



West Lothian  
Council



# WEST LOTHIAN LOCAL CHILD POVERTY ACTION REPORT 2019/20



FEBRUARY 2021

## Contents

Section 1: Setting the Scene.....	1
Section 3: Taking Action for Change .....	18
Section 4: Forward Planning: Child Poverty and Covid-19 new normal .....	25
Section 5: Lessons .....	38
References.....	42

## Section 1: Setting the Scene

Our first West Lothian Child Poverty Report stated that:

- In the short-term, child poverty work will optimise service provision that targets poverty mitigation e.g. income maximisation services, food poverty and insecurity.
- In the medium-term, it is intended that a preventive approach to poverty is embedded in partnership plans. Both the Local Outcome Improvement Plan and Children Services Plan are due to be updated in 2019/20 and child poverty will be one of the key issues considered in the plans.
- In the longer term, we are working towards a West Lothian where fewer people experience poverty, where no-one experiences destitution and where everyone has the opportunity to build a future free of poverty. Supporting the most disadvantaged in our society to progress and prosper is critical to achieving our vision.

These priorities have not changed. But this report necessarily has to acknowledge the impact that Covid-19 has had on our approach. In short, the challenges are greater and the medium-term policy reviews have been paused. The embedded nature of anti-poverty work as a core part of the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership has provided a basis from which a Covid-informed anti-poverty programme will emerge.

It is important to reiterate the extent to which child poverty work sits within the broader anti-poverty work led by the council's anti-poverty team. The council's anti-poverty work has been guided by plans since 2018. Much of the work in this child poverty report reflects and benefits from the established networks and governance and reporting established to support the anti-poverty work. Work about lived experience, the anti-poverty profile and targeted support for low income families are examples of this work.

### 1.1 Learning from Best Practice 2018/19

The Poverty and Inequality Commission review of LCPARs emphasised that 2019/20 reports should focus on: the inclusion of lived experience; prioritising actions that have the biggest impact on child poverty; and, ensuring the leadership of partnerships make a clear commitment to tackling poverty.

Feedback from the Improvement Service specifically about the first West Lothian LCPAR suggested action about structures and processes and recommendations for potential new areas of work.

Structures and processes	Progress
<p>Clear commitment to ensure child poverty is considered as part of next year's review of both Children's Service Planning and Local Outcome Improvement Plan. This will no doubt help to ensure the need to tackle poverty is a key consideration at all levels of planning.</p>	<p>This work was being progressed. A member of the Reference Group had been identified as the child poverty liaison with the Children Services Plan development group. Two members of the Reference Group have been heavily involved in the LOIP review.</p> <p>Reduce child poverty is embedded in the draft Children and Families service plan.</p>
<p>Establishment of a Child Poverty Reference Group (feeding into Anti-Poverty Task Force) as part of the existing CPP structure, helping to ensure focus on families with children in particular.</p>	<p>The reference group is established</p>
<p>Clear poverty reduction targets</p>	<p>Ongoing and reflected in the key performance indicators</p>
<p>Training for staff on poverty awareness and of the legislation across local partners.</p>	<p>Ongoing and included in this report</p>
Potential new areas of work	
<p>Review of poverty indicators to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) remove indicators without clear relevance to drivers of poverty, and</li> <li>b) disaggregate analysis of poverty indicators with a focus on children and families</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Complete</li> <li>b) Ongoing with support from NHS Lothian</li> </ul>
<p>More consideration of, and demonstration of, the ways in which children and families benefit from anti-poverty initiatives</p>	<p>Ongoing – included in this report</p>
<p>More detail about parental involvement as part of lived experience</p>	<p>Ongoing – included in this report</p>

The West Lothian Child Poverty Reference Group reviewed these findings in its first two meetings and progress is indicated in the table. One of the 2018/19 actions has been removed as it was not clearly enough related to child poverty.

WL LCPAR 2018-19 action	Progress	Comments
Increase awareness of, monitor uptake of new respectful funeral package	Removed	Not sufficiently targeted at child poverty

There was an opportunity throughout the year to share experiences, understanding and knowledge across a range of activity alongside learning from the publication of a series of evaluations and briefings; all of which supported a deeper knowledge base to help practitioners re-assess and evaluate the priorities and actions going forward.

Attendance at seminars and events:

- a) Poverty Lead Webinars and roundtable discussions 7 May 2019
- b) National conference on local action on child poverty 11 September 2019
- c) Menu for change food poverty conference 2 October 2019
- d) Priceless community health conference 4 November 2019
- e) Child Poverty Information Working Group 4 February 2020

## 1.2 End of year two (2019/20)

The West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report sits within the Community Planning Partnership (CPP) structure as a key responsibility of the Anti-Poverty Taskforce. During 2019, a new Health and Wellbeing Partnership was established within the CPP. The benefit of the CPP links has become apparent in the response to Covid-19 (see section 4 and Appendix 1 below for more detail). The Children’ Services Plan and Locality Outcomes Improvement Plan were being updated through 2020 in West Lothian. There was representation from members of the Child Poverty Reference Group in the Children’ Services Plan review and in a number of workshops and discussions about the new Locality Outcomes Improvement Plan; there was also representation in the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Strategic Board. Both the reviews have been paused due to Covid-19.



### Key poverty-focused plans and strategies

West Lothian Council	Multi-Agency	NHS Lothian
West Lothian Council Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan	West Lothian Anti-Poverty Strategy	NHS Lothian Inequalities Strategy
West Lothian Pupil Equity Fund Action Plan	West Lothian Economic Growth Plan	NHS Scotland Outcomes Focused Plan
West Lothian Jobs Task Force Plan	West Lothian Local Outcomes Improvement Plan	
Raising Attainment Strategy	European Social Fund Employability Pipeline	
WL Jobs Task Force Covid plan	Public Health Priorities for Scotland	
	<b>Children and Families Service Plan</b>	
	<b>Public Health Scotland Strategic Plan 2020-2023</b>	

Some of the actions in the 2018/19 report focused on engagement with partners and stakeholder groups. The participatory budgeting pilot and a major conference about Pupil Equity Funding had been scheduled for March 2020 but was cancelled due to Covid-19.

WL LCPAR 2018/19 action	Progress	Comments
Engage with the review of WL Children’s Services Plan to ensure child poverty focus	Ongoing	Progress delayed due to Covid-19
Ensure child poverty considered during review of the Community Planning Partnership	Ongoing	Progress delayed due to Covid-19. But child poverty a major theme in CPP and Anti-Poverty Taskforce Covid-19 work
Embedding advice, support and advocacy as part of prevention work across partnerships	Ongoing	Child poverty is being highlighted within the LOIP review and Children Services Plan. Perhaps this action needs to be revised or retired – to be reviewed by Child Poverty Reference Group

### Lived Experience

There has been good progress made in ensuring that those with lived experience are better heard. This not only helps decision makers understand the impacts on their daily lives but helps us to be clear about what would make a difference and what needs to change. It also helps service to redesign and consider new ways of working. Below is a sample of the ways in which this has been embedded into our practice.

### Experts by Experience

An ‘Experts by Experience’ group has been set up to gather the views of those who have experience, or know of someone, who has experienced poverty in the recent past. The success of the group will create a better picture of poverty in West Lothian and inform our planning to tackle the major issues surrounding poverty.

The Experts by Experience group currently has ten members who provide regular input to the group. The viewpoints of this group are gathered in a variety of ways to suit the needs of the members. These include by telephone, e-mail and face-to face meetings prior to the Covid-19 crisis. During the lockdown period, contact has been

maintained with the group with Zoom meetings being offered where appropriate, and continued completion of surveys has been encouraged.

The Experts are encouraged to take part in research, having tested and provided feedback on a new online benefits calculator and budgeting tool, in addition to an interactive map to be made available to West Lothian residents to provide information and guidance to those experiencing food insecurity. The Experts have been provided the opportunity to attend events and assist with raising awareness of poverty, being invited to Challenge Poverty Week events and consultations as well as participating in the Food Poverty conference.

The group have previously taken part in consultations with West Lothian Council's Food Growing Strategy and the Respectful Funeral initiative, and the implementation of the Period Poverty initiative. There has been feedback received on the implementation of the free school meal distribution and £10 payments during Covid-19 lockdown. The consultation sessions allowed the participants to provide their views on the various projects and how plans would impact those in poverty, both negatively and positively.

A number of surveys have also been carried out by the Experts by Experience on a range of subjects where their input was considered as part of the responses to government consultations, such as the Scottish Social Security consultation about the devolved Disability Assistance benefits to be implemented.

### **Young People: 'Learn, Think, Speak'**

It is important that the voices of young people are heard and that they are able to influence actions to reduce the cost of the school day and also speak about the impact of poverty in other areas of their lives. The Anti-Poverty service, in collaboration with the council's Community Learning and Development Youth team, worked with a group of eight teenagers from the Armadale Youth Forum to find out more about young people's lived experience of poverty. This initial group took part in poverty awareness training and one youth ambassador took on a role in co-delivering training in youth clubs across West Lothian. This consultation project ran from October 2019 to January 2020 engaging with a total of 164 young people to hear their views and gather information to inform the ongoing direction of the Anti-Poverty Strategy. The consultation focused on young people's experiences of poverty and deprivation outside of school and 91% said that a lack of money made it difficult for them to take part in activities which led to feelings of isolation and exclusion amongst peers. Socialisation was identified as the main part of life affected by poverty for young people in West Lothian.

Following the consultation period, a short video was filmed with three young people from the Armadale Youth Forum to present the findings and reflect on the approach

to the consultation. The young people involved have identified three key words to use going forward when engaging with young people about social issues: Learn, Think, Speak. The next stage was to involve young people in becoming peer advisors to help and support young people to have someone to talk to about issues relating to poverty which were affecting them and their families and to help them access help and support. This project has been put on hold due to Covid-19. Discussions are underway on how this aspect will be moved forward over the coming year.

### **Service Redesign**

Increasing awareness of and access to Education Maintenance Allowance was a key action for 2019/20. Core to this service redesign was to involve both young people and parents who would be most likely to benefit. A project team was set up with a time line to complete for the 2020/21 academic year. The team started by speaking with parents and carers at an engagement event held at a busy shopping thoroughfare, then spent an evening speaking to a group of fifth and sixth year pupils at a local secondary school. The insights gained from these engagements was used to develop a new online form allowing applicants to check eligibility, apply for Education Maintenance Allowance and complete their Learning Agreement digitally. Before going live, the team recruited a group of end users to test the new online platform and provide feedback. Suggestions for further improvements at this stage were implemented before the final version of the online application was released to the public. Feedback from applicants has been very positive with many students confirming that this has been a much easier method of application for them.

### **Participatory Budgeting**

Participatory Budgeting (PB) is usually referred to as 'Community Choices' in Scotland, and is a democratic process which empowers communities to have more say on how resources in their area are used. It is based on the view that communities (which can be a community of interest, a community of identity or community based on place) are best placed to be involved in or make decisions around their own needs. A co-ordinated approach to developing Community Choices in West Lothian will link in with other strategic developments to maximise the positive impact on communities.

Education – Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) - £167,000: A test of change process was developed during 2018/19 and was provided to all schools to support the development of Community Choices. Head Teachers have the authority to decide on the allocation of PEF monies for their school, and Head Teachers had confirmed that £167,268 of PEF in 2019/20 would be allocated to Community Choices. However, to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 the £167,000 PEF funding was redirected within the schools and therefore the community choices processes within schools will now be undertaken in 2020/21.

Social Policy – Children and Families £878,000: New models of accommodation and support for service users post 16 years of age have been identified as suitable for Community Choices. A public social partnership approach has started within Social Policy with feedback being received to include service users from the start of the design process to support young people coming out of the looked after children process. This process has continued through 2019/20.

### Child Poverty Reference Group

The first action in the 2018/19 LCPAR stated that a child poverty reference group should be established. The group (see Appendix 1 for membership) was established with terms of reference that ensure that:

- Actions in the West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report are being followed up
- New ideas and activities are being considered through the year to inform child poverty work in the county
- Members of the group would articulate the needs and voices of their clients to enable them to be heard
- The annual West Lothian Child Poverty Action Report is written and published.
- The group will meet three times every year: September, January and May.
- The group met on 1 October and again on 20 January. It had been intended that the group would shape the second West Lothian LCPAR in a more directed way. Covid-19 means this has not happened.

WL LCPAR 2018/19 action	Progress	Comments
To ensure that child poverty work is prioritised, a child poverty reference group will be established during 2019-20.	Achieved	
Experts by Experience group a focus to ensure that all anti-poverty work in West Lothian is informed by people who have used or need services.	Ongoing	
Pilot activities in youth settings to help better inform actions to address child poverty	Ongoing	

## Section 2: Picture of Poverty

A key feature of the Anti-Poverty Strategy is the poverty profile. All partners now use the profile as the baseline against which anti-poverty work in West Lothian is measured. The Anti-Poverty Strategy scorecard is included as Appendix 2 in this report. This brief summary highlights a number of issues that have been identified after data analysis by partners. Most of these data were collected before April 2020. Therefore, they do not reflect the impact of the Covid-19 lockdown and associated social and economic impact. There is more detail about the impacts of Covid-19 in section 4. The headline anti-poverty figures show that

- 12% of the West Lothian population are income deprived
- 26% of children experience relative poverty
- 77.8% of working age adults are in work
- 14% of workers earn below the Living Wage
- 23% of residents experience fuel poverty and
- 11% experience extreme fuel poverty

The Campaign to End Child Poverty published updated data on May 2019 which analysed the relative level of child poverty. Latest local estimates place West Lothian's level of child poverty at 24% after housing costs. This represents an increase of 1,200 children between 2015 and 2019.

**Table 1: Relative Poverty in West Lothian (Source: End Child Poverty update, 2019)**

	Relative Poverty After Housing Costs	
	Number	%
West Lothian	8,380	23.7
Scotland		24

## Food data

At secondary school, free school meal entitlement continues to be associated with area deprivation. But 2019 saw fewer young people claiming free school meals.

**Table 2: Free school meal entitlement 2019 (Source: West Lothian Poverty Profile update, 2020)**

Secondary School	Pupils registered for Free School Meals		% registered for Free school meals	
	2018	2019	2018	2019
Armadale Academy	154	145	16%	14%
Bathgate Academy	140	124	17%	14%
Broxburn Academy	142	121	16%	14%
Deans Community High School	159	171	17%	18%
Inveralmond Community High School	240	225	24%	22%
Linlithgow Academy	104	87	8%	7%
St Kentigern's Academy	208	222	18%	19%
St Margaret's Academy	155	151	15%	14%
The James Young High School	134	141	12%	13%
West Calder High School	99	90	14%	13%
Whitburn Academy	175	169	23%	21%
West Lothian	1,710	1,646	16%	15%

2,925 foodbank vouchers distributed in West Lothian's wards in the financial year 2018/19. Of these, almost a fifth (517) were distributed in Whitburn and Blackburn, followed by 361 in Bathgate and 342 in Broxburn, Uphall & Winchburgh.

5,885 residents (3,767 adults and 2,118 children) - about 2.1% of the West Lothian population - were the beneficiaries of the food vouchers.

Within Whitburn and Blackburn, for example, 8.7% of the child population and 4.8% of the adult population received the help in the form of a food voucher.

Table 3: Foodbank vouchers distributed in West Lothian by Multi Member Ward, 2018/19 (Source: West Lothian Poverty Profile update, 2020)

	No vouchers	Adults	Adults as % of adult popn.	Children	Children as % of child popn.	Total	Total as % of ward popn.
Armadale & Blackridge	298	383	1.51%	238	7.19%	621	3.96%
Bathgate	361	446	1.60%	217	4.44%	663	2.81%
Broxburn Uphall & Winchburgh	342	444	1.68%	155	4.34%	599	3.09%
East Livingston & East Calder	263	347	1.42%	218	5.61%	565	2.63%
Fauldhouse & Breich Valley	267	354	1.74%	250	8.67%	604	3.77%
Linlithgow	119	152	0.59%	55	1.79%	207	1.26%
Livingston North	185	242	0.78%	248	5.13%	490	2.09%
Livingston South	296	409	1.41%	255	5.15%	664	2.77%
Whitburn & Blackburn	517	645	4.81%	352	8.73%	997	4.68%
West Lothian	2,925	3,767	2.66%	2,118	5.35%	5,885	3.25%

### Antenatal data

A number of questions related to financial issues are included in the antenatal booking appointment. Fewer women were pregnant in 2019/20 than the previous year. In 2019/20, West Lothian women accounted for 19% of all antenatal booking appointments in Lothian. 31% of Lothian women seeking financial assistance were from West Lothian.

And the number of women living in temporary accommodation when first registering their pregnancy decreased from 85 to 66 in 2018/19. But the proportion of West

Lothian women living in temporary housing when registering their pregnancy remains higher than across Lothian as a whole.

**Table 4: Total antenatal booking appointments and temporary housing status (Source LAS, 2020)**

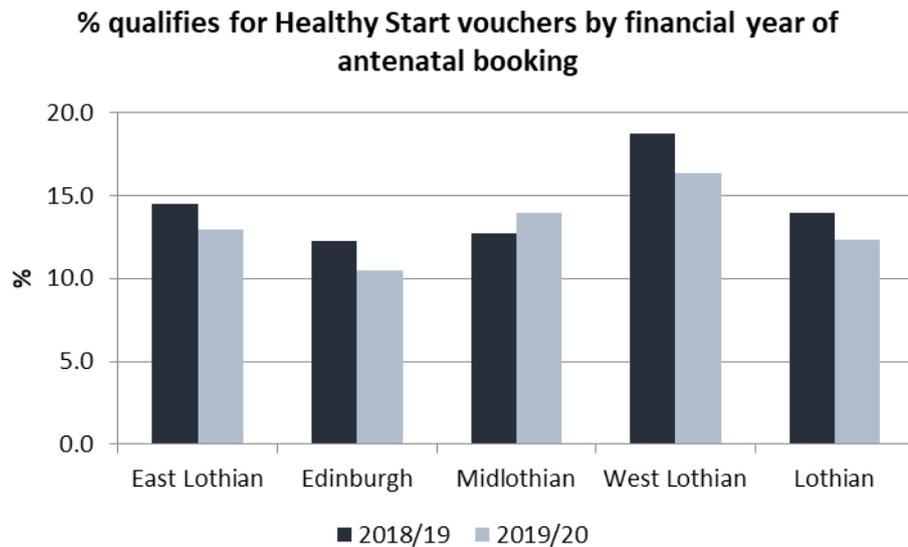
	2018/19		2019/20	
	West Lothian	Lothian	West Lothian	Lothian
Total pregnancies	1,943	9,377	1,760	9,030
In temporary housing	85	372	66	331

A considerably higher proportion of women in West Lothian apply for housing and benefits advice than elsewhere in Lothian. Furthermore, although there were fewer pregnant women in West Lothian in 2019/20 compared to 2018/19, there were more requests for assistance.

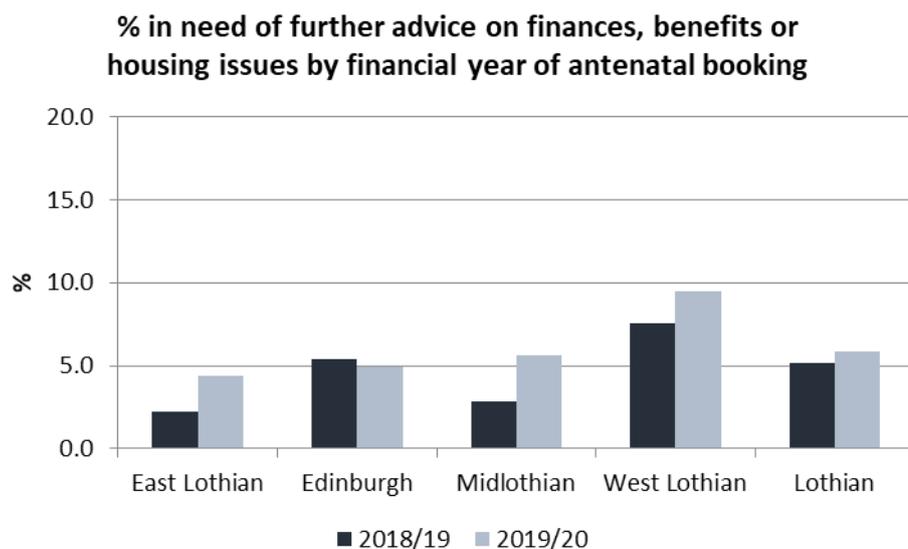
**Table 5: Antenatal booking: in need of further advice on finances benefits or housing issues (Source: LAS)**

	East Lothian	Edinburgh	Midlothian	West Lothian	Lothian
2018/19	2.2	5.4	2.9	7.6	5.1
2019/20	4.3	4.9	5.6	9.5	5.8

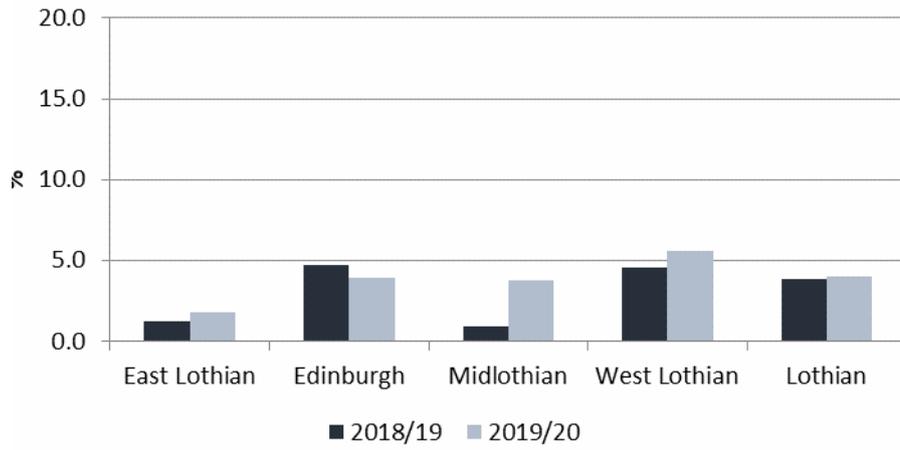
Although the proportion of women eligible for Healthy Start vouchers was lower in 2019-20 than the previous year, women from West Lothian still had greater needs than elsewhere with one in six eligible for vouchers. The decrease in qualifying women also reflects the legacy state of this benefit as it has been replaced by Best Start.



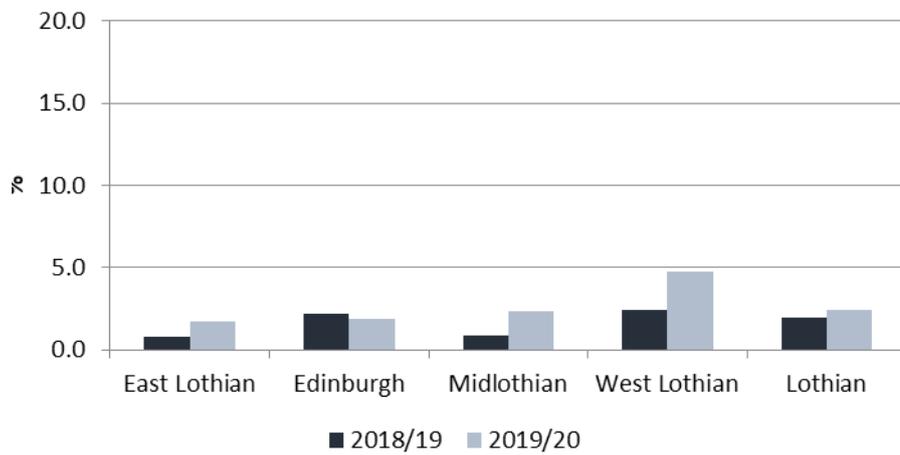
A variety of questions also show that West Lothian women have a greater need for financial support during pregnancy. Between 5% and 10% of pregnant women are referred to a number of support services. It is notable that there is a year on year increase in the numbers in need and referred to support services. In part, this is due to the training and embedding of sensitive conversations around money worries which Midwives and Health Visitors have been trained to have and encouraging pregnant women to take up offers of entitlement and other forms of support.

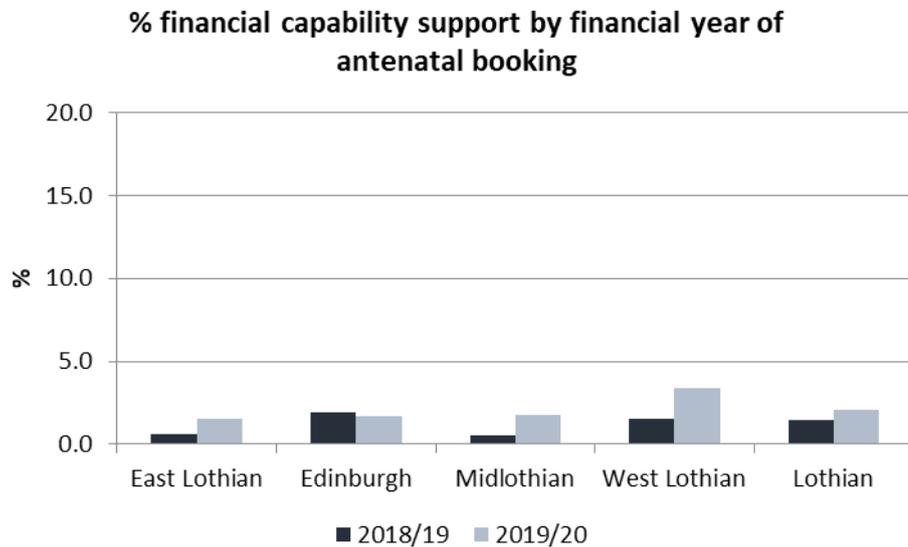


**% referral to income maximisation services by financial year of antenatal booking**



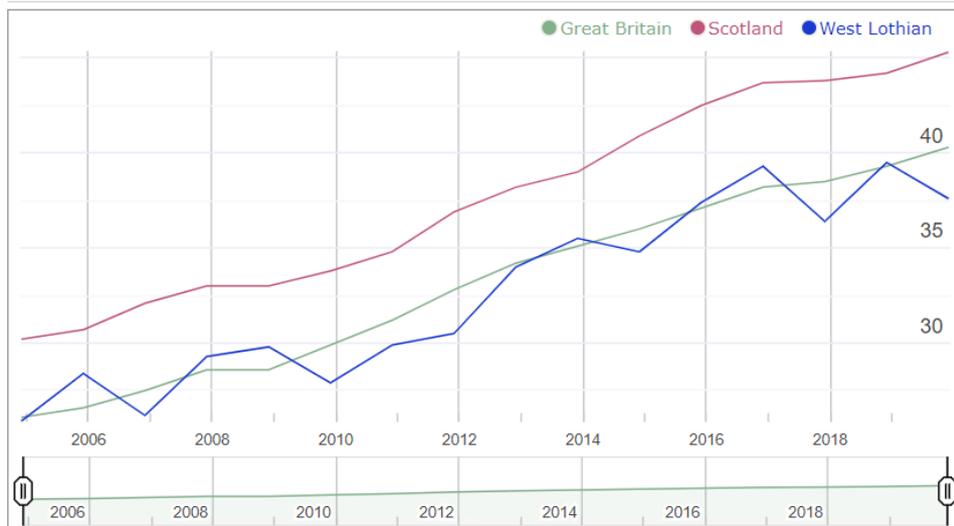
**% money and debt advice services by financial year of antenatal booking**





Pre Covid-19, the West Lothian labour market has been relatively buoyant with a long-term trend of a higher employment rate than the overall figure for Scotland as well as a higher proportion of economically active adults. However, the quality of local jobs and the gross earnings of local residents are consistently lower than the Scotland level. Only 37.6% of the West Lothian workforce is educated to degree level and above compared to 45.37% for Scotland. The educational attainment gap remains consistently below Scotland levels. (Source: NOMIS West Lothian Profile).

**NVQ4 and above  
West Lothian**



Approximately 16,000 (or 18%) of West Lothian residents earn below the Living Wage. The number of people falling below the living Wage threshold has increased steadily since 2012. (Source: West Lothian Poverty Profile, 2020)

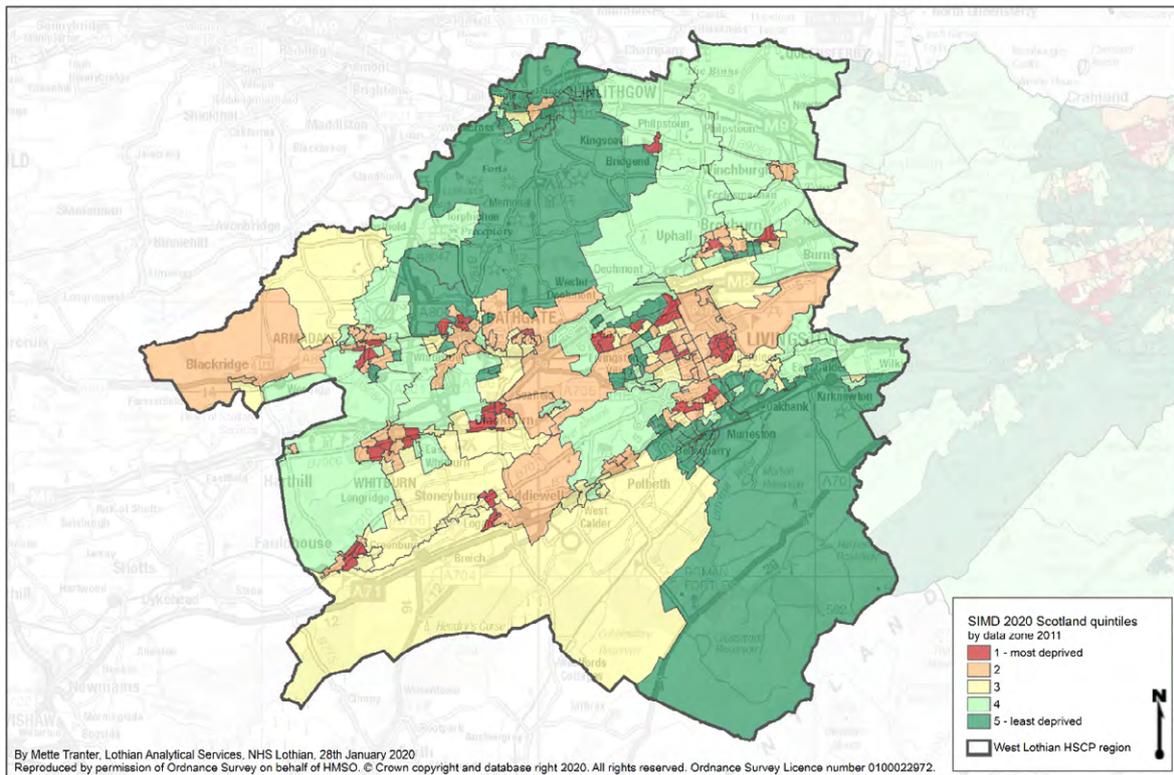
There is strong evidence that poverty is concentrated in areas of multiple deprivation. There are 37 West Lothian datazones in the 20% most deprived in Scotland (marked in red on the map below). These are concentrated in parts of Livingston and further west in communities which have a legacy of heavy or manufacturing industries (see Map 1). These areas show where targeted anti-poverty work is required. But it is also important to note that while 28,475 people live in the most deprived datazones, a further 10,780 people live in datazones that are among the 20% most deprived specifically for either income or employment but not the most deprived quintile overall.

**Table 5: SIMD breakdown**

	<b>SIMD 2020 SIMD quintile 5 population</b>	<b>SIMD 2020 Income deprived population</b>	<b>SIMD 2020 Employment deprived population</b>
<b>Most deprived 20% data zones in Scotland in West Lothian</b>	28,475	31,651	27,953

(Source: <https://www2.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/SIMD>)

**Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation 2020 - West Lothian**



## Section 3: Taking Action for Change

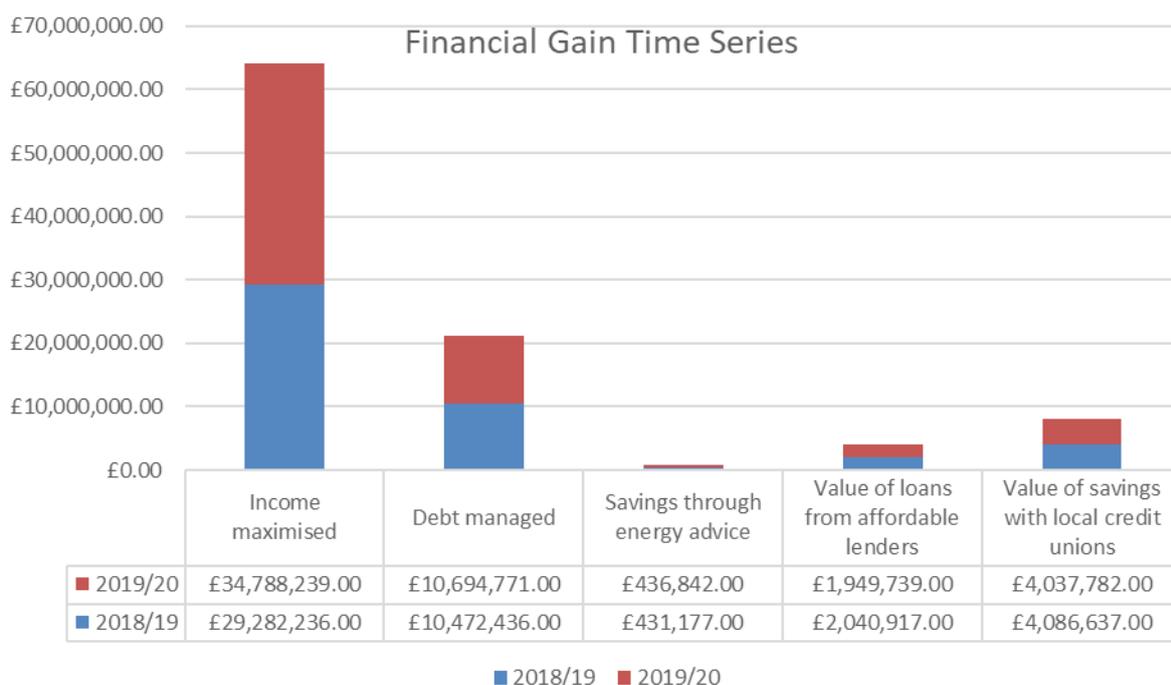
### Progress of Anti-Poverty Strategy- comparative results across years 1-2

	2018/19	2019/20
Individuals supported into work, education or training	412	408
Households facing eviction supported to remain in their homes	375	398
Affordable new build homes completed	934	1,170
Local advice outreach sessions available in all multi-member ward areas	21	24
Pregnant women and parents accessing specialist advice and income maximisation	569	701
Individuals able to access advice services through health settings including GP surgeries and St John's Hospital	1,909	1,604

### 3.1 Driver 1: Income from Employment

WL LCPAR 2018/19 actions	Progress	Comments
Promote the Living Wage and accreditation and address any barriers to take up	Ongoing	Responsibility for this work has been transferred to the WLC Business Development team,
Develop, pilot and evaluate Men n2 Work and further develop Women n2 work to support clients for whom English is not their first language.	Ongoing	SG funding for Men2Work and Women2Work. Opportunities to develop support that targets specific population groups e.g. mums returning to work

There was a 16% increase in income maximised between 2018/19 and 2019/20 and a broadly similar amount of debt managed and energy savings achieved across the two years. The level of savings with local credit unions and loans provided by affordable lenders has also been consistent over the two year period.



### 3.2 Driver 2: Costs of Living

WL LCPAR 2018/19 actions	Progress	Comments
To widen the mapping exercise to include third sector and NHS to fully understand range of activity, reduce duplication and focus on actions which work	Ongoing	Mapping had started before Covid-19 lockdown
Map all food projects across the region to better understand need and gaps	Mapping complete. Food Network to be established. Opportunities for community capacity building. Paper on 6 <sup>th</sup> December to WLC Partnership and Resources Committee	Provided the basis for the West Lothian Food Consortium
3% of Pupil Equity Funding is being allocated to participatory budgeting. Pilot being undertaken within 5 schools which will be linked to the cost of the school day.	Ongoing	Paused due to Covid-19
Refresh holiday lunch programme to increase number of places on offer and number of locations		Paper to WLC Education Executive about Early Years expansion during school holidays. The need for more community venues was identified. But this programme was transformed by Covid-19. The combined third sector and council response to ensure food poverty was minimised meant SG funding was used to provide free lunches for more than 5,500 young people from late March to mid-August

### 3.3 Driver 3: Income from Social Security

Specific activity with key target groups:

- Lone parents
- Families where a household member is disabled
- Families with 3 or more children
- Minority ethnic families
- Families where the youngest child is under 1
- Mothers aged under 25

#### Case Study 1

Amera is a mother of four who came to the UK as a refugee from Syria with her husband and children just over two years ago. She spoke no English, found it difficult to settle and build a new life with her family. Amera started to attend English as a Second or Other Language class in her local community to start learning English. She has now completed her level 1 course and is currently working toward achieving level 2.

Amera's ultimate goal is to find work but she realised this may be difficult as she has no UK work experience. She signed up for additional courses through the Women N2 Work programme; Improving Wellbeing and Employability Skills SQA level 3 courses to help improve her English and her overall confidence as well as learning more about life and work in her new homeland. Amera was supported in transitioning from ESOL classes to wider wellbeing and employability courses and had coursework translated into Arabic to aid her understanding. She was also given support to work through her SQA workbook tasks to aid her with her written English skills. All of this has helped Amera to support her family with both home, school and community life.

In her own words, Amera says "I'm happy here in Scotland but every day is a challenge. More than anything I want to have a plan and a future here. During the courses I have flourished, and helped some of the other refugee women to settle at the courses. I am incredibly proud of myself".

## **Case Study 2**

Sarah is a mum of two girls, one in high school and one in primary school. She is in a settled relationship and works part time in a local café. She is dyslexic and her youngest daughter is autistic.

Sarah started her learning journey with the Adult Learning team in May 2018, at which point her first learning goal was to be able to write in paragraphs. She worked closely with tutors to find adaptations to help with her dyslexia and found that using blue paper and screens helped with her visual stress and that explicit instructions and tasks set in stages helped her to read through and understand large pieces of work. She then moved on to creating a budget for home expenses and learning study skills that would help her support her eldest child with school work. Sarah was referred to the local Disability Centre and is now getting help and support from them too, both for herself and her youngest daughter. Sarah's next goals included research into ADHD and autism to inform herself and better prepare for NHS appointments to get the correct support her daughter needs.

Sarah is now better able to deal with correspondence as her reading has improved in leaps and bounds. She is also happy to handle the family budget and her finances are currently stable. Sarah has become more confident in dealing with professionals in regard to her support needs and her children and has negotiated her youngest daughter's change of primary school and transition to high school with support from the new primary school's learning support team. She has continued to fight for and get learning support and evaluation for her daughter. Her knowledge of childhood ASN and its support is now her driving ambition. She would like to help other parents with their struggles.

Sarah has been accepted to start a Level 5 course in Early Education and Childcare with West Lothian College in September 2020. She has already been in contact with the college's learning support team in preparation for starting.

## **Case Study 3**

Alison is a lone parent with three children who had escaped an abusive relationship and taken custody of her stepdaughter who had been abandoned by her father. Alison's mental health and wellbeing was very poor and she was off work with reduced pay as a result of the trauma. She was referred to the Advice Shop by her child's school as the teachers were concerned that her teenager didn't have uniform and often had no money to buy lunch.

A welfare rights advisor visited Alison at home where she was more comfortable in discussing her situation and identified ways to maximise her income and relieve

some of the financial pressure for the family. The advisor helped Alison to apply for Free School Meals and Clothing Grants to help toward school related costs for her children, set up a food delivery through the local foodbank to help her back on her feet and offered to link Alison in with a free meal delivery service to provide hot meals to her door whilst her income was low. Alison was also referred to a mental health advocacy project to provide ongoing help and support. The advisor maintains regular contact with Alison to make sure her benefits are in payment and provides help to resolve any issues that arise. Alison has also started working with an energy advisor to get her gas and electricity bills under control. Her financial situation has stabilised and Alison now has much more support in place as her mental health and wellbeing recovers.

### Increasing uptake of Best Start

Work is underway to assess mechanisms whereby healthcare staff can promote Best Start Food Payment and Grants. Routine midwife discussions at 21 weeks of pregnancy which introduce the Baby Box may be an opportunity to discuss Best Start payments and grants. This will require a consistent approach from community midwives to engaging with families around Best Start food payment. Exploratory work is underway with community midwifery to see how service can be developed.

WL LCPAR 2018/19 actions	Progress	Comments
Increase the number of people accessing help and advice in health and care settings	Ongoing	Data reported and new projects underway: new CAB linked advice workers at Craigshill and Whitburn Health Centre in conjunction with Community Development Trust. Workers at Carmondean, Ashgrove and Armadale Health Centre Annexe plus St John's Hospital. Introduction of Scottish Welfare Payments is important development.
Further work to automate processes and increase uptake of benefit entitlement	Ongoing	FORT (on line tracking and referral system) has been implemented and sign-up ongoing

### Training of Front Line Staff and Volunteers

Feedback from partners and stakeholders indicated that training staff and volunteers in poverty awareness was beneficial in improving confidence, skills and knowledge amongst staff to support those who are seeking help and support. Feedback from participants indicated that there was an interest and willingness to attend further training on specific areas of interest particularly around Universal Credit and welfare reform. Training for front-line staff has now been embedded into the annual action plan.

Training Session	Date delivered	Attendees
Poverty awareness training	June 2019 October 2019	120
Poverty awareness e-learning module	Ongoing	44
Welfare reform and Universal Credit update briefing	June 2019	44

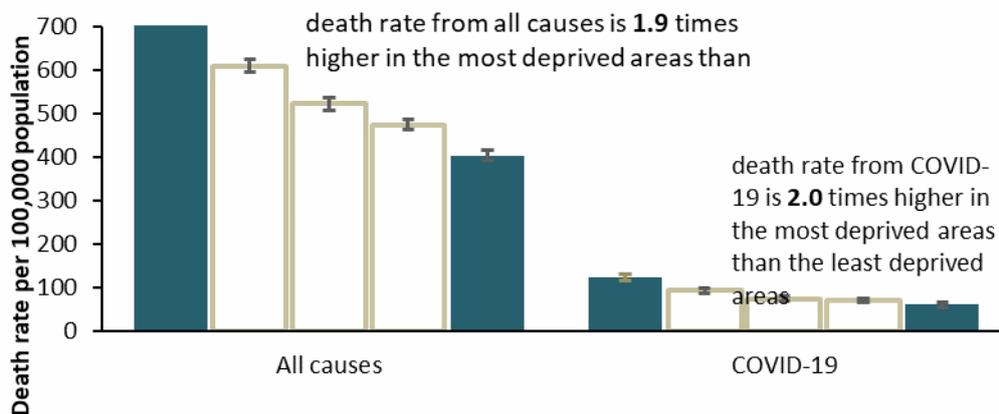
## Section 4: Forward Planning: Child Poverty and Covid-19 new normal

### 4.1 Impact of Covid-19

The impact of Covid-19 has not been shared across the population. There are people at greater risk and environments and settings that are higher risk. The age-standardised death rate due to Covid-19 in West Lothian (162.9/100,000) between March and July 2020 was below the Scotland (193/100,000) average. The age standardised death rate for all deaths in West Lothian (764.5/100,000) between March and July 2020 is significantly below the Scotland average (1,264/100,000).[1]

The current evidence suggests the following are direct health impacts of Covid-19:

- higher mortality rates among males than females[2-4]
- highest mortality rates among 75-84 year olds[2, 4]
- greater morbidity and mortality among people with pre-existing health problems. [5-9] BUT
- significant morbidity and mortality among people with no pre-existing health problems (see shielding numbers in Appendix 2)
- people from the most deprived communities have been twice as likely to die from Covid-19 as people from the least deprived communities. [4, 10]



**Table 1: All cause and Covid-19 age-sex standardised death rate for SIMD quintiles Scotland, 2020 [1]**

There is strong evidence that people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are at highest risk of illness and disease.[10-13] Recent analysis by Public Health Scotland shows the increased risks of serious illness due to Covid-19 in people of South Asian origin.[14] It seems unlikely that there is any biological reason for these outcomes but it is likely that people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds are at greater risk due to their occupational exposure[15] which is linked to structural racism.

### Occupational risk

Analysis of Covid-19 deaths in Scotland shows that the standardised death rate for all occupations is 10.2 per 100,000. But there is a gradient with most senior occupations experiencing lower death rates albeit numbers in each category are small. Other studies reach similar conclusions.[4, 10]

**Table 2: Deaths from Covid-19 by occupation (Source: NRS Deaths involving coronavirus (Covid-19) in Scotland, Week 28, 2020 (Additional Analysis)**

Standard Occupational Classification Major Group	Number of deaths	Age-standardised rate per 100,000 population
1 - Managers, Directors and Senior Officials	22	9.1
2 - Professional Occupations	8	.
3 - Associate Professional and Technical Occupations	18	6.6
4 - Administrative and Secretarial Occupations	17	7.0
5 - Skilled Trades Occupations	35	13.2
6 - Caring, Leisure and Other Service Occupations	30	13.0
7 - Sales and Customer Service Occupations	21	16.2
8 - Process, Plant and Machine Operatives	43	25.1
9 - Elementary Occupations	36	16.3

The most comprehensive information on occupational risk is from data for people aged 20-64 in England and Wales analysed by the Office for National Statistics. The ONS research, like other studies,[16] shows that health and social care workers have the highest risk of exposure to Covid-19. Protective measures for health care workers have reduced risk for this group but social care workers have not been protected to the same degree. For health care workers in England and Wales, the death rate is 6.4

per 100,000 whereas social care workers death rate is 14.4 per 100,000. The increased exposure, morbidity and mortality for social care workers is a particular concern. This is a predominantly female workforce whose employment is not well paid and many staff have temporary contracts and poor working conditions.

The data also shows that security guards, cleaners, bus and taxi drivers have had the highest death rates from Covid-19 in England and Wales. These are relatively low paid jobs, often deemed essential services, with potential for higher rates of exposure unless mitigation is in place.[8]

There is also strong evidence from large population surveys of a negative impact on mental health as a result of Covid-19. The Institute for Fiscal Studies estimate an 8% reduction in mental health across the population with particularly large drops for young people and women. Those people who have experienced job loss, loss of income or had children younger than 15 in the household have experienced poorer mental health.

## 4.2 Driver 1: Income from Employment

The social and economic impacts of Covid-19 in West Lothian have been clear.

- 27,600 West Lothian employees had been furloughed at August 2020
- 10,000 potential job losses anticipated by April 2021
- 5.9% unemployment in July, up from 2.8% in January; 10.4% youth unemployment

Economic activity has slowed down and there is concern about longer-lasting effects of a recession. Between January and July, the number of people on the claimant count rose from 2.8% to 5.9%. The latest release of statistics on the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme for August 2020 shows that there are 27,600 furloughed employments currently recorded in West Lothian, accounting for almost one third of all jobs in the area. There was a notable increase in Universal Credit claims in West Lothian during March and April (initially a 350% increase in Universal Credit claims) and a second wave of increased social security applications is anticipated as more people lose their jobs after furloughing ends. Government funding for community support is ending as are mortgage holidays.

Lockdown restrictions resulted in whole sectors of industry being closed down, triggering economic recession. Quarter 2 of 2020/21 saw a record fall of 20.4% and although GDP began to rise with an 8.7% growth in June 2020 as lockdown restrictions began to ease, there is still some way to go towards full economic recovery. The impact of Covid-19 has been felt by many workers at an individual or household level as hours have been cut, jobs lost and employment furloughed.

Although the impact of this unprecedented crisis has been widespread, evidence indicates that some workers are more likely to be adversely impacted than others:

1. Those in particularly affected industries such as hospitality, tourism, entertainment and non-food retail as well as employees of small businesses reliant on cash flow.
2. Those with insecure employment such as self-employed people, those with short term temporary contracts, zero hours contracts and individuals who identify as under-employed.
3. Those employed in roles with less ability to work from home such as customer facing roles or on-site work.
4. Households where all earners are impacted. This is particularly true for households with a single earner such as lone parents or households where an adult is unable to work due to disability, ill health or caring responsibilities.

Scottish Government analysis of the economic impact of coronavirus on individuals and households shows that some key groups are more likely to fall into these categories:

**Women:**

- Women make up the majority of workers in shut down sectors such as retail, accommodation and the food and drink service industry.
- Women are also more likely to work part time and therefore miss out on Statutory Sick Pay due to earnings falling under the eligibility threshold. Women are also more likely to work in roles where the hourly rate of pay is likely to fall far below the level of the Real Living Wage if wages are reduced to 80% through the furlough scheme.
- Women are over-represented in social care roles and at higher risk of exposure to Covid-19. ONS research shows a higher mortality rate for social care workers compared to health care professionals with more stringent protective measures in place.

**Young People:**

- Young people are more likely to work in shut down sectors such as retail, entertainment and hospitality and less likely to be able to work from home.
- Young people were more likely to be financially vulnerable and to have problem debt before the crisis and have been more likely to resort to borrowing to make ends meet during the pandemic.

### **Minority Ethnic People:**

- A higher share of the visible minority ethnic population work in the hospitality sector with 31.7% compared to 18.6% of the white population.
- Pakistani and Bangladeshi workers have the lowest median hourly pay and in Scotland, African women are more likely to work in care, leisure and other service occupations with less likelihood of being able to work from home.

## **4.2 Driver 2: Costs of Living**

The ability of households to meet the ongoing cost of living during the coronavirus crisis is closely linked to socio-economic factors. Financial resiliency is affected by both security of income and rising costs. West Lothian Council rent arrears have increased each month since April 2020. Every ward area has seen a small increase in rent arrears for mainstream tenancies and most areas have seen an increase in rent arrears for temporary accommodation and garages/garage plots. There has also been an increase in the caseload for Council Tax Reduction and a projected under-recovery of £807,153 council tax against budgeted income (as at end July 2020).

The Anti-Poverty service is managing the Additional Discretionary Housing Payment budget allocation for tenants struggling to pay housing costs as a result of the crisis.

### **Cost of Goods**

The period preceding lockdown at the end of March 2020 saw major fluctuation in the price of high demand goods. The Institute of Fiscal Studies has looked at the changes in the price of goods and services during the crisis, finding that:

- The price of cough and cold medicine increased by 11% in the 3rd and 4th week of March.
- The average price of other high demand products including pasta, nappies and pet food increased by 1.1% in the same period.

Those with less disposable income or financial resilience may have been unable to plan and buy ahead in preparation for lockdown and may have encountered more difficulty in securing goods at the best price as availability of high demand goods became scarce.

## Cost of Housing

Research by the Resolution Foundation, an independent think-tank focused on improving the living standards of those on low-to-middle incomes, has found that:

- By May 2020, the number of households making payments for mortgage, rent and council tax were respectively 14%, 11% and 9% below predicted levels based on pre-crisis trends.
- Housing costs tend to be higher for lower wealth households due to the cost of renting compared to mortgage. Owner occupiers are also more likely to have access to options such as payment holidays to mitigate the impact of reduced income due to Covid-19.
- The coronavirus income shock has been felt widely across tenures, but social and private renters are more likely to have fallen behind with housing costs than home owners. Additionally, renters are more likely to have lost their job or been furloughed during the crisis whilst owners with mortgage are the group most likely to have reduced hours.
- A significant proportion of respondents have cut back on other expenditure in order to cover their housing costs, with 12% reporting material deprivation. Sacrifices include eating fruit and vegetables every day, covering normal household bills, purchasing contents insurance, turning on the heating when needed, saving £10 or more a month and replacing broken electrical items such as a washing machine or fridge when required.

## Cost of the School Day

The Child Poverty Action Group surveyed 3218 parents and carers, and 1074 children during the month of May and found that:

- Low income families were twice as likely to lack resources needed to support learning at home and more likely to have to buy resources specifically for this task
- Children and young people valued being able to communicate with their teachers online, but phone calls were also highly appreciated by those that had received them. Parents and carers valued schools that took the time to understand their particular circumstances and offer personalised support.
- Measures to replace free school meals were valued by eligible families, but most preferred cash to enable them to meet their families' needs.

## Savings and Debt

A report by the Resolution Foundation entitled 'Rainy Days' looked at the comparative financial resilience of households with higher and lower wealth, finding that:

- Wealthier workers are more likely to be able to work from home and therefore experience less interruption of earnings.
- Whilst interruption to income has been felt across income deciles, the impact of financial shock on the household bottom line is much more serious for lower-income working-age families than higher-income ones.
- Key workers and workers in closed down sectors are more likely to be low paid, less likely to have savings and more likely to have had to borrow money to get through the crisis.
- During lockdown, one third of low income households were saving less whilst one third of higher income households were saving more.

### 4.3 Driver 3: Income from Social Security

A range of measures have been put in place to support those receiving social security benefits through the Covid-19 crisis:

- Increase to the rates of Universal Credit and Working Tax Credit by approximately £20 per week between April 2020 and April 2021.
- Temporary expansion of eligibility criteria for some benefits to ensure security of income during the crisis, for example the continuation of tax credits for claimants whose employment was affected.
- Work search requirements and the requirement to attend Jobcentre meetings temporarily suspended between March and July 2020. From July 2020, some work requirements and sanctions reintroduced.
- Deductions from benefits for overpayments and social fund loans paused between March and July 2020.

Research by the Resolution Foundation found that increased social security entitlement has lessened the impact of job losses and reduction in earnings, acting as a cushion for many low and middle income families, and Covid-19 has led to record numbers of new claims for Universal Credit, increasing from an average of 100,000 claims per month before the crisis to 950,000 claims in the last two weeks of March alone. But further job losses are expected when the furlough scheme comes to an end in March 2021 as businesses struggle to recover. There is therefore, concern that such temporary measures put in place to mitigate the impact of coronavirus could create a cliff edge for claimants, leading to increased financial hardship as these measures are removed.

The rollout of devolved social security benefits through Social Security Scotland has also been impacted by Covid. The renewed focus on the introduction of two new sources of financial support may go some way to support people in Scotland to cope with the ongoing impact of the crisis on their household budget:

- A new Job Start Grant is now available to help young people with the costs associated with starting a new job. If eligible, a one-off payment of £250 will be made, or £400 if applicant has a child
- The new Scottish Child Payment will open for applications in November 2020 with the first payments expected to be in February 2021. The first phase will be open to families with children under 6 years old and in receipt of a qualifying benefit with payments at a rate of £10 per week will be paid for each eligible child.

During the period 23 March to 16 August, the West Lothian Anti-Poverty service processed 5,081 claims to the Scottish Welfare Fund. This represented an increase of 55% compared with the same period in 2019. 55% of the awards were for crisis grants compared with 30% in the same period in 2019. The proportion of successful grants – a straightforward marker of increased need -- rose by 13 percentage points.

Measures have also been put in place at a local level to help mitigate the impact of Covid including:

- Extension of the School Clothing Grant eligibility criteria to include Council Tax Reduction Scheme as a qualifying benefit
- Parents of children eligible for free school meals received a payment of £10 per child per week until end of July 2020 to help ease financial strain
- The council also administered the early payment of school uniform grants to 5,500 children in West Lothian between April and mid-August.
- Parents of children eligible for free school meals will receive a payment of £15 per child per week for the Christmas, February and Easter holiday period.

#### 4.4 Covid-19 recovery needs

In recognition of the potential long-term impacts of Covid-19, colleagues involved in the West Lothian Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Anti-Poverty Task Force and the Health and Wellbeing Partnership have collated a list of key activity and future needs. The initial work has highlighted concerns which have been grouped into broad themes:

- income and employment;
- economy and business;
- physical and mental health and wellbeing
- housing and homelessness issues;
- develop/strengthen partnership working between public, third sector and business

It was recognised that the initial working group should incorporate a wider community perspective as well as canvass a wider group of partnership colleagues. The Chair of the CPP circulated an early draft of the key activity table in July asking partners for additional responses. Working group members also led discussions about this work with colleagues at the Integration Joint Board Strategic Planning Group, the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan Health and Wellbeing Group, the West Lothian Anti-Poverty Taskforce and the West Lothian Third Sector Strategy Group. Additionally, during August, West Lothian Council Regeneration Team and the Voluntary Sector Gateway surveyed community agencies asking for feedback on these initial priorities and additional issues that should be considered. There were 99 responses to the survey. There was overwhelming support for the initial themes.

### **Recovery plans**

- How do services adapt and move forward post-Covid? Forward planning – key affected groups, targeting resources
- How do services respond to changing local need?

It is anticipated that this post-Covid-19 work will inform the wider CPP Covid-19 recovery plan; anti-poverty work and child poverty work will be central. In the short term, it is important to ensure that key child poverty themes are highlighted in recovery plans for key service areas. Then it is imperative to ensure that the key drivers of poverty, and crucially the key actions to alleviate poverty, especially child poverty, are included in service plans and partnership action. It is anticipated that these key actions will cover the following:

- Employability
- Income maximisation

A number of actions have been developed as part of the 2020/21 Anti-Poverty Covid-19 action plan which will have direct application to households with children that experience poverty. These actions will complement the extant Child Poverty Actions. The Child Poverty Reference group will prioritise and track activity for 2020/21. Clearly, Covid-19 will shape priorities for the immediate future.

Aim	Action	Drivers
<p>Embed advice, support and advocacy to improve early intervention and prevent poverty and focus on those who have been affected by Covid-19</p>	<p>Monitor developments in the rollout plan for devolved Scottish Social Security benefits, particularly Scottish Child Payment which is expected in early 2021</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliver media take-up campaign following rollout of new Scottish benefits</li> <li>• Work with key partners to raise awareness of new benefits and encourage referrals through the FORT system for help to claim</li> <li>• Provide support and assistance to clients with the claim process</li> <li>• Develop close links with Access2 Employment to make onward referrals</li> </ul>	<p>3</p>
<p>Ensure that individuals in crisis are able to access appropriate, affordable solutions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Discretionary Housing Payment funding is available to help tenants who may be experiencing financial difficulties as a result of the Covid-19 crisis and increase numbers applying</li> <li>• All children entitled to free school meals will be able to collect a packed lunch or takeaway hot meal as well as breakfast cereal or a cereal bar daily throughout the duration of coronavirus lockdown and during summer</li> <li>• Parents of children eligible for free school meals will receive a payment of £10 per child per week until end of July 2020 to help ease financial strain</li> <li>• Early School Clothing Grant payments will be paid automatically to all parents/carers who received a payment in the 2019/20 academic year to ease financial pressure caused by coronavirus.</li> <li>• Increase uptake of school clothing grant by amending criteria to include council tax reduction</li> <li>• Support individuals in crisis to access one off sources of support and benevolent funds including energy grants, white goods and digital devices</li> <li>• Individuals experiencing domestic violence are supported by a one to one case worker to maximise income and improve financial stability</li> <li>• Explore the potential for an outreach session with Women’s Aid to improve access to advice for women fleeing domestic abuse</li> </ul>	<p>1, 2 &amp; 3</p>

Aim	Action	Drivers
Families with low income are aware of and are supported to access financial support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase uptake of school clothing grant by extending eligibility criteria to include Council Tax Reduction Scheme</li> <li>• Improve accessibility of Education Maintenance Allowance through the development of an online claim form</li> <li>• Promote the NEC card/ Young Scot card across a range of channels</li> <li>• Parents with children eligible for 2 year old early learning and childcare provision are offered a referral for financial advice</li> <li>• Work with Family Assessment and Support Services screening group to provide financial advice and income maximisation for at-risk families</li> <li>• Looked after young people are offered one-to-one support to develop budgeting skills and become financially included</li> </ul>	1, 2 & 3
Families have access to tools and resources to improve their financial wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with West Calder High School and local partners to develop a family support hub with a focus on financial capability</li> <li>• Implement a further phase of Connecting Scotland programme to provide devices and connectivity for school pupils.</li> </ul>	1
Improve the use of data from multiple sources to analyse and understand local poverty figures in order to target resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty profile of West Lothian updated annually</li> <li>• Covid-19 indicator scorecard to be developed to help monitor ongoing impact</li> </ul>	

Aim	Action	Drivers
<p>Parental Employment Support Fund (PESF) will support families who are in or at risk of poverty, to access employment or progress in work.</p>	<p>Family groups that will receive support are: lone parents, those with a disability; families with 3 or more children, those from an ethnic minority, families where the youngest child is under 1 or parents who are 25 or under. In terms of delivery 65% of funding will be allocated to supporting low income parents in work, with 35% being spent on unemployed parents.</p> <p>In West Lothian the provision will be delivered through Access2employment, initially targeted in Whitburn/Fauldhouse and surrounding areas. Initially primary schools will be targeted within the Whitburn Academy school cluster, employment advisors will engage with Primary and Nursery school staff to identify the key family grouping to offer a range of employability interventions. Parents that are currently experiencing in work poverty will undertake an assessment to evaluate their current position and identify training needs and employment support required to enable progression into better paid or more secure employment. Suitable training options will be identified and implemented for participants and support will be provided throughout to ensure training is sustainable for the necessary duration. Interventions will include the participation in Women or Men n2 Work, identification of upskilling / training opportunities and identifying career progression opportunities. Funding will be available for training aligned to progression opportunities to enable participants to secure employment or increase their earnings.</p> <p>In addition to targeting primary schools the delivery will target key organisations, and projects, that are engaging with the family grouping in the area to offer support including early years provision, nursery schools, Housing and the third sector organisations.</p>	

## Section 5: Lessons

2020/21 will be dominated by Covid-19 – even if there are vaccines the social and economic impacts of the pandemic will take time to unravel. It is clear that partnership working has proved its mettle during the first wave of the pandemic. All community planning partners contributed to work that, at its most fundamental, was about ameliorating household poverty and inequality caused by the need to counter the effects of the virus: food and medicine deliveries; childcare for key workers; phone calls to the most vulnerable members of society. Life now seems unimaginable without the West Lothian Food Consortium. But funding for Covid-19 resilience has already ceased. Need still exists and is likely to increase as furloughed jobs are lost and the economy continues to function in a less dynamic way. Social enterprises are struggling to replace income generating streams and public sector partners have financial worries.

Working with communities and learning from and with communities is a challenge in a socially distanced environment. We need to learn from colleagues, notably West Lothian Council's Regeneration team and the West Lothian third sector, how to do this type of work. Digital options will provide some opportunities but we need to be mindful that cost is just one barrier to engaging with digital technology.

Utilising Get Heard programme to hear from communities and having some sort of lessons learned seminar to inform year three:

- What has worked in years 1 and 2?
- What have the challenges been?
- How do these lessons apply going forward?
- How to take lessons learned and adapt to new ways of delivering services?

### **Appendix 1: West Lothian Child Poverty Reference Group**

Beverley Akinlami, West Lothian Council Community Education

Gillian Amos, NHS Lothian Health Promotion

Raymond Branton, Broxburn Family Centre, The Dale Hub & Simply Play

Martin Higgins, NHS Lothian Public Health

Tracy Murdoch, KidzEco

Kathleen Neilly, West Lothian Food Bank

Elaine Nisbet, West Lothian Council Anti-Poverty Service

### **Appendix 2: West Lothian Anti-Poverty Scorecard**

The West Lothian Anti-poverty Strategy and Action Plan was launched in 2012 and it is appropriate, therefore, to review the changes in the key indicators that help to map the nature and scale of poverty in West Lothian. Many of these indicators have a significant time lag and so it is difficult to judge the full impact of Covid-19 on the West Lothian Economy by looking at our traditional benchmark indicators.

<b>West Lothian Trend data</b>					
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Previous</b>	<b>Latest</b>	<b>Change since 2012</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
<b>Children and families</b>					
Children in out of work families (1)	7,000	6,200	3,800	-3200	
Children in working households receiving Working Tax Credit (1)	8,700	7,900	4,000	-4700	
Number of secondary school pupils registered for free school meals (3)	1,616	1,710	1,646	+30	
% of secondary school pupil registered for free school meals (3)	14.6%	16.0%	15.2%	+0.6%	
<b>Working age people</b>					
People in Work (4)	86,500	90,000	93,000	+6,500	
Employment rate – aged 16-64 (4)	74.2%	76.1%	78.4%	+4.2%	
% aged 16-64 who are employees (4)	67.3%	68.2%	66.6%	-0.7%	
% aged 16-64 who are self-employed (4)	6.8%	7.8%	9.5%	+2.7%	
% residents earning below The Living Wage (5)	18%	16.7%	15.0%	-3%	
Estimated number of residents earning below The Living Wage (5)	16,000	14,700	13,000	-3000	

<b>West Lothian Trend data (cont)</b>					
<b>Indicator</b>	<b>2012</b>	<b>Previous</b>	<b>Latest</b>	<b>Change since 2012</b>	<b>Direction of travel</b>
<b>Out of Work benefits</b>					
ILO (International Labour Organisation) unemployment estimate (4)	7,000	4,000	3,000	-4,000	
Claimant count (6) (Post Covid)	4,010	3,297	6,485	2,485	
18-24 Claimants (2)	1,310	445	695	-615	
<b>Pensioners</b>					
Beneficiaries of top-up benefit (2)	8,660	5,870	4,590	-3,730	
% of beneficiaries of pension credit top- up (2)	31%	20%	16%	-15%	

Sources: (1) HMRC Number of children and families receiving Child or Working Tax Credits in each local authority, April 2020 (2) DWP benefit claimants - working age client group; (3) Scottish Government, School Meals Survey; (4) ONS annual population survey; (5) ONS Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings; (6) ONS Claimant Count including Universal Credit

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