

West Lothian Children's Rights Report 2017-2020



Getting it Right
for West
Lothian's 
Children & Families

West Lothian
Health & Social Care Partnership
westlothianhsc.org.uk



**West Lothian
Council**

Children's Rights Report 2017-2020

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Introduction

The Scottish Government has committed to implementing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and seek to incorporate it into Scots law to make it unlawful for public authorities, including the Scottish Government, to act incompatibly with the UNCRC requirements

In West Lothian we recognise that investment in our children and young people is one of the most valuable long-term investments that we can make.

Committing shared resources to the delivery and development of services that focus on prevention and early intervention enables us to meet children's needs at the earliest opportunity supporting them to achieve their full potential. We need to continue embedding Children's rights in our service delivery and every child should be supported to know and understand their rights and be encouraged to express their views in matters that are important to them.



The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 aims to put children and young people at the heart of service planning and encourages a shift towards early intervention and prevention rather than crisis response. The Act strengthens children's rights and ensures that public services work together to design, plan and deliver services for children and families in Scotland and requires public bodies to produce a report every three years.

Partners in West Lothian are committed to upholding and embedding the UNCRC at every level of our services. The UNCRC has 54 articles in all, each outlining in detail the basic rights of every child. These can be summarised into four core principles:

- Non-discrimination
- Devotion to the best interests of the child
- The right to life, survival and development
- Respect for the views of the child.



The Scottish Government have summarised the UNCRC 54 articles into 8 themed 'Clusters' and in compliance with Part 1 (section 2) of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, partners in West Lothian will report on the steps that we have taken to further children's rights in West Lothian.

This report will reflect the progress the West Lothian Children & Families Strategic Planning Group have achieved covering the period from 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2020.

Internal and external partners including Social Policy, Education, NHS, Anti-Poverty Service, Housing, Community Learning and Development, 3rd Sector, Young Carer Service and Who Cares? Scotland all contributed to the report. The report reflects the collaborative partnership working that West Lothian adopt when we are all working towards the best interests of our children, young people and families.

Cluster 1 General measures of implementation

UNCRC CLUSTER	UNCRC RELATED ARTICLES
<p>General measures of implementation</p> <p>This cluster focuses on what government is expected to do to implement the UNCRC through law, policy and decisions which impact on children. It applies to legal measures (through legislation). It also applies to non-legal measures which progress implementation of the Convention including: national strategies and action plans; resource allocation and monitoring; children's rights training, awareness-raising and capacity-building; development and collection of data on children's lives; collaboration with all sectors including children.</p>	<p>(4) implementation of the Convention (42) knowledge of rights (44) implementation measures</p>

We ensure that the services we provide for children and young people conform to established national standards and provide high quality services and staffing (Article 4).

The Children’s Services Plan 2017-2020 was the key Strategic Plan which was developed to encompass the following principles:

- Getting the right balance between universal and targeted services
- Re-distributing resources towards targeted activities with individuals, groups and communities
- Improved integrated working
- Improving outcomes for the individual child and their family
- Focusing on early intervention by shifting resources from managing crisis to building resilience

The Plan highlighted the importance of Children’s Rights and clarified partners in West Lothian commitment to upholding and embedding the Articles of the UNCRC.

The governance arrangements for the planning and delivery of services for children, young people and their families is monitored at a West Lothian wide level by the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group (CFSPG) along with other partnership groups. All services and activities identified within the Children’s Services Plan 2017 – 2020 were planned and developed with regard to the national landscape and the following West Lothian Strategic Plans:-

WEST LOTHIAN CONTEXT
Community Planning Partnerships Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) 2013 -2023
West Lothian Child Protection Committee
West Lothian Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2019-2023
West Lothian Corporate Parenting Plan 2020 -2023
West Lothian Carers Strategy 2020 - 2023
NHS Lothian’s Strategy for Children and Young People 2014 - 2020
West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy 2018 -2023

WEST LoTHIAN CONTEXT
West Lothian Local Child Poverty Action Report
Community Learning & Development Plan 2018 - 2021
Strategic Commissioning Plan Alcohol and Drug Services 2020 - 2023
West Lothian Play Strategy
West Lothian Raising Attainment Strategy 2018/2019
Community Justice Strategic Plan 2019-2024
Youth Justice Development Plan 2016 - 2021

Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) is the national approach in Scotland to improving outcomes and supporting the wellbeing of our children and young people by offering the right help at the right time from the right people. It supports them and their parent(s) to work in partnership with the services that can help them. The Act places key elements of GIRFEC in statute. In particular, section 96 provides a statutory definition of wellbeing, relating it directly to the eight wellbeing indicators – Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included (sometimes known by the acronym SHANARRI). Articles (2) (3) (4) (6) (12) (42) (44)

GIRFEC is implemented throughout West Lothian’s services which is underpinned by Children (Scotland) Act 1995 and Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014.



All schools incorporate the UNCRC into their improvement plans and children not only learn about what the 42 articles are but what these mean in terms of their own lives. Staff and children worked in partnership to create class charters detailing the 42 articles which are designed to recognise and uphold their rights. (Article 42)

NHS Lothian is committed to equality and diversity across all of its services promoting health and wellbeing for all. It reviews its equality outcomes every 4 years and promotes the right to access health services that are inclusive for all (Articles – 2, 42). An Equality and Impact Assessment is carried out to ensure that children have the right to easily accessible health services at the right time (Article 24)

From birth to adulthood children’s rights have been embedded in NHS Lothian ‘s health care services. Health Visitors have implemented GIRFEC practice by the introduction of the Named Health Visitor role and ensuring every child has a child’s plan which follows them from birth and into their school years. When more support is required to ensure a child is meeting its full potential, Health Visitors will refer on to appropriate services as agreed by the family. Child’s Planning Meetings with multi-agency colleagues ensure that services are coordinated with the child at the centre. In delivering these services NHS Lothian ensure that national standards are adhered to (Article 4, 12, 42, 44)

The Family Nurse Partnership is a person-centred, preventative intervention programme offered to first time parents aged 20 or under, and clients aged 21 to 24 year old who have been care experienced. Eligible clients are identified following their booking appointment with their midwife and contacted directly by their Family Nurse. The Family will then visit the client in their own home from early pregnancy until the child reaches the age of 2 years old.

The Family Nurse works with a range of evidence-based materials tailored to meet the needs of their clients and their children, enhancing outcomes for the client and their child, giving them the best start in life.

Within West Lothian we have 10 Family Nurses and a supervisor, and cover the whole of West Lothian

Mental Health Training was co designed and delivered by Edinburgh University and WLC champions board. In considering the impact from training designed and delivered by the Champions Board in partnership with Edinburgh University it was noted that there was 90% attendance from practitioners and managers in the West Lothian area during the evaluation process.

From 2017, every school has had one or more Health and Wellbeing (HWB) Champion/s, supported by a designated Network Leader. A comprehensive training programme has been delivered, encompassing key elements of HWB inclusive of auditing and embedding the wellbeing indicators to identify key strengths and gaps; sharing best practice; Inspirational local speakers and external national agencies such as the team working on a revised Relationships and Sexual Health Programme.



In 2017, 100% of West Lothian Schools agreed to continue to support the Unicef Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) service level agreement on a pro rata basis, which allows for free assessments and reports. Unicef changed their award to a Gold, Silver and Bronze system in 2018 with a shifted focus away from a checklist of outcomes to a process-based assessment. There is an ongoing roll out of schools awarded in the new system. To date the following have been awarded: -

**Gold Award -1 secondary, 6 Primaries and 1 ASN school /
Silver Award – 2 Secondary’s and 5 Primaries**

Cluster 2 General principles of the UNCRC

UNCRC CLUSTER	UNCRC RELATED ARTICLES
<p>General principles of the UNCRC This cluster focuses on the four general principles of the UNCRC</p>	<p>(2) non-discrimination (3) best interests of the child (6) life, survival and development (12) respect for the views of the child</p>

We respect children and young people's rights to develop to their full potential in early learning and childcare settings, school, home and community (Article 6).

Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safety of pupils including: Attendance At School Policy and Operational Procedures; Safe Arrivals Procedure; Guidance for Schools on Pupils Absconding; Children Missing from Education Procedure; Managing Critical Incidents Policy Framework.

All policies and procedures are designed in line with GIRFEC and with a child at the centre approach. The GIRFEC wellbeing indicators are used as a working tool to monitor, assess and support pupil mental, emotional and physical wellbeing.

We can demonstrate how the principle and practice of non-discrimination have been taken into account in our services (Article 2)

West Lothian Pride

West Lothian Pride (WLP) was Learning and Development (CLD) response to our Lesbian, Gay, youth group's interest in holding a support people within our local celebration event, including a parade a large variety of stalls, activities, entertainment. It provides an build positive relationships, create isolation and raise awareness.



established in 2014 by Community Youth Services and partners in Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) local Pride event to celebrate and community. WLP is an annual and the Pride Village, which houses food and family friendly opportunity to make connections, community cohesion, reduce

We know that LGBT young people suffer greater mental health pressures than young people generally. Therefore, our work is crucial in supporting them and providing access to services and advice as well as promoting a celebration of culture and diversity in the annual Pride event.

A recognised achievement in tackling inequalities in 2018 was CLD Youth Services becoming the first Local Authority service in Scotland to achieve the Gold Chartermark award from LGBT Youth Scotland. The service continues to actively promoting diversity, equality, inclusion and LGBT rights into all aspects of working with young people.

We use a range of measures to seek children and young people's views about matters that affect them and always consider the child's views in determining what is in the child's best interests (Articles 3 and 12)

Children's views are respected and used to inform decision-making at class, school and local authority level. Pupil voice groups, pupil councils and house captain teams seek and represent the views of children and give pupil views a forum to be heard.

Children and Young People's views are sought across the Education Community in a variety of ways:

Universal:

- Regular school-based pupil evaluation and gathering of views is completed consistently throughout the school year including self-reporting, and quality improvement activity including participatory budgeting for targeted Pupil Equity Funding spends.
- Pupils councils are running in all West Lothian Schools.
- Strong Personal Social Emotional (PSE) programmes running in schools supporting pupil voice and Wellbeing education for all children across the authority.

Targeted:

- Assessment of Wellbeing Documentation seeks pupil views on their education and wellbeing.
- During Childs Planning Meetings pupil views are sought to impact change plans.
- Individual Education Plans seeks views of children and parents in a solution orientated manner to ensure needs are met.
- Additional Support Needs (ASN) schools have trained practitioners to complete Talking Mats with children who struggle to provide views through traditional methods.
- Person centred planning documentation is used across schools ensuring that children's views are at the centre of all planning for the future, using My world triangle to inform discussions.

CLD Youth Services supports young people with staff members working in partnership with young people to develop and support forums in local areas enabling members to come together to provide their views around issues which affect young people. They are encouraged and supported to participate on their local community centre management committees. Young people participating in youth clubs and projects are involved in the co-design and delivery of programmes; taking up leadership roles, for example facilitating workshops. Through our Youth Work in Schools Programme, we deliver the Democracy Challenge to all S4 pupils as well as representative training to members of pupil/house councils which enables them to work together effectively. In February of 2020, the Democracy Challenge was presented in all of the 11 mainstream secondary schools, with a combined roll of 2,067 S4 pupils. In total, 1,512 young people attended the sessions and 509 were added to the register. Having completed a ballot paper at the end of the session, 1,118 young people indicated that as a result of attending, they would be more likely to vote in the next election and 287 indicated that they would be more likely to take an interest locally, e.g. pupil council, community council, local forums and Scottish Youth Parliament.

In 2019, we appointed a Community Education Worker with a remit focused on increasing participation. This member of staff has responsibility for supporting our young people who are elected to the Scottish Youth Parliament and more broadly for developing a participation structure which is meaningful and effective in enabling young people to have their voices heard.

In October of 2019 we brought together young people in West Lothian to ensure that they were able to contribute to the refresh of the Scottish Government's National Youth Work Strategy. Forty young people attending groups supported by local authority and third sector youth organisations participated in the consultation to inform the strategy. Feedback from the consultation event identified that one of the most important issues for young people who attended was young people's mental health and wellbeing, in terms of access to services, stigma and related challenges. A young people's working group was set up to look at what they could do collectively to address these issues in West Lothian. In 2020, the service co-produced and piloted a mental health and wellbeing programme called Me Time. The pilot was successful and the service has since run 5 x 12 week programmes and takes referrals via the multi-agency Wellbeing Recovery Group.

In 2020 as part of the review of CLD Youth Services, over 300 young people participated in a survey. The review was carried out over the period 21 January – 31 March 2020. The review focused on the wide range of learning opportunities offered through the service including both universal and targeted services, projects and programmes. The review focused on the impact of youth services provision in:

- tackling inequalities;
- developing skills to improve employability;
- increasing participation;
- raising attainment and achievement;
- and promoting health and wellbeing of young people.

The outcomes of the survey and review have informed the development and implementation of a new youth services model, concentrating efforts to maximise benefit to those in most need through effective deployment of resources and partnership working to ensure positive outcomes for young people and communities.

The West Lothian **Having Your Say (HYS) group** has been in existence since 2003. The role and remit of this group is to enable children and young people to understand the UNCRC and to provide a forum for participation for looked after young children and people in the area, enabling them to have a say in health and social care issues affecting them. In the period of 2017-2020 an average of 20 children per year attended the group and were supported. The children and young people participated in various projects and consultations. Examples of participation include:



NHS Lothian promotes children's right to health and wellbeing across all its services by ensuring the child is at the centre of their own care. It seeks the views of children and young people on a variety of platforms which supports shaping of services (Article 12).

NHS Lothian GIRFEC processes ensure that each child has a Child's Health Plan which coordinates the needs of the child with equality and without discrimination providing services as required (Article 2, 3, 9, 12 & 24).

NHS Lothian supports the investigation of complaints through our Patient Experience Team and use the learning from complaints to shape future services

Cluster 3 Civil Rights and Freedoms

UNCRC CLUSTER	UNCRC RELATED ARTICLES
<p>Civil rights and freedoms</p> <p>This cluster focuses on children's civil rights and freedoms including: children's right to move freely in public space and to meet with others; children's right to think and believe what they like, to access information and speak their mind as long it is not harmful to others; children's right to keep personal matters and communications private; and their right to be protected from inhumane or degrading treatment</p>	<p>(7) birth registration, name, nationality, care (8) protection and preservation of identity (13) freedom of expression (14) freedom of thought, belief and religion (15) freedom of association (16) right to privacy (17) access to information from the media (28) right to education (37) inhumane treatment and detention (39) recovery from trauma and reintegration</p>

Information sharing is proportionate and appropriate and complies with the Data Protection Act while recognising a child's right to privacy (Article 16)

General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) notices that are provided throughout social policy recognising the rights of the child balanced against parental rights and responsibilities to information. Subject Data Access Requests (SDAR) gather their views if a parent requests information if they are 13 or over.

Children's views take a central role and inform decision-making processes. Where possible, views are sought in relation to information sharing with parents in relation to gender identity and use of preferred names and pronouns as defined within our Transgender Pupils and Students guidance document.

Children's right to privacy is respected and their views are central to decisions around sharing of information with parents in relation to sexual health. Education work in partnership with NHS Healthy Respect and Social Policy and adhere to Edinburgh and Lothians Interagency Child Protection and to their Under-age Sexual Activity guidance to ensure children's right to privacy is respected where there are no additional child protection concerns.

NHS Lothian at all times seeks the child and/or parent's consent to share information unless there are direct child protection concerns. Our patient record system TRAK has consent as a key field within the recording system to ensure health practitioners are informing parents how information is shared and with whom. This is discussed as routine at all New Baby visits and at any time a child requires referral to other health or support services (Article 16).

The child planning meetings involve hearing the voice of the child. Our documentation and meetings involve gathering information from the parents and assessing the child's behaviours to ensure we are capturing the parent /child's views especially when the child is very young.

At all of our childhood immunisation clinics informed parental consent is required before a child is immunised. If a parent is unable to attend the adult bringing the young person must provide us with a signed consent slip

before immunisation is offered to the child. Older children are able to self-consent from age 12 years for immunisations once they are assessed as fully understanding what they are consenting for.

Information materials are available in a range of formats, languages and in specific settings in order to meet the needs of individual children and young people (Article 17)

Children are encouraged and supported to access information from a range of sources including the internet. Children are taught how to use digital devices in a safe and appropriate manner and a Responsible User Agreement outlines the expectations of pupils and staff when using both their own and school devices.

The Child Disability service have talking mats and other forms of communication available for children to share views. Translation services are used within social work and housing services to support children where their first language is not English.

All of our health promotion leaflets and immunisation information leaflets are available in different languages to enable inclusivity. Translation services are used both during contacts with families and for written word as necessary. In addition, where required the Council have numerous translated leaflets and translation services available to ensure children and families understand and can respond to their needs no matter their circumstances.

We support children and young people's freedom of association through the provision of public spaces where they can meet safely (Article 15)

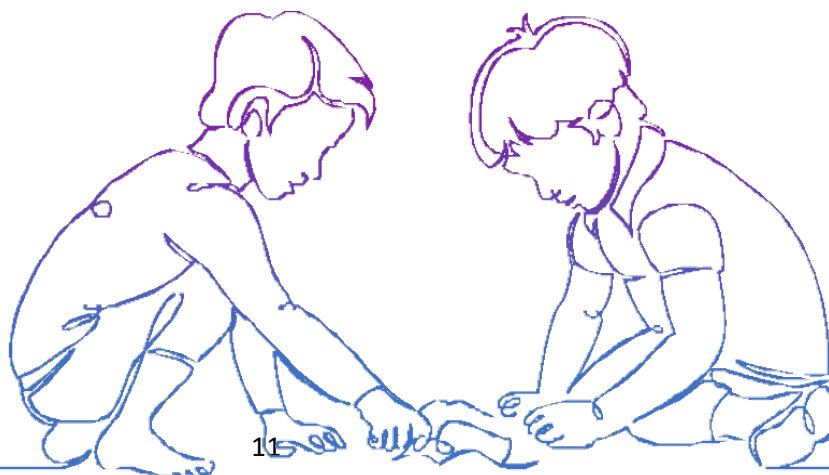
Examples of this is Council planning for parks and recreation areas and the new schools and housing built up to 2020.

The holiday activity programme runs throughout the year with structured safe place activities for children and young people.

We have a number of 3rd sector organisations who offer various drop in and safe place locations for children and young people to meet up and feel safe.

Children and young people are not subject to any form of treatment, which is deemed to be inhuman or degrading and have access to legal and other assistance in instances where they are detained (Article 37)

Where required children and young people are supported to contact CLAN Child law, Scottish child law and staff will access legal services within West Lothian council for advice and assistance to support their rights.



Cluster 4 Violence against Children

UNCRC CLUSTER	UNCRC RELATED ARTICLES
<p>Violence against children</p> <p>This cluster focuses on situations where children experience violence in all its forms including physical and mental violence, abuse and neglect, maltreatment and exploitation including sexual abuse; it highlights the right of children to services which support their physical and psychological recovery; and emphasises that children should not be subjected to torture or to other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment including physical or corporal punishment</p>	<p>(19) protection from violence, abuse and neglect (39) recovery from trauma and reintegration (37)(a) inhumane treatment and detention - no child subjected to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment (28)(2) right to education - school approaches to managing behaviour and discipline</p>

Approaches to managing behaviour and discipline in school and in other settings such as residential care and foster care are appropriate and positively support children and young people (Article 28 (2)).

All staff within Education Services receive annual Child Protection and Safeguarding refresher training which ensures staff have the knowledge and awareness to help keep children safe from violence, abuse and neglect. All staff also receive more detailed training on an annual basis on different areas of child protection. Between 2017-20 this has included focuses on Child Sexual Exploitation, Neglect, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Children affected by Domestic Abuse and Children affected by Parental Substance Misuse. Detailed child protection training is also provided to all probationer teachers when they begin working within the local authority and also to staff working at our partnership private nursery and Early Learning Centres.

Every educational establishment has identified Designated Members of Staff (DMS) for Child Protection who undertake additional training with the Education Services Child Protection Officer (ESCPO). This training ensures all schools have at least one DMS who is available for staff to discuss and report CP concerns to, who is responsible for ensuring appropriate information sharing and recording and who can monitor and quality assure CP and safeguarding processes within the establishment.

The ESCPO oversees quality assurances across all establishments and forms part of the Validated Self Evaluation team. The Child Protection and Safeguarding Quality Assurance Self Evaluation document identifies twenty key indicators and plays a central role in ensuring we are meeting our CP and Safeguarding obligations as set out within the National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland 2014, the Edinburgh and Lothians Multi-Agency Child Protection Procedures 2015 and How Good Is Your School 4 section 2.1. Assessment of these twenty indicators involves discussions with school staff and importantly, conversations with pupils about how safe, supported and respected they feel in school.

Support for pupils follows the guidance and procedures set out in the Promoting Positive Relationships in West Lothian Education Establishments Policy. This sets out how we seek to get it right for every child through our Continuum of Support, restorative approaches, appropriate interventions, positive staff/pupil relationships and a strong focus on inclusive education for all pupils.

In Social Policy training is offered to residential staff and foster carers including child protection, attachment, challenging behaviours and de-escalation methods. Domestic Abuse basic awareness raising which includes impact on the child, are offered quarterly to multi agency sessions with up to 25 workers trained per session.

NHS Lothian provides training in Child Protection for all staff working with children and families. Health Visitors use the Scottish Government's GIRFEC/SHANNARI indicators and National Practice Model to assess each child/family's situation and follow the National Guidance for Child Protection Scotland (2021) if abuse is identified. They work with essential services such as Social Work, Education and 3rd sector in child protection planning to ensure pre-school children are safe in the family home especially where there is evidence of drug misuse, domestic violence, physical, sexual, emotional abuse and neglect. The Health Visitor will contribute to Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Groups providing health support to improve outcomes for pre-school children as agreed in the Child's Plan. Health Visitors will also work with Scottish Children's Reporter Administration (SCRA) to improve outcomes for pre-school children (Article 33, 34).

We provide services to protect children and young people from violence including abuse and neglect, maltreatment and exploitation and promote children and young people's recovery if they have experienced violence (Article 19 &39)

The Domestic and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT) provides a specialised service to adults and children in West Lothian who are experiencing or have experienced domestic abuse. All adult support workers are cross-trained and involved in supporting survivors of both domestic and sexual abuse.

Services to children and young people aged between 5 – 16 who have experienced domestic abuse are delivered in a range of ways to meet their individual needs and this can include individual support and group work programmes. Individual support to children and young people is tailored to suit their age, ability, awareness and individual needs and circumstances.

All of the work is heavily rights based and a lot of work around rights and responsibilities is undertaken, particularly what children and young people are not responsible for. We ensure C&YP are aware they have a right to physical and emotional safety and security, to express themselves and have their voices heard and participate fully in services offered to them and all work is evaluated with C&YP. Based on feedback sessions have been changed and also design our groupwork as we go along based on the needs and views of the group.

In 2013, West Lothian introduced the CEDAR (Children Experiencing Domestic Abuse Recovery) programme. This is a unique way of working with children, young people and their mothers who have experienced domestic abuse.

The DASAT team has specialised staff to provide support to all women experiencing domestic abuse, rape and or sexual assault. These includes:

- the DASAT Duty service
- the Specialised Court Advocacy service
- National Advocacy Project
- Lisa Project
- the Almond Project
- a counselling service

The Public Protection Committee (now separated into the Child Protection Committee and Adult Protection Committee) has oversight of procedures and processes within the local authority to protect children from violence, abuse and harm. Appropriate multi-agency workstreams are identified and multi-agency subcommittees meet regularly to evaluate different aspects of public protection. We have an interagency referral discussion (IRD) review group discussed at the child protection committee and any actions identified.

NHS Lothian Child Protection Guidelines have been imbedded in practice and provide the child with the right to be safe and protected. This is embedded in all child protection training for health practitioners and in practice.

NHS Lothian children's community services staff are all trained to an appropriate standard in child protection. They actively discuss child protection reports for case conferences with the parents of the child if under 5 years and with the child if older and at school so that their views are listened to and they understand the reasons for the report (Article 12, 37(a)). Where children have experience of abuse and require support for recovery NHS Lothian will refer children to appropriate local services with their agreement (Article 39).

Violence Against Women Subcommittee (now known as Gender Based Violence Subcommittee) brings together multi-agency partners to ensure we are working within the principles of Safe and Together to identify and support children and adults impacted by Gender Based Violence (GBV). Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meets monthly (fortnightly as of 2020) to discuss children and non-offending parents at high risk of harm due to domestic violence situations.

In 2019 the St. Margaret's Cluster was nominated for a Quality Improvement Award "Most Innovative or Inspiring Project" in recognition of very effective partnership working with NHS Lothian to develop the Building Positive Relationships Initiative. This resulted in a decrease of 82% in relation to violent and distressed behaviour incidents.

From 2017 onwards The Children's Rights officer pioneered a role from the work of Scottish Women's Aid young experts and Children and Young People's Commissioners team in their project "Powered Up Powered Down", leading to the creation of a super listener or as it emerged to be Court Contact Children's Rights Officer (CCRO) – premier rights advocate for children in civil cases in Scotland. This role was provided within the civil courts in West Lothian where the voice of children who had experience of domestic abuse were asked their views in civil court contact cases. It is funded through Delivering Equally Safe money from the Scottish Government and West Lothian Council have expanded this role to full time and incorporated it into the corporate parenting plan.

From 2018 to 2020 the Court ordered contact children's rights officer received **206 referrals** for support and rights advice for children and young people with **54 referrals direct from Livingston Sheriff Court**, promoting the voice of the child in civil child welfare hearings. This service also provides referrals to other services when the Rights officer can identify unmet need, thus promoting the child's right to physical and emotional safety. The CCCRO will also ensure that children are aware and understand the decisions which are being made about them.

Voices heard in other forums

Initial Referral Discussions (IRD) between social work, Police and Health can lead to children and young people being interviewed through the Visually Recorded Interview process or VRI. The following numbers of children have been VRI'd in West Lothian. This directly amplified the view of the child and also enabled partners to safety plan and assess risk for children and their families.

- 2017 – 156
- 2018 – 156
- 2019 – 153
- 2020 – 195

The Graded Care Profile is a tool to assist professionals assess the quality of care that a child receives. It is child centred, focused exclusively on the child's lived experience. The tool also promotes a shared understanding between professionals. Working with parents/carers the areas of care that need improvement can be identified and support provided. Parental strengths are also identified and can be built upon. Staff in Children's Social Work Services and Health Visiting have been trained to use the tool, often working together alongside parents.

Parental neglect violates a child's right to:

- parental guidance;
- reach their developmental potential;
- achieve educationally;
- socialisation and stimulation;
- be recognised as an individual with their own thoughts and needs.



Cluster 5 Family environment and alternative care

UNCRC CLUSTER	UNCRC RELATED ARTICLES
<p>Family environment and alternative care</p> <p>This cluster focuses on: the primary role of parents and the support parents should have to bring up their children; the right of children to not be separated from parents unless this is in their best interests; the right of children to be well cared for where they live apart from their parents; the right of a child to maintain contact with both parents if that is in their best interests; the right of a child to have a say when decisions are made about where they should live, with placements subject to regular review; and the right of all children to be protected against all forms of violence and abuse</p>	<p>(5) parental guidance and a child’s evolving capacities (9) separation from parents (10) family reunification (11) abduction and non-return of children (12) respect for the views of the child (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance (19) protection from violence, abuse and neglect (20) children unable to live with their family (21) adoption (25) review of treatment in care (27) adequate standard of living (39) recovery from trauma and reintegration</p>

We take into account children's evolving capacities, making sure that all younger children are able to access their rights (Article 5)

Children’s rights are embedded in the statutory functions, duties, guidance and practice of all of West Lothian Council’s adoption and permanence work and in the Council’s Adoption and Permanence Panel.

Children’s views are sought at every stage throughout the adoption and permanence process and their views must be included in all reports to the Adoption & Permanence Panel including those provided by social worker, carers, parents and guardians.

The majority of children discussed at panel are under the age 5 and many are under the age of 3. They are therefore often unable to provide their views verbally, in person or in writing. For these children their views are actively sought from a trusted adult or advocate.

Children mature enough to attend panel are invited to do so and flexible arrangements are made to accommodate this for example children attending virtually, speaking on the phone, speaking with only the chair rather than the entire panel, being at only part of the meeting etc. Children not wishing to attend are invited to provide their views in any format they are most comfortable with be this in writing, or using many of the tools available, for example CAPR Child’s wishes and feelings or the Children’s Participation Toolkit for Social Workers (activities & worksheets), and through advocacy.

Information leaflets on the Adoption & Permanence Panel are provided to parents and guardians and they are invited to attend the Adoption and Permanence Panel to clarify they understand the recommendation being made, and for them to provide their views. Parents and guardians are actively encouraged to seek legal advice and to have an advocate present with them at the Panel. Parents and guardians who do not wish to attend are invited to be represented by an advocate or alternatively to provide their views in writing to the panel supported by an advocate. Parents and guardians are then provided with written information to explain the decision of the panel and are encouraged to discuss this with the child’s social worker, their legal representative and or their advocate.

The leading principle in all decision-making concerning adoption and permanence is the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child throughout their life being the paramount consideration. West Lothian Council performs its duty to ensure the child's right to a stable family life, to ascertain the child's views regarding decision making, and having regard so far as reasonably practicable to the views of parents, guardians and other relatives.

The Adoption and permanence panel examines recommendations in terms of promoting and maintaining family relationship including contact and children's rights to be placed together with their siblings unless there is evidence living together is not in their best interests nor will safeguard and protect the child's welfare. The panel provides an objective view on assessments where recommendations are being made that a child requires an adoption or permanence order, whether that plan is likely to best meet the needs of the child or if there is some better practicable alternative for the child. Any decisions recommending adoption or permanence orders for children are subject to judicial review.

The panel also provides an independent view whether a prospective adopter is a suitable adoptive parent and whether they are a suitable parent for a particular child. The panel examines the robustness and fairness of the assessment and recommendation and identifies gaps or unexplored areas.

Education establishments utilise Pupil Equity Funding to support children and families. A partnership with Action for Children is in place and family support workers support attendance, develop positive relationships with parents and support them to meet their children's needs.

Education staff work in partnership with other agencies to support children who are or have been care experienced. Staff are aware of the impact of adverse childhood experiences and adopt trauma-informed practices to support children's recovery and best meet their individual needs.

NHS Lothian's children and young people who are care experienced are offered a full health assessment soon after moving into placement by either Health Visitors or School Nurses. They are then referred to appropriate services dependant on their needs (Article 5, 6, 23, 24).

We provide support to children and young people who experience complex family circumstances (e.g. young carers; children with experience of domestic abuse; children who have a parent in prison) (Article 18)

Our Health Visitors and School Nurses are trained to identify signs of Domestic Abuse and our Health Visiting managers engage and chair Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) services. There is also referral to our Domestic Abuse Support services within West Lothian to provide more intensive support.

The Whole Family Support Service (now the Families Together Service) brings together agency partners to discuss children and families who are in crisis and identify appropriate supports to help ensure family placements do not break down.

Every child has the right to be heard in matters affecting them and has the right to participate in the life of their family, community and society (Article 12)

The Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) service was introduced in 2016 and is available for all children and young people in west Lothian where decisions are required regarding their care. This approach places the children's needs at the centre, giving them and their family a voice and a say in decisions that affect them. The aim of FGDM is to put the child's voice at the centre of decision making and to keep children safe and at home within their families wherever possible and promotes a child's right to be with their parents, and where this is not safe an opportunity to support children to stay with their extended family.

We seek and take account of children and young people's views prior to making decisions that affect them (Article 12)

West Lothian Council (WLC) have commissioned Who Cares? Scotland (WC?S) since 2016 in order to provide independent advocacy to children and young people who are or have been cared for away from home by WLC up to the age of 26. They led on the setting up of the Champions Board who have implemented various approaches to support participation and engagement. These have taken the form of school-based participation groups, one-to-one sessions, small group sessions, drop-in sessions and national events.

Families are provided with the necessary, additional and intensive supports to sustain families together where possible. This includes appropriate and proportionate staffing response that allows risk and need to be managed effectively. Where children do require alternative care provision there is a clear emphasis via My Planning, 'Rights Based Justice' to ensure that children's Rights are upheld and implemented. If Secure care is required there is adherence to the Secure Pathway Standards that ensure there is compliance with children rights and their family connections. Where alternative care arrangements are necessary there is a direct involvement and participation with children to ensure they are actively involved in their own planning, with dialogue and involvement from independent advocacy (Who Cares Scotland) services which children/young people have continual access to.

Following analysis of the profile of care experienced children and young people at the time, the Care Experienced Children and Young People Funding for West Lothian was used in the first year to establish a service to support our most disengaged young people in order to facilitate their access to learning and qualifications. This was a joint approach across education and social policy with both teaching and family support workers coming together as a team to provide holistic support to enable the young people to achieve relevant qualifications and to enhance their confidence and wellbeing in general through building strong relationships with key staff. As a result, every young person involved in the project has been supported to achieve qualifications which has then enabled them to focus on positive destinations beyond education. Young people's views on the project have been gathered from the beginning as part of the long-term evaluation strategy and the service has been shaped using this feedback. The project has become an established service which continues to support our care experienced young people who are significantly disengaged to be empowered to engage with a wide range of post-school opportunities.

In West Lothian *Viewpoint* was used to gather the views of looked after children. The information below provides a snapshot of some of the responses collated during the period 1st February 2020 to 10th June 2020. The information is broken down under the desired outcomes we work towards within services that support our Looked after Children and Young People and are in line with the Wellbeing Indicators: *Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included*. The results for children aged over 7 years are as follows:

Safe

Ensuring that our looked after children and young people are safe is a key responsibility of us as Corporate Parents:

- 96%, of those who completed the viewpoint questionnaire reported that they feel safe where they live now.
- 100% of the children and young people reported that nobody bullies or picks on them where they live now. This is an increase from 96% in 2018/19.

Healthy

Ensuring that we work together to improve the health and wellbeing of our looked after children and young people is a key responsibility of us as Corporate Parents:

- 75% stated they were not worried about how angry or frustrated they felt which is an increase on the previous year when then figure was 69%.

- 89% stated that they would describe themselves as happy most of the time, this is an increase on the previous period when the figure was 80%.

Achieving

Ensuring that our looked after children and young people are supported to achieve their potential is key:

- 82% responded that they thought that they were doing well at school, this is a decrease on the figure as reported in the previous period which was 90%
- 82% responded that they were getting the help that they needed at school, this is reduction on the figure reported in the previous period which was 87%

Nurtured

Feeling nurtured is something we, as Corporate Parents, aim to ensure all our looked after children and young people feel:

- 89% responded that they were settled where they live now, this is an increase on the previous period when the figure was 85%
- 96% responded that their carers were easy to talk to, this is an increase on the previous period when the figure was 90%.

Active

Ensuring that our looked after children and young people are active is essential:

- 67% of looked after children young people reported that they were able to exercise or play support 2 to 3 times per week, this is reduction on the figure reported in the previous period when the figure was 78%
- 81% of looked after children and young people reported that they can do hobbies and sport as often as they like, this is a reduction on the previous period when the figure was 94%

Respected and Responsible

As Corporate Parents we want to ensure that our looked after children and young people are respected and are supported to be responsible:

- 89% of looked after children and young people reported that they thought that their views and opinions were listened to this is the same figure reported in the previous period
- 93% of looked after children and young people reported that they had enough information to make decisions about their future, this is an increase on the previous period where the figure was 84%.

Included

We are committed to ensuring that our looked after children and young people are included:

- 78% of looked after children and young people reported that they were able to keep in touch with family and friends as much as they want, this is an increase on the previous period when the figure was 65%
- 48% of looked after children and young people reported that they were able to go to clubs, activities or events in their local area, this is a decrease on the previous period when the figure reported was 69%.

We provide support and services to parents/carers in order that they can care for their children (Article 18)

In November 2018, it was agreed that a model of Intensive and Crisis family support known as Whole families support service would be piloted with two key aims which were:

- Achieving a shift in the balance of care
- Significantly reducing the number of young people accommodated at a time of crisis.

The role and remit was to work 8am - 10pm 7 days per week to offer support to families when they felt they

required this the most.

The feedback from families was that:

- 92% of families either strongly agreed or agreed that the service helped them make a positive change
- 96% of families either strongly agreed or agreed that the service being available at evenings and weekends was supportive and required
- 89% of families strongly agreed or agreed that the service supported them to keep their child/children in their care or the care of their family.

Parents, carers and family members are by far the most important influences in their children's lives. When parents are involved in their child's education, children do better on a wide range of measures including attainment, attendance, behaviour, confidence and attitudes towards learning. This is why it is so important that schools work in partnership with parents throughout the child's learning journey. West Lothian have in place the Parental Involvement and Engagement Framework (PIE) 2018-2022 (article 5) whose overarching aim is;-

Parents and families are fully supported to engage in their child's education throughout their learning journey.

Examples from our PIE Framework outcomes of support includes:

- All parents and families will feel welcomed and encouraged to be included in the life and work of the school through building respectful, supportive relationships.
- Parents' individual needs are recognised and supported.
- Parents know how to access information about the school in a way that suits them.
- Parents know how to raise concerns or provide feedback.
- Parents understand the progress their child is making and the information/support they require to be able to support their child's learning.
- Parents feel confident to seek support and advice from school staff.
- Parents are encouraged and supported to continue their child's learning at home.
- Parents have access to family learning opportunities to increase their confidence in supporting their children.

NHS Lothian promotes children reaching their full potential by offering services that support parental engagement in their child's development. We provide targeted health services when children require more support (Article 3 & 6).

Our management team is informed of their duties and fulfils their responsibilities as corporate parents (Article 18)

As Corporate Parents we are committed to getting it right for every looked after child, young person and care leaver in West Lothian. The Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 puts Corporate Parenting on a statutory footing and is defined as **"the formal and local partnerships between all services responsible for working together to meet the needs of looked after children, young people and care leavers"**.

West Lothian's Corporate Parenting Plan 2017-2020 is focussed on how partners will work together to tackle the identified outcomes gap. It sits alongside the suite of strategic plans for children's services with the West Lothian Children's Services Plan being the overarching plan.

In West Lothian we want to ensure that all looked after children, young people, care leavers, parents and carers have the opportunity to have a real say in matters that affect them. We have a range of ways of engaging and involving our looked after children and carers including:

- ✚ Having Your Say forum
- ✚ Viewpoint
- ✚ Advocacy services and Children’s Rights service
- ✚ Residential House Activities
- ✚ Carers Consultative Forum
- ✚ Kinship Care Group
- ✚ Champions Board

Looked after children and carers are also actively encouraged to attend all meetings where their needs and outcomes are to be discussed. If they choose not to attend, we ensure their views and voices are heard at their meetings and ensure they receive feedback on what was discussed after the meeting.

West Lothian was the first area in the UK to develop the Housing First model for Youth (HF4Y). The model which has previously been designed and delivered for adults was adapted in recognition of the needs of care experienced young people who have experienced trauma and require support. The two-year pilot was launched in 2017. This was a multi-agency collaboration between Rock Trust, Almond Housing Association and West Lothian Council. A Public Social Partnership (PSP) supported the collaboration both directly and indirectly with other Third Sector partners. An independent evaluation was undertaken of the Project between 2017-2020. From the 12 young people who were engaged in the service – 100% remained engaged with the support and 92% successfully sustained their tenancies.



Cluster 6 Basic Health and Welfare

UNCRC CLUSTER	UNCRC RELATED ARTICLES
<p>Basic Health and welfare</p> <p>This cluster focuses on the health and welfare of all children and the consideration of disabled children's rights. All children should have the best possible standard of health, including access to relevant health services. There should be a focus on the determinants of children's health, including mental health. Under Articles 26 and 27, where families do not have enough to live on, children have a right to financial support from the Government to meet their basic needs.</p>	<p>(6) life, survival and development (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance (23) children with a disability (24) health and health services (26) social security (27) adequate standard of living (33) drug abuse</p>

We provide early learning and childcare services which benefit both children and their parents/carers (Article 18).

West Lothian Health & Social Care Partnership has invested in a wide range of early years services and parenting supports to ensure that children have the best possible start in life. These initiatives include:

- Supporting child/parent attachment
- Encouraging family learning
- Improving how children and parents access and are supported to play
- Intensive evidence-based parenting programmes which aim to build parental capacity amongst parents with children/young people with behavioral problems. Some programmes specifically support parents whose children have a developmental disability. Programmes include Incredible Years, Triple P, Mellow Parenting and Parenting Teens
- Sure Start services which support parents with children aged 0 – 3 through a programme of interventions which aim to support social inclusion as well as parenting skills and confidence
- Whole Family Support Service which engages with families with very complex needs and entrenched social issues using asset based, co- production ways of working. The service works with families on their own terms, addressing issues that are important for them and building on existing strengths within the family.

NHS Lothian Health Visiting Service provides the delivery of the *Universal Health Visiting Pathway for Scotland pre-birth to pre-school* to all parents in West Lothian. This consists of 11 key contacts with parents and children from pre-birth to pre-school. Both parental and children's health and wellbeing are assessed at each contact and parents offered referral to appropriate services as required (Articles 5, 12, 18, 24).

As per Scottish Government's GIRFEC policy all children on the Health Visitor caseload from the pre-birth, antenatal contact to pre-school have a child health assessment completed and an individual Child's Plan of care. For some this is the basic key contacts of the Universal Pathway however if a family require more support or have more complex needs which involves a range of professionals a Child's Planning Meeting will be arranged. The Child's Plan is agreed collaboratively between parents and the professionals involved in the child's care to ensure the child is having its needs met. This corroboration with the child's parents and key professionals is essential to providing the child with a voice even from a very young age (Articles 5, 6, 12, 18, 24).

Children who are identified by Health Visitors as having more complex requirements can be referred into our Child Development Clinic. This allows the child and parents to be seen by multiple clinicians at one appointment with a care plan agreed. This early identification of children with complex needs supports access to health and education requirements from a young age as appropriate (Articles 5, 6, 12, 18, 24).

The NHS Lothian's School Nursing Service is working towards delivery of the new *SG's Refocused School Nursing Role* within West Lothian. The key areas of focus are:

- emotional health and wellbeing
- substance misuse
- domestic abuse
- homelessness
- child protection
- care experienced children
- young carers
- youth justice.
- sexual health
- transitions

This new school nursing service is being transitioned into all schools as more School Nurses complete the new School Nursing qualification.

The vulnerable pregnancy service was launched in 2017 and it aims to offer an early intervention service working with families in the ante-natal stage of pregnancy. Referrals to the service are progressed from 16 weeks gestation, to allow full and robust planning for the unborn baby and their parents at the earliest opportunity. By commencing work with families at this stage of pregnancy we aim to carry out initial assessment and make recommendations for further support.

We actively promote the right of disabled children to have access to a range of services and have choice and control over the services they receive e.g. education, health care, play and leisure services etc (Article 6 and 23).

The West Lothian Child Disability Service (CDS) was established to ensure social work services are made available to disabled children and their families in West Lothian. The team strives to promote social inclusion and to maximise the potential of individual children with an emphasis on providing, as far as possible, services in local communities. The CDS supports children and young people between birth and 16 years or until they transition into adult services where appropriate, who live in West Lothian and have a significant or complex disability. This includes;

- learning disability
- physical disability
- motor impairment
- hearing impairment
- visual impairment
- language and communication disorder
- autism spectrum disorder

For children and their families impacted by disabilities there are information booklets created using Picture Exchange Communication systems (PEC's) to ensure young people know what services and supports are available from the children with disabilities service and provide an opportunity for young people to engage straight away. All staff members within this service have been trained in talking mats to support them in gathering young people's views. They make use of self-directed support legislation to ensure young people are empowered to have options of how, when and by whom they wish their support provided. In addition, the team make use of an external hard drive which has boardmaker on it to resolve communication barriers and further provide young people a voice. (Articles 6 and 23)

Children with disabilities are ensured their rights and access to services they require are available. The Child Development Clinic in Craigshill offers clinic appointments where children and their families have access to multiple health services at the same time including paediatricians, speech and language therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. This coordinated assessment means that the child and family are not sent to multiple clinic appointments and reduces the need to tell their story repeatedly (articles 2, 3, 6, 12).

Children of school age have access to school nursing for a variety of health conditions from mental health support, sexual health and continence support. In P7 children are offered Let's Introduce Anxiety Management (LIAM) sessions to support their mental health wellbeing. Drop in clinics for children in secondary schools ensure they have access to health professionals at a time when it suits them and is inclusive but confidential unless child protection issues are raised (articles 2, 3, 6, 12).

Within our school's pupil equity funding (PEF) was used to provide additional extracurricular opportunities for pupils to take part in sport through paid sessional coaches and sporting provision was added to existing breakfast clubs.

Detailed coordinated support plans are put in place where appropriate to ensure additional support needs are identified, assessed and supported.

We provide resources and support for children and young people in order to meet their mental health needs (Article 24).

The Mental Health and Wellbeing Screening Group (now the Wellbeing Recovery Group) brings together partners from local authority, NHS and third sector agencies to discuss children and young people who have been identified as requiring support with their mental wellbeing. A number of different outcomes are available ranging from individual, 1:1 supports such as counselling, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) and play therapy to group programmes such as Seasons for Growth and whole family supports such as befriending and parenting sessions, advocacy and support for young carers

We provide support to children and families, where this is within our authority responsibilities, to meet children's essential needs in relation to food, clothing and housing (Article 27).

Pupil Equity Funding (PEF), since its introduction in West Lothian Council (WLC), has been underpinned by a clear vision statement *"To work collaboratively and collectively to interrupt the cycle of inter-generational poverty in order to improve the life chances of children and young people in communities in West Lothian"*. This vision has driven the WLC PEF strategy and has been fundamental to the work undertaken in schools to identify and close the poverty related attainment gap.

Each school has been required to base their use of the funding on a clear contextual analysis which identifies the poverty related attainment gap in their schools with plans grounded in evidence of what is known to be effective at raising attainment for children affected by poverty. Headteachers have also been asked to consider additional steps that might be required to close the educational attainment gap for pupils affected by poverty who may also experience disadvantage for other reasons (disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex (gender) and sexual orientation); a need for which they require additional support; being looked after; having caring responsibilities. It has also been clearly stated that funding should not be used in ways that stigmatises children and young people or their parents/carers.

Creating effective partnerships has been a key principle. In many contexts schools have been able to achieve the best possible outcomes for children and young people by working with a range of bodies such as parent groups;

parent councils; other local authority services; third sector organisations (including youth work, family learning organisations); other educational sectors; and/or centres of expertise.

Schools have been encouraged to listen to the voices of children, young people, families and the local community when planning PEF initiatives, to ensure that there is a clear understanding of the lived experiences and specific barriers to learning for individual learners within our schools. Consultation and collaboration, therefore, have also been key driving principles, with the expectation that children, young people and families are part of the PEF planning and decision-making processes.

Participatory budgeting (PB) was introduced in 2019 with 3% of each school's PEF allocation used for this purpose. Schools have used PB as a means of supporting meaningful pupil voice by giving pupils a say in the decisions which affect them. It has also been used to encourage active citizenship and positive participation in the local community and has been used to engage pupils, parents and the community while lowering the cost of the school day and incentivising attainment. Schools have also created Poverty Proofing Statements to address the cost of the school day and have used the Cost of the School Day Toolkit to support this process. Since February 2019, West Lothian Councils Advice Shop have had a Campaign Development Officer focused on targeted activity to address child poverty since February 2019. The main function of this role is to help mitigate the impact of child poverty locally, by providing advice, advocacy and representation for children, families and young people as well as supporting professionals who work with this group of people. This role is focused on providing a targeted service to this group and working alongside a range of community planning partners to ensure that the customer is at the centre of a high-quality advice service.

For the period April 2017 to March 2020, the child poverty campaign engaged with 395 families and secured extra income of £575,733

New parents are offered a referral for an income maximisation check at the time of registering a birth

The Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian, Prevention Intervention and Money advice (PIMAP) project worked with pregnant women and families with children up to and including 1 year of age to ensure their income was maximised.

Baseline data is collected regarding: participation levels of all pupils with an Additional Support Need, those accessing Free Schools Meals and those participating from SIMD deciles 1 & 2. The Focus for 18/19 was to increase the percentage of pupils with a disability ASN to engage in extracurricular activity. – 31% was achieved for 2017/18 and a target was set of 37% for 2018/19 (consistent with wider school population).

CLD Youth Services and the Anti-Poverty Service have trained five young people to take on the role of Anti-Poverty Champions, to engage with, signpost and encourage other young people to access appropriate support. Anti-Poverty Champions support young people with financial worries, experiencing poverty or financial difficulties within their family.

We provide resources and support to protect children from harmful drugs (Article 33)

The West Lothian Alcohol and Drug Partnership brings together multi-agency partners to best support children and families impacted by substance misuse. Third sector agencies Circle and West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service provide direct support to children on an individual and group basis.

The Substance Misuse in School Policy sets out clear guidance for schools in terms of preventative work with children and young people and how to deal with issues arising which relate to substance misuse involving pupils.

Cluster 7 Education, leisure and culture

UNCRC CLUSTER	UNCRC RELATED ARTICLES
<p>Education, leisure and culture</p> <p>This cluster focuses on the right of all children to an education that will help them achieve their potential without discrimination. Education should be child-centred and empowering and strengthen their capacity to enjoy the full range of children's human rights including their right to express their views and participate in all aspects of their education. Article 29 entitles children to a broad curriculum. Article 31 states that children have a right to play, recreational activities, rest and leisure and to take part in cultural life.</p>	<p>(28) right to education (29) goals of education (30) children from minority or indigenous groups (31) leisure, play and culture</p>

We aim to ensure that all children do not experience any form of discrimination in their education, regardless of their circumstances (Article 28)

There have been various supports within early years and the central Support Team offer training and support in alternative early years approaches such as outdoor Learning and 6 schools have trained staff in Raising Children with Confidence – a 6 session parental workshop. Roots of Empathy runs in our schools where a new Mum brings in her baby usually to P3 and they follow the developmental process together. Cohorts average 10 -12 schools.

During 2017/18 we had 92 qualified secondary pupils delivering activities through Active Schools. The pupils provided with a range of training including delivery of coaching and events and those pupils were then provided with volunteering opportunities to put new knowledge and skills into practice allowing for increased opportunities for younger pupils to participate in sport.

The Assessment and Transition Group replaced the Inclusion and Wellbeing Forum in 2018 with a remit to provide advice and support to schools and make recommendations for pupils to be placed in particular establishments or accessing particular services such as hearing impaired or the inclusion and wellbeing service.

The Positive Relationship Policy was renewed in 2018 which works on the basis that good relationships developed within a positive ethos and a climate of mutual respect and trust based on shared values across communities are fundamental. Inclusion, engagement and involvement are the key principles underpinning the work. The following extracts demonstrate our commitment to meeting learners needs and UNCRC Principles:

- mutual respect between children, young people and adults
- high expectations for pupils' learning and achievement
- inclusion, engagement and involvement of all learners
- trust and tolerance between young people and between young people and adults
- all children and young people are valued irrespective of their needs, behaviour or background
- ensure every child / young person has the same opportunity to succeed

West Lothian Council also engages with various whole schools' strategies for promoting positive relationships and behaviour as outlined in the revised Included, Engaged and Involved Part 2: A Positive Approach to Preventing and Managing School Exclusions (2017). These include:

- Restorative and Solution Oriented approaches as part of whole school development
- Whole-school nurturing approaches based on nurturing principles and including nurture groups
- Rights Respecting Schools

- Anti-bullying policies and procedures which contribute to social and emotional wellbeing including the Mentors in Violence Prevention (MVP) programme.

Where young people are looked after and are facing significant barriers to accessing mainstream education, the looked after attainment project can work directly with the young person at a time and place that suits them in order to support them to raise attainment.

In 2017 Sign along was the main resource utilised by schools with hearing impaired children. In 2018, 31% of pupils in mainstream schools with a disability took part in extracurricular activity. Detail of any pupils who did not take part were analysed in appropriate school staff groups and Physical Education, Physical Activity and Sport (PEPAS) groups to look at identifying and tackling barriers to participation.

The Education Scotland inspection of CLD in West Lothian in 2018, reported “well targeted programmes leading to positive outcomes” as a key strength. In collaboration with young people, community groups and third sector organisations we aim to deliver provision that is flexible and responsive to needs. This has informed the development of new projects, changes to clubs and services, as well as training for staff and volunteers.

We provide children and young people with access to play and leisure opportunities and address barriers to inclusive play and leisure. (Article 31).

The West Lothian Play Strategy which aims to widen the opportunity for children and young people to access quality play. It prioritises the promotion of time and spaces to play across the area as well as shifting attitudes to the provision of outdoor play opportunities as a means of developing children and young people’s physical, social and emotional resilience.

The School Sport Award is a national award scheme for physical education (PE) and school sport that:

- Puts young people at the forefront of the decision making and planning of PE and sport in their school
- Encourages schools to self reflect and continuously improve
- Helps schools to increase young people’s opportunities and engagement in PE & school sport
- Helps schools to put PE & school sport at the heart of their planning, practice and ethos
- Recognises and celebrates successful PE & school sport models

70 schools engaged in school Sport Scotland award assessment with 14 new schools applying for a Gold Award for 17/18. 63 schools assessed in 16/17 with 6 applying for Gold.

From 2017 The Youth Work in Schools programme has provided a diverse range of learning opportunities specifically tailored to meet the needs of the young people referred. In the reporting period, programmes delivered focused on building confidence and self-esteem, resilience, personal safety, addressing risk taking behaviours, employability skills and raising aspirations. 12 participants achieved Dynamic Youth Awards and 7 participants gained Level 4 SQA Preparing for Employment Units.

Also, from 2017 The Helping Young People to Engage Programme (HYPE) continues to offer young people on Activity Agreements in West Lothian a wide range of activity based courses where young people can grow in self – confidence, begin to address the barriers to them moving on to their ‘next step’ and develop a range of life skills.

The HYPE Team engage with young people through a youth work approach. During the April – June period, the Media Skills project focus changed to enable the team to build on the skills and interests of the young people involved. The focus was on Visual Arts using elements of the environment and the interests of participants;

particularly in sketching characters and animation to influence art work. Participants enjoyed sessions developing sketching skills, spray painting and a visit to Jupiter Artland.

The Health Visiting Service will discuss with parents how physical activity is important for children to support both their physical and mental health. They will signpost families to local provisions which support this.

WLC Sports Club Accreditation Scheme was updated in 2018 stating that clubs must have an approved Equality policy in place to be accredited.

West Lothian Council committed to delivering free Holiday Activity and Lunch clubs during school holiday periods. The programme was delivered across localities by council services and local community groups, and provided children with a hot meal and an opportunity to take part in a sport, physical activity or play session.

West Lothian Council funded the 'Learn to Swim' programme delivered by West Lothian Leisure.

Carers of West Lothian, Young Carer Service delivers regular peer support group for aged 8 to 18, focussed group work summer holiday activities and programme, pantomime trips, young carer festival and also offer various support mechanisms such as access to counselling and one to one support and school support groups.

Young Carers Champions are identified in 11 of the high schools in West Lothian and the school staff have access to Personal Social Education programmes and an E Learning module to complete as part of the Continuing Professional Development.



Cluster 8 Special Protection Measures

UNCRC CLUSTER	UNCRC RELATED ARTICLES
<p>Special protection measures This cluster focuses on groups of vulnerable and marginalised children who require special protection. These are often the children who are most at risk of having their rights ignored or infringed. They include asylum-seeking and refugee children, child victims of trafficking or exploitation, and children in trouble with the law.</p> <p>Under Article 22, asylum-seeking children and child refugees are entitled to special protection and other UNCRC rights. The Convention states that, where possible, children should be dealt with outwith the criminal justice system and a welfare response is appropriate to meet the needs of the child. Under Article 40, children who enter the criminal justice system have a right to fair treatment and legal representation</p>	<p>(22) refugee children (30) children from minority or indigenous groups (32) child labour (33) drug abuse (34) sexual exploitation (35) abduction, sale and trafficking (36) other forms of exploitation (37) inhumane treatment and detention (38) war and armed conflicts (39) recovery from trauma and reintegration (40) juvenile justice</p>

We assess the numbers and situation of children and young people and their families who are asylum seeking and are migrants in order to provide them with services and support (Article 22).

The Syrian refugee programme included a local authority working group to support arrival of children, integration into schools and ongoing support for families. The Continuum of Support Document was introduced in 2018 to support Syrian Refugees and in 2018 a COSLA bronze award was made to the Syrian Refugee Re-settlement Team for partnership working to support the families. Community Partnerships were also recognised at Celebrating Success for work with Syrian Refugees and within West Lothian there are examples of refugee families being supported with their complex health needs and equipment, interpretation services, accommodation needs, speech and language therapy, education needs, and maximisation of finances.

Children and families seeking asylum are provided support by NHS Lothian’s Health Visiting and School Nursing services as required. NHS Lothian provides interpretation services as requested for Health Visitor’s while visiting the family in their residence. They will provide support to access other health and education services as necessary including immunisations

We ensure that children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation or drug use have access to the child protection and specialist support and services they require (Articles 33 and 34)

The West Lothian Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Procedure sets out guidance and multi-agency roles in relation to CSE. It includes warning indicators and a checklist which can be used by professionals to assess the level of risk. Where appropriate, a multi-agency CSE Strategy meeting will be arranged to share information, address the risks to young people and take effective action to disrupt perpetrators.

We provide support to children and young people in response to their needs so that they do not enter the criminal justice system, as far as possible (Articles 37 and 40)

In line with UNCRC/Whole System Approach there is also a clear aim of ensuring that where necessary all young people under the age of 16 years, charged with an offence or 16-18 years subject to a CSO (Compulsory Measures of Supervision) are remitted by the Procurator Fiscal to the Children’s Reporter. This ensures that

children and young people receive intervention that is appropriate, timeous and flexible and there is a clear aim and National Strategy in line with Whole System Approach which since 2011 has provided a clear focus to ensure that young people remain out of the Criminal Justice System as far as possible with the use of direct Police Disposals such as Warnings/Restorative Warnings and referrals to Early and Effective Intervention (EEI). There is also the use of Prosecution Diversion for 16 – 21 years in youth justice that ensures that young people have their risks/needs addressed without further progression to Court and the Justice System.

The Early Effective Intervention procedure is a multi-agency forum whose purpose is to identify and discuss young people who are coming into conflict with the law. Participants from Police Scotland, Social Policy and Education Services discuss the individual needs and risks related to these young people and identify appropriate supports which can be put in place to address the offending behaviour and help prevent recurring incidents.



COVID-19 Pandemic

We recognise that new challenges have emerged as a result of COVID-19, some of the families who were vulnerable prior to the pandemic are presenting with greater vulnerabilities now and families who would not have presented as vulnerable previously, now are.

The experience of Covid-19 has highlighted the flexible and innovative ways of working that staff, volunteers, carers and services have undertaken to ensure the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable children and families has been maintained. These new flexible working methods including increased use of technology will support the swifter adaption to potential new working ways.

Given the time period of this report ending on 31st March 2020, the challenges and changes which were experienced to combat the pandemic to keep children safe and protected will be reflected in the next UNCRC report 2020-2023.

Children's Services Plan 2020-2023 - new priority Promote Children's Rights

In February 2020 an extensive consultation and engagement exercise was undertaken to collate views and experiences to inform the development of the Children's Services Plan for 2020-2023. The feedback was used to inform the development of the key priorities detailed in the Plan and will also inform the development of the Children's Services Strategic Commissioning Plan. The Partnership recognises that it is essential that the development of local services takes account of local need, is aligned to national strategy and fits with the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership priorities.

The priorities have been reviewed and updated to reflect the findings of the two strategic needs assessments and engagement activities that have been undertaken. The two needs assessments focused on services for Looked After Children and Young People and on Early Intervention and Prevention and the findings have been used to inform the future development of services for children and young people in West Lothian.

As a result of the feedback from the consultation and engagement exercise it was agreed to create a new priority in the plan: **Promote Children's Rights**. A working group has been established with internal and external partners to ensure that Children's Rights including the principles of the UNCRC are imbedded into our service delivery and every child should be supported to know and understand their rights and be encouraged to express their views in matters that are important to them.

The working group will develop a coordinated approach for the incorporation and implementation of the UNCRC (Incorporation) (Scotland) Bill into Scottish Domestic Law to ensure understanding of our legal responsibilities. We will produce an action plan that is congruent with the Scottish Government Theory of Change, incorporating the 4 outcome maps (policy, capacity, culture and empowerment) to connect the actions with the results we expect to see.

The Promise

We are committed to supporting the Independent Care Review's vision of Scotland leading the way to be the best care system in the world and incorporating recommendations from The Promise into working practices throughout West

Lothian. The principles that underpin The Promise are consistent with the aspirations and ambitions that we have for our care experienced young people and their families in West Lothian.

The Use of Language

We recognise that there has been consideration both locally and nationally as to how we describe our children and young people, and their families to recognise their experience. Within this report we have used the language of 'Looked After Children'. Due to the current legislative framework in which we have duties and responsibilities, the terms 'looked after children' and 'care leavers' are used as there are rights and entitlements attached to these terms. We do understand that many young people do not wish to be referred to as children, and also that the acronyms of 'LAC or LAAC' or being 'looked after' is not descriptive terms they would wish to recognise instead opting for 'care experience'. There are also times we will refer to the experience as 'lived experience'. **The Promise** highlights the use of language as something which requires careful consideration. The aim by 2023 is that we will have actively consulted those with lived experience as to the use of language to accurately describe their experience, and further to that, those with lived experience will be directly involved in writing any future Plans and Strategies.

Community Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing

The Scottish Government and CoSLA commissioned a taskforce in 2018 with a focus on improving the mental health of our children, young people and families and following the pandemic they have also looked ahead to transition and recovery.

In West Lothian, the Wellbeing Recovery Group (WRG) identified an increase in demand for mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and their families. A waiting list was forming for children and families to receive support and it was agreed that a partnership of our third sector partners with the provision of a new model accessible, multi-agency support based on local need in West Lothian could help to manage the demand. The model would ensure there is 'no wrong door' for anyone seeking support.

A children and young people's mental health strategic needs assessment was carried out in June 2021 and it provided a clearer picture of what the needs of the families were in West Lothian. In addition, the data collected from the Wellbeing Recovery Group referrals was evaluated. This along with the national drivers led to changes within the service provision and participation and engagement became a priority in West Lothian.

Following the implementation of the Community Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Support and Services Framework values and principles, and using our learning from assessments and evaluations, a new Public Social Partnership (PSP) of 11 partner agencies was formed called **Roots** with referrals being screened via the WRG.

Thank You

Finally, we would like to acknowledge and thank all the people, services and partners who have contributed their views which form the basis of this report. And a thank you to all staff for the excellent work undertaken, who work to support the rights of every child and young person in West Lothian. The flexibility, dedication, compassion and professionalism they have all shown has been truly outstanding.

Performance Management

The Scottish Government National Performance Framework identifies eleven national outcomes. West Lothian Children’s Services Planning and priorities directly correlate to SEVEN of these outcomes:

National Outcome:	West Lothian Priorities	GIRFEC Wellbeing Indicator
<p>Children and Young People: We grow up loved, safe and respected so that we realise our full potential</p> <p>Poverty: We tackle poverty by sharing opportunities, wealth and power more equally</p> <p>Education: We are well educated, skilled and able to contribute to society</p> <p>Health: We are healthy and active</p> <p>Human Rights: We respect, protect and fulfil human rights and live free from discrimination</p> <p>Communities: We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe</p> <p>Culture: We are creative and our vibrant and diverse cultures are expressed and enjoyed widely</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection • Corporate Parenting • Raising achievement and attainment • Reduce Substance Misuse • Reduce offending behaviour in Children and Young People • Promote Health and Wellbeing • Promote Children’s Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe • Nurtured • Achieving • Responsible • Responsible • Healthy • Respected • Included
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle Child Poverty (Anti-Poverty Strategy) • Promote Health and Wellbeing • Promote Children’s Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurtured • Included • Respected • Healthy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising Achievement and Attainment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Achieving
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Health and Wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthy
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Children’s Rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Children’s Rights • Reduce Substance Misuse • Reduce offending behaviour in Children and Young People • Promote Health and Wellbeing • Child Protection • Corporate Parenting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe • Nurtured • Responsible • Responsible • Healthy • Respected • Included
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote Children’s Rights • Promote Health and Wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respected • Included

The remaining four National outcomes: Environment; Economy; International and Fair Work and Business do not correlate directly to this Children’s Services Plan.

All West Lothian's priorities contribute directly to the Wellbeing Indicators (SHANARRI) and correlate with links to the UNCRC priorities of safeguarding children and young people:

Wellbeing Indicator	Priority	Suggested Links to the UNCRC
<p>Safe</p> <p>Protected from abuse, neglect or harm at home, at school and in the community</p>	Child Protection	(11) abduction and non-return of children, (19) protection from violence, abuse and neglect, (22) refugee children, (32) child labour, (33) drug abuse, (34) sexual exploitation, (35) abduction, sale and trafficking, (36) other forms of exploitation, (37) inhumane treatment and detention, (38) war and armed conflicts
<p>Healthy</p> <p>Having the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health, access to suitable healthcare and support in learning to make healthy, safe choices</p>	Promote Health and Wellbeing	(3) best interests of the child, (6) life, survival and development, (24) health and health services, (39) recovery and rehabilitation of child victims
<p>Achieving</p> <p>Being supported and guided in learning and in the development of skills, confidence and self-esteem, at home, in school and in the community</p>	Raising achievement and attainment	(4) Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights in systems that promote and protect these rights, (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance, (28) right to education, (29) goals of education
<p>Nurtured</p> <p>Having a nurturing place to live in a family setting, with additional help if needed, or, where possible, in a suitable care setting</p>	Corporate Parenting	(4) Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights in systems that promote and protect these rights, (5) parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities, (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance, (20) children deprived of a family, (21) adoption, (25) review of treatment in care, (27) adequate standard of living
<p>Active</p> <p>Having opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community</p>	Promote Health and Wellbeing	(3) best interests of the child, (23) children with disabilities, (31) leisure, play and culture
<p>Respected</p> <p>Having the opportunity, along with carers, to be heard and involved in decisions that affect them</p>	Children's Rights Corporate Parenting	(2) non-discrimination, (3) best interests of the child, (4) Governments must do all they can to make sure every child can enjoy their rights in systems that promote and protect those rights, parental guidance and a child's evolving capacities, (8) protection and preservation of identity, (12) respect for the views of the child, (13) freedom of expression, (14) freedom of thought, belief and religion, (16) right to privacy, (17) access to information; mass media, (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance, (30) the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family
<p>Responsible</p> <p>Having opportunities and encouragement to play active and responsible roles at home, in school and in the community, and where necessary, having appropriate guidance and supervision, and being involved in decisions that affect them</p>	Reduce Substance Misuse Reduce offending behaviour in Children and Young People	(3) best interests of the child, (12) respect for the views of the child, (14) freedom of thought, conscience and religion, (15) freedom of association, (40) juvenile justice
<p>Included</p> <p>Having help to overcome social, educational, physical and economic inequalities, and being accepted as part of the community in which they live and learn</p>	Children's Rights Corporate Parenting	(3) best interests of the child, (6) life, survival and development, (18) parental responsibilities and state assistance, (23) children with disabilities, (26) social security, (27) adequate standard of living



Getting it Right for West Lothian's Children & Families 

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