The Dale Hub**, Unit 26 Bathville Business Centre, Armadale Industrial Estate, EH48 2ND Thursday 2.00 to 3.00pm
- **West Calder, The New Café**, 8 Main St, West Calder, EH55 8DA Wednesday mornings between 10am – 12pm



The **Shared Care Scotland** website contains a searchable directory of short breaks including funding sources.

**Euan's Guide** is a disabled access review website that aims to 'remove the fear of the unknown' and inspire people to try new places.

**ALISS** (A Local Information System for Scotland) aims to increase the availability of health and wellbeing information for people living with long term conditions, disabled people and unpaid carers.

These national links can be helpful in signposting carers to short breaks within and outside their own area, especially if they live in a different area from the person they care for.

Find out more about Self-Directed Support (SDS) in West Lothian on the **Self Directed Support section** of the Health and Social Care Partnership website.

Find out more about West Lothian Council's Contributions Policy on the **Assessment, Eligibility and Financial Contributions** section of the HSCP website.

Information on unpaid carers can also be found on the **Scottish Government's website**.

## FEEDBACK & REVIEW

This Short Breaks Services Statement has been produced in partnership with Carers of West Lothian and West Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (H&SCP). This statement will be reviewed annually by the H&SCP, Carers of West Lothian and carers.

