Notice of Meeting and Agenda

Performance, Review and Scrutiny Committee

Venue: Council Chambers/Hybrid,
Midlothian House, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN

Date: Tuesday, 11 June 2024

Time: 11:00

Executive Director : Place

Contact:
Clerk Name: Democratic Services
Clerk Telephone:
Clerk Email: democratic.services@midlothian.gov.uk

Further Information:

This is a meeting which is open to members of the public.

Privacy notice: Please note that this meeting may be recorded. The recording may be publicly available following the meeting. If you would like to know how Midlothian Council collects, uses and shares your personal information, please visit our website: www.midlothian.gov.uk

1   Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

2   Order of Business

Including notice of new business submitted as urgent for consideration at the end of the meeting.

3   Declaration of Interest

Members should declare any financial and non-financial interests they have in the items of business for consideration, identifying the relevant agenda item and the nature of their interest.

4   Minute of Previous Meeting

5   Public Reports

6   **Private Reports**

No items for discussion

7   **Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Monday, 7 October 2024 at 11am.

Minute of Meeting

Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee
Tuesday, 11 June 2024
Item No 4.1

Performance, Review and Scrutiny

Date	Time	Venue
Tuesday, 19 March 2024	11.00 am	Hybrid meeting held in the Council Chamber at Midlothian House and virtually via Microsoft Teams

Present:

Councillor Milligan (Chair)	
Councillor Curran	Councillor Drummond (Virtual)
Councillor Imrie	Councillor McCall
Councillor McEwan	Councillor Pottinger
Councillor Russell	Councillor Smaill
Councillor Virgo	Councillor Winchester

In attendance:

Grace Vickers, Chief Executive
Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place
Morag Barrow, Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB
Fiona Robertson, Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships
Saty Kaur, Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Derek Oliver, Chief Officer Place
Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer
Joan Tranent, Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Worker
Nick Clater, Head of Adult and Social Care Services
Janet Ritchie, Democratic Services Officer
Hannah Forbes, Democratic Services Assistant

1 Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed Elected Members and Officers to the meeting of the Performance, Review and Scrutiny (PRS) Committee.

Apologies were received on behalf of Councillor Bowen

2 Order of Business

The Order of Business was as detailed in the agenda.

3 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4 Minutes of Previous Meetings

4.1 The Minute of the Meeting of the PRS Committee held on 12 December 2023 was submitted and approved as correct record.

4.2 The Action Log was noted. The Chair noted that a paper was circulated by the Executive Director Place regarding Housing which was in response to an action on the Action Log.

5. Reports

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.1	Adult Health and Social Care Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		

The Head of Adult Health and Social Care presented the Q3 report highlighting that this quarterly update is aligned across four key themes of Prevention, Duty Social Work, Understanding Changing Needs and Best Value, and provided a brief update on some of the main achievements, challenges and risks, as outlined in the report.

The Chair thanked the Head of Adult Services for the report and opened it up to questions.

In responding to a question raised with regards to the National Care Service, the content of the Bill and what resource we may require, the Head of Adult Services updated that the detail is still unknown, and preparatory work is ongoing. The Chief Officer Children's Services/Chief Social Work Officer added that there is no update on plans for Children's Services and Justice Services therefore no update at this time.

A question was posed on the digital agenda and whether with the challenges there was risk that needed to be considered. The Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB responded that this was part of the broader

transformational plan around how digital technology is used to support traditional models of care. Further work is required on how to run services differently by utilising different types of technology and work with business partners. Some good progress has been made in utilising data through dashboard development and planning tools and use of apps.

The Welfare Rights Service was commended for the incredible work it delivers with a small team in terms of gains for communities.

In terms of Social Care assessment, there was a query on the criteria used in Midlothian and how this compares with other authorities. The Head of Adult Services responded that everyone has a legal right to assessment, and anyone can request these, however accessing services is based on national eligibility criteria which Midlothian apply the top two tiers - substantial and critical. This is similar to other Local Authorities. Work is ongoing to improve the application of that criteria as substantial and critical is not the same in individual services, however the key aim is to ensure people get the service they need when they need it. Following this, the Head of Adult Services was asked whether there were any additional challenges or opportunities as a result of decisions made in neighbouring authorities, such as Care Home closures. The Head of Adult Services advised that there is a wide recruitment campaign about to launch across Children Services and Adult Services. The Head of Adult Services also advised that there are challenges around care home closures in regards to risk to out of authority placements which adds pressure to Midlothian services as there is a low number of places in Midlothian and this is being monitored. In terms of commissioning and contract management this is also an area that is being looked at in more detail as some contracts are pan Lothian and changes may impact Midlothian service provision.

A question was asked about the beds within the Royal Edinburgh Hospital. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that Midlothian had 8 acute beds, 1 acute bed and 6 rehabs which are full, from a 16 bedded shared bed ward between Midlothian and East Lothian. Edin or East Lothian use the unfilled beds. The Head of Adult Services explained that there are discussions ongoing around financial compensation when not being used in Midlothian. It was highlighted that when there are no beds available then Midlothian service users are placed in St Johns which is a significant distance to Midlothian, which poses issues for Midlothian communities, and is being regularly reviewed. It was suggested that overall, it balances out but still is a changing picture.

Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action
Head of Adult Services

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.2	Children Services, Partnerships and Communities Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Worker
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		

The Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Work Officer presented the Q3 report, highlighting the priorities, progress, achievements, challenges and risks as contained within the report.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Work Officer for the report and opened it up to questions.

A discussion took place on the Children and Adolescent Mantal Health Services (CAMHS). A question was raised on the wait list for programmes after a CAMHS referral was made and the Chief Officer Children's Services stated that detail on this will be provided to this Committee after the meeting. There was a query on funding for part time worker referenced in the report. The Chief Officer Children's Services confirmed this will assist with the mental health work and look at earlier forms of intervention, and the advertisement of the post was being progressed now funding is secured. The Committee noted that families rely on this diagnosis to access other supports/services and queried if there was better way to support families to access these without a diagnosis due to the wait times for diagnosis. The Chief Officer Children's Services responded that this was very complex, and there was a need to put support in place to train staff for earlier intervention and this work needs to be looked at holistically.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Chief Officer Children's Services / Chief Social Work Officer

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.3	Corporate Solutions Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Chief Officer Corporate Solutions
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions presented the Q3 report highlighting the transformation objectives, the key achievements and the challenges and risks covering the period October to December 2023 as contained within the report.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Corporate Solutions for the report and opened it up to questions.

Questions were received on the Customer Service Platform and its potential to integrate with other Council systems. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions confirmed that some systems are integrated and work is ongoing to integrate new processes like reporting housing repairs online, and in other services such as

Housing, new systems have been adopted and are being scoped for further development i.e. online Housing applications.

Committee queried why the One Stop Shop model was a medium term aim and asked that this be implemented sooner. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions highlighted the rollout to date in communities and the increased service offer from partners and Council but explained that it is medium term to fully achieve the aspirations of the approach.

The Chief Officer also confirmed that the rollout of vehicle trackers did not include hire vehicles and this forms part of the Fleet Replacement Programme.

A discussion took place around sickness absence. It was noted that the Occupational Health referrals had tripled this quarter and it was queried whether any interrogation of the data took place to identify trends, particularly linked to hybrid working. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions confirmed that sickness absence is reviewed regularly across all Directorates and there are no identifiable trends from the data but this will be kept under review. Occupational Health referrals can be made for different reasons and do not all relate to absence. Alongside this, it was commented that the number of attendees at wellbeing events was low in comparison to the number of events delivered and is there intentions to understand why this is. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions acknowledged the low attendance figures and stated that the focus of those events had been in depots where it was likely front-line staff would have been deployed to respond to winter service and that the timing of the programme would be reviewed, as well as more promotion of the events held.

A question was raised on Freedom of Information requests and whether data that was being held by the Council could be more publicly available. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions confirmed that was the intention of the launch of the online portal however this had not yet been achieved and was an area for improvement this year.

The number of people completing mandatory e-learning was queried as this seemed to be lower than expected. The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions explained that through the improved induction processes the e-learning platform and also other e-learning resources will be better signposted to staff.

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions was asked how the library membership numbers in Midlothian compared to other Local Authorities and committed to providing that data after the meeting.

Exit interviews and data analysis was discussed and the Chief Officer Corporate Solutions explained that exit interviews are offered but are not mandatory, however for those that are received these are reviewed by HR for trends and improvement actions where appropriate.

The Executive Director Place responded to a question around the 25% affordable homes in the report and asked for more information on what these were, for both Midlothian, Registered Social Landlords and private developers. The Executive

Director Place referenced the upcoming report to Council on affordable homes where more information was included.

Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action
Chief Officer Corporate Solutions

Agenda No.	Report Title		Presented by:
5.4	Education Q3 Performance Report 2023/24		Education Chief Operating Officer

The Education Chief Operating Officer presented the Q3 report highlighting the key achievements, challenges and risks for the period 1 October 2023 – 31 Decembers 2024 as contained within the report. Also highlighted was that Q3 of the reporting year aligns to Q2 for the academic year.

The Chair thanked the Education Chief Operating Officer for the report and opened it up to questions.

A question was posed on the figures regarding home schooling. The Education Chief Operating Officer explained that the process was that parents needed to make a request to the Local Authority detailing the provision of the home education. The Local Authority reviews all applications and the proposed provision and makes a decision. There is a database which holds the figures on all children that are home educated and there is a statutory obligation to engage with all families annually and review this approach with them and agreed to provide the figures after the meeting.

It was raised that the reported was children focussed and did not include details on teaching staff activity. The Education Chief Operating Officer assured Committee that significant work took place with teaching and non-teaching staff who support learners including bringing teaching staff together to share with them the vision for the service. The Education Chief Operating Officer also described the work undertaken to support the staff such as training and upskilling sessions, visiting schools to engage and listen to staff and reviewing the feedback regularly from these visits. The Education Chief Operating Officer also referenced the engagement with Trade Unions and the work carried out to support the health and wellbeing of the staffing establishment across Education settings.

Committee requested that a report on class sizes of primary schools, including numbers on each primary school and class sizes be presented to a future Committee.

Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action
Education Chief Operating Officer

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.5	Place Q3 Performance Report 2023/24	Chief Officer Place

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Corporate Solutions presented the Q3 report highlighting the transformation objectives, the key achievements and the challenges and risks covering 1 October 2023 – 31 December 2023 as contained within the report.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer Place for the report and opened it up to questions.

The Committee reminded the Chief Officer Place of a future report expected to Committee on road consents around housing developments. It was commented that the future report should include actions on how this work is to be regulated and utility companies are being monitored to complete on time and the coordination of Council works and utility company works, in particular around newly surfaced roads and re-digging of these.

A question was raised about homelessness and what data is available about homelessness and classes delivered to schools. The Chief Officer Place confirmed further information would be provided after the meeting.

A question was raised about memberships and reimbursements when leisure facilities are unable to be used in particular an instance at Newbattle Leisure Centre where there is a repair issue due to storm damage. The Chief Officer Place explained the PPP contract arrangements in place and an analysis is taking place around loss adjustment. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that other facilities are able to be utilised during this time and options around local promotions are being explored for those particular members.

The Committee raised a query on street lighting when not a Midlothian Council fault and whether there was data on these instances and the contractual arrangements with the suppliers. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that statistics could be provided on faults, issues raised and remediation actions. It was confirmed that there is a financial compensation process in place that will be included in this update to Committee.

There was a query on the District Heating Scheme and government policy. It was questioned whether this was a risk as an unregulated market and what action officers were taking. The Chief Officer Place explained that the legislation was being reviewed by Building Standards and Planning and measures are in place for the District Heating Scheme. It was requested that this was highlighted to Scottish Government in particular around mine water concerns and the Chief Officer Place confirmed that this could be fed back through the ongoing dialogue around the grant funding.

The Committee queried the revenue monitoring KPI on the dashboard and whether this was correct. The Chief Officer Place confirmed that this was retrospective, and members should refer to the financial monitoring quarterly outturn reports.

There was a question on the progress of Vogrie Country Park and the Executive Director Place confirmed this is under the remit of the Head of Development and progress will be reported to BTSG and would need to be considered as part of the Capital Plan Prioritisation.

Committee congratulated the Chief Officer Place and their team on the downward trend around homelessness cases.

The Chief Officer Place was asked if there was a target for net zero in particular recycling levels. The Chief Officer Place confirmed there were requirements around heating housing replacement schemes and the retrofit programme. There has been a previous trial of materials recycling aggregate and this raised concerns following the trial assessment. This will be included in the Climate Action Plan to be presented to members at a future meeting.

Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action
Chief Officer Place

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.6	Midlothian Council Q3 Performance Report and Balanced Scorecard	Chief Executive

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion
The Chief Executive presented the Q3 report which provides a summary of actions outlined in the individual performance reports presented by Officers and that the Balanced Scorecard provides an overview of performance in line with the Single Midlothian Plan. The Chair thanked the Chief Executive for the report and opened it up to questions. No questions were raised.

Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action
The Chief Executive

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.7	Inspection of Midlothian Council/HSCP Care at Home Service by the Care Inspectorate	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion
The Head of Adult Services presented the report and highlighted the 4 areas of focus of the inspection. The Head of Adult Services thanked all staff in the service.

Committee recognised the positive points within the inspection report and stated it looked forward to an action plan in due course.

It was queried what the action tracker was and the Head of Adult Services explained that a spreadsheet is used but work is ongoing to record, track and monitor through Mosaic. The Head of Adult Services that the care and support audit template care plan was reviewed every six months but this is fluid. |

Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action
Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.8	Joint Inspection of Adult Services, Physical Disabilities, Long Term Conditions and Carers	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion
The Head of Adult Services explained that this is a strategic inspection that took place from April – December 2023. The Head of Adult Services outlined main sections contained within the report.

The Head of Adult Services thanked all staff involved in facilitating the in depth inspection.

The Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB updated Committee that 8 inspections have taken place across Health and Social Care this year and thanked all staff involved.

The Chair congratulated the officers for positive inspection reports and thanked them for their hard work. |

Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action
Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.9	Sacred Heart Primary School Post Inspection Progress Update	Education Chief Operating Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Education Chief Operating Officer provided an updated report with regards to the previous Inspection Report on Sacred Heart Primary School Inspection Report.

No comments or questions raised.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

Action

Education Chief Operating Officer

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.10	Inspection of Midlothian's Fostering, Adult Placement and Adoption Services	Chief Officer Childrens' Services / Chief Social Work Officer

Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion

The Chief Officer Childrens' Services presented a suite of reports on Fostering, Adult Placement and Adoption Services. The Chief Officer Childrens' Services informed Committee that this is the same team delivering all three services and was an unannounced inspection.

The Chief Officer Childrens' Services thanked all staff and carers for the excellent work they undertake on a daily basis.

The Committee recognised a good report.

A question was raised on the launch of the recruitment campaign. The Chief Officer Childrens' Services confirmed that filming is almost complete and will be launched soon.

A question was asked whether the Care Inspectorate take into budgetary constraints when undertaking inspections. The Chief Officer Childrens' Services confirmed that officers do raise this when inspections take place, however did highlight that inspections are regular and there is no additional resource to support these and provide the evidence required.

It was commented that this report did not reflect the service as known by members and that there are significant pressures on the service. The ratings are accepted reluctantly and members look forward to seeing the next report in light of the new staffing measures introduced.

Decision

The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.
Action
Chief Officer Childrens' Services / Chief Social Work Officer

Agenda No.	Report Title	Presented by:
5.11	Update on Newbyres Care Village	Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer
Outline of Report and Summary of Discussion		

The Head of Adult Services presented the update report following two previous inspections of Newbyres. The Head of Adult Services explained the enhanced governance measures in place through the newly established Social Work Assurance Group (SWAG) in response to the inspection findings, as outlined in the report.

A question was raised on the end date for temporary arrangements. More information was requested about the admissions criteria. It was queried if considerations were being given to other uses for Newbyres such as inclusion of respite. The Head of Adult Services confirmed that all aspects were being considered and included in the SWAG assurance and ongoing reviews. The Head of Adult Services is awaiting the outcome of the ongoing reviews to then plan next steps.

With regards to the financial challenge, the Head of Adult Services was asked how much was lost annually and how does the Council balance agency and permanent staff. The Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB responded that the use of agency staff was not an active choice but required from a safety perspective and there are workforce challenges when trying to recruit permanent staffing. The Joint Director Health and Social Care/Chief Officer, MIJB talked about the work that is ongoing this year to improve the financial position, and how this is part of a wider strategic review. Committee requested more financial detail when further reports are presented about Newbyres.

A question was asked about what the Care Inspectorate requires around staffing levels. The Head of Adult Services explained there is a sickness absence challenge, and a focussed piece of work is underway to deal with this.

The Committee commented on the positive changes contained with the report and actions detailed in comparison to previous reports and congratulated the Head of Adult Services on progress to date.

The Committee commented that the cycle of improvements and issues continues to change and there is no sustained positive impact.

The Chair commented on the timeline since the previous reports and clarity is required on some of the detail within and a sustainable operating model is required. The Chair asked if a peer review had taken place. The Head of Adult Services said

that issues are being addressed and accepted that there is work to be done.
Committee requested a follow up report in six months.
Decision
The Performance Review and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.
Action
Head of Adult Services and Deputy Chief Social Work Officer

6   Private Reports

No items for discussion.

7   Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, 14 May 2024 at 11:00am.

The meeting terminated at 13:28.

PRS Committee Action Log

Item No	Date of Meeting	Item No and Title	Action	Action Owner	Expected completion date	Comments
1	20/06/2023	**5.4 Education Performance Report**	• A further report on the analysis of the attendance in schools will be provided. • Clarification would be provided on the attainment figures.	Fiona Robertson	**Completed** April 2024	**Recommend for closure** Attendance report included in PRS Committee agenda pack.
2	19/09/2023	**5.1 Adult Health and Social Care Q1 2023/24 Performance Report**	Additional training/seminar for Members on the issues of drug use.	Nick Clater	End of June 2024	The Seminar is now likely to be post-August. The 2023 Drug Related Death figures are published in August 2024 so these will also help inform any Seminar for Members.
3	19/09/2023	**5.2 Children's Services, Partnerships and Communities Q1 2023/24 Performance Report**	Answer query in relation to whether there were online resources families might use whilst waiting for CAMHS referral	Joan Tranent	Awaiting feedback from Alistair Short, NHS	CSWO advising that there is still no answer to this but it has been raised with Alistair Short, NHS and will provide feedback once known.

Item No	Date of Meeting	Item No and Title	Action	Action Owner	Expected completion date	Comments
4	07/11/2023	**5.1 Inspection of Midlothian Access Team**	Report on six action points to brought back to PRS.	Nick Clater	May 2024	An update report will be brought to PRS in September. This is due to a current review of Learning Disability Day Care.
5	12/12/2023	**5.1 Adult Health and Social Care Performance Report Quarter Two 2023/24**	A report on issues experienced around sicknesses, absences, and recruitment to brought to a future PRS to allow Elected Members to have a better understanding of the problem and mitigations/solutions being taken.	Nick Clater	End of June 2024	A report is contained within the HSCP Performance Report being presented to the June PRS.
6	19/03/2024	**5.3 Corporate Solutions Q3 Performance Report 2023/24**	Figures on the 25% of affordable houses and information on these affordable houses which are being built by the Council and Developers.	Kevin Anderson	June 2024	509 affordable homes were secured in 2023/24 in planning obligations.
7	19/03/2024	**5.3 Corporate Solutions Q3 Performance Report 2023/24**	Information on how Midlothian Library membership figures compare to other Local Authorities	Saty Kaur	June 2024	Figures being collated and will be circulated to Committee members once received.

Item No	Date of Meeting	Item No and Title	Action	Action Owner	Expected completion date	Comments
8	19/03/2024	**5.4 Education Q3 Performance Report 2023/24**	Figures on the number of children who are home educated in Midlothian to be circulated to Members	Fiona Robertson	**Completed-June 2024**	**Recommended for closure** Figures collated and circulated to Committee members.
9	19/03/2024	**5.4 Education Q3 Performance Report 2023/24**	A report on class sizes and how many children are in each year in each primary school. Information to be circulated.	Michelle Strong	**Completed March 2024**	**Recommended for closure** - information circulated.
10	19/03/2024	**5.5 Place Q3 Performance Report 2023/24**	Preventing Homelessness: delivering the classes in schools regarding homelessness and when and how these are being delivered. To report back.	Derek Oliver	June	The Homeless Team have held meetings / talks with High School pupils over the past year including open discussions and questions. We now have a contract with The Rock Trust who provide support to young people 16-25 to prevent homelessness. The Trust will visit the schools following the summer holidays and deliver sessions on homeless prevention. This will include open discussions and case studies presented to pupils delivered by homelessness support workers
11	19/03/2024	**5.5 Place Q3 Performance Report 2023/24**	Newbattle Community High School: Sports facilities to be up and running within 6-8	Derek Oliver	**Completed**	**Recommended for closure** – Roofing repairs completed to permit full facilities access

Item No	Date of Meeting	Item No and Title	Action	Action Owner	Expected completion date	Comments
			weeks, Mr Oliver to ensure this timescale is still to be honoured.			
12	19/03/2024	**5.5 Place Q3 Performance Report 2023/24**	Street Lighting: To provide stats on faults and faults reported and response times by Scottish Power. Also report on the monitoring and managing faults reported.	Derek Oliver	June	Total number of Scottish Power faults over the past year, May 23 – May 24: 57. As per Ofgem standards, Scottish Power have 20 working days to repair faults or issued with fine for non-compliance. These fines are paid to Midlothian Council as compensation. Total fines issued and paid: £420
13	19/03/2024	**5.5 Place Q3 Performance Report 2023/24**	Temporary traffic lights – coordination with Council and Utility companies – report back on how this is managed.	Derek Oliver	June	Briefing note dated 31st May 2024 circulated to PRS Members.
14	19/03/2024	**5.11 Update on Newbyres Care Village**	Progress report to be brought back in six months	Nick Clater	September 2024	

Adult Health and Social Care
Annual Performance Report 2023/24

Midlothian

01. Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

The Midlothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) plan and direct delegated health and social care services for the people of Midlothian. Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) oversees the delivery of all the services delegated to Midlothian IJB. The aim of integrated health and social care is for the people to experience more joined up treatment and care.

Justice, Duty Social Work and Adult Protection

Prevention

Duty Social Work continue to ensure that individuals referred to the service are supported and supported in crisis, this includes signposting to appropriate services, undertaking assessments and direct interventions.

The Duty team continue to work with colleagues and Vocal to identify and support unpaid carers.   Within this quarter there were a total of 64 referrals received with the reason for making contact noted as 'Carer Stress' and the Duty Team dealt with 6% of these due to the nature of the concern and impact.   The Duty supported 5% of the 41 adults who were supported with an Adult Carer Support Plan.

Work continues to ensure that staff have the relevant skills, competence and knowledge to work effectively, and that they are trauma informed and able to engage with service users using a range of approaches including the Midway. Across Justice and Protection Services, 100% of staff are trained to level 1 Trauma training and the social work staff within the Justice are trained to level 2 of the NHS Education for Scotland (NES) framework.   There is work in progress to ensure that social work staff with the Duty Team and all Council Officers are able to complete Level 2.

The Justice Service are working closely with colleagues on Psychological Therapy Team to ensure that appropriate responses are taken with those with complex needs and to ensure that risk assessment are robust. This is achieved through weekly formulation sessions. Staff also have access to clinical supervision with a Psychologist to ensure that they are supported to manage the complexities of the work and reduce the risk of vicarious trauma.

The Adult Support and Protection Team (ASP Team) undertake a range of duties to identify, minimise and manage risk and ensure that all suspicions, disclosures or actual harm are acted upon.   Measures to protect adults need to be considered in the context of wider range of support services and an ASP investigation may highlight gaps in support. In these instances, an assessment of need should be undertaken to identify and develop an outcomes focused care plan. During Q 4 there were 232 referrals submitted under ASP 57% of these referrals were allocated to a Council Officer for an inquiry to be completed to determine if the individual was an adult at risk of harm as defined by the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 and appropriate action taken to reduce and/or mitigate the risk.

For Understanding Changing needs

The Justice Service have increased access to services for perpetrators of domestic abuse and to victims and children who may have been impacted by the behaviour. There are two routes through which men can access this support: following conviction the Court can impose a Community Payback Order with a requirement to undertake the Caledonian Programme – if the man is assessed as suitable. There is the option to undertake the programme on a voluntary basis (non-court mandated) via Your Chance to Change Referrals can also be received from partner agencies. In Q4, 7 men were engaging with the programme.

Learning and Development

The Midlothian Trauma Training Programme was launched in July 2023 and, since then, training has been delivered to 387 participants, and incorporates both open access training sessions and bespoke service support events. In total, 37 training events have been delivered between July 2023 and February 2024.

The learning and development team have also organised and delivered a wide range of training both mandatory and further training to ensure all staff are skilled and competent in their role. The service has funded 10 social workers across Adult services and Children service to undertake post grad qualification in Leadership and Management, Practice Education, Mental health officer Training and Child Welfare and protection. In addition, we have funded 10

workers across the same service to undertake modules with the Open University to work towards a degree in Social Work. The SVQ Team have delivered SVQ's across levels 5,6,7 and 8 to around 95 candidates and working closely with schools and young people to further develop the Foundation Apprenticeships for Health and Social Care.

Care at Home
The Care at home continues to be challenged with increasing demand for people to live safely at home in the community. There are approximately 7,200 hours of care at home delivered every week across Midlothian from our in house service, the external providers and through SDS Option 2 pathways. The commissioned providers and the in house service have all recently been inspected by the Care Inspectorate and received positive grades relating to service delivery.

Bed Performance
Midlothian HSCP continue to robustly manage the Adult Mental Health Bed performance. Over 2023/2024 Midlothian has seen a total of 71 admissions, with a mean average of 5 beds used per month. The effective collaborative working between the Adult Community Mental Health Team and Intensive Home Treatment Team has been essential in providing an effective response to supporting individuals at home rather than in hospital. This is achieved through assertive outreach, dynamic risk assessment, early intervention, and prevention, supporting individuals in their own home environment where appropriate.
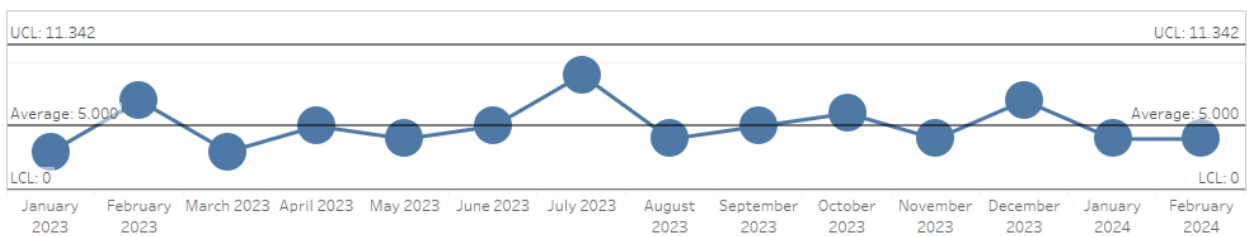
Midlothian Substance Use Services A 11 target

Midlothian Substance Use Services continues to make ongoing improvements to deliver the 90% target for A 11 (A11 individuals accessing services will be seen within 21 days from point of referral). Q3 performance for Midlothian services is 91.46% overall and 95.29% for MELDAP.
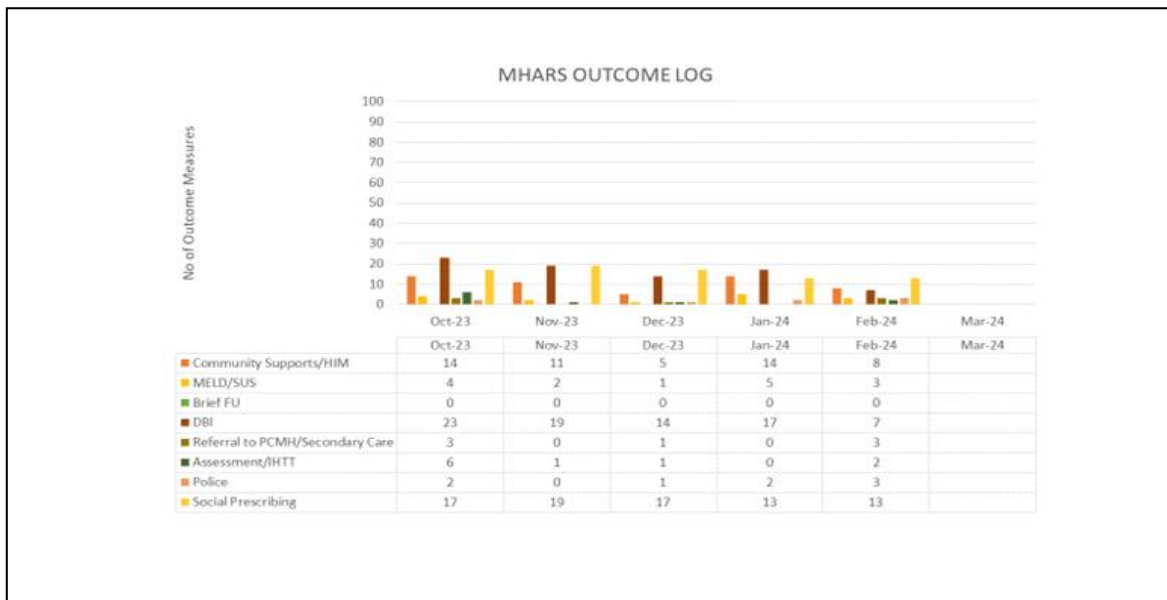
Midlothian
| 82 | 30 | 29 | 16 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 91.46% |

Predicted further improvement for Midlothian SUS Service: Reviewing the current completed wait data for January 2024, MELDAP have seen a further overall improvement for the Q4 Month of January 97.50%

Total Completed Waits
| 40 | 17 | 16 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 97.50% |

Mental Health and Resilience Service (MHARS)

Midlothian's Mental Health and Resilience Service (MHARS) continues to provide prompt, effective and compassionate support to individuals aged 18-65 residing in Midlothian. The service continues to provide a wide range of support with positive outcomes.

MHARS OUTCOME LOG

	Oct-23	Nov-23	Dec-23	Jan-24	Feb-24	Mar-24
Community Supports/HIM	14	11	5	14	8	
MELD/SUS	4	2	1	5	3	
Brief FU	0	0	0	0	0	
DBI	23	19	14	17	7	
Referral to PCMH/Secondary Care	3	0	1	0	3	
Assessment/IHTT	6	1	1	0	2	
Police	2	0	1	2	3	
Social Prescribing	17	19	17	13	13	

Our unique collaborative workforce delivery model between Penumbra and Midlothian IHTT, support the phone lines with IHTT staff and the delivery of level 2 Distress Brief Intervention (DBI). Midlothian's commissioning element of the model is 4.5 Penumbra practitioners. Early into the delivery of the service we recognised that to ensure a full delivery of our model, we needed to increase our workforce to support 7 days a week, 8am-10pm access. This being a priority due to the additional work IHTT staff conduct (urgent same day specialist assessments, unscheduled care and in reach into the REB).

Midlothian had the opportunity to increase the workforce from 4 to 6 Penumbra practitioners through funding from the National DBI Service on a 1-year basis, who recognised the impressive service design model. This additional funding is due to end in June 2024.

Through regular monitoring and evaluation, we have considered the potential of increasing the MHARS service to included access for individuals 65+. We recognise the positive addition of support this would provide individuals over the age of 65 across Midlothian, who may require support with their crisis and/or distress, mental health and/or well-being. The main challenges to the delivery of this model are the current workforce and the financial implications.
We are now in the process of evaluating and reviewing our current staffing model and exploring opportunities to use any existing resource to maintain the increased workforce of 6 Penumbra practitioners permanently. This increased workforce will enable the service to trial a test of change, to include access to the service for individuals aged 65+ in Year 3 of the commissioning contract, reviewing and evaluating the service in 2025.

Suicide Prevention
The Creating Hope Together strategy has a clear focus on inequalities, prevention and determinants of health and wellbeing. Specifically, the strategy aims to take a population health approach to Suicide Prevention and try to tackle key risk factors such as poverty and isolation. Within the HSCP one of our Public Health Practitioners has recently taken the responsibility of Suicide Prevention Lead for the partnership. There is a current Suicide Prevention Action Group which has been active in Midlothian for many years and is chaired by an NHS Lothian Public Health Consultant. The group has representation from a variety of partners across the partnership, including Primary Care, mental health services, workforce development and 3rd sector. The action group has developed a 1 year interim plan which has a focus on data collection and sharing, conducting a training review, developing a lived experience panel and developing the governance structure going forward. After this 1 year interim plan the group will develop a 3 year action plan to support the prevention of suicide in Midlothian.

Learning Disabilities – Primrose Lodge
Five sound bids have been received for the construction work at Primrose Lodge. The Programme Director has raised some queries that need to be addressed before we can proceed with the award. This will be resolved within three weeks at which point a starting date for the works will be set.

The Invitation to Tender for the Care and Support service closes on 9th May. There has been considerable interest from potential providers. The evaluation process will follow, with interviews of during May and June, and an award in July. Families of tenants have been involved in the development of the Invitation to Tender and will also be involved in the evaluation process.

The project will be ready to go live in August contingent on building work being complete and tenants will move in on a phased basis.

02. Challenges and Risks

23/24:

We adopt a whole system approach to service design and delivery. This relies on shared decision-making, and shared responsibility for outcomes that enable proactive and consistent approaches to performance and quality improvement.

We continue to invest in the wellbeing, training, and development of our workforce, including our third sector partners and unpaid carers. We also have ongoing challenges in rolling out our trauma-informed approaches to all aspects of the HSCP. There are some areas of very proactive practice but there are other areas who have had less exposure to trauma-informed approaches.

Whilst our digital agenda is gaining prominence, we continue to improve the coordination of care and find ways to share information between services. We will have to make better use of existing technologies and provide people with access to accurate information and services. Our daily huddles are great examples of creating daily opportunities for quick, agile spaces that enable us to work together across the system.

The Digital Champions Network is reaching across the HSCP to support teams from the ground up making best use of the technology we already have. One of the areas of focus is to enable teams across Council and Health to have collaborative workspaces. This involves both IT departments and staff and is being supported by our Midlothian HSCP Digital Programme and Oversight Board (which reports back to SMT) This aligns to the wider national work (led by Digital Office and NSS) around Teams Federation.

The DPIA is progressing to support a new dashboard for Midcare. This developmental build has oversight of our TEC Team's performance on Analogue to Digital including risk indexes (how we prioritise clients), how many clients have switched over, where reviews are required, stock management including equipment reclaim. We are currently augmenting this with Highlight reports (from April, monthly docked at SMT, attached for info)

The Flow Hub are the single point of access for clients, enabling the flow of clients and their information safely across our HSCP. A recent example is the falls review work in Highbank. It was identified that the Acute/Midlothian Community Hospital falls risk assessment was a gap in discharge handover which has now been added to reduce duplication and support local management of falls risks.

A Flow App is creating visible oversight of all Midlothian residents currently within the Emergency Department. This is enabling greater oversight and responsiveness.

The financial context continues to create challenges in ensuring long term sustainability of services, however, across the HSCP, positive steps are being taken to understand opportunities for redesign with a focus on efficacy, that also bring the required financial efficiencies.

Our workforce
We have competed a full review of the functionality, effectiveness and uptake of Health and Social Care specific LearnPro modules.

We continue to have areas where sickness rates are high. These are predominantly within areas where direct care is being delivered so the impact of this can present a challenge. HR are supporting managers to move long term sickness absence cases through to a conclusion as quickly as possible and managers are also looking at how they can better work with trade unions to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity. Wellbeing and trauma work with staff continues.

Sickness Absence
Sickness absence has remained a stubborn challenge within the HSCP. The total number of days lost from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 was 12249 and 506 FTE of staff that make up the total number of days lost.
The ten areas with the highest sickness absence are set out in the table below.

Highest Absence Areas	FTE of staff	Total Days Lost
Newbyres Village Residential Home	74	1899
Highbank Residential Home	50	1771
Home Care - Reablement	31	1146
Home Care- Complex East	25	1105
Home Care- Complex West	31	807

5

Cowan Court	18	752
Home care- Midlothian West	18	614
Home care- MERRIT	12	598
Catering & Domestic- Newybyres	15	397
Home Care Team	20	346

Please see the table below with the highest five reasons for absence.

Absence Reason	Grand Total (days lost)
Psychological	4467
Stomach / Bowel / Blood / Metabolic Disorders	1866
Musculoskeletal & Joint Disorders	1721
Hospital Treatment	934
Colds & Flu	814

From the information provided, it is apparent that sickness remains highest within the high volume areas of care, specifically Newbyers Care Village, Highbank Intermediate Care Home and Care at Home.

Within Care at Home, we have piloted having a dedicated part-time care team supervisor where their main role is to manage all the long-term sickness absence and those on stages from repeated sickness absence periods. There is therefore a consistent approach and this manager ensures the policy and protocols are followed clearly. We are clear that long term sickness cannot be sustained in the service, so we are looking at managing staff out of the service who are unable to maintain acceptable period of time at work. We do this with the support of HR colleagues. By way of an example of the effect of this approach, in November 2023 there were 23 Care at Home staff who were on the long term sickness absence list. By April 2024, this had reduced to 10. Out of the original 23 there are 4 who have returned to work, 4 who have resigned and 5 already gone to capability with a view to dismissal or move. Out of the remaining 10, 7 of them are going to capability hearings.

We are looking to replicate this approach in Newbyers Care Village which has had a recent history of high sickness rates, particularly amongst evening and night staff. We will align a portfolio of sickness absence management to one dedicated manager, again to ensure consistency of approach as per Care at Home.

Similar action is being taken in Highbank Intermediate Care Home. Whilst all managers there have had previous training in absence management, a refresher is being organised.
All staff are supported in maximising attendance at work.

In all areas across the HSCP we are focusing on having a strong adherence to timescales within the policy so as to avoid drift. HR colleagues have oversight of all long term cases and work with individual managers to progress. However, it is acknowledged that at times, due to other operational demands, timescales slip resulting in longer sickness absence than is optimal. This is an area for improvement and the Head of Service for Adults has requested that reports are provided to him for each area so outliers can be identified and remedial action taken. This remains a work in progress, but it is anticipated that this will see some positive effect in 2024-25.

Whilst adherence to the policy and procedure is of vital importance, work is also undertaken to manage staff wellbeing and change cultures in some areas. So, all the high volume areas have a range of training offered, from manual handling training with a view to reducing sickness absence through musculoskeletal injuries to trauma training to manage challenging situations and emotions to medication management training to reduce medication errors. Linked to this is an adapted managerial approach to staff making errors. Whilst some actions at work are serious enough to warrant investigation and subsequent disciplinary action, others are genuine errors and there is an attempt to create a more supportive culture regarding this. This is important as we know that staff investigations can often result in sickness absence. A more nuanced and proportionate approach is being taken with a view to this contributing to a reduction in sickness absence. It will take some time to see if this has the desired effect but it will be monitored throughout 2024.

Similarly, work on staff well-being is ongoing and includes the creation of a well-being space in both Newbyers and Highbank and packs have been given to Care at Home staff. Moreover, flexible working arrangements are accommodated where possible, along with any indicated feasible modifications to work that may be required. People returning from sick leave are offered other supports including short term phased return-to-work patterns, short term lighter duties, and referrals to the physiotherapy service, Employee Assistance Programme guidance, and referrals to the Occupational Health Service.
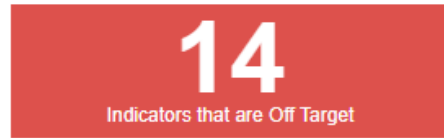
In the Social Work teams, sickness absence rates can be variable and there are a number of small teams which can make managing sickness absence challenging. The current Social Work and OT Review will look to factor in

how the service can manage this type of absence in a more resilient way, but current measures largely involve resources being moved from team to team depending on demand and availability. Managers work closely with HR colleagues as per the high volume service areas and additional training is offered to newer members including having difficult conversations with staff. More challenging cases are escalated to Service Manager level.

Our communities
Health inequalities are generally well understood across the HSCP, and services are becoming more aware of how their work can contribute to reducing the gap. Work is underway to build more detailed understanding of how the profile of communities across Midlothian is changing, within the context of significant population expansion driven by private sector housing development.

7

Quarter 4 - Adult Health and Social Care ▾

22	14	16	1
Indicators that are On Target	Indicators that are Off Target	Indicators that are Data Only	Indicators that have No Data Available

15	1	12	0
Actions that are On Target	Actions that are Off Target	Quarterly ASC Service All Risks	Quarterly ASC Service High Risks

Adult Health and Social Care INDICATORS Off Target

...	Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Last Update	History
🔴	AHSC.MPI.02 Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence (cumul...		24.26	10.53	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	23/24.AHSC2.2c Number of people receiving respite who have the opportunity to co...		0	100	2023/24	
🔴	23/24.AHSC3.1a Design a support pathway for unpaid carers of people in hospital wi...		No	Yes	2023/24	
🔴	23/24.AHSC3.1b Establish monthly activity numbers for referrals to VOCAL for unpai...		No	Yes	2023/24	
🔴	AHSC.MPI.06 % of high risks that have been reviewed in the last quarter		0%	100%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	23/24.AHSC4.1c Number of full drafts of completed framework.		2	14	2023/24	
🔴	23/24.AHSC4.1b Number of heat maps.		9	14	2023/24	
🔴	23/24.AHSC2.2a Highbank bed occupancy (both available beds and occupied beds)		3	4	H2 2023/24	
🔴	ASC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 workin...		75%	95%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	AHSC.MPI.07 % of internal/external audit actions progressing on target or complete ...		73%	90%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	ASC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days		77.78%	95%	2023/24	
🔴	23/24.AHSC4.1a Number of service areas using OutNav.		5	6	2023/24	
🔴	AHSC.MPI.05 % of Service PIs that are on target/ have reached their target. (does n...		77%	90%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	ASC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days		88.89%	95%	Q4 2023/24	

← 1 of 1 →

SMP Adult Health and Social Care ACTIONS Off Target

	Code & Title	Progress	Status	Due Date		Type
🔴	**23/24.AHSC3.1** Explore and design a model of who system support for unpaid carer...	90%	Overdue	31 Mar 2024	⚙️	Action

← 1 of 1 →

All children, young people, adults and families in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This is achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity and inclusion.

Community Priorities

The Community Planning Partnership (CPP) draw together public, voluntary and private sector bodies, and local communities to deliver a shared 'plan' to improve the lives of local people based on evidence. In Midlothian, the plan is called the Single Midlothian Plan (SMP). This is a shared partnership plan of how we will meet the needs of our local communities and brings together all the priorities for Midlothian into one place. Our outcomes for the next five years are:

• Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes,
• No child or household need live in poverty,
• Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

In Midlothian the Getting It Right for Every Child Board (GIRFEC) is one of the subgroups of the SMP, and one of the main drivers for the effective delivery of services to children. The GIRFEC Plan also known as the Integrated Children's Service Plan 2023-2026, is a statutory three year plan devised by the local authority and health. The plan develops key outcomes and priority actions which are designed to improve the lives of children, young people and families. The new 3 year plan has now been approved towards the end of 2023.

The plan has 12 shared priority themes, outcomes and actions which sit within 4 subgroups, namely:

1. Children& Young People's Rights
2. Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing
3. Whole Family Wellbeing
4. Information Sharing and Commissioning

1

We are fully committed to realising a children's rights approach to all of our work and ensuring that we embed the principles of the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) alongside our Promise commitments.

Progress and Achievements

The Promise
The Promise work continues to drive forward our children's service improvements.
Plan 21-24: Priority Areas
A Good Childhood
Whole Family Support
Supporting the Workforce
Planning
Building Capacity
Referrals:
Work has been progressed over the past year to allow us to have a clearer overview and understanding on how referrals come into the service. There is much greater confidence that those referrals coming into children's services are appropriate and for those referrals which relate to early support to prevent escalation, these are directed to the Family Wellbeing Service. This has been a significant piece of work and the impact on the service is that social workers are only involved in working with families who require a certain level of intervention and support.
Within Q4 there has been a 56% decrease in referrals coming into children's services compared to Q1. This should in time ensure that we provide a more efficient and robust service to those most in need. This said the complexity of the referrals coming into the service remains high. Over time it is hoped that the Family Wellbeing Service will be where see an increase in the number of referrals and further reduction in social work referrals.

Number of referrals by Quarter

22/23				23/24			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
2,155	2,212	2,023	2,626	2,353	2,067	1,436	1,324

Family Wellbeing Service
The service has had a significant amount of training on offer to the new workforce to ensure they have a good understanding of their role going forward. They are already working with 100 families and 177 children and young people, this equates to 172 referrals over the past year. We

2

have appointed a permanent new team leader in January 2024 who has a wealth of experience. Work is well underway liaising with our 3rd sector colleagues to agree how we can share some of the allocated funding with them to support a holistic approach to working with families.

Looked After away from home population
The data evidences that our looked after population is fairly static bearing in mind data changes on a daily basis. The differences in the data relate to one or two families coming into care, therefore this needs to be considered within this context. Overall across the past year the data has had no significant change, generally fluctuating from 140 – 152 children. The introduction of Family Group decision making, supports families to devise a plan which promotes families staying together with support from extended family. It is too early to advise if this is reason for the fairly static numbers.

The number of children's names on the child protection register has also remained fairly consistent across the past year however once again a cautionary approach when looking at this data as two families can mean an significant increase in the number. The main reason for registering a child's name on the register is the risk posed by domestic abuse.

Rate per 1,000 of Midlothian Looked After and Accommodated Children

22/23				23/24			
Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6.9	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.5	6.6	7.2	7.4

*Scotland Average for 22/23 is 9.7

Self-Directed Support
We continue to work tirelessly to ensure that families had access to funding if assessed as in need. The summer period is often a challenge for families trying to identify sufficient resources for children with additional support needs. Our aim is to start planning for the summer period now so that families are aware of what resources are available and have choice where their child(ren) can attend. This is a real challenge as most holiday resources do not cater for children with additional support needs, therefore there are only limited spaces available to families.

Trauma Informed Training
We remain committed to ensure all our staff are trauma informed this includes our foster carers. A rolling programme of training is being rolled out across the directorate and Council.

3

Challenges and risks

National Care Service:
The 'Bill' is progressing to stage 2. There remains no information around whether or not children's services and Justice will be included within the NCS. Many different options are being considered.

Poverty
As families continue to be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis this is expected to lead to an increase in the number of families experiencing poverty. This also applies to workers on low incomes. We are assessing all claims that come into children and families from the Scottish Welfare Fund for early identification of families who may need additional support. We also have income maximisation officers within the service who offer support to families. This has been a very positive approach to supporting families, ensuring they are receiving the benefits they are entitled to.

Workforce:
Midlothian continues to experience the same staffing issues encountered by other Councils. There is a general lack of experienced and skilled staff across the sector, and we are having to increasingly rely on locum workers. As reported in previous quarters, this is a national issue and discussions have started around A National Social Work Agency which would offer the same terms and conditions across Scotland, similar to that of Police Scotland and Education staff. This would benefit Midlothian if this approach were adopted. Workforce is a very live issue and impacting significantly on staff with higher rates of absence due to the stress this issue is causing. We are looking at a recruitment campaign over 3 days around June 2024 to try and attract social workers for children and adult services, social care staff, CLLE staff, teachers and learning assistants to try and bring new workers into Midlothian.

Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children
We continue to work with our Home Office colleagues to try to find a fairer way to share the distribution of UASC who arrive mainly in Kent on small boats. Most local authorities in Scotland are at capacity regarding having no more foster or residential capacity to accommodate these young people. We therefore must think differently around how we are all going to manage this ever-increasing demand.

Increased numbers of children impacted by the delay in neurodevelopmental waiting times:
There is a significant delay in families waiting for an appointment with CAMHS regarding neurodevelopment concerns. Not all cases will require clinical input from CAMHS however we are looking at how we can work together to consider how we best support families whilst on the waiting list. We continue to work with partners to explore how best to meet the current demands and pressure whilst making sure we future proof our services to deliver sustainable options locally for children and young people with ASN and Complex and Enduring Needs. A neurodevelopmental pathway is in the early stages of development.
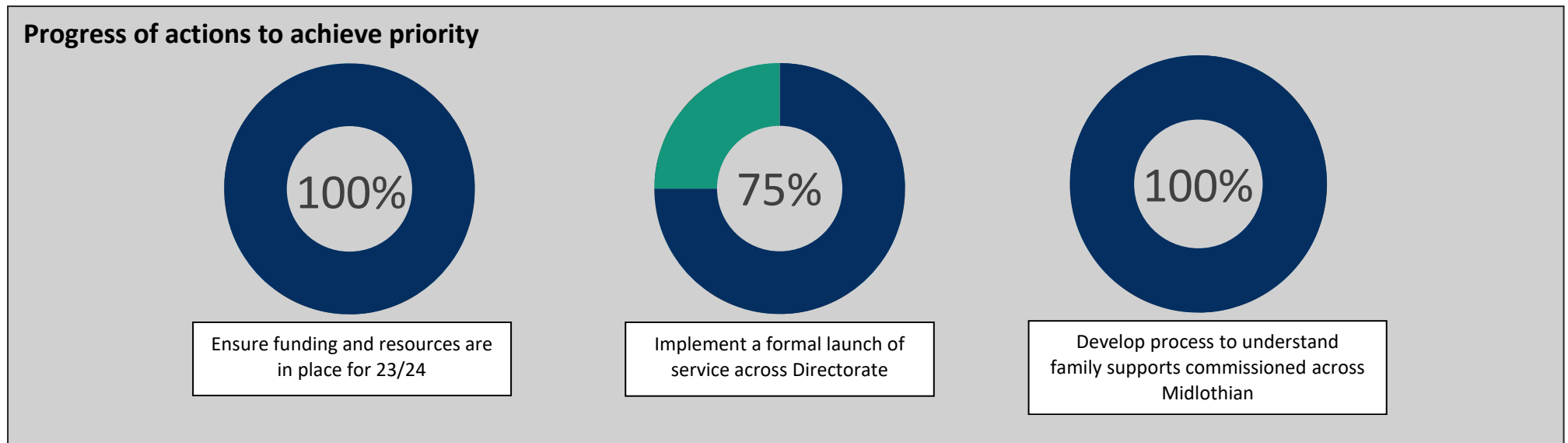
4

Foster Care

In February 2024 the Council approved a 5.5% fee increase for foster carers in Midlothian. Increased mileage rate and the reinstatement of an additional birthday, holiday and Christmas allowance payment were also approved. We are now ready to embark on a recruitment of foster carers campaign which will commence during Fostering Fortnight 13th-31st may 2024. We have spent a significant amount of time and resource on creating a wide reaching campaign to attract new carers.

Financial Pressures

Finance is an ongoing challenge and we must ensure that we have sufficient capacity within our workforce and resources to meet the increasing demand faced by the fastest growing local authority in Scotland.

5

Service Priority 1 - Ensure the Midlothian Wellbeing Service is aligned with other family supports across Midlothian
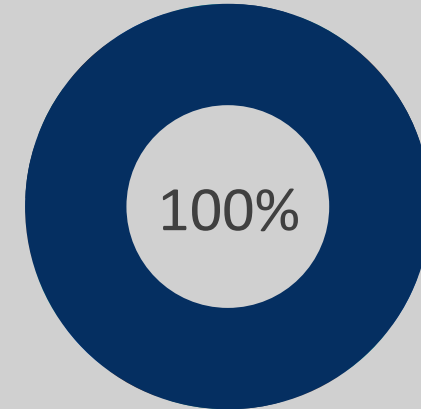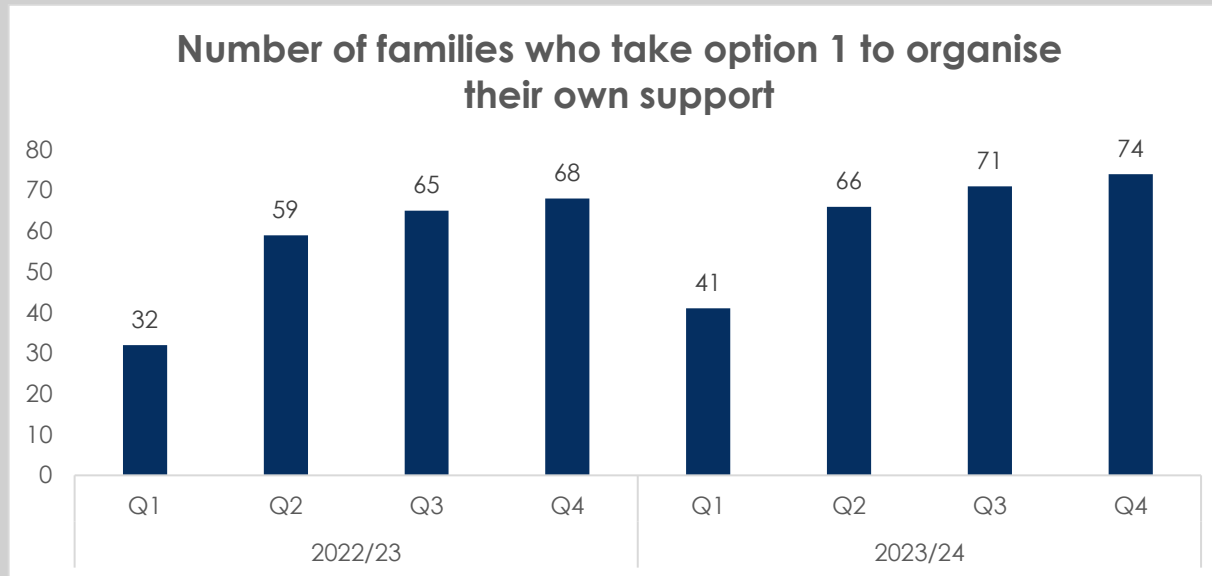
Progress of actions to achieve priority

100%	75%	100%
Ensure funding and resources are in place for 23/24	Implement a formal launch of service across Directorate	Develop process to understand family supports commissioned across Midlothian

Key achievements this quarter:

- All staff are now in place, 24/25 funding quota announced from Scottish Government. Funding process in place.
- Midlothian Wellbeing Service had a soft launch in 23/24, Formal launch will be rolled out following annual report.
- A formal directory is now in place and used by all staff, monthly updates being entered and monitored.

6

Service Priority 2 - Promote the use of Self-Directed Support amongst families to empower them to have choice and flexibility
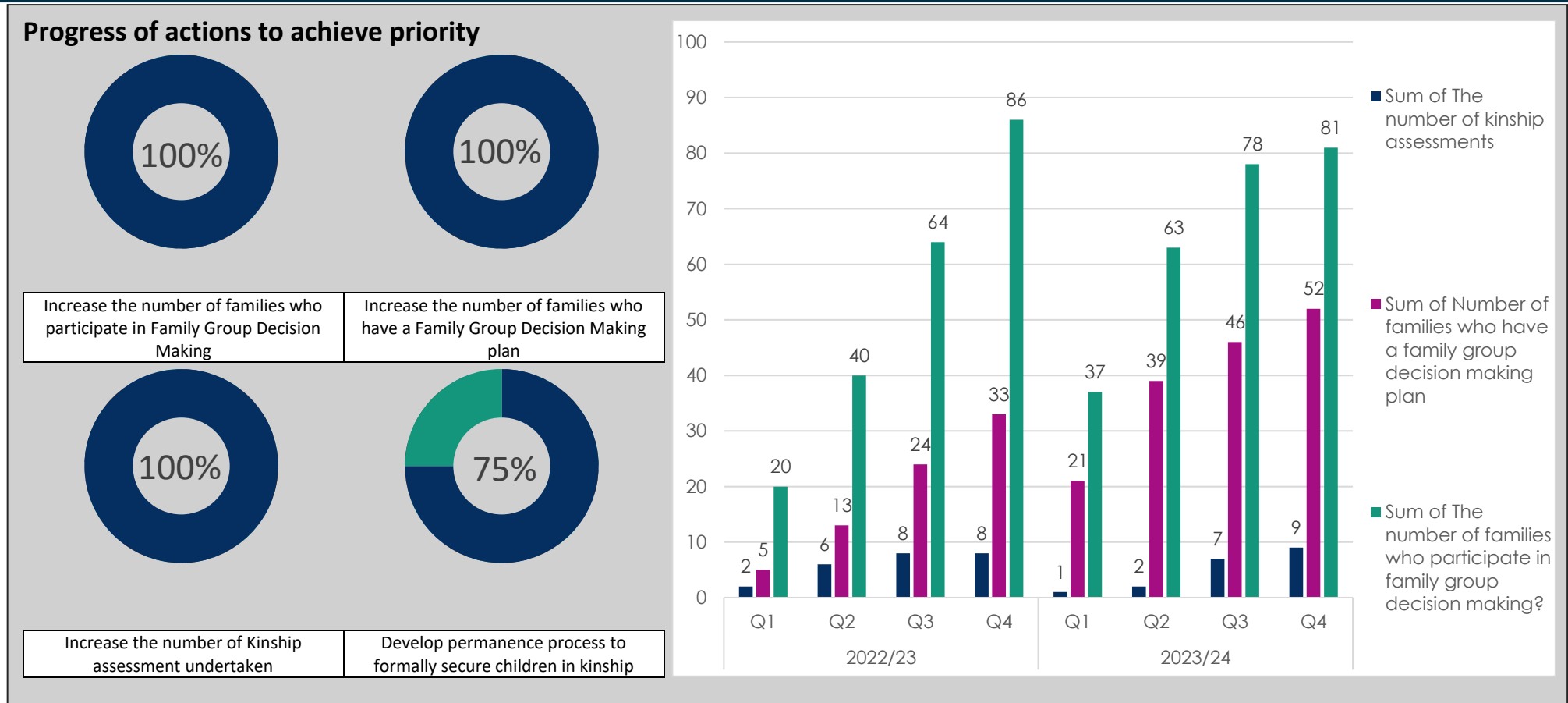
Progress of actions to achieve priority

Number of families who take option 1 to organise their own support

Bar chart values:

	2022/23				2023/24			
Quarter	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Value	32	59	65	68	41	66	71	74

100%

Increase by 10% the number of families who take Option 1 to organise their own support

Key achievements this quarter:

- In total there has been an increase of 33 families using SDS since Q1, which is an 80% increase and is the highest number now than at any point last year.
- This is a great achievement over the quarter and year with numbers continuing to increase. The issue we are facing is the lack of resources within the community to support families who want to access respite or clubs for their children who have additional support needs. Many organisations do not offer a service to children with additional support needs due to the increase costs in staffing but also finding suitably skilled staff is an ongoing issue.
- All posts have now been filled. This information will inform practice planning in 24/25.

7

Progress of actions to achieve priority

	2022/23				2023/24			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Sum of The number of kinship assessments	2	6	8	8	1	2	7	9
Sum of Number of families who have a family group decision making plan	5	13	24	33	21	39	46	52
Sum of The number of families who participate in family group decision making?	20	40	64	86	37	63	78	81

Donut charts:
- 100% — Increase the number of families who participate in Family Group Decision Making
- 100% — Increase the number of families who have a Family Group Decision Making plan
- 100% — Increase the number of Kinship assessment undertaken
- 75% — Develop permanence process to formally secure children in kinship

Key achievements this quarter:

- Compared to the same period the previous year there has been a reduction in the number of referrals from 29 to 23 in Q4 2024. This is to be expected as the service has reduced in size and scope due to a reduction staffing.

- Going forward a further FGDM post has been agreed and this will help increase capacity within the service in 24/25.

Service Priority 4 – Implement the National Child Protection Guidance locally

**Progress of actions to achieve priority**

100%
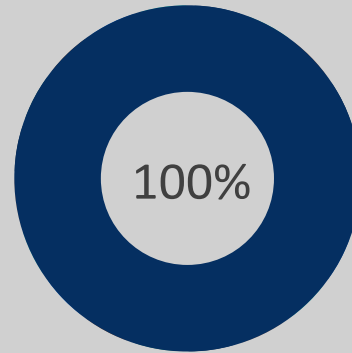
Contribute towards the development of Lothian wide Child Protection Procedures

Key achievements this quarter:

- The new national guidance and local procedure are now in place

- Briefing sessions have been offered across the partnership

- Mosaic processes have been updated to reflect the changes in process and timescales

Service Priority 5 - Develop a pathway for children and families to navigate mental health services in a timely manner

Progress of actions to achieve priority

75%
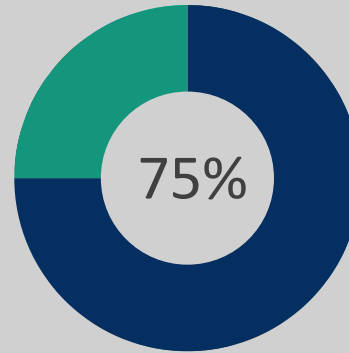
Develop a Single Point of Access across the directorate

Key achievements this quarter:

- Work is progressing on this matter. Funding has been agreed with CAMHS to fund a part time worker to take this work forward. We are awaiting post evaluation before sending for recruitment. Funding secured for all posts going forward. This indicator is being progressed via the Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Sub Group.

10

Service Priority 6 - Strengthen mechanisms to support families maximise their income

Progress of actions to achieve priority

100%

Increase number of families offered an income assessment

Number of families offered an income assessment
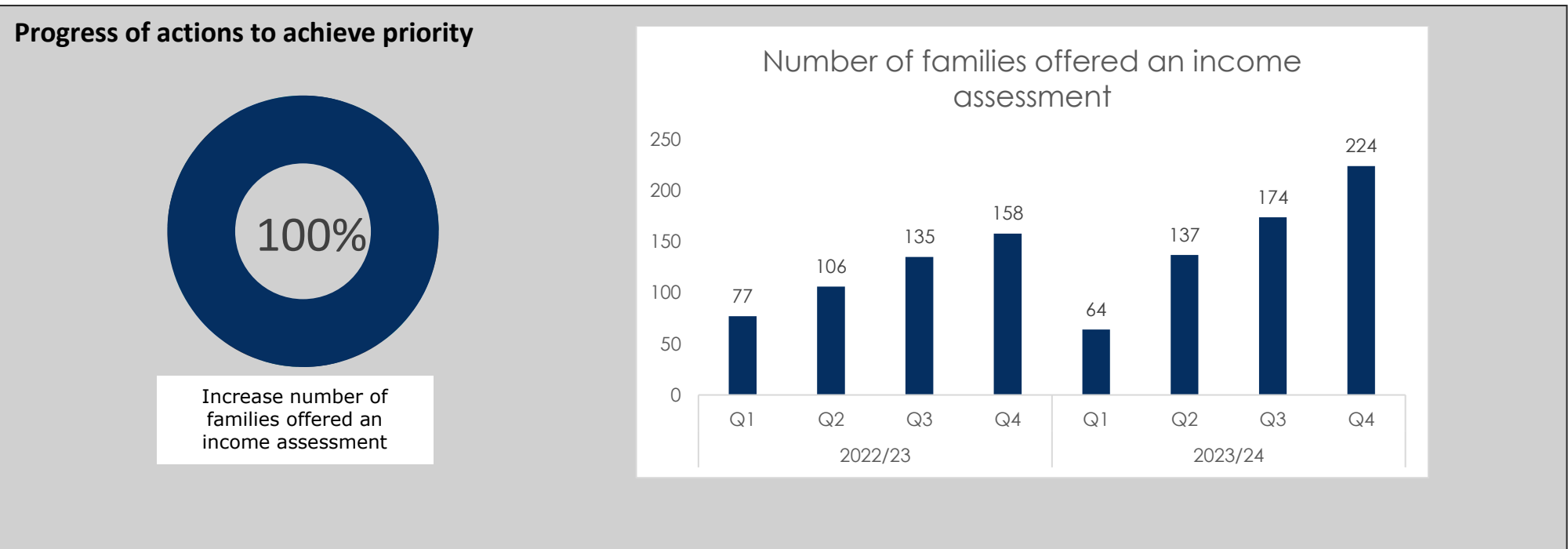
Key achievements this quarter:

- The number of families offered an income assessment in 2023/24 is 41% higher than last year.
- In total 224 families offered assessment in 2023/24. Indicator will change in 2024/25 to look at relative income gained.
- Q4 reporting demonstrates the positive impact of both workers and the financial gain made for families
- Review meeting has agreed to broaden the remit of one worker for families who are engaging in Child protection processes to allow support while this process is in progress

11

# Service Priority 7 - Children, young people and their families experience high quality services

Progress of actions to achieve priority

100%	100%	100%	100%
Ensure local Adoption Service will provide high quality care and support	Ensure local Continuing Care/Adult services will provide high quality care	Ensure Hawthorn Family Learning Centre will provide high quality care and support	Ensure 2 x Young People's Care Homes will provide high quality care
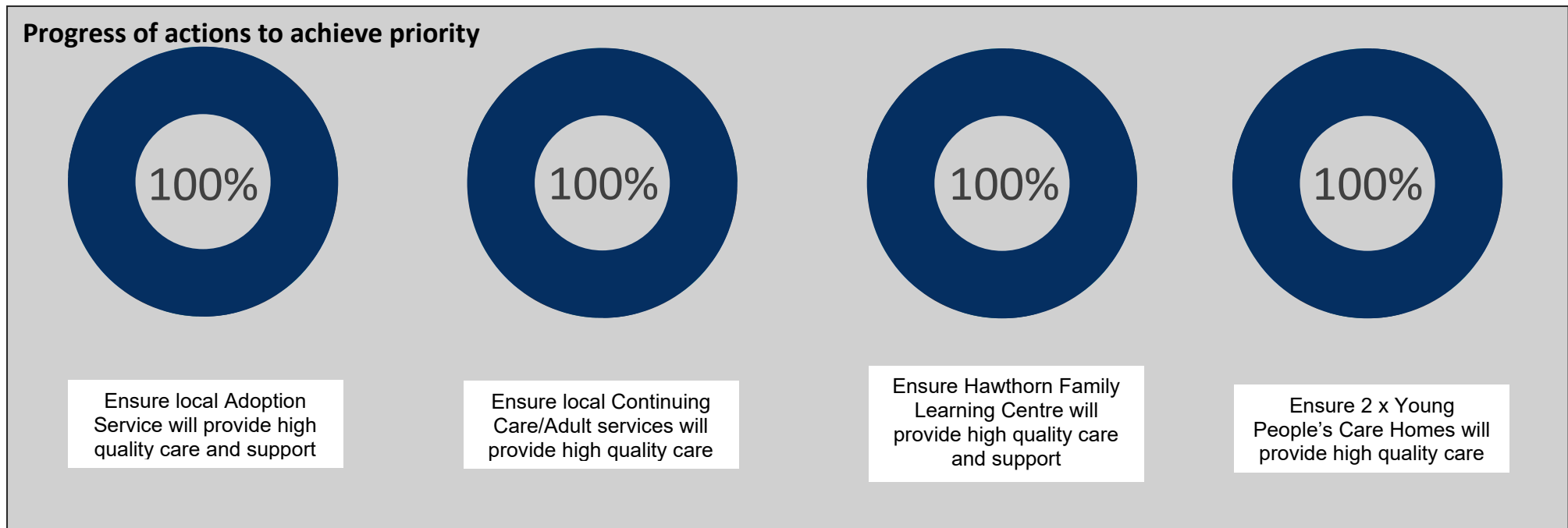
Key achievements this quarter:

- An inspection took place in September 2023 for Fostering/ Adoption and Continuing Care – an improvement plan has been developed on the back of this and is closely scrutinized and monitored by Social Work Assurance Group (SWAG) to ensure the recommendations are being actioned and improvements being made.
- An annual report and improvement plan are in place at Hawthorn Family Learning Centre, no recent inspection.
- Our Young People's care homes last inspection was rated "Very good". Awaiting this year's inspection. Improvement plan in place.

12

Service Priority 8 – Strengthen the number of staff who understand the importance of trauma informed practice

Progress of actions to achieve priority

100%
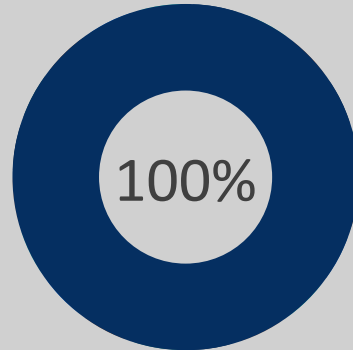
Develop a timetable of events that offer training opportunities and development for all CS staff

100%
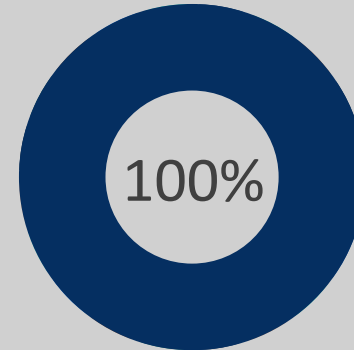
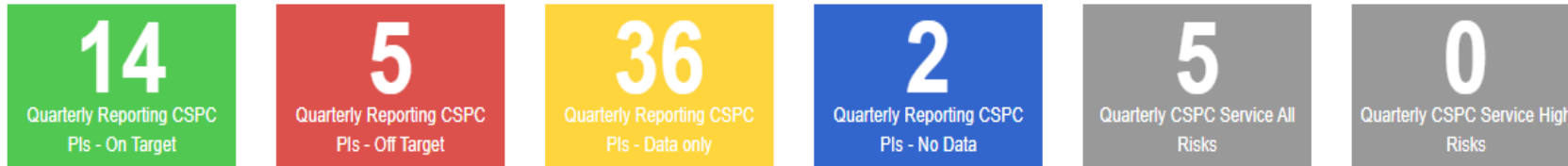Increase the number of staff trained in using a trauma informed approach

Key achievements this quarter:

- In total 64 CSCYP staff attended training in Trauma informed practice in 23/24, 31 at Level 1 and 33 at Level 2. In-house training is being rolled out throughout the service.
- In-house training is being rolled out to support corporate delivery. Staff development days ongoing with teams.

13

Pentana Performance Dashboard

A full review of quarterly performance data is available via Pentana (Browser login link - https://midlothian.pentanarpm.uk/login)

Quarter 4 - Children's Services Partnership and Communities

14	5	36	2	5	0
Quarterly Reporting CSPC PIs - On Target	Quarterly Reporting CSPC PIs - Off Target	Quarterly Reporting CSPC PIs - Data only	Quarterly Reporting CSPC PIs - No Data	Quarterly CSPC Service All Risks	Quarterly CSPC Service High Risks

Quarterly Reporting PIs - Off Target

...	Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
●	BS.CSPC.LPI.05 Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within 15 days fo...		86%	100%	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
●	CSPC.MPI.07 % of internal/external audit actions progressing on target or complete t...		78%	95%	01 Apr 2024	Q4 2023/24	
●	CS.SPSO.04.1 Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 1		6	5	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
●	CS.SPSO.04.2 Average time in working days to respond to complaints at stage 2		25	20	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
●	CS.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days		0%	95%	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	

← 1 of 1 →

14

15

Corporate Solutions Performance Report 23/24
Annual Summary

Midlothian

The number of library events has increased by 7% from last year with 6,135 library events held this year resulting in a total of 81,006 attendees, an 11% increase from those attending events last year. This covers regular events and activities for both adults and children as well as standalone events.

The Summer Reading Challenge, based around the power of play, sport and games, saw over 1,000 children sign up this year (a 15% increase on last year) with 55% of those completing the challenge (a 4% increase on the numbers finishing last year). Nearly 130 events were attended by over 4,000 children and their families and over 21,000 items of junior stock were issued over July and August. As a result, libraries saw 668 new child memberships which reflects the positive engagement of the Summer Reading Challenge.

Book Week Scotland took place in November and 66 events were held across our libraries including Bookbug sessions, author visits, workshops, crafting, school visits and Bookbug bag gifting sessions. Almost 2,300 people attended which was a great turn out for what was a very wet Book Week Scotland. A bookmark design competition was run in partnership with Midlothian primary schools with almost 300 entries having been submitted.

Lend and Mend Hub

This year saw the launch of Gorebridge Library's Lend and Mend Hub. The Hub provides free access to sewing machines and other equipment to allow communities to repair, re-use and upcycle their own items. Gorebridge was one of nine library partners across Scotland in a project funded by the John Lewis Partnership's Circular Future Fund and managed through SLIC (the Scottish Library and Information Council).

Taking a co-design approach, the hubs were developed with insight and expertise from local teams and library members to ensure services were tailored to community needs. Funding granted from the John Lewis Partnership's £1m Circular Future Fund was used for the equipment, training and space upgrades needed to deliver the projects. Following their launch, each library hub introduced an education programme to support new skills development, helping to reduce inequality through equitable access to resources. The first focus was on 'mending', and several workshops and sessions were held with groups such as the SHRUB Cooperative, to teach people the first steps of repairing and re-making.

This is an example of how the library service is transforming and thriving, responding to community needs and giving people access to resources that they may not otherwise have. In line with the Council's commitment to Net Zero by 2030 and the Climate Change Strategy, the promotion of circular economy activities can change the way we use and consume to make the way we live greener, as well as upskill residents and foster new social connections. It is anticipated that this pilot will help develop a long-term model for libraries to be a hub of circular economy activities and external funding has been secured for two more Lend and Mend Hubs due to launch in Summer 2024 in Danderhall and Loanhead Libraries.

Relaunch of our Warm and Well hubs

As part of Challenge Poverty Week in October we relaunched our 4 warm and well hubs. Working in partnership with other services including Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability, Citizens Advice Bureau, Social Security Scotland and Into Work, a number of workshops and drop-in sessions were held in our Warm and Well Hubs providing advice on benefits, employability support, household budgeting and Cost of Living support and advice. In order to continue to support our communities through the Cost of Living Crisis, Dalkeith Library launched a free coat swap where coats could be donated or taken by those who were in need. A wide range of jackets, hats and gloves were on offer with 127 coats being taken since January.

Library Service Excellence Award

This year, Library Services were awarded the SLIC Library Service Excellence Award for activities that put our communities at the heart of the service. The service has risen to the challenges of a rapidly changing community, creating a series of events and services that respond to the needs to the community, particularly in response to the Cost of Living Crisis. The judges commended the service for these activities and joined up thinking they represent. They also saw a great range of cultural events which have been rewarded by significant increases in library visits and materials issues compared to that of the previous year.

Our website performance

In SiteImprove, the marketing performance platform, our council website's Digital Certainty Index score has been consistently around 10% better than the Government benchmark. We currently have a score of just over 90%. This is a gauge of how the website compares to other sites from the same sector across the UK, in terms of accessibility, usability, credibility, trustworthiness and how well-poised it is to respond to Search Engine optimisation challenges. This is a significant achievement particularly with a minimal website team, in comparison to websites managed by much larger government agencies. This year we received 1,142,941 visits to our website, although this number is based on customers accepting analytic cookies, therefore, we expect figures to be much higher.

Communications and promotion
Our communication and marketing team continue to support services across the Council by promoting key initiatives on our social media platforms, news releases, website and community radio channel. Key successes this year include:

Promotion to encourage participation of the Midlothian Outdoor Festival through a dedicated communications campaign. This includes a new Council website page signposting customers to online booking, media releases, brochure and posters and promotion across our social media platforms. The best performing Facebook post reaching 7,604 news feeds and 406 engagements. The best performing Twitter post reaching 2,123 impressions and 85 engagements.

Communication to encourage the uptake of Bonfire Night Waste Amnesty contributed to a 21% increase in total uplifts from last year. 510 items were uplifted in total, removing potentially flammable waste from our communities most affected by nuisance fire-raising in the run up to Bonfire Night. A series of social media posts publicised the initiative and provided updates on slot availability. The best performing Facebook post reached 16,847 with an engagement rate of 7.75%, both considered higher than might be considered typical. Best performing Twitter post reached 1,986 impressions.

Activity to promote the uptake of the Health & Social Care Partnership (HSCP) social care strategy survey, canvassing views of residents about future strategic priorities for Midlothian social care provision. A series of social media graphics were created in collaboration with HSCP, each formatted for use on different social media platforms. Combined Facebook posts reached 13,396 impressions and combined Twitter

Encouraging eligible families to apply for free school meals and clothing grants through a dedicated communications campaign. Short videos were created with school children and the Council's food nutritionist and posted across all social media platforms. Facebook and Twitter posts featured key messages pointing people back to the Free School Meals/Clothing Grant webpages to apply. As a result, in terms of the webforms being received, the majority of those were applications for these supports. The best performing Facebook post reached 8,077 views and 5,635 views via Twitter.

Communications to support the recruitment of more Shared Lives carers, focusing on short break services. Social media posts were created across all Council platforms publishing the work of the service and soliciting expressions of interest. The combined Facebook posts reaching 14,468 with an engagement rate of 4.66%. Interview footage was shot for inclusion in a new video providing information about the service, which will be released in Spring this year as well as work to update webpages for the service.

Promotion of customer consultations and surveys including:
- Fostering campaign (led externally and supported by the Council's communications service)
- Auchendinny to Rosewell stretch of Core Path (best performing social media post reached 80,468 news feeds with 7,824 engagements)
- Newtongrange former pool site (a series of scheduled Facebook posts publicising an in-person consultation event and signposting to an online questionnaire had a total reach of 112,814)
- Midlothian Local Development Plan engagement actions (Facebook posts for the development plan, with a total reach of 22,066, engagement rate 2825 (12%) and Facebook posts for open space strategy, with a total reach of 16,722, total engagement was 759 (4.5%)).

Policy and strategy

- Consultation with the Trade Unions to prioritise the policy review with requests to focus on disciplinary, resolution, maximising attendance at work, performance improvement.
- Job Evaluation was brought back in-house this year with work undertaken to streamline the internal processes and increase efficiencies.
- A new Hybrid Working Policy was launched following engagement with Trade Unions.
- The Recruitment Strategy was drafted this year and is being finalised for approval, prior to communication and implementation.
- The new Wellbeing Strategy was approved by the Corporate Management Team. The strategy continues to focus on the financial, physical, and psychological wellbeing of our workforce and ensure employees have access to advice, guidance and initiatives which support their health and wellbeing.

Investing in our workforce

- A new programme for welcome, induction, long service recognition and leavers was developed this year. This includes a refreshed face to face induction programme for all new staff and existing staff; and will be supported by a range of online resources provided at onboarding. The introduction of long service recognition and a revised approach to learning from employees exiting the organisation will enable us to learn from employee experiences, understand the reasons for leaving and promote Midlothian as an employer of choice.
- The introduction of shared cost additional voluntary contributions has been approved and work is now underway with procurement and Employment and Reward for implementation. When finalised, a communications plan will support the roll out to all staff to encourage take up to the scheme.
- A new coaching programme has been rolled out across the organisation and the Leadership Team. The Leadership Forum programme for 2024 is agreed and the new Management Forum focusing on practical line management launches in Summer 2024.

Workforce measures

We track our employee turnover rates on a half yearly basis by expressing it as a percentage of employees overall when taking account of all leavers. Consideration of the levels of turnover across services, locations and particular groups of employees helps to inform workforce planning and resourcing. Compared to last year, staff turnover rates have decreased from 10.3% last year to 9.2% this year.

The gender pay gap measures the average female pay (£19.81) versus average male pay (£20.36) within the organisation. The figures show that the Council has more male staff at higher rates of pay by 2.7% in 23/24. This figure has reduced from 2.86% in 22/23.

The percentage of female employees in the top 5% of earnings continues to gradually increase this year to 122 from 120 in 22/23, 115 in 21/22 and 98 in 20/21.

Sickness absence rates for all employees has remained fairly consistent to rates of last year with average sickness days at 11.71 for this year compared to 11.04 in 22/23. For Corporate Solutions, the average number of working days lost due to sickness absence has slightly increased compared to this time last year. Of the FTE days lost, 15% was due to long term sickness, 68% self-certified, 17% short term absence. There are no identifiable trends causing increases in figures, either in short term or long term absences and work continues with each service area to review attendance levels and support those absent to return to work.

Wellness@Midlothian

This year Midlothian Council maintained the Healthy Working Lives Gold Award for over 9 years, through involvement by a committee of dedicated employees volunteering their time and expertise to create and support wellbeing initiatives.

The rolling programme of **Wellness@Midlothian** initiatives continued this year to ensure we are supporting the positive health and wellbeing of our staff. This year 75 wellbeing events were held internally and externally covering cost of living supports, wellbeing and mental health awareness and health checks. A total of 595 staff attended various events organised in house. Events included:

- promotion of free learning opportunities, and a programme around Carer's Week with training from Vocal and Alzheimer's Scotland, raising awareness of the carers policy and supports available. Other promotions included men's health guidance, McMillan cancer support and promotion of volunteer week
- health checks were held across Midlothian Libraries, Schools, Cherry Road and Council depots including Stobhill, Fushiebridge and Bonnyrigg garage. In addition, staff engagement exercises were held in Stobhill Depot and Bonnyrigg Garage to share employee wellbeing information and details of where to seek support on a large range of topics.
- onsite visits were provided by Capital Credit Union to meet staff and provide advice on budgeting and saving. Webinars were delivered from Money Advice Scotland and drop-in sessions from Citizen Advice in Midlothian. In addition, 3 Affinity Connect courses held on financial topics this year. 2 home energy workshops were also delivered to staff.
- in terms of mental health, Trauma Level 1 & 2 courses were delivered, a SQA Coping Strategies Course, a Mindfulness course delivered by Health and Social Care Partnership, and the first series of the Edinburgh College Coaching Course.
- 6 Health walks were held for staff from the Active Travel Team supported by the Sport and Leisure team and special offers for gym membership over the festive period were promoted to staff.

Roll out of Microsoft 365 across the whole corporate estate was completed this year, enabling widescale collaboration and co-production. This has included:

- Phase 2 started in December, focusing on user adoption, service-level workflow re-design, Sharepoint deployment, software rationalisation and data reporting and visualisation. Progressing with the roll out of SharePoint and OneDrive for corporate users by engaging with Infotechtion (a leading M365 delivery organisation), who are providing advice and guidance for key parts of the project.
- Providing Council wide training to corporate staff and elected members, bringing the total to 3,568 attendees across 29 training sessions of 8 different courses.
- Technical deployment of core Office 365 applications across the estate.
- Improved collaboration and efficiencies now being realized in many ways across various areas of Council working.
- Linkage (federation) of Microsoft accounts with NHS and other local authorities enabling chat, video-calling, and efficient calendar appointment scheduling (free/busy status visibility).
- Increasing the security of the M365 environment by implementing tighter Bring Your Own Device controls.

Education and Equipped for Learning

As part of the equipped for learning project, 500 new Smart Screens installed this year across the school estate. As well as providing a superior teaching and learning experience, the new panels reduce power consumption by 50%.

36 physical primary school servers were consolidated down to just 3 this year. This significantly reduces power requirements and CO_2 emissions. This also allowed us to reduce the number of servers, thus reducing complexity and maintenance time of these systems.

Significant progress was made towards simplified meeting scheduling, enabling calendar visibility across Google and Microsoft accounts which went live in January 2024.

Workplaces of the future

TB: THEME 3

Digital Systems and Infrastructure

A range of improvements have been completed this year to facilitate a more efficient organisation and improve how we work:

- Completion of a major upgrade to the Citrix platform, significantly enhancing security and efficiency. Citrix is used by approximately ¼ of corporate staff.
- Cloud First strategy continues with successful migration of several major business systems to the Cloud increasing resilience, simplifying maintenance reducing power consumption and CO_2 emissions, and providing increased functionality -
  - Contact Centre's Netcall Liberty telephony management system
  - Capita One Housing system
  - Spydus, the new Library Management System

- Replacement, upgrade or removal of all Microsoft Windows 2012 Servers and upgrade to Commvault Backup System. This ensures that we do not have any old unsupported (and unsecure) server operating systems and hardware. Eight servers and four storage arrays replaced by four new servers. Again, reducing power, CO_2, as well as increasing performance and reducing complexity.
- Performance and security of remote-access to Council network improved through roll-out of new Global Protect solution.
- Education access and utilisation of the internet is now more secure via LightSpeed roll-out which blocks inappropriate websites, and alerts staff to any potentially concerning internet searches / usage from pupils, improving the safety for pupils.
- ForcePoint Cloud was successfully rolled out across the corporate network to enhance our internet security, significantly reducing the likelihood and impact of cyber threats.
- Deployment of Corporate WiFi at the Stobhill depot.
- Migration from a poor point to point WiFi system at Pathhead to a reliable 4G solution.

Cyber Security

This year we were successful in managing and mitigating a major cyber incident. All systems and data were fully secured due to rapid response and multi-team effort during out-of-hours. A testament to the groundwork previously done to block, minimize and mitigate cyber attempts, as well as the dedication and professionalism of the workforce.

In addition, various cyber security initiatives and events have taken place this year:

➢ **Phishing Exercises:** Designed and executed realistic phishing exercises to evaluate the resilience of the organisation against social engineering attacks.
➢ **Elected Member Cyber Security Presentation**: Communicated key cyber security threats and mitigation to elected members, enhancing overall awareness.
➢ **Staff Security Presentation:** Delivery of security presentations to staff, ensuring a widespread understanding of cyber security risk and protective measures.
➢ **Setup PDNS (Protective DNS) for the Schools Network:** To strengthen the overall resilience of the schools' network against malicious attacks.
➢ **Implementation of Key Technical and Business Processes:** Collaborated with teams to integrate security and compliance measures into new technologies and workflows, minimising potential risks e.g. Projects such as M365 and Google Workspace etc.

Business Applications

A range of Business application upgrades were completed this year including TotalMobile, CivicaPay, Citizen Space, Mosaic, Open Revenues, Legend, Capita ONE. ITrent was migrated to a hosted server and an annual data cleanse of casual employee data was complete. A complete revision of all data and creation of a new agency was carried out as part of a Homecare and CM2000 project.

Other achievements this year included:

- Successful roll out of a Print and Post service across the Housing Services team ensuring that customer correspondence in relation to Housing Services is sent out timeously, whilst reducing internal resource, postage and stationary costs required to do so. In addition, the Operational Support team worked closely with Housing Services to review and enhance the information published on our website with the aim of improving customer access to information and reducing the volume of enquiry type calls received.
- The replacement of 82 multi-functional devices and printers across our school estate.
- The completion of the replacement programme for vehicle trackers across our fleet.
- A review and cleanse of unused mobile phone connections was carried out this year with 387 disconnections made in total.
- A new contract for Vehicle Telematics awarded resulting in reduced costs for the support and maintenance of the application. The new contract also includes free replacement of hardware and potential for the introduction of mobile apps for driver safety and compliance.

Invoicing

Work continues for the rollout of invoice approval processes. Fushiebridge Depot, a high-volume invoice service, was fully onboarded to invoice approval this year. Work to onboard Fleet Services and expand invoice approval in Property Maintenance was fully implemented. Invoice approval was also implemented in Catering Services for non-food purchases. Moving away from paper-based invoicing to invoice approval system management allows for a greater level of audit, performance management and data, leading to more up to date financial monitoring and real time reporting. The percentage of invoices processed via a green slip (paper-based invoicing) has reduced from 15.3% in 22/23 to 12.1% this year.

The rate of invoices paid on time across the Council is 92.6% (target is 95%), an increase from 90% paid on time in 22/23. A total of 109,847 transactions were processed in 2023/24, of which 90,076 were included in the Statutory Performance Indicator (SPI) invoice calculation with an average of 12 days to pay an invoice. The team made 16,411 direct payments to bank accounts to cover Free school meals during the holiday periods, Energy bill support scheme, Ukrainian Host payments and Business Covid recovery grants. 3,360 internally generated payments were processed including grants, corporate appointees, salary deductions and treasury activities.

Supporting the Cost-of-Living Crisis

Requests for crisis funding continue to remain consistently high, with 100% of the revised Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) budget up to and including Q4 allocated. (114% of the original budget). 6,766 applications have been received for Crisis Grants this year (1,789 during Q4). 1,349 received for Community Care Grants (320 during Q4). This demonstrates the significant challenge faced by our communities. The successful recruitment of the Scottish Welfare Fund Assessors will not only allow the team to respond and address the current backlog of processing activities but also analyse the reasons for the high number of applications and refusals to identify preventative activity to mitigate people reaching this crisis point. This is identified as a key action in the Child Poverty Action Plan. In addition, 11,721 customers received help and support via housing benefits this year.

As part of the UK government's support to consumers with their energy costs this winter via the Energy Bills Support Scheme (EBSS) and Alternative Fuel Payments (AFP), Business Services successfully administered these schemes this year through verification of applications against the criteria set by the UK government, approval/rejection of applications and payments made to successful applicants.

Payroll

The Employment and Reward and Business Applications Team successfully implemented the Local Government Pay award and associated back dated payments at the start of this year. Work was carried out to improve our processes and controls in relation to salary overpayments which has reduced monies owed to the Council. Further work was carried out in Employment and Reward to review various employee processes resulting in the introduction of e-forms and workflows to manage special leave/extended unpaid leave/career breaks/sabbatical requests, flexible retirement, new post and recruitment authorisation and onboarding processes.

Legal and Compliance

This year our Legal Services team concluded various Section 75 agreements to enable housing developments across Midlothian including:

- Newbyres, Gorebridge for 96 homes
- small scale housing development at Robertson Bank, Gorebridge
- Lingerwood Farm, Newtongrange for 1000 homes
- land to east of Glenarch Lodge, Dalkeith for 6 units
- land south west of Newlandburn house, Gorebridge for 10 units

The team negotiated the purchase of 19 properties on the open market to support the Council's social housing programme, and purchased 11 buy backs, 53 affordable housing units at Roslin and land for 11 units at Pathhead to increase the Council's housing portfolio.

Other in-house legal work this year included:
- Provision of servitudes across Council land to enable development of adjacent housing sites. In particular, receipt of £519,532 in March as consideration for granting two servitudes at Oak Place, Mayfield which were required for a housing development adjacent to Council land.
- Land sales for garden ground, tree preservation and charging orders at various locations.
- Purchase of Millerhill Hub community facility from Shawfair LLP pursuant to Shawfair S75 Agreement. This involved agreeing additional transfer provisions for special district heating obligations, mutual car parking arrangements and special arrangements to take effect when the new (adjacent) retail unit is being constructed. An in- house legal fee will be received for this work.
- Completion of legal documentation, conclusion of missives at various sites, securing of Scottish Government funding.
- Conclusion of film location agreement at Vogrie House.

The Continuous Improvement Team transferred from the Chief Executive's Office to Corporate Solutions part way through 2023/24. The team supports the required step-change to ensure that as an organisation we learn from feedback and complaints received and improve service delivery as a result of driving forward a culture of continuous improvement.

A key success this year has been the introduction of the 'Contact Us' customer feedback and complaints module, with a central resource to support and deliver an improved process and experience for the customer.

Corporate Solutions 23/24 Performance report

Corporate Solutions will "deliver forward looking services fit for a modern 21st Century organisation and put the citizen at the centre of service redesign".

Corporate Solutions encompasses Human Resources, Digital, Customer Engagement, Legal & Governance, Corporate Resources, Transformation PMO and Continuous Improvement.

Corporate Solutions supports the whole Council delivering services to internal and external stakeholders, playing a key role in the delivery of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and ensuring organisational compliance, developing the workforce, and advancing transformation.

Transformation and opportunities

Transformation Blueprint (2023-2028)

We are committed to building on the learning and new ways of working that were adopted during the pandemic and renewing our focus on delivering our key priorities at the most local level possible. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, the vision of the 5-year Transformation Blueprint focuses on reducing inequalities at the same time as looking after the health of our planet. Specifically, we have three main aims

- Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes.
- No child or household live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The pandemic has accelerated the financial challenges that we are facing. Reprioritisation and redesign are crucial to balancing the financial position, as well as preparing for further challenges, continued growth, and unknown changes that we will face.

The Blueprint sets out key areas of concern that need to be addressed over the next five years. We will continue to work to address the inequalities that our communities face, respond to the demands of being the fastest growing local authority in Scotland, and delivering our vision of being a great, green place to grow.

Transformation Blueprint Objectives

1. Support the Council to address the 5-year funding gap outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
2. Follow the Money to ensure that the services we commission, contracts we manage and digital solutions we use deliver value for money.
3. Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible ensuring that all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively supported by digital technologies that fit for a 21st century workforce.
4. Design a workplace for the future delivering services in a holistic and integrated way.
5. Drive forward multi-agency transformation to deliver systems-level change resulting in joined-up service delivery which improve outcomes.

The Council's transformation blueprint provides the framework for opportunities to change the way services are improved and delivered to be more efficient. Corporate Solutions has a particular focus on delivering digital first approaches, embedding automation to improve customer access to services and hybrid working.

Customer Engagement

Aligned to the Transformation Blueprint, priorities for 2023/24, key work streams below:

Short term:
- Continued rollout and implementation of Customer Service Platform
- Reviewing service delivery all across Contact Centre teams
- Increased use of eBooks
- Active promotion of library space, for Council and partner services, and enable out of hours access for communities

Medium term:
- Rollout of the Hub & Spoke model with libraries providing and facilitating increased local service provision
- Customer Engagement Strategy development including revised communications and engagement plan
- Launch of the new mobile library service

Long term:
- Increase income within Registrars through alternative ceremony offer
  Community and school library redesign

Communications and Marketing:

- Promoting the council's vision, strategy and plans such as a Great Green Place to Grow, Transformation Blueprint, Wellbeing Strategy, Climate Change Strategy and carbon charter to both an internal and external audience.
- Raising awareness of the ways that people can take part to influence how public services operate e.g. public consultations such as Midlothian Local Development Plan, town centre regeneration projects, and catchment area consultations.
- Supporting service redesign and the delivery of change, e.g. supporting the shift to the new customer service platform which will enable citizens to do much more online via our website.
- Promotion of behavioural change, for example by encouraging residents of Midlothian to recycle more or travel more actively or improve their health and wellbeing.

Key achievements this quarter:

Library services

Our library services continue to transform and thrive in responding to the needs of our communities. This year there has been a 22% increase in total library visits compared to the same period last year with a 34% increase in physical library visits. This increase in footfall demonstrates the impact of our Warm and Well Hubs and other support services and initiatives provided to our communities.

Q4 saw the highest total number of physical visits since 2019.

Q4 also saw the highest number of virtual library visits so far, indicating the continuing popularity of eResources on offer.

Key events delivered:

- Local History Month was held in May and across all libraries, there was a varied selection of activities, from displays, class visits and treasure hunts to lectures and talks on topics as diverse as the history of fashion to folk music. The Reminiscence & Memories Scotland groups had guest speakers come to many of their regular scheduled sessions, adding a new dimension to them to mark the month. 33 activities and events were held with nearly 600 people taking part.
- Providing free story, songs and rhyme sessions for babies and toddlers. This quarter we have launched two new Bookbug sessions. Penicuik Library has started a sensory friendly session on Saturday mornings providing softer lighting, gentle songs and tactile interaction for children with additional support needs. Dalkeith Library has established a Polish Bookbug session which started as monthly but is now fortnightly due to demand.
- This quarter, Danderhall Library hosted a functional fitness event held by Ageing Well where nearly 40 people went through the functional fitness test then enjoyed the free soup, tea and coffee provided by the Warm & Well Hub. A representative from the Red Cross was also there to provide information, advice and signposting. This is a great example of partnership working in our communities.
- Boardmaker - a symbol-based software used to create visual resources, personalised visual timetables and reminders, for people with communication, attention or memory challenges. This quarter, library staff received refresher training. Some feedback from one parent who used it for her daughter was *"I printed images onto a breakfast board with her favourites items to eat. My daughter who is able now to have her own voice by choosing the symbols letting me know what she wants for breakfast (the first time in 5 years)."* The software is available in 5 of our libraries, Dalkeith, Gorebridge, Loanhead, Newbattle and Penicuik.

In March this year, a total of 750 people in Midlothian completed the Scottish Public Library Annual Survey, with comments highlighting the value of our local library services and staff. 99% of respondents said the library is important to them.

Channel shift

Channel shift work continues with the rollout of short term lets, assisted bin collection requests, grit bin requests and Contact Us through our Customer Service Platform. This quarter saw the introduction of the elected members case management system and new/replacement bin/box forms.

Several other service requests are in test phase and due to go live in 24/25 including:
- bulky uplifts
- online application forms for school clothing grants and free school meals
- forestry inspections
- general enquires
- direct debit online sign up for Council Tax, rent and other payments
- access protection markings requests
- Vogrie parking passes

Q4 shows a general increase of channel shift by 14% from the previous quarter. The main reason for this is the annual sign up of the brown bin service which has generated over 15,500 online forms. This greatly exceeds any other online form for any other quarter (Q1 2,300 brown bins, Q2 1,300 for free school meals and Q3 1,304 for pupil registration).

Data shows a 5% reduction in call volumes compared to last year and a 37% increase in contact received digitally by email. Overall, customer contact volumes remain consistent over the year to date.

Call abandonment rate has remained the same this year compared to last year with a 7% abandonment rate. This abandonment rate calculates the total number of calls that come into the call queue and then leave the queue. There is no ability to analyse why calls are abandoned - callers may choose to hang up because they would rather not wait, or they have called at an inopportune time. Front-end messages are updated on contact centre lines to provide information to the customer waiting, for example, if a whole street of bins had been missed, this would be reflected in the front- end message. Lines also have messages directing people online to carry out transactional activity.

Stage 1 complaint responses across Corporate Solutions are off target. As part of the implementation of the new online complaints portal, there has been an increase in stage 1 complaints received through this self-service option. However, some of these are service requests and not complaints, and work is ongoing to better signpost customers to service requests options where that is more appropriate. This volume, coupled with the Festive shut down has contributed to a slower response time for stage 1 complaints.

Communications and promotion

The promotion of the garden waste collection service to drive sign ups to the garden waste subscription scheme for 2024. A series of social media updates were posted publicising dates, changes to prices and application information. Posts comprised of a suite of graphics and an animated video updated with new information for 2024. Facebook posts had a total reach of 127,900. The best performing post, from the day the service launched, had a reach of over 29,100, and an engagement rate of 12.31%, exceptionally high for the platform. Facebook continues to be the best means of reaching residents with this type of information. The platform continued to have lots of lively debate in the comments and aside from instances of criticism for charging for the service and the price increase, there were many positive comments posted. Customers legitimately seeking help were also able to have questions about payments answered by the call centre team, fostering better engagement and two-way communication.

One ongoing social media campaign to promote **Social Security Scotland's Drop-In Services** at libraries throughout Midlothian and one short social campaign to raise awareness of the updated offering of the Best Start Food Grant.

Pharmacy First social media campaign - supporting Midlothian Health and Social Care GP surgery teams with social media campaign encouraging patients with minor ailments to administer self-care at home, check symptoms online, and attend a local pharmacy for help before phoning their local surgery. The main (unstated) aim of this was to help relieve pressure on GPs during the busiest time in of the year.

Mental health service videos were filmed, edited and issued publicising mental health services available to Midlothian residents. One focused on the Mental Health Practice Nurse service available through GP surgeries; the other on Midlothian Access Point (MAP), which provides signposting assistance linking patients to local mental health services.

Customer Engagement – performance measures

Customer contact

Number of Contact Centre calls (quarterly)

44,663 39,201 36,784 35,833 42,358

| Q4 22/23 | Q1 23/24 | Q2 23/24 | Q3 23/24 | Q4 23/24 |

73% of calls this year answered **within 120 seconds**

Social Media

22.1k Midlothian Council Facebook followers

18k @midgov twitter followers

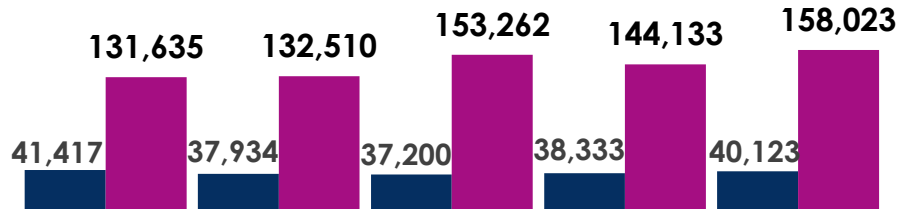**17.6%** Customer contact received **digitally (webform versus telephone)** this year.

53,600 **Email contact** handled this year (increase from 39,198 in 2022/23)

11,537 Contact Centre **Webforms** received this year (decrease from 12,391 in 2022/23)

Number of Library memberships

	Child memberships - new	Total
Q4 23/24	369	34,312
Q3 23/24	416	33,837
Q2 23/24	668	34,668
Q1 23/24	442	33,384
Q4 22/23	473	33,569

■ Child memberships - new ■ Total

Library services

Number of Library visits (quarterly)

	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
Physical	131,635	132,510	153,262	144,133	158,023
Virtual	41,417	37,934	37,200	38,333	40,123

■ Virtual ■ Phyiscal

4,091 **Children's library initiatives** taken place in 2023/24

2,652 Library customers supported with **digital queries** in 2023/24

6,135 **Library events** held this year = **81,006** attendees

Human Resources

To achieve the Council's strategic priorities, we recognise that people are our most important asset. Our workforce strategy highlights that we need to attract the best talent, grow our own talent ensuring there are clear progression pathways, ensure our workforce feel engaged, valued and motivated and importantly, empower our staff to enable them to reach their full potential.

Our workforce vision is to work as **One Council** using our knowledge, experiences and sense of shared endeavour to collaborate and think creatively and innovatively so that our people can deliver life-changing impacts for our communities. Our new ways of working mark a clear desire for cultural change and a shift towards a more agile and modern operating model.

Our workforce is key to the delivery of the Transformation Blueprint. In order to ensure a thriving workforce, key areas of focus for 2023/24 will be:

- Investment in Organisational Development through a focused programme of work
- Completion of workforce plans in all services, with a particular focus in high risk areas
- Rollout of the Wellbeing Strategy
- Delivery of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Key achievements this quarter:

Wellbeing
In conjunction with Midlothian Voluntary Action's project MFIN (Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network) and the cost of living agenda, HR and Communications staff were involved with promoting support available through partner agencies to combat the cost of living pressures currently being experienced by employees and friends and family living in Midlothian communities. This included awareness of supports for debt advice, energy costs, healthy eating and stress management.

The HR team continue to focus on long term sickness absence with 606 cases supported by HR across all directorates. The HR team are proactively working with managers and their teams to support them in their absence management, helping to tackle and reduce sickness absence, complimenting the range of health and wellbeing support provided by the Council to all employees. The HR team provides training for managers in absence management processes, and provides statistics on a regular basis, to enable managers to measure and manage the long and short term absence in their areas. This work is resulting in progression of absence cases, capability hearings and return to work this year as well as the more efficient management of employee relations cases to bring these to a conclusion.

HR commission services including an Employment Assistance Programme, Physiotherapy services, Occupational Health and work in partnership with local and national agencies to offer counselling, health and lifestyle advice, health plans and treatment guidance for the workforce. Employees can self-refer to the Employment Assistance Programme from MCL medics which provides life style support regarding relationship issues; work/life balance, stress, nutrition, sleep and can be accessed 24/7. 8 sessions of counselling can be offered free of charge, where the employee requires this level of support. Physiotherapy services of up to 4 free sessions can be accessed by the employee to receive treatment and advice for Musculoskeletal injuries and various health conditions to improve movement and mobility.

The HR team worked with procurement to renew the contracts for physiotherapy provision for staff and the non-financial benefits platform.

21st century workforce - workforce strategy, recruitment and retention

Consultation took place this quarter with Local Government Workers and Teaching Trade Union colleagues on the new Overpayments and Underpayments Policy. The final policy was approved by CMT for launch in May 2024.

Work is underway this quarter to refresh the Voluntary Severance/Early Retirement (VSER) Policy and ensure that offers set out in the policy are brought inline with statutory payment values.

Recruitment for a Human Resources/Organisational Development advisor was undertaken this quarter and a new officer due to start in spring. This role will be vital in taking forward key pieces of work around leadership and management and upskilling managers across the organisation.

Human Resources – performance measures

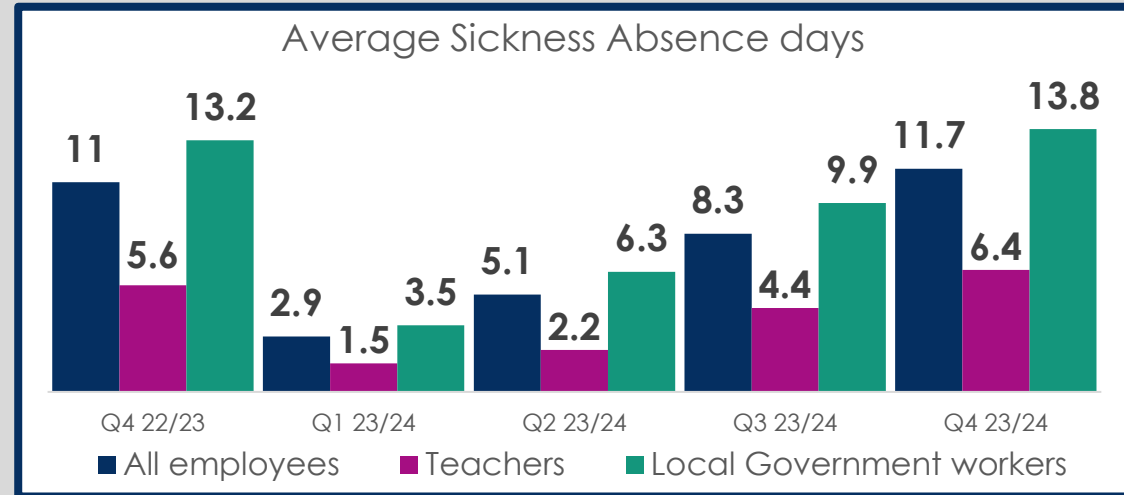## Workforce demographics
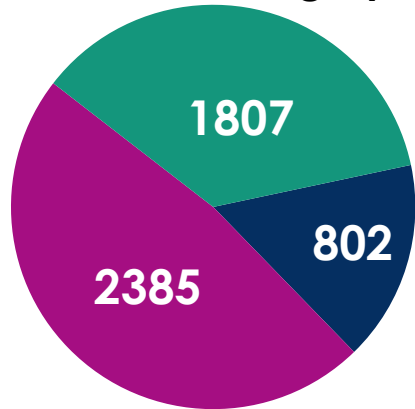
No. of staff by age group

- 1807
- 802
- 2385

Legend: ■ 16-30 ■ 31-50 ■ over 50

65.5% of employees are Midlothian Residents

1,194 (24%) Employees with over 15 years of service

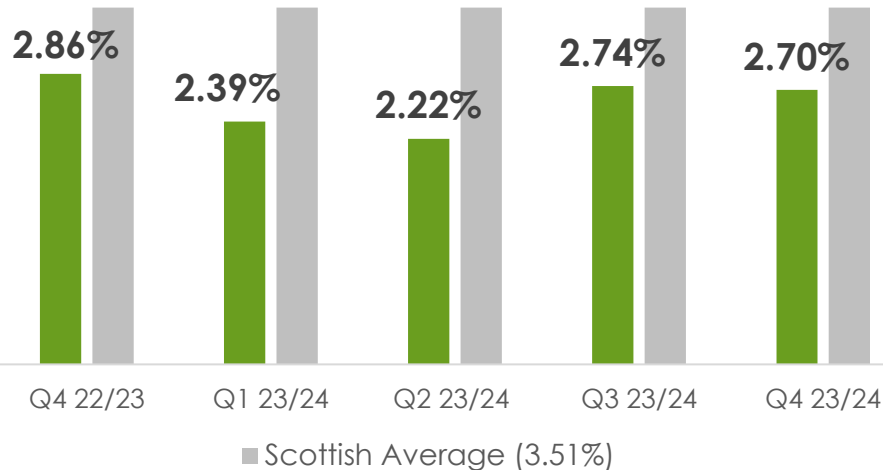**587** Leavers by Q4 (cumulative figure)

122 **female employees in top 5%** this year (120 in 2022/23)

Gender pay gap between average hourly rate of pay for male and female (all employees)

- Q4 22/23: 2.86%
- Q1 23/24: 2.39%
- Q2 23/24: 2.22%
- Q3 23/24: 2.74%
- Q4 23/24: 2.70%

■ Scottish Average (3.51%)

Employee Health and Wellbeing

Average Sickness Absence days

	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
All employees	11	2.9	5.1	8.3	11.7
Teachers	5.6	1.5	2.2	4.4	6.4
Local Government workers	13.2	3.5	6.3	9.9	13.8

Legend: ■ All employees ■ Teachers ■ Local Government workers

606 **Long term absence** cases ongoing this year (168 in Q4)

616 **Occupational Health referrals** via OHIO this year (221 in Q4)

92 **HR cases** in progress this year (20 in Q4)

1,042 **Physiotherapy referrals** made this year (277 in Q4)

- **75** wellbeing events held this year with 595 attendees
- **3,325** employees accessing **mandatory eLearning courses**
- **5,672** employees accessing **non-mandatory eLearning courses**

% of staff turnover (quarterly)

- Q4 23/24: 2.26%
- Q3 23/24: 1.8%
- Q2 23/24: 2.9%
- Q1 23/24: 2.4%
- Q4 22/23: 1.96%

Digital

Digital solutions underpin the Transformation Blueprint. Key work streams include:

- Review and refresh of the Council's Digital Strategy, including reprioritisation of projects to enable change and transformation
- Development of a Data Strategy and pilot projects such as the secure sharing and analysis of collective, operational level NHS & Council data
- Continued rollout of compliance and cyber security protective measures, including attainment of PSN and Cyber Essentials certification, and actioning any related recommendations
- Implementation of Microsoft O365 capabilities and applications to enable organisational efficiencies, collaboration and data driven decision making
- Delivering service improvements in frontline teams through projects such as digital transformation of Neighbourhood Services
- Continue the roll-out of the Customer Services Platform to promote channel shift
- Equipped for Learning: upgrade classroom Audio Visual estate with interactive smart screens and support the pilot of Virtual Class delivery
- Upgrading Call Centre digital infrastructure elements
- Refreshing / improving quality and coverage of corporate WiFi network
- Ensure all digital aspects of Council operations are well supported and operational

Key achievements this quarter:

Successes achieved this quarter were:

- Improving the security of the Google Workplace by implementing recommendations after a recent audit.
- Completion of the Looker Studio Project with a view to putting sensitive information into Google, allowing Staff to better track how their students are doing and allowing them to adapt or intervene appropriately.

- Agreement to move the School websites from CampusPress to Google Sites. This will see improvements to the websites and a common theme applied. There will be cost savings as there is no charge for Google.
- New Aruba test WiFi network installed in Education and staff are continuing with the audits of the Education buildings for digital infrastructure requirements and upgrades.
- Replacement of the damaged fibre cable which provides network connectivity to the music block at Penicuik High School.

Technical Design Authority / Digital First Board: a new process was developed this year to effectively govern and prioritise new digital projects, helping to ensure resources are being assigned to highest impact projects, and that digital project best practices are leveraged from the start. This process is being piloted via a refreshed Digital Delivery Board and focusing on a digital project for Neighbourhood Services.

Digital Maturity Assessment for HSCP: Assessment was completed in collaboration with HSCP and CYPP as part of Scotland-wide HSCP digital maturity exercise. Assessment focus re-enforced our already identified priority focus areas/challenges and provided opportunity to highlight where Midlothian HSCP is leading the way across Scotland (e.g. COPD pathway)

Digital – performance measures

Key Digital projects

100% of Office 365 (phase 1) project complete

45% of total CSP (IT foundation and service modules) complete

100% of AI pilot and information governance digital project complete

35% of Neighbourhood Services digital project complete

Equipped for Learning **500** panels (interactive smart boards) were upgraded across schools this year.

Progress of total number of Customer Service Platform modules (cumulative)

	Planned	In progress	Complete
Value	51	8	8
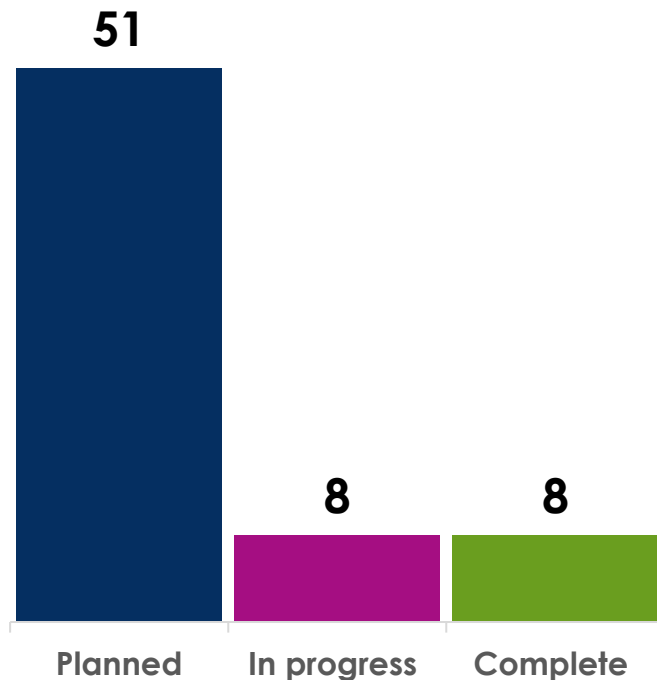
Service and Cyber security performance

1,142,941 Midlothian Council **Website visits** this year (430,413 website visits in Q4)

% of IT helpdesk incidents complete within 48 hours (quarterly)

Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
57%	49%	53%	58%
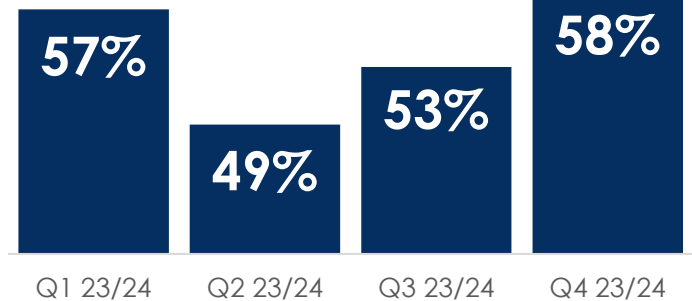
20% of **cyber security training** complete

100% of **Cyber Essentials and PSN implemented**

Corporate Resources

Key priorities for the service in 2023/24

- Redesign of business processes to achieve efficiencies across all of Corporate Resources
- Making more use of current applications to enable self-service e.g. viewing Council Tax and rent accounts online
- Continued upgrade of applications

Key achievements this quarter:

The Business Applications Team continue to work with Scottish Government's e-commerce team on next steps for the e-invoicing programme and onboarding of suppliers to this service. 3 new suppliers were onboarded last quarter.

The percentage of current housing rent arrears sits at 12.77% for 23/24, an increase from last year of 10.78%. In year Council Tax collected year to date is 93.8% showing a slight decrease from collection rates this time last year by 0.7%.

Corporate Resources – performance measures

Revenues and Benefits

Average processing times (days)

Change of circumstances

- Q4 22/23: 5
- Q1 23/24: 12
- Q2 23/24: 17
- Q3 23/24: 17
- Q4 23/24: 29

New claims

- Q4 22/23: 41
- Q1 23/24: 40
- Q2 23/24: 46
- Q3 23/24: 50
- Q4 23/24: 54
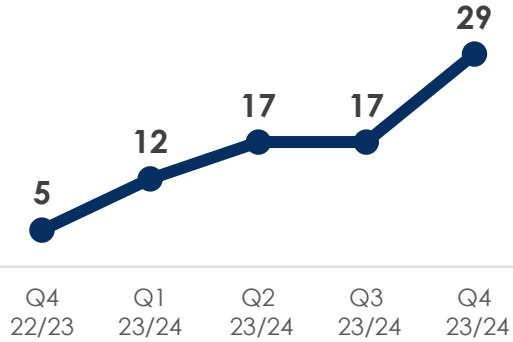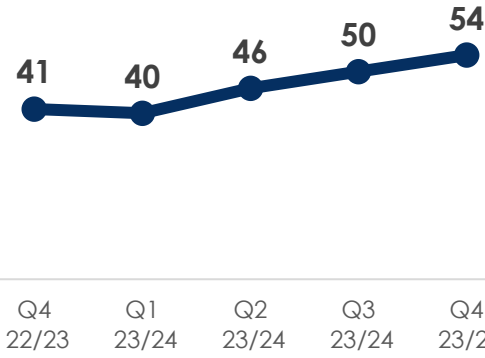
93.8% of in year **Council Tax collected** year to date.

Number of online transactions (quarterly)

Quarter	Rent	Council Tax
Q4 23/24	2767	2531
Q3 23/24	2579	3999
Q2 23/24	2551	3999
Q1 23/24	2450	7584
Q4 22/23	2542	8230

■ Rent ■ Council Tax
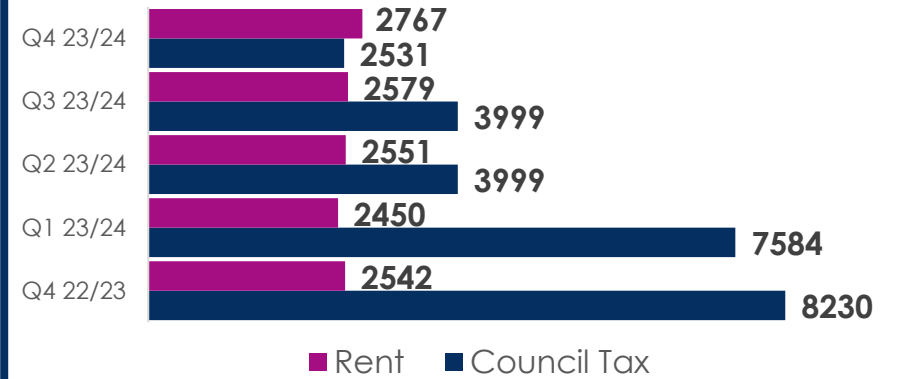
Scottish Welfare Fund

£527,868 granted from Scottish Welfare fund for **crisis grants** **£449,088** granted for **community care grants** up to Q4.

Number of Crisis Grants (quarterly)

	received	awarded	declined	ineligible
Q1 23/24	1783	817	24	942
Q2 23/24	1730	818	37	875
Q3 23/24	1464	755	27	682
Q4 23/24	1789	962	13	814
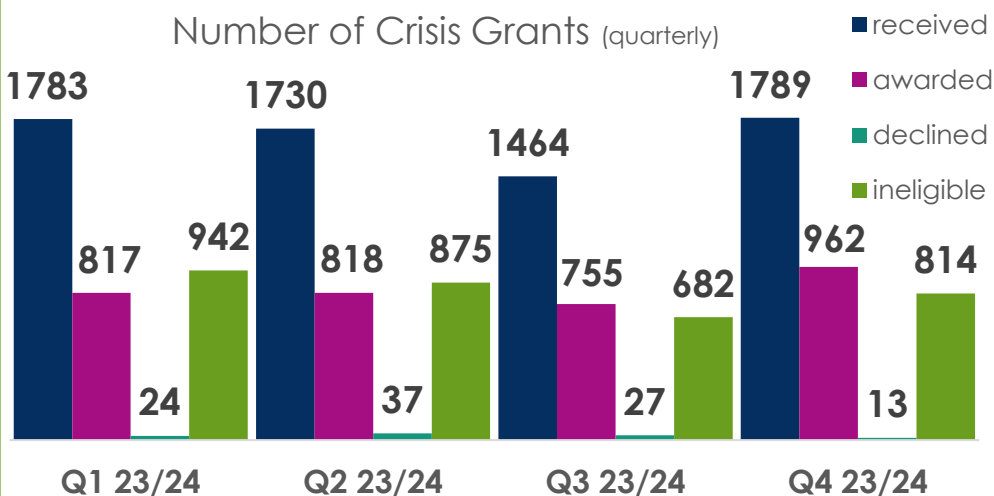
100% of Scottish Welfare Fund budget spent this year.

Number of Community Care Grants (quarterly)

	received	awarded	declined	ineligible
Q1 23/24	364	138	0	226
Q2 23/24	385	141	6	238
Q3 23/24	280	91	0	189
Q4 23/34	320	94	3	223
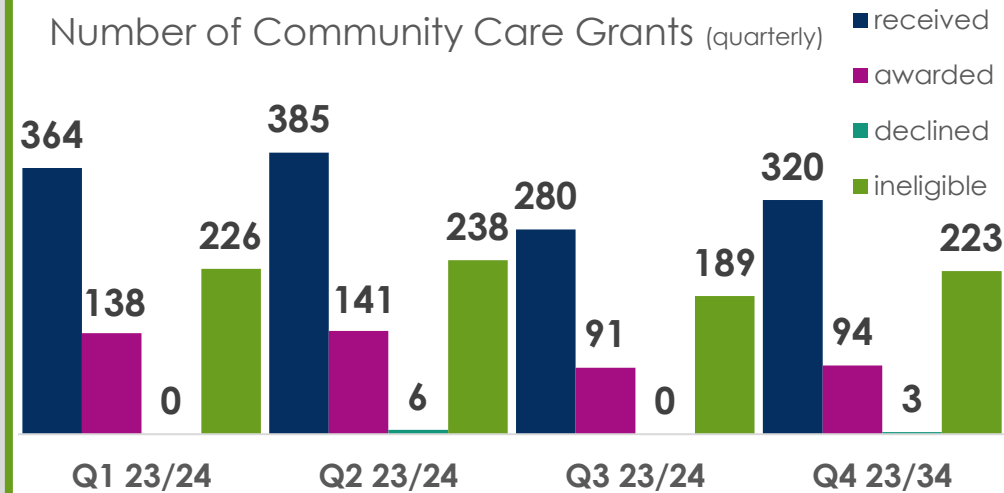
Grant applications deemed as ineligible are in general those that have exceeded the maximum amount of 3 applications in a year or customers who do not meet the set criteria for the award.

Legal and Governance

Key priorities for the service in 2023/24

- Delivery of the 2024 UK Government elections including voter Identity implementation
- Review of the Council's governance framework with revised Standing Orders and Associated Scheme(s)
- Implementation of the new Subject Access Request portal
- Development of the new Procurement Strategy, with a focus on social value, the introduction of a Council wide approach to Community Benefits, and an increased focus on local procurement
- Aligned to the Transformation Blueprint, undertake a review of Contract and Grant Management

Key achievements this year:

The legal court team continue to protect the Council's interests and deliver suitable outcomes for children and vulnerable adults. Additional special needs tribunal work was brought back in house this year and input was provided to the Mental Health Law Review consultation.

Procurement

An Interim Procurement Manager has led the team over the last few quarters with significant work undertaken including:

- An overhaul of the Contract Database
- Research and investigation into the use of a Concession contract, identifying and benchmarking of a suitable tender and preparation of all necessary tender documentation including suitable Terms and Conditions with support from legal services.
- The Council's standard Terms and Conditions for all other contracts have been updated with support from legal services.
- The procurement strategy peer review process has been streamlined to ensure audit trail and accountability.
- The Non-Competitive forms and templates have been reviewed and updated to ensure compliance with Regulations and Standing Orders.

A short life working group has been established to review contracts within Health and Social Care including the appointment of a dedicated Procurement Officer. A programme of work is being delivered to bring all off-contract spend onto relevant frameworks. A key piece of work that has commenced with Midlothian Health & Social Care Partnership and Procurement is involvement in the development of the Scotland Excel (SXL) Care and Support Contract which SXL are retendering with a go live date of April 2024. This approach provides a route to compliant commissioning for almost £16.5m of social care expenditure. It is anticipated that this would reduce the resource that would need to be invested in commissioning and avoid costs associated with a recommissioning / tendering process and could potentially mitigate some of the inflationary budget risks associated with a recommissioning exercise.

Programmes of work like this are part of the Transformation Blueprint 'Follow the Money' theme, looking at commissioning, contracting and identifying savings and efficiencies that can be made across the organisation, particularly in high risk/high spend areas.

High value and complex contracts were awarded this year and include the supply of fire doors, purchase of A2D (Analogue to Digital) Telecare Equipment, Insurance tender renewal, website hosting and support, purchase of refuse collection vehicles as part of the fleet replacement programme and the mobile library vehicle. In addition, Primrose Lodge tender was issued and published with a contract value of £3.9m. Over 50 new contract extension letters issued to Adult Care providers and over 70 letters issued regarding uplifting the Living Wage.

Local Procurement - The Council has now set up its own framework contract for interim Multi Trade Works - all suppliers on the framework are Midlothian based.

Legal and Governance – performance measures

Access to information

Number of Freedom of Information requests recieved (quarterly)

Quarter	Value
Q4 22/23	405
Q1 23/24	345
Q2 23/24	337
Q3 23/24	319
Q4 23/24	397

Number of Subject Access Requests recieved (quarterly)

Quarter	Value
Q4 22/23	54
Q1 23/24	37
Q2 23/24	49
Q3 23/24	46
Q4 23/24	49

% of procurement spent on local enterprizes (LGBF)

Year	Value
19/20	14.68%
20/21	16.81%
21/22	13.78%
22/23	13.79%
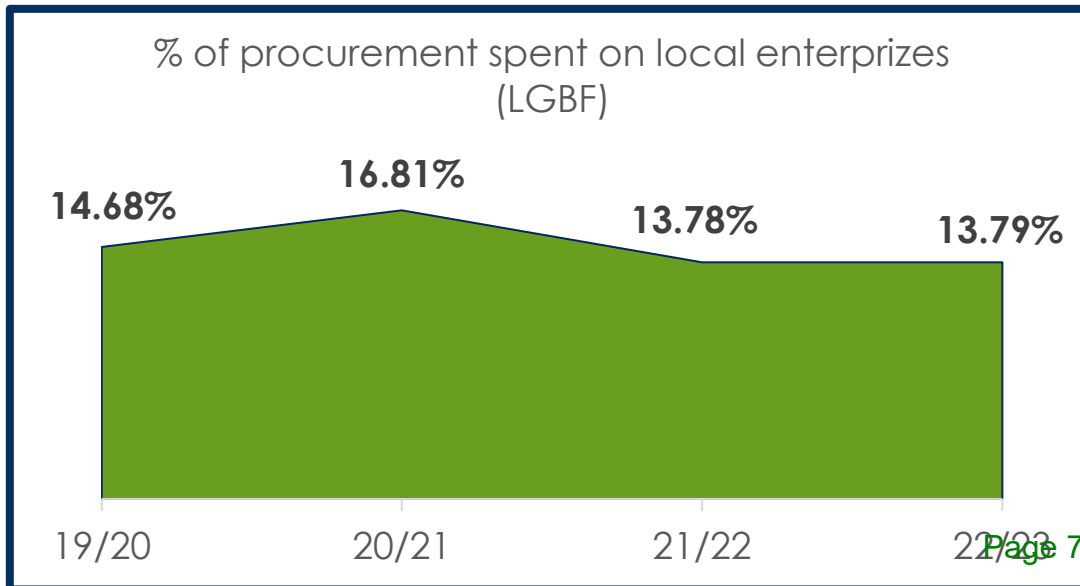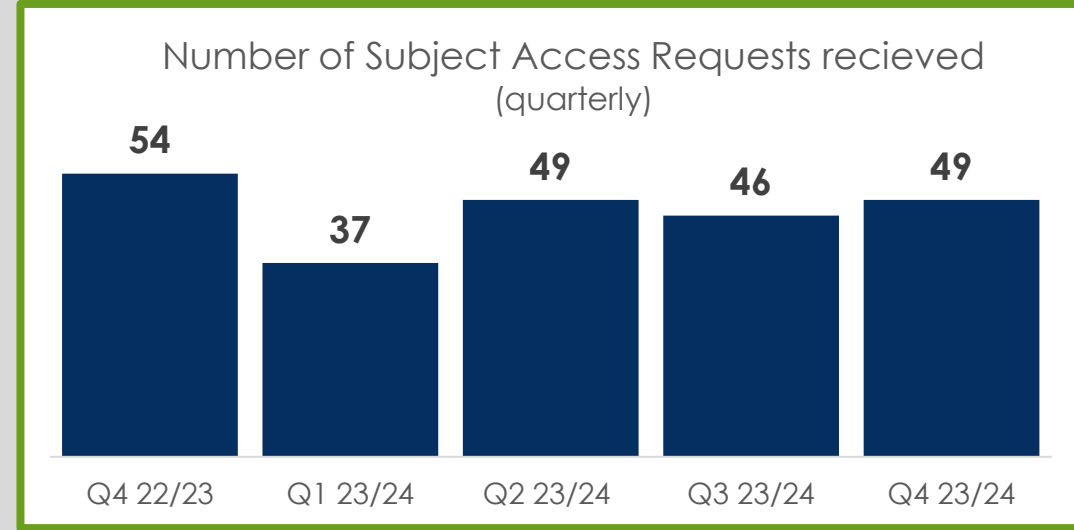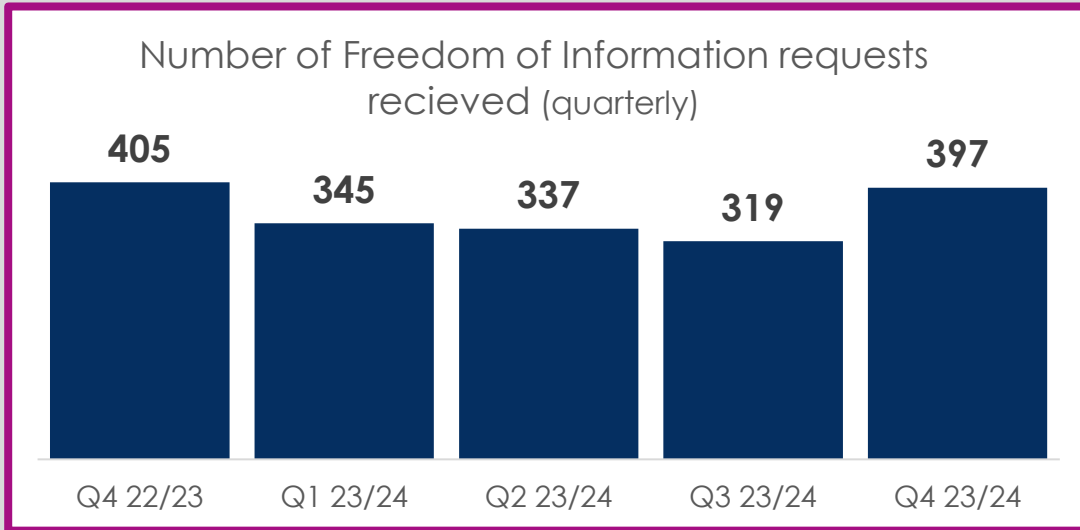
34 regulated procurement exercises undertaken this year (6 in Q4)

44 legal commercial transactions undertaken this year (12 in Q4)

Continuous Improvement

The Continuous Improvement Team transferred from the Chief Executive's Office to Corporate Solutions part way through 2023/24. The team supports the required step-change to ensure that as an organisation we learn from feedback and complaints received and improve service delivery as a result of driving forward a culture of continuous improvement.

Key priorities for the service in 2023/24:

Working with services to focus on performance measures and supporting approaches which deliver improved outcomes, including:

- The introduction of a revised Planning and Performance Management Framework (PPMF) and a newly developed Best Value Framework (BVF).
- Revising the Midlothian Excellence Framework (MEF), our corporate self-evaluation tool, to reflect changes to the Public Service Improvement Framework (PSIF).
- External data submission, monitoring and reporting of Local Government Benchmarking (LGBF), including maintenance of the LGBF dashboard on Pentana for elected members.
- Developing and introducing a dashboard and reporting structure within Pentana to reflect the changes introduced by the Community Planning Board for the Single Midlothian Plan 2023-27.
- Key contact for corporate level external scrutiny activities such as the Best Value Thematic exercises undertaken by our external auditor.
- Facilitating a review and update of all policies and procedures in place to deliver the Council's strategic outcomes and ensure alignment with overarching strategies.

Key achievements this year:

A key success this year has been the introduction of the 'Contact Us' customer feedback and complaints module, with a central resource to support and deliver an improved process and experience for the customer. While development and support is ongoing, improvements introduced include:

- Ensuring that all complaint cases logged are complaints – 2022/23 6478 cases logged, 2023/24 1490 actual complaint cases logged.
- Customers can now raise complaints directly with services.
- Incorrectly logged complaints can be withdrawn or redirected easily within the system.
- Consistency and timeliness of responses are supported by auto-generated prompts and auto-email templates.
- All stage 2 investigations are subject to review prior to issuing a response.
- Adherence to statutory processes and statutory reporting is built into the system.
- Regular and real time updates and reporting introduced which better supports improvement activity with data being more readily available.

Managing and supporting the Council's commitment to equality and diversity, responding effectively to equality, diversity and human rights related matters and ensuring that the Council complies with legislative requirements under the Equality Act 2010, while keeping abreast of good practice and any government initiatives/legislation with a link to equality and diversity such as UNCRC.

Key actions include:
- Timely publication of the Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Report 2021-2023
- Ongoing monitoring of equality related action plans (Midlothian Equality Plan 2021-2025, Gaelic Language Plan 2021-2026, British Sign Language Plan 2018-2024)
- The establishment of a working group to ensure that the delivery of the Transformation Blueprint and associated transformation workstreams are fully informed by an equalities and inclusion lens.
- Development of the new British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030

Challenges and risks

Financial position

Council approved the 2024/25 budget at its meeting on 27 February 2024. Whilst the 2024/25 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years are embedded in the Council's Transformation Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Officers continue to work closely with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges.

Financial Services continues to work to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports regularly presented to Council. The team continues to provide in-depth financial input to revenue and capital projects embedded into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and successful delivery of the Treasury Management Strategy with Midlothian's Loans Fund Interest rate now the lowest in Scotland.

Growing Council

The draft 2022 Census results have now been published. They show Midlothian with an increase of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%.

In terms of households, Midlothian saw the highest percentage increase at 17.2% since the 2011 census. Population density in Midlothian is 273.1 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 69.8. Midlothian has 10 data zones which fall into the most deprived areas.

Economic pressures

Inflation, as well as rising energy costs, are affecting the construction industry in Scotland. The UK is experiencing unprecedented adverse market conditions, leading to significant rises in tender prices for a wide range of materials. There is evidence that inflation of between 10% and 15% beyond BCIS predictions is affecting projects. The pandemic has also accelerated financial challenges, and the growth from being the fastest growing local authority in Scotland places significant pressure on Midlothian to be able to deliver high quality services to its citizens.

Capital Investment Strategy

Midlothian's approved Capital Investment Strategy sets out the infrastructure required to meet these demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Encompassing five main themes the City Region Deal will bring significant investment across the regions with total investment of circa £1.3 billion across:

- Data Driven Innovation: £751 million

- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills: £25 million
- Transport: £156 million
- Culture: £45 million
- Housing: £313 million

The Capital Investment Strategy sits centrally within the Council's future planning activities and in doing so has to reflect the demands of Council services to ensure positive outcomes are achieved in the right place, at the right time, for the maximum benefit to Midlothian. The extensive capital programme aims to deliver new schools, investment in council housing, improved community infrastructure, investment in the local transport network and innovative developments such as the new low carbon heat network in Shawfair.

In response to all these pressures, a range of reprioritisation activity is taking place, with a revised Capital Investment Strategy being considered by the cross-party Business Transformation Steering Group, and options to review what and how services are delivered as part of the savings measures to reduce the funding gap recommended to Council.

Cost of Living Crisis
Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households continues to be noted across the UK with 49% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in December 2023 (Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 11.1% in October 2022 has been the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. Recent data shows the annual inflation rate was 4.0% in December 2023, up slightly from 3.9% in November. The price rises continue to impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation estimates that absolute poverty is set to rise in the short- run, from 17.2% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2023/24 (or an additional 800,000 people in poverty).

As our citizens feel the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, they will seek additional support from public services; in particular local authorities. To respond to this emerging crisis, the Council established a Cost of Living Task Force in 2022, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities.

National Care Service
The estimated funding gap for the next three financial years does not include the associated costs of the Scottish Government's National Care Services (Scotland) Bill. If enacted, the bill would have fundamental implications for the community and for Local Government itself. The wide reaching changes in the bill aim to deliver a National Care Service by the end of the parliamentary term, which will impact on all aspects of the work of the Corporate Solutions team, including financial implications, in both revenue and capital, our asset base, our workforce, governance and legal arrangements and our digital infrastructure

and platforms. It will require an immediate focus for the foreseeable future, and this will inevitably have implications for other priority work at a time of continued resource constraint.
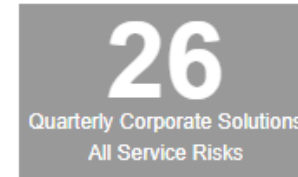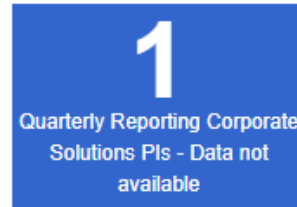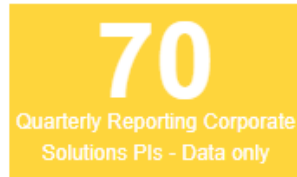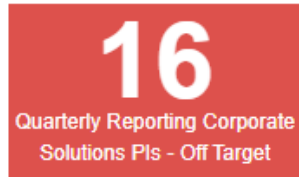
Risk

The Council's Strategic Risk Profile is presented retrospectively to Audit Committee quarterly. The most critical risks to the Council are Financial Sustainability, Climate Change and the Change Programme. Corporate Solutions is key to the delivery of mitigating actions to these risks; through strategic planning and driving forward transformation.

Pentana Performance Dashboard

A full review of quarterly performance data is available via Pentana (Browser login link - https://midlothian.pentanarpm.uk/login)here

Quarter 4 - Corporate Solutions▾

10 Quarterly Reporting Corporate Solutions PIs - On Target	**16** Quarterly Reporting Corporate Solutions PIs - Off Target	**70** Quarterly Reporting Corporate Solutions PIs - Data only	**1** Quarterly Reporting Corporate Solutions PIs - Data not available	**26** Quarterly Corporate Solutions All Service Risks	**0** Quarterly Corporate Solutions High Service Risks

Quarterly Reporting Corporate Solutions PIs - Off Target

...	Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Last Update	History
🔴	CORP.DIGITAL.01 Number of Customer Services platform implementations complet...		8	10	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORP.DIGITAL.06 % of AI pilot and information governance digital project complete ...		90%	100%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORP.DIGITAL.07 % of Customer services platform complete (includes IT work to i...		45%	100%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORP.DIGITAL.09 % of Neighbourhood services digital project complete (cumulative)		35%	100%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORP.DIGITAL.10 % of Data maturity digital project complete (cumulative)		10%	100%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORP.DIGITAL.11 % of IT helpdesk incidents complete within 48 hours (quarterly)		58%	60%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORP.DIGITAL.12 % completion rate of cyber security training (cumulative)		20%	80%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORP.LEG.02 % of Freedom of Information requests complete within Statutory time...		85%	100%	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORP.LEG.04 % of Subject Access Requests complete within Statutory timescale (3...		98%	100%	Q4 2023/24	
⏱🔴	CR.CC.4 % of contact centre calls abandoned (quarterly)		7%	5%	2023/24	
⏱🔴	CSE.LPI.03 Average processing time for new claims (internally calculated) (quarterly)		54 days	25 days	Q4 2023/24	
⏱🔴	CSE.LPI.04 Average processing time for change of circumstances (internally calculat...		29 days	8 days	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	CORPS.MPI.05 % of Service PIs that are on target/ have reached their target.		81.82%	90%	Q4 2023/24	
🕐🔴	RHM.r.01.1 % of in-year Council Tax collected ytd (cumulative)		93.8%	95.2%	2023/24	
⏱🔴	RHM.r.02.1 % of current Housing Rent arrears (total)		12.77%	7.5%	2023/24	
🔴	CORPS.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working ...		93.75%	95%	Q4 2023/24	

← 1 of 1 →

Improving Outcomes for Learners through an Empowered System

Education Services encompasses Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), Primary Schooling, Secondary Schooling, Special Schooling, Additional Support Needs, Digital Learning, Educational Psychology and Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE).

Vision and context

All children, young people, adults and communities in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This will be achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity, inclusion and lifelong learning.

The Education Service Plan is informed by and links to the outcomes determined by the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Board.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, as amended 2016, placed new duties on education authorities, and the Education Service Plan includes identified areas for improvement specific to Education to fulfil these duties. As a result, the Education Service Improvement Plan not only reflects the key priorities in the Midlothian Single Plan but also aligns closely with the key priorities in Education – Achieving Excellence & Equity: National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2023:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

1

Priority 1: Raising attainment to ensure that all children and young people in Midlothian achieve outcomes which lead to positive destinations

Aligned to the Service Plan, priorities for 2023/24, key work streams:

- *Learning, Teaching & Assessment Framework*
- *Monitoring impact of Raising Attainment Strategy*
- *Literacy & numeracy progressions*
- *Moderation & progression*
- *ASG development of BGE curricular frameworks*

Key achievements this quarter:

- Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework in place and ready for August Launch. Schools are trialling these in final term of 2023/24, with feedback due to gathered to improve for application in 24/15 to support improvements in consistency across our schools.
- From the QI visits this quarter, 67% of schools are judged to be good or above in QI 2.3, learning, teaching and assessment. This has improved from 60% in Q3, which shows improvement in our schools self-assessment processes.
- All school staff trained and all primary schools using literacy and numeracy progressions, with impacts noted during QI visit 2.
- New Quality Assurance and Support Officer's (QAMSOs) trained and LA moderation sessions held in writing, with the impact being teacher judgements more robust.
- Working groups developed and frameworks in other curricular areas which will be used fully next session. This will improve consistency in delivery of the curriculum across all our schools, with work ongoing into third and 4th level.
- All secondary schools planning for Midlothian Curriculum Offer (MACO) and rest of curriculum development to be aligned with raising attainment strategy.
- Working group that have developed framework to align with LTA Framework and this will be implemented next session to improve consistency and quality assurance processes.
- Equity and Excellence Board in place and using KPI's to monitor impact, which will focus upon the progress towards our raising attainment measures for both excellence and equity. Education Support Officer (ESO) for Care Experienced Children and Young People (CECYP) is also present at the board compiling progress report impact on attainment and achievement for care experienced young people.
- School leaders using data to inform next steps in learning, teaching, assessment, targeted support and attendance. The final stages are being put on the DPIA which will allow pupil details to be added to enable drilling down of data and support individual tracking and support where needed.
- QI visit 2, school leaders using intersectional data to inform planning and addressing barriers to learning. Evidence being gathered on impact and identification of equality issues.
- Data uplift analysis and QA visit 2 analysis informs understanding of progress to SAs allowing interventions pre final data uplift. Secondary Data Performance group set up and progress started to develop aligned tracking and monitoring from 3-18 to enable consistency and support of improvement in attainment.
- Schools evaluating PEF planning, and impacts shared in SQ report to be used to plan for next session. PEF workbook being amended after feedback of use this session.
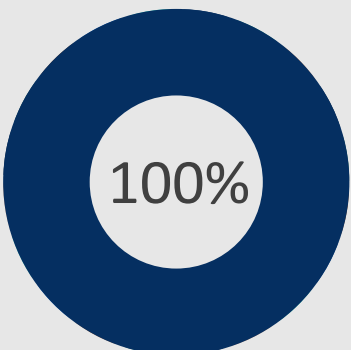
2

Priority 1.1 - Learning, teaching and assessment
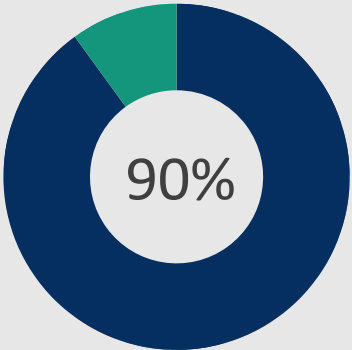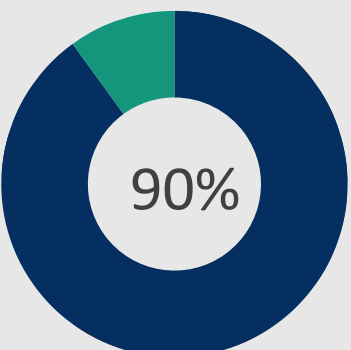
90% — Learning, Teaching & Assessment Framework
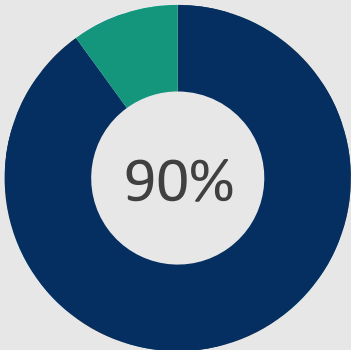
90% — Monitoring impact of Raising Attainment

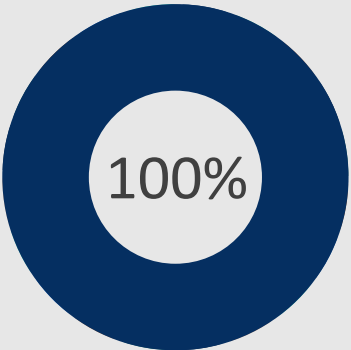**100%** — Majority of schools judged as good or above for QI 2.3
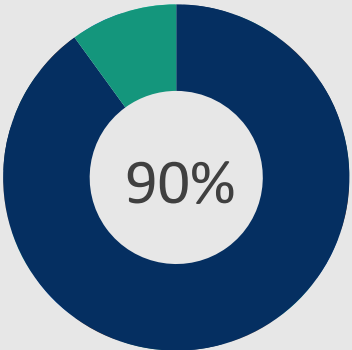
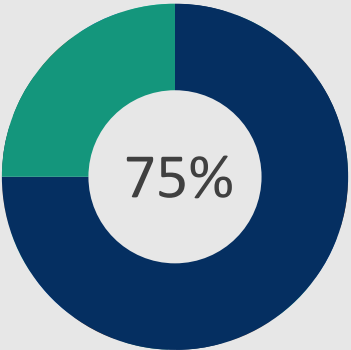**90%** — All schools can evidence improvement for QI 2.3

Priority 1.2 - Curriculum

100% — Literacy and Numeracy Progressions

100% — Moderation and Progression

90% — Development of BGE curricular frameworks

75% — Curriculum Framework
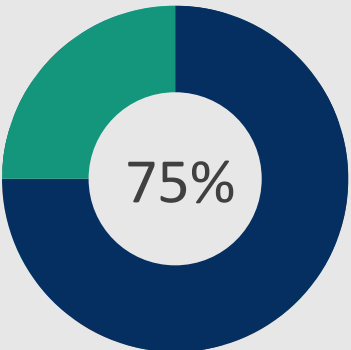
75% — Midlothian Skills Framework

3

Priority 1.3 - Equity
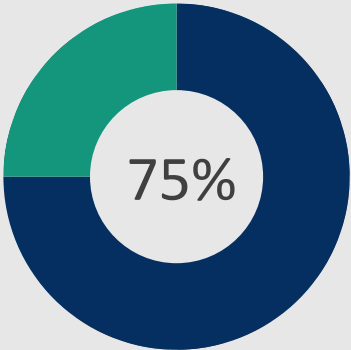
75% — Excellence and Equity
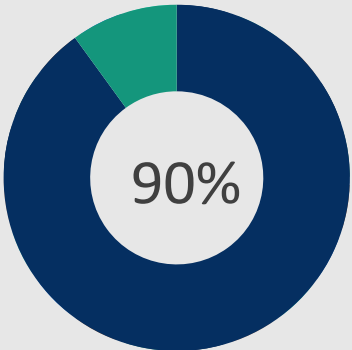
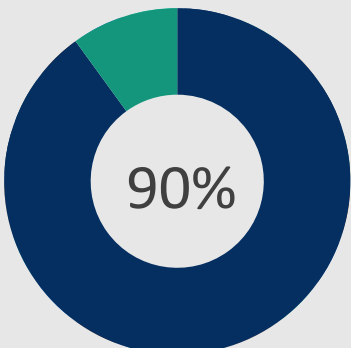90% — Effective use of data dashboards
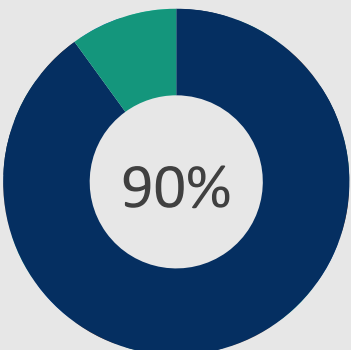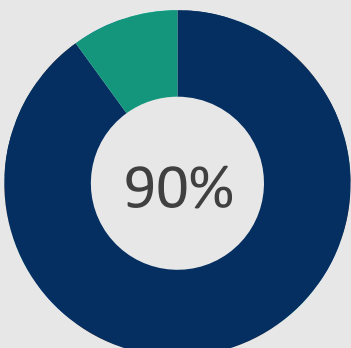
90% — Intersectional data
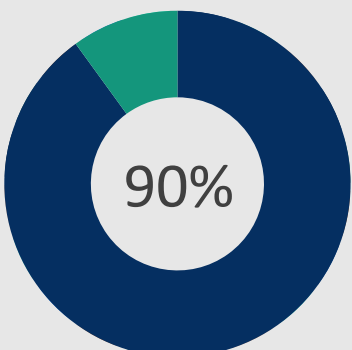
90% — Tracking and Monitoring
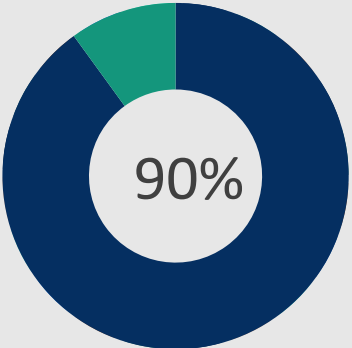
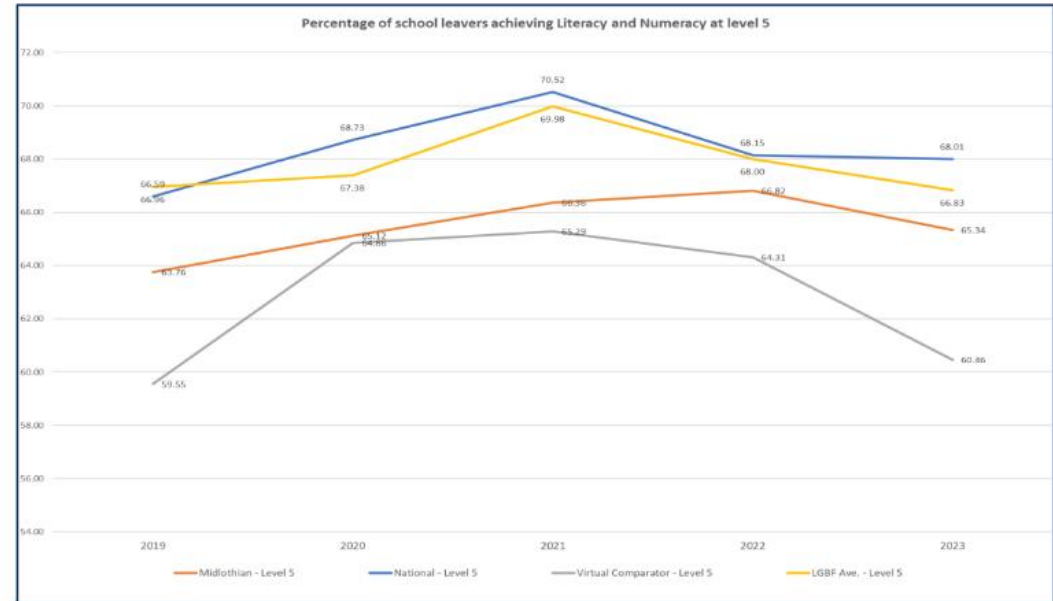90% — Pupil Equity Funding plans (PEF)
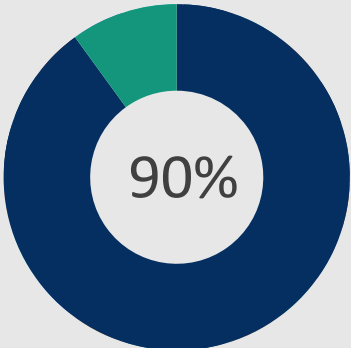
90% — Midlothian Poverty Action

90% — Procedures and Policy

90% — Partnerships and pathways

5

Insight Leavers Update 2022/23

In summary, the attainment outcomes for leavers in 2022/23 are positive in comparison to last year and pre-pandemic levels. Almost all leavers are in a positive destination (95.3%), and there is strong performance in attainment in comparison to our virtual comparators. There was also positive achievements in SCQF levels 3 and 4 versus the national and Local Government Benchmark Framework (LGBF) comparator authorities. There are however challenges where improvement will be focused, which includes the core middle 60% attainment cohort and learners at SCQF level 6.

In order to address these improvements, the schools will continue to support learners and utilise the value from the insight dataset alongside their improvement plans in specific areas. It is also worth considering the significant impact of the pandemic that this has had on our young people. Assessments and examinations from this year (2022/23) was the first time in full since the pandemic:

6

Education Improvement Priority 2: All children & young people feel valued & included, and have the same opportunities to succeed

Aligned to the Service Plan, priorities for 2023/24, key work streams:
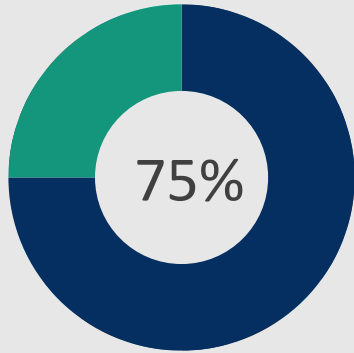
- *Relationships*

- *Wellbeing and Care*

- *Inclusion and Targeted Support*

## Key achievements this quarter:

- Relational practice becoming embedded in the language and practice in schools led by Nurture Leads and EPs. Plan to develop relational policy through engagement with children and young people is well underway.
- EPs and Nurture Leads are developing professional learning offer for relational approaches and Keeping Trauma in Mind to launch in August 2024.
- Mapping of system around staff wellbeing is underway through a series of appreciative enquiry engagement sessions with school staff and analysis of support structures in schools. Proposals to be drafted upon completion of analysis in May
- Professional learning to strengthen understanding of anxiety, mental health and neurodiversity.
- The Glasgow Wellbeing Profile has not yet been rolled out across schools due to a delay in resolving issues relating to data security. Consideration is being given to the use of SHINE as an effective universal approach. Guidance for schools on use to targeted data is in process.
- A professional learning framework for wellbeing and mental health has been drafted for consultation with schools and partners with the aim of further building capacity within settings.
- A mapping of how resource is allocated across the system has been undertaken to inform the development of the Single Point of Access (SPA).
- Analysis of need has identified key priorities for allocation of Community Mental Health funds with centralised streamlined access pathways.
- All Support for Learning Staff have been trained in Inclusive Classrooms, had equipped for learning digital update and new Midlothian Learning Plans. Support for Learning role training took place in Q3.
- Dyslexia Working group has been set up and includes practitioners, parents and young people to review current dyslexia toolkits.

7

Education Improvement Priority 2 – Progress towards the outcome

Priority 2.1 - Relationships

75% — Relationship policy and practice
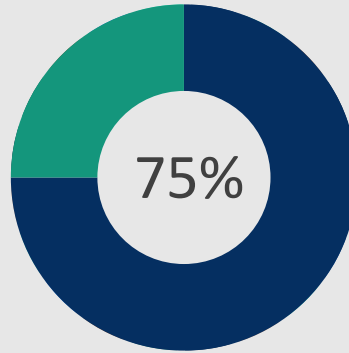
75% — Professional learning needs of school staff
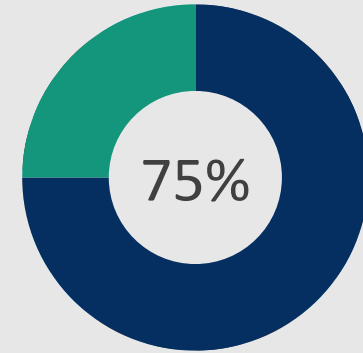
75% — Professional support and supervision

Priority 2.2 - Wellbeing and Care
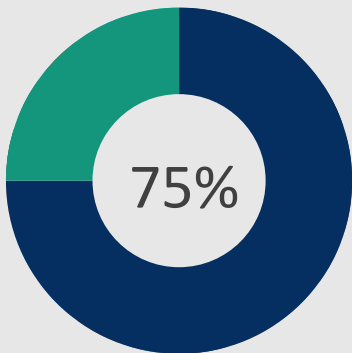
75% — Curriculum pathways
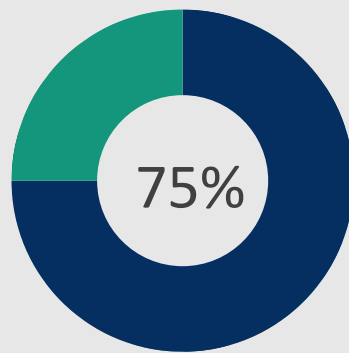
75% — Person centred assessment

50% — Effective use of data

50% — Pathways of support

Priority 2.3 - Inclusion and Targeted Support
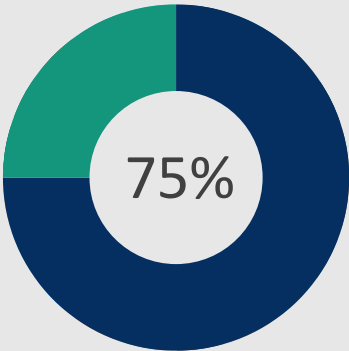
75%	75%	100%	100%
Additional Support Needs Review	Additional Support Needs policies	Support for learning network	Additional Support Needs network
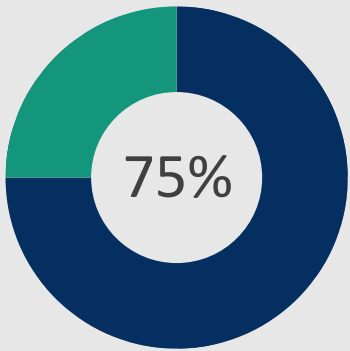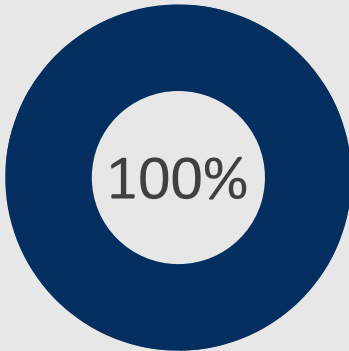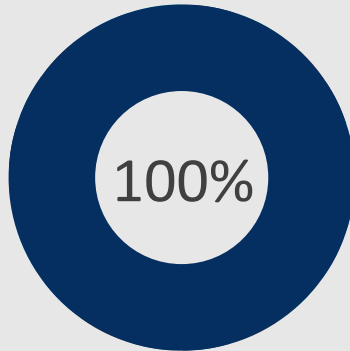
100%	75%	75%
CEYP Tracking and Monitoring	Dyslexia	Transitions 14+ and 16+
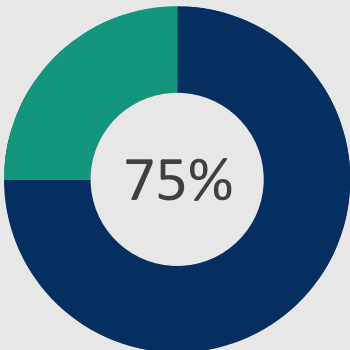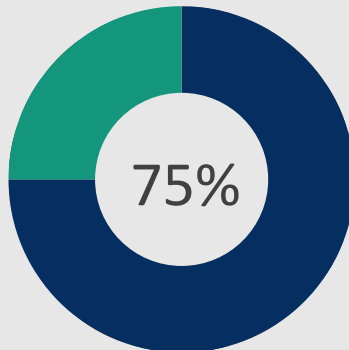
BS.E.P.1.1d Improve Primary School attendance

BS.E.P.1.1e Improve Secondary School attendance

BS.E.P.1.1f Reduce exclusions in Primary schools (Rate per 1,000)

BS.E.P.1.1g Reduce exclusions in Secondary schools (Rate per 1,000)

10
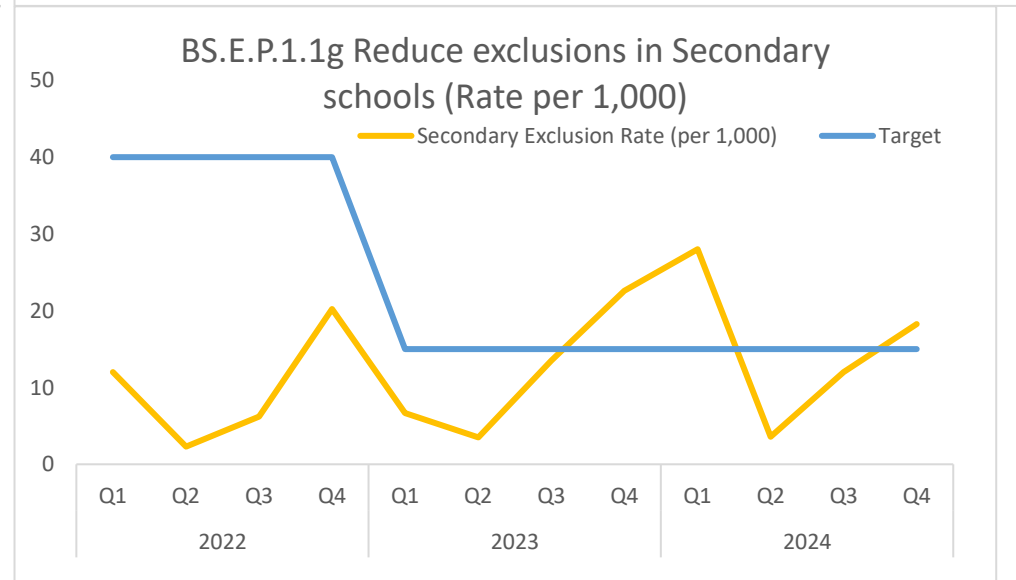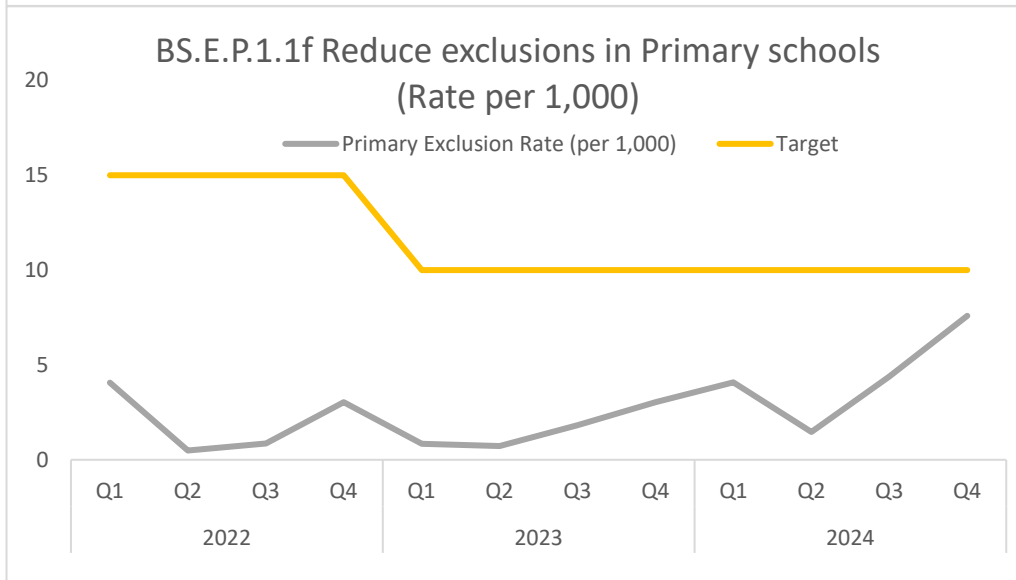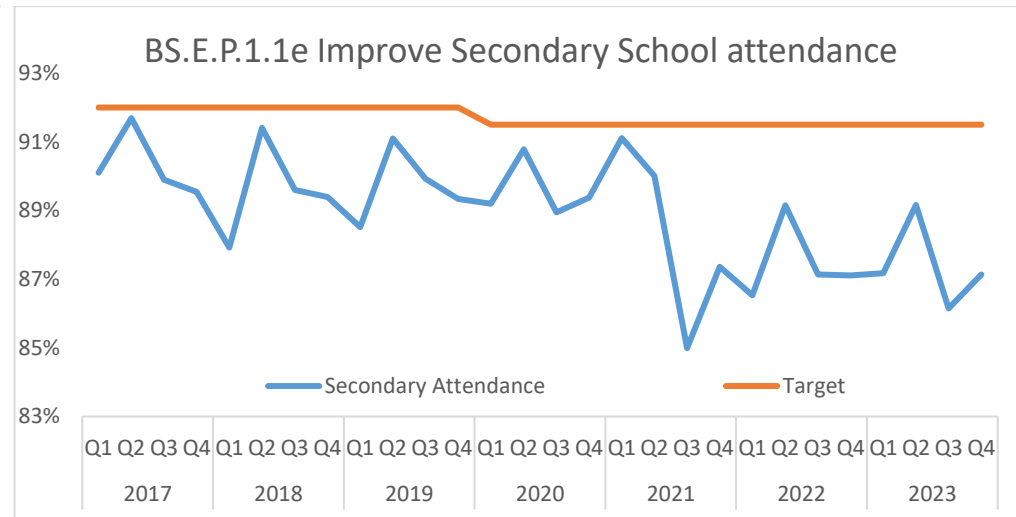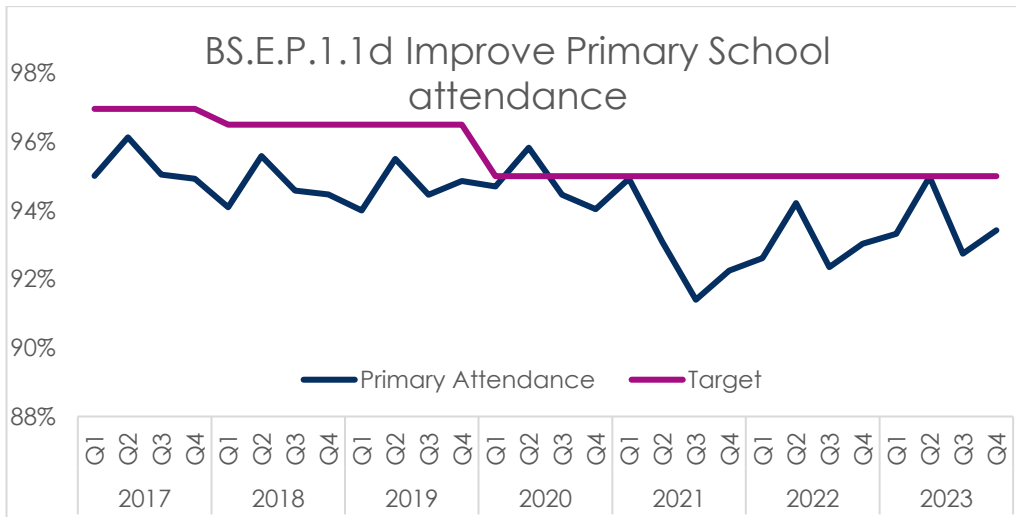
2,254 P1+P2 pupils have access to Individual learning tablets

11,872 P3-S6 pupils have their own learning Chromebook

Additional Support Needs changes over time

8.6% Increase in Primary pupils with Additional support needs

16.5% Increase in Secondary pupils with Additional support needs

ASN Pupils Profile Midlothian 2018 - 2023 - Primary

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Yes	23.53%	24.78%	28.98%	27.54%	31.99%	32.19%
No	76.47%	75.22%	71.02%	72.46%	68.01%	67.81%

ASN Pupils Scotland 2018 - 2022 - Primary

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Yes	25.4%	27%	27.8%	27.7%	28.3%
No	74.6%	73%	72.2%	72.3%	71.7%

ASN Pupils Profile Midlothian 2018 - 2023 - Secondary

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Yes	30.14%	34.37%	37.72%	40.67%	49.62%	46.63%
No	69.86%	65.63%	62.28%	59.33%	50.38%	53.37%

ASN Pupils Scotland 2018 - 2022 - Secondary

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Yes	31.7%	34.6%	36.6%	38.2%	40.1%
No	68.3%	65.4%	63.4%	61.8%	59.9%

Number of factors 2021: 1 = 61.8%, 2 = 21.9%, 3 or more = 16.4%

Number of factors 2022: 1 = 59%, 2 = 23.6%, 3 or more = 17.5%

Number of factors 2023: 1 = 58.5%, 2 = 22.9%, 3 or more = 18.6%

11

Education challenges and risks

Attendance rates
The continuing impact of the pandemic on attendance and on post-school destinations
The implementation of a new Attendance strategy as well as strengthened supports will help to reverse this negative trend

Early Learning and Childcare Delivery
Midlothian Council has a relatively high proportion of funded ELC places delivered by partners in the private and voluntary sectors. Any increases in the rate that is paid to funded providers would create additional upward pressure on the early years budget. There is now an expectation from Scottish Government about payment of real living wage which will also have an impact on local authority budgets.

Rate of demographic growth on the learning estate
●   A full refresh of school roll projections and capacities has been undertaken to assess current and future demand. This work will inform and shape the Learning Estate Strategy over the next 5 years.
●   A number of schools funded through the Scottish Governments Learning Estate Investment Programme are at the briefing and design stages. There are council and developer funded projects being undertaken also.
●   The Roll Projection data will be checked and refreshed on a 6 month basis to ensure we have provided sufficient capacity in each catchment. There are a number of schools with imminent capacity breaches.
●   The Place Directorate are conducting Condition Survey's in all school assets.

Children with ASN
●   Increase in the number of children and young people with additional support requiring more specialist provision will require robust monitoring to ensure staffing and specialist facilities meets level of needs.
●   Increase in the number of children and young people with additional support needs requiring more resourcing within mainstream school.

Recruitment and retention of staff
Increased difficulties of attracting and retaining subject specialists especially Maths, Science, Technologies is having an impact on service delivery in a number of secondary schools. Attracting and retaining teaching and non-teaching staff into ASN provisions is having an impact on service delivery. Attracting suitably qualified staff for ELC due to national demand is also proving a challenge and having an impact on service delivery.

Financial pressure
There is a financial challenge to deliver statutory services given the current budget pressures. Due to the current financial climate there may be an impact on services as a result of the cost of living and increase in poverty.

12

Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE)

Key achievements this quarter:

Successes in Q4 Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLD) (Including Beeslack High School Community Activities)

CLD builds skills for learning, life and work.

Midlothian CLD Partnership Progress Visit – Inspection by Education Scotland HMIe

A positive progress visit took place in March 2024 and the formal report will be published on 30th April 2024. The inspection focused on:

- **How effective is the leadership of the local authority and their CLD partners in improving outcomes?**
- **How well does the performance of the local authority and their CLD partners demonstrate positive impact?**

Verbal feedback provided indicates that leadership of CLD at all levels is confident and effective. There is a shared vision and ambition for improving the lives of individuals and communities. There is a well embedded culture of strong partnership working. Robust evidence bases underpin the work taking place to remove barriers to participation. Overall participants across a range of CLD services are gaining new knowledge and skills to help them meet their aspirations and needs. As a result of gaining new skills and qualifications, learners are better able to secure employment. Across provision, the achievements of young people and adults are regularly recognised and celebrated well. There are two recommended areas of continuous improvement, and an action plan will be developed to address these areas of continuous improvement.

CLD Partnership Plan
Overall, very good progress has been made in meeting the targets set in the CLD Three Year Partnership Plan which ensures Midlothian Council fulfils its statutory duty in relation to youth work, adult learning, and community capacity building with zero red actions, 10 amber and 23 green). A third year and final report is due at the end of September 2024. We have been advised that an interim one-year plan can be put in place, or the current plan extended for September 24 to September 25 whilst we are waiting on the results of the National Review of CLD and other Strategic Policy for example national youth work strategy.

Main Highlight in Quarter 4: The CLLE service and partners have worked together to produce a padlet which provides detailed information on the opportunities available to support young people, adults, families and communities to build skills for learning, life and work. Please see link Midlothian Council - CLLE (Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability) (padlet.com)

Employability Highlights
The Parental Employability Project has supported 298 parents over the last 12 months, 186 new parents and 114 existing parents.
80 entered employment or progressed within their employment to more hours or a higher paid job. 80 parents entered self-employment or progressed within their self-employment to increase their income levels.
36.78% of parents achieved a work-related accredited qualification totalling 275 qualifications. 9 parents started Further or Higher Education.

13

Employability Impact Quote: "I am very grateful of having the support of PESF and having my own Keyworker to help me get a Job, I needed a Job during school hours and my key worker told me that Midlothian Council were running a programme called (LTU) Long Term Unemployed programme which is six month paid work placements in various sectors. My key worker asked me if I would like to apply for this great opportunity, I agreed". I have now secured a permanent position due to the support I have received with my English, CV and interview preparation."

Parental Employability Support Project funded through NOLB Scottish Government has operated a successful LGV Driver Programme in March 24.

Employability Impact *Quote:* "I was in a low paid job, struggling to make ends meet for my growing family, Thanks for giving me the opportunity of doing the LGV driving training course as without this I feel that the future was a struggle but now it is looking very positive."

Employability for All Ages (who are not parents including young people)
255 young people and adults are being supported overall, with 80 of these starting in quarter 4. 32 new into employment, 11 into college and 75 gained qualifications. Intensive support has been provided for 7 young people with disabilities who have started with the programme in the last quarter.
"My youth key worker takes me out of the school environment. I feel believed in, encouraged and helps with advice and guidance. I applied for lots of jobs and pleased that I got a job. I am also pleased that I am doing my education subjects again. I do not think I would be this far on if it wasn't for meeting my youth key worker every week."

Youth Work
- 3422 engagements have taken place over the last 12 months by young people accessing youth work provision across a range of provisions for example Croft Street Hub, Feel Good Friday, Dungeon and Dragons, Youth Platform, Soup Group, Lady Wood Youth Club, Young Carer's Projects, Duke of Edinburgh, and Youth Participation Focus Groups

Adult and Family Learning
- 1525 engagements have taken place over the last 12 months in our community based and adult learning programme.
- CLLE's contribution to Education Scotland's 'Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027 has included an increase in Gaelic courses on offer as part of our Adult and Family Learning Programmes. During January to March 2024 we have offered a Beginners Gaelic Class, Post Beginners Gaelic Class and a Family Gaelic class. This ensures there is a learning pathway for individuals and families to explore and learn together. Through this offer we are encouraging the increased use of Gaelic, promoting the acquisition and learning of Gaelic and also promoting a positive image of Gaelic.

Community Capacity Building and Reducing Poverty
- 58 groups in the last 12 months have received direct community capacity building support.
- The Cost-of-Living Task Force agreed £66,000 carry forward funding to support the trusted partners model till June 2024, with a further report being prepared jointly by CLLE and Place Directorate with regard to future Cost of Living Supports.
- The excellent work of the Federation of Community Councils through the MTRaP group on Roads, Paths and Footways supported by CLLE was recognised in the recent CLD Partnership Plan Progress Visit.

Challenges: *External funding for a number of programmes including Foundation Apprenticeships and NOLB Employability offers have not been confirmed in writing which makes it incredibly difficult for the service and partners to maintain provision. These issues have been raised at a national level.*

14

CLLE Progress toward outcomes

Note: SIMD20%/40% engagements are lower than our target therefore we will analyse this further and take appropriate targeted action.

Number of local people engaged with CLL projects **6,225**		**Number of CLL Opportunities / Projects / Courses offered** **509**
Number receiving 1:1 support **799**		**The number of Community groups engaged with CLLE** **58**
Participants in the paid for adult learning program **477**		**Holistic Home Visits** **533**
Number of CLLE learners from 20% SIMD most deprived **377**		**Number of CLLE learners from 40% SIMD most deprived** **2,037**
SQA Awards **88**		**Number of qualifications gained by CLLE learners** **2,531**

98.3% Participant satisfaction with CLL services

93.9% Key skills improved through CLL services

94% Foundation Apprenticeships completed through CLL

15

Pentana Performance Dashboard

Quarter 4 - Education ▾

8 Indicators that are On Target	**5** Quarterly Education Service Indicators Off Target	**14** Education service Indicators Data only	**4** Indicators that have No Data Available	**19** Quarterly Education Service All Risks	**3** Quarterly Education Service High Risks

Education INDICATORS Off Target

...	Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
🔴	ED.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 working ...		57.14%	95%	01 Apr 2024	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	ED.MPI.02 Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence (cumulative)		8.556	7.5	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	BS.E.P.1.1e Improve Secondary School Attendance		87.14%	91.5%	01 Apr 2024	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	ED.SPSO.04.3 Average time in working days for a full response for escalated compl...		20.714	20	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	BS.E.P.1.1d Improve Primary School attendance		93.42%	95%	01 Apr 2024	Q4 2023/24	

← 1 of 1 →

16

Education Performance Report Q4 23/24

Improving Outcomes for Learners through an Empowered System

Education Services encompasses Early Learning and Childcare (ELC), Primary Schooling, Secondary Schooling, Special Schooling, Additional Support Needs, Digital Learning, Education Psychology and Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE).

Vision and context

All children, young people, adults and communities in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This will be achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity, inclusion and lifelong learning.

The Education Service Plan is informed by and links to the outcomes determined by the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Board.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, as amended 2016, placed new duties on education authorities, and the Education Service Plan includes identified areas for improvement specific to Education to fulfil these duties. As a result, the Education Service Improvement Plan not only reflects the key priorities in the Midlothian Single Plan but also aligns closely with the key priorities in Education – Achieving Excellence & Equity: National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2023:

•   Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education

•   Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing

•   Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people

•   Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people

•   Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

Challenges and risks

Attendance rates
The continuing impact of the pandemic on attendance and on post-school destinations
The implementation of a new Attendance strategy as well as strengthened supports will help to reverse this negative trend

Early Learning and Childcare Delivery
Midlothian Council has a relatively high proportion of funded ELC places delivered by partners in the private and voluntary sectors. Any increases in the rate that is paid to funded providers would create additional upward pressure on the early years budget. There is now an expectation from Scottish Government about payment of real living wage which will also have an impact on local authority budgets.

1

Rate of demographic growth on the learning estate

● A full refresh of school roll projections and capacities has been undertaken to assess current and future demand. This work will inform and shape the Learning Estate Strategy over the next 5 years.

● A number of schools funded through the Scottish Governments Learning Estate Investment Programme are at the briefing and design stages. There are council and developer funded projects being undertaken also.

● The Roll Projection data will be checked and refreshed on a 6 month basis to ensure we have provided sufficient capacity in each catchment. There are a number of schools with imminent capacity breaches.

● The Place Directorate are conducting Condition Survey's in all school assets.

Children with ASN

● Increase in the number of children and young people with additional support requiring more specialist provision will require robust monitoring to ensure staffing and specialist facilities meets level of needs.

● Increase in the number of children and young people with additional support needs requiring more resourcing within mainstream school.

Recruitment and retention of staff

Increased difficulties of attracting and retaining subject specialists especially Maths, Science, Technologies is having an impact on service delivery in a number of secondary schools. Attracting and retaining teaching and non-teaching staff into ASN provisions is having an impact on service delivery. Attracting suitably qualified staff for ELC due to national demand is also proving a challenge and having an impact on service delivery.

Financial pressure

There is a financial challenge to deliver statutory services given the current budget pressures. Due to the current financial climate there may be an impact on services as a result of the cost of living and increase in poverty.

Priority 1: Raising attainment to ensure that all children and young people in Midlothian achieve outcomes which lead to positive destinations

Aligned to the Service Plan, priorities for 2023/24, key work streams:

- *Learning, Teaching & Assessment Framework*
- *Monitoring impact of Raising Attainment Strategy*
- *Literacy & numeracy progressions*
- *Moderation & progression*
- *ASG development of BGE curricular frameworks*
- *Curriculum framework*
- *Equity and Excellence*

Key achievements this quarter:

Monitoring the impact of Raising Attainment Strategy

Excellence and Equity Board established to review progress of KPIs informing Quality Improvement activity and input from Raising Attainment team. Risk and Capacity register being developed to capture school data and inform future improvement activity.

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Framework

Draft Learning, Teaching and Assessment (LTA) Framework shared with senior leaders. Principles and overarching LTA Framework policy paper in draft and support materials being created ready for August launch.

Literacy & numeracy progressions

All school staff have received training related to use of progressions. A session for school leadership teams focussed on strategic leadership of Literacy. Literacy and numeracy champions termly meetings have informed development of progressions at a local level. Information gathered at visit 2 evidences use of progressions across all schools.

Moderation & progression

New cohort of teachers have undergone QAMSO training. All existing QAMSOs led moderation within their school and ASG. P4 and P7 Writing Moderation cross authority sessions held and Consistent approaches to writing moderation now in place across Midlothian leading to reduced variation in teacher professional judgement.

ASG development of BGE curricular frameworks

Working groups in each ASG have developed one curricular area and created consistent Midlothian progression planners covering all experiences and outcomes. Work is ongoing to develop progressions at third and fourth level. ASG sharing session at HT meeting and all progressions will be used fully next session to ensure consistent approaches in curriculum delivery and pedagogical strategies.

Curriculum Framework

The aligned timetable structure which underpins the delivery of the Midlothian Aligned Curriculum Offer was agreed by secondary Headteachers prior to coursing. A full common school day consultation, involving all stakeholders and Council services has been concluded, with strong support for the proposed curriculum changes. The proposed changes were signed off by the cross-party Business Transformation of Services Group (BTSG). The Senior Phase Curriculum offers a wide range of traditional academic pathways and a diverse set of industry supported work-based options. A bespoke Midlothian school-based offer has been added to the existing School to College partnership. The curriculum now provides equitable access to Senior Phase Qualifications in all six secondary schools. A Digital Campus paper has been developed to further enhance this offer.

3

In terms of 'next steps', the newly formed 2-18 Learning, Teaching, Assessment and Curriculum Group (LTAC) will now focus upon a refresh of the opportunities and projects presented in the Broad General Phase of Education, with a particular focus upon improving pedagogical approaches, data-informed practice and leadership development.

Equity and Excellence

Excellence and Equity Board established and reviews progress of KPIs informing recommendations in relation to Excellence and Equity measures. Equity ESO in place and CECYP plan progress shared.

School analysis of data using data dashboards which informs school/ASG/service improvement plans for session 24/25. Schools can evidence effective use of data dashboards to inform planning to reduce poverty related gaps

New PEF workbook created this session contains stretch aims for equity and excellence. These have been reviewed at termly tracking periods and inform quality improvement dialogue with officers and targeted support from raising attainment team. Finance assistants tracking PEF spend this session and monitoring done by QIMs. Termly PEF drop in support sessions held and attended by a few headteachers. All schools have evaluated their PEF planning, impacts will be shared in SQ report and used to inform plans for next session. PEF workbook amended after feedback from use this session.

Promoting and protecting school attendance

The attendance procedures were launched in January 2024. A school self-evaluation tool and tracking and monitoring systems have been reviewed and streamlined to align to the new procedures and ensure practice is consistent and equitable. An authority-wide tracking and monitoring system is being developed to be rolled out to all schools from August onwards. Communications have been developed across the ASGs involving posters, letters and monthly attendance texts. All ASGs will launch a consistent approach from August 2024.

 A research team of children and young people has been established to research the factors influencing attendance and how to improve attendance for those attending between 70 and 90%. This project will extend to different groups of young people from August.

The Attendance Partnership Network (APN) has been established to promote collaboration and problem solving across schools and key partners including EPs, Home School Practitioners, Family Wellbeing Service and the 3rd sector.

4

Priority 2: All children & young people feel valued & included, and have the same opportunities to succeed

Aligned to the Service Plan, priorities for 2023/24, key work streams:

- *Relationships*

- *Wellbeing and Care*

- *Inclusion and Targeted Support*

Key achievements this quarter:

Relationships

Engagement and co-production activities with children, young people, parents/carers and school staff are taking place this term to develop the relationship policy and anti-bullying policies.

The Nurture Leads Community of Practice provides peer support, challenge and opportunities for sharing and problem solving. Relational practice is developed and monitored through the Nurture Leads Community of Practice, professional learning needs identified and new professional learning developed.

The Directorate Conference highlighted the importance of safety and belonging and key role of relationships.

Appreciative enquiry sessions have taken place across a range of settings and staff groups exploring the strengths, issues and opportunities to promote and protect staff wellbeing. Proposals will be drafted in June in relation to staff wellbeing and structures of support.

Wellbeing and Care

Person centred approaches and tools for assessment relating to wellbeing and mental health and neurodivergence are being identified through the nurture strategy subgroup. Guidance is being drafted based on best practice in schools to be shared in August 2024.

Some schools have carried out the Glasgow Wellbeing Survey as a universal measure of wellbeing across the school population and developed systems to analyse universal and targeted approaches. All schools are prepared and ready to implement a universal wellbeing survey from September 2024 with renewed tracking and monitoring systems to review intersectional data.

Following funding approval, a project manager will be in post from 22nd May to progress the development of systems for a Central Point of Access. Preparatory tasks have been completed including mapping current resource and access pathways and Request for Assistance processes.

Inclusion and targeted support

The Neurodevelopmental Pathway Group has strengthened relationships and partnership working across agencies, with greater understanding of roles and shared purpose. The strategy has ensured children and young people's voices are sought and listened to and influence the development the pathway at each stage.

5

Community, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE)

Key achievements this quarter:

Successes in Q4 Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLD) (Including Beeslack High School Community Activities)

CLD builds skills for learning, life and work.

Midlothian CLD Partnership Progress Visit – Inspection by Education Scotland HMIe

A positive progress visit took place in March 2024 and the formal report will be published on 30th April 2024. The inspection focused on:

- **How effective is the leadership of the local authority and their CLD partners in improving outcomes?**
- **How well does the performance of the local authority and their CLD partners demonstrate positive impact?**

Verbal feedback provided indicates that leadership of CLD at all levels is confident and effective. There is a shared vision and ambition for improving the lives of individuals and communities. There is a well embedded culture of strong partnership working. Robust evidence bases underpin the work taking place to remove barriers to participation. Overall participants across a range of CLD services are gaining new knowledge and skills to help them meet their aspirations and needs. As a result of gaining new skills and qualifications, learners are better able to secure employment. Across provision, the achievements of young people and adults are regularly recognised and celebrated well. There are two recommended areas of continuous improvement, and an action plan will be developed to address these areas of continuous improvement.

CLD Partnership Plan

Overall very good progress has been made in meeting the targets set in the CLD Three Year Partnership Plan which ensures Midlothian Council fulfils its statutory duty in relation to youth work, adult learning, and community capacity building with zero red actions, 10 amber and 23 green). A third year and final report is due at the end of September 2024. We have been advised that an interim one-year plan can be put in place, or the current plan extended for September 24 to September 25 whilst we are waiting on the results of the National Review of CLD and other Strategic Policy for example national youth work strategy.

Main Highlight in Quarter 4: The CLLE service and partners have worked together to produce a padlet which provides detailed information on the opportunities available to support young people, adults, families and communities to build skills for learning, life and work. Please see link Midlothian Council - CLLE (Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability) (padlet.com)

Employability Highlights

The Parental Employability Project has supported 298 parents over the last 12 months, 186 new parents and 114 existing parents.

80 entered employment or progressed within their employment to more hours or a higher paid job. 80 parents entered self-employment or progressed within their self-employment to increase their income levels.

36.78% of parents achieved a work-related accredited qualification totalling 275 qualifications. 9 parents started Further or Higher Education.

Employability Impact Quote: "I am very grateful of having the support of PESF and having my own Keyworker to help me get a Job, I needed a Job during school hours and my key worker told me that Midlothian Council were running a programme called (LTU) Long Term Unemployed programme which is six month paid work placements in various sectors. My key worker asked me if I would like to apply for this great opportunity, I agreed". I have now secured a permanent position due to the support I have received with my English, CV and interview preparation."

Parental Employability Support Project funded through NOLB Scottish Government has operated a successful LGV Driver Programme in March 24.

Employability Impact *Quote:* "I was in a low paid job, struggling to make ends meet for my growing family, Thanks for giving me the opportunity of doing the LGV driving training course as without this I feel that the future was a struggle but now it is looking very positive."

Employability for All Ages (who are not parents including young people)

255 young people and adults are being supported overall, with 80 of these starting in quarter 4. 32 new into employment, 11 into college and 75 gained qualifications.
Intensive support has been provided for 7 young people with disabilities who have started with the programme in the last quarter.

"My youth key worker takes me out of the school environment. I feel believed in, encouraged and helps with advice and guidance. I applied for lots of jobs and pleased that I got a job. I am also pleased that I am doing my education subjects again. I do not think I would be this far on if it wasn't for meeting my youth key worker every week."

Youth Work

•   3422 engagements have taken place over the last 12 months by young people accessing youth work provision across a range of provisions for example Croft Street Hub, Feel Good Friday, Dungeon and Dragons, Youth Platform, Soup Group, Lady Wood Youth Club, Young Carer's Projects, Duke of Edinburgh, and Youth Participation Focus Groups

Adult and Family Learning

•   1525 engagements have taken place over the last 12 months in our community based and adult learning programme.
•   CLLE's contribution to Education Scotland's 'Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027 has included an increase in Gaelic courses on offer as part of our Adult and Family Learning Programmes. During January to March 2024 we have offered a Beginners Gaelic Class, Post Beginners Gaelic Class and a Family Gaelic class. This ensures there is a learning pathway for individuals and families to explore and learn together. Through this offer we are encouraging the increased use of Gaelic, promoting the acquisition and learning of Gaelic and also promoting a positive image of Gaelic.

Community Capacity Building and Reducing Poverty

•   58 groups in the last 12 months have received direct community capacity building support.
•   The Cost-of-Living Task Force agreed £66,000 carry forward funding to support the trusted partners model till June 2024, with a further report being prepared jointly by CLLE and Place Directorate regarding future Cost of Living Supports.
•   The excellent work of the Federation of Community Councils through the MTRaP group on Roads, Paths and Footways supported by CLLE was recognised in the recent CLD Partnership Plan Progress Visit.

Challenges: *External funding for a number of programmes including Foundation Apprenticeships and NOLB Employability offers have not been confirmed in writing which makes it incredibly difficult for the service and partners to maintain provision. These issues have been raised at a national level.*

Note: SIMD20%/40% engagements are lower than our target therefore we will analyse this further and take appropriate targeted action.

8

Place Performance Report 2023/24
Annual summary

Midlothian

Key achievements during 23/24

Our Greenspaces

77 **improvements or new facilities** were completed this year, 28 improvement projects, 12 play areas and 16 village improvements.

Green Flags awarded at Straiton Pond Local nature reserve and Kings Park.

This year, **6,990 volunteer hours** (1,165 days) were spent in countryside sites. Volunteer numbers have increased significantly over the last few years, with a 25% increase in volunteer hours this year compared to last year and a 45% increase from 2021/22.

A total of **4,352 memorials** were inspected throughout the year, safeguarding our heritage and enhancing public safety.

Waste and Recycling

Our Waste Services team carry out over **5.8 million individual waste and recycling** collections each year. The team completed 99.95% of all collections as scheduled.

New waste service standards and waste collection policies were approved by Council this year. The development of these polices will ensure services operate transparently and fairly, encouraging householder participation, maximise the quality and quantity of materials collected for recycling and improve operational efficiencies.

£2.2m was awarded from the **Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund** which allows the Council to fully transition existing waste and recycling collection services to meet the recommendations in the Charter for Household Waste Recycling.

Our Roads and Footpaths

14.83km of **carriageway resurfaced** and **4.59km** of **footway resurfaced** this year.

1,802.52 tonnes of material used in 2023/24 to **fill potholes.** The Pothole Pro project equated to **9,214m^2** of **permanent patching**, repairing **2,985 potholes** this year.

The **street lighting capital programme** was completed ahead of plan this year with a targeted **752 new lighting column** replacements. A further **1,164** street lights were upgraded to LED lanterns to include a central management system for dimming.
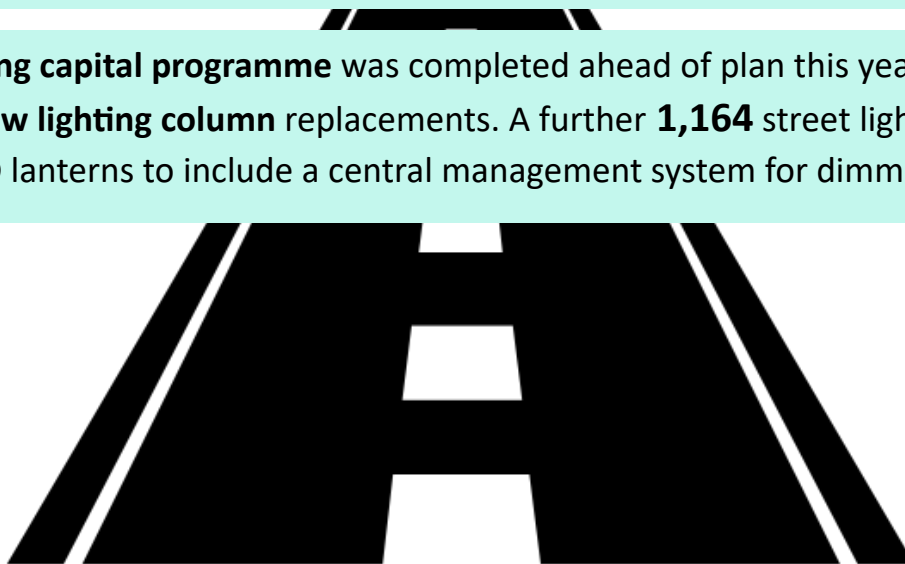
Protective Services

Our Public Health and Environmental Protection team received **1,121 public health service requests** this year from Midlothian residents and businesses and 412 requests from internal sources.

100% of all **priority food law inspections** that were planned in for 2023-2024 were completed. A total of **312 food inspections carried out** at food businesses registered with Midlothian Council with the highest risk for food safety and standards.

Trading Standards received **208 consumer complaints this year** with at least **£28,200 being returned to Midlothian consumers** following Trading Standards involvement. This includes refunds as well as repairs and replacement goods.

275 Trading Standards **primary inspections** took place this year.

133 intelligence logs were recorded on IDB, the national Trading Standards database.

185 abandoned vehicle reports were responded to.

Planning, Sustainable Growth and Investment

103 Business start-ups this year. This should realise a forecasted creation of **142 jobs** and an estimated contribution of **£5.62M to the Midlothian economy** in their first year of trading.

108 Businesses signed up to the **Midlothian Business Green Pledge** this year (increase from 50 in 2022/23).

235 'Planning to Start' business enquiries were received this year, an increase of 120% over the 2022/23 financial year with 195 pre-starts.

Housing

This year housing received the completed handover for **181 new build homes** extending our housing stock to **7,170 by end of 23/24.**

Re-let times to permanent accommodation properties this year has averaged at **35 days** to re-let and continues on a downward trend from 46 days in 21/22.

552 lets were made this year, an increase of 77 lets from last year.

19 houses were let this year through our **Housing first model.**

217 lets were made to new build and open market purchases.

The **length of time homeless applicants waited until receiving a permanent housing** outcome has decreased to **43.8 weeks for this year** showing a continued downward trend from 70 weeks at the same period last year and 85 weeks for 21/22.

The number of temporary accommodation households that have been **flipped to permanent accommodation** was **139** this year.

The number of homeless cases provided with **advice and assistance** this year was **1,243**, an increase of 28% compared to this time last year and 56% from 21/22.

93.2% of homeless applicants **sustained a permanent tenancy** after 1 year compared to 76.98% during 22/23.

The total number of **jobs completed internally** by our Building Maintenance Service this year was **36,345**, an increase of 8% compared to 33,515 completed in 22/23. Jobs include all reactive, planned works, voids and inspections.

Sport and Leisure

Our **tonezone memberships** continues to grow through improved marketing and promotion with a total of **4,628 memberships** this year to date. An increase of 13% from quarter 1 of this year.

1,250 primary 4 pupils attended **free swimming lessons** this year after an effective system was put in place from our programme development officer.

Midlothian Active Choices (MAC) is a sport and leisure physical activity referral programme, aimed at adults who are inactive and experience various health conditions. The programme offers a range of supported activities across Midlothian to help manage these health conditions. This year saw **5,688 Midlothian Active Choices attendees** and **1,435 new referrals** after completion of MAC sessions.
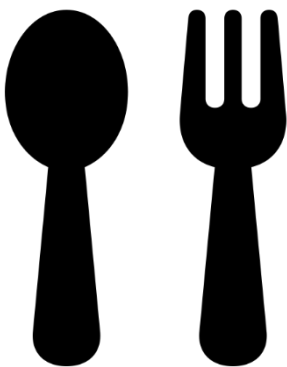
Catering Services

The percentage of **Secondary school meal uptake** has increased considerably from 20.36% in quarter 1 to 45.71% in quarter 2 this year. This figure was sustained during quarter 3 with 44.41% uptake and an **average annual figure of 37.13%.**

Construction and Development

Nearing completion of Contract 1 at Destination Hillend with parking and service infrastructure and Alpine Coaster to be ready for operation from 1st July.

First Passivhaus developments completed, occupied and certified at Buccleuch St Dalkeith and Burnbrae, Bonnyrigg.

Largest Passivhaus development on site at former Newbattle High School, part of Scotland's largest Passivhaus housing programme.

Midlothian Energy Limited (MEL) delivering district heat network in Shawfair with heat connections due Summer/Autumn 2024.

Alpine Coaster – Destination Hillend

Place is where people, location and resources combine to create a sense of identity and purpose. The Place service ambition is to deliver joined-up, collaborative, and participative approaches to services, land and buildings, across all sectors within a place, enabling better outcomes for everyone and increased opportunities for people and communities to shape their own lives.

Place Services encompasses Building Services; Housing Services; Neighbourhood Services; Planning, Sustainable Growth & Investment; Property & Facilities Management; Protective Services; and, since September 2023, Sport & Leisure.

Transformation Blueprint (2023-2028)

We are committed to building on the learning and new ways of working that were adopted during the pandemic and renew our focus on delivering our key priorities at the most local level possible. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, the vision of our new 5-year strategy focuses on reducing inequalities at the same time as looking after the health of our planet. Specifically, we have three main aims:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and learning outcomes.
- No child or household live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

The pandemic has accelerated the financial challenges that we are facing. Reprioritisation and redesign is crucial to balancing the financial position, as well as preparing for further challenges and changes that we will face.

The strategic plan sets out our biggest challenges that need to be addressed over the next five years. We will continue to work to address the inequalities that our communities face, respond to the demands of the fastest growing local authority in Scotland, and delivering our vision of being a great, green place to grow.

Transformation Blueprint Objectives

1. Support the Council to address the 5-year funding gap of outlined in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
2. Follow the Money to ensure that the services we commission, contracts we manage and digital solutions we use deliver value for money.
3. Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible, ensuring that all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively, supported by digital technologies that fit for a 21st century workforce.
4. Design a workplace for the future delivering services in a holistic and integrated way.
5. Drive forward multi-agency transformation to deliver systems-level change resulting in joined-up service delivery which improve outcomes.

Environmental

Key achievements 2023-24

Midlothian Council was one of the first local authorities to sign Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, publicly acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that climate change brings with a commitment to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030. Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy and focus continues within Place services to achieve future emissions targets. The ambitious strategy sets out how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, encourage, and work with others in our community to mitigate and adapt to changing climate. The strategy incorporates an action plan with a number of initiatives and ongoing programmes which together are helping to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint. Climate change actions included "*delivering the Shawfair low carbon community heating system and looking to develop heat networks across the county.*" Works started on site in February 2023 with concentration on the back up energy centre and main spine pipe network. Ground works on the Zero Waste Site, including grouting mine shafts for the energy centre, is now complete and the energy centre is constructed with the internal fit out of the back-up energy centre with E boilers and thermal stores included, to be completed early 2024/25.

Economic Development continues to promote the Midlothian Business Green Pledge. A total of 108 businesses have now committed to the Pledge with 29 of those signing up during quarter 4. The team continue to work with pledgers to identify the best platform for group sharing. Through the LinkedIn group, pledgers share their experiences and the team continue to share a mix of green information from partners on learning opportunities, support and funding. Planning is taking place to hold an 'in-person' Green Pledger event for Climate Week in September 2024 which will provide collaboration, shared learning and an opportunity for our Pledgers to highlight the steps they have taken to progress on their net zero journeys.

The Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Strategy (2021) sets out its aims and objectives for achieving net zero emissions within the entire building stock in Scotland by 2045, including addressing poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. As part of this Strategy, Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) will set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. The Strategies will draw on a standardised methodology to:

- set out how each section of the building stock needs to change to meet national objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.
- identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone.
- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

This year work has progressed at pace to review the findings of the previously reported Stage 4 LHEES study, the outcome of which has provided a good foundation for the remaining stages. There has been positive and good engagement with internal stakeholders' business and community representatives, and regular engagement with Joint Venture Partners Midlothian Energy who will be an essential partner in delivering an effective and viable plan. The LHEES Strategy and covering report is complete and approved by the Scottish Government for compliance and subject to Council approval this year.

The annual Capital Works Programme for carriageway resurfacing combined with the Residential streets programme has achieved its annual target with 14.83km of carriageway resurfaced and 4.59km of footway resurfaced this year to date, representing 2.15% and 0.64% of the total road network and footway public network respectively. Over the last three years, the percentage of our road network resurfaced continues to accelerate compared to that of previous years (pre-covid) where the annual percentage of our road network resurfaced was between 1% and 1.3%.

1,802.52 tonnes of material was used in 2023/24 to fill potholes. 730.86 tonnes of material was used for temporary repairs and 1,071.72 tonnes for pothole pro permanent patching. The Pothole Pro project equated to 9,214m^2 of permanent patching, repairing 2,985 potholes this year. Our Roads and Transportation services received a "well managed" annual performance rating from the Scottish Road Works Commissioner for the coordination of all road works on the Council's public network during 2022/23. The service have achieved this top rating for a third year in a row.

The street lighting capital programme was completed ahead of plan this year with a targeted 752 new lighting column replacements. A further 1,164 street lights were upgraded to LED lanterns to include a central management system for dimming. In addition, our lighting team delivered 5 Traffic signal renewals this year and upgraded CCTV system was completed in Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Penicuik.

Our Waste Services team carry out over 5.8 million individual waste and recycling collections each year. The team completed 99.95% of all collections as scheduled.

New waste service standards and waste collection policies were approved by Council this year. The development of these polices will ensure services operate transparently and fairly, encouraging householder participation, maximise the quality and quantity of materials collected for recycling and improve operational efficiencies. Changes to our policies have been communicated to our customers via our website pages and other promotional activities will take place during quarter 1. Going forward, monitoring these standards will help us communicate more effectively with our customer when complaints arise, giving a clear understanding of the levels of service that can be expected. In addition, £2.2m was awarded from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund which allows the Council to fully transition existing waste and recycling collection services to meet the recommendations in the Charter for Household Waste Recycling.

The expansion of the food waste collection service to include rural areas was finalised during quarter 4 ahead of its implementation in quarter 1. This included a review of current collection routes and consultation with front line staff and trade unions.

Following a successful trial of bodyworn CCTV at Stobhill Recycling Centre to deter instances of verbal abuse, body worn cameras will be rolled out to both Recycling Centres and to loan workers in early 24/25.

As part of our Customer Service Platform, assisted waste collection request flows went live and a new online form for the replacement and renewal of bins was launched in quarter 4. An online form for bulky uplifts is in a test phase and expected to go live early 2024/25. This will

result in improvements to the customer experience as well as more detailed and accurate reporting facilities.

A new service excellence model and Recycling and Green space voluntary pledge for front line teams was launched in quarter 4. The work carried out as part of the model will help to create a more positive culture with the overall aim being to deliver excellent services to our Midlothian residents. As part of this culture change programme and ongoing service reviews, a pilot was developed to provide staff with additional support and advice on issues such as mental health and wellbeing. This will be ongoing throughout 24/25.

Park and Greenspace improvements

77 improvements or new facilities were completed this year, work included:

- Utilisation of the Nature Restoration fund from the Scottish Government, Butterfly and Bee happy mixes of Bulbs and wild flowers were planted at some of our prominent roundabouts and in our parks. 20 locations were planted with 1,184,670 bulbs. To further support the Scottish Government's draft Scottish Biodiversity Strategy and Midlothian's Local Biodiversity action plan, additional funding was spent on further biodiversity measures to be undertaken in the next quarter involving large areas of wild flowers on the former Golf Course at Vogrie Country Park to create pollinator friendly areas.

- **28 improvement projects:**
    1. Burnbrae Primary school outdoor facility improvement.
    2. Fence repaired/installed at North Middleton Park along with relocating vehicle gate.
    3. Path work repairs at Rosewell on the Dalkeith to Penicuik walkway.
    4. New picnic benches and bases installed at Kings Park, Dalkeith and Ironmills Park.
    5. Path and drainage repairs undertaken at Vogrie Country Park near the House and play area.
    6. New drainage installed at Vogrie car park area.
    7. Memorial bench installation in Cemeteries
    8. Drainage repairs at Mayfield skate park.
    9. Drainage ditches and path repairs undertaken at Straiton pond.
    10. Works completed on pedestrian Bridge at Roslin Glen Country park to stabilise banking and bridge foundations.
    11. Path work repairs at Roslin gun powder mill.

12. Installation of barrier gate and bollards at Hawthornden centre.
13. Repair of steps at Roslin on Walkway.
14. Repair and top dressing of path at Miners Memorial Penicuik.
15. Installation of picnic tables and miniature goals in Auld gala park.
16. Riverbed slate completed at Eskdail court.
17. New bench installation at Jarnac Court.
18. Block work completed at Welfare Park, Newtongrange for sensory garden roundel.
19. Fence repairs at Ironmills steps.
20. Installation of a new petanque court at North Middleton Play area.
21. Hand rails and path repairs completed at Imrie place, Penicuik.
22. Installation of 14 bins on the Rosewell to Penicuik walkway
23. Installation of 7 aside goals at Kaimes View, Danderhall.
24. Replacement of 4 Queens Jubilee trees.
25. Works undertaken to create a new safe pathway from overflow carpark at Stobhill depot.
26. Paving works at Danderhall Pavilion.
27. Works undertaken at St Mathews primary to install play equipment.
28. Installation of pétanque Piste at North Midleton.

- **12 Play area improvements**
  Utilisation of Scottish Government funding to replace equipment in 12 play areas installing inclusive roundabouts, carousels, springers and a track rider and safety surfaces. Works complete at Arniston Park, Cowden Park and Cockpen View Play Area, Montgomery Park, Penicuik, Cousland Play Area, Carrington Play Area, Birkenside Play Area and Edgehead Play Area.

- **16 Village improvements**
  As part of the Neighbourhood Services joint working project to make a visible change to the aesthetics of our villages across Midlothian, 16 improvements were completed at the following locations: Pathhead, Leadburn, Fala, Howgate, Lasswade, Ford, Edgehead, Auchendinny, Newton village and Silverburn to date with works planned for Cousland, Carrington, Millerhill, Temple, Whitehill and Middleton.

Our Countryside Ranger Service continues to ensure our sites are an attractive, safe and welcoming environment for all to enjoy. This year, 6,990 volunteer hours (1,165 days) were spent in countryside sites. Volunteer numbers have increased significantly over the last few years, with a 25% increase in volunteer hours this year compared to last year and a 45% increase from 2021/22. Work on our Countryside sites would not be possible without close partnership working between volunteers and their coordination by our Ranger service. Other achievements this year included:

- 36 ranger events held with 1,557 participants and 174 school and community group events with 2,603 participants.
- The completion of countryside site tree surveys to include identification of dangerous and high priority trees for treatment.
- Development of links and environmental learning sessions with 'Early Learning' outdoor nursery at Vogrie.
- Continued provision of conservation volunteering tasks and activities for an increasing number of corporate groups.
- Delivery of Midlothian Outdoor Festival 2023, including 30 events and over 1,550 participants, with volunteers and partners throughout Midlothian.
- Grassland management to increase pollinator species and carbon sequestration rates carried out at Vogrie, Roslin and Straiton Pond by volunteers cutting and lifting wildflower rich meadow areas.
- Green Flags awarded at Straiton Pond Local nature reserve and Kings Park.
- As part of a national monitoring scheme, Butterfly surveys were carried out with volunteers on a weekly basis from April to Sept.
- 'Vogrie Bioblitz' of the former golf course took place with partners and volunteer recorders to gather information on species as a benchmark for future management interventions in species diversity.
- Partnership developed with Alzheimer Scotland to lead guided walks and talks.

A total of 4,352 memorials were inspected throughout the year, safeguarding our heritage and enhancing public safety.

The Vogrie Country Park renewal strategy tender was completed last quarter and a consultant appointed to support the Head of Development Capital and Entrepreneurial Projects with the initial baseline survey now completed.

Across Protective Services, our business regulations team completed 100% of all priority food law inspections that were planned in for 2023-2024. These inspections were carried out at food businesses registered with Midlothian Council with the highest risk for food safety and standards. The team completed 312 food inspections, this included 226 planned inspections and 86 unplanned inspections, consisting of newly registered premises and businesses with serious or significant food safety contraventions where intensive interventions were required to bring the business into compliance. Official Controls Verification interventions at our highest risk approved premises (those

handling/processing products of animal origin) were prioritised. These interventions are significantly resource intensive requiring two officers to undertake complex assessment of documentation and processes at frequent intervals. All our highest risk approved premises have received at minimum 1 intervention. The majority of our lower risk approved premises e.g cold stores (storing products only) received an intervention.

The Food Standards Scotland (FSS) annual food sampling survey and Midlothian annual food sampling plan (including approved premises and manufacturers) were completed this year. In total, 149 samples were taken with the majority being rated as satisfactory. Of the results returned so far only 3% were unsatisfactory. These included labelling issues and cross contamination with allergens. Failures are followed up with the business to provide advice and secure compliance.

Trading Standards received 208 consumer complaints this year, 200 of which were completed. Completion is not fully within service control and is dependant on traders and complainants responding to investigations. This year at least £28,200 has been returned to Midlothian consumers following Trading Standards involvement. This includes refunds as well as repairs and replacement goods.

275 Trading Standards primary inspections took place this year including 55 farms or smallholdings to assess animal health and welfare. Over the course of the last two years the team have now inspected all farms and smallholdings regarded as high or medium risk.

This year, 2,228 single use vapes were seized from 8 shops across Midlothian. Over 1,500 were seized from one shop in a total of 3 visits and reported to the Procurator Fiscal. Vapes are seized due to contraventions of the safety law, mainly concerning the maximum quantity of nicotine. 145 businesses registered for tobacco/vapes in Midlothian were visited this year, this equates to 59% of Midlothian premises and exceeds our target to visit 20% in the year. 24 interventions were carried out relating to Tobacco and nicotine containing products.

133 intelligence logs were recorded on IDB, the national Trading Standards database by our Trading Standards team this year. In comparison to other Scottish Councils, Midlothian sit in the top quartile for logs created.

Our Public Health and Environmental Protection team continue to support the Midlothian Partnership Against Rural Crime (MPARC) initiative by attendance at a rural crime event to network with other partners and farmers and promote our commitments and contributions. The team have also contributed to national forums, surveys and consultations this year including the Scottish Government and COSLA forum on a national rodenticide survey, and consultation on animal licencing and XL bully dog controls. The new Scottish Government XL Bully exemption certificate scheme was introduced on the 1st of April 2024. In advance of the scheme being introduced the

team were proactive in compiling a list of known owners of XL Bullies and contact was made to each advising on the process for the application certificate.

This year our Public Health and Environmental Protection team implemented the short-term let licensing scheme within the time scales prescribed by Scottish Government. This scheme was publicised via our social media platforms to increase the number of applications by the given deadline.

The Environmental Crime Pilot was launched this year with an increased emphasis on fly-tipping, littering and dog fouling. The year long pilot has the power to issue statutory and fixed penalty notices between £80-£200 to offenders and report potential crimes to the procurator fiscal. The pilot is now being supported with a public fly tipping press release.

The team received 1,121 public health service requests this year from Midlothian residents and businesses and 412 requests from internal sources.

185 abandoned vehicle reports were responded to this year, of which 33 notices were served and 16 vehicles removed for destruction. Officers are proactive in contacting owners early in the process prior to having to go to formal notice by affixing 'awareness' notices at their first visit, encouraging the owners to contact us. This allows the owner to informally deal with the issue before moving to formal notice.

Air Quality Progress Reports for 2020-21 and 2021-22 were accepted by Scottish Government and SEPA. Our Air Quality monitoring programme which had been suspended due to resourcing issues was successfully restarted early this year.

Neighbourhood Services – performance

% OF ALL DISPOSED WASTE

Recycled 43.5%

Energy from Waste 38.1%

Landfill 17.2%

Other 1.2%

Number of vounteer hours in countryside sites (cumulative)

Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
5,604	1,962	3,300	5,244	6,990

■ Target (23/24 is 6,000)
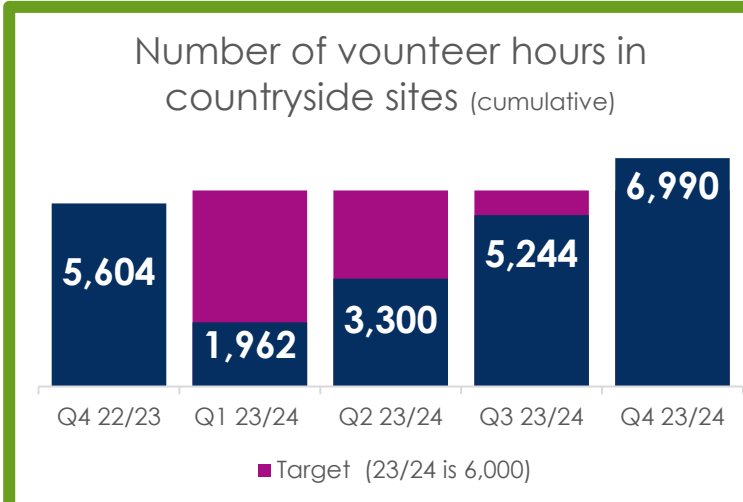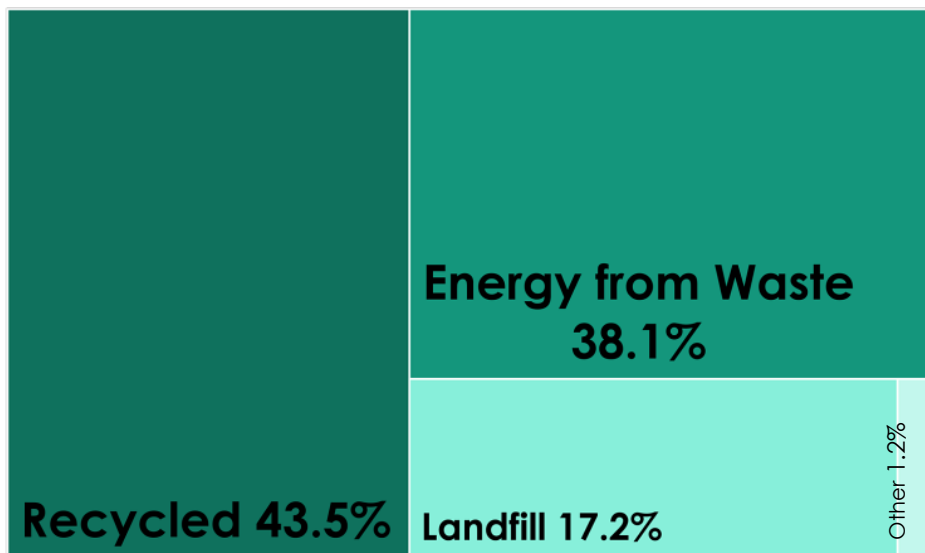
2

Environmental Green flags awarded for Kings Park and Straiton pond.

77 park and greenspace improvements/new facilities complete this year out of 50 planned (20 complete this quarter)

Number of street lighting columns replaced

2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
702	136	752
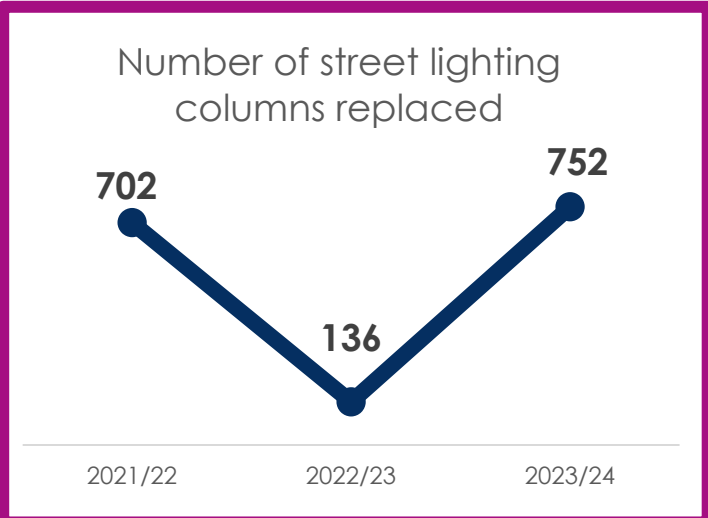
1,121 tonnes of carbon emissions saved from street lighting this year (Increase from 1,075 tonnes in 2022/23)

1,802.58 tonnes of material used to fill temporary and permanent potholes this year (555.36 tonnes of material used in Q4)

9,214m² of permanent patching achieved this year

2,985 potholes were permanently repaired this year

% of Roads and footpath resurfaced (cumulative)

	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/34	Q4 23/24
% of Footpath	1.02%	0.03%	0.22%	0.44%	0.64%
% road network	2.89%	0.55%	1.23%	1.72%	2.15%

■ % of Footpath   ■ % road network
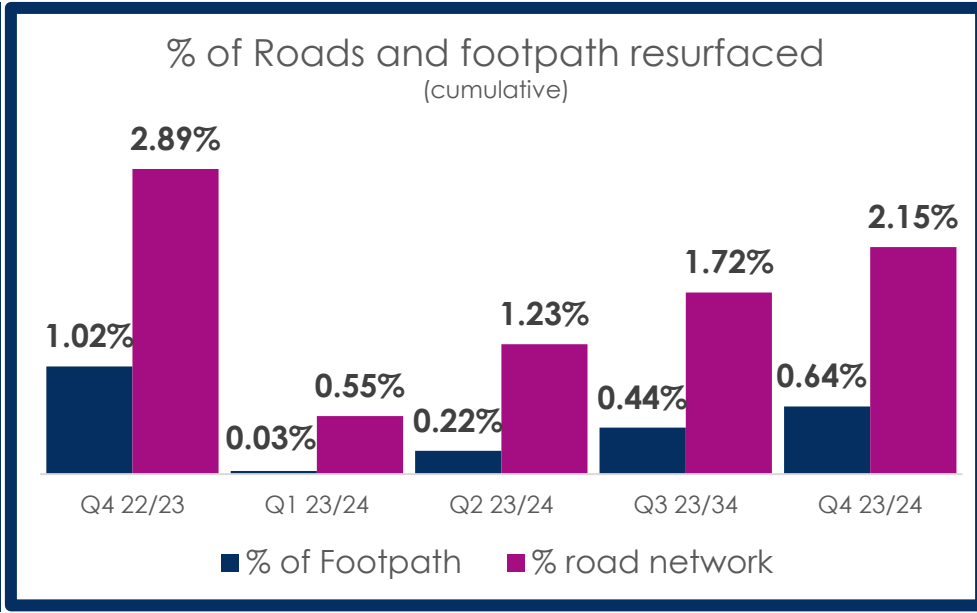
Protective Services – performance

Food Standards

81% of food related service requests from mid residents and Businesses responded to with target of 5 working days.

100% of Priority 1 and 2 premises receiving completed food law intervention in line with the service plan.

236 food law service requests received this year

Number of abandoned vehicles
(quarterly)

	Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
Reported	73	66	36	48	35
Notices served	10	19	3	4	7
Vehicles removed for destruction	1	4	3	3	6

- ■ Reported
- ■ Notices served
- ■ Vehicles removed for destruction

Public Health

1,121 Public Health service requests received from residents and businesses this year.

78% of public health complaints receiving first response within timescale this year.

Trading Standards

208 consumer complaints received this year (decrease from 287 in 2022/23)

% of Consumer complaints

	completed within 14 days	responded to within 5 days
Q4 23/24	81%	100%
Q3 23/24	97%	100%
Q2 23/24	90%	98%
Q1 23/24	80%	100%

- ■ completed within 14 days
- ■ responded to within 5 days

59% of businesses registered for tobacco/vapes in Midlothian visited this year. (11% visited in Q4)

24 interventions carried out in total for 2023/24.

Housing

Key achievements 2023-24

Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP)

Midlothian Council's updated Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) sets out key actions for delivery this year and addresses the next phase in transforming the services provided to meet housing need. These activities are crucial to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation, improving the quality of temporary accommodation provided, continue to deliver Housing First and improve the health and wellbeing of those most vulnerable households. Our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has brought significant change for homelessness over the last 4 years in ending the use of Bed and Breakfast type accommodation and developing better quality temporary accommodation, developing nomination agreements for people experiencing domestic abuse, and leaving the armed forces to enable access to permanent housing, preventing the need for a homeless assessment. Midlothian Council also adopted a model of Housing First which finds suitable properties before inviting nominations from a multi- disciplinary core group. Through the last award of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) monies this year, Housing Services have commissioned the Rock Trust for a two year contract to support our young tenants, helping them to move on from homelessness or avoid it altogether. This quarter, successful grant funding of £120,000 was secured and will further support our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plans.

Meeting housing need

The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/25 to 2028/29 was submitted to the Scottish Government last quarter. The SHIP identifies the Council's priorities for investment in new affordable housing in Midlothian over a 5 year period. The delivery of more affordable housing remains a high priority for Midlothian, as reflected by our ongoing and ambitious housing development programme.

This year we have received the completed handover for 181 new build homes extending our housing stock to 7,170 by end of 23/24.

There were 5,712 active housing applicants placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this year, a 25% increase compared to the same period last year. The total number of lets made to the general needs applicants was 4,776 and 936 made to homeless applicants. Re-let

times to permanent accommodation properties this year has averaged at 35 days to re-let which is slightly higher than last year at 33 days however remains on target for the year and continues on a downward trend from 46 days in 21/22. 552 lets were made this year, an increase of 77 lets from last year. 19 houses were let this year through our Housing first model. 217 lets were made to new build and open market purchases.

Changes to our Housing allocation policy were approved on the 26th of March 2024 following a consultation process with tenants and stakeholders earlier this year. The policy aims to prioritise applicants needs and to let the available vacant properties to those in the greatest need in accordance with current guidance and legislation.

The Housing team continue to make good progress on better communications with our housing applicants and tenants. This year the team held a successful housing pop up day and have carried out a number of walkabouts throughout Midlothian. In addition, Housing services refreshed their vision for the service going forward to provide a more comprehensive approach to homelessness, temporary accommodation, housing allocations and housing management.

Homelessness

There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services, alongside the increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented. The Homeless Persons (Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities) (Scotland) Order 2022 gives people in housing crisis the freedom to settle where they choose with access to the support they need and aims to help them integrate more fully into the local community and to reduce repeat homelessness. The removal of the necessity to have a local connection to an area under this legislation has seen a shift in persons now presenting to Midlothian. The total number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of this year 23/24 is 393, an increase of 21.6% compared to the same period last year.

Our aim is to reduce the length of time that an applicant is in Temporary Accommodation and through our Rapid Rehousing transition plan we are seeing households moving through the homeless system more quickly. Officers take a proactive approach when allocating properties to place applicants in area of choice where possible, increasing the chances to accept the property being flipped and allows for a more sustainable community.

The length of time homeless applicants waited until receiving a permanent housing outcome has decreased to 43.8 weeks for this year

showing a continued downward trend from 70 weeks at the same period last year and 85 weeks for 21/22. Although annual figures for the length of time homeless applicants spent in temporary accommodation are not available until Q1 24/25 (as part of our Scottish Government homeless report) data from Q1 to Q3 of this year shows that an average of 48 weeks was spent in temporary accommodation compared to an average of 87 weeks over the same period last year.

The number of temporary accommodation households that have been flipped to permanent accommodation was 139 this year, reducing the need for multiple moves before being permanently housed, allowing for links established within the local community to be maintained.

Homelessness prevention assists around 20 households with advice and assistance about homelessness prevention per week. This is rental assistance advice, financial awareness advice and mediation. The number of homeless cases provided with advice and assistance this year was 1,243, an increase of 28% compared to this time last year and 56% from 21/22. We continue to promote this service to ensure early successful intervention when possible.

93.2% of homeless applicants sustained a permanent tenancy after 1 year compared to 76.98% during 22/23.

One housing system implementation

This year, a new Housing management system was implemented replacing Capita Academy to Capita ONE. This was a significant task for all services involved in the implementation process. Work continues on some snagging issues. Once fully embedded, the housing system will help drive future digitalization of the housing service and customer self service.

Building Maintenance

The total number of jobs completed internally by our Building Maintenance Service this year was 36,345, an increase of 8% compared to 33,515 completed in 22/23. Jobs include all reactive, planned works, voids and inspections.

The Building Maintenance Service (BMS) Capital upgrade programme has continued throughout the year, surpassing the totals set at the beginning of the year by 925 upgrades. This is an increase of 26% of our expected turnover upgraded within this financial year across our estate. These upgrades include new windows, doors, bathrooms and kitchens helping Midlothian Council maintain its Scottish Housing Quality

Standards.

Earlier in the year, Building Maintenance Service commenced the trial fit out of a brand new heating system which incorporates infra-red heating technology and are monitoring the cost of running this system through the winter with the assistance of the tenants who have moved into this property. This is a further step in achieving net zero and reducing the heating costs for our tenants. This technology may be an ideal system to fit within our adapted homes as requires no radiators within the home freeing up the walls for other medical adaptions.

In line with our Damp and Mould policy the service continued to roll out the environmental sensors throughout our portfolio. This year BMS have installed 2,370 monitors across 1,158 homes. This has increased from 304 across 152 homes last year. This increase provides us valuable information from within our homes, allowing us to achieve our targets set out in our Damp and Mould policy. The information collated by the monitors is sent through to a portal using a gateway system that also monitors our smoke alarms. BMS have installed 992 of these gateways this year increasing our coverage to 38.72% of our properties. We have set an ambitious target of 1,056 units for 24/25 and hope to continue with this roll out to cover all homes within Midlothian.

Housing – performance

5,712 applicants on housing waiting list this year (General needs and Homeless) (increase from 4,612 in 2022/23)

552 housing lets this year.

% of lets made to applicants

Homeless 56.52%

General needs 43.48%

217 Lets to new build and open market purchases this year (81 in Q4)

19 Lets to Housing First applicants this year (7 in Q4)
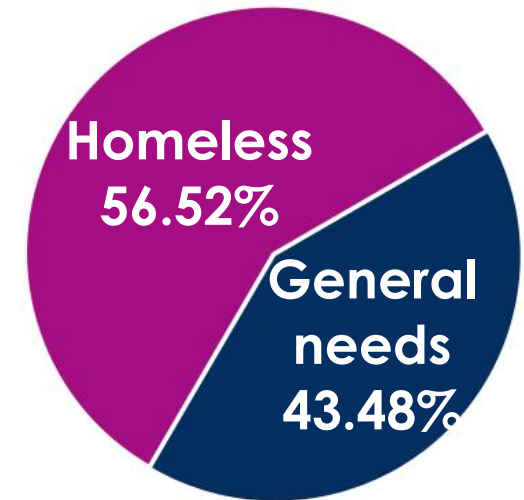
Time taken to re-let permanent accommodation properties (calendar days)

21/22	22/23	23/24
46	33	35
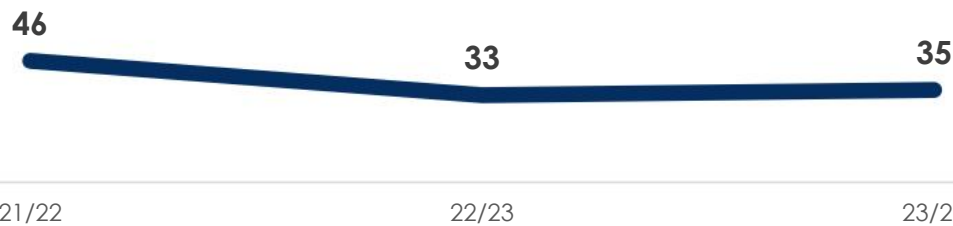
92.12% of Homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year in 23/24

Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants wait until recieving a permanant housing outcome

21/22	22/23	23/24
85	70	44
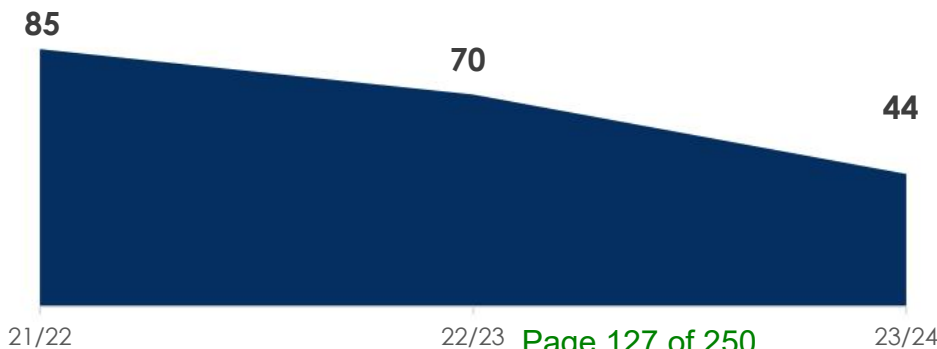
Length of time (weeks) homeless applicants spend in temporary accommodation

Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24
62	46	58	39.5
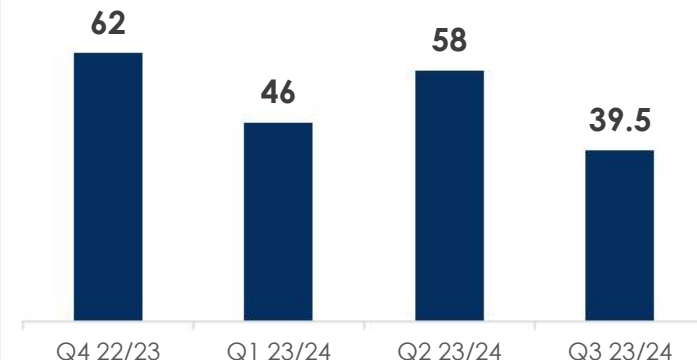
Building Services – performance

% of Council housing meeting Scottish Housing Quality Standards (SHQS) (cumulative)

Period	Value
22/23	32.28
Q1 23/24	34.3
Q2 23/24	34.3
Q3 23/24	49.3
Q4 23/24	59.47

Percentage of housing repairs completed on time this year:

94.1% of **emergency repairs** completed on time

86.67% of **priority 2 repairs** completed on time

84.66% of **priority 3 repairs** completed on time
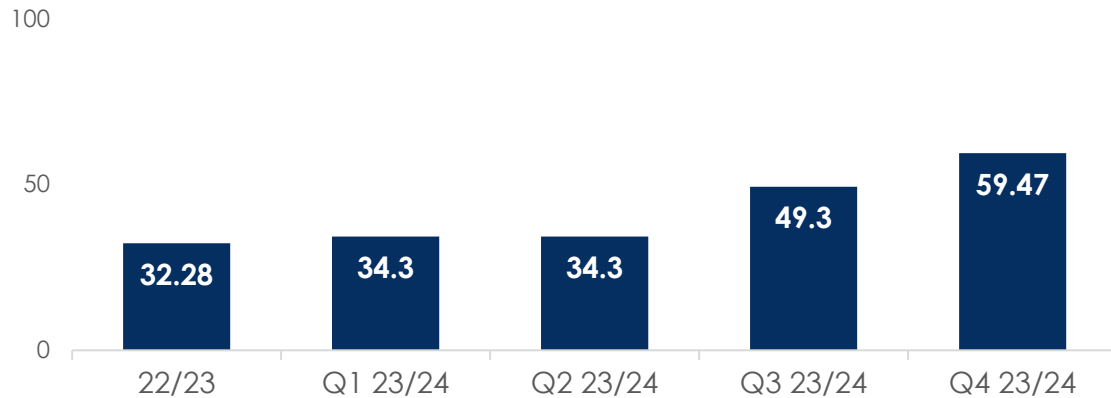
20 days
Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs for 23/24 (includes Priority 2 and 3 repairs)

36,345 jobs completed this year by our
Building Maintenance Service, an increase of 8% compared to 33,515 completed in 22/23.

% of Building warrant assessments processed within 10 days

Q4 22/23	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The nationally adopted target for processing warrant is 20 days, Midlothian aim to process all applications in 10 days.

Economy & Regeneration

Key achievements 2023-24

Midlothian Council's Economic Renewal Strategy sets out our ambitious approach to managing the transition from pandemic lockdown and planning for the longer term challenges the local economy will face. The strategy aims to mitigate the adverse economic impact on the local economy from COVID-19. Key aims are to protect jobs and aid business recovery using a place-based partnership approach that maximises the opportunities developing from the pandemic. Taking this partnership approach, the strategy will foster entrepreneurship, upskilling and training, addressing gaps in the market and changing the way business is done to better align this to customer behaviour. Alongside support for agriculture, tourism and the leisure and hospitality sectors, the council will also promote local jobs and self-employment opportunities, particularly for young people, to give them the necessary skills and support they need to benefit from economic recovery. Work is ongoing to refresh the Economic Strategy and will be presented for approval to Council later in the year.

The total number of new Business start-ups this year was 103. This should realise a forecasted creation of 142 jobs and an estimated contribution of £5.62M to the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading.

A further 75 'Planning to Start' enquiries were received in Q4, an increase of 10 on the previous quarter bringing the full year total to 235 for 2023/24, an increase of 120% over the 2022/23 financial year with 195 pre-starts. Enquiries are received from individuals that are considering setting up a business but need support to achieve this, these clients tend to have numerous sessions with their advisor covering areas such as business planning, access to finance, regularity compliance, routes to market and can take from 3 months to a year to reach the trading stage.

The Business Gateway team continue to promote localised procurement with clients, encouraging registration with the Supplier Development Programme and Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). The team actively encourage businesses to register with the Supplier Development Programme which provides access to free training and support in all aspects of public sector tendering to improve the tender readiness of local suppliers. Last quarter discussions took place between Economic Development and Procurement proposing the creation of action groups to take key areas of work. Proposed areas of focus are:

- Refresh of the Local Procurement Strategy, supporting Community Wealth Building.
- Managing change – the need for better understanding throughout the Council to increase the local spend and to minimise unregulated spend.
- Creation of sessions hosted by procurement and economic development to encourage services to direct spend to the local supply base.

The Community Wealth Procurement Officer is now engaging with clients referred by colleagues across the service, encouraging them to access the Supplier Development Programme, Public Contract Scotland and providing one to one support to help businesses start their procurement journey as part of a growth strategy.

Women in Business Series: £2k of funding was received this year from the City Region Deal Integrated Employer Engagement programme to deliver a series of events for female owned or managed businesses within the financial year. We partnered with East Lothian Council to deliver a joint session at Queen Margaret University in January followed by 4 further events, 2 in each local authority area. Each event was open to attendance from businesses in both local authority areas. This increased access to topics and enabled businesses to collaborate across boundaries. A further request to participants for feedback was distributed in March 2024.

The Business Gateway service continue to promote the social enterprise model to clients where their plans, objectives and values align to the model. Contributing to Community Wealth Building objectives, the team support projects from the Social Enterprise Conversation sessions as they develop. The Economic Development service has provided a total of 63 support inputs to social enterprise during the year. These organisations are a mix of existing third sector organisations, new Business Associations and existing social enterprises with growth aspirations. Social Enterprise and Business Association support is provided by one of the Shared Prosperity Funded Officers, a total of 14 community based and 5 school based social enterprises have received support in Q4.

There are now 3 active Business Associations in Midlothian. 2 are geographic covering Dalkeith and Rosemains with the Midlothian Wellbeing Association being the only thematic association formed to date. A third geographic association is currently being explored in Penicuik and following our fully funded Women in Business Series we have interest in a Midlothian Women in Business Association being supported. An event will be organised to support this development in Q1 2024/25.

Business Gateway Expert Help Programme: work is underway with our Net Zero Nation Programme which will support 13 local businesses to accelerate their Net Zero Journey.

The businesses will take part in 12-month Net Zero Business Accelerators with funding support from Midlothian Council/Business Gateway Midlothian. In return, they must sign an agreement where they commit to approach their Net Zero strategy and credible carbon reduction plan with vigour, speak at physical and online events to encourage other business leaders to start their own transition to Net Zero. The companies will receive a 12-month carbon accounting software license, an expert partner providing 1:1 support over 12 months to help them produce their audited carbon accounts, their carbon reduction plan produced, an auditor to verify and certify their carbon accounts and carbon reduction plan.

Delivering this programme to businesses will bring benefits to the Midlothian local business base in terms of economic, social and environmental progression and aligns with the Councils' commitment to Net Zero.

This year our Economic Development team also progressed our expert help programme, Learn e-commerce, with marketing commencing in November 2023 and a landing page set up for registrations, this programme was finalised this quarter and will support retailers to increase their reach, turnover and profits through a multiple platform approach to e-retailing. 18 Businesses enrolled for the digital course.

The new Midlothian Business Directory on Locate in Midlothian was launched during quarter 3. The new directory allows Midlothian businesses to have a listing on a dedicated webpage with images, an outline of the business activity, the business location and links to websites and social channels, all at no cost. Businesses are also highlighted on a map of Midlothian and categorised by sector, enabling businesses, consumers, and council services. The Midlothian Business Directory will be used by Council Services to support the strategic priority of redirecting public sector spend into the local economy by making it easier for them to find local businesses for tender opportunities. As at the end of March 2024 there were 71 listings on the Midlothian Business Directory, an increase of 29 from end of December 2023. In addition, a Business Gateway portal and new 'strengthen your business' client enquiry tool was launched. This tool is designed for existing businesses that are not registered with Business Gateway but are already trading. The introduction of this tool has reduced the level of data input required of local advisory teams. National and local marketing will take place over the next quarter to increase awareness with existing businesses.

Our Estates team have had continued success in letting a number of properties within the existing PIA estate including two at the recently acquired Hardengreen Industrial Estate. Letting of office space at Hardengreen Business Centre and the newly acquired Hardengreen Business Park. Letting of an industrial unit in Mayfield and one unit at Buccleuch Street. Successful tender and disposal (subject to planning) of the Orchard Centre.

Surveys have been concluded in relation to potential presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) in our Schools. All schools within the at-risk date range of 1930-2000 have been surveyed by consultant engineers who have confirmed that RAAC is not present. The Non-Housing stock condition surveys were completed in line with allocated budget and agreed timelines.

The introduction and use of SMART VIZ IoT software this quarter to assess the occupancy and environmental conditions across the office estate will be used to inform rationalisation proposals going forward.

A tender to let advertising space on our roundabouts was successfully concluded this year and the successful contractor is now engaging positively with the planning service over applications.

Following the adoption of the National Planning Framework No.4, this quarter, the planning service has formally commenced its review of the Council's adopted spatial strategy, the Midlothian Local Development Plan 2. The first phase consists of engagement with community groups, key agencies, the development industry, local residents and elected members. This engagement was ongoing throughout this year.

Throughout 2023/24 the Planning Committee has determined to grant planning permission for a number of strategic developments which contribute towards the Council's planning, economic and environmental objectives, and include:

- adoption of a Discretionary Charging Charter for its Planning Service introducing fees for providing pre application advice, requests to consider non-material variations, discharging conditions attached to a grant of planning permission and enhanced charges for retrospective planning application. From introduction, £29,789.92 has been recovered in 23/24 from pre application enquires and other discretionary charging.
- Confirmation of a Tree Preservation Order to protect eight individual trees and four groups of trees on land at the Kiln, Quarrybank, Cousland and land at Northfield Farm, Cousland.

- determined to refer two cases to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service for prosecutorial action, one regarding an unauthorised advertisement on land adjoining the A68 Slip Road/A720 City Bypass and the second regarding the erection of an unauthorised dwellinghouse at 10 Kirkhill Terrace, Gorebridge.
- granted planning permission for a 54 bed care home and associated uses and a retail unit at Greenlaw Mains, Mauricewood Road, Penicuik.
- adopted the Dalkeith Regeneration Development Framework as Planning Guidance.

Our Building Standards service continues to provide a high level of customer satisfaction against an increasing service demand. In December the Building Standards service was awarded its full re-appointment period by the Scottish Government. This re-appointment period is from the 1st May 2023 until 30th April 2029. Although a positive this reappointment is subject to the following terms:

- The six year appointment period is conditional on the ability of Midlothian Council's building standards service to sustain and improve performance and ensure there is no reversal of performance or investment levels.
- Sufficiently resourcing the service to ensure workforce supply will meet longer term demand projections to maintain operational resilience.

The Building Standards service review has been agreed and outlined in the review is the proposal to increase the workforce to manage the increase in workload, as well as successfully managing the future of the service as it navigates through the expected changes due to succession planning.

Planning, Sustainable Growth & Investment–performance

Number of new Business start ups (quarterly)

Quarter	Number
Q4 23/24	23
Q3 23/24	24
Q2 23/24	32
Q1 23/24	24
Q4 22/23	63

108 Businesses signed up to the **Midlothian Business Green Pledge** this year (increase from 50 in 2022/23)

63 **Social enterprises supported** this year (19 supported in Q4)

235 **'Planning to Start' enquires/submissions** this year (increase from 195 in 2022/23)
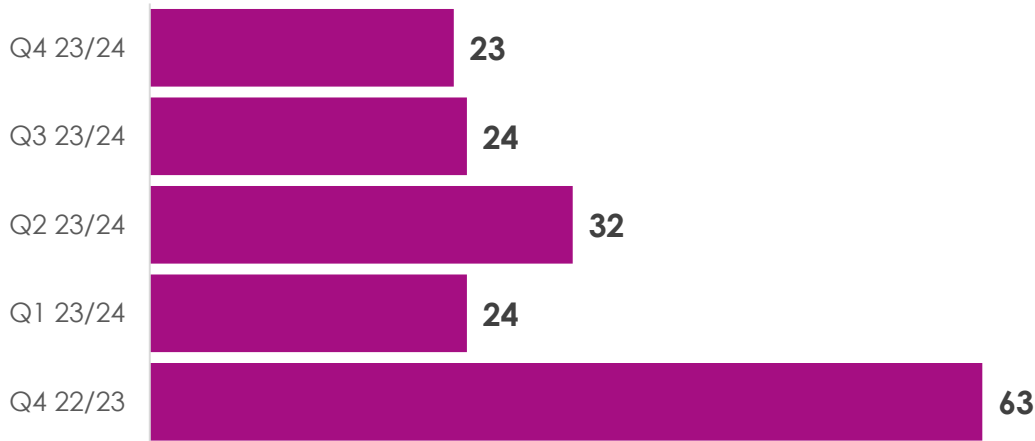
Social media

1,690 Locate in Midlothian followers.

2,288 Business Gateway followers

% of planning applications completed within target of 80%

Quarter	Percentage
Q4 22/23	85%
Q1 23/24	68%
Q2 23/24	81%
Q3 23/24	79%
Q4 23/24	75%

54.6 weeks

Average time to determine planning applications for **major** developments

(Increase from **50.1** weeks in Q3)

9.3 weeks

Average time to determine planning applications for **minor** developments.

(Increase from **9** weeks in Q3)

Property and Facilities – performance

% of school meal uptake

Quarter	Primary	Secondary	Free school meals
Q1 23/24	56.68%	20.36%	74.28%
Q2 23/24	58.85%	45.71%	70.62%
Q3 23/24	60.74%	44.41%	69.70%
Q4 23/24	59.08%	38.03%	67.75%
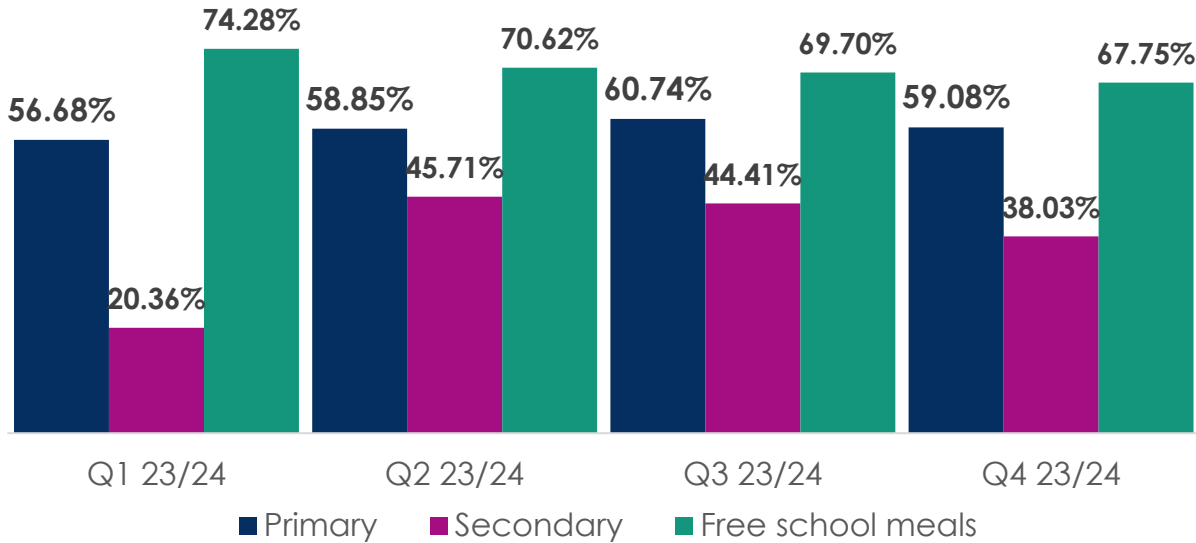
Percentage of school meal food waste

Quarter	Waste %
Q4 23/24	5.21%
Q3 23/24	5.15%
Q2 23/24	5.71%
Q1 23/24	6.86%

Target less than 7.5% of waste
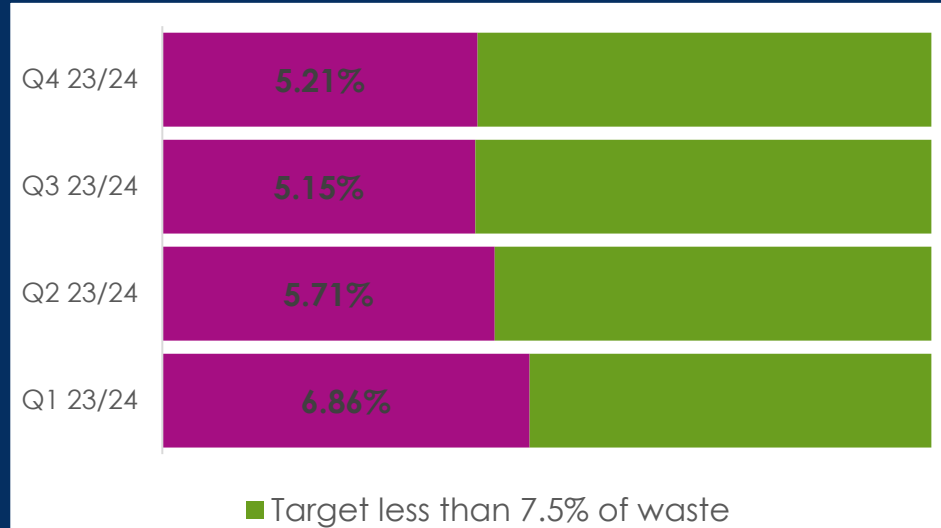
7.28 nursery and primary school meals prepared per hour this year (7.26 in Q4)

TARGET: *APSE national average 8.84 meals prepared per hour*

7.23 secondary school meals prepared per hour this year (7.91 in Q4)

% of Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) complete

99%
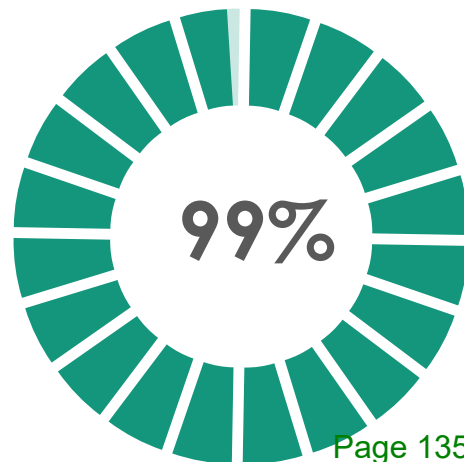
Percentage of cleaning hours against budgeted hours achieved

Quarter	primary school	Secondary school
Q1 23/24	100.99	101.85
Q2 23/24	101.62	103.82
Q3 23/24	102.45	107.28
Q4 23/24	106.76	105.75
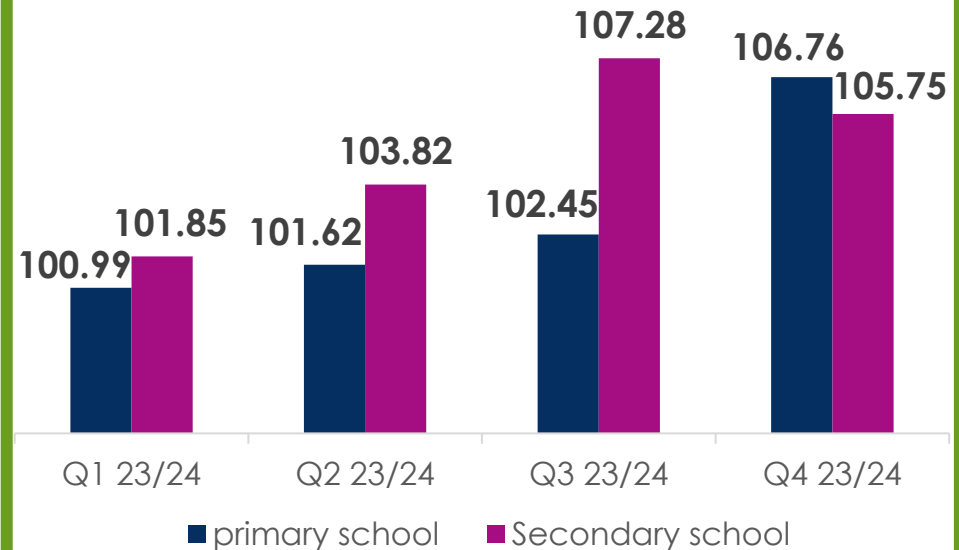
Health and Wellbeing

Across our Facilities services, the percentage of Secondary school meal uptake has increased considerably from 20.36% in quarter 1 to 45.71% in quarter 2 this year. This figure was sustained during quarter 3 with 44.41% uptake with an average annual figure of 37.13%. This is due to changes made to the menu offered to secondary schools to attract pupils back into the dining room. This figure puts Midlothian above the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) national average of 36.23% uptake for meals in Secondary Schools. Primary school meal uptake continues to sit well above the APSE average of 41.24% with annual average for Midlothian at of 58.84%.

Across Sport and Lesisure services, our tonezone memberships continues to grow through improved marketing and promotion with a total of 4,628 memberships this year to date. An increase of 13% from quarter 1 of this year.

1,250 primary 4 pupils attended free swimming lessons this year after an effective system was put in place from our programme development officer.

Our Active Schools Midlothian team continue to work in partnership with sportsscotland, providing opportunities for our children to adopt healthy and active lifestyles throughout their school years and into adulthood by supporting and sustaining a network of volunteers, coaches, leaders and teachers who, in turn, deliver extra curricular physical activity and sport before, during and after school and in the wider community. Various events and activities have been held throughout the year, including a Learning Disability Olympics event held at Newbattle Campus with 12 teams and over 90 athletes competing. A Paralympic sport event at St Davids High school which saw over 60 pupils participate with physical disabilities and additional support needs from eight Midlothian schools. To ensure such events taken place, our Active Schools team work in partnership with Scottish Disability Sport to encourage more inclusive opportunities for our young people.

This year, Lasswade High School were awarded the Gold School Sport Award which was achieved through a combined effort from Lasswade High School, sports council, pupils and Midlothian Active Schools. Led by the Midlothian Active Schools Team, sportscotland School Sport Award is an assessment and planning tool which encourages schools to demonstrate an on-going commitment to increase young people's opportunities and engagement in physical education, school sport and leadership and provide clear pathways to life-long participation in sport.

Various training and development has taken place across Sport and Leisure this year by our development and Active Schools team including sportscotland communication training, safeguarding young leaders and tutor training. In addition, our new Community Sports Hub Officer is now in post and has made a positive start.

Roslin, Bilston and St Marys multi-use games areas (MUGA) are now open to the community to book and hire.

Midlothian Active Choices (MAC) is a sport and leisure physical activity referral programme, aimed at adults who are inactive and experience various health conditions. The programme offers a range of supported activities across Midlothian to help manage these health conditions. This year saw 5,688 Midlothian Active Choices attendees and 1,435 new referrals after completion of MAC sessions.

Sport and Leisure - performance

Number of Tonezone memberships (cumulative)

Quarter	Value
Q4 23/24	4,628
Q3 23/24	4,574
Q2 23/24	4,193
Q1 23/24	4,084
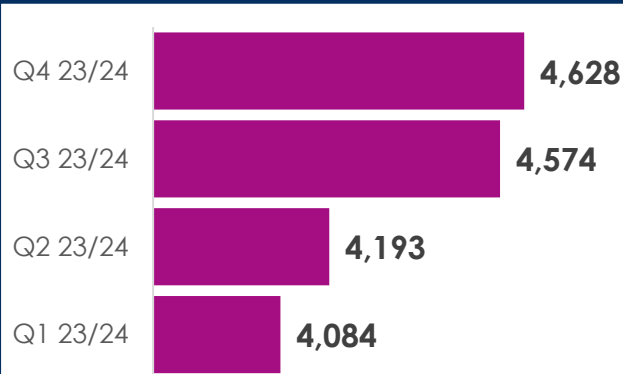
Number of attendances at Sport and Leisure facilties (quarterly)

Legend:
- All facilities (excl pools)
- Swimming pools
- Outdoor facilities - pitches/pavillions

	Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
All facilities (excl pools)	62,501	65,520	39,881	80,164
Swimming pools	55,792	44,405	24,016	45,613
Outdoor facilities - pitches/pavillions	28,281	22,099	21,589	30,661
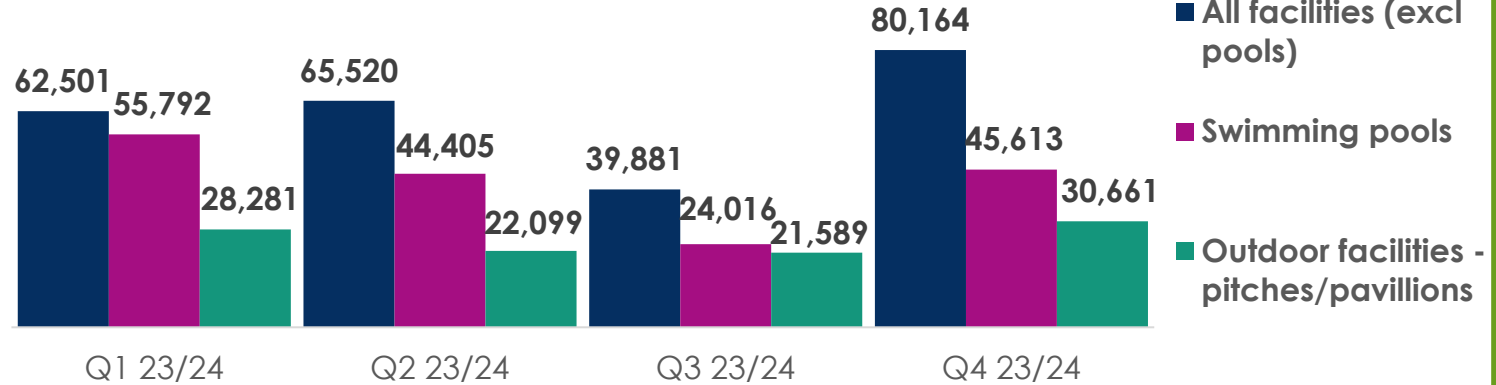
Midlothian Active Choices (MAC)

Number of MAC attendees (quarterly)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	1,298	1,529	1,414	1,447
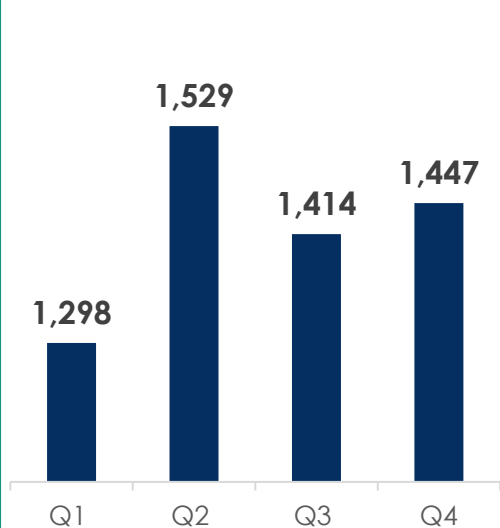
Number of new refferals after completion of MAC sessions (quarterly)

	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
	345	370	341	379
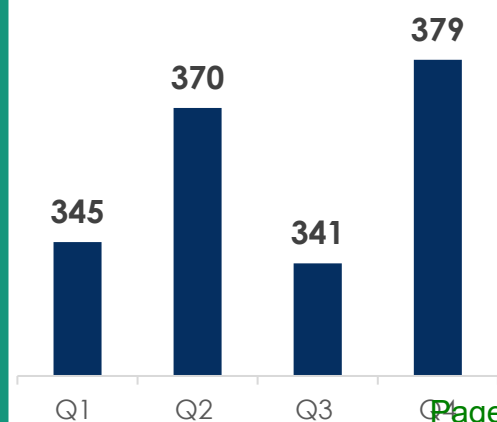
Ageing Well and Active Schools programme

Number of activities offered by Ageing Well to 50+ age groups (quarterly)

Q1 23/24	Q2 23/24	Q3 23/24	Q4 23/24
715	728	660	660
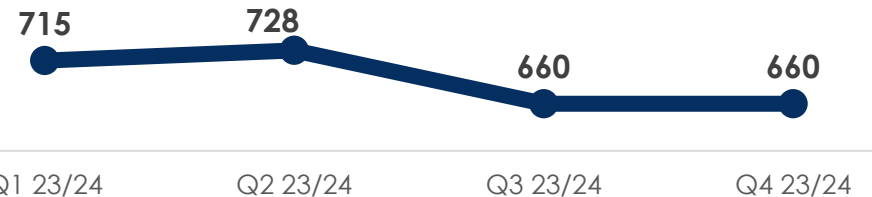
197 activities involving Active Schools programme

2,802 participants attending Active Schools clubs

1,972 volunteer hours delivered in Active Schools programme

To note, figures are for Q3. Annual figures not available until Sept from sportscotland.

Capital Investment Programme

As Scotland's fastest growing local authority area, it is critical to delivery that investment in community infrastructure, such as housing, the learning estate, economic investment and green infrastructure, is in the right place at the right time. This will help our communities to live well, live locally and prosper. How we invest in community infrastructure must also respond to changes in our working and living patterns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. Communities need to be able to readily access the services they require. Capital investment is also an opportunity to support our local economy through job creation and skills enhancement, particularly in relation to supporting a transition to a green economy as we invest in sustainable, highly energy efficient buildings.

As a growing Council, we have the opportunity to transform parts of Midlothian in a way that reflects how we live now. We will invest in community infrastructure with a focus on place-making, reducing inequalities, improving economic opportunities and improving education and health and wellbeing outcomes.

The Capital Investment Strategy brings together many strands of the Council's activities to build upon our past successes and drive forward innovation in a co-ordinated and achievable manner for the benefit of Midlothian and its citizens.

The Capital Investment Strategy sits centrally within the Council's future planning activities and in doing so has to reflect the demands of Council services to ensure positive outcomes are achieved in the right place, at the right time for the maximum benefit to Midlothian. The extensive capital programme delivers new schools, a record investment in council housing, improved community infrastructure, investment in the local transport network and innovative developments such as the new low carbon heat network in Shawfair.

To ensure Midlothian is 'building back better', this investment is also creating new jobs, apprenticeship opportunities, opportunities for businesses and communities and families hard-hit by the impact of the pandemic. These new opportunities help lead the way out of the pandemic and towards a better future for Midlothian.

The Education Learning Estate Strategy programme has been developed and is subject to regular review meetings with Education and stakeholders to ensure effective monitoring, reporting and delivery of improvement and expansion of the Education estate including Early Years provision. This currently covers approximately 30 projects at various stages of development.

Midlothian Council is overseeing a significant housing programme. Phase 1 provided 864 additional houses within Midlothian. The total number of new homes from phase 2, 3 and 4 is currently estimated at 1134, comprising of 489 from phase 2 budget and 645 from phase 3 and 4 budgets. Progress continues with 645 homes currently being constructed on site either through commencement of enabling works or main contract works as of November 2022. An additional 327 homes are funded for delivery in phase 5. This included the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland, with 191 homes to be built to the exacting Passivhaus standard, in line with Midlothian Council's Net Zero Housing Design Guide. This ensures exceptionally high levels of energy efficiency and low utility bills for our residents. At present any further Passivhaus developments are paused for a cost benefit analysis exercise.

This year, key achievements across our Construction and Development team include:

- Nearing completion of Contract 1 at Destination Hillend with parking and service infrastructure and Alpine Coaster to be ready for operation from 1st July.

- Easthouses Primary School nearing completion, on track for delivery to agreed timescale with school open for August 2024.

- Woodburn Primary School 9 class, STEM and gym extension on site and due for completion in accordance with agreed programme in November 2024.

- Appointment of Kier for Stage 1 Pre Construction Service Agreement at Mayfield Community Campus.

- First Passivhaus developments completed, occupied and certified at Buccleuch St Dalkeith and Burnbrae, Bonnyrigg.

- Largest Passivhaus development on site at former Newbattle High School, part of Scotland's largest Passivhaus housing programme.

- Replacement Highbank Intermediate Care on site with extra care housing now on site with Ogilvie in Bonnyrigg, all being built to Passivhaus standard.

- Midlothian Energy Limited (MEL) delivering district heat network in Shawfair with heat connections due Summer/Autumn 2024.

Challenges and risk

Over recent years, innovative ways of working have been introduced and services adapted at pace to respond to the needs of our citizens, in particular those experiencing the greatest levels of poverty and inequality. Our services are continuing to build on this learning moving forward, harnessing the energy, flexibility and creativity demonstrated by our workforce, to embed a culture of continuous improvement and innovation across Place.

Growing Council

In addition to the financial sustainability challenges, other challenges for Midlothian continue with our recovery from the pandemic, the cost of living crisis, the growing and ageing population and the increasing demand for services that this brings.

The recent Census results 2022 highlights that Midlothian remains the fastest growing local authority in Scotland with an increase of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%. In terms of households, Midlothian saw the highest percentage increase at 17.2% since the 2011 census. Population density in Midlothian is 273.1 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 69.8. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas.

This growth creates the opportunity to meet the housing need with 25% of new homes being built in the affordable housing bracket, in addition to the expansion in Council house building. This construction will directly support employment and will see a steady increase in the value of Council Tax income received over time.

The approved Capital Strategy sets out the infrastructure required to meet those demographic pressures and includes the financial contributions Midlothian will make to the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal. Encompassing five main themes the City Region Deal will bring significant investment across the regions with total investment of circa £1.3 billion across:

- Data Driven Innovation: £751 million

- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills: £25 million
- Transport: £156 million
- Culture: £45 million
- Housing: £313 million

Through the Data Driven Innovation strand the Deal will leverage existing world-class research institutes and commercialisation facilities in order that Easter Bush becomes a global location of Agritech excellence. The Easter Bush project includes significant investment in transport infrastructure along the A701/2 transport corridor. In addition, by improving on-site infrastructure at Easter Bush and transport infrastructure, The University of Edinburgh expects commercial partners will be able to co-locate at scale to commercialise Agritech breakthroughs.

Risk
The Council's Strategic Risk Profile is presented retrospectively to Audit Committee quarterly. The most critical risks to the Council are Financial Sustainability, Climate Change and the Change Programme. Corporate Solutions is key to the delivery of mitigating actions to these risks; through strategic planning and the Medium Term Financial Strategy and driving forward the Council's transformation programme to derive change and redesign services.

Pentana Performance Dashboard

A full review of quarterly performance data is available via Pentana (Browser login link - https://midlothian.pentanarpm.uk/login)

Quarter 4 - Place

31	21	73	5	6	102
Quarterly Reporting Place PIs - On Target	Quarterly Reporting Place PIs - Off Target	Quarterly Reporting Place PIs - Data only	Quarterly Reporting Place PIs - No data available	Quarterly Place High Service Risks	Quarterly Place All Service Risks
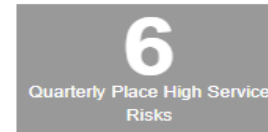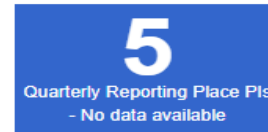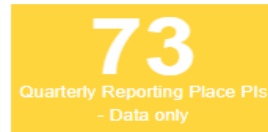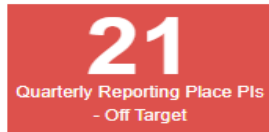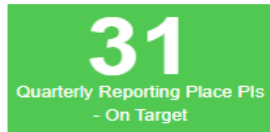
Quarterly Reporting Place PIs - Off Target

▼1 Code & Title ▲ 2	Gauge	Value	Target	History
● BS.PLACE.HSN.01 Re-let time permanent accommodation properties (calendar days)		45 days	35 days	
● BS.PLACE.P.5.2b Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Modern fa...		98.4%	100%	
● HSN3 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the S...		56.47%	100%	
● HSN4b Average time taken to complete non-emergency repairs (LGBF)		25.00 days	7.00 days	
● PLACE.BUILDS.02 Be on site with first modular housing development within 12 mon...		No	Yes	
● PLACE.MPI.04 % of invoices paid within 30 days of invoice receipt (cumulative)		88%	90%	
● PLACE.MPI.05 % of Service PIs that are on target/ have reached their target. (does ...		86.67%	90%	
● PLACE.P.14.2e Percentage of total road network resurfaced (cumulative)		2.15%	2.2%	
● PLACE.P.5.2a Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Free from seri...		98.9%	100%	
● PLACE.P.5.2c Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Healthy, safe ...		34.3%	100%	
● PLACE.PFM.17 Number of secondary school meals prepared per hour (APSE)		7.91	8.84	
● PLACE.PFM.18 Number of nursery and primary meals prepared per hour (APSE)		7.26	8.84	
● PLACE.PFM.21 Percentage of free school meal uptake (P1-P5)		67.75%	77.57%	
● PLACE.PLAN.01 Determine 80% of planning applications within target (2 months for...		75%	80%	
● PLACE.PLAN.02 Average timescale (weeks) to determine planning applications for ...		54.6	50	
● PLACE.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		83.33%	95%	
● PLACE.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 wor...		85.37%	95%	
● PROSERVICES.30 Percentage of businesses registered for tobacco/vapes in Midlot...		0%	10%	
⊙ ● RHM.a.04.4mi Percentage of lets made to homeless list applicants		53.5%	60%	
⊕ ● RHM.a.07.1b Average time in hours taken to complete emergency repair		103	24	

← 1 of 2 →

Midlothian Council Annual Report 2023/24

Individuals and communities in Midlothian will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener lives by 2030.
No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.

Our new Single Midlothian Plan focuses on three main priorities:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work.
- No child or household need live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

In recent Census results, Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all mainland council areas in Scotland with an increase of 16%. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas living a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

To accommodate growth within the resources available we will need to think differently about the services we deliver and how we deliver them. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, in June 2023 Council approved the new Transformation Blueprint 2023-2028. Some services will be transformed to meet our growing population within the financial envelope available, others may be delivered in a different way and some will need to stop. Fostering a collaborative culture where everyone is focused on the same end goal – creating effective and efficient services which will benefit our citizens – will be crucial to future success. The Transformation Blueprint will focus on the nature of the work we will do, developing a 21st century workforce supported by a workplace fit for the future where joined up services are delivered in a holistic and integrated way.

The 5 key objectives of the Transformation Blueprint are:

1. Support the Council to address the 5 year funding gap of £29.121 million outlined in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.
2. Follow the Money to ensure that the services we commission, contracts we manage and digital solutions we use deliver value for money.
3. Develop an organisational workforce that is flexible ensuring that all staff have the necessary skills to work effectively supported by digital technologies that fit for a 21st century workforce.
4. Design a workplace fit for the future delivering services in a holistic and integrated way as well as utilising our assets to maximise their potential.
5. Drive forward multi-agency transformation to deliver systems-level change resulting in integrated service delivery which improve community outcomes.

Whilst a full update for the performance for each of the Council's Service areas is published separately, this report reflects an overview of the key service updates, against the thematic areas of the Single Midlothian Plan.

Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2023/27

Midlothian will be Healthier - Achievements

Progress in delivery of strategic outcomes

The Midlothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) plan and direct delegated health and social care services for the people of Midlothian. Midlothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) oversees the delivery of all the services delegated to Midlothian IJB. The aim of integrated health and social care is for the people to experience more joined up treatment and care.

Justice, Duty Social Work and Adult Protection –
Prevention

Social Work continue to ensure that individuals referred to the service are supported and supported in crisis, this includes signposting to appropriate services, undertaking assessments and direct interventions.

Work continues to ensure that staff have the relevant skills, competence and knowledge to work effectively, and that they are trauma informed and able to engage with service users using a range of approaches. The Midlothian Trauma Training Programme was launched in July 2023 and incorporates both open access training sessions and bespoke service support events.

Social Work undertake a range of duties to identify, minimise and manage risk and ensure that all suspicions, disclosures or actual harm are acted upon.   Measures to protect adults need to be considered in the context of wider range of support services and an investigation may highlight gaps in support. In these instances, an assessment of need would be undertaken to identify and develop an outcomes focused care plan.

Understanding Changing needs

The Justice Service have increased access to services for perpetrators of domestic abuse and to victims and children who may have been impacted by the behaviour. .

Learning and Development

A wide range of training to ensure all social work staff are skilled and competent in their role. The service has funded 10 social workers across Adult services and Children service to undertake post grad qualification in Leadership and Management, Practice Education, Mental health officer Training and Child Welfare and protection.

Care at Home

The Care at home continues to be challenged with increasing demand for people to live safely at home in the community. There are approximately 7,200 hours of care at home delivered every week across Midlothian from our in house service, the external providers and through SDS Option 2 pathways. The commissioned providers and the in house service have all recently been inspected by the Care Inspectorate and received positive grades relating to service delivery.

Midlothian will be Safer - Achievements

This theme aims to address the underlying causes of offending behaviour, working with a range of individuals and organisations within community justice. The Community Justice (Scotland) Act 2016 supported a redesign of the community justice system, transferring the responsibilities for reducing offending and reoffending to local Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs). A National Strategy for Community Justice (2022) and National Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework (2023) were published by the Scottish Government to outline the new model.

The Community Justice Outcome Improvement Plan (CJOIP) has been approved and we are working on the actions agreed in the plan. The Community Justice Service was onboarded to OutNav, the digital platform used to capture contributions and report on progress towards improved outcomes at personal, service and strategic levels.

Research continues to show that community-based sentences are more effective in reducing offending than short prison sentences; they enable those convicted of offences to retain connections with local supports and family relationships. Community Payback Orders (CPO) have a number of requirements but Supervision and/or an Unpaid Work or Other Activity Requirement are those most often used by the Courts.

Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child Achievements

All children, young people, adults and communities in Midlothian are supported to be the best they can be. This will be achieved through a nurturing, respectful and collaborative approach that promotes wellbeing, equity, inclusion and lifelong learning.

The Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000, as amended 2016, placed new duties on education authorities. As a result, the Education Service Improvement Plan not only reflects the key priorities in the Midlothian Single Plan but also aligns closely with the key priorities in Education – Achieving Excellence & Equity: National Improvement Framework and Improvement Plan 2023:

- Placing the human rights and needs of every child and young person at the centre of education
- Improvement in children and young people's health and wellbeing
- Closing the attainment gap between the most and least disadvantaged children and young people
- Improvement in skills and sustained, positive school-leaver destinations for all young people
- Improvement in attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy

The Getting It Right for Every Child Board (GIRFEC) is one of the subgroups of the SMP, and one of the main drivers for the effective delivery of services to children. The GIRFEC Plan also known as the Integrated Children's Service Plan 2023-2026, is a statutory three year plan devised by the local authority and health. The plan develops key outcomes and priority actions which are designed to improve the lives of children, young people and families.

The plan has 12 shared priority themes, outcomes and actions which sit within 4 subgroups, namely:

1. Children& Young People's Rights
2. Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing

3. Whole Family Wellbeing
4. Information Sharing and Commissioning

The Promise work continues to drive forward our children's service improvements.

Priority Areas in the 21-24 Plan:
- A Good Childhood
- Whole Family Support
- Supporting the Workforce
- Planning
- Building Capacity

Referrals: Work has been progressed over the past year to allow us to have a clearer overview and understanding on how referrals come into the service. There is much greater confidence that those referrals coming into children's services are appropriate and for those referrals which relate to early support to prevent escalation, these are directed to the Family Wellbeing Service. This has been a significant piece of work and the impact on the service is that social workers are only involved in working with families who require a certain level of intervention and support.

Midlothian will support Residents to Improve Employability and Outcomes in our Communities - Achievements

Overall very good progress has been made in meeting the targets set in the Community Learning and Development Three Year Partnership Plan which ensures Midlothian Council fulfils its statutory duty in relation to youth work, adult learning, and community capacity building with zero red actions, 10 amber and 23 green

Employability Highlights: The Parental Employability Project has supported 298 parents over the last 12 months, 186 new parents and 114 existing parents.

80 entered employment or progressed within their employment to more hours or a higher paid job. 80 parents entered self-employment or progressed within their self-employment to increase their income levels.

36.78% of parents achieved a work-related accredited qualification totalling 275 qualifications. 9 parents started Further or Higher Education.

Youth Work: 3422 engagements have taken place over the last 12 months by young people accessing youth work provision across a range of provisions for example Croft Street Hub, Feel Good Friday, Dungeon and Dragons, Youth Platform, Soup Group, Lady Wood Youth Club, Young Carer's Projects, Duke of Edinburgh, and Youth Participation Focus Groups

Adult and Family Learning: 1525 engagements have taken place over the last 12 months in our community based and adult learning programme. CLLE's contribution to Education Scotland's 'Gaelic Language Plan 2022-2027 has included an increase in Gaelic courses on offer as part of our Adult and Family Learning Programmes. We have offered a Beginners Gaelic Class, Post Beginners Gaelic Class and a Family Gaelic class. This ensures there is a learning pathway for individuals and families to explore and learn together. Through this offer we are encouraging the increased use of Gaelic, promoting the acquisition and learning of Gaelic and also promoting a positive image of Gaelic.

Midlothian will be Greener - Achievements

Midlothian Council was one of the first local authorities to sign Scotland's Climate Change Declaration, publicly acknowledging the challenges and opportunities that climate change brings with a commitment to make the Council's activities net zero carbon by 2030. Work continues to implement the Council's Climate Change Strategy and focus continues to achieve future emissions targets. The ambitious strategy sets out how we will reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, encourage, and work with others in our community to mitigate and adapt to changing climate. The strategy incorporates an action plan with a number of initiatives and ongoing programmes which together are helping to reduce our emissions and carbon footprint. Climate change actions included "*delivering the Shawfair low carbon community heating system and looking to develop heat networks across the county.*" Works started on site in February 2023 with concentration on the back up energy centre and main spine pipe network. Ground works on the Zero Waste Site, including grouting mine shafts for the energy centre, is now complete and the energy centre is constructed with the internal fit out of the back-up energy centre with E boilers and thermal stores included, to be completed early 2024/25.

The Scottish Government's Heat in Buildings Strategy (2021) sets out its aims and objectives for achieving net zero emissions within the entire building stock in Scotland by 2045, including addressing poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty. As part of this Strategy, Local Heat & Energy Efficiency Strategies (LHEES) will set out the long-term plan for decarbonising heat in buildings and improving energy efficiency across an entire local authority area. The Strategies will draw on a standardised methodology to:

- set out how each section of the building stock needs to change to meet national objectives, including achieving zero greenhouse gas emissions in the building sector, and the removal of poor energy efficiency as a driver of fuel poverty.
- identify strategic heat decarbonisation zones and set out the principal measures for reducing buildings emissions within each zone.
- prioritise areas for delivery, against national and local priorities.

This year work has progressed at pace to review the findings of the previously reported Stage 4 LHEES study, the outcome of which has provided a good foundation for the remaining stages. There has been positive and good engagement with internal stakeholders' business and community representatives, and regular engagement with Joint Venture Partners Midlothian Energy who will be an essential partner in delivering an effective and viable plan. The LHEES Strategy and covering report is complete and approved by the Scottish Government for compliance and subject to Council approval this year.

Thematic actions are designed to increase awareness, promote reflection and action on the key Climate Emergency issues of energy, food and travel. They will lead to a better understanding of carbon emissions and greater investment in greener travel, renewable heat, energy sources and heating efficiency in Midlothian. The actions will help inform and give people the opportunity to get involved to make a difference. Midlothian's future will be different through having more people aware and engaged in Climate Emergency issues, both consciously and subconsciously. This will make Midlothian more resilient to the effects of Climate Change and in addition help contribute more widely to Climate Change resilience.

Outcome 1: Learning for Sustainability is increased
Outcome 2: Sustainable Living is increased
Outcome 3: Low Carbon/Renewable Energy Development and Home Energy Saving is Increased
Outcome 4: Carbon Storage is increased

Work continues to engage with businesses regarding their own climate change commitments via the 'climate change pledge' programme and there is increasing awareness in the Council and

across communities on the back of communications from the Council and the working progressed by the Community Planning Climate Change Emergency group.

The street lighting capital programme was completed ahead of plan this year with a targeted 752 new lighting column replacements. A further 1,164 street lights were upgraded to LED lanterns to include a central management system for dimming. In addition, our lighting team delivered 5 Traffic signal renewals this year and upgraded CCTV system was completed in Dalkeith, Bonnyrigg and Penicuik.

New waste service standards and waste collection policies were approved by Council. The development of these polices will ensure services operate transparently and fairly, encouraging householder participation, maximise the quality and quantity of materials collected for recycling and improve operational efficiencies. Work is being undertaken to communicate changes to our customers via our website pages and other promotional activities. Going forward, monitoring these standards will help us communicate more effectively with our customer when complaints arise, giving a clear understanding of the levels of service that can be expected. In addition, £2.2m was awarded from the Scottish Government's Recycling Improvement Fund which allow the Council to fully transition existing waste and recycling collection services to meet the recommendations in the Charter for Household Waste Recycling.

A new service excellence model and Recycling and Green space voluntary pledge for front line teams was launched this year. The work carried out as part of the model will help to create a more positive culture with the overall aim being to deliver excellent services to our Midlothian residents. As part of this culture change programme and ongoing service reviews, a pilot was developed to provide staff with additional support and advice on issues such as mental health and wellbeing. This will be ongoing throughout 24/25.

Midlothian will have a Wellbeing Economy and be Better Connected - Achievements

A wellbeing economy aims to deliver increased economic opportunities for all, providing meaningful and fair work, better outcomes for young people, sustainable places, improved health outcomes, reduced poverty and environmental sustainability.

Midlothian Council's Economic Renewal Strategy sets out our ambitious approach to managing the transition from pandemic lockdown and planning for the longer term challenges the local economy will face. The strategy aims to mitigate the adverse economic impact on the local economy from COVID-19. Key aims are to protect jobs and aid business recovery using a place-based partnership approach that maximises the opportunities developing from the pandemic. Taking this partnership approach, the strategy will foster entrepreneurship, upskilling and training, addressing gaps in the market and changing the way business is done to better align this to customer behaviour. Alongside support for agriculture, tourism and the leisure and hospitality sectors, the council will also promote local jobs and self-employment opportunities, particularly for young people, to give them the necessary skills and support they need to benefit from economic recovery. Work is ongoing to refresh the Economic Strategy.

The Regional Prosperity Framework (RPF) 2021 guides and integrates public, private and Third Sector decisions, actions, collaborations, strategies, policies and investments and sets out 3 key areas to support the rebuilding of the economy:

- people – to access fair work, to learn and develop new skills and to live happy and healthy lives
- places – that are sustainable, and attractive to live and work in and where enterprise thrives
- planet – meeting our needs in a way that will allow future generations to meet theirs, with a

focus on reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (sustainability).

Localised procurement with is promoted to clients, encouraging registration with the Supplier Development Programme and Public Contracts Scotland (PCS). Businesses are encouraged to register with the Supplier Development Programme which provides access to free training and support in all aspects of public sector tendering to improve the tender readiness of local suppliers. The creation of action groups to take forward key areas of proposed work to focus on are:

- Refresh of the Local Procurement Strategy, supporting Community Wealth Building.
- Managing change – the need for better understanding throughout the Council to increase the local spend and to minimise unregulated spend.
- Creation of sessions hosted by procurement and economic development to encourage services to direct spend to the local supply base.

The Economic Development priorities for the 2023/27 Single Midlothian Plan align to the social, environmental and economic aspirations of the wellbeing economy with people focussed outcomes that will also deliver local economic benefit.

Outcome 1: Develop a Midlothian Community Wealth Building Action Plan to guide future economic activity across the partnership
Outcome 2: Increase economic opportunity to maximise income, empowering individuals and communities
Outcome 3: Develop a culture of entrepreneurship, increasing business knowledge, for current and future generations

The total number of new Business start-ups this year was 103 forecasting to create a total of 142 jobs for the Midlothian economy in their first year of trading. Most of these businesses are sole traders/owner operators and do not have employees.

The Council has had continued success in letting a number of properties within the existing PIA estate including two at the recently acquired Hardengreen Industrial Estate. Letting of office space at Hardengreen Business Centre and the newly acquired Hardengreen Business Park. Letting of an industrial unit in Mayfield and one unit at Buccleuch Street. Successful tender and disposal (subject to planning) of the Orchard Centre.

Midlothian Council is overseeing a significant housing programme. Phase 1 provided 864 additional houses within Midlothian. The total number of new homes from phase 2, 3 and 4 is currently estimated at 1134, comprising of 489 from phase 2 budget and 645 from phase 3 and 4 budgets. Progress continues with 645 homes currently being constructed on site either through commencement of enabling works or main contract works as of November 2022. An additional 327 homes are funded for delivery in phase 5. This included the largest Passivhaus programme in Scotland, with 191 homes to be built to the exacting Passivhaus standard, in line with Midlothian Council's Net Zero Housing Design Guide. This ensures exceptionally high levels of energy efficiency and low utility bills for our residents. At present any further Passivhaus developments are paused for a cost benefit analysis exercise.

Midlothian will work towards Reducing Poverty Achievements

This theme focuses on reducing all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty.

There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services, alongside the increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented. The Homeless

[Persons (Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities) (Scotland) Order 2022](#) gives people in housing crisis the freedom to settle where they choose with access to the support they need and aims to help them integrate more fully into the local community and to reduce repeat homelessness. The removal of the necessity to have a local connection to an area under this legislation has seen a shift in persons now presenting to Midlothian.

Our aim is to reduce the length of time that an applicant is in Temporary Accommodation and through our Rapid Rehousing transition plan we are seeing households moving through the homeless system more quickly. A proactive approach is taken when allocating properties to place applicants in area of choice where possible, increasing the chances to accept the property being flipped and allows for a more sustainable community.

The Scottish Housing Regulator reviewed our Homelessness practice and showed an understanding of the local issues we face, providing positive feedback to Housing Services for the work completed during this challenging period.

The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) 2024/25 to 2028/29 was submitted to the Scottish Government. The SHIP identifies the Council's priorities for investment in new affordable housing in Midlothian over a 5 year period. The delivery of more affordable housing remains a high priority for Midlothian, as reflected by our ongoing and ambitious housing development programme.

Midlothian Council's updated Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) sets out key actions for delivery this year and addresses the next phase in transforming the services provided to meet housing need. These activities are crucial to reduce the time spent in temporary accommodation, improving the quality of temporary accommodation provided, continue to deliver Housing First and improve the health and wellbeing of those most vulnerable households. Our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan has brought significant change for homelessness over the last 4 years in ending the use of Bed and Breakfast type accommodation and developing better quality temporary accommodation, developing nomination agreements for people experiencing domestic abuse, and leaving the armed forces to enable access to permanent housing, preventing the need for a homeless assessment. Midlothian Council also adopted a model of Housing First which finds suitable properties before inviting nominations from a multi- disciplinary core group. Through the last award of our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan (RRTP) monies this year, Housing Services have commissioned the Rock Trust for a two year contract to support our young tenants, helping them to move on from homelessness or avoid it altogether.

Cost of Living Crisis: Midlothian's citizens are facing significant financial challenges. The impact on households continues to be noted across the UK with 49% of adults reporting an increase in their cost of living in December 2023 (Office for National Statistics; Francis-Devine et al, 2022). The UK is currently facing an unprecedented wave of increasing prices, bills and tax challenges. The 41 year high inflation rate of 11.1% in October 2022 has been the main driver of the cost of living crisis which has outstripped wage and benefit increases. Recent data shows the annual inflation rate was 4.0% in December 2023, up slightly from 3.9% in November. The price rises continue to impact low-income households hardest as a larger proportion of their costs are on energy and food. The Resolution Foundation estimates that absolute poverty is set to rise in the short- run, from 17.2% in 2021-22 to 18.3% in 2023/24 (or an additional 800,000 people in poverty).

As our citizens feel the impact of the Cost of Living Crisis, they will seek additional support from public services; in particular local authorities. To respond to this emerging crisis, the Council established a Cost of Living Task Force in 2022, which is chaired by the Council Leader and meets regularly to coordinate mitigating activities.

Community Capacity Building and Reducing Poverty
- 58 groups in the last 12 months have received direct community capacity building support.
- The Cost-of-Living Task Force agreed £66,000 carry forward funding to support the trusted partners model till June 2024, with a further report being prepared jointly by CLLE and Place Directorate regarding future Cost of Living Supports.

- The excellent work of the Federation of Community Councils through the MTRaP group on Roads, Paths and Footways supported by CLLE was recognised in the recent CLD Partnership Plan Progress Visit.

Challenges and Risks

Financial position: Council approved the 2024/25 budget at its meeting on 27 February 2024. Whilst the 2024/25 budget is agreed, the challenge remains to reach ongoing financial sustainability. Cost and income projections for future years are embedded in the Council's Transformation Blueprint which contains a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Officers continue to work closely with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges.

Financial Services continues to work to ensure the Council has robust financial management arrangements in place with a full suite of financial monitoring reports regularly presented to Council. The team continues to provide in-depth financial input to revenue and capital projects embedded into the Medium Term Financial Strategy and successful delivery of the Treasury Management Strategy with Midlothian's Loans Fund Interest rate now the lowest in Scotland.

Economic pressures Inflation, as well as rising energy costs, are affecting the construction industry in Scotland. The UK is experiencing unprecedented adverse market conditions, leading to significant rises in tender prices for a wide range of materials. There is evidence that inflation of between 10% and 15% beyond BCIS predictions is affecting projects. The pandemic has also accelerated financial challenges, and the growth from being the fastest growing local authority in Scotland places significant pressure on Midlothian to be able to deliver high quality services to its citizens.

Growing Council: The draft 2022 Census results have now been published. They show Midlothian with an increase of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%.

In terms of households, Midlothian saw the highest percentage increase at 17.2% since the 2011 census. Population density in Midlothian is 273.1 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 69.8. Midlothian has 10 data zones which fall into the most deprived areas.

National Care Service: The estimated funding gap for the next three financial years does not include the associated costs of the Scottish Government's National Care Services (Scotland) Bill. If enacted, the bill would have fundamental implications for the community and for Local Government itself. The wide reaching changes in the bill aim to deliver a National Care Service by the end of the parliamentary term, which will impact on all aspects of the work of the Corporate Solutions team, including financial implications, in both revenue and capital, our asset base, our workforce, governance and legal arrangements and our digital infrastructure and platforms. It will require an immediate focus for the foreseeable future, and this will inevitably have implications for other priority work at a time of continued resource constraint.

Poverty: As families continue to be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis this is expected to lead to an increase in the number of families experiencing poverty. This also applies to workers on low incomes. We are assessing all claims that come into children and families from the Scottish Welfare Fund for early identification of families who may need additional support. We also have income maximisation officers within the service who offer support to families. This has been a very positive approach to supporting families, ensuring they are receiving the benefits they are entitled to.

		3				5				1				10	
		Midlothian Council On Target				Midlothian Council Off Target				Midlothian Council No Data				Midlothian Council Data Only	

PI Off Target

...	Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Next Update Due	Last Update	History
🔴	**CORP8** Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...		92.6%	95.0%	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	**BS.MC.SPSO.05.1** Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		82.3%	95%	01 Jul 2024	Q4 2023/24	
🔴	**BS.MC.SPSO.05.2** Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		58.67%	95%	01 Jul 2024	2023/24	
🔴	**BS.MC.SPSO.05.3** Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		77.3%	95%	01 Jul 2024	2023/24	
🔴	**MC.SPSO.04.2** Average time in working days for a full response at stage 2		22.747	20	01 Jul 2024	2023/24	

← 1 of 1 →

Balanced Scorecard Indicators Annual Report 2023/24

This section of the Council report is presented using the Balanced Scorecard approach. The four Balanced Scorecard perspectives and key areas of focus are shown in the following table and the associated key indicators that follow are drawn from across the Councils services.

Customer/Stakeholder	Financial Health
- Improving outcomes for children, young people and their families - Ensuring Midlothian is a safe place to live, work and grow up in - Creating opportunities for all and reducing inequalities - Growing the local economy and supporting businesses - Responding to growing demand for Housing and Adult Social Care services	- Maintaining financial sustainability and maximising funding sources - Making optimal use of available resources - Reducing costs and eliminating waste
Internal Processes	**Learning and Growth**
Improving and aligning processes, services and infrastructure	- Developing employee knowledge, skills and abilities - Improving engagement and collaboration - Developing a high performing workforce

Each of the perspectives shown above are supported by a number of key measures and indicators which ensure that the Balanced Scorecard informs ongoing performance reporting and helps to identify areas for further improvement. The strategy map below provides an at a glance summary of the key performance indicators identified for the Single Midlothian Plan and under each of the perspective headings of the Balanced Scorecard. Detailed performance data is available in the quarterly service performance reports.

1

Single Midlothian Plan - Key Indicators

Community Planning Partnerships (CPPs) draw together public, voluntary and private sector bodies, and local communities. CPPs deliver a shared 'plan' based on evidence to improve the lives of local people, in Midlothian, the plan is called the Single Midlothian Plan. By working together as a Community Planning Partnership, individuals and communities will be able to lead healthier, safer and greener lives by 2030. No child or household need live in poverty. Midlothian will be a Great Green Place to Grow by achieving our net zero carbon ambitions and supporting local people to strengthen the skills they need for learning, life and work.

We are moving to a four-year Single Midlothian Plan from 2023-27 with the first annual reporting of the plan will be September 2024. The structure will now consist of 7 thematic priorities with key actions across the four years and will be refreshed annually.

- Midlothian will be Healthier
- Midlothian will be Safer
- Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child
- Midlothian will support residents to improve Employability and Outcomes in our Communities
- Midlothian will be Greener
- Midlothian will have a Wellbeing Economy and be Better Connected
- Midlothian will work towards reducing Poverty

The first reporting of the key performance indicators in the new plan will be included in this report at Q2 24/25. This will allow for the finishing off the existing SMP

Customer Perspective - Adult, Health and Care

Midlothian

1	6	0	1
Balanced Scorecard ASC - OFF Target	Customer Perspective ASC - On Target	Customer Perspective ASC - Data only	Customer Perspective ASC - No Data yet

1. Adult Health and Care

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status
Number of completed Adult Carer Support plans by VOCAL (accumulative)			615	600	✅
Number of completed Adult Carer Support plans by HSCP (accumulative)			152	80	✅
Number of service areas with a functioning feedback mechanism.			7	7	✅
Percentage of Health and Social Care specific LearnPro modules working / accessible that relate to registered professional practice.			100%	100%	✅
All Health and Social Care specific LearnPro modules with up to date content that relate to registered professional practice.			Yes	Yes	✅
Performance against revenue budget	£52.319m	N/A	No data yet		❓
Average number of working days lost due to sickness absence (cumulative)	17.10	21.16	24.26	10.53	🛑
% of service priority Actions on target / completed, of the total number	82.86%	72.97%	93.75%	90%	✅

Customer Perspective - Community Safety

Midlothian

0	2	0	0
Customer Perspective Community Safety - Off Target	Customer Perspective Community Safety - On Target	Customer Perspective Community Safety - Data Only	Customer Perspective Community Safety - No data yet

2. Community Safety

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status
Successful completion rate of Community Payback Orders is maintained at or above the national average.	73.4%	70%	74%	78%	✅
Percentage of all street light repairs completed within 7 days (quarterly)	100%	98.74%	98.42%	90%	✅

Customer Perspective - GIRFEC

Midlothian

3	4	18	0
Customer Perspective GIRFEC - Off Target	Customer Perspective GIRFEC - On Target	Customer Perspective GIRFEC - Data only	Customer Perspective GIRFEC - Data not available
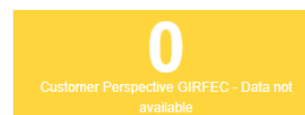
3. Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status
Number of outcome focused assessments undertaken (cumulative)	1,339	1,329	1,397	Data only	
Number of referrals to the duty service (cumulative)	8,287	9,016	7,179	Data only	
Number of foster carers going through prep groups on a quarterly basis (cumulative)	24	14	10	Data only	
Number of new foster carers approved (cumulative)	3	1	1	Data only	
Number of foster carers de-registered quarterly (cumulative)	5	4	5	Data only	
Number of permanence LAAC Reviews happening quarterly (cumulative)	10	27	19	Data only	
Number of children matched in quarter – (average months from perm LAAC to matching panel) (cumulative)	8	4	1	Data only	
Number of places taken at residential houses - capacity 10	12	10	10	Data only	
The number of children living in kinship care	61	59	69	Data only	
The number of children living in foster care	65	61	62	Data only	
Number of Midlothian children on the Child Protection Register	38	43	40	Data only	
Rate per 1,000 population of Midlothian children on the Child Protection Register in relation to the Scottish average (2.3)	2.1	2.4	2.2	Data only	
% of Child Protection plans which have integrated chronology	79%	94%	90%	Data only	
Rate per 1,000 of Midlothian Looked After Children AT HOME in comparison with the Scottish average (2.6)	1.5	1.3	2.1	Data only	

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status
Rate per 1,000 of Midlothian Looked After and Accommodated Children in comparison with the Scottish average (9.7)	7	6.7	7.4	Data only	
The number of looked after children and young people not in residential placed outwith Midlothian	11	8	9	Data only	
The number of looked after children and young people placed in Residential School outwith Midlothian	2	2	2	Data only	
The number of young people who are allocated/engage with Through Care and After Care service	64	64	54	Data only	
Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within a 8 week period.	98%	99%	100%	100%	✅
Child Protection: % of Core Group meetings held within 15 days for Initial	86%	89%	86%	100%	🛑
Improve Primary School attendance	92.25%	93.03%	93.42%	95%	🛑
Improve Secondary School Attendance	87.36%	87.11%	87.14%	91.5%	🛑
Reduce exclusions in Primary schools (Rate per 1,000)	3.04	3.03	7.59	15	✅
Reduce exclusions in Secondary schools (Rate per 1,000)	20.2	22.6	18.27	15	✅
Percentage of Midlothian Care Experienced school leavers progressing to positive destinations	88%	90%	100%	85.96%	✅

Customer Perspective - Improving Opportunities for Midlothian

Midlothian

0	1	1	1
Customer Perspective IOM - Off Target	Customer Perspective IOM - On Target	Customer Perspective IOM - Data only	Customer Perspective IOM - No Data available

4. Improving Opportunities for Midlothian

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status
Midlothian Citizen Advice Bureaux (CABs) will generate an income maximization of £625k per quarter	£5,703,704	£5,119,209	N/A	£2,500,000	❓
% of those leaving school secure a positive destination	95.5%	N/A	95.29%	95%	✅
Percentage of Unemployed People Assisted into work from Council (LGBF)	16.17%	23.91%	Data will be available in November 2024		📈

Customer Perspective
Sustainable Growth and Housing

Midlothian

3	3	1	3
Customer Perspective Sustainable Growth - Off Target	Customer Perspective Sustainable Growth - On Target	Customer Perspective Sustainable Growth - Data only	Customer Perspective Sustainable Growth - No Data available

5. Sustainable Growth

Performance Indicator	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		Status
	Value	Value	Value	Target	
Number of environmental awards e.g. Green flags	1	2	2	2	✅
Percentage of Council fleet which is 'Green' (cumulative)	8.2%	8.2%	8.2%	8%	✅
Percentage of waste going to landfill per calendar year (quarterly)	12.3%	13.3%	N/A	15.0%	❓
Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the 'Modern facilities & services' Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria	98.4%	98.4%	98.4%	100%	🛑
Number of New Business Start Ups (LGBF)	124	118	103	Data only	📈
Street Cleanliness Score (LGBF)	89.1%	88.5%		95.5%	❓
Percentage of total household waste that is recycled (LGBF)	47.5%	47.0%	N/A	54.0%	❓
Corporate Indicator - Percentage of the Council's housing stock meeting the Scottish Housing Quality Standard criteria (LGBF)	77.55%	32.28%	56.47%	100%	🛑
Re-let time permanent accommodation properties (calendar days)	46 days	33 days	35 days	35 days	✅
Percentage of total road network resurfaced (cumulative)	2.05%	2.89%	2.15%	2.2%	🛑

8

Financial Health Perspective

Midlothian 🍃

1	0	16	1
Financial Health Perspective - Off Target	Financial Health Perspective - On Target	Financial Health Perspective - Annual Data Only	Financial Health Perspective - Annual Indicator

Short Name	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status
Performance against revenue budget	£240.921m	£258.468m	No data yet		❓
Corporate Indicator - Primary Education - Cost per pupil (LGBF)	£6,720.00	£7,149.00	LGBF data will be available in November 24		
Corporate Indicator - Secondary Education - Cost per pupil (LGBF)	£8,217.00	£8,372.35			
Corporate Indicator - Pre- Primary Education - Cost per pupil (LGBF)	£10,550.00	£9,917.00			
Corporate Indicator - The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in Residential Based Services per Child per Week (LGBF)	£6,943.79				
Corporate Indicator - The Gross Cost of "Children Looked After" in a Community Setting per Child per Week (LGBF)	£497.70				
Corporate Indicator - Central Support services as a % of Total Gross expenditure (LGBF)	3.79%	3.74%			
Corporate Indicator - Cost of collecting council tax per dwelling (LGBF)	£9.10	£9.44			
Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 days (LGBF) (quarterly)	93.1%	90.0%	92.6%	95.0%	🛑
Corporate Indicator - Net cost of waste collection per premise (annual) (LGBF)	£63.58	£66.99	LGBF data will be available in November 24		
Corporate Indicator - Net cost of waste disposal per premise (annual) (LGBF)	£57.09	£31.25			
Corporate Indicator - Net cost of street cleaning per 1,000 population (LGBF)	£12,526.40	£12,368.00			
Corporate Indicator - Cost of maintenance per kilometre of roads (LGBF)	£9,402.00	£10,980.56			
Corporate Indicator - Cost of Trading Standards, Money Advice & Citizen Advice per 1000 population (LGBF)	£5,787.92	£8,390.00			
Corporate Indicator - Cost of environmental health per 1,000 population. (LGBF)	£16,730.04	£12,780.00			
Corporate Indicator - Older Persons Home Care Costs per Hour (Over 65) (LGBF)	£29.75	£56.96			
Corporate Indicator -Self Directed Support	4.4%	3.6%			
Corporate Indicator - The Net Cost of Residential Care Services per Older Adult (+65) per Week (LGBF)	£699.00	£627.00			

Learning and Growth Perspective

0 Learning and Growth Perspective - Off Target	**1** Learning and Growth Perspective - On Target	**5** Learning and Growth Perspective - Data Only	**0** Internal Processes Perspective - Data not available

Short Name	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status
Percentage of staff turnover (including teachers) (quarterly)	9.5%	10.36%	9.2%	Data only	
Corporate Indicator - The Percentage of council employees in top 5% of earners that are women (LGBF)	55.0%	56.9%	58.9%	50%	
Corporate Indicator - The gender pay gap between average hourly rate of pay for male and female - all council employees (LGBF)	2.52%	2.86%	2.7%	Data only	
Corporate Indicator - Sickness Absence Days per Employee (All employees)	9.33	11.04	11.71	Data only	
Corporate Indicator - Teachers Sickness Absence Days (LGBF)	4.61 days	5.62 days	6.44 days	Data only	
Corporate Indicator - Local Government Employees (except teachers) sickness absence days (LGBF)	11.22 days	13.20 days	13.79 days	Data only	

Internal Processes Perspective

Midlothian

2	2	7	0
Internal Processes Perspective - Off Target	Internal Processes Perspective - On Target	Internal Processes Perspective - Data Only	Internal Processes Perspective - Data not available

Short Name	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24		
	Value	Value	Value	Target	Status
% of internal/external audit actions progressing on target.	93.06%	100%	97.16%	85%	✅
% of high risks that have been reviewed in the last quarter	100%	100%	100%	100%	✅
Corporate Indicator - Percentage of adults satisfied with libraries (LGBF)	66%	66%	LGBF data will be available in November 2024		
Corporate Indicator - Percentage of adults satisfied with parks and open spaces (LGBF)	83%	85.3%			
Corporate Indicator - Percentage of adults satisfied with leisure facilities (LGBF)	63%	66.7%			
Corporate Indicator - Percentage of Adults satisfied with local schools (LGBF)	67%				
Corporate Indicator - Percentage of Adults satisfied with refuse collection (LGBF)	81%	84.7%			
Corporate Indicator - Percentage of adults satisfied with street cleaning (LGBF)	58.63%	60%			
Total number of complaints received (quarterly)	6,450	6,459	1,750	Data only	📈
Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working days	87.7%	90.62%	83.4%	95%	🛑
Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working days	70.21%	77.55%	58.67%	95%	🛑

Inspection of Lasswade Primary School and Nursery

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Report for Information

1   Recommendations

PRS is asked to:

(i)   Note the content of the <u>Education Scotland inspection letter</u>
(ii)   Note that Education Scotland are confident that the school and nursery has the capacity to continue to improve and so will make no more visits in connection with this inspection.
(iii)   Congratulate the Headteacher, pupils, parents and staff connected with Lasswade Primary School on the key strengths highlighted in the report.

2   Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The report outlines the outcome of the Education Scotland inspection of Lasswade Primary School and nursery class.

27 February 2024

Report Contact:
Colin McLean, Quality Improvement Manager Professional Learning and Digital Inclusion & Learning
Colin.McLean@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background/Main Body of Report

3.1 In November 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Lasswade Primary School and nursery. The report was published on 27 February 2024 and is now available on Education Scotland's website.

3.2 Education Scotland is responsible for inspecting education settings throughout Scotland. Inspectors use the following selected quality indicators from How Good is our School 4? to evaluate the quality of education provision in the primary school:

QI	1.3	**Leadership of Change**
QI	2.3	**Learning, teaching and assessment**
QI	3.1	**Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**
QI	3.2	**Raising attainment and achievement**

Inspectors use the following selected quality indicators from How Good is our Early Learning and Childcare? To evaluate the quality of education provision in the nursery:

QI	1.3	**Leadership of change**
QI	2.3	**Learning, teaching and assessment**
QI	3.1	**Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**
QI	3.2	**Securing children's progress**

At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes are published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement This letter provides a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work. This is published along with the summary of inspection findings (SIF). The SIF is a professional report and summarises the findings from all the evidence gathered during the inspection. This document is intended to be used by staff in progressing school improvement.

National Improvement Framework (NIF)
As part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the reporting procedures for the National Improvement Framework (NIF) have been placed on a statutory footing. The evaluations of Quality Indicators 2.3 and 3.2 feed directly into the evidence base for the NIF in order to demonstrate progress with the NIF priorities and drivers for improvement. This progress is reported annually by the Scottish Government.**.**

Inspection Findings
Lasswade Primary School and Nursery were evaluated as follows:

Primary Stages	Quality Indicator	Grade
	1.3 Leadership of change	Very good
	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
	3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
	3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Good
Early Learning and Childcare	Quality Indicator	Very good
	1.3 Leadership of change	Good
	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Good
	3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion	Good
	3.2 Securing children's progress	

3.3   Strengths
The inspection team found the following strengths in the school and nursery:

- The effective leadership from the headteacher across the school and early learning and childcare setting. She is supported well by senior leaders and motivated staff. This is leading to a culture that reflects the vision, values and aims of the school and early learning and childcare setting very well.

- Children who are proud of their school and early learning and childcare setting. Children are happy, friendly, respectful and interact well. They are keen to learn and contribute to the life of the school.

- Staff who maintain a focus on wellbeing across the school and early learning and childcare setting. They help develop children who are responsible, able to find solutions to challenges, engage well in activities, and are proud of their successes.

- Staff's success in addressing gaps in children's attainment. Staff in the early learning and childcare setting support children well to accelerate their learning, particularly in developing their early communication, language and wellbeing skills.

3.4   Areas for improvement
The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Midlothian Council.

- Continue to develop approaches to learning and teaching. Teachers should make sure that activities are set at the right level of difficulty for all children.

- Increase outdoor learning experiences across the nursery and primary as part of the curriculum.

- Continue to raise attainment, including how the school and early learning and childcare setting checks that all children are making good progress.

3.5   Conclusion

Education Scotland is confident that the school has the capacity to continue to improve and will make no more visits in connection with this inspection. Midlothian Council will inform parents/carers about the school's progress as part of its arrangements for reporting on the quality of its schools.

4   Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1   Resource
There are no financial and human resource implications associated with this report.

4.2 Digital

There are no Digital implications.

4.3 Risk

Education Scotland's team of Inspectors visit a sample of education settings every year to find out how they are performing. A report is published which informs parents about the key strengths of the setting and its capacity for further improvement.

Following the publication of the report further visits may be made to the setting, by the Education Authority to assist improvement and monitor progress.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by central officers in the Education Team is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of settings to demonstrate their capacity to improve.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

4.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications
Appendix B – Background information/Links

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1   Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian

A.2   Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

☐ Holistic Working
☐ Hub and Spoke
☐ Modern
☐ Sustainable
☒ Transformational
☒ Preventative
☐ Asset-based
☒ Continuous Improvement
☐ One size fits one
☐ None of the above

A.3   Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

☐ One Council Working with you, for you
☒ Preventative and Sustainable
☐ Efficient and Modern
☒ Innovative and Ambitious
☐ None of the above

A.4   Delivering Best Value
Noted within.

A.5   Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders
A link to the published report has been made available to Elected Members, parents of children currently attending Lasswade Primary School and other interested parties.

A.6   Impact on Performance and Outcomes
The setting will continue to improve its work in line with the school improvement plan and central officers in the Education Team will continue to challenge and support the setting in relation to developing and implementing a range of quality improvement strategies.

A.7   Adopting a Preventative Approach
The Education (Scotland) Bill aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities. Midlothian is highly committed to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

A.8   Supporting Sustainable Development
The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

APPENDIX B

Education Scotland inspection findings letter to parents
Education Scotland summary of inspection findings

Inspection of Lawfield Primary School and Nursery

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Report for Information

1   Recommendations

PRS is asked to:

(i)   Note the content of the 23 April 2024 inspection report.
(ii)   Congratulate the acting headteacher, pupils, parents and staff connected with Lawfield Primary School and Nursery on the key strengths highlighted in the report.

2   Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The report outlines the outcome of the Education Scotland inspection of Lawfield Primary School and nursery class.

01 May 2024

Report Contact:
Colin McLean, Quality Improvement Manager Professional Learning and Digital Inclusion & Learning
Colin.McLean@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background/Main Body of Report

3.1 In February 2024, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland undertook a further visit to Lawfield Primary School and nursery. The report was published on 23 April 2024. and is now available on Education Scotland's website. This is also attached as Appendix B. This followed an inspection carried out in 2020, with further visits carried out in 2022 and 2023.

3.2 Education Scotland is responsible for inspecting education settings throughout Scotland. They do so using core quality indicators;

QI 1.3 Leadership of Change
QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment
QI 3.1 Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion
QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

The inspection of Lawfield Primary School and Nursery in February 2024 was carried out using the Education Scotland "further inspection visit" (2-day) model. This was following the inspection visits carried out below.

The school and nursery were originally inspected by Education Scotland in 2020 with the following outcomes.

Primary Stages	**Quality Indicator**	**Grade**
	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
	3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	Weak
Early Learning and Childcare	**Quality Indicator**	**Grade**
	2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	Satisfactory
	3.2 Securing children's progress	Satisfactory

Strengths
The strengths identified in the original Education Scotland letter June 2020 were:

- Staff's positive engagement with professional learning which is planned well and directed effectively by the headteacher. This is beginning to improve key aspects of learning and teaching across the primary school and nursery.
- Children's support for one another in the primary classes and when involved in activities out with class. Children in the nursery are kind and considerate of each other.
- Strong teamwork in the nursery class, which is helping to improve the support and learning experiences for children and their families. This includes positive changes to planning approaches, and improvements to practice.

Areas for Improvement
The main areas for improvement in the original Education Scotland report in June 2020 were:

- Raise children's attainment across the nursery and primary school.
- Ensure children benefit from consistently high-quality learning and teaching, which includes increasing opportunities for children to lead their own learning.
- Improve assessment approaches across the primary stages. Ensure all teaching staff use information gathered from children's learning and assessment activity more effectively to plan learning experiences which meet the needs of all children.

The inspectors concluded "As a result of our inspection findings we identified areas where improvements are required. In light of the current circumstances (sic. Covid pandemic restrictions), we will liaise with Midlothian Council to discuss our findings and support for the school. We will provide you with an update on next steps once the school has reopened."

A further visit was carried out by inspectors in January 2022 and March 2023. Inspectors were mindful of the impact of the pandemic on progress made towards addressing all areas for improvement identified in the original inspection.

The inspectors report January 2022 concluded that "Understandably, the school has been responding to the challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. These have had a significant impact on the work of the school. Staff are prioritising their plans to support recovery. As a result, the school needs more time to take forward the recommendations from the original inspection. We will also carry out another visit to the school within one year of the publication of this letter."

The inspectors report of March 2023 concluded that "The school has made insufficient progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Midlothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 12 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Midlothian Council the details of this inspection."

The headteacher at Lawfield Primary School left Midlothian Council in August 2023 and an acting headteacher has been in post since. A new, permanent head teacher has been appointed and takes up post on 28th May 2024.

Additional support for the school has included:

- Additional Depute Head Teacher.
- Additional funding to support whole-school nurture approaches.
- Additional support from raising attainment teachers, early years principal teacher, additional support needs team members and the quality improvement team.
- Exploring how partner services can better support the needs of the community.

3.3   In the 2024 further inspection visit, no update on the inspection grades was given. The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work:

- Use of attainment data to plan next steps in learning and make accurate judgements about children's progress.
- Staff's effective partnership working with Midlothian's Raising Attainment Team is supporting them to develop appropriate strategies to raise attainment.
- Children's attendance and engagement in learning.
- There are early indications that approaches to improving attainment are working.
- Senior leaders have demonstrated a relentless focus on improving the climate for learning across the school. Staff are now well-placed to increase the focus on ensuring the provision of high-quality learning and teaching.
- Senior leaders, supported very well by local authority officers, have taken forward significant improvements to the way nurture is promoted across the school.
- The organisation of the enhanced class has been improved. As a result, a significant number of children accessing the enhanced class now benefit from very effective support. There are early indications that this new approach is having a very positive impact on these children's emotional wellbeing and learning.

- All children who access nurture support now spend more extended periods of time in their own classes. Children have a more positive attitude to learning and display greater resilience in classes.
- Children engage well in their learning in the majority of classes.
- Staff across the school are becoming increasingly reflective of their own practice. They demonstrate an enthusiasm in improving learning and teaching.
- At the early level, staff are improving the ways they promote learning through play. They have significantly improved the spaces both in the atrium and classrooms. As a result, children now engage in play-based activities in a more suitable environment. This enables them to access more appropriate resources to be curious and creative. Children now have increased opportunities to lead their own learning.
- Staff now plan learning in a more streamlined and focused way. Their new approach to planning takes better account of Curriculum for Excellence experiences and outcomes and national Benchmarks. Their plans provide greater clarity about what children are expected to learn and how this will be assessed. Staff's use of the new Midlothian progression pathways is supporting children to build on prior learning more effectively.
- Children are beginning to talk about their learning and what they need to do to succeed. Staff engage in regular meetings that focus better on moderating standards through robust evidence gathering of children's achievements in their learning.
- Teacher's understanding of strategies to support children with social and emotional barriers to learning has improved.
- The majority of teachers have improved their classroom environment. As a result, more children benefit from safer, nurturing classroom environments where they can enjoy uninterrupted learning.
- As a result of the skilful leadership of the acting headteacher, an improved ethos and culture are evident across the school. This strong leadership has led to significant progress being made to improve children's behaviour, relationships and the learning environment.
- The physical environment of the school has also improved.
- In consultation with local authority officers, the acting headteacher has identified a reduced number of key priorities for improvement. They have provided staff with increased clarity about improvement priorities, and this is supporting an increasing pace of change.

3.4 The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the acting headteacher and a representative from Midlothian Council.

- Staff require further professional learning and clearer guidance to ensure these contribute to raising children's attainment.
- Practitioners should review further the use of the nursery playroom environment and outdoor space to ensure they motivate children sufficiently to progress in their learning.
- Senior leaders should continue to develop further staff's understanding and use of the 'Lawfield Way' to ensure all children experience consistently high-quality learning.
- Staff should continue to monitor and develop a cohesive approach to the removal of barriers to learning based on ongoing assessment. They should ensure the provision of well-planned interventions that lead to positive outcomes for all children across the school and nursery.

- Overall, staff have made a very positive start to improving assessment and meeting the needs of children. They should continue to build on the work undertaken this session, ensuring that effective assessment accurately informs planned learning to meet the needs of all learners.

3.5 Conclusion

The school is beginning to make progress since the original inspection. Education Scotland will liaise with Midlothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve and will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 12 months.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

Lawfield Primary School and nursery will continue to receive additional support to make the necessary improvements. This support has included, during 2023-24.

- Locality team members working at the school for part of the week to provide additional support in the nursery.
- Regular Quality Improvement Manager meetings with the headteacher to monitor the action plan and provide additional support to bring about required improvements.
- An experienced acting headteacher was appointed to Lawfield Primary School in August 2023. A new permanent head teacher has been recruited and starts work at the school on 28th May 2024.
- An additional depute headteacher was provided, to increase capacity to improve the school, in September 2023.
- The Raising Attainment Team have provided direct support, including planning with class teachers, modelling of agreed teaching approaches and monitoring of learner engagement and achievement.
- A new data dashboard, provided by Midlothian Council, has improved the data available for the school and this has been used to inform improvements.
- Additional funding, educational psychologist and professional learning for staff to support improvements in Nurture approaches.
- HR support to recruit staff. The school has experienced a high turn-over of staff. HR support to improve absence management.
- Quality Improvement Manager meetings with the Children's Services team, Active Schools team and HR team to explore how these services can further support staff and pupil wellbeing.
- Support from the Newbattle Locality Team has included a Principal Teacher Early Years supporting improvement in the nursery; a Quality Improvement Officer ASN and an Education Support Officer ASN supporting improvements in meeting the needs of all learners.
- Quality improvement reviews of the school took place, to monitor progress in improvement, in April and October 2023. These will continue as required.

4.2 Digital

There are no Digital implications.

4.3 Risk

Education Scotland's team of Inspectors visit a sample of education settings every year to find out how they are performing. A report is published which informs parents about the key strengths of the setting and its capacity for further improvement.

Following the publication of the report further visits may be made to the setting, by the Education Authority to assist improvement and monitor progress.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by central officers in the Education Team is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of settings to demonstrate their capacity to improve.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

4.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications
Appendix B – Background information/Links

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1   Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian

A.2   Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

☐ Holistic Working
☐ Hub and Spoke
☐ Modern
☐ Sustainable
☒ Transformational
☒ Preventative
☐ Asset-based
☒ Continuous Improvement
☐ One size fits one
☐ None of the above

A.3   Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

☐ One Council Working with you, for you
☒ Preventative and Sustainable
☐ Efficient and Modern
☒ Innovative and Ambitious
☐ None of the above

A.4   Delivering Best Value

Noted within.

A.5   Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

A link to the published report has been made available to Elected Members, parents of children currently attending Newbattle High School and other interested parties.

A.6   Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The setting will continue to improve its work in line with the school improvement plan and central officers in the Education Team will continue to challenge and support the setting in relation to developing and implementing a range of quality improvement strategies.

A.7   Adopting a Preventative Approach

The Education (Scotland) Bill aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities. Midlothian is highly committed to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

APPENDIX B

Background Papers/Resource Links
Lawfield Primary School inspection report 23 June 2020
Lawfield Primary School Education Scotland visit letter 18 January 2022
Lawfield Primary School further inspection 7 March 2023
Lawfield Primary School further inspection visit April 2024

Further inspection: record of visit (ROV)

Purpose and audience

- This document (called the Further Inspection – Record of Visit or ROV) is provided within one working week of the publication of the letter to support the headteacher/head of setting in leading improvement. The findings and evidence in the ROV provide detail which will be helpful in guiding further planning and implementation of improvement.

- The ROV is provided for use by the education authority and headteacher/head of setting to which it refers. It is a technical document designed for use by education professionals.

- The ROV is not intended to be copied and distributed in its entirety. Headteachers/heads of setting should use their judgement in sharing particular sections of the document confidentially with others as appropriate to their areas of responsibility and interests.

Contents

- The ROV is the set of notes used by the inspection team for the discussion of findings meeting on the final day of the further inspection visit. It may also contain further information that was prepared in advance of the meeting, but which may not have been required in the discussion.

- The information in this ROV has been checked and edited to ensure that individual members of staff below appropriate levels of seniority and individual learners, or small groups of learners, cannot be identified and that it conforms to Scottish Government guidelines on the disclosure of data.

- The ROV is not an exclusive record of all of the evidence which underpins the evaluations as expressed in the published letter and should not be regarded as such.

Sources of evidence for the ROV

- In all inspections, inspectors visit learning activities in contexts appropriate to the establishment. They observe learning experiences and teaching and talk to staff and children about learning and achievement, and other aspects as appropriate to the inspection. Inspectors evaluate children's achievements in different aspects of the curriculum, using direct observation, sampling of learners' work, and additional data as appropriate to the sector. Inspectors also have a range of professional discussions with staff who have responsibility for managing the educational provision, and other staff as appropriate. They take account of stakeholders' views, including those gathered through pre-further inspection questionnaires when these are used in a further inspection, and discussions with parents and other members of the community, as appropriate to the sector.

- Further inspections begin with the senior staff of the establishment sharing their self-evaluation evidence with the inspection team, showing how they are bringing about improvement. This evidence contributes to evaluations of the progress made since the original inspection.

- The ROV may contain references to the way that Curriculum for Excellence is being taken forward in the context of the establishment. This may include progress in planning, prioritising and reviewing the curriculum, through the use of self-evaluation and improvement planning, and in applying key ideas and principles from Curriculum for Excellence. It may also include how the setting is working with partners and with its own staff to enable them to learn together to develop their understanding of Curriculum for Excellence ideas and put them into practice, supported by a plan for continuing professional development. There may be references to how Curriculum for Excellence Experiences and Outcomes are being used to improve learning and achievement and how individual teachers are contributing to literacy and/or numeracy and aspects of health and wellbeing. The ROV may also refer to how staff identify and measure improvements in learners' experiences and in standards of achievement; how they communicate with and involve parents, and how they collaborate to plan and support learners' progress. The extent to which references to Curriculum for Excellence are made in the ROV will depend on the range and nature of the areas for improvement which were previously set out in the letter sent to parents following the original inspection and which are used to shape the further inspection.

Further inspection: record of visit (ROV)

School/Setting Name	Lawfield Primary School
MI undertaking visit	Pamela Adamson
Date(s) of visit	26 – 28 February 2024
Publication date of original letter	23 June 2020
Letter publication date	23 April 2024
ROV sharing date	26 April 2024

Area for improvement 1
Raise children's attainment across the nursery and primary school. **Strengths, progress and area for further development identified during the visit:** Staff have been working together to improve their understanding of children's attainment. Senior leaders have introduced this session, the use of the new Midlothian Council data dashboard to improve the collection and analysis of attainment data for each year group. Senior leaders ensured that staff received appropriate professional learning to support the dashboard's introduction. Staff's confidence in the use of data, and their ability to recognise trends in attainment, is beginning to strengthen as a result. Staff are at the early stages of using this data to plan next steps in learning. Senior leaders and teachers meet termly to review children's progress and achievement using this improved data. These progress and attainment meetings are supporting staff to consider more closely how to meet the needs of all children to raise attainment. Staff welcome the clarity of guidance now in place to support their preparation for these meetings. Senior leaders recognise the need to develop data systems further to ensure the progress of individual children is recorded and closely monitored. Staff are not yet tracking wider achievement and the development of children's skills. Senior leaders have correctly identified the need to develop further the accuracy of teacher's professional judgements about children's attainment. Teachers are beginning to increase their understanding of national standards through engagement in moderation activities. Their participation in writing moderation activities with associated school's group colleagues in November 2023 is beginning to support this development. Attainment is strongest at early level. The majority of children are on track to achieve the early level of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE) by the end of this session in listening, talking and

reading. Most children are expected to achieve early level in writing and numeracy. The number of children attaining early level numeracy has increased since the original inspection.

Fewer children are expected to attain CfE first level than at the original inspection. This reflects the significant number of children who require additional support with their learning at this stage. Predicted levels of attainment are lower than the Midlothian and national averages. Around a quarter of children are expected to achieve first level in listening and talking. Even fewer children are expected to achieve expected levels in reading and numeracy. The professional judgement that the majority of children will achieve first level writing is not yet sufficiently robust.

At second level, attainment has improved since the original inspection. The majority of children are expected to achieve CfE second level in listening and talking, writing and numeracy. Around a half of children are on track to achieve second level in reading.

Overall, the majority of children are on track to achieve expected levels of attainment in listening and talking. Across all stages, children's progress needs to improve. In particular, children would benefit from developing their skills in listening and responding more appropriately to others in more respectful ways. Children should develop further the ability to take turns and contribute at the appropriate time when engaging with others. The quality of the presentation of children's work across the school should be improved.

Staff welcome the significant review and reorganisation of literacy and numeracy resources, and the provision of additional reading materials. This is supporting them to plan and deliver learning activities more efficiently. Staff are still not yet skilled sufficiently in how to develop and improve children's literacy skills despite the introduction of new literacy programmes. The professional learning and resources provided to staff to support the introduction of new literacy programmes were insufficient to ensure their successful implementation. As a result, there is inconsistency in their use. Staff require further professional learning and clearer guidance to ensure these contribute to raising attainment.

Senior leaders have secured the services of a range of partners to inform and enhance identified strategies to raise attainment. Staff from Midlothian's Raising Attainment Team are providing valuable support to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy. Raising Attainment Team members work effectively in partnership with staff to plan, moderate, teach and assess children's progress. As a result, staff are becoming better at identifying those children who have the potential to achieve more with additional support. Team members also provide a range of targeted supports to raise attainment, particularly at P2, P4 and P7. As a result, preparation to provide targeted support for P2 phonics has begun. The pace of progress in reading at P4 is increasing. At P7, the planning and structure of numeracy lessons is improving.

Strategies to improve children's attendance are leading to improvement, enabling children to engage more frequently in learning activities. For example, senior leaders use of robust monitoring procedures and the provision of support to families is leading to improved attendance. For the first time, attendance levels have overtaken the Midlothian average. The school's multi-disciplinary team has successfully delivered a range of interventions designed to

meet the specific needs of individuals. The attendance of boys has improved through the provision of activities specifically designed to meet their interests.

All staff in the nursery continue to know children's social and emotional needs very well and provide opportunities for children to feel safe and secure. Adult interactions are nurturing and supportive and this approach supports children well to make progress in their learning. The recently formed team is at the early stages of building and embedding the processes in place across the school and nursery class to raise children's attainment and secure children's progress. Records of children's progress do not yet contain enough information on children's attainment over time.

Due to staffing challenges, learning environments across the three nursery playrooms were reviewed by practitioners to keep children safe and engaged in their learning. Children's restricted access to one room, and limited opportunities for engaging learning in the outdoors, limit children's learning experiences. Throughout the day as instances of challenging behaviour increase, children's levels of concentration decrease which affects individual children's progress. Staff should ensure that learning environments motivate children to progress in their learning.

The process for assessing and reporting on children's progress in the nursery now takes greater account of whole school approaches to planning learning and seeking parents' views. Practitioners track children's coverage of the early level curriculum on an ongoing basis and link this well with each child's individual targets. Parents welcome the recently introduced 'physical journals' that enable them to see what their child is learning across a range of contexts. Practitioners now need to monitor these journals to ensure that they demonstrate children's progress. In addition, practitioners should ensure that children in the nursery can access records of their learning independently.

In the nursery, the majority of children make appropriate progress in literacy and numeracy. However, approaches to raising attainment in the nursery class are not embedded within the whole school approach to quality assurance. Attendance and children's progress over time in the nursery is not monitored or reported upon within the whole school analysis. As a result, data does not provide clarity on children's progress over time across the early level and into P1.

Overall, very limited progress has been made to raise children's attainment across the nursery and primary school. However, important work has been undertaken to improve staff's understanding and use of attainment data. Effective partnership working with Midlothian's Raising Attainment Team is supporting the development of strategies to raise attainment.

Area for Improvement 2

Ensure children benefit from consistently high-quality learning and teaching, which includes increasing opportunities for children to lead their own learning.

Strengths, progress and area for further development identified during the visit:

This session, the acting headteacher and senior leadership team have had a relentless focus on improving the climate for learning across the school. They recognised the need to improve

relationships across the school and to increase a significant number of children's readiness to learn. They have taken successful steps to address these issues. For example, working with the staff, they developed a whole-school approach to nurture, improved the learning environment across the school and met the needs of learners more effectively. The senior leadership team lead by example in the positive way they interact with learners and strive to improve learning experiences for all.

Senior leaders, supported very well by local authority officers, have taken forward significant improvements to the way nurture is promoted across the school. A multi-disciplinary team, including the principal teacher, youth worker, home-school practitioner, early years practitioner and learning assistants, collaborate well to provide a range of targeted interventions and support. These include, for example, mindfulness sessions, sporting activities, dance, art and a life skills programme. Staff have also made improvements to the way the enhanced class is organised. They are ensuring that learning within the enhanced class is more aligned with children's main classwork.

The nurture team collaborate well to identify which specific groups or programmes would best meet the needs of their learners. Their practice is trauma informed. The team are led well by the depute headteacher and principal teacher. In the last few terms, senior leaders changed the way the nurture programme is organised and delivered. As a result, a significant number of children are now benefitting from very effective support. There are early indications that this new approach is having a very positive impact on children's emotional wellbeing and learning. For example, all children who access nurture support are now able to spend more extended periods of time in their own classes. Children are also demonstrating a more positive attitude to learning and displaying greater resilience in classes. Staff within the nurture team support each other very well and recognise that they also need to look after each other's wellbeing. They value the support they receive from senior leaders.

Teachers understanding of strategies to support children with social and emotional barriers to learning has improved. More children benefit from safer, nurturing classroom environments where they can enjoy uninterrupted learning. The nurture team helped to establish calm learning zones in each of the school's atrium spaces. Children access these areas when they need a quiet, calm and relaxing space. Children are effectively using these new calm zones to help regulate their behaviour. Staff across the school also now provide children with a soft start session at the beginning of each day. As a result, children present as more settled and engage better in learning experiences throughout the day. These sessions also help children to form more positive relationships with their peers.

Across the school, staff have taken positive steps to improve the learning environment both within and outwith classrooms. Displays of children's work are attractive and clearly celebrate children's achievements. The headteacher has secured additional funding to improve the quality and number of resources across the school to support improved learning and teaching.

Senior staff continue to support the staff team in improving the quality of learning and teaching across the school. In the majority of classes, children engage well in their learning. Where this is most successful, the pace of learning is brisk, and staff provide appropriate challenge and

support for children. In a few classes, staff need to make better use of classroom management strategies to ensure that children do not disrupt other children's learning.

The majority of teachers share the purpose of learning well with children at the start of lessons. They also share with children how to be successful in their learning. These are helping children to understand more fully how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. The majority of children now talk about what they are learning. Children are less confident in identifying their strengths and areas for development. Staff need to provide children with more opportunities to reflect on their learning. There are positive examples of children leading aspects of their learning. Now that relationships between children are improving, staff should develop these opportunities further for children to be involved in assessing their own learning. Senior leaders should continue to develop further staff's understanding and use of the 'Lawfield Way' to ensure all children experience consistently high-quality learning.

There are a few examples of teachers making use of questioning well to check on children's understanding and extend learning. Teachers need to make this a more consistent feature of lessons across the school. Most children benefit from kind relationships with staff. Most teachers make good use of praise to promote a positive learning climate in their classes.

The acting headteacher collaborated appropriately with the staff team to improve their approaches to planning. Teachers now take better account of CfE experiences and outcomes and national Benchmarks. Staff now plan in a more streamlined and focused way. They ensure greater clarity about what children are expected to learn and how this will be assessed. Staff now use Midlothian progression pathways for all areas across the curriculum. This is supporting children to build on prior learning more effectively. Teachers value the regular opportunities they now have to plan learning together within stages.

Staff across the school are becoming increasingly reflective of their practice. They demonstrate an enthusiasm in improving learning and teaching. They participate in a wide range of professional learning opportunities which help them better support the needs of learners. It would be helpful for staff to collaborate with each other more regularly to review and evaluate the implementation and impact of new initiatives and developments.

At the early level, staff are improving the ways they promote learning through play. They have significantly improved the spaces both in the atrium and classrooms. Children now have ready access to a range of inviting play spaces. As a result, children now access more appropriate resources to be curious and creative. Staff have undertaken a range of useful professional learning activities and visited other schools which help to develop their practice.

Overall, significant steps have been taken to ensure children's readiness to learn. Staff are now well-placed to increase their focus on improving and ensuring the provision of much improved learning and teaching.

Area for Improvement 3

Improve assessment approaches across the primary stages. Ensure all teaching staff use information gathered from children's learning and assessment activity more effectively to plan learning experiences which meet the needs of all children.

Strengths, progress and area for further development identified during the visit:

Teacher's assessment approaches across the primary classes are now more cohesive and integral to planning learning and teaching. Staff now capture information about children's progress more effectively. Staff across the primary stages continue to implement and embed the 'inclusive learning, teaching and assessment policy'. This policy is increasingly understood by staff and supports their use of both formative and summative assessment to evidence children's progress. Children are beginning to talk about their learning and what they need to do to succeed.

Senior leaders continue to use quality assurance processes well to evaluate children's progress in the primary classes. Their planning formats are more streamlined and show progressive learning pathways across all areas of the curriculum. They have regular meetings and professional dialogue sessions with staff which focus appropriately on moderating standards through robust evidence gathering of children's achievements. This leadership and direction provided by senior leaders is beginning to impact positively on teachers' professional judgement of CfE levels.

The targeted support in place across the primary classes through the support for learning and nurture unit is developing very well and meaningfully alongside the improvements in universal support. Children requiring support are identified through senior leaders and class teachers reviewing assessment information about individual children. Senior leaders should continue to monitor and develop a cohesive approach to the removal of barriers to learning. They should ensure children in the nursery class and all primary stages receive well-planned interventions that lead to positive outcomes.

Overall, staff have made a very positive start to improving assessment and meeting the needs of children. They should continue to build on the work undertaken this session, ensuring that effective assessment accurately informs planned learning to meet the needs of all learners.

Safeguarding

Senior leaders should:

- continue to take steps to ensure that all staff and partners understand their responsibilities as set out in the school's safeguarding and child-protection policies;
- continue to address the issues related to bullying and child safety that were raised by children, staff and parents during the inspection process;
- ensure that all staff complete wellbeing concern forms accurately to ensure consistency of reporting in accordance with school procedures; and

- review how the recording of incidents is recorded to ensure compliance with General Data Protection Regulations.

Staff's successful development of nurture approaches across the school has resulted in a noticeable reduction in dysregulated behaviour. Children requiring support with behaviour become more regulated quicker than before. The frequency of children absconding from class has significantly reduced. Children at risk of exclusion have improved Midlothian Learners Plans. Planning is continuing with partner services to further support children at risk of exclusion. Overall, the school is a calmer place. As a result, children are beginning to engage more effectively in their learning.

Strengths and progress identified during the visit:

As a result of the skilful leadership of the acting headteacher, an improved ethos and culture are evident across the school.

Local authority officers and the acting headteacher correctly identified the need to improve the culture and ethos of the school as a matter urgency. Significant progress has been made to improve behaviour, relationships and the learning environment since the arrival of the acting headteacher in August 2023.

The physical environment of the school has improved. The introduction of nurture spaces across the school enables children to access quiet, calm spaces easily. Attractive wall displays are now evident in corridors. Children are proud to see their work displayed for others to enjoy. School assemblies have been re-established and are contributing to the development of a stronger sense of community across the school.

The acting headteacher has ensured more effective systems and processes are in place to support a wide range of aspects of the school's work. This has included the streamlining and simplification of curriculum planning and administrative procedures. Staff welcome the clarity this provides.

In consultation with local authority officers, the acting headteacher has identified a reduced number of key priorities for improvement. Staff have increased clarity about improvement priorities and is supporting an increasing pace of change. Communication across the staff team is improving. The re-scheduling of staff meetings to a Friday morning enables more staff attend. Staff, particularly the support staff, now work more effectively as a team. Senior leaders should now ensure nursery staff become more integral to the wider school team. Building on this very positive start, senior leaders should now review and improve the approaches used to communicate with parents.

What happens next?

The school is beginning to make progress since the original inspection. We will liaise with Midlothian Council regarding the school's capacity to improve. We will return to carry out a further inspection of the school within 12 months of the publication of this letter. We will discuss with Midlothian Council the details of this inspection. When we return to inspect the school, we will write to you as parents informing you of the progress the school has made.

Inspection of Newbattle High School

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Report for Information

1   Recommendations

PRS is asked to:

(i)   Note the content of the inspection report.

(ii)   Note that Education Scotland will ask Midlothian Council for a report on progress with the agreed areas for improvement within eighteen months of the publication of this report. Taking account of the progress report, Education Scotland will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required.

(iii)   Congratulate the pupils, parents and staff connected with Newbattle High School on the key strengths highlighted in the report.

2   Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The report outlines the outcome of the above inspection as carried out by Education Scotland which was communicated in their report of 6th February 2024.

13 February 2024

Report Contact:
Colin McLean, Quality Improvement Manager Professional Learning and Digital Inclusion & Learning
Colin.McLean@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background/Main Body of Report

3.1 In November 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Newbattle High School. The report was published on 6 February 2024 and is now available on Education Scotland's website.

3.2 Education Scotland is responsible for inspecting education settings throughout Scotland. Inspectors use the following selected quality indicators from How Good is our School 4? to evaluate the quality of education provision in the primary school:

QI	1.3	**Leadership of Change**
QI	2.3	**Learning, teaching and assessment**
QI	3.1	**Ensuring wellbeing, equality and inclusion**
QI	3.2	**Raising attainment and achievement**

The inspection of Newbattle High School was carried out using the Education Scotland short inspection model. Focussing on QI 2.3 and 3.2

At the end of the inspection process, the outcomes are published in a short letter to parents and carers outlining the key strengths and areas for improvement This letter provides a statement of the confidence the inspectors have in the school's capacity to improve the quality of its own work. This letter is available in Appendix B. This is published along with the summary of inspection findings (SIF). The SIF is a professional report and summarises the findings from all the evidence gathered during the inspection. This document is intended to be used by staff in progressing school improvement. This is available in Appendix B.

National Improvement Framework (NIF)
As part of the Education (Scotland) Act 2016, the reporting procedures for the National Improvement Framework (NIF) have been placed on a statutory footing. The evaluations of Quality Indicators 2.3 and 3.2 feed directly into the evidence base for the NIF in order to demonstrate progress with the NIF priorities and drivers for improvement. This progress is reported annually by the Scottish Government.

Inspection Findings
Newbattle High School was evaluated as follows:

Quality Indicator	Grade
2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	**Good**
3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	**Satisfactory**

3.3 Strengths
The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher has a clear focus on improving attainment and achievement and is supported by senior and middle leaders effectively. This is improving outcomes for young people who are impacted by social and economic disadvantage.
- Staff make skilful use of digital technology to enhance young people's learning experiences. This is helping to develop young people's skills and is encouraging them to reflect on their learning.
- Staff work with a range of partners effectively to support improved outcomes for young people. These include ensuring all young people achieve and develop important skills towards positive destinations.

3.4   Areas for improvement
The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Midlothian Council.

- Senior leaders should ensure all staff apply a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching to their practice. Staff should have high expectations of all young people and plan tasks which are appropriately challenging to meet the needs of all.
- Senior leaders and staff should continue to raise the attainment of all young people. Importantly, they should improve the number and quality of National Qualification passes by young people in S4 and S5.
- Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop approaches to improving young people's attendance at all stages.

3.5   Conclusion

Education Scotland will ask Midlothian Council for a report on progress with the agreed areas for improvement within eighteen months of the publication of this letter. Taking account of the progress report, Education Scotland will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required. This may involve another inspection visit. Midlothian Council will notify stakeholders of this outcome.

4   Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1   Resource
There are no financial and human resource implications associated with this report.

4.2   Digital
There are no Digital implications.

4.3   Risk
Education Scotland's team of Inspectors visit a sample of education settings every year to find out how they are performing. A report is published which informs parents about the key strengths of the setting and its capacity for further improvement.

Following the publication of the report further visits may be made to the setting, by the Education Authority to assist improvement and monitor progress.

Monitoring, review and evaluation of progress by central officers in the Education Team is the control measure in place to reduce the risk of failure of settings to demonstrate their capacity to improve.

4.4   Ensuring Equalities
The School Improvement Plan will be screened for equalities implications.

4.5   Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)
See Appendix A

Appendices
Appendix A – Report implications
Appendix B –Background papers/ resources

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1   Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan
- Getting it right for every Midlothian child
- Improving opportunities in Midlothian

A.2   Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

☐ Holistic Working
☐ Hub and Spoke
☐ Modern
☐ Sustainable
☒ Transformational
☒ Preventative
☐ Asset-based
☒ Continuous Improvement
☐ One size fits one
☐ None of the above

A.3   Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

☐ One Council Working with you, for you
☒ Preventative and Sustainable
☐ Efficient and Modern
☒ Innovative and Ambitious
☐ None of the above

A.4   Delivering Best Value
Noted within.

A.5   Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders
A link to the published report has been made available to Elected Members, parents of children currently attending Newbattle High School and other interested parties.

A.6   Impact on Performance and Outcomes
The setting will continue to improve its work in line with the school improvement plan and central officers in the Education Team will continue to challenge and support the setting in relation to developing and implementing a range of quality improvement strategies.

A.7   Adopting a Preventative Approach
The Education (Scotland) Bill aims to take preventative action in order to close the attainment versus deprivation gap by implementing key policies and programmes which are designed to target support to children and young people from disadvantaged communities. Midlothian is highly committed to closing the poverty related attainment gap.

A.8   Supporting Sustainable Development
The School Improvement Plan allows for sustainable development and improvement.

APPENDIX B

Background Papers/Resource: this link
Education Scotland inspection findings letter to parents
Education Scotland summary of inspection findings

Summarised inspection findings

Newbattle High School

Midlothian Council

6 February 2024

Key contextual information

School Name: Newbattle High School
Council: Midlothian Council
SEED number: 5546036
Roll: 1177 young people

Newbattle High School is a non-denominational secondary school serving the communities of Mayfield, Easthouses, Newtongrange, Gorebridge, North Middleton, Temple and surrounding areas. The new school building opened in June 2018. The headteacher has been in post for five years. He is supported by a senior leadership team of five depute headteachers, including one part-time.

Attendance is generally below the national average. Attendance dropped significantly during and since the COVID-19 pandemic. Exclusions are generally in line with the national average. There has been a significant reduction in the number of exclusions in recent times. In September 2022, 22.6% of young people were registered for free school meals. In September 2022, 59% of young people lived in Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) deciles one to three. In September 2022, the school reported that 43% of young people had additional support needs.

Newbattle High School is a European Digital Skills award establishment. They mentor other schools from across Europe who seek recognition for their digital creativity.

2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment	good

This indicator focuses on ensuring high-quality learning experiences for all children and young people. It highlights the importance of highly-skilled staff who work with children, young people and others to ensure learning is motivating and meaningful. Effective use of assessment by staff and learners ensures children and young people maximise their successes and achievements. The themes are:

■ learning and engagement
■ quality of teaching
■ effective use of assessment
■ planning, tracking and monitoring

■ Most teachers use the school's values well to underpin their work. In most lessons, relationships between young people and staff are positive. Staff are caring and respectful towards young people. Young people respond well to praise offered by staff and through praise postcards linked to the values. Staff and young people achieved a silver Rights Respecting Schools Award and are working towards gold as they develop their rights-based approach.

■ Most young people engage well with the tasks set by teachers. In a minority of lessons, young people have well-considered opportunities to work independently and to lead aspects of their learning. This enhances young people's engagement and motivation for learning. Young people would benefit from more regular use of these opportunities across departments.

■ Teachers have worked collaboratively to produce a Positive Learning Policy that clearly confirms expectations and routines in classrooms. Almost all young people are polite and reflect these expectations. When required, staff respond quietly, appropriately and calmly to address the few young people who are not focused during learning and who can cause low level disruption at times. Staff should build on their positive relationships with young people by applying high standards and expectations to all young people consistently. Middle leaders and staff should continue to work with all young people to ensure these expectations and routines support positive learning environments.

■ The principal teacher of pedagogy, working collaboratively with teachers in the Learning and Teaching Group, has agreed what high-quality classroom practice should look like. This is shared in a well organised toolkit accessible to all staff and underpinned by the learning and teaching policy. It is supporting improvements in the quality and consistency of learners' experiences across the school.

■ Most teachers design well-structured lessons, using starter activities to focus young people on their learning. Most teachers share the purpose of learning, and in a majority of lessons these are linked well to success criteria. However, success criteria too often focuses on the completion of tasks rather than how young people can show progress in learning. In a minority of lessons, teachers regularly refer to the purpose of learning and what successful learning looks like. They also review progress using plenaries effectively at the end of a lesson. This highly effective practice needs to be developed and embedded further.

■ In most lessons, teachers use questions to check young people's understanding. In a minority of lessons teachers use challenging questions to ensure young people think deeply about their learning. Most young people in the senior phase experience challenge through appropriately

paced lessons. For a majority of young people in the broad general education (BGE), the pace of learning is often too slow and tasks set are not sufficiently challenging. Middle leaders should support staff to develop an agreed approach to improve young people's higher-order thinking skills. This should include reviewing learning which is overly teacher led and where the experience of young people is too passive.

- There are examples of the highly effective use of digital technology by staff to enhance learner experiences. This is a strength of the school. All young people have their own digital device to continue to learn at home successfully. Young people with additional support needs (ASN) use a digital literacy support tool very well to support their learning. A majority of teachers use digital platforms creatively to engage young people meaningfully. This includes designing interactive tasks and valuable online assessment activities.

- Most teachers check young people's progress in learning effectively through ongoing dialogue with learners. Teachers use an appropriate range of approaches to assess young people, including an increasing range of formative assessment techniques. In most subjects, teachers use peer and self-assessment purposefully. In a few lessons, young people need further support to offer meaningful feedback on their work and the work of others.

- Most young people recognise that the feedback they receive is helping them to improve and progress in their learning. In almost all lessons, young people in the senior phase receive helpful feedback through planned learner conversations with teachers. Most teachers also use digital platforms well to provide feedback to young people. This helps young people to be clear on their next steps to accelerate progress. Young people in the BGE are beginning to record and reflect on their learning through their online Learner Journey template. Teachers should now ensure all young people's targets and next steps are consistently ambitious, realistic and well-understood by the learner.

- Most teachers are confident in their assessment judgments. In the BGE, this is largely based on increasingly effective use of National Benchmarks. Additionally, most teachers engage in regular and appropriate moderation activities that supports the reliability of assessment outcomes. There has been positive moderation work conducted with local primary schools. Senior leaders identify the need for further moderation activities with other secondary schools.

- In the senior phase teachers show a clear understanding of standards associated with National Qualification (NQ) courses. A number of staff adopt Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA) roles or have subject development roles at local, regional and national levels. These staff work collaboratively with the wider school to increase confidence in applying national standards.

- Staff in departments regularly track and monitor the progress of young people. Middle leaders and staff work systematically to analyse attainment data and use it to inform relevant interventions when young people are under achieving. Teachers should build on this practice by using this data to inform planning of learning which is more consistently well-matched to the needs of all young people.

2.1 Safeguarding and child protection

■ The school submitted self-evaluation information related to child protection and safeguarding. Inspectors discussed this information with relevant staff and, where appropriate, children. In addition, inspectors examined a sample of safeguarding documentation. Areas for development have been agreed with the school and the education authority.

3.2 Raising attainment and achievement	satisfactory

This indicator focuses on the school's success in achieving the best possible outcomes for all learners. Success is measured in attainment across all areas of the curriculum and through the school's ability to demonstrate learners' achievements in relation to skills and attributes. Continuous improvement or sustained high standards over time is a key feature of this indicator. The themes are:

■ attainment in literacy and numeracy
■ attainment over time
■ overall quality of learners' achievement
■ equity for all learners

■ The headteacher, senior and middle leaders have implemented a range of targeted strategies and universal approaches to raise attainment. Many of these interventions are leading to improving patterns in attainment, such as in the attainment of young people in the BGE or those living in poverty, and aspects of literacy and numeracy measures. Whilst there are improvements on prior levels of attainment, overall young people's attainment is below that of their peers. There is a significant need to improve the breadth and quality of passes in NQs, including in English and mathematics, particularly by young people in S4 and S5.

Attainment in literacy and numeracy
Broad General Education (BGE)
■ By the end of S3, young people's attainment in CfE third and fourth level in literacy and numeracy has been improving from 2017/18 till 2021/22. In 2022, most young people achieved CfE third level or better in literacy, which is an improvement from a majority in previous years. A minority of young people achieved CfE fourth level in literacy. In 2022, almost all young people achieved CfE third level or better in numeracy. Just over half of young people attained at CfE fourth level, which is an improvement from a minority in previous years. Senior leaders and staff must continue to improve these measures further.

■ Staff use effective approaches to improve young people's literacy. A principal teacher of transition works effectively with primary schools to plan moderation activities and to identify and support children needing literacy support. This helps more children achieve appropriate milestones at the point of transition. Teachers of English engage in helpful moderation activities to ensure the reliability of professional judgements. Staff leading on literacy offer professional learning to support all staff to embed literacy successfully as a responsibility of all.

■ Senior leaders are supporting the mathematics department well to develop the leadership and planning to achieve improvements in numeracy. This support is improving the tracking of learners' progressive skills development and moderation of standards in numeracy. This is beginning to improve the robustness of teachers' professional judgements as a result.

Senior Phase
Literacy and numeracy (leavers)
■ Almost all young people leaving school in 2021/22 achieved a Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF) level 4 or better in literacy. This is an improvement from 2017/18. Attainment at this level is in line with the virtual comparator (VC) for 2021/22 having been significantly lower in the previous year. In 2021/22, a majority of leavers achieved SCQF level 5 or better, and a minority achieved SCQF level 6, in literacy. Attainment at

these levels has been significantly lower or much lower than the VC for most of the period from 2017/18 to 2021/22.

■ From 2017/18 to 2021/22, almost all or most leavers achieved SCQF level 4 or better in numeracy. A majority left with SCQF level 5 or better. This is generally in line with the VC over the five-year period. From 2018/19 to 2021/22, a few leavers achieved SCQF level 6. This was in line with the VC in 2021/22 after being significantly lower in selected years.

■ All or almost all leavers with ASN achieved SCQF level 3 or better, and most achieved SCQF level 4 or better in literacy and numeracy from 2019/20 to 2021/22.

Literacy (cohorts)
■ At S4 most young people attained SCQF level 4 or better in the last four years. This is in line with the VC. A majority of young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in the last five years. This improved from significantly lower than the VC in selected years to being in line in 2022/23. By S5, based on the S5 roll, almost all young people attained SCQF level 4 or better in the last five years. This was in line with the VC in 2021/22 and 2022/23. At SCQF level 5 and level 6, performance has not been strong over the five-year period. Performance was significantly lower or much lower than the VC for selected years. By S6, based on the S6 roll, almost all young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in three out of the past five years, including 2022/23. This improved from significantly much lower or significantly lower than the VC in selected years to in line in 2022/23. Most young people attained SCQF level 6 in 2022/23, which is in line with the VC, and an improvement from a majority in the previous four years.

Numeracy (cohorts)
■ At S4, most young people attained SCQF level 4 or better in the past five years. This is generally in line with the VC. A minority of young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in the last two years, which is significantly lower than the VC. By S5, based on the S5 roll, almost all young people attained SCQF level 4 or better in the past five years. This is in line with the VC. A majority of young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in the last five years. This was significantly below the VC in 2022/23. A few young people attained SCQF level 6 in four out of the past five years. This was significantly much lower than the VC in 2022/23. By S6, based on the S6 roll, almost all young people attained SCQF level 5 or better in 2020/21 and 2022/23. This is in line with the VC. A minority attained SCQF level 6 in the last five years. This is in line with the VC after being significantly lower or significantly much lower for selected years.

Attainment over time
BGE
■ Senior leaders use effective systems to track and monitor young people's attainment. A group of middle leaders use data very effectively to identify young people off track and ensure interventions are put in place. Senior leaders should develop a raising attainment strategy. This should detail everyone's role in raising attainment and stress how teachers should use data better to inform how they support young people to raise their attainment.

■ Senior leaders demonstrate positive progress over time of young people in the BGE. In 2022, by the end of S3, most learners achieved CfE third level in most curricular areas. A minority of learners achieved CfE fourth level in a majority of areas. Improvements in the BGE have the potential to enhance attainment as learners progress into the senior phase.

Senior Phase

■ The attainment of young people in the senior phase has been impacted by various factors. Senior leaders identify decreasing school attendance and a drop in stay-on rates linked to the pandemic and recovery. Staff have focused on supporting the increasing wellbeing needs of young people and families, including anxiety and mental health issues. Senior leaders recognise improving young people's attendance is key to raising attainment. Whilst strategies used to improve attendance so far demonstrate a positive impact for individuals, they are not yet leading to improvements in the overall attendance profile. Senior leaders should continue to ensure the pattern of falling attendance is addressed with a whole school, strategic approach.

■ The attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of leavers, using average complementary tariff scores is generally in line with the VC. The attainment of the lowest attaining 20% of leavers with ASN has improved over the last five years and now sits above the VC in 2021/22. The performance of the middle 60% shows no consistent pattern of improvement and for four of the last five years has been significantly lower than the VC. The performance of the highest 20% has improved and moved from being significantly lower to being in line with the VC.

■ In S4, and by S5, based on the S5 roll, the performance of the lowest and highest 20% is generally in line with the VC over the last five years. For the middle 60%, performance is generally significantly lower than the VC over the past 5 years. By S6, based on the S6 roll, performance of all groups is improving and has moved from being significantly lower in selected years to being in line with the VC in 2022/23.

Breadth and Depth

■ Staff are increasing the range of SCQF courses offered to learners. This year, senior leaders increased the number of NQ courses studied by learners in S4 from six to seven, offering greater opportunities for success. Senior leaders recognise that there is a significant need to improve the attainment, and quality of passes, of young people in S4 and S5.

■ Staff's relentless focus on raising attainment for all supports most young people at S4 to attain five or more courses at SCQF level 3 or better over the five-year period. This is generally in line with the VC. Most young people attain two or more to three or more courses at SCQF level 4 or better over the five-year period, which is generally in line with the VC. The school's performance at four or more to five or more courses in SCQF level 4 or better has been significantly lower than the VC in three of the last five years. Attainment at SCQF level 5C or better is significantly lower or much lower than the VC over the last five years.

■ By S5, most young people achieved four or more awards at SCQF level 4 or better and most young people achieved one or more awards at SCQF level 5C or better in the last two years. This is generally in line with the VC. There has been an improvement in young people attaining SCQF level 5C or better and SCQF level 6C or better over the last five years. However, performance is generally significantly lower or much lower than the VC.

■ By S6, for those young people who stay on at school there are some improvements in their attainment. The school's performance at one or more to five or more awards at SCQF level 5A or better has improving patterns and is generally in line with the VC. A majority of young people achieved one or more qualifications, and a minority achieved three or more qualifications, at SCQF level 6A or better from 2020/21 to 2022/23. This is in line with the VC. There are improving patterns in the attainment of one or more and two or more awards at SCQF level 7C over the past five years. In 2022/23, around half of young people attained one or more awards at SCQF level 7C which is significantly higher than the VC.

Overall quality of learners' achievement

■ The quality of learners' achievements is a strength of the school. A majority of young people benefit from an extensive range of clubs and activities, including sport, literacy and expressive arts. These allow young people to develop their confidence and team working skills. Staff track young people's participation in activities. This ensures staff identify and address those not benefitting from involvement. Senior leaders plan to renew a skills framework to help young people communicate better how they are developing important skills.

■ Staff recognise and celebrate all young people's achievement and success in a range of ways. They award praise postcards, house points and promote success through display boards and an active social media presence. Award ceremonies celebrate the attainment and achievement of young people, with a focus on being inclusive of the achievements of all.

■ Senior leaders and staff ensure young people benefit from the development of skills through a developing range of vocational courses and awards. For example, the very high-quality range of challenging and progressive learner pathways available through Sports and Wellbeing. Over 100 young people develop important leadership skills through the 'Aim Higher' leadership academy. Young people gain skills in communication and leadership through well-planned pupil groups such as the children's rights and mental health groups. This is supporting young people to feel empowered to make a positive difference to their school.

■ Learners benefit from staff's very strong partnership working. Partners help in various ways, including supporting young people to achieve, develop skills and to support learning pathways.

Equity for all learners

■ The headteacher, supported by all staff, is committed to ensuring equity for all learners. Staff have very effective tracking systems in place to monitor young people with barriers to their learning. As a result, senior leaders are clearly able to demonstrate improvements in the attainment of young people. Staff are closing attainment gaps for young people who receive free school meals, with an ASN, or who live in SIMD one to three.

■ There is a clear plan in place for Pupil Equity Funding (PEF). Senior leaders consult all parents on the use of PEF. Positively, staff have also asked parents if they have seen the impact of PEF on their children's experiences and outcomes. This is supporting planning of future spending. PEF has been mainly spent on staffing, such as nurture, mental health and outreach workers. These staff work very well together to target interventions for young people. They, with other staff, have raised attainment through approaches to nurture, transitions and a focus on ensuring learners achieve at least five awards at SCQF level 3 or better. Most learners accessing interventions achieved their targeted level in the BGE or gained five or more awards at SCQF level 3 or better in the senior phase.

■ Senior leaders need to continue with positive steps taken to raise attainment. While there have been improvements for school leavers living within SIMD one to three, attainment is still significantly lower when compared to young people living in similar deciles across Scotland.

■ Staff use robust approaches to monitor young people's attendance. They are aware that attendance is below national averages and are taking positive steps to address this. A few targeted young people have improved their attendance through involvement in out-of-school supports, digital learning and partnerships supporting them to reengage in learning.

■ Staff work effectively with a range of partners such as Skills Development Scotland, local employers, colleges and universities to support young people when they leave school. As a

result, almost all young people move on to a positive destination. The majority move to further or higher education with a significant minority going to employment. Employment opportunities include both full and part-time employment with a minority successfully engaging in modern apprenticeships. Young people also benefit from the Lothians Equal Access Program for Schools (LEAPS) which supports access to university.

Quality of provision of Special Unit

The Complex Needs Base (CNB) in Newbattle High School recently opened. There is one class, with a few young people from S1 and S2. The roll is likely to increase during the next academic session. There is one teacher and two learning assistants. A depute headteacher has leadership responsibility for the base. The Midlothian Education Resource Group considers which education resource is most suitable for young people who cannot sustain mainstream education. The CNB works with young people who have significant additional support requirements.

QI 2.3 Learning, teaching and assessment

■ Staff have developed a friendly and welcoming atmosphere within the CNB. They are respectful and inclusive which results in positive relationships between them and young people. All young people actively participate in appropriately challenging tasks. Staff plan learning that appeals to young people's interests and takes account of their areas of strength and enjoyment. Teachers support young people to make use of appropriate digital technology which assists learning. Depending upon their abilities, young people complete tasks on their individual laptop and send their work to teachers for feedback. They say they prefer this way of working, and it supports them to improve their literacy skills. This helps to build valuable digital skills for the future. Appropriately, teachers recognise the need to encourage writing and they should continue to support and provide tasks to help improve young people's handwriting.

■ Teaching is underpinned by a commitment to inclusive values. Teachers and staff demonstrate consistently caring and positive interactions with young people. They tailor learning to young people's individual needs. This is helping young people to spend more time in class than they were able to sustain at previous placements. Teachers work skilfully with young people to find the correct balance between support and challenge.

■ Teachers assess young people's needs effectively and use this information to plan learning appropriately. Teachers collate information from young people's previous placements to inform the work they set. Senior leaders and the local authority should work together to plan effective transitions for young people who will attend the base. As the provision is very new, plans are in place to establish improved joint working with previous school placements. Senior leaders and teachers should also continue with their well-considered plans to work with similar provisions within and beyond the local authority. This will enhance staff professional learning, and opportunities for moderation will support robust assessments of CfE levels. Teachers should continue to draw upon the National Benchmarks to assess the knowledge, understanding, and skills for learning, life and work which young people are developing across the curriculum.

■ Teachers and staff plan activities to ensure young people progress through a broad range of learning experiences and outcomes. The development of processes for planning and assessment are in the early stages and are not yet fully established. Current planning reflects the wellbeing indicators and is personalised for each young person. Learners and their families are beginning to contribute to planning learning, including some input into the shape of the school day and the topics they will cover. Senior leaders should begin to find further ways to involve young people and their families in the development of plans for the base.

■ Staff plan for young people to begin joining peers in mainstream classes when they have settled in the school. Senior leaders should ensure that this is given priority when appropriate. Where applicable, mainstream teachers should be familiar with young people's education plans and should contribute to planning and the assessment of young people's progress.

QI 3.2 Raising attainment and achievement

- Learners in the base are making appropriate progress from their prior levels of attainment in literacy and numeracy. Young people enjoy tuition in very small groups and have access to experienced staff who understand their needs. All young people are working towards early or first level in both literacy and numeracy. A few young people work on aspects of second level on literacy and numeracy.

- In literacy, young people are making appropriate progress for their developmental stage. Young people write a daily diary and begin this task by verbally recounting the entry. Young people use drawings as a stimulus and recount events using art to help them tell the story. Most young people write independently, punctuating sentences accurately. For example, using capital letters, full stops and question marks. Young people take turns to speak and contribute to conversations at the appropriate time when engaging with others.

- In numeracy, young people estimate the value of a pile of coins and can discuss the value of money in relation to items they might purchase. They accurately count and confirm the value. Young people work towards individual targets in numeracy and staff respond to their requirements appropriately.

- Senior leaders and teachers should now begin to gather data over time about young people's progress within the BGE. They should analyse this data and include information about young people's progress in achieving literacy and numeracy targets within support plans. This would provide further helpful information to support individual progress.

- Young people celebrate their own and each other's achievements within the base regularly throughout the school day. There is a culture of praise and kindness, and young people enjoy discussing their success at school. Senior leaders and staff are devising ways for young people to be more fully involved in the life of the school. This includes joining other classes for selected activities like baking and during social times for gaming. These activities are increasing inclusion generally for all young people at the school. Young people at the base are building confidence and valuable social skills. The school should expand on this positive start, ensuring that there are plenty of opportunities for all young people to be fully included in the life of the school.

Other relevant evidence

■ Staff have a clear understanding of the socio-economic circumstances of young people and their families. Detailed information on socio-economic disadvantage in the local area and the main drivers of poverty support staff to understand the school's context. Staff have taken positive steps to ensure that there is no cost associated with the school day. Additionally, staff actively consider how to support families by reducing costs for achievement opportunities.

■ The school submitted information relating to compliance with the revised Nutritional Regulations 2020 and key duties as required by The Schools (Health Promotion and Nutrition) (Scotland) Act 2007. The Health and Nutrition Inspector (HNI) discussed this information with relevant staff and young people. In addition, the HNI examined documentation relating to the effectiveness of whole-school approaches to improving the health and wellbeing of young people through food in school. A few areas for improvement have been agreed with the school and the school meals provider. Aspects of good practice were identified in relation to food in schools.

Practice worth sharing more widely

- The very high-quality approaches in the Sport and Wellbeing department that provide challenging and progressive pathways for all young people.

Explanation of terms of quantity

The following standard Education Scotland terms of quantity are used in this report:

All	100%
Almost all	91%-99%
Most	75%-90%
Majority	50%-74%
Minority/less than half	15%-49%
A few	less than 15%

Other quantitative terms used in this report are to be understood as in common English usage.

6 February 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

In November 2023, a team of inspectors from Education Scotland visited Newbattle High School. During our visit, we talked to parents/carers and young people and worked closely with the headteacher and staff.

The inspection team found the following strengths in the school's work.

- The headteacher has a clear focus on improving attainment and achievement and is supported by senior and middle leaders effectively. This is improving outcomes for young people who are impacted by social and economic disadvantage.

- Staff make skilful use of digital technology to enhance young people's learning experiences. This is helping to develop young people's skills and is encouraging them to reflect on their learning.

- Staff work with a range of partners effectively to support improved outcomes for young people. These include ensuring all young people achieve and develop important skills towards positive destinations.

The following areas for improvement were identified and discussed with the headteacher and a representative from Midlothian Council

- Senior leaders should ensure all staff apply a shared understanding of high-quality learning and teaching to their practice. Staff should have high expectations of all young people and plan tasks which are appropriately challenging to meet the needs of all.

- Senior leaders and staff should continue to raise the attainment of all young people. Importantly, they should improve the number and quality of National Qualification passes by young people in S4 and S5.

- Senior leaders and staff should continue to develop approaches to improving young people's attendance at all stages.

We gathered evidence to enable us to evaluate the school's work using quality indicators from How good is our school? (4th edition). Quality indicators help schools, local authorities and inspectors to judge what is working well and what needs to be improved. Following the inspection of each school, the Scottish Government gathers details of our evaluations to keep track of how well Scottish schools are doing.

Here are Education Scotland's evaluations for Newbattle High School

Quality indicators	Evaluation
Learning, teaching and assessment	**good**
Raising attainment and achievement	**satisfactory**
Descriptions of the evaluations are available from: How good is our school? (4th edition), Appendix 3: The six-point scale.	

A more detailed document called Summarised Inspection Findings (SIF) will be available on the Education Scotland website at:
Details | Find an inspection report | Find an inspection report | Inspection and Review | Education Scotland.

What happens next?

We will ask Midlothian Council for a report on progress with the agreed areas for improvement within eighteen months of the publication of this letter. Taking account of the progress report, we will then decide whether further engagement with the school is required. This may involve another inspection visit. Midlothian Council will write to you again detailing the improvements the school has made and outlining any further action that we intend to take, as agreed with Midlothian Council

Mr Graham Parry
HM Inspector

Inspection of Community Learning and Development (CLD) Services in Midlothian

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Report for Information

1   Recommendations

PRS are asked to note:

- The very positive inspection of the CLD Partnership Plan and associated work.
- The areas for development focusing on shared ownership of CLD Plans, joint self-evaluation and individual learning plans. A development action plan is being produced with partners.

2   Purpose of Report/Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to highlight the positive partnership inspection of CLD through the recent progress visit. The formal report was published on 30 April 2024.

01 May 2024

Report Contact:
Annette Lang, Group Service Manager CLLE
Annette.Lang@midlothian.gov.uk

3 Background

3.1 Legislation and Policy

The statutory basis for Community Learning and Development (CLD) is set out under section 1 and 2 of the **Education (Scotland) Act 1980** (referred to as the 1980 Act):

Section 1 of the Act places duties on education authorities to secure adequate and efficient provision of school education and further education for their area. This includes CLD and is not age limited.

Section 2 of the Act sets out **The Requirement for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013** which allows Scottish Ministers to prescribe the standards and requirements to which every education authority much comply with when discharging their statutory functions under the **1980 Act**. The Regulations 2013 set out the requirement in relation to the process to be undertaken by education authorities in securing CLD provision. Under the Requirements, local authorities must publish a plan every 3 years containing information about the provision of CLD within their area.

The 4 CLD Regulations seek to strengthen the legislative basis for CLD by placing requirements on local authorities in relation to the auditing of need for CLD, as well as consultation and planning at a local level.

3.1.1 Regulation 1 – Citation, commencement, and interpretation

Key activities to fulfil CLD outcomes and activities set out in legislation are as follows:

Community Development/Building Community Capacity
- Enabling people to develop the confidence, understanding and skills required to influence decision making and service delivery.
- Volunteering.

Youth work/family learning and other intervention work with children, young people, and families

- Engaging with young people to support their personal, social, and educational development and have a voice.
- Family learning.

3.1.2 Regulation 2 – The process to secure CLD in the local authority area

This regulation requires the local authority to initiate, maintain and facilitate a process which ensures CLD is secured in such a way that it:

- Identifies target individuals and groups.
- Considers the needs of those target individuals and groups for CLD.
- Assesses the degree to which those needs are already being met; and identifies barriers to the adequate and efficient provision of relevant CLD.

3.1.3 Regulation 3 Duty to involve and consult:

This regulation requires the local authority to involve and consult community members who represent:

- The target individuals and groups.
- Providers of CLD within the area.

3.1.4 Regulation 4 Three-year plan:

This regulation requires the local authority to consult on and publish plans every three years containing specific information on the provision of CLD by both the local authority and its partners.

In Midlothian, this statutory function is delivered as follows:

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/4295/midlothian_statutory_community_learning_and_development_plan_2021_to_2024_pdf.pdf

3.2 March 2024 Progress Inspection Partnership Visit Midlothian CLD

HM Inspectors visited Midlothian Council to undertake a community learning and development (CLD) progress visit during March 2024. During the visit, we talked to learners and community representatives, CLD leaders, managers, staff, and volunteers, and other key stakeholders. HM Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of local authority CLD partnerships' approach to self-evaluation and planning for improvement, and considered progress made against identified priorities in their CLD plans.

During the visit, Education Scotland spoke with learners and community representatives, CLD leaders in the public and third sectors, managers, staff, and volunteers, and other key stakeholders to determine Midlothian Council's and partner's effectiveness and areas for improvement.

The inspection team focused on answering the following two questions:

- **How effective is the leadership of the local authority and their CLD partners in improving outcomes?**
- **How well does the performance of the local authority and their CLD partners demonstrate positive impact?**

Leadership and Improving Outcomes – Positive Progress

The leadership of CLD at all levels is confident and effective. There is a clear shared vision and ambition for improving the lives of individuals and communities. The CLD Plan is closely aligned to the Single Midlothian Plan, and the two high-level plans complement each other well. The governance of CLD is clear, efficient and integrated well into both council and Community Planning Partnership (CPP) reporting structures and scrutiny arrangements. Regular and detailed reporting is ensuring that the council and strategic partners are clear about the progress they are making. Council internal reporting and governance is used well by senior leaders to analyse and scrutinise achievements against planned actions and targets. Midlothian Voluntary Action (MVA) is a key and vital partner in CLD. MVA contributes effectively to the leadership, governance and delivery of CLD plan priorities. The work and

contribution of CLD to council and CPP priorities is valued highly by senior leaders and elected members. There are a range of opportunities for stakeholders, including young people and adults, to inform and influence the CLD Plan. For example, through commissioned research, consultations, focus groups and youth and community forums. There is a well-embedded culture of strong and effective partnership working. Clearly defined roles and high levels of trust between the Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE) service, third sector and other partners is helping to ensure a collaborative and collective endeavour to improving lives. This is helping to make effective and efficient use of reducing resources by avoiding duplication and targeting resources to areas of greatest needs.

Council and CLD partners planning for improvement is based on robust evidence and underpinned by the comprehensive Profile of Midlothian. Partners focused on improving health and wellbeing and tackling poverty are improving their coordination of provision. This is helping to improve outcomes for individuals and families. The communication between council departments and the Federation of Community Councils, its sub-groups and local Community Councils is improving. This has strengthened links with the planning and roads departments, resulting in earlier engagement and improved communication with communities.

The Shaping Places Programme is building capacity and leading to improvement. The programme has directly influenced decision-making by informing changes to the Single Midlothian Plan. Staff and volunteers know their communities and learners well. Programmes and activities are adapted well to continue to meet ongoing needs.

The Local Employability Plus Partnership is a highly effective group and network of council, CLD partners and third sector organisations. Their open and collaborative approach is helping to ensure that limited funding is distributed well to local groups and organisations.

Staff and volunteers are supported well to increase their skills and knowledge. Staff are actively encouraged and supported to suggest and to lead improvements and new initiatives. Routes into employment from volunteering and career progression in CLD (CLLE) are supported well by the council. For example, from an introduction to youth work through to degree level qualifications for a few staff. The council and CLD partners, including MVA, are effective at sharing training opportunities, which is helping to widen reach and maximise the use of available resources.

Performance and Positive Impact Areas of Positive Progress

Midlothian Council and community planning partners gather and analyse a rich variety of data and other information well to demonstrate the positive impact they are making. Senior leaders are effective at driving this. They understand the story behind the data and benchmark their performance against similar CLD provision across Scotland. Overall, the council and partners are making positive progress towards achieving almost all of the high-level targets within the Single Midlothian Plan and CLD Plan. Case studies are used very well to exemplify where CLLE and partners are making a difference to the lives of individuals and communities. Overall, the majority of participation and achievements of learners are returning to pre-pandemic levels. A few measures show a significant upward trend over time. In recent years, the numbers of young people achieving a positive post school destination has significantly improved and is now consistently high. CLD partners gather and analyse data systematically to inform and deliver a multi-agency programme of diversionary youth work activity. As a result, they have significantly reduced levels of youth anti-social behaviour.

The local authority and partners are very effective at removing barriers to participation. For example, they deliver many programmes and activities free of charge, cover travel expenses and provide equipment. The online delivery of programmes, such as the mental health and wellbeing course, is making this more accessible to those that work or who have other responsibilities. A few CLD and other partners are working well with schools. This is helping to ensure the most appropriate, timely and effective support is put in place for children, young people and families that need it the most. Adjustments to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award provision is helping to remove barriers to participation, including for young people with additional support needs.

As a result, more young people are being recognised for their achievements and have increased confidence to progress to other programmes and activities, such as volunteering. Young carers attending the Croft Street Hub are supported well to study in a safe, quiet and nurturing learning environment. Adult learners are supported well to complete accredited courses based on their needs and interests. Learners value highly the support provided by CLLE staff, which is helping to maintain their interest in learning during difficult times in their lives.

Committed and well-supported volunteers are helping to improve lives and communities. For example, conversation café volunteers are helping adults learning English and become part of their community. Ageing Well volunteers are helping to reduce social isolation and keep older people physically active. Older adults involved in the Village Voices reminiscence group benefit from the social interaction and support from other group members. A few have developed friendships and now meet out with the group. The allocation of Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery Funds to 'trusted partners' is helping to ensure that resources reach those households on low incomes or impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. As a result, individuals and families are receiving much needed support and advice on financial management, food supplies and money to cover unexpected bills. Local community development trusts (CDT) positively benefit from effective support provided by the local authority and MVA. This is helping CDTs to secure assets, attract funding and develop their capacity to progress. CDT and local organisations network well to share their experience and learn from each other. They use community consultation and engagement well to inform their priorities. As a result, communities across Midlothian are benefiting from access to an increasing range of provision.

Overall, participants across a range of programmes and activities are gaining new knowledge and skills helping them to meet their aspirations and needs. For example, young people who are at risk of not achieving a positive destination are gaining skills through Croft Street Hub and Loanhead Vocational Learning Centre provision. Most of these young people are working towards a Foundation Apprenticeship or other Scottish Qualification Authority qualification. As a result, almost all are more aware of their skills, interests and career aims and are better able to progress to other learning. Adults attending the online mental health and wellbeing course are developing strategies to help them tackle stress and anxiety and learning how to support other members of their family. All of the adults participating in the No One Left Behind employability programme are developing skills, gaining qualifications and progressing to further learning, volunteering or employment. Through their engagement, a few learners have become increasingly self-aware, such as recognising challenges with their mental health. As a result, they are accessing the help and support they need to build their confidence and to progress. Digital learners, English for speakers of other languages students, literacy students and Gaelic learners are gaining skills and progressing to other learning. As a result of gaining new skills and qualifications, learners are better able to secure employment.

Across provision, the achievements of young people and adults are regularly recognised and celebrated well.

In summary

The report emphasised that "the council and partners are making positive progress towards achieving almost all of the high-level targets within the CLD Plan.

With regards to CLD for young people, areas of positive progress highlighted in the report included the following:

- The majority of participation and achievements of learners returning to pre-pandemic levels.
- A consistently high number of young people achieving a positive post school destination.
- Significantly reduced levels of youth anti-social behaviour, following the delivery of a multi-agency programme of diversionary youth work activity.
- Committed and well-supported volunteers are helping to improve lives and communities.

Midlothian's CLD provision for adult learners also received praise in the report, with the following areas highlighted:

- Conversation café volunteers are helping adults learning English and become part of their community.
- All of the adults participating in the No One Left Behind employability programme are developing skills, gaining qualifications and progressing to further learning, volunteering or employment.
- Adults attending the online mental health and wellbeing course are developing strategies to help them tackle stress and anxiety and learning how to support other members of their family too.

Community Development Support

The report also highlighted the progress of Community Development Support in the following areas:

- Partners focused on improving health and wellbeing and tackling poverty are improving their coordination of provision.
- The communication between council departments and the <u>Federation of Community Councils</u>, its sub-groups and local Community Councils is improving.
- Local community development trusts (CDT) positively benefit from effective support provided by the local authority and Midlothian Voluntary Action (MVA).
- <u>The Shaping Places Programme</u> is building capacity and leading to improvement.

The local authority and partners are very effective at removing barriers to participation. For example, they deliver many programmes and activities free of charge, cover travel expenses and provide equipment. Adjustments to the Duke of Edinburgh's Award provision is helping to remove barriers to participation, including for young people with additional support needs.

Areas for Development:

There is not yet shared ownership of all CLD priorities or a consistent understanding of how all key stakeholders contribute fully to the CLD Plan. Whilst the close alignment between the CLD Plan and the Single Midlothian Plan is a strength, a few key stakeholders do not fully recognise how they contribute to progressing CLD Plan priorities. Joint self-evaluation is not yet systematic across collaborative work with all relevant partners, such as the health service. Senior leaders should review current self-evaluation arrangements to ensure that collective impacts and information from all key partners helps to more fully inform and influence strategic decision-making.

Across various programmes, a few learners are not aware of having an individual action plan. Key workers should ensure that all learners are clear about the progress they are making and have ownership of their individual action plan.

The full report from Education Scotland can be read in full through the following link:

https://education.gov.scot/inspection-and-review/find-an-inspection-report/find-an-inspection-report/details?id=5306

3.3 Next Steps

The local authority and their CLD partners are making sufficient progress with their CLD plan and have the capacity to continue to improve. As a result, HM Inspectors will take no further action in relation to this progress visit. However the CLLE service and its CLD delivery partners will work together to produce an area for development plan and these priorities will be included within the new 3-year CLD Plan required in September 2024.

4 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

4.1 Resource

Staff and partners time is required to support the areas for development action plan.

4.2 Digital

Not applicable.

4.3 Risk

Not applicable.

4.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

The purpose of CLD activity is to reduce barriers to participation in building skills for learning, life and work. ICLD activity also is responsible for improving outcomes in communities and reducing unemployment.

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1   Key Priorities

The overall CLD activity aligns with the key outcomes in the Single Midlothian Plan as indicated by this recent inspection.

A.2   Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

☒ Holistic Working
☒ Hub and Spoke
☒ Modern
☒ Sustainable
☒ Transformational
☒ Preventative
☒ Asset-based
☒ Continuous Improvement
☒ One size fits one
☐ None of the above

A.3   Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

☒ One Council Working with you, for you
☒ Preventative and Sustainable
☒ Efficient and Modern
☒ Innovative and Ambitious
☐ None of the above

A.4   Delivering Best Value

The inspection report on the CLD and Partners Progress Visit indicates positive progress is being made in securing best value.

A.5   Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Many community and third sector and public sector stakeholders were included within the inspection visit through focus groups.

A.6   Impact on Performance and Outcomes

Positive trend data indicating improved performance was evidenced through the inspection process.

A.7 Adopting a Preventative Approach

Ensuring we meet our CLD statutory duties supports improved outcomes through enhancing current preventative approaches.

A.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

Ensuring we meet our CLD statutory duties supports the ability to build sustainability into the joint work taking place through CLD activity and is one of the key themes within the existing CLD Plan.

Inspection of Highbank Intermediate Care Home

Report by Grace Cowan
Head of Primary Care and Older People

1 Purpose of Report

This report provides an overview of the resent unannounced care inspection for Highbank Intermediate Care Home.

2 Background

2.1 Highbank Intermediate care facility was inspected by the Care Inspectorate as a registered facility for people aged over 60. The care home was inspected on the 9th/10th January 2024 with the report published on the 16th January 2024.

Highbank Intermediate Care facility provides step down intermediate care for 38 people and short break respite for 2 residents. Some bedrooms have ensuite, with shared toilets/bathrooms in each unit. The care home is based over two floors and is made up of six wings all with separate lounge, kitchenette, and dining areas. The laundry and main kitchen are on the ground floor of facility.

The inspection format was undertaken under Care Inspectorate Heath and Social Care standards for care homes.

2.2 Following the recent inspection a report was published that details the areas of its findings and outlines areas for recommendation and/or requirements.

The inspection report grades the areas of inspection from 1 (Unsatisfactory) to 6 (Excellent). This inspection report graded the three areas as follows:

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	**4**	**Good**
How good is our leadership?	**5**	**Very good**
How good is our care and support planned?	**4**	**Good**

2.3 <u>Key messages from the report</u>:

There were good working relationships between management and staff. The management team had effective oversight of the service.

Significant strengths in relation to management and leadership were identified during the inspection which the care inspectorate noting this to have a significant impact on positive outcomes and experiences for people being supported and their families.

Staff encouraged people to be independent, promoted choice and consistently which showed in depth knowledge of each person and as a result had meaningful interactions. A programme of meaningful activities was available to all within Highbank, and staff facilitated people engaging with this when additional support was needed. This ensured peoples wellbeing and sense of worth was enhanced by staff who were knowledgeable and skilled.

People experienced compassion, dignity, and respect, with staff knowing the people they supported very well and working as a team to achieve positive outcomes for people. There was a culture of respect within Highbank between all members of the team which the inspectors noted, created a lovely environment. Staff expressed they were happy in their roles and noted satisfaction in supporting people to have a better quality of life.

People's health needs were monitored well, and referrals were made to health professional. There were very good relationships with health care professionals and the regular multi-disciplinary meeting were highlighted as having a positive impact on health outcomes for people supported in Highbank.

2.4   All previous areas for improvement had been fully met. There were no areas of improvement noted from this unannounced inspection.

2.5   Actions taken in response to inspection:

No specific action to take place but ongoing quality assurance and improvement programme underway.

2.6   There have been not complaints since the last inspection.

3   **Conclusion**

This was a positive inspection, with encouraging feedback from families and staff.

4   Report Implications

4.1   Resource

There are no financial and human resource implications associated with this report.

4.2   Risk

The Care Inspectorate inspect all registered services on a regular basis with announced and unannounced inspections. A report is published which informs all stakeholders about the key strengths of the service, areas for improvement and sets out the main points for action.

Following the publication of that report it is accessible to the public via the Care Inspectorate website, and by requesting a hard copy. It is also on display in the Care at Home base for staff and visitors to access and review progress.

4.3   Policy

Strategy

This positive report has been noted by the social work assurance group, within Midlothian HSCP.

Consultation:

Copies of the Inspection report have been made available to Elected Members, and staff members, and notified to families/carers and other interested parties.

4.4   Equalities

There are no apparent equalities issues.

5   Technology issues

There are no Technology related issues arising from this report.

6   Recommendations

PRS is asked to:

(i)   Note the content of the report, and progress made and forward to Performance Review and Scrutiny Board

10th April 2024

Report Contact: Grace Cowan
                        grace.cowan@midlothian.gov.uk

Highbank
Care Home Service

9a Bonnyrigg Road
Eskbank
Dalkeith
EH22 3EY

Telephone: 01312 705 640

Type of inspection:
Unannounced

Completed on:
16 January 2024

Service provided by:
Midlothian Council

Service provider number:
SP2003002602

Service no:
CS2003011087

About the service

Highbank care home provides care to a maximum of 40 people over the age of 60, of which 6 will be respite/short breaks places. The Provider of the service is Midlothian Council. A new home is scheduled to be built within the next two years to offer a more specialised service in a more suitable environment.

The care home is situated in Eskbank, Dalkeith, and is close to shops and local amenities. The home comprises of two floors that offer accommodation. The home is made up of six wings, each with a lounge/dining and kitchenette area. Some bedrooms have en-suite facilities. There are shared toilets and bath/shower rooms in each unit. The laundry and kitchen area are on the ground floor. There are patio and garden areas around the home that people can access easily.

The care home provides intermediate care which includes rehabilitation and assessment. Placements are usually short term before people move on and professionals are involved from the Health and Social Care Partnership to provide support, such as, physiotherapists, and district nurses.

About the inspection

This was an unannounced follow up inspection which took place on 9 Jan 2023 between 9:30 am and 16:30 and 10 Jan between 09:00 and 16:00. The inspection was carried out by two inspectors from the Care Inspectorate.

To prepare for the inspection we reviewed information about this service. This included previous inspection findings, registration information, information submitted by the service and intelligence gathered since the last inspection.

In making our evaluations of the service we:
- spoke with people using the service and their families/friends.
- we talked with members of staff and the management teams
- observed staff practice and daily life and reviewed a range of documents

Key messages

People experienced compassion, dignity and respect.

The staff knew the people they supported very well and worked as a team to achieve positive outcomes for people.

People were supported by staff to enjoy meaningful activities .

Peoples health needs were monitored well and referrals were made to health professionals when needed.

There were good working relationships between management and staff.

The management team had effective oversight of the service.

From this inspection we evaluated this service as:

In evaluating quality, we use a six point scale where 1 is unsatisfactory and 6 is excellent

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	4 – Good
How good is our leadership?	5 – Very Good
How well is our care and support planned?	4 – Good

Further details on the particular areas inspected are provided at the end of this report.

How well do we support people's wellbeing?   4 – Good

We found significant strengths in aspects of the care provided and how this supported positive outcomes for people. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as good.

People experienced warmth and kindness from staff who had built up positive relationships with the people they support. Staff encouraged people to be independent, promoted choice and consistently showed in-depth knowledge of each person and as a result had meaningful interactions. This ensured peoples wellbeing and sense of worth was enhanced by staff who were knowledgeable and skilled.

There was a culture of respect within Highbank between all members of the team which created a lovely environment All the staff we spoke with stated they were happy in their roles and how much satisfaction they got from supporting people to have a better quality of life.

People were encouraged to make decisions and choices about how wanted to spend their time which allowed them to maintain and develop their interests and what matters to them. This was very beneficial as Highbank offers intermediate care and many are awaiting care packages to return home. Independence was promoted at the right level to make the transition easier.

Staff supported activities and worked alongside the activity coordinator. This ensured people had opportunities to enjoy and take part in activities should they wish to do so. People were having fun and social bonds were clearly seen between people living in the home. There was one activity coordinator who was working on plans to do more one to one activity and activities upstairs to include those who choose to stay in their rooms. People benefitted from regular interactions and engagements from staff which provided opportunities to feel included.

There were no restrictions on family visiting, family and friends were invited into the home which allowed further opportunities for people to connect with those that are important to them. Where restrictions were needed, such as outbreaks of infectious disease, this was managed in a way that still allowed service users to have contact and relationships but ensuring that all involved are fully informed of the situation and can make informed decisions around visiting and infection control.

Meal time experience was well organised and unhurried. People sat with friends and there was a very relaxed atmosphere with people chatting and interacting with each other. Staff encouraged and enabled people to eat their meals independently with just the right level of support where needed. This was offered in a respectful manner. There was access to a variety of meals and drinks. Staff promoted good hydration to people who needed gentle prompting throughout the day. Peoples wellbeing benefitted from an approach that enabled a healthy attitude to food and drink.

Management regularly monitored and audited medication and staff received regular training to ensure safe practice which benefitted people's health.

There were very good relationships with health care professionals and regular multi-disciplinary meeting were taken place. This had a positive impact on health outcomes for people supported in Highbank by people working together proactively.

How good is our leadership? 5 - Very Good

We found significant strengths in relation to management and leadership that had a significant impact on positive outcomes and experiences for people being supported and their families. Therefore, we evaluated this key question as very good.

People benefitted from good leadership skills because quality assurance and improvement were led well. Management promoted strong teamwork and high standards of practice as well as the understanding of maintaining the standards and leading changes where improvement was necessary. People could be assured the organisation providing their care was well led and managed.

Staff received regular training and supervisions. Staff told us the management team were supportive and approachable ,they felt listened to and valued. Team morale was high and staff felt able to offer ideas to help drive improvement and further develop their knowledge and skills. This meant people could have confidence staff were trained , competent and skilled and followed their professional and organisational codes.

The manager had developed a full and comprehensive quality assurance system and demonstrated a clear understanding of what works well and what improvements are needed. This will ensure people benefit from a culture of continuous improvement.

Relatives spoke positively about communication and relationships with the management team and staff. People could be confident that learning from feedback improved outcomes for people.

The manager was responsible for the recruitment of staff, safe recruitment guidance was followed. Systems in place were completed consistently and staff did not commence employment until all necessary pre employment checks were carried out and satisfactory.

How well is our care and support planned? 4 - Good

We evaluated this key question as good where strengths impacted positively on outcomes for people and outweighed areas for improvement.

Care plans were well written, person centred and contained very informative detailed information about the person. The plans were easy to follow and gave a good background on the person, their life, medical history and who and what was important to them. The plans were regularly updated and reviewed. This demonstrated there was a sustained approach to ensuring support plans held relevant information to deliver the right care and support for that person.

Legal documents were all in place as well as risk assessments and safety plans. This meant there was clear guidance for all staff to minimise risk and ensure people were safe.

 The support plans were all in paper formats which made them time consuming to review to ensure every section was up to date.

The personal plans would benefit from further work to ensure they included guidance for staff on supporting someone with stress and distress. This would include effective interventions to support the person and any reasons for their stress and distress. This would lead to consistent approaches for the benefit of the person. This was discussed with the manager who responded immediately with an action plan with timeframes to ensure this was completed. We have therefore not made an area for improvement.

Anticipatory care plans were in place and reviewed and updated regularly by the management team where needed.

What the service has done to meet any areas for improvement we made at or since the last inspection

Areas for improvement

Previous area for improvement 1

Staff should follow the 'Open with Care' guidance on visiting to ensure that people make the most of spending time with their friends and loved ones.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 2.18: I am supported to manage my relationships with my family, friends or partner in a way that suits my wellbeing

This area for improvement was made on 5 July 2021.

Action taken since then

There are no restrictions on visiting and clients are supported in relationships that suits their wellbeing. During any outbreaks this is managed in a way that still allow clients to have contact and relationships but ensuring that all involved are fully informed of the situation and can make informed decisions around visiting and infection control.

This area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 2

Staff should be aware of the legal framework that supports adults with incapacity to ensure their rights are met. Appropriate documentation should be available for staff to see and use to ensure they have the knowledge and understanding to support people who lack capacity. This includes information as to who is making decisions on the person's behalf.

This is to ensure care and support is consistent with Health and Social Care Standard 1.3: If my independence , choice and control are restricted, this complies with relevant legislation and any restrictions are justified, kept to a minimum and carried out sensitively

This area for improvement was made on 5 July 2021.

Action taken since then

All power of attorney and adults with incapacity documentation are in place for service users in the support plans and the assessment information. Plans clearly states whether capacity has been assessed including who did this and date. Senior team all aware that capacity must be determined prior to a move to the service being agreed and Social Work review all capacity paperwork to determine whether a person can be legally moved or not. Appropriate training is provided in this area for all staff.

This area for improvement was met.

Previous area for improvement 3

People experiencing care who are at risk of falling should be cared for in ways that promote their safety and independence. The manager should ensure that appropriate falls prevention guidelines, risk assessments and support plans are in place for people, based on recognised falls prevention frameworks. Staff should be provided with training and support their need to understand this and apply it to their practice.

This is to ensure the care and support is consistent with the Health and Social Care Standards which state: "I have confidence in people because they are trained, competent and skilled, are able to reflect on their practice and follow their professional and organisational codes" (HSCS 3.14).

This area for improvement was made on 10 November 2020.

Action taken since then
Updated paperwork around falls assessments now in place. A person centred risk assessment (with a risk rating) as well as a Falls risk assessment & support plan which gets completed for all new admissions and this is reviewed following any fall or change in needs which might affect mobility. A Tool has also been introduced to assess the use of bedrails to help minimise this risk. Clients and their families are provided with a falls booklet too for information.

This area for improvement was met.

Complaints

There have been no complaints upheld since the last inspection. Details of any older upheld complaints are published at www.careinspectorate.com.

Detailed evaluations

How well do we support people's wellbeing?	4 - Good
1.1 People experience compassion, dignity and respect	5 - Very Good
1.2 People get the most out of life	4 - Good
1.3 People's health and wellbeing benefits from their care and support	5 - Very Good

How good is our leadership?	5 - Very Good
2.2 Quality assurance and improvement is led well	5 - Very Good

How well is our care and support planned?	4 - Good
5.1 Assessment and personal planning reflects people's outcomes and wishes	4 - Good

To find out more

This inspection report is published by the Care Inspectorate. You can download this report and others from our website.

Care services in Scotland cannot operate unless they are registered with the Care Inspectorate. We inspect, award grades and help services to improve. We also investigate complaints about care services and can take action when things aren't good enough.

Please get in touch with us if you would like more information or have any concerns about a care service.

You can also read more about our work online at www.careinspectorate.com

Contact us

Care Inspectorate
Compass House
11 Riverside Drive
Dundee
DD1 4NY

enquiries@careinspectorate.com

0345 600 9527

Find us on Facebook

Twitter: @careinspect

Other languages and formats

This report is available in other languages and formats on request.

Tha am foillseachadh seo ri fhaighinn ann an cruthannan is cànain eile ma nithear iarrtas.

অনুরোধসাপেক্ষে এই প্রকাশনাটি অন্য ফরম্যাট এবং অন্যান্য ভাষায় পাওয়া যায়।

یہ اشاعت درخواست کرنے پر دیگر شکلوں اور دیگر زبانوں میں فراہم کی جاسکتی ہے۔

ਬੇਨਤੀ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਪਲਬਧ ਹੈ।

هذه الوثيقة متوفرة بلغات ونماذج أخرى عند الطلب

本出版品有其他格式和其他語言備索。

Na życzenie niniejsza publikacja dostępna jest także w innych formatach oraz językach.

Attendance Update for Midlothian

Report by Michelle Strong, Education Chief Operating Officer

Report for Information

1   Recommendations

PRS are asked to note:
- The ongoing work of the attendance strategy group in building stronger processes to improve attendance at school.
- Acknowledge the ongoing work of schools to support children and families to attend school consistently.

2   Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to present a summary of attendance in Midlothian. The historic and current trends in attendance are presented alongside the ongoing work that is taking place across the authority and within schools to improve the outcomes of our young people.

02 May 2024

Report Contact:
Andrew Carse, Principal Officer – Performance, Data Analysis & Research
andrew.carse@midlothian.gov.uk

Kirsty Quinn, Principal Educational Psychologist
kirsty.quinn@midlothian.gov.uk

3   Background

3.1   The purpose of this report is to present the trend data and comparison to national and similar authorities for our attendance data. The report will also highlight the recent national developments in attendance information and present the work that has been ongoing with the Midlothian Attendance Strategy working group to improve attendance for all young people in schools.

3.2   There are a number of different sources of data for this report, the main source is taken from the recently published national dataset on Summary statistics for schools in Scotland 2022/23, which contains a breakdown for attendance and absence and can be found here. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the Scottish Government were gathering data biennially on school pupil attendance and absence to produce National Statistics. However, during the pandemic the Scottish Government started collecting the data on a more frequent basis, up to daily information, as it was used as evidence that informed the Scottish Government, Scottish Ministers, CERG (etc.) throughout the pandemic in relation to the impact Covid-19 was having on school pupil attendance. This process reduced following full reopening of schools, and returned to the biannual publication of data, however they have continued with a fortnightly data collection as of August 2023 to enable the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to continue to monitor any residual impact Covid-19. This information is now being reported on every two weeks with summary of findings shared with each local authority and data presented on a publicly available online dashboard, which can be found **here**. It should be noted that this data is extracted directly from the education management information system, SEEMiS, and presented without any quality assurance.

3.3   In a similar way to how the Scottish Government is continuing to monitor attendance and absence, Midlothian council has also continued to focus on this area of work as a key priority. There has been a strong emphasis as part of the education service plan, with significant improvements being made through the attendance strategy group. School and authority level attendance, absence and exclusion data is updated on a biweekly basis and shared internally through data dashboards. The purpose of this is to provide focused support were needed and reduced the risk through early intervention and prevention.

4   Attendance Summary

4.1   Appendix B for this report provides summary information for attendance in Midlothian in comparison to the national and comparator authorities. There are also extracts from the Midlothian data dashboard to provide context for how the attendance strategy group and schools are using this to drive improvement:

4.2   **Attendance Context for Midlothian**

    i.   The trend of overall attendance in Midlothian is very similar to that of the national and comparator authorities. There has been a gradual decrease in attendance from 2012/13 to the last full session, 2022/23. Over this period there has been a -3.50% reduction nationally, -3.19% for the Local Government Benchmarking Framework (LGBF) family group and -2.50% reduction for Midlothian. The recent trend data shows that attendance in Midlothian, which was previously lower than the national rate, is now higher than this, although slightly lower than the LGBF average. It is clear from the data that there has been an impact from the Covid-19 pandemic, with attendance for all authorities declining since schools reopened. Most notable

however, the year-to-date attendance for Midlothian this session is higher than what it was in 2022/23.

ii. The trend in attendance for all school pupils is very similar when examined by sector. There has been a gradual decrease in attendance from 2014/15, with the biggest decrease coming post-pandemic for both primary and secondary pupils. For primary school attendance the rate in Midlothian is higher than the national level, with the decrease from 2014/15 only -1.79% compared to -2.88% nationally and -2.54% for the LGBF family group average. In secondary it is a similar pattern with a -3.13% decrease in Midlothian compared to -4.06 nationally and -4.02% for the LGBF average. The attendance rate for secondary school pupils in Midlothian in 2022/23 however was lower than the national rate by 0.57%, but there has been a slight increase in attendance for this session year-to-date compared to 2022/23.

iii. The biweekly Scottish Government attendance dashboard that is shared online, highlights the comparisons and challenges in this area of work. There does need to be a level of caution with this data given that it is utilised in its raw format and not quality assured. The most recent information however for the two weeks up until 20th March show that Midlothian ranks 19th out of the 32 local authorities in primary attendance and 15th out of 32 for secondary attendance. For primary attendance Midlothian is slightly higher than the national and LGBF comparators, and in Secondary Midlothian is slightly below the national level but above the LGGF average. The level of attendance will vary from period to period, however the ranking of Midlothian has not changed dramatically since being published.

iv. Since the start of the session in 2022/23 the Midlothian Attendance strategy group and schools have had access to an internal data dashboard. This is updated biweekly to present trends on attendance and exclusions and allow targeted support to be implemented. The information can be drilled down to specific groups of young people and highlight where the challenges currently presented in schools can be supported though interventions and preventions. A select number of slides from the dashboard are shown in Appendix B, but this is only available internally to drive improvement and focused support.

4.3 Attendance Strategy

The overarching aim of the attendance strategy is to develop and strengthen a whole-system partnership approach that leads to increased and sustained attendance and engagement in education for all children and young people.

It is recognised that improving attendance and engagement is a particularly complex issue and a strong partnership approach is needed to deepen understanding and develop impactful and sustainable solutions. Key considerations include the impact of Covid and a shift in the perceived importance of attendance and the place of school, greater access to digital learning, the impacts of rising poverty and an increase in levels of anxiety and mental health concerns amongst children, young people and families.

The Attendance Strategy Group is made up of school leaders, central education team members, home school practitioners, Family Wellbeing Service, CLLE, health and 3rd sector colleagues. We are currently pursuing membership from parents/carers and are engaging with children and young people to develop systems to ensure they are active participants and influencing the activity and decision-making of the group.

Based on analysis of attendance data, engagement activities over time and a review of effective practice across the UK, the strategy is mapped out over the 4 levels below:

Level 1: Promote and protect attendance at universal whole school level

- Following significant engagement with stakeholders, the refreshed attendance policy was launched in January 2024. The policy details the positive approaches and partnerships to promote engagement and attendance in Midlothian and the procedures for responding to concerns around attendance.
- A school attendance self-evaluation tool is being developed to support school leaders to evaluate school systems and approaches against quality indicators of effective practice. This self-evaluation tool will be integrated into the quality improvement plans with schools.
- Midlothian-wide communications are to be personalised and delivered through ASGs to ensure consistent messages and commitments across the authority while promoting local relationships with communities.

Level 2: Reduce the risk of non-attendance through prevention and early intervention

- Tracking and monitoring systems are being streamlined across schools, ensuring detailed analysis of attendance levels and codes across different groups, and ensuring the impact of interventions can be tracked and gaps/areas for improvement identified.
- The data dashboards have enabled the tracking and monitoring of groups of children and young people at risk of low attendance, review effective use of PEF, and identify the impact of interventions. Analysis has been carried out on a whole school basis to identify schools that are making a positive difference and how to extend best practice.

Level 3: Strengthen effective early support to reduce signs of non-attendance

- The effectiveness of the refreshed procedure where attendance drops below 90% will be reviewed in June along with the impact of targeted communications and support strategies.
- A group of children and young people with attendance between 70 and 89% have been recruited as co-researchers to design and carry out research into the factors that influence attendance of young people across Midlothian at this level and ways of improving this.
- A toolkit has been developed to help deepen insight into attendance issues and promote effective support planning. This will be further developed with children and young people.

Level 4: Strengthen purpose, support and partnerships for young people presenting with persistent non-attendance

- Work is ongoing to strengthen curriculum progressions to ensure rich and purposeful learning opportunities enable learners to achieve and reach positive destinations with particular consideration of learners at 0-19% and 20-69% attendance and the role of the digital workspace in maintaining connection and engagement.
- The Attendance Partnership Network was formed this session, bringing partners together from Schools, EPs, Family wellbeing, home school practitioners and 3rd sector to deepen understanding of key issues and of roles, coordinate actions and problem solve issues together.

- From September, children and young people with attendance between 0 and 19% will be recruited as co-researchers to gain deeper insight into the factors that influence attendance at this level and ways of improving this.
- The attendance toolkit will be further developed to include support plans with children and young people at attendance between 0-19% and 20-69%.

The Attendance Strategy Group will continue to review and monitor the impact across the 4 levels and seek to build systemic capacity to make a positive and sustained difference over time.

5 Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)

5.1 Resource

There are no resource implications for this report.

5.2 Digital

There continues to be improvements and developments of our data and digital technology in this specific area of work, which will continue to support the attendance strategy group, schools and priorities for the children of Midlothian. Improvements in this area will enable more targeted support and intervention.

5.3 Risk

Not applicable.

5.4 Ensuring Equalities (if required a separate IIA must be completed)

Not applicable.

5.5 Additional Report Implications (See Appendix A)

See Appendix A

Appendices

Appendix A – Additional Report Implications
Appendix B – Attendance Summary

APPENDIX A – Report Implications

A.1   Key Priorities within the Single Midlothian Plan

This will work towards the key priority of Reducing the gap in learning outcomes.

A.2   Key Drivers for Change

Key drivers addressed in this report:

☐ Holistic Working
☐ Hub and Spoke
☒ Modern
☐ Sustainable
☒ Transformational
☐ Preventative
☐ Asset-based
☒ Continuous Improvement
☐ One size fits one
☐ None of the above

A.3   Key Delivery Streams

Key delivery streams addressed in this report:

☐ One Council Working with you, for you
☒ Preventative and Sustainable
☒ Efficient and Modern
☒ Innovative and Ambitious
☐ None of the above

A.4   Delivering Best Value

The delivery of this plan with assist the council in meeting its best value duties. Most notably in the following Best Value themes: Governance and Accountability; Effective use of resources and; Partnerships and collaborative working.

A.5   Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

Not applicable.

A.6   Impact on Performance and Outcomes

The content in this report and the continuous improvement to support improvement in attendance and attainment for all young people will assist in improving performance and outcomes for the council.

A.7   Adopting a Preventative Approach

Not applicable.

A.8   Supporting Sustainable Development

Not applicable.

APPENDIX B – Attendance Summary

1. **<u>Midlothian Comparison Context</u>**

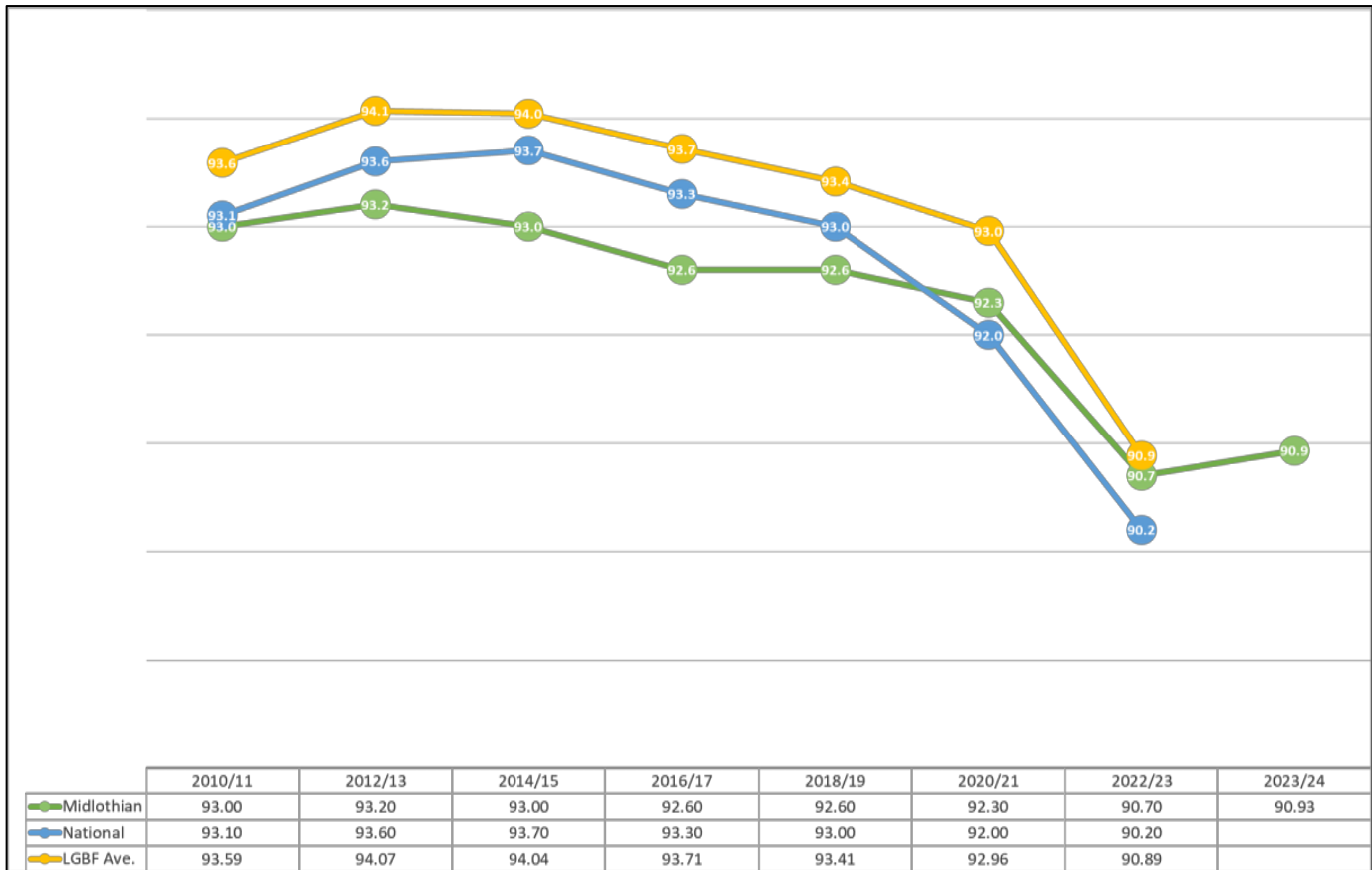|	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15	2016/17	2018/19	2020/21	2022/23	2023/24
Midlothian	93.00	93.20	93.00	92.60	92.60	92.30	90.70	90.93
National	93.10	93.60	93.70	93.30	93.00	92.00	90.20	
LGBF Ave.	93.59	94.07	94.04	93.71	93.41	92.96	90.89	

Figure 1 – Attendance rates as a percentage by academic year – all stages
Source: Scottish Government (2024)
* LGBF Ave. is the average figures for Midlothian's Local Government Benchmarking Framework family comparator group. This includes Angus, Argyll & Bute, East Lothian, Moray, Scottish Borders and Stirling.
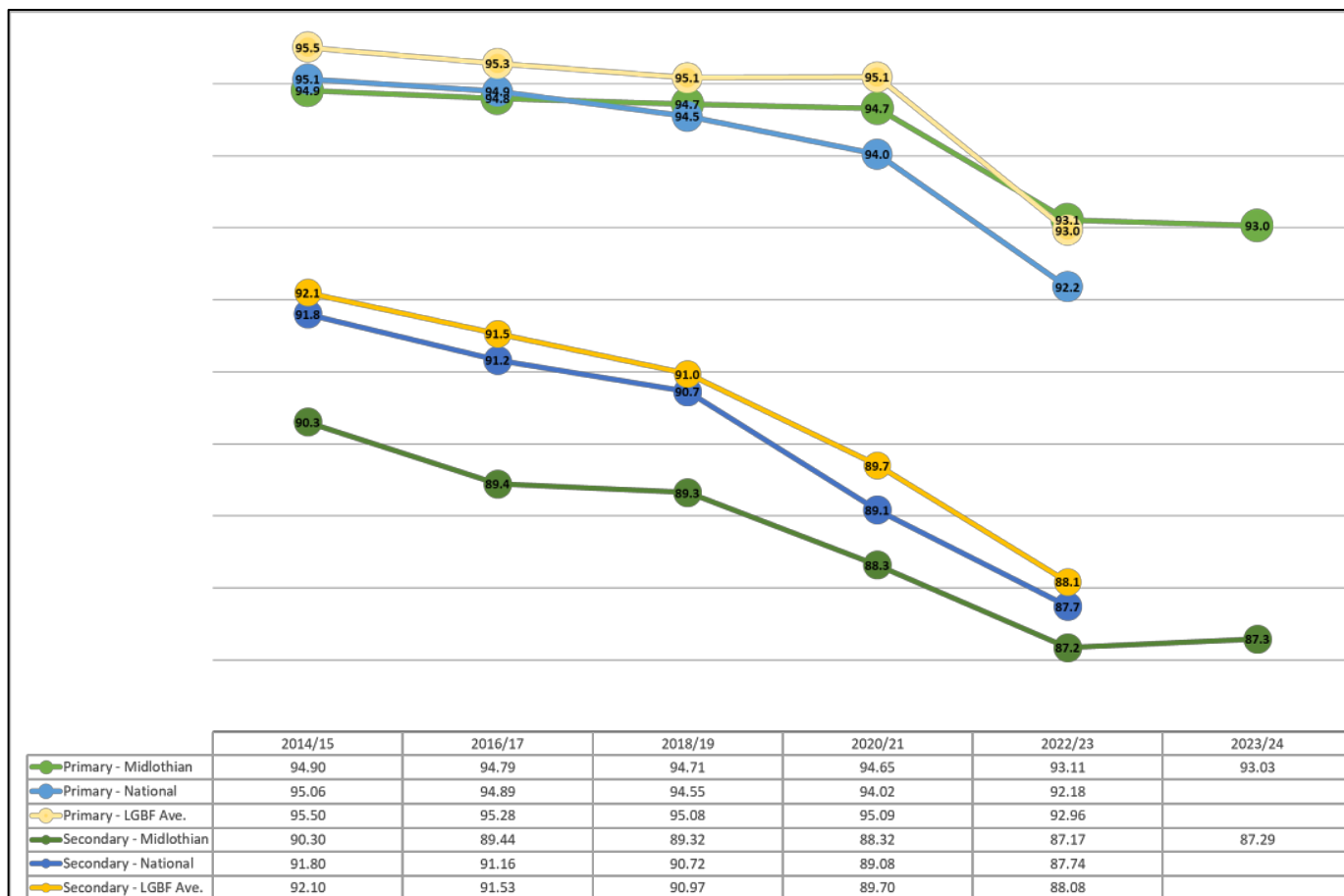
	2014/15	2016/17	2018/19	2020/21	2022/23	2023/24
Primary - Midlothian	94.90	94.79	94.71	94.65	93.11	93.03
Primary - National	95.06	94.89	94.55	94.02	92.18	
Primary - LGBF Ave.	95.50	95.28	95.08	95.09	92.96	
Secondary - Midlothian	90.30	89.44	89.32	88.32	87.17	87.29
Secondary - National	91.80	91.16	90.72	89.08	87.74	
Secondary - LGBF Ave.	92.10	91.53	90.97	89.70	88.08	

Figure 2 – Attendance rates as a percentage by academic year by sector
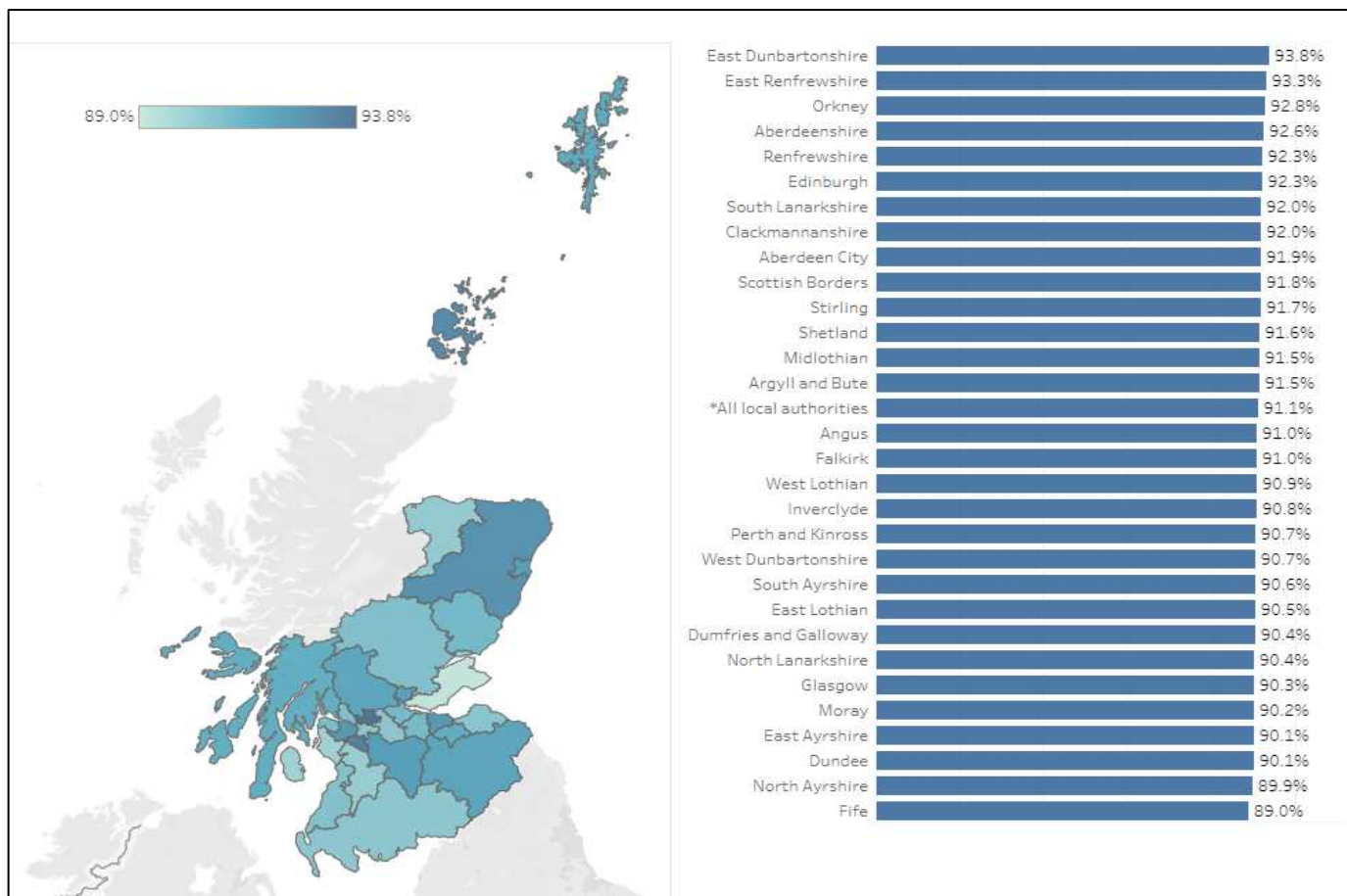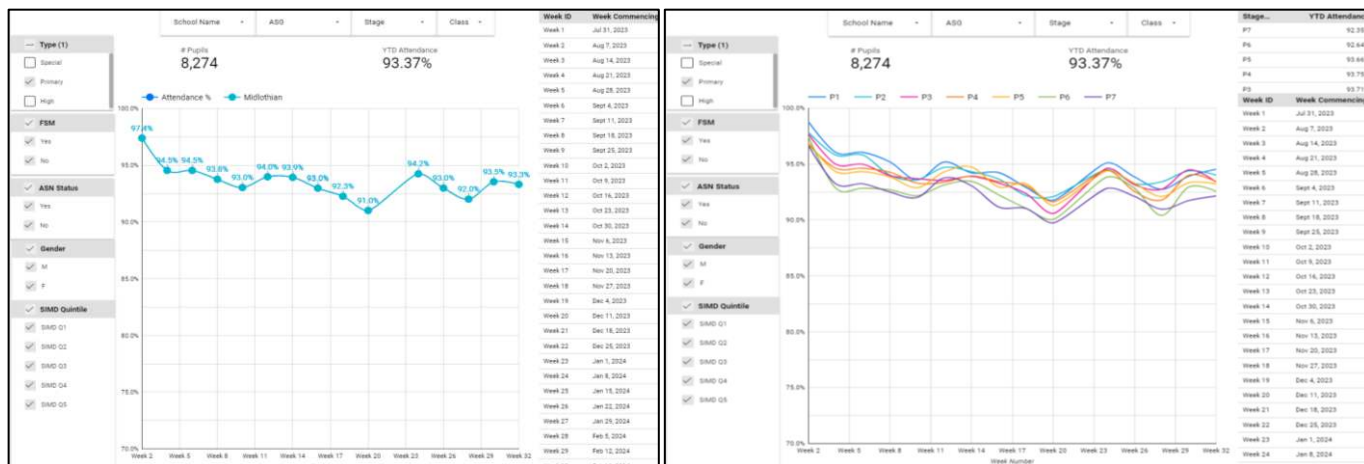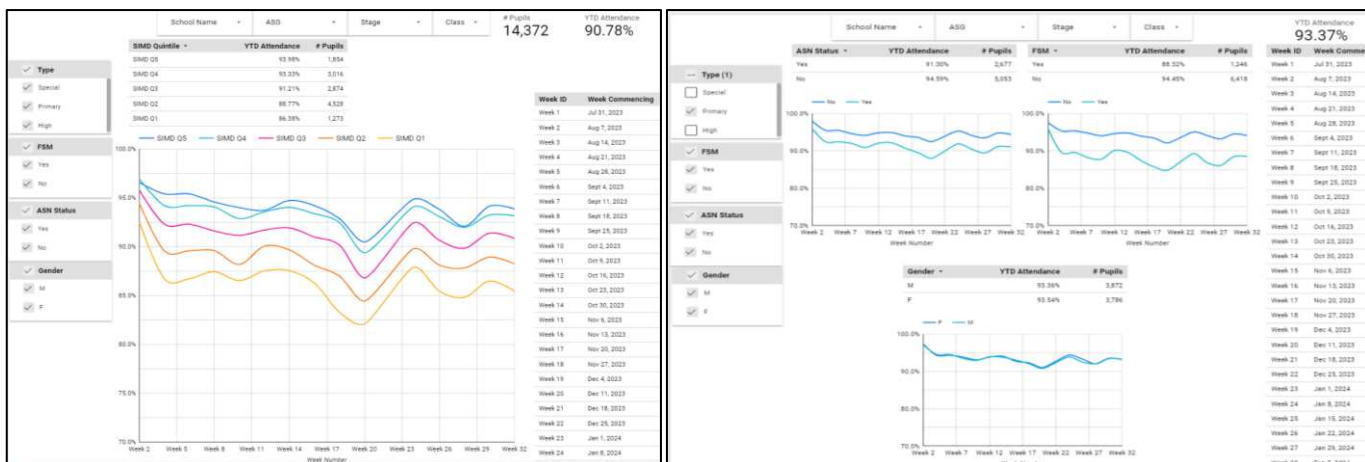Source: Scottish Government (2024)

Figure 3 – Extract of Scottish Government Fortnightly School Attendance Dashboard
Source: Scottish Government (2024) – taken from 21.02.24

Overall Attendance – Can be drilled down by characteristics   Attendance by Stage – can be drilled down by characteristics

Attendance by SIMD – can be drilled down by characteristics gender, ASN, FSM

Attendance comparison by

Figure 4 – Extract of Midlothian Attendance Data Dashboard