



West Lothian
Council

THE GATEWAY

Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian

Annual Report 2021-22

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Introduction

This is the second annual report produced by West Lothian Council and Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian covering 2021/22. The aim is to provide an overview of how the sector, West Lothian Council and other Community Planning Partners worked together to deliver vital support for communities.

The context of much of the first report was very much shaped by the Covid-19 pandemic and the effect of this over all on our communities, changing the way we work. Unfortunately, that remained the background to the 2021/22 report as West Lothian begins the recovery from the Covid 19 pandemic and the impact on West Lothian communities.

West Lothian Council, Community Planning Partners, Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) and the wider third sector continued to work together positively to provide a coordinated response to provide help and support to vulnerable individuals and communities across the local area. This changing landscape continued the need for new ways of working for many a permanent change to how services are delivered going forward. The partnership adapted quickly to meet changing needs and responded to mitigate the impacts on our communities. This continues to be the way of working that underpins the activity within this report and is highlighted by some of the case studies.

Contained within the report is information on the size and scale of the Third Sector both in terms of the Scottish context and West Lothian. The information highlights the number of organisations, the number of staff employed and the spend in the local economy. The information aims to show the scale and impact of the sector and highlights that the sector within West Lothian is predominantly a locally grown sector.

The report pulls together a wider overview of the overall investment, support and partnership working that takes place across a number of Council Services and other Community Planning partners. It is not meant to be an in-depth analysis, as the detail of the activity is reported and scrutinized within the lead area for delivery, it is however, an attempt to show the range of partnership work that goes on and a wider understanding of the funding that helps support the work in our communities.

It is not a complete picture as links, networks and partnership working take place all the time and is not always captured easily. Similarly, with funding, there is much more investment that supports the Third Sector and Council to deliver than the investment that goes into the third sector through Council. The key importance of how the Third Sector is able to draw down funding from external funders is recognised and how that ability helps to deliver key support to our local communities whether geographically or thematically. This is something that needs to be better understood going forward and something Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian (VSGWL) is looking at to provide a clearer picture of the full impact of the sector. The report highlights around £40.5M of funding going into the sector from West Lothian Council and our Health partners in 2021/22 but partners are aware of more investment not captured within the report summary.

Understanding the impact of the sector is also not simply about the ability to attract external funding it is also about what the funding is for, namely how they improve the outcomes for their users in whatever sector they operate. This is something generally recognised and is no doubt captured individually or thematically but not looked at in the round. This is an area of work that both officers and the Third Sector will aim to develop throughout 2022/23 and will begin to report in the next annual report where possible.

West Lothian Council and the Third Sector have worked closer than ever before and strengthened existing processes and relationships. This partnership approach is not just about funding but also about planning strategically to ensure a joined-up approach so that available resources are best targeted to deliver for our communities, including an officer led Third Sector group that continues to support joint working on strategic areas for development. Some other areas of this activity are captured within the report under partnership working and are meant to highlight the breadth of activity but these are only some aspects.

In terms of defining the Third Sector, for the purposes of the report this includes local community-based organisations groups (mainly charities but some unincorporated), West Lothian wide groups, national charities operating within West Lothian, Community Development Trusts and other social enterprise models).

SIZE AND SCALE OF THE SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

This section provides high level information about the size and value of the sector from a national perspective as well as the local context.

Key Figures

46,500

CHARITIES/COMMUNITY GROUPS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISES KNOWN TO BE ACTIVE IN SCOTLAND



This includes 23,800 Scottish charities and over 1,000 UK-wide charities operating in Scotland. - The figure also includes over 20,000 community groups not registered as charities. - For every 10 registered charities there are a further 8 community groups.

89%

OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS ARE LOCAL

35%

OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS ARE BASED IN RURAL OR REMOTE AREAS

Charities and community groups play a particularly important role in rural areas, with more charities and community groups per head of population than urban areas.

Finances & Growth



SCOTTISH CHARITY INCOME IN 2020/21
£8.5 BILLION

SCOTTISH CHARITY EXPENDITURE IN 2020/21
£7.9 BILLION



£8.5
BILLION

TURNOVER OF THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR IN SCOTLAND

SCOTTISH CHARITIES £7.2 BILLION
UK-WIDE CHARITIES' SCOTTISH ACTIVITIES £1.3 BILLION

68%

OF CHARITIES SAW INCOMES DECREASE BETWEEN 2020 AND 2021, REFLECTING THAT MANY GROUPS HAD TO CLOSE THEIR DOORS AND PUT A HALT TO ACTIVITIES.

This reflects the fact that during the pandemic many charities were not only able to continue providing services, but adapted and increased activities to meet new demand. Growth was driven by larger charities, particularly those involved in Housing, Social Care, and Community Development. Grant-making bodies also increased spending by £56m.

ON AVERAGE 3 NEW CHARITIES ARE REGISTERED EVERY DAY, WHILE AROUND 2 PER DAY ARE WOUND UP.

Both charity formations and dissolutions appear to be down slightly during the pandemic, although this may simply be due to a time lag.

3



2



1,182,000

FORMAL
VOLUNTEERS
SUPPORTED
ACTIVITIES IN 2020.



28%

OF SCOTTISH CHARITIES
EMPLOY PAID STAFF WHILE THE
REMAINDER RELY ON UNPAID
VOLUNTEERS.

135,000

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF
PEOPLE EMPLOYED BY
CHARITIES AND THE
WIDER VOLUNTARY
SECTOR

118,644

PAID STAFF
EMPLOYED BY
SCOTTISH
CHARITIES IN
2021



46%

OF THE SECTOR'S EMPLOYEES
WORK PART-TIME - THIS IS FAR
HIGHER THAN BOTH THE PUBLIC
(28%) AND PRIVATE SECTOR
(26%).

64.5%

OF THE SECTOR'S WORKFORCE IS
WOMEN - SIMILAR TO THE PUBLIC
SECTOR, BUT FAR HIGHER THAN THE
PRIVATE SECTOR.

SPORTS AND YOUTH/CHILDREN'S
ACTIVITIES SAW A DROP IN
VOLUNTEERING.



HOWEVER, LOCAL
COMMUNITY/NEIGHBOURHOOD
VOLUNTEERING ROSE FROM
22% IN 2019 TO
25% IN 2020



Informal volunteering on the other hand experienced some major shifts in 2020 due to the impact of Covid, with participation rates increasing from **36%** in 2018 to **56%** in 2020, with around **2.5 million adults** providing unpaid help to friends and neighbours. Some types of informal volunteering soared:

- Keeping in touch with someone who is at risk of being lonely increased from 18% in 2018 to 69% in 2020
- Doing shopping, collection pension, collecting benefits or paying bills increased from 12% to 51%



ECONOMIC VALUE OF VOLUNTEERING

There's no doubt that Scotland's volunteers are valuable. But how can we measure the social and economic value of volunteering?

The results of the 2018 Scottish Household Survey allow us to calculate volunteering effort in Scotland. We estimate that in total volunteers contribute:

£5.5 BILLION to Scotland's economy

*£2.3BN FROM FORMAL VOLUNTEERING AND £3.2BN FROM INFORMAL
VOLUNTEERING (NUMBERS HAVE BEEN ROUNDED TO THE NEAREST MILLION
OR 1,000,000).



Investing in the Voluntary Sector

There are lots of myths and misconceptions about voluntary sector funding. For example, two thirds of sector income is earned rather than donated.



There is currently no national assessment of the true added value of public investment in the sector, but many individual charities have carried out Social Return on Investment research to highlight the significant benefits of their work. Most recently, Children's Hospices across Scotland reported that its services generated £6.24 in public value in return for every public pound invested.

Despite this, many voluntary organisations delivering public services struggle with short term funding arrangements that make it challenging to plan for the future. As a result, charity managers frequently raise concerns about the amount of time they spend trying to raise money rather than delivering vital services. Some estimates suggest that leaders of small to medium charities spend a quarter of their time chasing funding. Short-term funding also creates stress for staff and beneficiaries.

Scotland's voluntary sector is a major provider of public services, from health and social care to education and housing, with £2bn in income coming from the public sector annually, including:



SIZE AND SCALE OF THE SECTOR WEST LoTHIAN

West Lothian Key Facts

536

CHARITIES
OPERATING



INCOME
£109,856,200

EXPENDITURE
£89,523,413



1,083

PAID STAFF



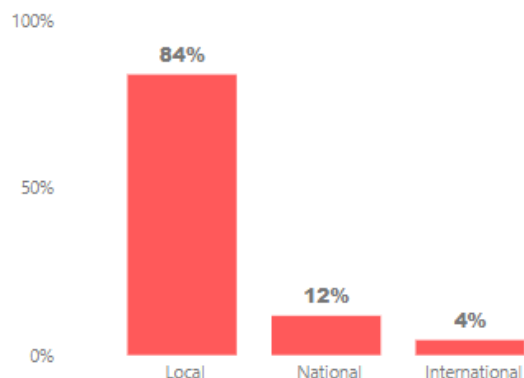
2,855

TRUSTEES



Geographical Reach: Local, national and international

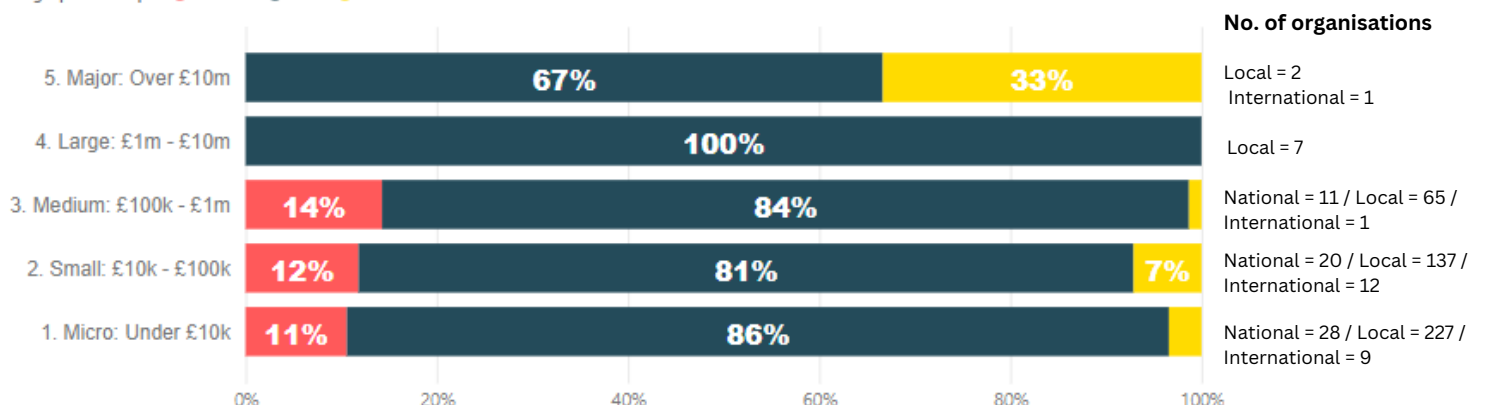
Voluntary organisations by Geographical Spread



There is a tendency for national and international charities to be larger than local ones, and more likely to be registered as charities. The majority of organisations are small regardless of their geographical scope. Many international charities work in very local areas, eg in a specific region, or with a specific school or orphanage. Similarly many national charities are small, for example those dealing with very specialist interests or rare health issues.

% of charities by size and Geographical Spread

Geographical Scope: National (Red), Local (Dark Blue), International (Yellow)



Source: OSCR 2019 and SCVO 2020

Scottish voluntary sector data by ICNPO area of work

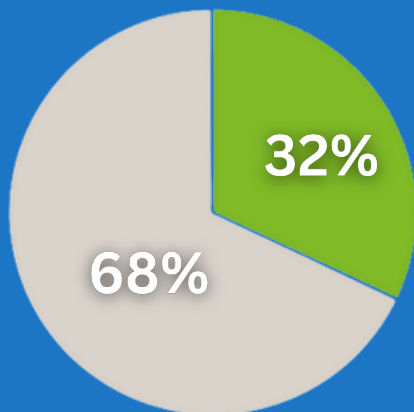
The following table presents the top 5 ICNPO's field of work categories using SCVO's adapted classification system based on the [International Classification of Non-Profit Organisations \(ICNPO\)](#).

| ICNPO Field of Work | Number of Organisations | Income 2020/21 | Expenditure 2020/21 | Paid Staff |
|--|-------------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------|
| Social Care | 166 | £11,144,605 | £9,784,356 | 391 |
| Culture and Sport | 95 | £13,864,165 | £13,094,181 | 156 |
| Religious Activities | 77 | £3,750,528 | £3,668,954 | 79 |
| Community, economic and social development | 68 | £4,816,639 | £3,519,525 | 91 |
| Education and Research | 34 | £5,356,309 | £4,277,221 | 59 |

VOLUNTEERING IN WEST LoTHIAN

THE LATEST STATS FROM THE SCOTTISH HOUSEHOLD SURVEY (SHS)

4 year participation rate: West Lothian



32% of adults in West Lothian, an estimated 46,270 people, volunteer formally through an organisation or group. To provide a more robust result, this is calculated on a 4-year average. This is above the national average in 2018 of 26%.

Adults, based: 980 (sum of respondents for last 4 years 2015-2018)

IN WEST LoTHIAN, FORMAL VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTED:



**4.1 MILLION HOURS
OF HELP PROVIDING**



**£62.1 MILLION
TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Summary of Annual Report 2021-22

£40,500,000

across all sectors covered in this report

Voluntary Sector Gateway



1200

people signed up to volunteer during the crisis

Approx. **£900,000**

emergency funding provided to Vol Orgs by Scottish Government and West Lothian Council



£570k

Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing funding to support 32 small grassroots community groups delivering local mental health and wellbeing initiatives

Partnership & Strategic Working



Over **40** partners groups involve representatives of third sector organisations.

Housing and Homelessness

£272,000
paid out



£75,000 to Action for Children.

£102,000 to Rock Trust - Nightstop and Housing First Services.

£52,000 to Cyrenians Housing First.

Enviromental

£68,852

Management Fees paid

20 organisations supported to develop food growing or community spaces.

Livingston North Blue Green Network Emergency Fund **£24,762**



£31,524 Wyndford Park, Broxburn
Balbardie Park Pump Track, Bathgate **£12,566**

Economic Development & Regeneration

£2,829,561.52
total grants paid out

Voluntary Organisations Budget Split into:

- Service Level Agreements
- Third Sector Community Support Fund
- support from Modernisation & Improvement Fund **£1,154,728.50**



£285,000 (29 Groups) Additional Core Cost Funding

£70,987

Modernisation & Improvement Fund (12 projects)



£808,564

Place Based Investment Fund

Young Persons Guarantee



£200,000

8 Organisations

Community Choices Pilot Blackburn

£25,000

to 9 organisations



Pensioners Xmas 2020/21

£29,000

towards a meal or event



supported **74** social enterprises with business planning and sustainability.

21 organisations have received specialist business support/advice on Community Asset Transfers.



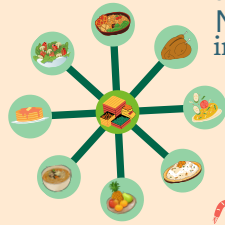
Anti-Poverty Service

£596,831
paid out

West Lothian Food Network grew from 39 to **46** organisations

£596,811 paid to the Food Network in 2021/22

£1,495,452 committed to the Food Network in 2022/23



From May 2020 to June 2022 provided **3,211,008 meals**



Social Policy

£31,654,375
total grants paid out

£21.7 Million

on care and carer support for Adults and Older People.



Children & Families external placements for children, care for children with disabilities, supported accommodation, and other support to families.



£9.9 Million



Supported the national **Winter Protection Fund**

Locally **£5,000** has been awarded from the 'Return of Children to West Lothian' fund.



£145,000 remaining

Education

£4,805,779
paid out

2021/22 CLD Youth Services administered awards to **42** orgs. Including the Summer Programme.

£380,000



Support Playgroups **£20,000**
11 Playgroups supported

Sporting Grants scheme 2021/22

£34,779

15 organisations



Get Into Summer investment. 10 organisations supported to apply

2021/22 West Lothian Leisure awarded:

£4.182 Million



The School Counselling fund

- **£189,000** Wellbeing Scotland – counselling service for all primary school children aged 10 years +
- All secondary schools (including The Skills Centre) have been provided with £25,000 to procure school counselling services. Cedarbank receives £10,000 to procure a specialist therapist for pupils with significant learning needs.

Mental Health Development

£1,720,798
paid out

in 2021/22 **£511,000** was made available for community based mental health services for children, young people, their families and carers. Of which **£325,000** will be used to fund the **PSP, Roots**.

£383,250

has been identified for a Mental Health PSP 'Roots'



Budget

£715,548

for Vulnerable Due to Young Age Public Social Partnership split between all third sector agencies



Wellbeing Scotland received £111,000 to support counsellors and group work.

Partnership and Strategic Working

Investment, partnership working and sharing of expertise is vital to both shaping strategy and delivering for our communities. The establishment of the Third Sector Working Group to link between the Council and the Third Sector has been important and will be developed further moving forward. It is one such example of a number of key strategic for a that involve West Lothian Council, Community Planning partners and Third Sector representatives.

This approach is reflected across a wide range of partnership structures, from the development of the Local Outcome Improvement Plan through the Community Planning Partnership Board to community level and the development of locality plans where the Third Sector is key to planning, sharing best practice and taking actions forward based on where the gaps are. This maximises the ability for limited resources to be best targeted to address the key priorities for our communities.

Below lists examples of current partnership and strategic working groups:



Investment

The following section give a broad overview of funding and partnership working across a range of services and provides an overview of the vital role the third sector plays in supporting delivery. The information also contains funding that is provided by Health Partners.



Economic Development and Regeneration

In 2021/22 £2,829,561.52 was paid to community organisations through a number of application based programmes detailed below.

The Voluntary Organisation Budget was split between a new **Third Sector Community Support Fund** (with some additional funding from other funding streams including the Modernisation and Improvement Fund) as well as organisations identified for commissioning or service agreements. This funding supported 29 West Lothian Third Sector Organisations with a total allocation of £1,154,728.50. The 29 recipients also received an additional share of one off funding of £285,000 to help with core costs and allow more funding to support COVID-19 recovery. This meant a total £1,439,728.50 was allocated to support work being delivered in 2021/22 from a mix of 2020/21 and 2021/22 funding.

The **Modernisation and Improvement Funding** also allocated £70,987 to 12 projects in 2021/22 to help them modernise and improve their organisation.

Young Persons Guarantee Fund – To help support young people into employment £200,000 of Scottish Government Funding received by West Lothian Council was awarded to eight Third Sector organisations.

Pensioners Xmas Treat Fund - Once again £29,000 was distributed to support our older people with a treat at Christmas with 49 small organisations receiving a grant to support 3,372 beneficiaries.



West Lothian Development Trust - The Service also administers the wind farm monies through a Trust and awards funding to local community organisations in eligible areas. In 2021/22 16 awards were made to local groups to the value of £256,282.02.



Place Based Investment Fund Community Wealth Building 2021/22- West Lothian Council received £1,302,000 for year one of a new five year funding stream from the Scottish Government to support place based projects. The Council chose to focus this funding specifically on Community Wealthy Building through an application based process. This saw five projects supported, four of which were third sector led projects that shared investment of £808,564.

Community Choices Pilot -As part of a pilot project on Community Choices, £25,000 was allocated to Blackburn. Local groups, organisations and clubs were invited to bid for funding (maximum of £5,000) to take forward their ideas on how they could improve health and wellbeing in Blackburn, focusing on one or more of the following areas: Mental Health and Wellbeing, Children Living in Poverty and Healthy Life Choices. Eleven applications were received and nine out of the eleven were funded (one part funded):

Group

- Blackburn Galaday (£1800)
- Blackburn Young at Heart (£700)
- Blackburn Family Centre (£2500)
- Change in Blackburn Group (£3200)
- Blackburn and Seafield Church (£5000)
- Blackburn Friday Club (£1590)
- Screen Memories (£3650)
- West Lothian Youth Action Project (£5000)
- Blackburn Bulldogs (£1560)

Support for Social Enterprise - For the 12 month period from April 2021 to the end of March 2022 Business Gateway supported 74 social enterprises across West Lothian. During this time 21 organisations have also received specialist business support and advice from the Business Gateway service on Community Asset Transfers.

Education

The Education Service works with Third Sector providers in a number of areas and includes a major contribution to West Lothian Leisure. Below shows some of that funding with £4,805,779 committed in 2021/22. There is additional monies through PEF for example that goes to third sector organisations that is not included here.



Active Schools and Community Sport

Opportunities to participate in sports and physical activities have been significantly constrained through the pandemic and participation rates have dropped, particularly amongst key target groups. In these challenging times, the value of sports and physical activities to physical and mental health and wellbeing, however, has never been more apparent.

Community sports clubs, their members and volunteers are a fundamental, and often unacknowledged, part of the third sector landscape in West Lothian. One example of how sports clubs and organisations were provided support was via the West Lothian Club Network across the year with a variety of groups attending workshops to help with the return to sport and to consider the impact of other sector wide challenges. These were themed following a consultation with clubs.



2021-22 Sporting Grants - Funding support is also currently provided through the Sporting Grants scheme and the service allocated a total of **£34,779** to 15 different community organisations via the Sporting Grants fund. These projects covered a variety of targeted projects aligned to the Active Scotland Outcomes Framework.

Get Into Summer Funding - Working in partnership with Community Learning & Development, the service supported 10 Accredited sports clubs with their applications to the WLC holiday provision fund. Clubs used this funding to deliver activities targeted at children from low income families and those with additional support needs.



Third Sector Strategic/Consultative Group -The service works in partnership with ClubSport West Lothian; a committee made up of the member community sports clubs across West Lothian. ClubSport West Lothian is the voluntary voice of sports clubs, organisations and individuals within West Lothian. They provide support, information and funding to affiliated members in an effort to enhance the provision of sport and increase the opportunities available to the ever-growing population of the sporting community. Funding is awarded to support their development and also to administer a smaller grants pot with different criteria from our own. ClubSport West Lothian is used as a consultative partner. There are 43-member clubs. ClubSport West Lothian are affiliated to Scottish ClubSport, previously the Scottish Association of Local Sports Councils (SALSC). The organisation is a National partner of sportscotland and is the umbrella organisation for Local Sports Councils and ClubSport networks across Scotland.

West Lothian Leisure - West Lothian Council awarded West Lothian Leisure £4.182M in 2021/22.



Youth Services

Youth Services supported 42 local organisations who shared £380,000 in funding to support youth work in the area, this was mainly focussed on the Summer Programme activities and was a mix of administering external (including Scottish Government) and council monies.

Youth Services also have a strategic group that meets and included two representatives of local youth providers who represent the wider youth sector.



Playgroups



20,000 from the Voluntary Organisations Budget is currently available each year to support Playgroups who can apply and receive an annual grant if they are registered with the Care Inspectorate.

In 2021/22 - 11 local playgroups across West Lothian benefitted from this funding.



School Counselling funding - £577,000 from Scottish Government includes elements of work being delivered by voluntary organisation partners. In 2021/22 of £189,000 supported Primary school counselling service for all primary schools for children aged 10 years and up from Wellbeing Scotland.

All secondary schools (including The Skills Centre) have been provided with £25,000 to procure their own school counselling services. Work being covered includes £10,000 to procure a specialist therapist for pupils with significant learning needs with secondary schools working with 4 main providers locally (SMILE, Your Space, TCS (Therapeutic Counselling Services) and an independent provider).

NETs, Land and Countryside Service

The Council has continued to work closely with Green Action Trust (GAT) in project development and delivery. GAT was commissioned to undertake work that required expert advice or additional time resources that were not available in-house due to other programme delivery targets. This included extensive community and stakeholder consultations, preparation of funding applications, preparation of briefs to secure consultancy services, appointment and management of consultants and contractors and management of on-site work with different elements or over multiple locations.

The value of management fees for 2021/22 was as follows:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|----------------------------|
| Livingston North Blue Green Network | £24,762 | WLC Climate Emergency Fund |
| Wyndford park, Broxburn | £31,524 | Capital funding |
| Balbardie Park Pump Track, Bathgate | £12,566 | Capital funding |

Open Space has also worked with a number of community gardens to provide advice

or support in developing their

spaces for food growing or

community spaces. This has

included Addiewell Community Garden, Ladywell

Community Garden, Strathbrock Community

Garden, Ash Grove Community Garden Project,

Winchburgh Community Growing Group,

Whitburn Community Garden, Linlithgow Peace

Garden, Murieston Community Council (for their

Community Garden), West Lothian Youth Action,

Project, Killandean Allotment Association,

Bathgate CDT, Broxburn and Uphall Growers,

Polbeth Community Council (were interested in setting up informal gardens in patches in Polbeth), The Hub in Polbeth (food bank, etc), Kirknewton CDT, Ladywell Neighbourhood Network, West Lothian Litter Pickers (looking to create wildflower meadows), Burgh Beautiful, Almond Housing and the Growing Together project in Craigshill.



An Open Space Officer attends and supports West Lothian Growing Forum which is a district wide meeting group comprising community gardens, allotment and food bank representatives and groups involved in growing generally to share issues and opportunities and learn best practice.”



Anti-Poverty Service

The West Lothian Food Network was formed in Spring 2020 with 24 organisations. Its membership has now grown to 46 organisations which ensures coverage across the whole of West Lothian. The network aims to support low income households who face on-going food insecurity over a period of time. From May 2020 to the end of June 2022, the West Lothian Food Network has provided a total of 3,211,008 meals (an average of seven meals per week to 4,103 people). 85% of recipients indicated they were financially at risk, on a low income and/or unemployed.

In 2021/22 the food network received **£596,831**, following £253,469 in 2020/21. In 2022/23 a further £595,452 has been committed.

West Lothian Council at its budget setting meeting on 15 February 2022, agreed the Revenue Budget for 2022/23 including time limited funding of £600,000 in 2022/23 to provide additional payments to the West Lothian Food Network. Council also agreed an additional £300,000 funding for the Food Network to extend the period the funding will cover.



Added to this increased Energy prices are requiring additional resources to develop and deliver cash first approaches.

Strategic Groups

The Anti-Poverty Task Force, The Anti-Poverty Practitioners and the Short Life Working Group for the Cost of Living Crisis. All these groups work in partnership with our community planning partners/third sector and voluntary sector to help mitigate poverty locally and bring about change.



Social Policy

In **2021/22** a total of **£31,654,375** was paid to third sector bodies through commissioned services, grants, spot purchase, block payment etc. In Adults and Older People services, there was **£21.7m** expenditure on care homes, care at home, supported accommodation, day care and other related services such as advocacy and carer support. In Children & Families, there was **£9.9m** expenditure on external placements for children, care for children with disabilities, supported accommodation, and other support to families.

Winter Protection Fund is a national programme developed to mitigate social harm posed by the concurrent risks of COVID-19, winter cost of living increases and EU exit, as well as to promote equality and human rights. Within the 2020/21 period, locally **£150,000** were allocated to fund the '**Return of Children to West Lothian**', this multi-disciplinary approach with the third sector, **The Rock Trust, Open Door, Action for Children, Bethany** along with internal WLC partners allows



support and accommodation packages for the planned move of young people back within authority. At time of publication £5,000 of this fund has been accessed, with the remaining £145,000 still to be drawn down. The fund is regularly reviewed through the Vulnerable Due to Young Age PSP and the Accommodation Group.

Mental Health Development

Coming out of COVID mental health has become a key area for focus. Within the financial year 2020/21 West Lothian Council received **£511,000** from the Scottish Government to be used to deliver new and enhanced community based mental health and emotional wellbeing support for children, young people, their families and carers. We have recently been advised that the same amount has been awarded for 2022/23 and we hope that going forward this will become an annual award.

In 2020/21 West Lothian Council received a grant of **£383,250** which was then identified for the Mental Health PSP, named 'Roots' which is led by Children 1st in partnership with Action for Children, Carers of West Lothian, Family and Community Development West Lothian Safe Families, Signpost, Wellbeing Scotland, WLDAS, WLYAP and Firefly. The above noted award of £511,000 will partly be used (£325,000) to fund this PSP in October 2022/23, for year 2 of the project. This will support the growing demand for mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and their families to improve and sustain emotional health and wellbeing.

Vulnerable Due to Young Age Public Social Partnership has been designed to involve the third sector earlier and more deeply in the design, commissioning of and delivery of services which will support Young People who are identified as Vulnerable Due to Young Age. **WLC Social Policy, WLC Housing, The Rock Trust, Action for Children, Bethany Trust and Open Door** manage an overall budget of **£715,548**. This has been proportionately split between all third sector agencies with referrals from, but not limited to: Social Work, Youth Justice, CYPT, Housing, Education, Health, West Lothian College and also between providers services.

WLC Domestic and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT):

DASAT work alongside several third sector agencies to support women and children affected by domestic abuse and or sexual assault. These groups include, **West Lothian Women's Aid, Shakti Women's Aid (Edinburgh), River Kids, Wellbeing Scotland, The Foodbank, The School Bank West Lothian.**

Wellbeing Scotland offer a confidential service to adult survivors of both sexual assault and domestic abuse. Support sessions are offered throughout West Lothian or online. Wellbeing Scotland also offer an Art Group (ASHA) In Livingston providing support for adult survivors of abuse.

Wellbeing Scotland receive **£36,000** for an Open Secret Counsellor, which is their regular contract. Open Secret is confidential support for survivors of childhood abuse and trauma. They also receive **£75,000** per year for two years (21/22 and 22/23) as part of one-off Covid-19 support, which funds an additional counsellor and a groupworker.

In terms of strategy development, the Gender Based Violence Committee is currently attended by both West Lothian Women's Aid, and Wellbeing Scotland. It is hoped that through Voluntary Sector West Lothian additional 3rd sector involvement can be identified to develop the partnership and a focus and action going forward is to strengthen our links in this area. The Gender Based Violence Committee is a multi-agency partnership concerned with preventing and eradicating all forms of violence against women and girls. The Committee has a role in supporting the delivery of Equally Safe, the Scottish Governments strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.



Housing

Housing Need Service has 3 working groups that sit under the RRTP Board which consist of a range of partner services some of which who represent themselves of the wider third sector. As part of RRTP and council funding we have commissioned a number of third sector services to deliver services. This includes:

Action for Children – Young Persons Emergency Prevention Service - £75,000

Rock Trust – Nightstop Service - £50,000

Rock Trust – Housing First - £52,000

Cyrenians – Housing First - £95,000



NHS Lothian, Public Health and Health Policy

NHS Lothian's Public Health and Health Policy Directorate has recently gone through organisational change which led to the creation of a Public Health Partnership and Place team in each local authority area. The main purpose of the West Lothian Partnership and Place team is to improve population health and reduce health inequalities by acting on the wider determinants of health. The team works with community planning partners to achieve this long-term aim and makes a financial contribution to delivering outcomes through the Health Improvement Fund (HIF).

Health Improvement Funding (HIF)

NHS Lothian has Service Level Agreements with third sector organisations in place until March 2023. The following table illustrates the spend:

| Name of Project | Organisation Delivering | Resources Allocated |
|--|---|---------------------|
| Playbase | Family and community development West Lothian | £49,519 |
| Financial advice in GP surgeries | Citizens Advice Bureau | £29,686 |
| Nutritional inequalities for children and families | Kidzeco | £51,000 |
| Young People's Green Gym | The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) | £49,987 |

Strategic Partnership Working

The role of the West Lothian Partnership and Place Team is to work with partners and colleagues to deliver evidence-based actions to reduce health inequalities and improve population health. These include a range of Community Planning Partnership (CPP) Groups and Forums, including the CPP Board and CPP Steering Group. Key areas of work include:

- Chairing the Health & Wellbeing Partnership. This group is leading on the Health & Wellbeing pillar of the revised LOIP. Delivery plans are being developed for each priority area – mental health and wellbeing, alcohol prevention and the food and physical activity environment.
- Leading the Whole Systems Approach to prevention of Type2 Diabetes in Whitburn.
- Leading the Child Poverty Reference Group which produces the Local Child Poverty Action Report including and delivers partnership action to tackle the main drivers of child and family poverty. The team also supports the work of the Anti- Poverty Task Force.
- Leading work on capacity building in mental health and trauma informed practice and contributing to the Mental Health Oversight Group and Trauma Informed Practice Board.
- Supporting the Children and Families Strategic Group and leading the Health and Wellbeing priority. This includes work to improve community mental health and wellbeing support for children, young people and families.

The team is working with partnership groups whose key aim is to act on the wider determinants of health, including, the Economic Partnership Forum, Local Employability Partnership and work on the Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan.

The team also supports the work of the following groups:

- Gender Based Violence Group
- Community Justice Partnership
- ADP Executive and Alcohol Licensing Forum
- Community Learning and Development Board

CASE STUDIES

The report has provided a range of high level facts and figures to provide about the sector nationally, locally, funding and partnership working. However, what is ultimately important is what this actually looks like in practice.

Below are a number of cases studies provided by Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian members that help bring to life some of the work the sector does in West Lothian. A number of these organisations receive funding from the various funding streams covered throughout the report and external funding sources not yet reported:

The following organisations are covered:

- 1. Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian;**
- 2. Family and Community Development West Lothian;**
- 3. The Bridge Community Project;**
- 4. The Larder;**
- 5. No Limits;**
- 6. The School Bank West Lothian;**
- 7. The Brock Garden Centre;**
- 8. Signpost;**
- 9. New Directions West Lothian;**
- 10. West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service;**
- 11. Wellbeing Scotland in West Lothian;**
- 12. West Lothian Youth Action Project; and**
- 13. Beechbrae SCIO**

Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian

Volunteering with Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian

Since the 1940s the Citizens Advice Bureau has been a leading advice provider for the West Lothian community. During this time the bureau has developed and evolved to ensure that client needs are met. The key to our success is the ability to adapt and to ensure that we maintain a strong team of advisers both voluntary and paid staff equipped to provide a quality, accurate, confidential and free service to our clients.



Against this overall background there is a huge reliance on our volunteer force which forms the backbone of our service. Traditionally our volunteers have provided our main generalist advice service through a range of communication channels such as phone, email, face to face ensuring that our services remain accessible to all in the community.

Many volunteers have joined and left us over the years however we do have volunteers who have remained with us long term and have experienced many changes over the years as to how we provide services and also what service we provide. Events such as the restrictions as a result of COVID have come as challenges however our volunteers have stood up to the plate and continued to provide advice services throughout these difficulties. This is testament to our volunteer's commitment and sense of duty which is admirable and much appreciated by the Bureau and indeed more importantly our clients.

In terms of where our volunteers come from we have always had a healthy annual intake from those who may have just ended a successful professional career to younger people embarking on a working life and looking to gain some experience. In any event all of our volunteers bring differing experience and skills to the Bureau which enhances our ability to relate to clients and understand their problems.

When volunteers join us, we pride ourselves in providing an extremely comprehensive training programme to equip volunteers and staff alike so that all advisers are trained to the same exacting standards thereby ensuring excellent and consistent quality of advice provision.

The Bureau was recently subject to an independent and rigorous audit of our services by the Scottish Legal Aid board which we passed. This is testament to the highly professional manner in which we go about our daily business and indeed the way our volunteers and staff deliver that service. In the year to March 2022 we dealt with:

- 15,000 Issues
- 3,000 emails
- 6,300 phone calls
- 500 face to face enquiries
- And secured £1.5 Million worth of client financial gain.

In the coming months we will yet again be faced with significant challenge as the effect of the cost of living crisis kicks in and many clients who have perhaps never needed advice and support before now find themselves in difficulty.

New clients, new issues, new problems.

No matter what they face our volunteers are up to the challenge

Brian Jeffrey, Manager
Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian

Ronnie's Story

I joined CAB as a volunteer in May 2022 and was immediately welcomed by a supportive team through the entire induction and training process. The online Adviser Training Programme is vast, extensive, and initially quite daunting but you are given as much time as you need to learn and find your way around the CAB processes, systems, and ways of working in the office. You can also do the learning from home. The staff and volunteer colleagues are approachable, friendly, and genuinely interested in you as an individual and a volunteer colleague. They are always around and available to share knowledge openly and willingly, to train everyone, and give advice and feedback in new areas. The focus on aiding/supporting members of the public, irrespective of their personal circumstances, with their life challenges, welfare and wellbeing is notable, heart-warming, and excellent. It is a role that also has a positive effect on you as an individual. While you may feel that you could or want to do more to assist each client, you do need to accept that you cannot resolve or fix everything. You do, however, walk away from each contact by phone, e-mail or face to face meeting feeling good and knowing that the client has been given the information they need to make their own positive steps forward.



Sylvia's Story

I have been a volunteer with Citizens Advice Bureau West Lothian since 2010 starting before the training was on line and before the current computer systems and phone systems were installed. These were steep learning curves for me however got through that and have been successfully advising ever since. Pre Covid-clients were mostly seen face to face but of course all that has changed and contact now is primarily by email and phone. The infinite variety of enquiries and not knowing day to day what you might be faced with makes the work extremely interesting and challenging. In my experience support for volunteers is excellent and is given generously. I do enjoy the work and have done so for many years



Family and Community Development West Lothian



Family and Community Development West Lothian have been supporting vulnerable children and families across West Lothian for 34 years. From their beginnings at Broxburn Family Centre, the organisation has gone on to develop the Range Adventure Playground, the Dale Hub in Armadale and the Playbase mobile project. Since 2010, it's Simply Play, childcare social enterprise has become the largest provider of after school and holiday care in West Lothian and they opened Wonder Woods, West Lothian's first fully outdoors woodland nursery, just over 2-years ago. The organisation is also an accredited SQA Centre, with its own Modern Apprenticeship programme and delivers training to the sector.

The organisation's impact is largely due to its unique approach to using play: play is non threatening, fun, engaging and inviting and is a great way to bring people in, get chatting with them and build trust and supportive relationships. Also, as a community-based organisation, their local services take the lead from local families in identifying where the gaps and needs are for them. And they have no time limits - they commit to their children and families for as long as is required, in ways that are appropriate to them, in recognition that there are no quick fixes to complex issues. Most importantly, they bring fun and joy into people's lives, during, often, difficult times: they help them to create new positive memories, to heal and to build resilience. All of this demonstrates relationship-based engagement at its best.



In the last year they have delivered for West Lothian's families, with 22 family groups and 16 children's groups every week, for 163 families and 233 children. They also provided intensive, one-to-one support for 20 vulnerable parents/families. They provided out of school care at 6 locations, covering 21 primary schools, as well as pre-school childcare at their Wonder Woods partnership nursery, all totalling childcare for 691 families, with 873 children. Through a contract with the Child Disability Team they provided play, socialisation and respite, sessions for 22 children/families during school holidays.

Families have fed back that they have helped to reduce or prevent: Poverty; Obesity; Social exclusion; Social Work intervention; Children being taken into care; Domestic abuse; Isolation and loneliness; Substance misuse; Deteriorating mental health; Loss of tenancy; Child safety issues; Malnourishment; Neglect; and the repeating pattern of parents ACEs.

With everything for them being about prevention and early intervention, to save on more expensive crisis interventions further down the line, they contributed to: improved mental wellbeing; improve family functioning and resilience; strengthened attachment; improved physical health; reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety; and improved self-esteem and confidence.


The organisation is a key strategic and delivery partner in West Lothian. This year they have been part of the new "Roots" public social partnership, chaired the Third Sector Strategic Group, were a Sector Rep in the Children and Families Strategic Planning Group, contributed to the writing on the Children's Services Plan and were an ongoing member of a Council/Sector Working Group.

Likemost of West Lothian's ThirdSector they have added significant value to Council's investment in their services and in our local communities. In the last year they have used this secure base to quadruple Council's contribution and deliver a 4:1 return on investment for the people and communities of West Lothian. This has provided excellent value for moneyand delivered far more than Council couldhave by itself.

The charity is one of West Lothian'sstrongest, with: good governance; effectiveleadership and management; an excellent fundraising record; quick and innovative reactions to crises like the Covid pandemic; delivery of ongoing contributions to improved outcomes for children, families and communities; and a very enterprising approach that has built one of West Lothian's most successful social enterprises



The Bridge Community Project



the bridge
CONNECTING HOME WITH HOPE

BRIDGE COMMUNITY PROJECT

IMPACT SEPTEMBER 21 - AUGUST 22


IMPROVING EVERYDAY WELLBEING

236


PEOPLE SUPPORTED

3

WELLBEING SERVICES




the bridge
financial wellbeing service




“It's removed the mounting pressure and worry. I felt trapped and imprisoned by debt whereas now I'm paying back my debtors and feel as if I can breathe again.”


Our Financial Wellbeing team have been able to support **88** individuals in a person centred way to improve their financial Wellbeing. We worked predominately with those who live in **rural areas** and those who present with **mental health** conditions.

Our impact has ensured that clients:







are less stressed




keep on top of finances




have improved mental wellbeing



have budgets in place




are more connected to their community




have less debt

PRACTICAL SUPPORT

We also provide clients with vital practical support



✓ 1 to 1 cooking & recipe bags



- ✓ Budgeting packs
- ✓ Energy top ups
- ✓ Signposting
- ✓ volunteer opportunities
- ✓ Support with pip appointments
- ✓ Small community grants
- ✓ Support with warm home discounts

Our Counselling team have been able to support **61** individuals to improve their emotional wellbeing while offering **812** counselling sessions. Our service provides affordable mental health support in a safe environment.

The most common presenting issues are

TRAUMA ANXIETY DEPRESSION BEREAVEMENT SUICIDAL IDEATION

These are some of the stories of improved emotional wellbeing:

“

My story began with me being in a terrible place. I was suicidal and really believed everyone would be better off without me. Bridge for me was a final chance to give it one last attempt at wanting to be alive.

I told my councillor things I had carried around with me my whole life, that I hadn't told anyone. Although the first few weeks were hard, by session four I started to feel the weight I'd been carrying around was lifting and the pain inside of me was healing a little. I am a different person today and happy to be alive. I have self worth, which is a first for a very long time.

”

“

I reached the bridge broken and willing to try anything to try to help improve my mental health. I was sceptical about how much counselling would actually be able to help me. It took me about 6-8 weeks to settle in and feel I could really open up which is when I really started to feel the benefit. I now feel like a different person, I am able to cope with situations that used to easily overwhelm me and enjoy my life again.

”

“

I was aware that I had past trauma affecting my life. Bridge counselling helped me identify where some of my negative thinking and self hate was originating from. With the counsellor's support, I was able to address some past beliefs that had been incorrect and address them so that I can move forward. The process has helped me gain self confidence and begin to address my negative self talk.

”

“

I moved to Scotland in 2008 to marry an amazing Scotsman. He unfortunately passed away unexpectedly in 2020. I was left to raise our two children alone in this country. I felt very overwhelmed, lonely, isolated and depressed. Without any family here to support me, and having been suffering from anxiety and stress, I was pretty much struggling to find the motivation to keep me going. I am now at a much better place mentally and emotionally thanks to the help I received. I am forever grateful.

”



Our Stepping Stones to Wellbeing team have been able to support **87** individuals to improve their financial and emotional wellbeing through offering **20** groups and courses across the past year.

“

I found the group to be very helpful with people who are experienced to help me understand my mental health

”



LOOKING AFTER YOUR MENTAL WELLBEING

5 groups completed



EMOTIONAL LIFEJACKET COURSE

2 groups completed



MONEY MANAGEMENT MASTERCLASS

2 courses completed



SHARING SKILLS FOR LIFE

3 groups completed



BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT COURSE, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH LIVINGSTON UNITED PARISH CHURCH AND COOP BEREAVEMENT CARE

8 courses completed

OTHER IMPACTS



purchased our **wellbeing hub**



launched our **1st** Social Enterprise



employee **15** people locally



supported **25** volunteers

THE LARDER

The Larder is committed to creating a more equal and just Scotland through the alternative economic model of social enterprise and calling for a Scotland without poverty, where everyone has the opportunity to achieve their full potential and the right to food is enshrined in Scots law.

We are a social enterprise that combats poverty and hunger, through 4 key strands:



01. TRAINING

for young people and adults who experience complex and multiple barriers to reaching their full potential.



02. SOCIAL FOOD

providing dignified responses to food insecurity and making sure no-one in West Lothian goes hungry



03. ENTERPRISE

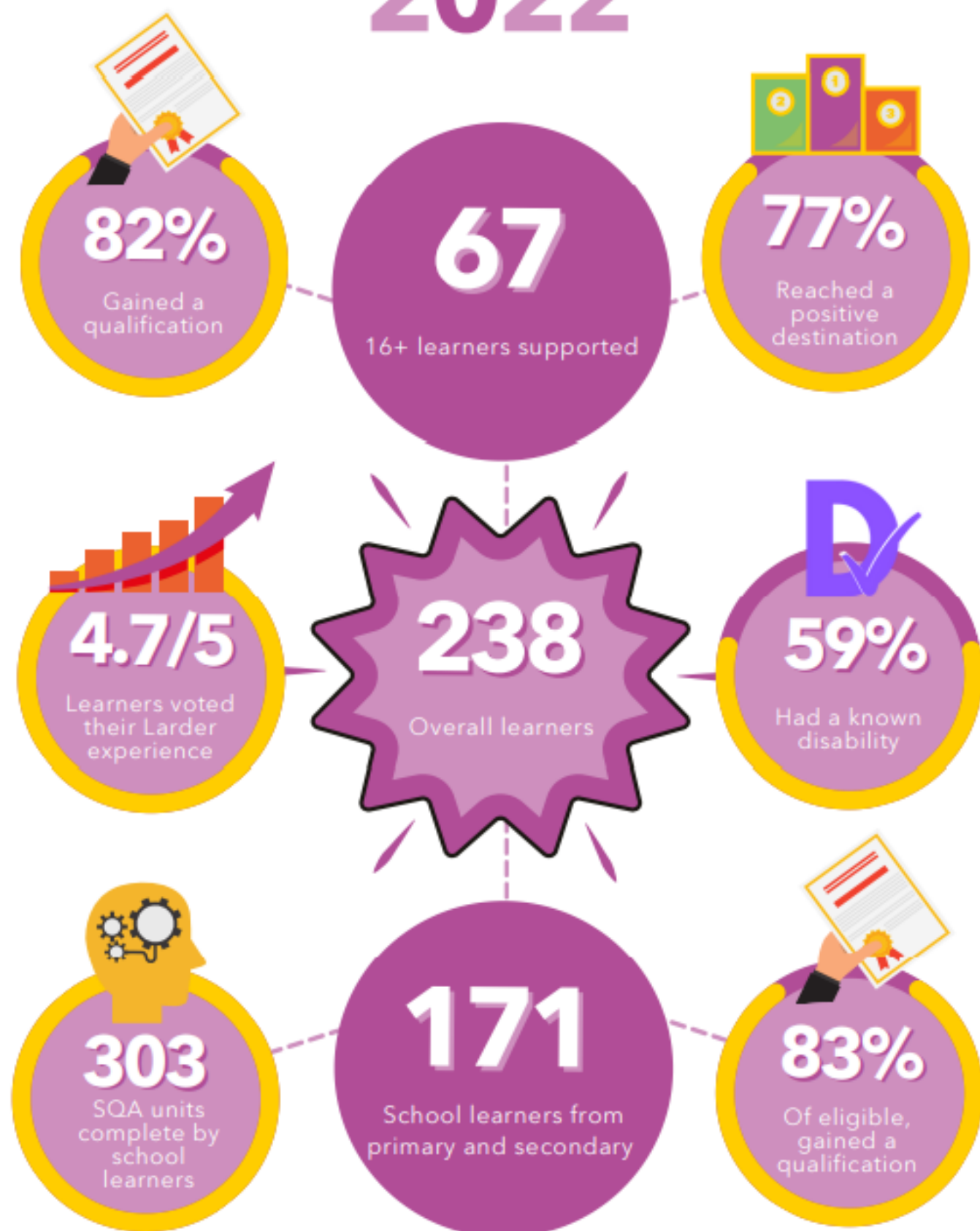
projects that create solutions to social problems, improving life chances, the creation of living wage jobs and generating surplus to support the charitable aims of the organisation.



04. CAMPAIGNING

working with other charities to call on Governments for systemic changes that will eradicate poverty in Scotland .

TRAINING IMPACT 2022





244

On average supported with meal deliveries.



45,754

Meals delivered throughout West Lothian



92%

were experiencing low income



78%

were experiencing poor mental health



47%

were experiencing homelessness



27%

were families with children

I'm a newly single parent of 3 girls, the help you've given us has been invaluable, you are all worth your weight in gold, making our life that bit easier during this awful time

Thank you so much to everyone at Catalyst Kitchen, the meals have been a lifeline for me. I have no support & on low income plus isolating with poor mental health, so life has been a struggle.

I've always had to manage before when I've been ill, I now feel like there is a little team of people who care around us this time and its honestly beautiful. Thanks so much for the food and more than that, the gesture that means were not alone and people care.

No Limits

'No limits' are a West Lothian based multi-sports and social club for children and young people with disabilities and they provide a wide variety of sporting and social opportunities to the county for people who face major life challenges. The club has a membership of 64 people most of whom come from West Lothian. The club has been in existence for 26 years and was assisted by West Lothian Council sports development unit in its early stages. The club meets weekly at Xcite leisure Centre, Linlithgow and we do a variety of sports including, football, basketball, hockey, carpet bowls, new age curling, badminton, table tennis, darts, rounders and model car racing. The club members have taken part in many local, regional and national competitions including, Boccia, Carpet Bowls Table Tennis and the Special Olympics. We regularly send teams to the national Boccia championships and have achieved notable successes in this sport .

The club is run by a combination of parents and volunteers and there is a high level of interaction with the community which by and large funds the club via voluntary contributions and fundraising events. The club have organised more than 60 weekend adventure holidays – at Badaguish, Aviemore (2 weekends per year) and at the Calvert Trust centre at Kielder (one week per year) taking on average between 30 and 40 people at a time. 2. The club holds four Ten Pin Bowling competitions a year and four indoor and seven outdoor Archery Sessions. Since 2008 the club has supplied Archery Leaders in a joint venture with Lothian Disability Sport to provide weekly Archery sessions for people with disabilities at Blackburn Community Centre. This service is used by the Community Inclusion Team and people from the various support services.



The Club is accredited to 'Active assured plus' with West Lothian Council, the highest level possible, and were the first general sports club to achieve same. The club and it's members have won numerous awards over the years and in 2015 won the 'Queens Award ' for voluntary service The club is a registered charity SC026826 and works closely with other charitable organisations in the area such as 'Carers of West Lothian' and Signpost. Committee members meet bi- monthly to review and conduct the business of the club. The committee members arrange fund raising events such as sponsored walks, ceilidhs, abseiling events, bingo and race nights. They undertake training and coaching courses and organise trips to sporting events both locally and nationally. Information about where and when the club meets and forthcoming events can be obtained at our website at <http://nolimitssportsclub.org>

The club is a valuable resource to West Lothian, particularly because it is self- sufficient and not reliant on any specific funding streams (eg. Council/Health/Education/Government), however it operates within a voluntary sector which provides support as and when required, and ,offers funding opportunities which the club does take up on a regular basis.

Here are a few picture examples of the clubs activities during the past year. No Limits Pics from 2022



The School Bank West Lothian

The work of The School Bank West Lothian is driven by the need to address the immediate financial and material effects of poverty on children and their families who reside in West Lothian. Current statistics show that 25% of children in West Lothian live in poverty, which equates to 10,000 young people. The COVID pandemic and cost of living crisis has resulted in many more people in our community suffering severe financial hardship, including many families who are working. This has resulted in a 60% increase in demand for our service over the last two years.



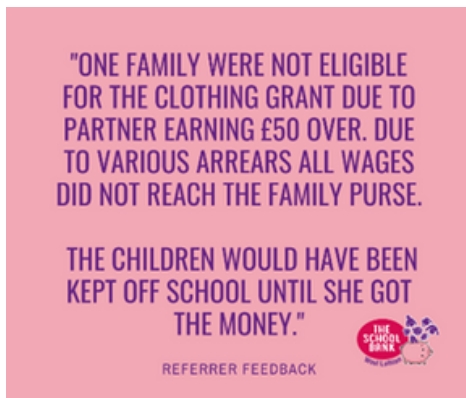
We support struggling families with the cost of the school day by providing school supplies for both primary and secondary aged young people. We supply school uniforms and any other essential items deemed necessary to meet the cost of the school day, e.g., full school uniform, PE kit, footwear, jackets, school bags, stationery, and underwear. We operate on a referral basis (this includes self-referral) and pride ourselves in providing a straightforward, timely and confidential service that is accessible to any family in direct need.

We believe we are fulfilling a need in our local community without which these children would undoubtedly suffer, having a detrimental effect on their educational attainment, and ultimately their life chances. Without support children will continue to suffer from the effect of being in poverty e.g., more likely to achieve lower qualifications, less likelihood of attending school, experience chronic illness, mental health issues, substance abuse, unemployment and have a shorter life expectancy.



Our charity is 6 years old; demand has grown year on year, and in the last full year (12 months ending April 2022), we provided 1,344 school uniform packs. In August 2022 we provided a total of 729 uniform packs for children starting the new school year (a 40% increase on the same period last year). We are deeply concerned about the cost-of-living crisis and how that will impact on the need for our service in the months ahead. This demonstrates the need for financial support in our local community. While it is impossible to predict the impact of the rise in living costs, we forecast the demand for our service to increase to between 1,600 and 1,900 referrals in the current year. We and our referring partners are deeply concerned about how our communities and our service will cope during the months ahead.

There are many reasons why families are referred to us for support. Although West Lothian Council provides a school clothing grant, a significant percentage of children referred to us come from working families who are ineligible for the grant. In addition, there is no council grant provision to support families throughout the year as they out-grow/wear out clothes/shoes or help in crisis situations such as unexpected homelessness or fleeing domestic abuse or moving school due to bullying. We can help in these emergency situations and support any family at the point of need – our service is not means tested. Additionally, the uniform grant covers basic costs but often does not enable parents to buy all the items required for school so for some families we supply necessary extras such as a warm jacket, shoes, and outdoor PE kit.



We receive feedback from our referrers about our impact on the children and families who receive assistance. We hear a very strong message that:

- Providing a school uniform pack gives an immediate boost for children and families who lead extremely difficult lives. Receiving new items is really valued by people who may rarely receive any new clothes or possessions.
- Being the same as their peers is really important to children, affecting their self-esteem and confidence. When children have the correct uniform and supplies the risk of bullying is reduced and school attendance improves.
- Knowing that your child is adequately clothed and not having to worry about them being unhappy, bullied or not wanting to go to school because of lack of uniform, greatly reduces anxiety for parents and carers.
- Providing uniform also relieves a burden for families who are struggling financially.

As a charity, we drive forward our ambition to work closely with local community groups, referrers, and key partners, while simultaneously building awareness of our profile in the community. Our Project Manager monitors the impact of societal changes and invents new methods of support e.g., helping schools to set up their own second-hand uniform hub to support families more directly; sourcing and redistributing re-furbished laptops to support digital inclusion; launching a casual clothing project in Craigshill, Livingston; re-cycling once used clothing such as Halloween outfits and Christmas Jumpers; sourced food vouchers; and we recently launched a preschool clothing project in partnership with West Lothian Women's Aid to support early years. #EveryChildDeservesToTakePart



The Brock Garden Centre SCIO

Overview of 2021

The New Year started with another lockdown. Our indoor workshops were paused, and The Brock was happy to be able to continue activities outdoors to smaller groups.

Due to having to remain outdoors, everyone received a thermal mug and a personalised fleece.

The Brock welcomed our new Outreach Facilitator, repurposed our indoor multi-activity room, and revamped the website.

Our socially distanced outdoor AGM took place on 23rd March, and it was wonderful to see so many people. We spent a good hour looking back on the last year, and the consensus is that everyone is happy with how The Brock managed to work throughout 2020, and there is real optimism for the future.

In April the indoor workshops restarted, The Brock opened its doors to the public again, with many people using our planter refilling service – The Brock also reached 1000 Facebook followers!



In Autumn we restarted our Service Users Meetings, for the first time since pre-COVID. Thank you to all who have contributed, your ideas led to the creation of the new Tuesday Walking Group!

End of summer is Brock BBQ time; a great day with great food, great games and great people

Community Involvement

The Brock is very grateful to Broxburn Parish Church, who donated their old pews. We still don't know which wood they were made from, but we do know it is great for turning.



**Alzheimer Scotland's
adopted raised bed at
The Brock**



**Planting Project at
Tippethill**



**Building Projects at
St John's Hospital**

It's so much more than The Brock.....

All service users who attend The Brock are offered access to The Brock WhatsApp Group. This is used to stay in touch and to share the things we do or just something funny we see.

This also led to people joining up for activities in their own time - outwith The Brock;

In July and August, a number of people on glamping trips to St Andrews and Biggar. A few people went to visit them for the day

"The best was sitting at the camp fire"

"We saw a wild rabbit and a bird of prey"

"In St Andrews some went swimming in the sea, in Biggar some went swimming in the pool"

"I enjoyed just getting away, peaceful in the countryside, relaxing without worries or cares"

"We went to the Prego restaurant in Biggar, the food was good and we enjoyed it"

The Service Users Group organised a number of meals out. They were brilliant nights out, the food was lovely, and everyone was enjoying the blether and a fun night with lots of laughing

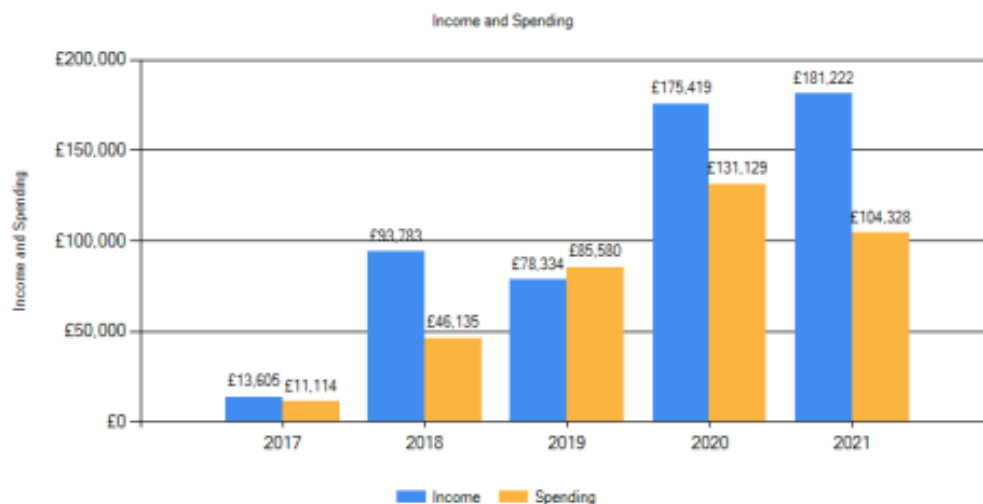
The Brock is extremely grateful to the Postcode Lottery Local Trust, who made it possible for our paths to be re-laid.

We now have mobility friendly access to the Garden Centre and the Community Mind Garden.

Special shout-out to Rab and his team, who kept smiling as they tolerated us continuing our normal activities during the works!



The interesting numbers



The difference between income and expenditure over the past two years is due to accumulated funding which could not all be spent during the pandemic – this funding is kept restricted and we are now (2022) catching up.

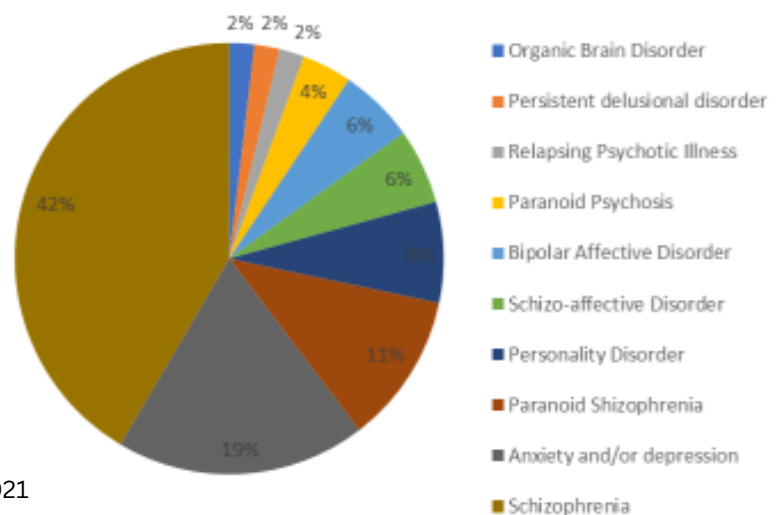
Service Users;

The number of people attending The Brock grew from 28 in 2016 to 78 when the pandemic struck in March 2020. Upon re-opening this fell to 64, and has since increased to 83 (January 2022).

Before March 2020, the average attendance at The Brock was 66%. Following the re-opening in July 2020 after the initial COVID-19 lockdown, attendance rose to 94%! This has since balanced out to 90%, indicating the high need for our service.

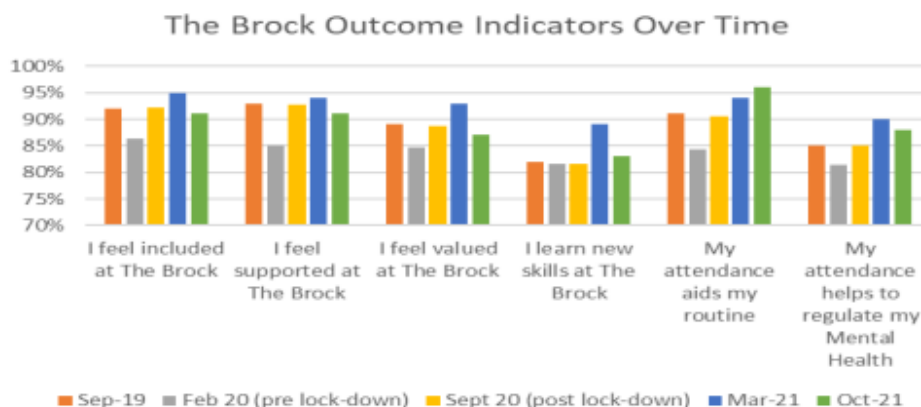
In 2020 The Brock delivered 2915 sessions – which is comparable to 3750 in 2019 when taking into account the 15 weeks closure due to COVID-19. In 2021 The Brock delivered 5332 sessions, an increase of 42% which is due to more service users, higher attendance and a larger variety of activities

Service Users' Primary Diagnoses Dec 21



Measured Outcomes Indicators;

The Brock also uses the Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale. The average score for people attending The Brock is consistently lower than the average score for people living in Scotland, especially for women



Signpost

In the last couple of years, Signpost has worked hard to support families of young people with additional support needs to weather the storm of the pandemic, and now the cost of living crisis.

Signpost provides not only information on every topic of interest to families, but also support to use that information & deal with the emotions that living with disability can bring, empowering them to make good decisions that meet the needs of each unique family.

An independent impact report from Community Enterprise, published in September 2022, said:

“It is evident that the organisation provides a critical service to children and families who are experiencing disability and that the support provided enables children and their families to be better informed, better connected, more confident and better prepared for whatever challenges or obstacles they may experience”. The report went on to note:

“There was a high level of satisfaction from all those engaged in the evaluation. Signpost supported children and families from across all West Lothian communities. Their person centred, holistic, tailored, and collaborative approach was held in high regard by all. The values, ethos, and organisational style were seen as a key strength, with the organisation regarded as flexible, highly responsive, passionate, and good at listening to parents and children.

Partner agencies see Signpost as a trusted, competent, and highly skilled organisation and one which provides a key, and sometimes unique, service that both supports and complements their own activity but also that of their clients”.

Activities include dealing with over 900 contacts a year on our helpline/social media, who are helped individually with any difficulties or questions. We also provide group training such as ‘Getting Through the Day with Autism’ and ‘Moving on from School’ which equip parents with the skills and knowledge they need. We are part of the successful ‘Roots’ partnership, in which 9 local voluntary organisations collaborate to support young people’s wellbeing, and we also work in partnership with Carers of West Lothian, as well as making and taking referrals from other agencies.

This year we have also facilitated 39 young people with additional support needs to contribute their own solutions and perspective to child planning meetings and similar events.

Other families have been supported to negotiate better support in school for children left anxious by the pandemic or having other difficulties.



“I am 13 and I have autism signpost made me realise that I have a voice and a right to have it be heard and now I know that things will get better I can push back against this injustice and say this isn't right I don't deserve this



One of our simplest, but most successful interventions, is the loan of passes for local attractions, which enable over 400 trips per year to be taken by families whose children’s behaviour and health can be unpredictable. These families often miss out on days out together due to prohibitive costs and the fear that money will be ‘wasted’ if they have to leave suddenly due to their child’s needs.

Even before the cost of living crisis, most families with disabled children reported that they seldom or never had holidays or days out. The cost of raising a disabled child can be 3x more than a typical child.

Our 'Financial help for families' booklet gathers together all the supports relating specifically to children with disabilities.

We partner with the local 'Advice Shop' to ensure families receive benefit maximisation checks.

We match families with funders who can buy equipment or fund short breaks.

As well as the positive impact on local families, Signpost contributes to the local economy by bringing around £90,000 per annum into West Lothian to support local families, in the form of grants and other funding (in addition to the funding provided by West Lothian Council).

Signpost is also a key partner in an exciting new project to build a Discovery Centre heritage attraction in West Calder, which will also incorporate a centre of excellence for people with disabilities across West Lothian. The first phase of this development is now underway, bringing further funds into West Lothian from the National Lottery Community Fund and other investors.

950 contacts last year, 35% from new families, the rest from people returning for further help as their child's needs change.

557 families supported
950 problems solved
2 new partnerships

My daughter has Autism. Signpost has supported us to recognise what we know already and what we still need, and to voice our emotions and worries in difficult situations. In the early days they gave us books so my daughter could understand how Autism affected her. Later it was about making sure her little sister got support and Signpost suggested a Siblings Club, and now she knows she's not alone, and gets so many opportunities that I couldn't provide. Both of them have clubs, which has really boosted their confidence. I joined a Carers Group which has helped me to speak up better. Recently we attended the Signpost Transition Course, which led to us getting Social Work support, which we would otherwise not known about. Our daughter has now got a place at college which is another thing we didn't think was possible.

New Directions West Lothian

New Directions has been active in providing Social Care in West Lothian for over twenty years. Initially we provided advice and support for people with epilepsy but since 2015 we have broadened our remit and support people who have a learning disability, autism, mental health, physical disability, addictions and life-limiting conditions.

The organisation has been led for the past six years by Carolyn Craig who has managed Third Sector services for thirty years. She was initially tasked with creating transformational change in the organisation.

Since 2006 we have grown by 89% percent and deliver 41,000 hours of support per year. Our main contract is with West Lothian Council but we also deliver support on behalf of Falkirk Council and City of Edinburgh. We support seventy-five people and assist people to take part in education, training, paid and voluntary work, look after their homes, their health and their money. We have close links with colleagues in health and social work.

During the early part of the Covid pandemic we provided two hundred hours of face-to-face support to people in crisis at no cost to West Lothian Council and partnered with West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust to deliver chilled meals to vulnerable people across West Lothian.

We employ thirty-two staff who are all residents of West Lothian and provide training and a funded professional qualification. In 2021 our team benefited from x hours of training. During the current recruitment crisis in social care we have been able to maintain and add to our staff team. We are one of only two social care providers in West Lothian who are accredited Scottish Living Wage employers and, over the past six years, have been able to increase salaries for our Support Workers by 28%. Our most recent staff survey found that 100% of our team were proud to work for New Directions. Collectively our managers have over seventy years of experience in social care.

Our Board of Directors come from a range of backgrounds including education, health and social care and lived and family experience of disability.

As well as our social care contracts we provide added value in the form of groups, including drama and music. We host well-attended social events and, this summer, ran a community café which provided paid work experience for people with a learning disability and local high school students as well as providing good-quality and affordable food for local people.

New Directions regularly gathers feedback from stakeholders including our team, the people we support and their families and other professionals and are signed up to the Charter for Involvement which commits us to involving people at every level of the organisation.



West Lothian Drug & Alcohol Service

The service was established in 1985 to educate the local community in the risks of alcohol and drugs that had significantly increased due to socio-economic factors for example, the demise of local industry leading to high unemployment coupled with a proximity to Glasgow and Edinburgh.

Funding was originally provided for education and training as well as to conduct research locally to establish issues and need. It became evident there was a definite need to provide support to individuals who were experiencing difficulties with drug and alcohol misuse and indeed to support family members affected by theirs or another's use.



The service has changed dramatically during its 37-year history in all areas. None more so than in staff compliment and funding streams. Furthermore, the services that are provided are varied and include provision for those with no substance issue but have unfortunately experienced sudden death or anticipated death of a friend or loved one. What has not changed is the commitment of the organisation to provide the best evidence-based support available to the whole community in West Lothian and to tackle the inequalities that people unfortunately experience.

WLDAS takes pride in its insight and innovation as it continually strives to develop new initiatives and indeed seek funding opportunities to deliver such initiatives to the people it serves within West Lothian and not rely on one main funding source. This is evidenced through WLDAS securing funding from The Corra Foundation for its Wraparound West Lothian Project and Family Matters Project as well as, The Big Lottery Fund for Grief Matters Project.

- Wraparound West Lothian Project was awarded a grant of £496,508 in April 2022 to develop and deliver this project over 5 years
- Family Matters Project was awarded a grant of £229,740 in April 2022 to develop, improve and deliver this project over 4 years
- Grief Matters Project was awarded funds amounting to £161,574 in April 2022 to develop and deliver this project over 3 years

The above projects will enhance the Whole Family Approach that WLDAS and its partners (working in partnership within a multi-disciplinary team is paramount to provide the best support for the people of West Lothian) are taking in tackling the issues whole families are experiencing in relation to substances, inequalities, stigma and sudden or anticipated death. The latter being available to people with or without a substance issue.

WLDAS as an organisation believes in involving the people who use its services to assist in the development of the services it provides. This is achieved through an active voluntary Service User Advisory Group (SUAG) who conduct service user evaluations and feedback interviews. Furthermore, the SUAG has most recently become involved as peer interviewers (after initial training) in a research project involving WLDAS, University of Edinburgh, Kings College London, and Public Health Scotland to establish a new programme to assist people in recovery from drug and alcohol issues to reduce or quit smoking (DASHES Project). Several statutory, private and 3rd sector organisations will be involved by providing service users for interview on and off site.

Further involvement over the coming months will be from family members/close relatives who attend WLDAS' Family Matters (family support) service. This will see WLDAS staff and Family Matters attendees collaboratively compiling a presentation on Stigma to highlight the damaging impact this has had personally on family members/close relatives who have a loved one involved in dependant/problematic substance use. Stigma is the largest barrier to people accessing support whether they are using substances or are associated with someone else who is using substances.

On the next page are some quotes from client evaluations of our Therapeutic Support Service which provides counselling, support, and psychological therapies:

‘Made me look at myself and how I could improve my life and lifestyle without drugs’

‘I trusted my counsellor to be honest with her. She understood my issues and empathised with cultural issues and recognised the racism I experienced is real’

‘It is ok to seek help and share your feelings and anxieties with a sympathetic, non-judgemental ear. The trained counsellors at WLDAS are very understanding and listen rather than criticise’.

‘I always tell people about WLDAS and how important they have been in my recovery’.

‘The support I received from WLDAS saved my life’.

Wellbeing Scotland in West Lothian

Wellbeing Scotland (formerly Open Secret) have been working in the West Lothian area since 2008. We run a variety of services for both adults and children. Our main area of work is counselling. We are also keen on running projects for people's general "Wellbeing", for example peer support group work, artwork and befriending.



Adults Services Counselling

We work in conjunction with DASAT (Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Team) at West Lothian Council. Our specialism is to provide counselling for adult survivors of childhood trauma, including abuse and/or domestic abuse. We have been providing this since 2008.

We offer clients 12 to 20 sessions of counselling, usually on a weekly basis. We are returning to some face-to-face work as well as continuing with offering clients online and phone counselling. Despite Covid restrictions, we have managed to grow as an organisation and increase our numbers of clients and counsellors.

In 2021/2022 we received 353 new referrals, peaking to on average 30 new referrals for counselling a month during Covid.

Our evaluation measures and feedback reflect that clients who accessed services from wellbeing Scotland had 100% improved levels of wellbeing, 100% reported feeling safer (were assessed as being at less risk of harm) and 100% Improvement in suicidal ideation at the end of their journey with the service.

In addition, we have secured external funding for 5 individual clients who were eligible (£500 each). The 'Safe Lives' funding was secured to help those fleeing domestic abuse.

West Calder project

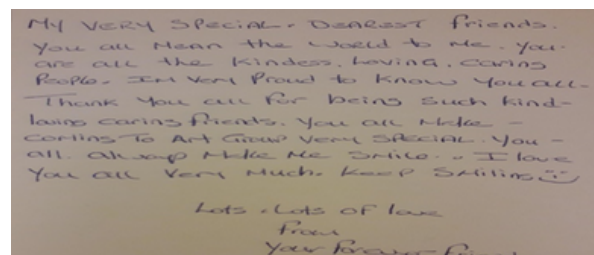
In conjunction with the West Calder and Harburn Community Development Trust. We provide one day of counselling a week for those within the boundaries of the Trust or those linked to the Reach Out Talk Out groups.

A qualified counsellor runs this with a volunteer.

ASHA Art Group

Again, for adult survivors, we run an art group in Livingston, which has been running for 8 years. This group can be for those waiting for counselling or moving forward after counselling.

Link to ASHA video: ASHA



Peer Support Groups: “Reach Out, Talk Out”

Reach out talk out is offered to people on the waiting list for counselling and for those who have had counselling. These groups offer adults a safe, supportive, and nurturing environment that promotes their wellbeing.

Facebook page: Reach Out Talk Out

Schools Counselling

Since July 2020, we have been providing a counselling service in Primary Schools in West Lothian. We work with pupils aged between 10-12 years old (primarily P6 and P7). We have five full and part time qualified counsellors who are linked to individual schools.

The total of referrals received since July 2020 is 536, each child referred has been offered 12 one-to-one sessions and with the option of re-referral for further sessions to meet the needs of each individual child.

Roots Project

We are part of the partnership for children and young people called “Roots” which was established in October 2021. We offer Play and Creative Therapy as well as Art Therapy.

WLSen West Lothian Wellbeing

Wellbeing Scotland work in partnership with the West Lothian Wellbeing Project, run by WLSen. We are part of the group that helps people of West Lothian know where to be referred to and offer signposting.

Various Online Events and Groups

As part of the wider Wellbeing Scotland remit, we offer online groups, particularly during Covid restrictions.

These were a variety of groups that ran for six to eight weeks, subjects included Self Care, Self-Compassion and Anxiety workshops.

Volunteers

We have a team of volunteers who provide counselling (during training at University or College), befrienders, peer support workers and helpers at the groups and training events we facilitate.

Free Online Training

In 2021/2022 we provided free, monthly training workshops for fellow counsellors, other professionals, and clients. These covered topics such as: Suicide and self-harm, working with trauma, adverse childhood experiences, understanding Dissociation.

Monica Mochar

Head of Counselling and Wellbeing (West Lothian)

monica@wellbeingscotland.org

West Lothian Youth Action Project

West Lothian Youth Action Project is a third sector charity who have operated in West Lothian for almost 30 years. Our services include Early Intervention and individual support for young people experiencing challenges in their lives, these being problems with mainstream education, poor mental health, isolation, complex family backgrounds, involvement in anti-social behaviour and low-level criminality in the community or just finding things difficult to manage. In addition to this provision, we are part of a network of agencies providing family support through the Roots Project, we offer practical skills training programmes, music groups, Growing Together, an environment, growing and food initiative with Almond Housing and a Community fridge service which assists individuals and families who are struggling to access good nutritional food.



We receive core funding from West Lothian Council but like many third sector organisations we have to raise external funds to meet the ever-increasing demands on our services.

I would like to take the opportunity to highlight two specific areas of our work – Integr8, our befriending service for young people aged 10-21 years. Our highly skilled volunteers are carefully matched to provide individual support and time for some of West Lothian's most vulnerable young people. The following case study highlights the story of one young woman and the benefits she gains from the service.

Ashley (**not her real name**) originally came to the Youth Action Project via the mental health screening group, following a referral from her GP. Initially, Ashley was allocated weekly 1-1 support, to enable her to talk about the things going on for her, how she reacted and behaved in certain circumstances, and to explore alternative ways to manage situations when they cropped up. Following the initial 1-1 support, Ashley transferred into the Youth Action Project's befriending service, where her support continued, but also included opportunities to engage in social and recreational activities, while still working on her emotional reactions to demanding situations. Sessions gave Ashley the time and space to think about the different ways she could deal with her challenges, and strategies to help her to choose alternative ways of reacting to things. She was able to begin considering the impact of her actions on others.

Ashley's journey has not been smooth; however, she has continued to engage in her sessions regularly and has used the time to share her experiences and talk through what led there, and what she may do differently in the future. Over time, Ashley's reactions and outbursts have reduced significantly, her communication with her family has improved, and she is able to weigh up any consequences relating to her choices. The opportunity to participate in social and recreational activities brought an added benefit to Ashley, giving lighthearted fun while navigating her emotional challenges.

We would also like to highlight the excellent partnership that we have developed with the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service in West Lothian. For many years, we have worked with SFRS, sharing information regularly to address the issue of youth anti-social behaviour involving fire raising, often low-level criminality such as stealing wheelie bins and setting small fires in local communities. These actions may not be the crimes of the century but are very frustrating. Costly to the local authority, Police, SFRS and of course a nuisance to local residents and property. There is in addition the significant risk of harm to young people themselves and the negative impact this behaviour has upon the wider community and opinions they have of young people.

SFRS Officers have assisted us by joining our youthwork team in groupwork sessions, providing factual information in an engaging manner on the consequences of fire raising. They have also joined our detached streetwork team, directly providing safety advice and preventative messages to young people and community members. Partnership working is vital at this time of fewer resources and increased demands, it has been a pleasure working with committed professionals and at times the added humour makes the job just that little bit easier.

We were fortunate enough to be provided with the statement below, supporting our partnership.

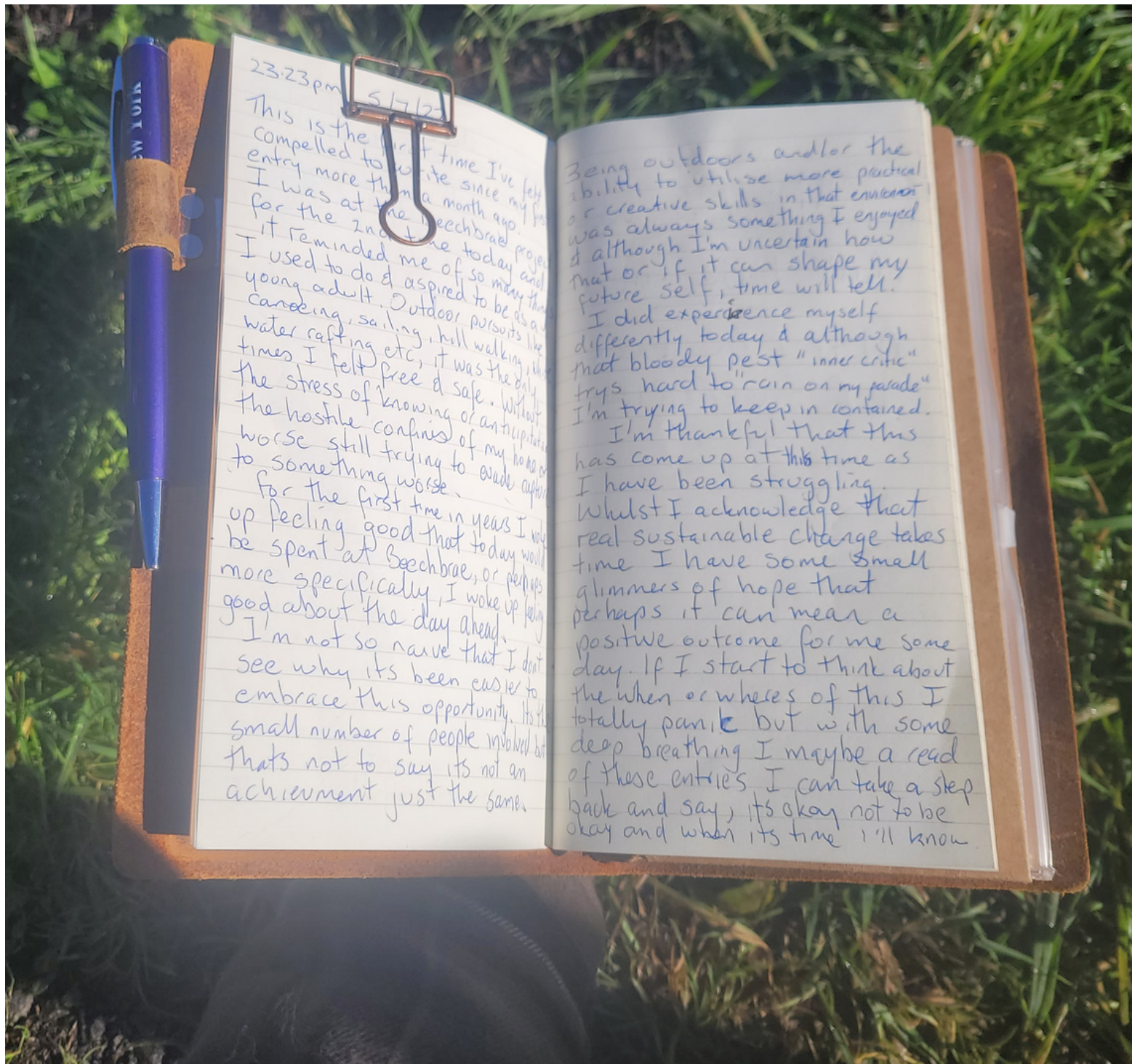
“The main purpose of the Scottish Fire and Rescue Service (SFRS) as defined by the Scottish Government's Fire and Rescue Framework is “To work in partnership with communities and with others in the public, private and third sectors on prevention, protection and response to improve the safety and well-being of people throughout Scotland.”

That purpose is no better exemplified than in the close collaborative work with the West Lothian Youth Action Project (WLYAP). SFRS and WLYAP work together to help improve the outcomes for the communities of West Lothian, joint working on youth streetwork in identified target areas and sharing information daily to help reduce community risk. WLYAP are a highly valued partner in the Community Safety Partnership and have provided considerable support to SFRS on deliberate fire reduction strategies, seasonal bonfire reduction strategies, community events and group education work. The team at WLYAP are able to reach far into communities and provide support and assistance to young people and families to assist their community partners.

On a personal basis I am immensely proud of the relationship that the local SFRS team have with the good people of WLYAP, I have learned much from working with them and I look forward to continuing to work in partnership to improve the safety and well-being of our communities.”

Beechbrae SCIO

Beechbrae is based in the woods in Blackridge and supports people who are in hard places. We work with young people who aren't engaging with school through woodland wellbeing programmes teaching social skills, emotional regulation and life skills. We also work with adults with a diagnosed mental health condition through our 12 week Branching Out Programme that was developed by Scottish Forestry and NHS. Beechbrae receives no core funding from West Lothian Council and runs through a combination of self generated income and grants.



CONCLUSION

As evidenced by this report, the partnership work between West Lothian Council, Community Planning Partners and the Third Sector is well established. It will be vital to continue to consolidate and build on this partnership going forward.

There has been a huge range of different and complex challenges facing the third sector during the pandemic and the recovery period, as we move out the effects remain, especially in relation to mental health and wellbeing and the developing Cost of Living crisis. These will shape the priorities for the coming years from the partnership.

The importance of Community Planning Partners, including West Lothian Council and the Third Sector, working as strategically as possible to deliver for our communities remains key. This will help make best use of constrained resources. For example, consortium or collaborative funding applications is an area that may need more investigation with some funding streams looking specifically at this approach and clearly address strategic priorities. This may attract larger pots of external funding, probably something that has not been developed as much as it might have.

As part of moving forward there are developing frameworks and approaches that offer a way of empowering our communities and ensure the local economy works for all. It is hoped that the developing work around Community Wealth Building, community empowerment, asset transfer, community choices as well as developing further the strategic approach and partnership working covered in this report will provide the basis for meeting our communities needs.