

Local Child Poverty Action Report Year 3 (20/21)

Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian



February 2022

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Preface

This annual report highlights the steps that have been taken in the year 2020/21 towards reducing poverty for families in Midlothian. The report outlines the crisis response to Covid-19, such as the provision of food vouchers and fuel payments, coupled with investment in digital infrastructure, to ensure that families were supported through the pandemic. In December 2020, Midlothian Council set up the Food and Key Essentials Fund which supported over 4500 households during 11 weeks of operation. Approximately 75% of the funding was issued to households with children, with over half of the funding supporting single parent families in need. Childcare Hubs were set up across Midlothian, providing support for families in need and care for children of key workers to allow them to continue working.

Actions to address child poverty sit within our community action plans and are primarily contained within Improving Opportunities Midlothian (IOM) and Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child (GIRFEMC) thematic plans. The Midlothian Child Poverty Working Group has taken steps to improve the strategic direction and ownership of planning to tackle family poverty and will be responsible for the development and delivery of the Child Poverty Action Plan. Work continues to address the drivers of child poverty alongside work to mitigate the effects of poverty on families in Midlothian.

Introduction

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 places a duty on Local Authorities and NHS Boards to jointly develop and publish an annual Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR). This progress report provides an update on actions taken locally to reduce child poverty in Midlothian in the year 2020-21. The Covid-19 pandemic has adversely affected Midlothian's population and exacerbated the impact of child poverty within our communities. Throughout the year 2020-21, Midlothian Council worked with NHS and third sector partners to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and the measures taken are outlined in this report.

Governance

The Child Poverty Working Group reports to the Improving Opportunities in Midlothian thematic group within Midlothian Community Planning structure. The working group is led jointly by Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian representatives. Steps have been taken this year to review the membership of the working group and to improve the strategic direction, ownership and embedding of actions to address child poverty in Midlothian.

Midlothian Community Planning Partnership outcomes for 2019-22 are focused on reducing inequalities in:

- the health of our population
- the outcomes of learning in our population
- the economic circumstances of our population

Working towards these outcomes through the actions contained in our Service Plans allows us to focus on actions to address child poverty. Developing strategic engagement with areas such as procurement, housing, transport and economic development continue to be viewed as crucial to further developing this work.

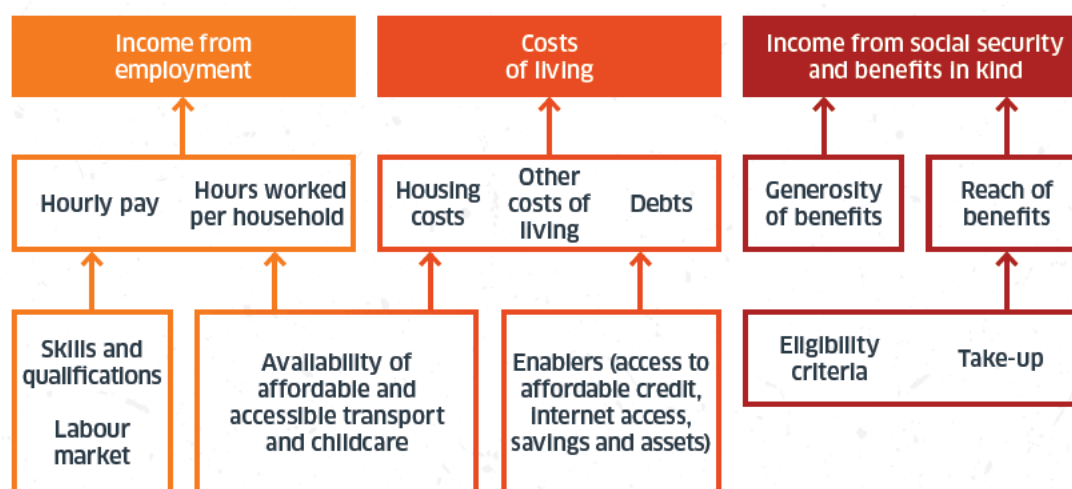
Our vision

In keeping with the targets of the Scottish Government, our vision in Midlothian is to work to eradicate child poverty and by 2030 to have made significant progress that results in:

- less than 10% of our children living in relative poverty
- less than 5% of our children living in absolute poverty
- less than 5% of families unable to afford the basic necessities of life
- less than 5% of our children living in persistent poverty

To achieve these aims, we are taking actions focused on the three drivers of child poverty:

1	Increasing income from employment
2	Reducing the costs of living
3	Increasing uptake of social security and benefits in kind



Midlothian profile

Child Poverty rates

From 2015-2020 child poverty rates in Midlothian have increased by 2.1%, from 21.8% (2014-15) to 23.9% (2019-20). Over this period increased rates of child poverty are also reported in neighbouring local authority areas and across Scotland.

Area	2014-15	2018-19	2019-20	% point change 2015-20
Midlothian	21.8%	22.5%	23.9%	2.1%
East Lothian	21.9%	22.7%	24.5%	2.6%
West Lothian	21.3%	22.9%	24.6%	3.3%
City of Edinburgh	18.6%	18.9%	20.3%	1.7%
Scottish Borders	20.9%	22.5%	24.2%	3.3%
Scotland	22%	24%	24.3%	2.7%

Source: End Child Poverty local child poverty estimates - <http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/local-child-poverty-data-2014-15-2019-20/>

SIMD 2020

The most recent SIMD data, published in 2020, shows that Midlothian has three datazones in the most deprived 10% nationally, all of which are located in the Dalkeith Ward. Ten datazones fall within the most deprived 20% nationally, a reduction from eleven in 2016. In addition to Dalkeith, these are found in the wards of Midlothian East, Midlothian West and Midlothian South.

Midlothian datazones in the most deprived 10% nationally			
Datazone reference	Intermediate Zone	Population	Ward
S01011010	Dalkeith - 01	578	Dalkeith
S01011011	Dalkeith - 02	802	Dalkeith
S01011012	Dalkeith - 03	688	Dalkeith

Midlothian datazones in the most deprived 20% nationally			
Datazone reference	Intermediate Zone	Population	Ward
S01010965	Straiton - 04	529	Midlothian West
S01011010	Dalkeith - 01	578	Dalkeith
S01011011	Dalkeith - 02	802	Dalkeith
S01011012	Dalkeith - 03	688	Dalkeith
S01011022	Easthouses - 02	593	Midlothian East
S01011024	Easthouses - 04	793	Midlothian East
S01011026	Mayfield - 02	527	Midlothian East

Midlothian datazones in the most deprived 20% nationally			
S01011027	Mayfield - 03	946	Midlothian East
S01011038	North Gorebridge - 02	1005	Midlothian South
S01011044	Gorebridge & Middleton - 05	658	Midlothian South

Poverty Profile – Local Authority level data on child poverty

Code	PI	Baseline	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Data Source
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
CP.01	HMRC - % Children in low-income families	18.6%	12%	N/A	15%	16%	16%	N/A	HMRC, Personal Tax Credits: Children in low-income families local measure
CP.02	End Child Poverty - Estimates of children in poverty	21%	21.1%	23.4%	23.8%	22.5%	23.9%	N/A	End Child Poverty, Children in poverty estimates
CP.03	% Households managing well financially	45%	60%	56%	60%	58%	N/A	N/A	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey - Local Authority tables
CP.04	% Children in working households	66.6%	61.2%	72.1%	72.4%	74.1%	61.9%	N/A	ONS, Workless households for regions across the UK
CP.05	% Employees (18+) earning less than the Living Wage	17.5%	17.2%	13.8%	16%	15.1%	N/A	15.4%	ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings - Scotland analysis
CP.06	Underemployment of 16+ population (%)	4%	10%	7%	7%	8%	N/A	N/A	Regional employment patterns in Scotland
CP.07	Adults with no savings	15%	N/A	20%	N/A	23%	N/A	N/A	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey - Local Authority tables

Code	PI	Baseline	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Data Source
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
CP.08	P4-P7 pupils registered for free school meals	20.3%	17.8%	16.2%	15.3%	14.9%	15.5%	N/A	Scottish Government, Healthy Living Survey
CP.09	Employment in "lower paid" occupations	27%				27%	31%	N/A	ONS, Annual Population Survey
CP.10	Median full-time gross weekly earnings	6.2%				6.2%	8.2%	7.4%	ONS, Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings
CP.11	Jobs density	0.62		0.62	0.63	0.62	N/A	N/A	ONS, Jobs density dataset
CP.12	% Adults reporting a limiting long-term physical or mental health problem - household with children	11%	5.7%	7.8%	13.4%	18.3%	N/A	N/A	Scottish Government, Scottish Surveys Core Questions
CP.13	% Single parent households	7%	8%	9%	5%	4%	N/A	N/A	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey
CP.14	% Large family households	7%	6%	5%	5%	5%	N/A	N/A	Scottish Government, Scottish Household Survey
CP.15	Children (under 16) - Population estimates	19.1%	19.1%	19.1%	19.3%	19.4%	19.4%	N/A	NRS, Mid-year Population Estimates
CP.16	Children (under 16) by SIMD16 quintile	11%				11%	N/A	N/A	SIMD16
CP.17	First time mothers aged	16%	11%	10%	8%	5%	N/A	N/A	ISD, Age of First Time Mothers

Code	PI	Baseline	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Data Source
			Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	Value	
	19 yrs and under (% of all first-time mothers)								
CP.18	Non-white minority ethnic - % of total population				2.8%	3%	2.4%	N/A	Scottish Government, Scottish Survey Core Questions

Mitigating the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

Food and Fuel

In March 2020, through the Localised Partnership Approach to Covid-19, funds were awarded to foodbanks relating directly to the numbers and populations that they served, to purchase necessary food items for food parcels for those in need in our communities. This funding helped support online purchasing of ambient foods as well as fresh produce to complete the agreed nutritionally balanced food parcels and to ensure there was enough food for different sized families. It allowed foodbanks to make bulk purchases not otherwise available due to supermarket restrictions at that time. The funding also helped to minimise risks to volunteers, mostly retired people, from having to shop daily in supermarkets for their respective foodbanks.

At the same time Foodbanks were able to receive excess food from Cyrenians in an arrangement through Midlothian Council who opened a distribution hub for surplus food from the Cyrenians Edinburgh base. Redeployed council staff collected and delivered the ambient food across Midlothian to the many foodbanks and to new hot food providers who started up in local communities.

In December 2020 Midlothian Council set up the Food and Key Essentials Fund. The fund opened on 15th December 2020 and closed on 3rd March 2021. The fund successfully supported over 4500 households in need across Midlothian during the 11 weeks of operation:

- 89% of issued funding to 4 post codes EH22, EH23 EH26, EH19
- Approx. 75 % of funding issued to households with children
- Approx. 53% of funding issued to single parent families
- 2099 applicants have been referred to local Citizens Advice for further support
- 68% of applicants received fuel payments
- 73% of applicants have only applied once

Initially families with children who were eligible for Free School Meals had lunches delivered to their homes, then they were transitioned on to BACS payments.

Digital

Students were issued with devices to enable them to engage in online learning and to keep in contact with their class and teachers. Connect Scotland continue to provide devices and mifi so that people can stay connected.

HUBs for children

Childcare hubs were set up across the county to support essential workers to continue working and to provide support for vulnerable families. Doorstep visits to families across the county were carried

out by Education staff, in order to keep in touch and identify any needs that could be supported, such as food, devices, medication etc.

Learning Opportunities

Adult learning opportunities transitioned to online platforms and support was provided for those looking to upskill, change career etc. Feedback from adult learners highlighted the benefits of being able to join courses online as it reduced the need to travel and having to arrange childcare.

Local Child Poverty Action Plan Update 2020-21

Actions relating to child poverty are contained within the various thematic community planning action plans, particularly Improving Opportunities Midlothian (IOM) and Getting It Right for Every Midlothian Child (GIRFEMC), and within Midlothian Council and NHS service plans. The Child Poverty Working Group has highlighted a requirement to develop a poverty action plan that provides strategic direction to address poverty and this action is contained within the strategic planning update below. Updates to our current actions to address the three drivers of child poverty are documented in the following tables.

Strategic Planning to address child poverty in Midlothian		
Action	Progress	Future plans
Review and develop governance and strategic leadership of policies and actions to address child poverty.	The Child Poverty Working Group developed a paper of recommendations, including the development of a Child Poverty Strategic Planning Group to provide governance and strategic direction to the working group. This will assist strategic engagement with areas such as procurement, housing, transport and economic development, which continue to be viewed as crucial to assist the reduction of child poverty in Midlothian.	Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian child poverty leads for Midlothian will continue work to develop the Midlothian Child Poverty Action Plan 2022 in collaboration with Improving Opportunities Midlothian thematic planning group. Work will be undertaken to progress the development of a new Poverty Strategic Planning group.
Undertake a Child Poverty Self-assessment session with Midlothian Community Planning partners.	A Self-assessment session was originally planned for May 2020 and was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to run this session during 2021 and it is further postponed. The session was to be led by the Improvement Service with the support of NHS Health Scotland and the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU) and aimed to identify strengths and areas for improvement in relation to our work to tackle child poverty (particularly around development and delivery of our Local Child Poverty Action Plan and Report). A background fact-finding questionnaire has been developed for the session.	This session will be held in 2022 following the development of the new Poverty Strategic Planning group. Planning will take place to allow the session to be held online if it is not possible to meet in person. The outcomes of the session will inform the development of the Midlothian Child Poverty Action Plan.

Develop the Midlothian Child Poverty Action Plan	A new action plan is to be developed to address the drivers of child poverty.	The plan will be developed collaboratively between the Poverty Strategic Planning group and the Child Poverty Working group and will be informed by the Self-assessment session, Midlothian's poverty profile, and the voices of people with lived experience.
Listening to the voices of lived experience	In 2019 Get Heard Scotland discussions, facilitated by the Poverty Alliance, took place in the areas of Gorebridge, Woodburn, Penicuik, Bonnyrigg and Mayfield, with around 41 people in total taking part.	The outcomes of the Get Heard Scotland discussions in Midlothian will be used to inform the Midlothian Child Poverty Action Plan 2022-25. Further engagement with families with lived experience of poverty is planned as part of our work to address the Cost of the School Day. In 2022 collaborative work between Communities & Lifelong Learning, Education, Third Sector and NHS Lothian will commence in Gorebridge and Penicuik to address the cost of the school day for families living in these localities.
Midlothian Poverty Profile	The Midlothian poverty profile has been updated with available data. A child poverty snapshot has been produced to highlight key data and this will be used to inform and guide discussions with partners.	The content of the Midlothian poverty profile will be reviewed by the Child Poverty Working Group to assess the availability and use of the data. Data from Public Health Scotland and local public health data will be used to inform an updated poverty profile for Midlothian.

Costs of living are reduced		
Action	Progress 2020-21	Future plans
Advice and support for families to address utility costs and fuel efficiency - Changeworks (part of the Aim Hi project)	50 families were supported in the year 2020-21 resulting in total financial savings of £10,542 and carbon savings of 1,161kg. Savings were made up from energy advice, fuel billing savings, Fuel Bank vouchers and applications to the Home Heating Fund.	The Aim Hi project has been awarded extended funding from the Health Improvement Fund until September 2022. Evaluation is being undertaken and results will be reported in March 2022 to understand the impact of the 4-year project and assist future planning.
Homelink Outreach Family Opportunities Coordinator recruited to support families to access benefits, housing, energy and debt advice to make real and sustainable changes.	During the pandemic the focus was on continuing to support families with their immediate needs, mostly accessing food and money and assisting families with educational materials to help support children not accessing school. Additional offer: 23 families supported to maximise their income 6 families supported to minimise their outgoings 5 families supported in to training/employment opportunities	The post is funded for 2 more years from 20-22.

Income from employment is maximised		
Action	Progress 2020-21	Future steps
Increase uptake of Good Time To Be 2 (GTTB2) ELC places	190 children received a GTTB2 place. Strong partnerships between NHS, Midlothian Council, Third Sector organisations and partnership nurseries led to this increase in enquiries and spaces allocated. The number of early learning and childcare settings offering GTTB2 in Midlothian has increased, improving availability of	There is a move towards an electronic application process for GTTB2. Applicants will have the choice to apply online or by paper format, further reducing barriers to involvement. A media campaign will be launched to promote and highlight ways to apply.

Income from employment is maximised		
Action	Progress 2020-21	Future steps
	GTTB2 across Midlothian.	
Parental Employability Support	65 parents have received/are receiving 1:1 intensive keyworker support at present through Midlothian Council from a PESF worker (part-time) and two keyworkers within the Communities and Lifelong Learning department (CLL). A spilt of 28 employed/ 37 unemployed. A further 4 parents are awaiting initial assessments/ first meetings being set up.	Growth sectors have changed during the pandemic so using Labour Market Intelligence and linking in with Midlothian's Economic Growth Strategy and local partners we will be more aware of opportunities that will be available in the coming months (Health and Social Care, Construction, Retail, Early Years and Administration service).
Together for Positive Change Intensive Family Support Service - Barnardos	<p>The service was established in July 2020 during lock down and started to engage with families in October 2020. A number of families were in crisis and significant support was put in to establish routines, relationships with schools etc. to stabilise the family situation before starting to look at barriers to employment/further education.</p> <p>The Barnardos Covid Fund was accessed to support families in financial difficulties with a wide range of responses from vouchers to buying food, topping up electricity/gas, access to money for travel, and purchasing of essential items such as fridges and washing machines. Additional funds were used to buy electronic equipment (phones, computer devices) to support communication and engagement with education.</p>	10 families to enter into an action agreement.

Income from social security and benefits in kind is maximised

Action	Progress 2020-21	Future plans
<p>Income maximisation advice and support in Midlothian Sure Start centres – Aim Hi project</p>	<p>In the year 2020-21, a total of 579 advice contact sessions were provided to families, with advice provided on 1402 issues. Of these issues, 63% of enquiries related to benefits and 16% to housing issues. In addition to support to access benefits, clients received financial support to purchase essential items and to obtain repairs or move to more suitable accommodation. This made a crucial difference to the lives of the clients and their families. Over the year, families who accessed the project were a total of £77,689 better off.</p> <p>As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the referral routes to Aim-Hi widened significantly. In addition to supporting families who were referred from the Sure Start centres, word-of-mouth referrals from the health and education sectors became more prevalent during local and national lockdown. This proved beneficial for applications such as PIP and DLA, where supporting information from health professionals was available. Additionally, the Aim Hi worker was able to provide advice to health professionals that resulted in early support to families that did not subsequently need referred to the project.</p> <p>Increased referrals for emergency crisis support were made through Aim Hi as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, with 82 clients receiving emergency financial support of £10,353 in total over the year. The availability of crisis funding relieved stress in families and assisted the building of positive relationships between Aim Hi and families in need of support.</p>	<p>The Aim Hi project has been awarded extended funding from the Health Improvement Fund until September 2022. Evaluation is being undertaken and results will be reported in March 2022 to understand the impact of the 4-year project and assist future planning.</p>

Midwife/Health Visitor referral pathway to welfare advice	A Privacy Impact Assessment has been completed to comply with data sharing protocols and progress the implementation of a referral pathway from Midwifery, Family Nurse Partnership and Health Visiting to Aim Hi. Further steps towards implementation are paused until an evaluation of the Aim Hi project is complete and future funding is known. The project evaluation is due in March 2022.	Review, updating and implementation of referral pathways is recommended as part of a wider mapping of income maximisation services across Midlothian. This work will be planned and commenced in 2022.
Increase uptake of Best Start Grants and Best Start Food Payments	Within NHS Lothian, information was circulated to improve knowledge and uptake of Best Start grants. Health Visiting and Community Midwifery leads were provided with information, fact sheets, posters, videos and details of how to order materials for distribution to parents. Information was shared with the Health and Wellbeing leads in NHS Lothian hospitals and circulated to NHS staff. Signposting to the Best Start website is live on the NHS staff intranet within maternity resources.	Scoping in underway to develop an Implementation Plan to improve uptake of Best Start grants and Best Start food payments across Midlothian. This work will be developed and implemented by the Child Poverty Working Group in partnership with the locality Population Health Team and Social Security Scotland.
Work with Revenues and Integrated Service Support (ISS) to achieve aim of automation of free school meals and clothing grants	Midlothian Council proposal to introduce an 'apply once' system so that on contacting the council the person/family is assessed for all areas – free school meals, council tax reduction etc. This will involve data sharing agreements and redesign of systems.	To be progressed
Embed welfare advice in NHS settings	32 families across Lothian have received advice and support from the project and financial gains of £56,471 have been recorded this year. Of the 32 families supported, 3 families are resident in Midlothian. A summary report is provided in Appendix 1.	The project continues to be funded until March 2022.
Children's Services income maximisation work	Since September 2020 the service has worked directly with 21 parents with children on the child protection register or looked after at home. This work has included Universal Credit applications, Child Benefit applications and transfers, DLA eligibility, PIP and PIP successions, Carers Allowance, Scottish Grant payments, Best Start grants, winter heating assistance,	Seek funding for a full-time permanent post to provide focus on increased early intervention approach.

	housing benefit claims, council tax reduction, child tax credits, pension credit, guardian's allowance and housing caps. Advice and support has also been given in relation to other areas e.g. health benefits, debt advice, foodbank referrals, change of utility provider, employment advice and ACAS.	
Income maximisation - Dalkeith CAB	<p>Client Financial Gain £3.2million</p> <p>The main 3 issues were benefits (especially universal credit), debt and employment. Top age ranges seeking advice was 25-34 years and 45-59 years. 58% of those seeking advice were women.</p> <p>The two highest groups of clients seeking advice were working adults and adults with disabilities.</p> <p>Postcodes seeking most advice: EH22, EH19 and EH23.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of all clients had children • 34% were married/co-habiting • 35% living in Social Housing • 26% owner occupier 	Continue to provide income maximisation support, with additional focus on those identified through the Midlothian Food and Key Essential Fund.
Income maximisation – Penicuik CAB	<p>Client Financial Gain £2.2 million</p> <p>The main 3 issues were benefits (especially universal credit and PIP), debt and housing. Top age range seeking advice was 45-59 years. 64% of those seeking advice were women.</p> <p>Penicuik CAB has a freephone telephone advice line and receives enquiries from across all Midlothian postcodes.</p>	Continue to provide income maximisation support, with additional focus on those identified through the Midlothian Food and Key Essential Fund.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 37% of all clients had children• 42% were married/co-habiting• 51% living in Social Housing• 26% owner occupier	
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Case Study 1 – Homelink Family Opportunities Worker

The Family Opportunities worker has been working with a single mum who has been unemployed since January 2020. When her work contract came to an end, the client found herself in financial hardship and the coordinator assisted her to apply for benefits. The coordinator also referred the family to the food bank to make sure the client was able to feed her children and delivered new clothes for the children. As the client found herself in debt, the coordinator accompanied her to a CAB appointment with a debt specialist to make a repayment plan. The coordinator has offered general budgeting advice.

Throughout lockdown, the coordinator has maintained weekly contact with the client to offer advice and emotional support. The coordinator made a referral for the child to the nursery hub to support the client with their child's challenging behaviour and a deterioration in the client's mental health. The child was able to attend the hub three times a week and this helped greatly to allow the family to set a routine again.

Socially distanced face-to-face support re-commenced in August 2020 and the coordinator was able to meet with the client again and continue the support.

Case Study 2 – Citizen’s Advice Bureau

Client and partner contacted the bureau as they needed help with numerous issues. They were living in rented property and both had worked full-time at the start of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, client was self-employed and could not work due to lockdown and did not fall into any categories to receive further help from Government schemes. This caused a loss of income of over £2,000 per month. Client’s partner was furloughed on 80% of their salary. Client lived in a rented property. Client had 2 children of school age which made it difficult to look for work as the children were currently at home not at school.

Client had never used the CAB service before and did not know how the benefit system worked.

Client had debts and outgoings that were larger than the now reduced income.

We assisted the client to make a claim for benefits, Universal Credit and Council Tax Reduction using video calls due to the lockdown situation as we could not offer face to face appointments. As client was still struggling to keep the Universal Credit journal up to date, we advised them to bring the iPad to the bureau so we could talk them through all the processes.

Client could not afford food, so a referral was put into the local foodbank for support.

Client's partner paid Scottish Power for electricity only (no gas in the home).

The electricity account was still in client’s late mother’s name. Client had tried to change it but had been unsuccessful. We offered help from our energy adviser to further resolve this issue as utility costs would be difficult to maintain or get further assistance with until the names were changed.

After much support the client and partner were able to monitor their own Universal Credit claim. We were able to get them support for their housing rental costs.

Case Study 3 – Parental Employability Support Fund

Client 1

Client is a parent who self-referred himself to the service as he was in need of employability support. He was working as a sub-contractor for a gas and electric company and was looking to increase his level of training in the industry. He was looking to get funding for an electrical wiring course, as this would help him to expand on his job remit, helping him to get more jobs and increase his income. Through the fund he was able to attend the course and gained the qualification needed in order to progress in his current employment and increase his income. He also said that he felt more confident in his work as he now knows how to do electrical wiring.

Client 2

The client contacted the PESF team after seeing a post on Facebook. They had been offered more hours at work and didn't know if this was sustainable due to currently working part-time and being a single parent. The PESF team put a referral through to the CAB and suggested they apply to the Midlothian Key Essentials Fund. The client was supported with Farmfoods vouchers and a fuel payment. The PESF team supported the client to plan for the future resulting in an increase in working hours and starting university on a part-time basis to increase qualifications. The client reported feeling more confident in themselves and their future.

Appendix 1 - NHS Lothian – Royal Hospital for Children and Young People Welfare Advice Service

In Lothian, the Scottish Government Healthier Wealthier Children Fund has been used to establish a hospital-based welfare advice service at the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP) in Edinburgh. This service benefits families experiencing poverty across the four local authority areas within Lothian and complements the existing welfare advice provision within the adult hospitals. Having a hospital-based service promotes access for those families who may struggle to engage with community based services and/or who may find they are experiencing financial difficulties as a result of their child's illness or hospital stay.

The service offers free, independent, confidential and non-judgemental advice across the hospital (inpatient and outpatients) and includes support on issues such as income maximisation, benefit entitlement, debt, employment and housing. This not only supports vulnerable families at a time when they may be experiencing additional stress with a child in hospital, but also supports the work of clinical staff and lessens the burden on them potentially freeing up time.

NHS Lothian are working in partnership with the Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI) to provide this service.

The intention had been for the welfare advice service to be fully embedded within the RHCYP and for the project worker to have a physical presence in the hospital. Unfortunately given the circumstances surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions from March 2020, the welfare adviser has not been able to work from the hospital and has been operating remotely offering telephone based support. This has seriously impacted CHAI's ability to fully develop the project but every effort has been made to raise awareness of the service and encourage referrals.

From 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Referrals	32
Appointments	160
Financial gain	£56, 471 <i>(this may increase as further financial gains for this time period become clear)</i>

32 families across Lothian have received advice and support from the project and to date financial gains of £56,471 have been recorded (this may increase over time as further financial gains for this time period accumulate). During this period, 160 appointments were offered to families and various types of follow-up work completed. Non-financial gains for the period included suitable alternative housing being attained for one family whilst others received clothing and school uniforms. The adviser has provided support and advice on a range of issues including supporting a family with welfare advice issues relating to bereavement.

Of the 32 families who received support, the local authority breakdown is as follows:

Local authority	Number of referrals
Edinburgh	23
East Lothian	3
Midlothian	3
West Lothian	2
Fife	1

Links have been made with local authority housing staff, housing associations, grant organisations and clothing charities. Although the referral numbers are lower than initially anticipated (before the COVID-19 pandemic), it is apparent that the cases being referred are incredibly complex and require a significant amount of time and expertise to resolve multiple issues.

The project worker continues to promote the service and build referrals pathways and contacts across the hospital. The adviser now attends regular multiagency meetings with RHCYP clinicians and as a result, more hospital departments are becoming aware of the service and referrals are gradually increasing.

Further information

Aim Hi

<https://www.changeworks.org.uk/projects/aim-hi>

[https://www.penicuikcab.org.uk/sites/penicuikcab.org.uk/files/pdfs/AIM%20HI%20leaflet
0.pdf](https://www.penicuikcab.org.uk/sites/penicuikcab.org.uk/files/pdfs/AIM%20HI%20leaflet%200.pdf)

A Good Time to be 2

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/851/early_learning_nurseries_and_childcare/135/early_learning_nurseries_and_childcare/3

Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/best-start-grant-and-best-start-foods-high-level-statistics-to-31-may-2020/>

Changeworks

<https://www.changeworks.org.uk/projects/aim-hi>

End Child Poverty

<https://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/>

Home Link Family Support

<https://www.homelinkfamilysupport.org/>

Midlothian Sure Start

<http://www.midlothiansurestart.org.uk/>

Parental Employability Support

https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/1084/jobs_and_training/676/parental_employability_support

Poverty Alliance – Get Heard Scotland

<https://www.povertyalliance.org/get-involved/get-heard-scotland/>

SIMD

<https://simd.scot/#/simd2020>