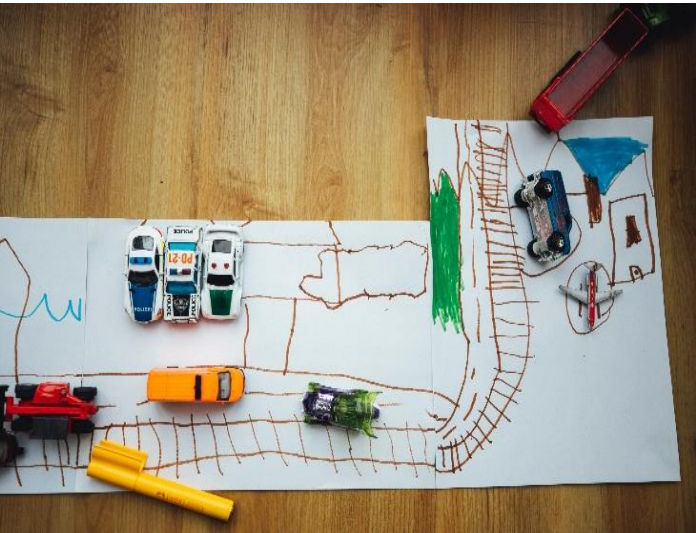




Local Child Poverty Action Report

Year 5 (22/23)



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Foreword

Our fifth Local Child Poverty Action Report sets out the actions we have taken and intend to take to support families and reduce child poverty within Midlothian. While the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may have reduced, families continue to feel the effects, and many more, as a result of the cost-of-living crisis that has emerged during the post pandemic period. Midlothian Council and its partners, NHS Lothian, Midlothian's Health and Social Care Partnership, Midlothian Community Planning Partnership and the third sector, have worked collaboratively to support families, particularly those facing mounting financial pressure as a result of the cost-of-living crisis.

In Midlothian, we are committed to getting it right for our children, families and communities. Our Community Planning Partnership Single Midlothian Plan 2023-2027, and associated strategic service plans, set out the steps we will take to tackle child poverty and improve the lives of children in Midlothian.

This Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian report embodies our commitment to work together to reduce poverty and its impact for families living in Midlothian.

Fiona Robertson
Executive Director Children, Young People & Partnerships
Midlothian Council

Dona Milne
Director of Public Health
NHS Lothian

Executive Summary

Outcomes achieved in 2022-23

This report describes work that has been undertaken to address child poverty across Midlothian in 2022-23, highlighting areas of impact.

Improvement: We were supported by the Improvement Service and National partners to conduct a Child Poverty Self-Assessment. This reflective work brought partners together to engage in a step-change process to identify areas for improvement and develop actions to enhance the impact of our work to tackle child poverty.

Data: The Improvement Service supported us to develop a Child Poverty Index (CPI) for Midlothian to enable better insight into child poverty within Midlothian Council datazones. Additionally, we developed locality child poverty maps and are working with Public Health Scotland to develop and refine a set of robust child poverty indicators.

Cost-of-living: A review of the effectiveness of current cost-of-living interventions funded through LACER funds was carried out. The Trusted Partner programme was found to be reaching people in real need who are facing severe financial pressures.

Key areas for development in 2023-24

- Develop a robust Child Poverty data profile to prioritise actions and monitor progress.
- Work with people with lived experience of poverty to effect change locally
- Increase the uptake of eligible 2-year-old childcare places.
- Continue to provide person-centred help to address barriers to work for parents through our Parental Employability Service.
- Strengthen financial wellbeing pathways across Health Visiting, Midwifery and FNP teams to maximise income and address infant food insecurity.
- Provide holistic support to help deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and families through our Family Wellbeing Service.
- Increase awareness of child poverty and routes to support amongst Midlothian based workers.
- Increase the uptake of Free School Meals, Clothing Grants, Educational Maintenance Allowance and National Entitlement cards.
- Deliver Cost of the School Day (COSD) training and support schools to undertake a COSD audit.
- Embed the reduction of child poverty in Children's Rights planning and delivery across Midlothian.

Strategic Context

The Child Poverty (Scotland) Act 2017 was introduced to drive forward and monitor action to reduce the number of children and their families living in poverty across Scotland. Four statutory targets were set for 2030 with four interim targets to be achieved by 2023. These are:

- Less than 10% of children live in households that are in relative poverty by 2030 (18% by 2023)
- Less than 5% of children live in households that are in absolute poverty (14% by 2023)
- Less than 5% of children live in households that are in combined low income and material deprivation (8% by 2023)

The Act requires Scottish ministers to publish delivery plans in 2018, 2022 and 2026 and report on them annually. The Act also places a duty on local authorities and health boards to jointly produce annual reports on activity undertaken and planned to reduce child poverty in their local areas.

This Local Child Poverty Action Report (LCPAR) 2022-2023 provides an update of actions taken locally to prevent, reduce and mitigate the consequences of child poverty in Midlothian, and our future plans. This year has seen the development of a new Strategic Poverty Prevention group within our Community Planning structure, with an aim to provide strategic direction to address poverty across the life course. Additionally, in response to the cost-of-living crisis, an elected members Cost of Living Taskforce was created to provide focus on mitigation interventions using Local Authority Economic Recovery (LACER) funding.

Our 2023-27 Single Midlothian Plan¹ outcomes for the next 4 years are:

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

Within the new Community Planning structure, the Child Poverty Working Group will continue to be responsible for delivery of the annual Local Child Poverty Action Report. The

¹ https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200284/your_community/214/community_planning_in_midlothian/2

reports will be approved by NHS Lothian and Midlothian Council prior to submission to the Scottish Government.

The Child Poverty Working Group will report to the 'Midlothian will work towards reducing poverty' thematic priority group of the Community Planning Partnership (CPP). Actions contained within the Child Poverty Action Plan (2023-27) will sit across, and be taken forward by, the CPP thematic priority groups. The 2023-2027 Tackling Child Poverty Action Plan for Midlothian is currently in development and will support our joint commitment and high-level actions to tackle child poverty in Midlothian.

Midlothian Community Planning Structure



The Child Poverty Working Group will continue to:

- develop and drive forward the Midlothian Child Poverty Action Plan;
- identify gaps and develop solutions to prevent and mitigate the impact of child poverty in Midlothian;
- ensure the voices of those with lived experience of poverty are heard;
- ensure publication and dissemination of the Child Poverty Action Report;
- monitor the progress of actions in the Midlothian Child Poverty Action Report and support implementation of these where required; and
- ensure key messages in relation to child poverty and the Local Child Poverty Action Report are communicated to groups and networks across Midlothian.

Midlothian's Children's Services Partnership

Midlothian Council's Children Young People and Partnerships Directorate works closely with NHS Lothian and community partners to ensure services are in place that provide children, young people and families with the support they need. This work takes place through our Getting It Right for Every Child Board whose members include the Council, other public organisations and the third sector. Together we identify local priorities and plan how we can have greater impact in the delivery of services for children, young people and their families that make a real difference to their lives.

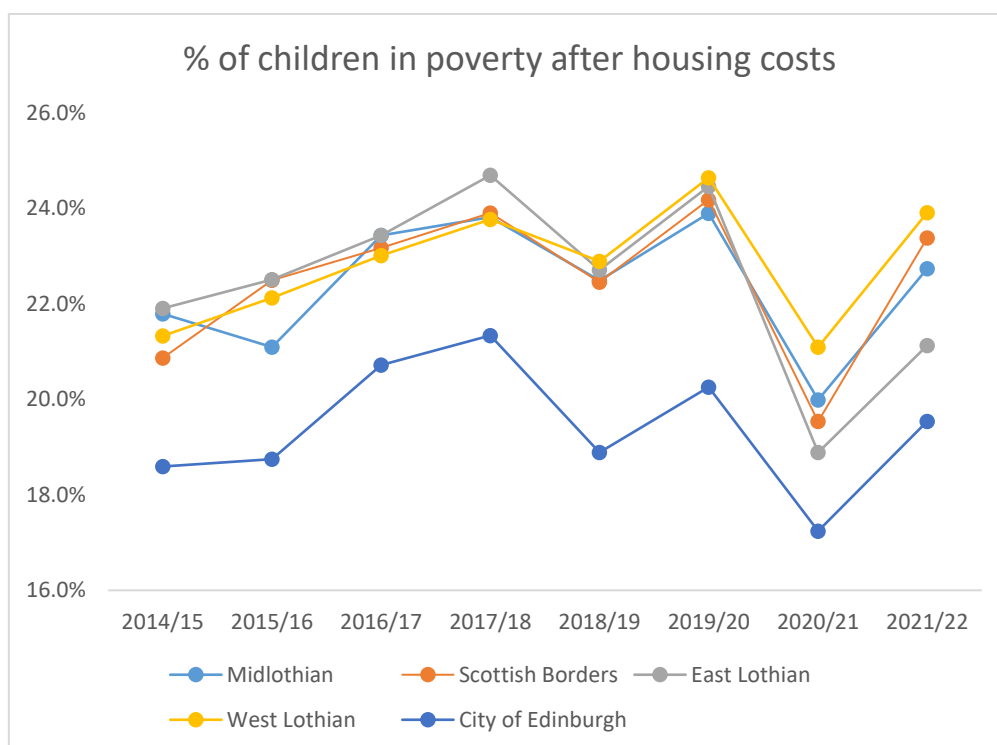
Our Integrated Children's Services Plan 2023-2027 sets out our focus for Midlothian's children, young people and families and identifies the actions we will take to improve their lives. Based on what is known about the needs of children and young people we have identified the following shared priority themes, outcomes and actions that we will work together to deliver.

Priority Theme	Outcome	Action
Children's and Young People's Rights	1. The rights of children and young people in Midlothian are respected in everything we do	Ensure UNCRC principles are incorporated in all partnership programmes
	2. Families are supported to stay together at home	Deliver the actions outlined in The Promise and the Midlothian Corporate Parenting plans
	3. Children and young people have improved access to a variety of safe and health-promoting places and spaces in Midlothian	Develop a partnership approach to Spatial Planning that ensures Midlothian is a place where children enjoy growing up
Children's and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing	4. Midlothian's children and young people have timely access to appropriate emotional, mental health, and wellbeing support	Develop a single point of access to efficiently allocate mental health and wellbeing supports
	5. Children and young people receive the appropriate needs-based support whilst they are assessed for neurodevelopmental concerns	Implement a neurodevelopmental pathway in line with the Scottish Government service specification, linking with the single point of access
	6. All professionals are appropriately trained and equipped to deliver services in a trauma-informed way	Implement Trauma Informed Practice throughout the partnership workforce
Whole Family Wellbeing	7. Families receive holistic support to help to deliver improved outcomes for children, young people and families	Implement our whole family wellbeing approach and make best use of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund
	8. Young people transition into services in a planned, safe, and seamless manner	Develop a Transitions Framework to support local services and processes
	9. Families are supported in a way that demonstrably improves outcomes for mothers and babies	Apply a partnership approach to test targeted support during early years to reduce inequalities
	10. Lower numbers of children and young people live in relative poverty	Implement and deliver on the actions set out in the Local Poverty Action Plan
Information Sharing and Commissioning	11. Joint commissioning is in place, to better support our Partnership to identify local needs, resources and priorities to improve outcomes for children, young people and families	Develop robust joint commissioning processes and oversight
	12. Strengthened GIRFEC practice ensures information is shared proactively to aid prevention and early intervention	Strengthen information sharing between partners to effectively support prevention and early intervention measures

What does our data tell us?

In 2022-23, a number of data sources were examined to establish the picture of child poverty in Midlothian, including children living in low-income families by school catchment area and children living in poverty (after housing costs).

Percentage of children living in poverty (after housing costs), 2014-22²



It is estimated that in 2021-2022, 22.7% of children in Midlothian (4590 children) were living in relative poverty (after housing costs). Midlothian follows a similar trajectory to neighbouring local authorities who were all below the Scottish average of 24.5% of children living in poverty in 2021/22. Our focus remains on longer-term trend data, which displays a small increase from 21.8% in 2014/15 to 22.7% in 2021/22. Caution is advised when interpreting year-on-year changes in local areas. Due to sampling issues during 2021/22 related to the Covid-19 pandemic, additional caution may be required in interpreting these statistics.

² https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Child-Poverty-AHC-estimates-2015-2022_final.xlsx

The extent of child poverty across Midlothian

Child poverty rates vary across Midlothian localities and the table below highlights the extent of child poverty across Midlothian Wards. The most recently available Ward data is from 2019 and we recognise that the Covid-19 pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis will have impacted these figures. The data, however, illustrates higher levels of child poverty in areas of multiple deprivation and helps us to understand where targeted approaches may be required.

Ward	%
Penicuik	14%
Bonnyrigg	11%
Dalkeith	35%
Midlothian East	23%
Midlothian South	26%
Midlothian West	11%

(Source: [Midlothian Profile 2022](#); based on data from 2019)

Number of children living in poverty (after housing costs), 2014-22³

Midlothian is one of the fastest growing local authorities in Scotland. This growth places increased demands on services which aim to tackle poverty. Between 2018 and 2028, the number of households in Midlothian is projected to increase at a faster rate than the rest of Scotland. The Midlothian population increased from 89,637 in 2017 to 94,680 in 2021. Of the 2021 population, it is estimated 18,281 are in the 0–15 age bracket⁴ with around 1,000 Midlothian families each year facing the financial challenges of a new baby. The table below displays the numbers of children aged 0-15 years who are living in households with incomes (net of housing costs) that are below 60% of the UK median income.

Number of children living in poverty (0-15yrs)

	Midlothian	Scottish Borders	East Lothian	West Lothian	City of Edinburgh
2021/22	4,590	4,963	4,765	9,364	17,339
2020/21	4,180	4,445	4,390	8,723	16,142
2019/20	4,583	5,292	5,589	9,326	17,980
2018/19	4,385	4,683	5,195	8,435	16,222
2017/18	4,339	4,966	5,058	8,987	17,911
2016/17	4,337	4,984	4,933	8,871	17,706
2015/16	3,922	4,941	4,730	8,622	16,102
2014/15	3,952	4,562	4,606	8,280	15,624

³ https://endchildpoverty.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Child-Poverty-AHC-estimates-2015-2022_final.xlsx

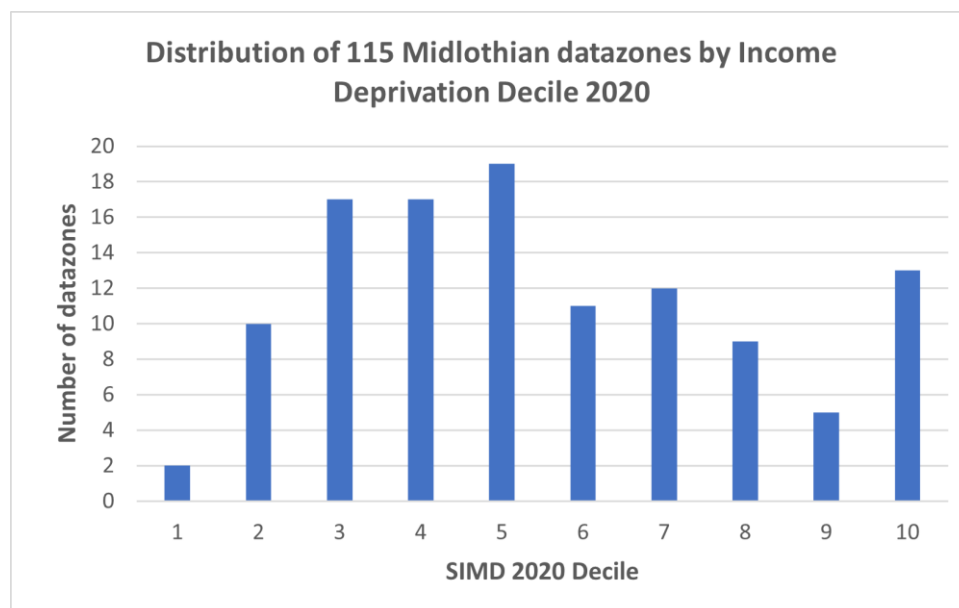
⁴ <https://www.nrscotland.gov.uk/files//statistics/council-area-data-sheets/midlothian-council-profile.html>

The increased number of children living in poverty in Midlothian is reflective of a population swell in the under-15 years and working age populations. Larger families (those with three or more children) are affected by the two-child limit to Universal Credit. In Midlothian, the number of affected families is higher than in other Lothian areas, affecting 34 per 100 larger families in receipt of Child Benefit in Midlothian (Source: DWP/HMRC).

The Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) population of Midlothian is also growing. Available census data from 2011 is now outdated and is not reflective of migration within the UK or from overseas. Currently 6.8% of Midlothian pupils are from a minority ethnic background. Foreign-born nationals may differ from the rest of the population in terms of entitlement to support through the benefit system, be more vulnerable to the consequences of labour market or health issues where such entitlement is less, and be less familiar with sources of financial and other assistance available to them. It is recognised that particular BAME populations may face tougher challenges during the cost-of-living crisis.

Income Deprivation - SIMD 2020

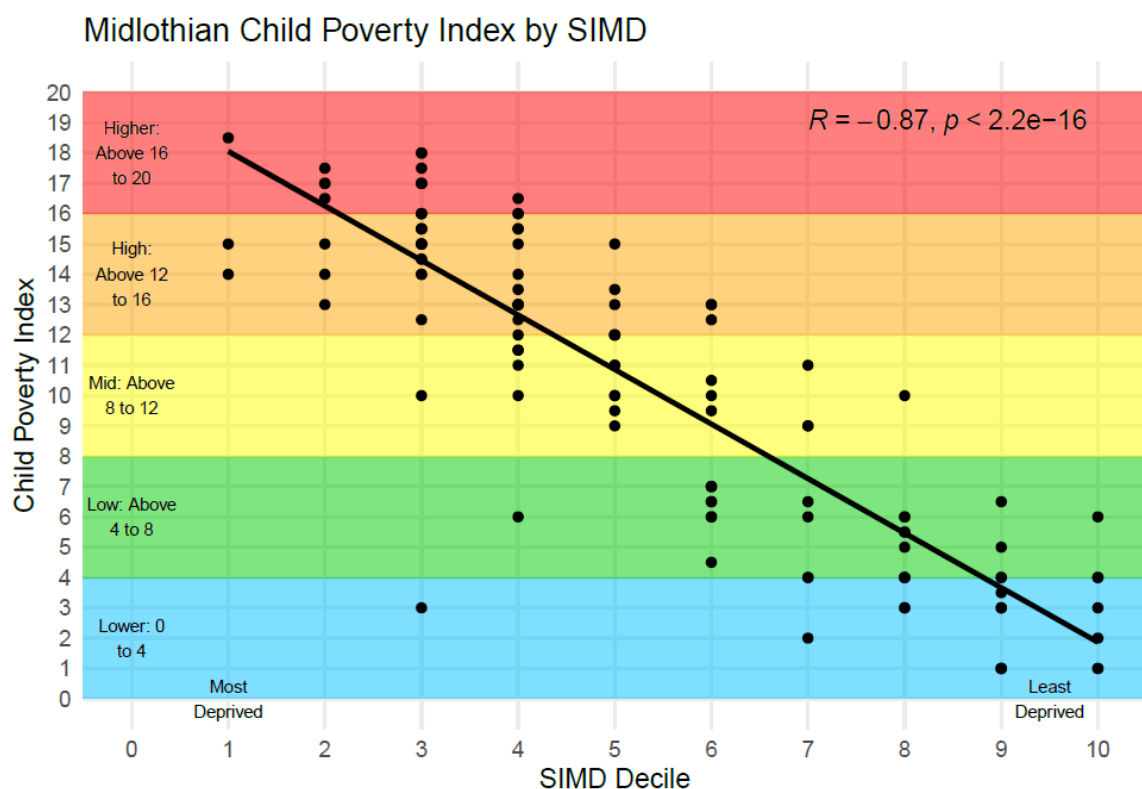
In Midlothian, 10 Datazones are in the most deprived Datazones in Scotland by *multiple deprivation*. According to SIMD 2020, 12 Datazones in Midlothian are in the 20% most *income deprived* Datazones in Scotland, which includes 2 Datazones in the 10% most *income deprived* in Scotland. The graph below shows how many Datazones in Midlothian are in each income deprivation decile.



Understanding the areas in Midlothian where the population is most income deprived will help us to target and measure actions to reduce child poverty. This data will be used as one source of information to inform the development a Child Poverty Index and Poverty locality maps, using multiple data sources that will ensure a more robust data set.

Midlothian Child Poverty Index

As part of our improvement work, we were supported by the Improvement Service to develop a Child Poverty Index (CPI) for Midlothian (Appendix A). The CPI, designed by Scottish Borders Council, is a tactile index created to enable better insight into child poverty. It recognises that, while the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a good tool for identifying overall deprivation, it is not poverty specific or child focused. The CPI uses DWP Low Income families, Free School Meal, School Clothing Grant and Education Maintenance Allowance data to identify geographic areas where high levels of child poverty may be prevalent. The following graph shows a basic comparison between SIMD 2020 Decile and Midlothian Council CPI score (2022-23).



The graph displays Midlothian Council data zones (black dots) by their CPI score (y-axis, 0-20) and SIMD 2020 decile (x-axis, Decile 1-10). Some of the 115 data zones have the same score on both the x and y axis and are therefore, hidden behind others.

There is a strong relationship displayed between deprivation and child poverty, represented by the data zones with the highest level of deprivation also displaying a higher level of child poverty on the CPI. However, there are several areas in Midlothian where the level of child poverty is higher than expected when looking at SIMD decile (represented on the graph as black dots falling within higher CPI levels). Data zones with a Higher CPI level of child poverty were found, for example, within data zones recorded as SIMD 2020 Decile 4. While the CPI is strongly correlated with SIMD, there are some data zones where SIMD may under or over report levels of poverty. As part of our ongoing improvement work, we will examine the CPI to establish the robustness of its output and how this, or a revised version, may be used to inform targeted actions to address child poverty in Midlothian.

Understanding and using child poverty data

Using insights from the Child Poverty Index for Midlothian, we aim to improve our understanding of the prevalence of child poverty across Midlothian school catchment areas. Better understanding of geographic areas with high levels of child poverty, which we recognise will include some areas that do not display high levels of multiple deprivation on SIMD, will allow us to plan targeted work to support families and tackle child poverty.

As a first step, we developed a number of poverty locality maps by high school catchment area (Appendix B). This set of maps display across Midlothian and by school catchment area: SIMD Quintile, % of children in Child Benefit families, % of children in Low Income families, and % Free School Meal registrations. In the coming year, we will continue to work on the development of a more robust data set from the CPI and locality maps, which will help us to determine the prevalence of child poverty within Midlothian's localities. This will improve the strategic planning of long and short-term actions to tackle child poverty by ensuring that activity is directed to areas of greatest need.

Additionally, we want to identify and improve our use of data by developing a set of indicators that will provide context and help us to prioritise actions to tackle child poverty and monitor progress. In 2022-23, we have gathered data to help us with our improvement journey and this is reported in the following section. In future years, we will use a refined set of indicators for reporting purposes.

Child Poverty Indicators

Out of work benefits

In July 2023, 2.3% of Midlothian residents (1,370 residents), were receiving out of work benefits⁵. This included a greater number of female than male claimants; 770 and 605 respectively.

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods

Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods are a collection of payments which provide parents or carers who get certain benefits or tax credits with financial support during pregnancy and the key early years of a child's life. There is a single application form for Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods that covers the three Best Start Grant Payments Pregnancy and Baby Payment (applications taken from 10 December 2018), Early Learning Payment (applications taken from 29 April 2019) and School Age Payment (applications taken from 3 June 2019) and Best Start Foods - a recurring four weekly pre-paid card payment, which replaced Healthy Start Vouchers for new claims in Scotland from 12 August 2019.

Rather than indicating what they wish to apply for on the form, applicants provide details about themselves, their partner, all dependent children, and any details about their pregnancy and expected children. When the application is processed, Social Security Scotland determines which elements of Best Start Grant the client is eligible to receive and makes a single payment to the client to cover all of these elements. Social Security Scotland will also determine whether the client is eligible for Best Start Foods.

Applications and payments for Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods in Midlothian from 2018/19 – 2022/23 are detailed below.

⁵ [Labour Market Profile - Nomis - Official Census and Labour Market Statistics \(nomisweb.co.uk\)](https://www.nomisweb.co.uk)

Best Start Grants and Best Start Foods applications 2018-2023

	Applications for Best Start Grant - Pregnancy and Baby Payment	Applications for Best Start Grant - Early Learning Payment	Applications for Best Start grant - School Age Payment	Applications for Best Start Foods	Total Midlothian applications
Number (% of total applications)	2,820 (35%)	2,645 (33%)	2,100 (26%)	4,715 (58%)	8,100
Total value	£553,117	£407,512	£375,262	£769,153	£2,105,044

	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	Total
Applications received	350	2,240	2,240	1,705	1,570	8,100
Applications processed	320	2,090	2,115	1,710	1,625	7,860
Applications authorised	225 (71%)	1,485 (71%)	1,480 (70%)	1,160 (68%)	1,075 (66%)	5,425
Applications denied	90 (28%)	525 (25%)	605 (29%)	395 (23%)	500 (31%)	2,115
Applications withdrawn	5 (1%)	80 (4%)	30 (2%)	155 (9%)	50 (3%)	320
% processed authorised	71%	71%	70%	68%	66%	69%
% processed applications denied	28%	25%	29%	23%	31%	27%
% processed applications withdrawn	1%	4%	2%	9%	3%	4%

(Source: [Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods: high level statistics to 31 March 2023 - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/best-start-grant-and-best-start-foods-high-level-statistics-to-31-march-2023) (www.gov.scot))

Scottish Child Payment

On 9 November 2020, Social Security Scotland began taking applications for Scottish Child Payment. At the beginning of the application process, individuals can choose to make a joint application for Scottish Child Payment, Best Start Grant and Best Start Foods. If they choose to do this, the applicant completes one application form for all of these benefits.

To make it easier for families to access the support they are entitled to, Social Security Scotland began on 28 November 2022 to award Best Start Grant Early Learning Payment and School Age Payment automatically to eligible families in receipt of Scottish Child Payment. These awards, made to individuals who are in receipt of Scottish Child Payment

and who have an eligible child within the relevant Early Learning Payment or School Age Payment application window, happen automatically without the need for a new application.

Scottish Child Payment is intended to provide regular, additional financial support for families already in receipt of qualifying benefits to assist with the costs of caring for a child. From launch to the 31 March 2023, 5,845 applications were received for Midlothian, of these 5,595 were processed and 4,770 authorised⁶.

Scottish Child Payment applications Feb 2021 – 2023

	Launch to 31/01/21	2021 -2022	2022 – 2023	Total
Applications received	1,990	1,045	2,810	5,845
*Applications processed	1,540	1,315	2,740	5,595
No. of applications authorised and % of processed applications authorised	1,420 (92)%	995 (75%)	2,355 (86%)	4,770 (85%)
Value	£68,290	£1,059,740	£3,596,315	£4,724,345

Young Carer Grant

Young Carer Grant is a yearly payment of £359.65 for young carers in Scotland. To be eligible for Young Carer Grant, carers must be 16-18 years old and have been caring for 1-3 people for an average of 16 hours a week for at least the last 3 months. Young Carer Grant is paid once a year, up until the age of 19yrs. During the period 21 October 2019 to 30 April 2023, 251 applications were received from Midlothian, of these 140 were authorised (60%)⁷.

⁶ [Scottish Child Payment: high level statistics to 31 March 2023 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-child-payment-high-level-statistics-to-31-march-2023/pages/1-10.aspx)

⁷ <https://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/asset-storage/production/downloads/Young-Carer-Grant-publication-June-2023-revised.pdf>

Young Carer Grant applications Oct 2019 – April 2023

	From launch to 30 April 2020	From launch to 30 April 2021	From launch to 30 April 2022	From launch to 30 April 2023	Total
Applications received	30	60	75	85	251
*Applications processed	25	65	70	75	235
Applications authorised (% processed apps)	20 (80%)	40 (62%)	40 (57%)	40 (53%)	140 (60%)
Value	£6,000	£12,194	£12,015	£12,031	£42,240

Job Start Payment

Job Start Payment is a payment to help young people in Scotland with the costs associated with the transition into employment after a period of time out of paid work. From 17 August 2020 to 31 March 2023 there were 140 applications received from Midlothian, of which 45 were authorised (36%).⁸

Job Start Payment Applications Aug 2020 – March 2023

	2020-21 (from Aug 20)	2021-22	2022-23	Total*
Applications received	30	90	20	135
*Applications processed	25	80	20	125
Applications authorised (% processed apps)	10 (31%)	30 (38%)	5 (26%)	45 (35%)
Value	£2,300	£8,989	£1,201	£12,490

* Applications are processed once a decision has been made to authorise or deny, or once an application is withdrawn by the applicant

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/job-start-payment-high-level-statistics-to-31-march-2023/>

Child Disability Payment

Child Disability Payment provides money to help with the extra care and mobility costs that a child or young person living with a disability might have. In 22 November 2021, Child Disability Payment launched nationwide to all new applicants living in Scotland. 750 applications were received from Midlothian residents up until 30 June 2023.⁹

Child Disability Payment	Nov 21 – June 2023
Applications received	860
Applications processed*	615
Applications authorised	515 (84%)
Value	£7,199,980

* Applications are processed once a decision has been made to authorise or deny, or once an application is withdrawn by the applicant

Clothing grants and Free School Meals

Midlothian Council provide children from low-income families with free school meals (FSM), and money to help towards buying school clothes. An award provides a pupil with one free meal each day they attend school.

FSM Registrations	2020/21*	%	2021/22*	%	2022/23*	%
Primary	624	14	489	14	367	16
Secondary	636	12	707	13	743	13
Special	50	57	57	61	102	100
Total	1310		1253		1212	

(Source: These figures are taken using census information from September each year)

* In 2020/21, universal FSM was provided for P1-P3.

**In 2021/22, universal FSM was provided for P1-P4.

**In 2022/23, universal FSM was provided for P1-P5.

Clothing grants awarded	2018/19	2021/22	2022/23
Primary	£125,280	£165,490	£171,900
Secondary	£60,890	£128,380	£129,060
Special	£1,060	£4,290	£4,320
Total	£187,230	£298,160	£305,280

Clothing grants are now paid at:

⁹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/child-disability-payment-high-level-statistics-to-30-june-2023/>

- £120 for primary pupils (£100, 2018/19)
- £150 for secondary pupils (£100, 2018/19)

Working with schools

Using insights from Free School Meal and School Clothing Grant data, along with local feedback from schools, we are moving towards a more holistic approach to support for families in need across Midlothian. This will encourage the co-ordination of support, with updated and more streamlined processes, such as an improved application process for School Clothing Grants and Free School Meals, to encourage wider uptake for eligible families.

Services and support, including Home-School Practitioners, Educational Psychology, Whole Family Wellbeing Service and Family Learning will come together to develop a new locality model of delivery of support for families. Children's Rights will be embedded within the approach that will seek to poverty-proof the school day and provide the wider practical and relational support that families need.

Pupil Equity Funding

All schools have identified stretch aims focused on closing the poverty-related attainment gap. The close scrutiny of PEF plans and spend has ensured schools are working towards the desired impact for the most disadvantaged learners. Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) plans are embedded within school Standards, Quality and Improvement Plans (SQIP). The planning format is consistent across all schools and supports schools to consider their gaps and set measurable outcomes to address these. A mid-year check was carried out with all schools in relation to PEF spend and support given to ensure ongoing commitment and PEF spend considered against wider Interventions for equity and Cost of the School Day.

A new Excellence & Equity workbook has been created to encourage schools to set ambitious stretch aims for 2023-2027. The workbook presents the individual school's data in a clear way to support the setting of stretch aims for both 2026 (Scottish Government requirement) and 2027 (Midlothian Service Plan timescale and alignment with the Raising Attainment Strategy). Progress towards gathering the impact of PEF has advanced with the creation of the Excellence and Equity workbook to house stretch aims for attainment and closing the attainment gap. Within the same workbook, poverty-related gap stretch aims are being aligned with PEF initiatives so data can be gathered to show how PEF is supporting the closing of the attainment gap.

Affordable Food

The shared vision of partners in Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network (MFIN) is ‘to work together to support the development of a community-led, sustainable and affordable food network across Midlothian’. In 2022, MFIN commissioned GrowGreen Scotland to conduct a piece of research on affordable food in Midlothian. A report of outcomes and recommendations was produced that outlines:

- where there are affordable food projects in Midlothian, such as food fridges and food pantries
- whether there are growing projects in Midlothian that might want to support affordable food projects
- what part affordable food could play in twenty-minute neighbourhoods
- the best way for our local affordable food projects to share best practice.

As part of Challenge Poverty Week, MFIN held an Affordable Food Event to discuss what an affordable food network might look like in Midlothian. GrowGreen Scotland presented findings from the research and attendees were able to have a discussion about opportunities, barriers and what they would like to see in Midlothian.

Midlothian Foodbank

Foodbank information, covering food parcels provided by the Midlothian Foodbank, the Trussell Trust affiliated operation running in Gorebridge, are detailed below. These statistics do not include supports provided by other foodbanks and faith groups across Midlothian.

Ward	No. of vouchers	Adults	Children	Total
Bonnyrigg	190	287	296	583
Dalkeith	459	625	388	1,013
Midlothian East	605	970	1,076	2,046
Midlothian South	762	1,192	1,088	2,280
Midlothian West	133	183	186	369
NFA	2	3	2	5
Penicuik	34	39	35	74
TOTAL	2,185	3,299	3,071	6,370

Scottish Welfare Fund

The Scottish Welfare Fund is one of the key benefits administered by Midlothian Council. Crisis Grants may help residents who are in crisis because of a disaster, such as a fire or flood, or an emergency such as losing all their money or having to visit a sick child in hospital. Community Care Grants may help residents who are about to leave care to live on their own in the community, or to help those who are struggling to provide a safe and secure home for their family. There are limits to the number of applications that can be made for both funds. Allocations for 2021/22 and 2022/23 are detailed below.

Crisis Grants

	2021/22		2022/23	
Paid	3,953	56.6%	4,083	52.4%
Declined*	118	1.7%	165	2.2%
Refused**	2,908	41.7%	3,542	45.4%
TOTAL	6,979		7,790	
Value	£452,499		£450,850	

Community Care Grants

	2021/22		2022/23	
Paid	483	33.7%	490	33.6%
Declined*	121	8.4%	21	1.4%
Refused**	830	57.9%	946	64.0%
TOTAL	1,434		1,457	
Value	£353,094		£449,088	

**Declined applications are where the claimant states they do not want the award after a decision to award is made. Reasons for declined awards are not reported.*

*** Refused applications are where the application was not accepted for processing, e.g. not eligible, incomplete application.*

In line with national trends, crisis grant applications have more than doubled since 2013/14, with a rapid increase in 2021/22 which has continued in to 2022/23. A significant proportion of applications for crisis grants in Midlothian are repeat applications and the Scottish Welfare Fund does not remove all financial pressure from applicants. Midlothian has a lower acceptance rate than the Scottish average. In 2021/22, the rate of acceptance in Midlothian was 56.6%, compared to the Scotland rate of 66%. As part of a planned review of equitable

access to welfare and debt advice for Midlothian residents, we aim to ensure ongoing provision and support is available to assist residents to reach a less financially pressured level.

The acceptance rate for Community Care Grants in Midlothian is lower than the Scottish average. In 2021/22, the rate of acceptance in Midlothian was 33.7%, compared to the Scotland rate of 55%. However, the average payment awarded for Midlothian residents was over £50 more than the average Scottish award.

Homelessness

The total number of homeless applications in Midlothian has increased by 17.5% from 2020 to 2023. There has been a significant increase in the percentage of applications from households with dependent children, rising from 35% in 2020/21 to 46% in 2022/23. The table below shows the percentage of homeless applications that were received from households with and without dependent children from 2020-2023.

Number of homeless applications

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Total homeless applications	490	432	576
% of households with dependent children	35%	34%	46%
% of households with no children	65%	66%	54%

Applications from single male parents have also increased, from 44 applications in 2021/22 to 107 applications in 2022/23, an increase of 143%. The majority of these applications are from parents who have some overnight access to their children rather than children who reside with them on a permanent basis. Meeting the temporary accommodation requirements of these parents has been the biggest challenge experienced by homeless services in Midlothian during 2022/23. In 2022/23 there were 227 children living in temporary accommodation.

In 2022/23, 55 women sought homeless assistance as a result of domestic abuse or other violence in the household, of which 52 had dependent children in the household. Going forward we will prioritise access to tenancy support for tenants and housing applicants with children who are living in, or at risk of poverty. We aim to reduce the number of households with children in temporary accommodation.

Working towards improvement

As we move forward from the Covid-19 pandemic, we have taken the opportunity to pause and reflect on our short and long-term response to child poverty in Midlothian. We have carried out a robust review of the landscape and strategic direction to reduce child poverty across the Community Planning Partnership as detailed below.

1. Self-assessment

The Midlothian Child Poverty Working Group have been supported by the Improvement Service to engage in a step-change process of self-assessment to review the most recent LCPAR, identify areas for improvement and develop actions to enhance the impact of our work to tackle child poverty. The process was co-ordinated by the Improvement Service, working in partnership with the Scottish Government, Public Health Scotland, Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) and the Scottish Poverty and Inequality Research Unit (SPIRU). The self-assessment provided an opportunity for Midlothian Community Planning Partnership and wider Midlothian partners to consider current strengths and priority areas for action going forward. The process aimed to help us ensure that we are doing all we can to support low-income families at a time of increasing financial strain.

The first step in the process was for Midlothian partners to complete an online survey. This helped us to reflect on our Year 4 Local Child Poverty Action Report and to consider our performance in relation to 1) how we understand local need 2) how we use our resources and policy to address poverty 3) how we understand our progress and 4) the structures and arrangements we have in place to work together. Information was gathered to understand how we use local and national intelligence to inform our approach. This included data from Public Health Scotland, Midlothian Council, Social Security Scotland and SEEMiS education information that, together, helped to provide an overview of child poverty across Midlothian and identify areas for improvement action. We also considered how Midlothian uses its resources and policy powers across a wide range of themes including, for example, economic development, employability, transport, income maximisation advice, local benefits, childcare and the affordability of housing. An understanding of the structure and governance arrangements was established, along with information on how we measure the impact of our actions.

Eight improvement statements were identified from the self-assessment process that informed a refreshed approach to developing a longer-term strategy to tackle child poverty. These improvement statements shaped ongoing partnership collaboration towards identifying shared outcomes that will help us to address the drivers of child poverty locally. In addition to thinking about long term poverty reduction, we also considered how Midlothian is supporting families at risk of immediate financial crisis and whether it is doing so in the most effective and dignified way possible.

A number of workshops were held with the involvement of national partners, to identify clear shared outcomes related to tackling child poverty, that Midlothian partners will work towards together. At these sessions, potential ways of working were explored that will underpin the identified outcomes. Principles that informed our discussions were to:

- take a whole system, person centred approach where possible.
- consider place-based, targeted interventions.
- consider how the voice of lived experience can shape our work and be reflected in our understanding of progress.
- consider pooling resources.
- consider the role of local partners as employers and anchor institutions.

The workshops enabled Midlothian partners to review data, consider areas of existing good practice to tackle poverty in our schools and communities, and refine shared poverty outcomes and actions contained in the Single Midlothian Plan, 2023-27. The vision of the Community Planning Partnership, detailed in the Single Midlothian Plan, is that “by working together as a Community Planning Partnership, individuals and communities will be able to lead healthier, safer, greener and successful 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 emissions.” Three priority poverty outcomes were identified that align with the child poverty improvement statements developed from the self-assessment process.

Outcome 1: Poverty and child poverty is reduced through use of partnership levers and resources.

Outcome 2: Benefit income maximised for individuals and families and financial resilience is improved for low-income households.

Outcome 3: The most significant impacts of poverty on individuals and families are reduced.

These shared outcomes of the Child Poverty Working Group and the Strategic Poverty Prevention Group contribute to the ambitions of the Single Midlothian Plan and straddle the plans of the Poverty, Employability and Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC) Community Planning thematic groups. Actions to reduce child poverty are reflected in the Midlothian Child Poverty Action Plan, 2023-27 (in development) and the Midlothian Children's Services Plan, 2023-27¹⁰.

2. Children Young People and Partnership Directorate Conference

Held across two sessions, the Directorate Conferences for staff within schools, Children and Families and Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability, focussed on taking action on poverty in Midlothian. Partners from NHS Lothian, the CPP and the Third Sector were invited to help shape collective actions going forward. The first session allowed the sharing of local and national data, an update on local strategic planning and the opportunity for locality school clusters to review service plans and look at opportunities for partnership working. The second session focussed on learning from good practice nationally and locally. Examples of tailored income maximisation services, community pantries and planning with parents and pupils around Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) spend were shared. School cluster partners were asked to consider what they can do to contribute to Midlothian Working Towards Reducing Poverty. The areas and actions identified continue to be refined and will be included in the Child Poverty Action Plan 2023-27.

3. Commissioned review of cost of living supports.

Midlothian Council's Cost of Living Taskforce commissioned a review of the effectiveness of current interventions funded through LACER funds, including the Trusted Partners model, and a review of current support information available on the council website. The consultant undertook to gather the views of local people with lived experience of poverty and report on the current position in Midlothian with regards to poverty and the cost-of-living crisis. This included recommendations of measures that Midlothian Council and the Community Planning Partnership should consider in the future to reduce poverty.

It was noted that the Trusted Partner programme is reaching people in real need who are facing severe financial pressures to the point, in many cases, of not eating and/or not

¹⁰ https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/5012/childrens_services_service_plan_2023-24

heating their home properly. The programme is reaching people badly affected by the cost-of-living crisis, but who have often lived in poverty across the longer term and who are amongst those most vulnerable to rising prices. It is also reaching people facing broader life difficulties which may in turn have triggered financial impacts, including people who are disabled, have long-term mental and physical health conditions, experience domestic violence, or care for children with a disability. Four themes identified for future focus are:

- Increasing benefit take up and access to money advice
- Reducing household outgoings and building financial resilience
- Mitigating food insecurity and destitution
- Developing a whole-system approach at a local level.

These themes align with the drivers of child poverty and will help to inform the Child Poverty Action Plan.

4. Improvement work in progress

We continue to work with the Improvement Service and National Partners, who are supporting us in our improvement journey over the coming months, to focus on two priority actions that support our longer-term strategy:

1. Direct Experience

We will work with the Poverty Alliance to explore the development of skills and confidence of a core group of Midlothian staff to engage people with direct experience of poverty and ensure that their contribution is meaningful and that it affects change locally. We will consider how this work feeds into our ongoing improvement work, including the need to develop a poverty profile, child poverty indicators and mechanisms to evaluate the impact of actions taken to reduce child poverty.

2. Using our data

We will set up a Short Life Working Group, led by Midlothian Council and including relevant local and National partners, to develop a child poverty data profile for Midlothian. This process aims to draw together and review multiple sources of data to refine and refresh key risk and performance indicators and consider how progress against our poverty outcomes might be monitored.

Progress 2022-23

During 2022-23, we have continued to work in partnership to address the drivers of child poverty and key actions that have been taken are presented below.

Involvement of people with direct experience of poverty

As part of the review of cost-of-living supports, the appointed consultants carried out consultations with people with lived experience of poverty, aimed at exploring their perspectives on the cost-of-living crisis, of poverty in Midlothian more generally, and how the council and its partners might respond. Two sessions were run with parents of young children recruited through Midlothian Sure Start centres and two sessions with a group of adult learners with a broader demographic recruited through Midlothian Council's Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability. The first sessions focused on issues experienced, while the second focussed on issues with responses.

Some of the solutions suggested included:

- Local low-cost community transport solutions
- Services should be more local/based in single locations/closer to communities
- Local shopping can be more expensive – develop pantry model
- There is lots going on – what can be done about communication/marketing?
- Groups sessions around money saving and about understanding energy bills
- Are there any opportunities for local energy schemes?

These suggested solutions will be explored by the Strategic Poverty Prevention Group and we will draw on the findings from these consultations as we continue to develop our four-year Local Child Poverty Action Plan. This will include planning for ongoing engagement with people with direct experience of poverty, to ensure that their contribution is meaningful and that it affects change locally through the development of a Direct Experience Panel.

Best Start, Bright Futures Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26

Best Start, Bright Futures Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan 2022-26 is a plan for all of Scotland to tackle child poverty:

“Through direct efforts to get more cash in the pockets of families now, alongside a genuinely holistic, person-centred package of family support, we can help to ensure families receive the right support at the right time, for as long as they need it, creating the conditions for families to navigate their way out of poverty”¹¹

Actions taken to address child poverty in Midlothian are presented below by the Delivery Plan themes (Part A, Part B, Part C).



¹¹ [Supporting documents - Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/supporting-documents/best-start-bright-futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-to-2026)

PART A: PROVIDING THE OPPORTUNITIES AND INTEGRATED SUPPORT PARENTS NEED TO ENTER, SUSTAIN AND PROGRESS IN WORK

- **STRENGTHENED EMPLOYMENT OFFER TO PARENTS**
- **CONNECTIVITY AND CHILDCARE**
- **TRANSFORMING OUR ECONOMY**

1. Local Employability Partnership (LEP)

The Midlothian, the Local Employability Partnership (LEP) provides strategic direction for the priorities that partners will work towards based on evidence of need to help local people secure their next steps, first job or better paid job. These priorities are set out in the No One Left Behind Operating Plan 2022-25¹². The plan targets those in child poverty priority groups and sets out the resources available. The plan records the achievements by partners to help local people secure better employment, start their journey towards employment or generate/increase income through self-employment. Work over the last year supports the reduction of child poverty by recognising that both parents and young people contribute to the household income.

We have progressed this by:

- re-establishing work experience for school pupils.
- working with education to embed enterprise learning in the curriculum to develop skills that prepare students for employment
- supporting young people to maximise income, for example applying for Young Scot cards and Educational Maintenance Allowance.
- Referring people to the Business Gateway service for self employment support
- directly supporting parents through the PESF programme to secure employment or a better paid job.
- directly supporting young people through youth guarantee programmes to secure their next steps, increase qualifications, employment or get a better paid job.
- supporting young people to secure employment through a variety of dedicated methods, such as home visits, intensive support and access to qualifications.

¹² https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/4801/no_one_left_behind_operating_plan_2022-25_pdf

- supporting young people to gain business insights and support to attend job fairs provided through Developing the Young Workforce (DYW).
- supporting the long term unemployed through a dedicated programme of paid work experience.
- supporting young people who are carers and those who are care experienced with bespoke programmes, for example summer paid work placements.
- directly supporting parents with additional support needs and other priority groups, through the grants programme.
- working jointly with Skills Development Scotland (SDS) to undertake joint staff development to raise awareness of good practice and skill development in order to support young people into quality, sustained destinations.

No One Left Behind Employability Support: The Local Employability Partnership work together strategically to plan employability services. The strategic plan is the [Midlothian No One Left Behind Plan](#).

2. Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability - All Age Employability Support

CLLE, supported by No One Left Behind funding, provides all age employability support for Midlothian residents 15.5 years and over. External funding and core staffing is utilised to support parents and young people to secure employment, or their first or next steps to employment. Support for food, travel and clothing is provided.

A group of young people developed a social enterprise and pitched their idea to Business Gateway. Their ideas developed the Soup2Go social enterprise with a plan to batch cook soup, portion it up, freeze it and make it available free of charge for collection by the community. Through this project the young people have developed their interests, skills and talents across a range of areas including marketing, digital and food hygiene.

3. Parental Employability Support – Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE), Midlothian Council

In Midlothian, the Parental Employability Support service provides support to Midlothian residents, both in and out of employment. This support helps people to access or progress

in employment, improving their own and their families' circumstances with the aim of ultimately reducing child poverty rates.

Aims of the service

- Improve access into employment by progressing through all stages of the strategic pipeline.
- Support parents who are employed on low income to tackle in-work poverty, address barriers and upskill while in work.
- Target support to help parents already in work through the provision of training and employability support to either remain active in the workplace or gain progression through a rewarding career change.
- Address parents' barriers to work.
- Support people to achieve their full potential.
- Promote fair working practices.

The PESF service is well-placed to provide targeted support to families affected by poverty, by addressing barriers to work and helping parents to remain active in the workplace or to gain progression through training and employability support. The service supplements work already undertaken through the No-one Left Behind and the Intensive Family Support models, to support eligible parents from all child poverty priority families.

Model of delivery

A lead worker with extensive knowledge of Midlothian and partner organisations and expertise in employability support, works alongside four PES keyworkers to provide:

- intensive person-centred support and pre-employment support pathways for all parents identified as being at most risk of experiencing poverty, providing pre-employment, holistic 1:1 support, covering financial advice, income maximisation, careers guidance, literacy and numeracy, targeted employability support, transport, affordable childcare, health and wellbeing, managing anxiety, soft skills, SVQ qualifications and confidence building.
- help meeting the increasing challenge of in-work poverty, targeting in-work support to help parents already in jobs to remain in the workplace and gain progression through a rewarding career. This support complements Fair Start Scotland and the aim is that the range of support available helps parents to achieve household incomes in excess of current poverty thresholds for each specific family type.

In addition to 1:1 support, PES are facilitating, along with partnership agencies, a variety of work-related accredited training. This follows local labour market intelligence and Midlothian Economic Growth Strategy and employment sectors struggling to recruit staff, resulting in bespoke programmes and training on offer (e.g. LVG, SIA, REHIS, Care/childcare, EFAW, mental health, Additional Support Needs modules, digital, customer service).

In response to the rising cost of living, PES have been running short information stalls with local providers to promote family supports, such as Social Security Scotland family benefits, Job Start Payments, free food apps, Access 2 Childminding, and sources of advice, e.g. Citizen Advice Bureau community outreach surgeries, Welfare Rights support, Changeworks energy advice. PES also continue to work in partnership with Edinburgh Hygiene Bank and are providing personal care products to help parents improve their presentation at interviews, work trials etc.

A designated PES keyworker works closely with local employers and recruiters to facilitate opportunities for them to meet and give information to Midlothian parents and young people about available opportunities, required qualifications and recruitment processes. PESF staff also work closely with the DWP and attend local job centres, allowing parents to co-ordinate their meetings with work coaches and PES keyworkers at the same venue.

Outcomes

In 2022-23, 214 parents received support through Midlothian PESF service, resulting in 54 families having increased income due to parents gaining employment. 228 parents completed accredited and work-related courses across multiple disciplines, including Customer Service, Childcare and IT skills.

Number of parents supported through employment and training

	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number of parents who entered employment	31	60
Number of parents who started self-employment	6	6
Number of parents who started a Modern apprenticeship	1	2
Number of parents who completed accredited/work-related courses	95 accredited courses completed	228 accredited courses completed with over 70

	2021-2022	2022-2023
		qualifications being achieved
Number of parents who started Further or Higher education courses	3 parents have completed	12 parents have entered and are sustaining FE/HE courses

Number of families supported by family type

Family Type	Number of families supported
Single parent families	138
Ethnic minority families	43
Families with disabilities	129*
Families with a mother under 25yrs	35
Families with a child under 1	26
Families with 3 or more children	85

*76 out of 129 families included a child with a disability

Parental Employability Support - Case Study

Paul* successfully secured an administration post with Midlothian Council's Communities, Lifelong Learning & Employability team through the Long-Term Unemployed scheme, which he started in June 2022. Paul has now been in post for a complete year and is enjoying being back at work and meeting people. He feels that along with others, the Parental Employability Support Team really helped him on his personal journey back in to work and he is excited about what the future holds. Paul has also recently completed qualifications in National 5 Maths, REHIS and Emergency First Aid at Work. (**name has been anonymised to protect identity*)

PART B: MAXIMISING THE SUPPORT AVAILABLE FOR FAMILIES TO LEAD DIGNIFIED LIVES AND MEET THEIR BASIC NEEDS

- **TRANSFORMATIONAL APPROACH TO PEOPLE AND PLACE**
- **SOCIAL SECURITY**
- **INCOME MAXIMISATION**
- **WARM AFFORDABLE HOMES**

1. Discretionary 2-year-old childcare

Midlothian Council broadened the criteria for discretionary 2-year-old childcare funding to support young children and their families. The current statutory and discretionary places taken up are shown below.

Uptake of 2-year-old childcare

	Statutory	Discretionary	Total
2023 (as at 11/10/23)	138	30	168
2022	181	40	221
2021	187	50	237

2. Trusted Partner model

In 2022 Midlothian Council further developed their cash first Trusted Partner model, utilising the Local Authority Covid Economic Recovery LACER funding to support residents struggling with the cost-of-living crisis. Up to 31st March 2023, 2110 instances of support were delivered by 15 Trusted Partners using this model. 72% of these were first payments. 63% of the allocations were for people living in households on low income, living in households with children, and people living in the most deprived areas.

3. Wash and Dry Laundry Service

As part of the Cost-of-Living Taskforce initiatives, two laundry services are being piloted. One pilot is being run by a Mayfield-based business and is supporting residents living in Gorebridge, Mayfield and Easthouses, Newtongrange and Dalkeith who are on a low income and struggling with the cost of living. Residents can have their washing collected, washed, dried and delivered. The other pilot is a self-service model running from the Penicuik area. Tokens have been distributed to local partners and residents can make use of the 24-hour accessible laundry facilities at Ladywood Leisure Centre.

4. Reheatable Foods

At the start of 2023 Midlothian Council, in conjunction with British Red Cross, trialled a small pilot aimed at supporting people on low incomes who cannot cook, or find cooking challenging for a variety of reasons. British Red Cross collated the referrals and distributed readymade box meals that can be stored in a cupboard, before heating in either a pot or a microwave when needed. 20 residents were supported as part of this pilot that allowed residents with limited cooking facilities access to a hot meal. After the success of the pilot there will be a relaunch of this programme for the winter months.

5. Midlothian Pantry models

In July 2021, Mayfield and Easthouses Development Trust (MAEDT) launched their pantry in response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the rising cost of living. The pantry provides a more sustainable and dignified approach to tackling food insecurity. It is free to join and there is a £3.50 charge per weekly household shop, which allows users ten credits to spend as they wish. They are also able to access short shelf-life products free of charge.

The success of the pantry has been recognised in Midlothian and the Cost-of-Living Taskforce allocated LACER funding to establish the Central Dalkeith and Woodburn Pantry (CDWP). MAEDT supported the set-up of CDWP and they were delighted to open their doors in October 2022. CDWP now have 300 registered members and average 65-75 shoppers per week. A similar model was launched in Newtongrange in April 2023 and the pantries continue to work together to share good practice and foods to reduce food waste. Each of the pantries benefit from being locally based and providing additional services, such as

income maximisation support, energy advice, cooking workshops and signposting to other supports.

6. Changeworks – Warm and Well Programme

Midlothian Council Housing Services commissioned Changeworks to provide a Warm and Well programme until October 2023, with an aim to assist 290 Midlothian Council tenants to tackle poverty issues. To date, a total of 272 householders have received support from the project, which represents 93% of the target population. This has resulted in savings of £50,884 for Midlothian Council tenants.

7. Accessibility and availability of Cost of Living support

[Information on cost of living supports available to Midlothian residents](#) has been made available on the Council website.

The Independent Food Aid Network produced a '[Worrying About Money](#)' leaflet which is available online and paper copies have been distributed to community buildings and partners:

Midlothian Financial Inclusion Network (MFIN) have produced a leaflet for professionals with signposting information on cost-of-living supports available across the county. This is updated and circulated as and when there are changes made or additional information added.



8. Home Link Family Opportunities Worker

The Midlothian Council Large Grants Programme 2022-2025 contributes to the salary costs for a Family Opportunities Worker through Home Link Family Support. The aim of the project is to provide support to families across Midlothian, with priority given to those in three priority areas of deprivation, to access benefits, housing, energy and debt advice to make real and sustainable changes. The project uses various methods of engagement – one to one support, group work, stay and play sessions and in person and online supports. During 2022/23, 41 families with 76 children were supported. 75% of the families are lone parents and 80% live in the three priority areas.

9. Whole Family Wellbeing Service (WFWS)

Recognising that quality family support which is available at an earlier stage can mitigate the impact of poverty and adversity, Midlothian Council and its partners have committed to developing holistic, flexible, cohesive and integrated support for families through the creation of the Midlothian Whole Family Wellbeing Service (WFWS). As with other Councils, Midlothian is committed to meeting The Promise aspiration by 2030. This investment in a WFWS is aligned with The Promise by ensuring families can access the support they need, where and when they need it. The WFWS also aligns to the principles of the United Nations Convention of the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and a child's right to be raised safely in their own family, wherever possible.

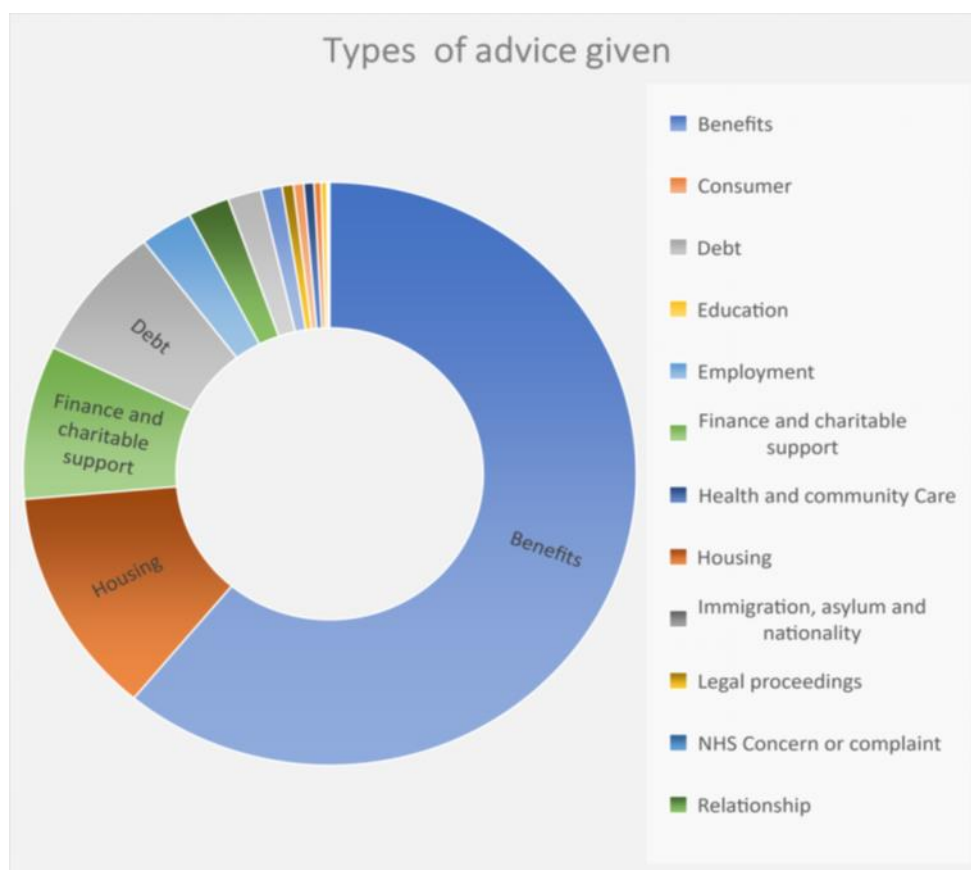
Midlothian Council has a long history of supporting families at an early stage, however families often have to navigate complex systems to access the support that they need. The WFWS seeks to ensure that all families can experience easily accessible advice and support at the earliest opportunity. The service employs a strengths-based model, bringing together supports and resources from inside the family as well as considering what external supports may be needed to increase the resilience of the whole family system. The service is voluntary and based on the belief that when families are given the appropriate resources, information and power they will make safe decisions for their children. This service will be aligned within our Community Planning structure and the Single Midlothian Plan.

Aims of the WFWS

- Offer holistic family support to Midlothian families to enable them to build capacity,
- Support families to remain together,
- Raise school attendance and attainment within families,
- Reduce the need for families to be referred to Children's Services.

What we offer within the Whole Family Wellbeing Service

Whole Family Wellbeing Service	Support provided by other Midlothian services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1:1 family work – working with a family unit • Group work • Support to access other services • Support to diminish barriers to Educational attainment and attendance • Support to access community activities • Support at home, in the community, within education establishments • Support to access services to address cost of living crisis and benefits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of support from therapeutic services within 3rd sector, health and education • Communities Lifelong Learning and Employability (CLLE) • Hawthorn Family Learning Centre (HFLC) • Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) • Mediation • Income maximisation



Advice and support from the WFWS has been provided to families in the following areas: benefits, housing, debt, utilities, health and community care, charitable and financial support, relationships, education and immigration. The following diagram displays the most frequently provided types of advice and support to date.

Outcomes

The service is in its infancy, however within the first 4 months of operation has already worked with 114 children, achieving financial gains for families of £6,585.86 and improving children's attendance in school. Additionally, there have been successful funding applications to support families throughout the summer school holidays.

Feedback from families

"I wouldn't be able to do this if it wasn't for you encouraging me to do it."

"Wish we had you years ago, someone who listens and says they'll help, I was at the end of my tether, I feel I am not on my own anymore."

"If you were not involved, I would stay at home all day"

Whole Family Wellbeing Service - Case Study

Financial support was provided to a family who had significant issues with outstanding bills, payments and Council Tax arrears. Parent was feeling overwhelmed and their mental health was being greatly impacted, for example they had no motivation to get the children ready and off to school in time, and routines were no longer in place.

The Family Wellbeing Service Worker (FWSW) took time to build a trusting relationship, shifting the balance and ensuring that the Parent could make the necessary changes themselves. The FWSW made contact with the Income Maximisation Adviser and supported the Parent to attend the initial appointment. The Parent then felt able to attend further appointments by themselves and gained benefits advice and information about budgeting. Payment plans were agreed with relevant companies and the Parent discovered that they were entitled to other benefits that they were not aware of. Knowing that they were in control of their financial situation relieved stress and anxiety.

Housing repairs were also required but the Parent did not know who to ask for support. A joint visit was arranged with the Housing Officer to clarify exactly what the Parent was responsible for. Support was offered to get jobs done that were affordable for the family and applications were made for additional financial support from the Housing Association. This combined approach allowed all jobs to be completed, removing a great deal of worry about dealing with the Housing Association alone and being able to have the necessary repairs carried out.

10. Midlothian Citizens Advice Bureaux services for families (2022-23)

Holistic local delivery of services

The Midlothian Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) service takes a holistic approach to income maximisation, providing advice on a range of subjects in addition to benefits and debt. Issues around employment, utilities and housing are frequently interconnected with, and impacted by, benefit and debt advice. The development of a network of outreach clinics provides a local service that aims to meet the needs of Midlothian families within their own communities. Local delivery removes the cost of travel, reduces environmental impact and makes advice provision more accessible. As a consequence, vulnerable and disadvantaged families are more likely to seek and benefit from advice. Outreach services are delivered in various community-based venues across the county. While all of the community outreach services have the potential to reach families affected by poverty, funding has been provided within Midlothian for a number of income maximisation projects that are specifically targeted at families, such as the Aim Hi project (detailed below) and the GIRFEC Income Maximisation project. Case studies highlighting examples of the benefit of community income maximisation support are provided (VOCAL, Midlothian).

Outcomes for families

Family type	Known financial gain
Single parent families	£750,555
Family 1 or 2 children	£675,760
Family with 3 or more children	£88,939
Total	£1,515,254

Benefits obtained	Number of Families Supported
Best Start foods	20
BSG Early Learning Payment	8
BSG Pregnancy & Baby Payment	12
BSG School Age Payment	8
Child Disability Payment - care	28
Child Disability Payment - mobility	22
Kinship Care Allowance	2

Benefits obtained	Number of Families Supported
Child Benefit	42
Scottish Child Payment	83

Family type	Number of families supported
Families with disabilities	655
Ethnic minority families	38
Single parent families	319
Families with 3 or more children	118
Families with a child under 1	96
Family with a mother under 24	84
Families with 1 or 2 children	390

CAB Community Income Maximisation Support - VOCAL Income Maximisation for Carers - Case Study 1

A family with two young children with challenging behaviour was supported to access benefit entitlements by the Income Maximisation Adviser. The parent was in receipt of Child Tax Credits and Child Benefit, however was still struggling financially. The Income Maximisation Adviser discussed the children's needs and advised the parent that they could apply for Child Disability Allowance (DLA) (now replaced by the Scottish Child Disability Payment for new claims). The parent had heard of DLA but did not feel confident about filling out lengthy and complex forms. The Adviser was able to help the parent to make a DLA application for both children resulting in awards of Higher Rate and Middle Rate DLA.

The Adviser also assisted the parent to claim additional entitlements, including Carers Allowance, Scottish Carers Allowance Supplement and Best Start Early Learning payment. This resulted in a total annual increased family income of over £12,000 and provided the family with a passport to other assistance.

Case Study 2

A family was supported by the Income Maximisation Adviser to apply for benefit entitlements. The mother was in receipt of Statutory Maternity Pay and her partner was working on a part-time contract. The mother had long-term chronic health issues for which she was receiving medical care and support. The family were not in receipt of any benefits and told the Adviser that they had tried to claim Child Benefit a few times but had received a reply stating they were not eligible for it. Council Tax arrears had built up due to insufficient income coming into the household.

Following a benefit check, the following benefits were identified by the Adviser: Universal Credit, Child Benefit, Scottish Child Payment, Pregnancy and Baby payment, Best Start Foods and Council Tax Reduction.

The Adviser was able to speak with the Child Benefit office who confirmed that they were in receipt of the parents' application and that this was being processed. The Adviser supported the parents to successfully apply for other entitlements, resulting in a total Client Financial Gain for one year of over £6,000.

Community income maximisation support case studies

11. Access to Improved opportunities in Midlothian for long term Health Improvement Project (AIM HI)

The Aim Hi project is a partnership between Penicuik Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), Changeworks and Midlothian Sure Start, funded initially for three years by NHS Lothian Health Improvement Fund, and extended for a further two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The project brought together partners holding complementary expertise in welfare and debt advice, fuel and food poverty and family support, to explore and develop practices to maximise family income and improve wellbeing. The success of this project has resulted in the embedding of the Aim Hi service within the CAB advice services, providing ongoing support for families with young children and pregnant women.

Model of delivery



Outcomes (2018-23)

- £606,001 financial gain for Midlothian families.
- 43% of clients stated that they felt more relaxed.
- 57% said they were now coping (86% reported not coping before receiving help).
- 100% were more confident about using heating controls and about speaking to their energy supplier.
- 67% had a better understanding of ways to save money on energy bills.

Next steps (2023-24)

Referral pathways continue to be developed and embedded to ensure equitable access to support for families. Where feasible, referrals from NHS professionals will be automated to provide parents with quick and easy access to support. Professionals have been provided with information to support conversations with parents about money and to raise awareness of available support. A programme of training and awareness-raising will be delivered to complement this information.

12. Midlothian Council Welfare Rights

The Midlothian Council Welfare Rights Team offer welfare advice and benefits checks, help with applying for benefits, help in a crisis, help with benefit appeals and tribunal representation, and basic debt and housing advice. They provide advice to social work clients and older people on maximising income and have a specialist Macmillan Benefits Adviser for people with cancer and their carers. The total financial gains for the Welfare Rights Team for 2022/2023 was £3,912,837. The breakdown of financial gains for households where there are children is shown below:

Household Type	Value
Children under 18	£140,068
Referrals from Children & Family's	£51,225
Referrals where a dependent child is within the household	£195,470
Total	£386,763

13. Welfare Advice provision in NHS settings

Following the successful establishment of a Welfare Advice Service in the Royal Hospital for Children and Young People (RHCYP), NHS Lothian Charity has provided funding (2022-25) to extend hospital-based advice services to other Lothian hospitals. This includes building on existing welfare advice delivered to patients of Midlothian Community Hospital and Highbank Intermediate Care Home by Midlothian Council Welfare Rights team and Penicuik CAB to embed the Welfare Advice Service in Midlothian Community Hospital (MCH).

The RHCYP service benefits families experiencing poverty across all four local authority areas within Lothian and is available to any family attending or attached to the hospital. The MCH service can be accessed by patients, carers and staff attending or working in the hospital and residents, carers and staff at Highbank Intermediate Care Home. At the RHCYP, NHS Lothian works in partnership with the Community Help and Advice Initiative (CHAI) to provide this service, while at MCH the service is delivered by Penicuik Citizen's Advice Bureau, who work in collaboration with other local services to ensure that client needs are met.

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 family illness or hospital stay. The services offer free, independent, confidential and non-judgemental advice that 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, but also supports the work of clinical staff and lessens the burden on them, potentially freeing up time.

The hospital-based advice services offer both on-site and remote support through drop-in and scheduled consultations. Throughout 2022-23, 20 Midlothian families were supported through the RHCYP service. The MCH service commenced in November 2022 and concentrated initially on advertising and promotion of the service, building relationships with staff and key contacts, and establishing effective working practices. Throughout 2023-24, secure referral pathways will be established to support service delivery. Reporting requirements are also being reviewed to ensure that we understand where support is provided to child poverty priority families.

14. Supporting Afghan arrivals and Ukrainian guests

Midlothian currently supports 207 Ukrainian people who have been displaced, including 68 children within 38 families. Midlothian Council offer a welfare visit to every host home in Midlothian once guests have arrived to offer support to both hosts and guests. In some cases this work is ongoing with 2x weekly visits if there are issues arising. Regular Host Meetings support guests living with hosts and include sessions on housing and benefits entitlements. Various supports are in place around Social Housing and Private Rental accommodation, involving the support of our Homeless Officers for Housing Options appointments. All Ukrainian arrivals are supported with:

- Benefit applications
- Bank accounts
- ESOL support - lessons 1:1, online or group work.
- Registration with GP / Dentist / Optician / Health Screening and Vaccinations.
- Registration with school provision
- Any other supports/ social activities.
- Support to find employment / translate qualifications / source training & development.

Concessionary passes for Midlothian leisure facilities have been provided and links made with third sector support, such as cooking groups and churches. A newsletter goes out to all Ukrainian residents so that they have information on where to find the right supports.

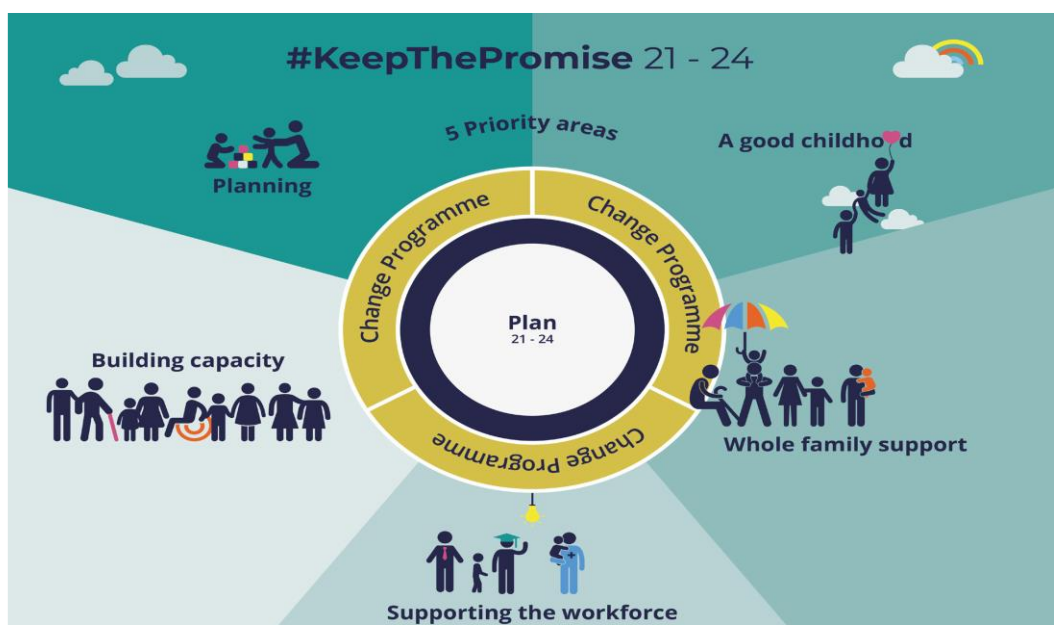
In the last year, 26 Afghan people arrived in Midlothian, comprising 4 large families with children. Some have been supported with ESOL and employability by Midlothian Council Communities Lifelong Learning & Employability and schools and 'Good Time To Be 2' childcare places have been secured. The Afghan families have indefinite right to remain and are termed as New Scots and have the same entitlement to services as other Midlothian residents.

PART C: SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION TO THRIVE

- BEST START TO LIFE
- SUPPORTING CHILDREN TO LEARN AND GROW
- POST SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

1. #Keeping the promise in Midlothian

Midlothian's commitment to the Promise is founded on adopting a rights-based approach to working with family through listening to the views of children and their families, Article 12.



2. Digital devices

Midlothian Council has invested £10.5m in providing every child in P1-S6 with a digital device. Robust safeguarding policies are in place to protect learners and ensure safe and responsible use. Additional safeguarding software ensures learners use their devices responsibly. Learners also contribute to development of digital policy through the Children's Rights Strategy Group.

3. Summer Programme 2022

We worked with schools to identify families that could be supported with Scottish Government summer holiday funding and identified how families would like the funding to be utilised. The summer programme for 2022 was delivered over 3 parts.



Holiday childcare places

- 657.5 days of holiday childcare were delivered over the summer school holiday for 66 children from 45 families.

Holiday vouchers for activities (including food)

Midlothian Council provided vouchers for a range of activities that included trips to attractions and the use of community leisure facilities.

- 483 children from 283 families were allocated vouchers to attend a variety of activities (with food where available). Activities included Ninja Warrior, Alien Rock, cinema, Fox Lake Adventures, Midlothian Snowsports Centre, Ryze Activity Centre, East Links Family Park, and family swimming at Midlothian swimming pools.

Summer Family Events

Play Midlothian, in partnership with Gorebridge Development Trust and Midlothian Sure Start, delivered a series of family events attended by a total of 136 children:

- 6 family picnics over 6 weeks for an average of 14 families and 35 children each week, delivered by Play Midlothian and Gorebridge Development Trust.
- Large family event for 100 families and 6 centre-based events for 50 families, delivered by Midlothian Sure Start. Family Learning Centre events included a Storyteller, Magician/performer and picnic/BBQ.

4. Cost of the school day – Lasswade High School

Lasswade High School used the Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile¹³ (GMWP) to gauge the level of nurture in all ASG schools, providing them with a baseline and end of year profile. To support students to improve their physical wellbeing and promote readiness to

¹³ [Wellbeing Profile: Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile \(GMWP\) | Resources | Education Scotland](#)

learn, several interventions were implemented: a free breakfast Club, free 'Grab n Go' healthy snacks, no curriculum costs for art and design, home economics and design and technology, no additional costs for extra-curricular activities/clubs (30 this session) and Chromebook charging available throughout the school.

To create a sense of belonging and support in the school community, a uniform cupboard was initiated so that students could access what they needed. Through Student Voice research, a 'Secret Locker' was set up in 2 locations in the school, containing hygiene products, learning materials, snacks etc. To support families with financial planning, an annual calendar of events, trips and expenses for parents/carers for each year group was produced.

5. PEF planning with parents – Mayfield Primary School

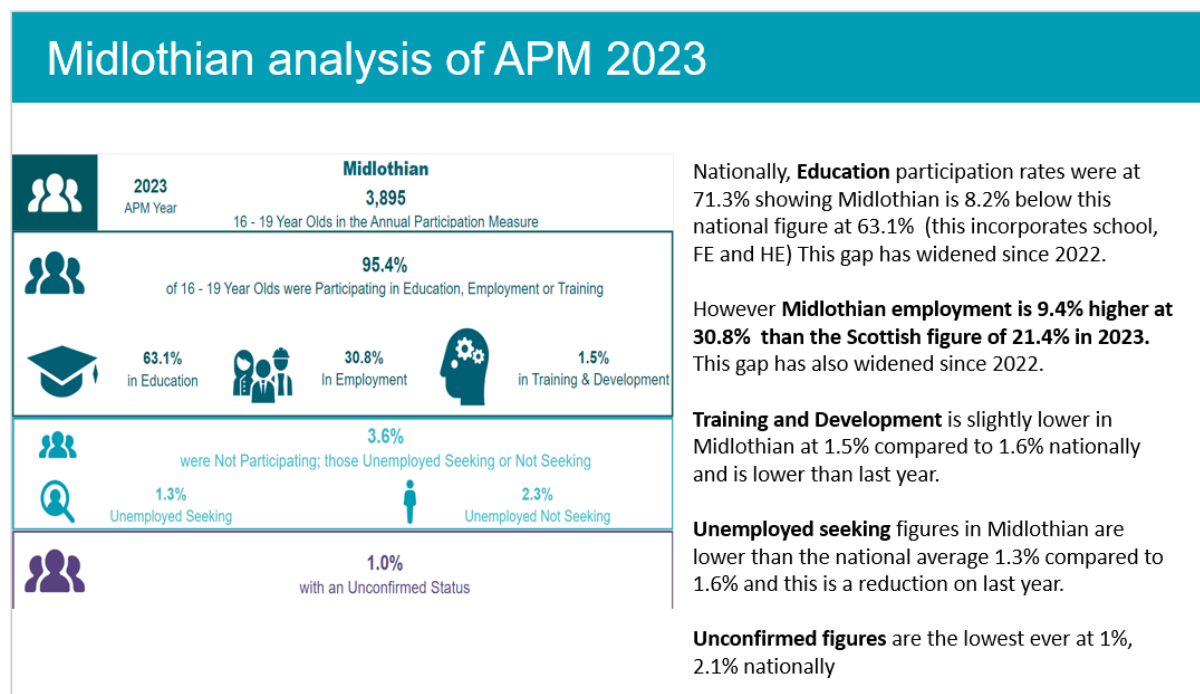
Mayfield Primary involved parents with the planning and spend of their Pupil Equity Fund. The school carried out an audit using Interventions for Equity and chose to focus on 3 themes – early intervention and prevention, social and emotional wellbeing and promoting healthy lifestyles. The school arranged face-to-face chats and used simple approaches like surveys and sticky dots to share options with families. Over £100,000 was allocated to support the school and findings were shared with parents and used to inform and support planning for next session.

6. Positive Destinations

CLLE support post school transitions through 1:1 support to help develop young people's skills for learning, life and work. They work through a bespoke timetable tailored to the needs of young people and work to overcome any barriers to participating.

The annual participation measure has been looking at the participation status of 16-19 year olds across Scotland since 2016. The most recent figures published in August 2023 show Midlothian 16-19 year-olds at the highest levels of participation recorded, 95.4%, compared with a national figure of 94.3%.

In terms of employment as a participation measure, including Modern Apprenticeships, the Midlothian figure is 30.8%, which is 9.4% higher than the national employment figure of 21.4%. This is significantly higher than Scotland as a whole and could highlight that more young people are potentially contributing to the overall household income.



7. Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability support to reduce poverty

Barrier free youth provision

CLLE Youth clubs are person centred, there is no charge for attendance or trips, food is provided, specialist equipment is sourced when necessary and specialist staffing is provided for attendees with additional support needs. All clothing, kit and food are provided for participants of CLLE delivered Duke of Edinburgh (132 completed in 22/23).

CLLE staff support young people to apply for their free bus passes to reduce travel costs.

Transition Support

CLLE provide support to P7–S1 young people who have been identified in primary clusters. The young people meet before, and through, the summer and attend free of charge to take part in activities to get to know each other. They are supported with travel and linked into the secondary schools and our local CLLE youth provision.

Community Based Adult Learning

CLLE have been operating key focused courses supporting local people with cooking on a budget, financial literacies and sign posting to a range of support services including benefits and food supports.

Health and Hygiene

CLLE are signed up as a Hygiene Bank partner with Boots to deliver free of charge hygiene products and toiletries for all ages and stages e.g. shampoo, conditioner, nappies etc.

CLLE in partnership with NHS Lothian deliver a locally based weekly Healthy Respect service from Dalkeith to approx. 5-10 young people every week. Transport can be provided to support attendance.

Plans for 2023-27

We are moving towards longer-term planning with the development of a four-year Child Poverty Action Plan. At the time of writing this report, the plan and measurable outcomes are still in development, however a number of areas are identified that will be taken forward during 2023-2025.

Child Poverty Delivery Plan Actions

Part A: Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work

- Strengthened employment offer to parents
- Connectivity and childcare
- Transforming our economy

Midlothian Outcomes	Midlothian Actions	Owner
Increased uptake of eligible 2-year-old childcare places.	Following Scottish Government’s review of eligibility criteria for 2-year-old places in 2023, Midlothian Council will work with DWP to identify families in Midlothian with children who are newly eligible and proactively contact these families and work with them to take up their places.	Midlothian Council Education Service
The review of local childcare report will inform childcare provision and plans to increase provision.	Collate information on all out-of-school childcare providers across Midlothian, recording their operating hours, location, contracts and let charges. Review and report on the local authority’s QA arrangements (where we have funded places). Review our approach to collating and analysing data on out-of-school childcare provision.	Midlothian Council Education Service

Midlothian Outcomes	Midlothian Actions	Owner
	Liaise with our Parent and Learner Liaison Officer to carry out a Council-wide consultation on out-of-school childcare provision.	
Increase the uptake of tax-free childcare.	<p>Work with health to promote tax-free childcare.</p> <p>Promote uptake of tax-free childcare to working parents.</p> <p>Audit and review registered childcare providers on the scheme.</p> <p>Proactively promote take up campaigns signposting registered tax-free childcare providers.</p>	Midlothian Council Education Services
Provide person-centred help to address barriers to work for parents through our Parental Employability Service, including health, money advice and motivational support.	<p>During 23-24 PESF will support 180 parents.</p> <p>35% entering employment, self-employment, MA or progress into employment.</p> <p>7% progression to HE/FE Training</p> <p>30% will achieve an accredited or work-related qualification.</p> <p>10-15 paid Long term work placements</p> <p>10-15 Employer Recruitment incentives</p>	Midlothian Council CLLE (PESF)

Part B: Maximising the support available for families to lead dignified lives and meet their basic needs

- Transformational approach to people and place
- Social Security
- Income Maximisation
- Warm affordable homes

Midlothian Outcomes	Midlothian Actions	Owner
Equitable income maximisation and debt advice is available across Midlothian.	A review of access to income maximisation, welfare and debt advice will be commissioned, with a primary focus on child poverty priority families. Recommendations for improvement will be shared with community planning partners and an implementation plan developed to shape future provision.	NHS Lothian Public Health
Current signposting information to income maximisation services and Cost of Living supports is included in communications with Midlothian residents.	Review the correspondence issued from Midlothian Council's Revenue's Team. Work to provide information about income maximisation services and Cost of Living supports in communications regarding Scottish Welfare Fund applications, rent arrears, council tax arrears and school meal debt.	Midlothian Council Corporate Solutions
Staff working across NHS and HSCP services have the knowledge and skills to support increased take-up of benefits.	Roll out of training, awareness-raising and information to support benefits take-up and referrals to advice services. Joint working between Public Health, Midlothian Council, Social Security Scotland and advice services.	NHS Lothian Public Health
Our Family Wellbeing Service will provide holistic support to help deliver improved outcomes for	Families will be supported in a way that demonstrably improves outcomes for mothers and babies.	GIRFEC Whole Family Wellbeing sub-group

Midlothian Outcomes	Midlothian Actions	Owner
children, young people and families and ensure best use of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund.		
Increased awareness of child poverty and routes to support amongst Midlothian based workers.	A programme of training and awareness-raising will be designed and delivered to ensure that all Midlothian-based workers are trained by 31/3/25 and outcomes of training are evaluated.	Midlothian Council CLLE/NHS Lothian Public Health
All school staff will be trained in Cost of the School Day.	By the end of the 24/25 school year all school staff will have completed the COSD module.	Midlothian Council Education Service
Schools are supported to undertake a Cost of the School Day audit.	Midlothian schools, working with pupils and parent councils, will identify all the costs associated with their pupils attending and taking part in education.	Midlothian Council Education Service
Indicators of child poverty in Midlothian are further developed, leading to the production of a more robust data set to inform future targeted interventions.	Data will be complemented with local needs assessments and targeted actions towards the greatest need. The data set will support local partners to identify priorities to address the 3 drivers of child poverty and monitor progress towards prioritised actions.	Midlothian Council Education Service/ NHS Lothian Public Health
Improve effectiveness, consistency and impact of PEF funding in closing the poverty related attainment gap.	Schools work collegiately to share effective strategies to closing the poverty related attainment gap.	Midlothian Council Education Service

Midlothian Outcomes	Midlothian Actions	Owner
Increase the uptake of free school meal and clothing grant registration for eligible pupils.	P1-5 families will be targeted to ensure registration for FSM, clothing grants, milk and holiday food entitlements.	Midlothian Council Education Service
Increase the uptake of Education Maintenance Allowance.	Awareness-raising with High School pupils and families of EMA entitlement.	Midlothian Council Education Service
Increase the uptake of the Young Scot National Entitlement Card for under 22s.	Midlothian Council CLLE, Library Services and partners will work together to promote the uptake of the NEC Cards.	Midlothian Council CLLE/ Education and Library Services
Increase the uptake of Best Start Grants, Best Start Foods and Scottish Child Payment.	NHS Lothian, Midlothian HSCP & Social Security Scotland will work together to promote Best Grant Grants, Best Start Foods & Scottish Child Payment to eligible parents.	NHS Lothian Public Health
Lived Experience Panel actively inform the priorities and associated actions within the LCPAR.	Establish a lived experience panel to gather views of local residents and directly influence the LCPAR.	Midlothian Council CPP

Part C: Supporting the next generation to thrive

- Best Start to Life
- Supporting Children to Learn and Grow
- Post School Transitions

Midlothian Outcomes	Midlothian Actions	Owner
Midlothian School Uniform Guidance published.	Establish a short-term working group that involves school learners to develop poverty-proof school uniform guidance.	Midlothian Council Education Service
Data is used to understand the number of families where parent's income is just slightly above the Scottish Government threshold for free school meal entitlements for pupils.	Findings will be presented to the Cost of Living Taskforce to consider the provision of discretionary free school meals.	Midlothian Council Education Service
Strengthened financial wellbeing pathways across Health Visiting, Midwifery and Family Nurse Partnership teams to maximise income and address infant food insecurity.	NHS Lothian, HSCP and advice providers will work together to ensure quick and easy referral routes from perinatal services to income maximisation support. Emergency pathways to alleviate infant food insecurity will be developed.	NHS Lothian Public Health
Reducing child poverty is embedded in Children's Rights planning and delivery across Midlothian.	All schools & settings demonstrate a commitment towards taking a child's rights-based approach by having an action plan for their school around how they are going to take forward poverty-related actions.	Midlothian Council Education Service
Reducing child poverty is embedded in Communities, Lifelong Learning and Employability programmes.	All CLLE provision embed the following actions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free food 	Midlothian Council CLLE and Community Planning

Midlothian Outcomes	Midlothian Actions	Owner
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Barrier removal to access learning and employment • Identification evidence • Childcare • Travel • Digital connectivity • Course fees including subsidies. • Free access to a range of youth work and adult learning activities. • Reducing participation barriers by providing equipment and not charging for equipment and materials. <p>Coordination of poverty mitigation actions across the community planning partners.</p>	

Appendix A – Child Poverty Index Report: Midlothian

Child Poverty Index Purpose and Scoring

The purpose of the Child Poverty Index (CPI) is to provide additional insight into Child Poverty in Midlothian council. The CPI was developed by Scottish Borders council and is replicated here in response to actions from the Rural Child Poverty Data and Intelligence Sprint held in 2022. The CPI is a tool to help inform the Local Child Poverty Action Plan which is a requirement of the Child Poverty Act (Scotland) 2017. It was also created to work alongside the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation. SIMD provides a way of looking at deprivation in an area, covering the whole population and does not specifically reflect child poverty.

The CPI is a summary of four components which are:

- Children in Low Income Families (CiLIF) - Source is [DWP/HMRC](#). Relative low-income is defined as a family whose equivalised income is below 60 per cent of contemporary median income. Gross income measure is Before Housing Costs (BHC) and includes contributions from earnings, state support and pensions. The CPI uses the most recent available year's data from 2021/22.
- Free School Meals (FSM) - Source is Midlothian council, provided in May 2023. The proportion of pupils recorded as in receipt of Free School Meals as a proportion of all children aged 10 to 18 in the council.¹⁴
- Clothing Grant (CG) - Source is Midlothian, provided in May 2023. The proportion of pupils recorded as in receipt of a Clothing Grant as a proportion of all children aged 5 to 15 in the council.¹⁵
- Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) - Source is Midlothian, provided in May 2023. The proportion of pupils recorded as in receipt of Educational Maintenance as a proportion of all children aged 16-18 in the council.¹⁶

The table below shows the values of each component for Midlothian council.

Table 1: Child Poverty Index Component Values for Midlothian council

Child Poverty Index Components	Component Scores
Children in Low Income Families - CiLIF	17.7%
Free School Meals - FSM	22.5%
Clothing Grant - CG	17.0%
Educational Maintenance Allowance - EMA	3.2%

¹⁴ Population figures are used as the number of pupils in the eligible age categories was not available. Population figures are sourced from [NRS](#)

¹⁵ See footnote 1

¹⁶ See footnote 1

The table below shows the score that an area will receive based on the result for each component. The CPI allows for an area to have a score ranging from 0 to 20, where 0 indicates no element of child poverty and 20 the highest levels of child poverty.

Table 2: Scores allocated to each component

ChildrenFree School Meals in Low Income Families		ClothingEducational Grant Maintenance Allowance
0: None	0: None	0: None
1: Under 10%	1: Under 5%	1: Under 5%
2: 10% to Under 20%	2: 5% to Under 10%	2: 5% to Under 10%
3: 20% to Under 30%	3: 10% to Under 15%	3: 10% to Under 15%
4: 30% to Under 40%	4: 15% to Under 20%	4: 15% to Under 20%
5: 40% or More	5: 20% to Under 30%	5: 20% to Under 30%
6: 30% or More		6: 30% or More

Note that EMA scores are half the other components reflecting the population size.

Midlothian Child Poverty Index Components

The tables and graph below shows the allocation of data zones in Midlothian council for each of the components.

It is interesting to note that for each component, there is at least 1 data zone that does not have that specific component.

- For the Children in Low Income Families component, the largest percentage (28.7%) of data zones fall into the **Mid** band.
- For the Free School Meals component, the largest percentage (28.7%) of data zones fall into the **Higher +** band.
- For the Clothing Grant component, the largest percentage (20.9%) of data zones fall into the **Higher** band.
- And for the Educational Maintenance Allowance component, the largest percentage (48.7%) of data zones fall into the **None** band.

Table 3: Count of Midlothian Data Zones by CPI score for each component

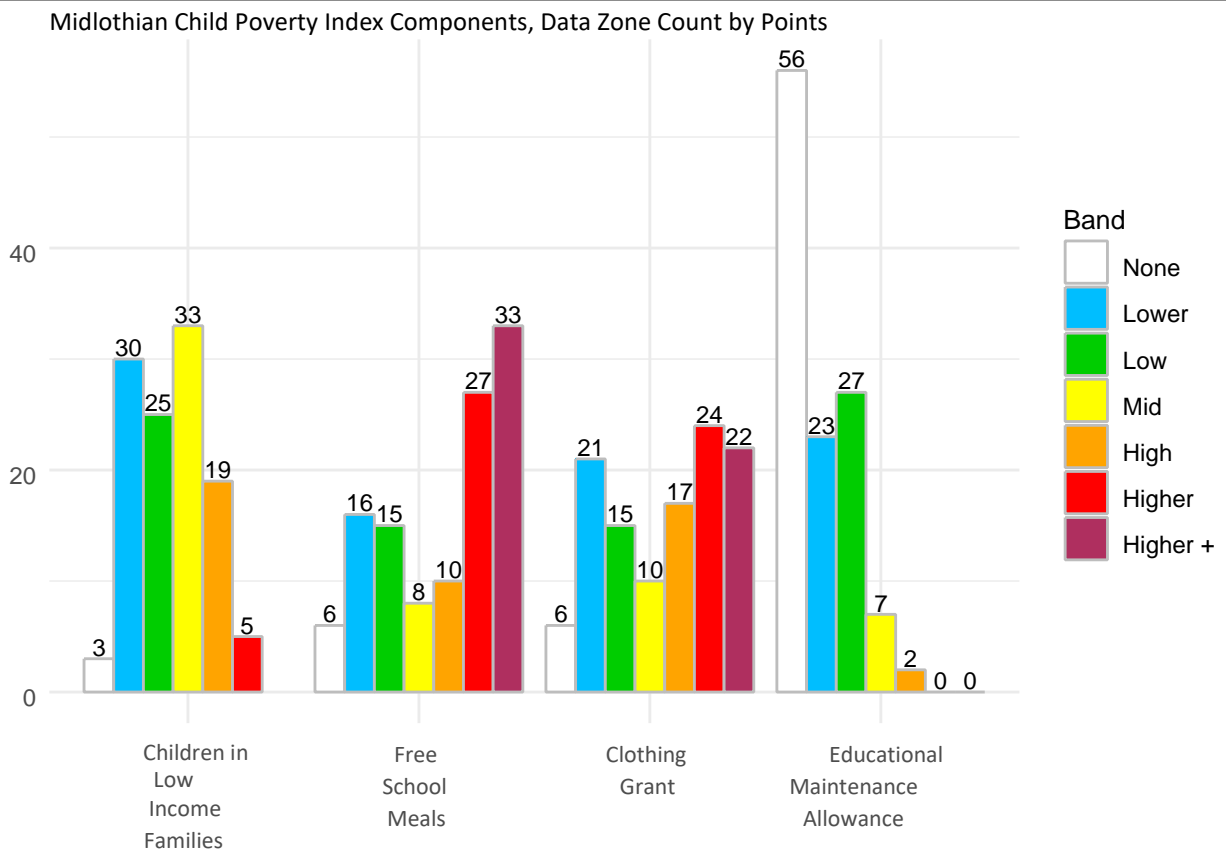
CPI Scores by DZ	Children in Low Income Families	Free School Meals	Clothing Grant	Educational Maintenance Allowance
None	3	6	6	56
Lower	30	16	21	23
Low	25	15	15	27
Mid	33	8	10	7
High	19	10	17	2
Higher	5	27	24	0
Higher +		33	22	0
DZ	115	115	115	115

Table 4: Percent of Midlothian Data Zones by CPI score for each component

CPI Scores by DZ	Children in Low Income Families	Free School Meals	Clothing Grant	Educational Maintenance Allowance
None	2.6%	5.2%	5.2%	48.7%
Lower	26.1%	13.9%	18.3%	20.0%
Low	21.7%	13.0%	13.0%	23.5%

Mid	28.7%	7.0%	8.7%	6.1%
High	16.5%	8.7%	14.8%	1.7%
Higher	4.3%	23.5%	20.9%	0.0%
Higher +		28.7%	19.1%	0.0%

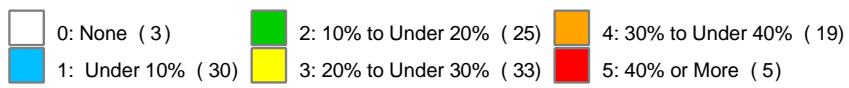
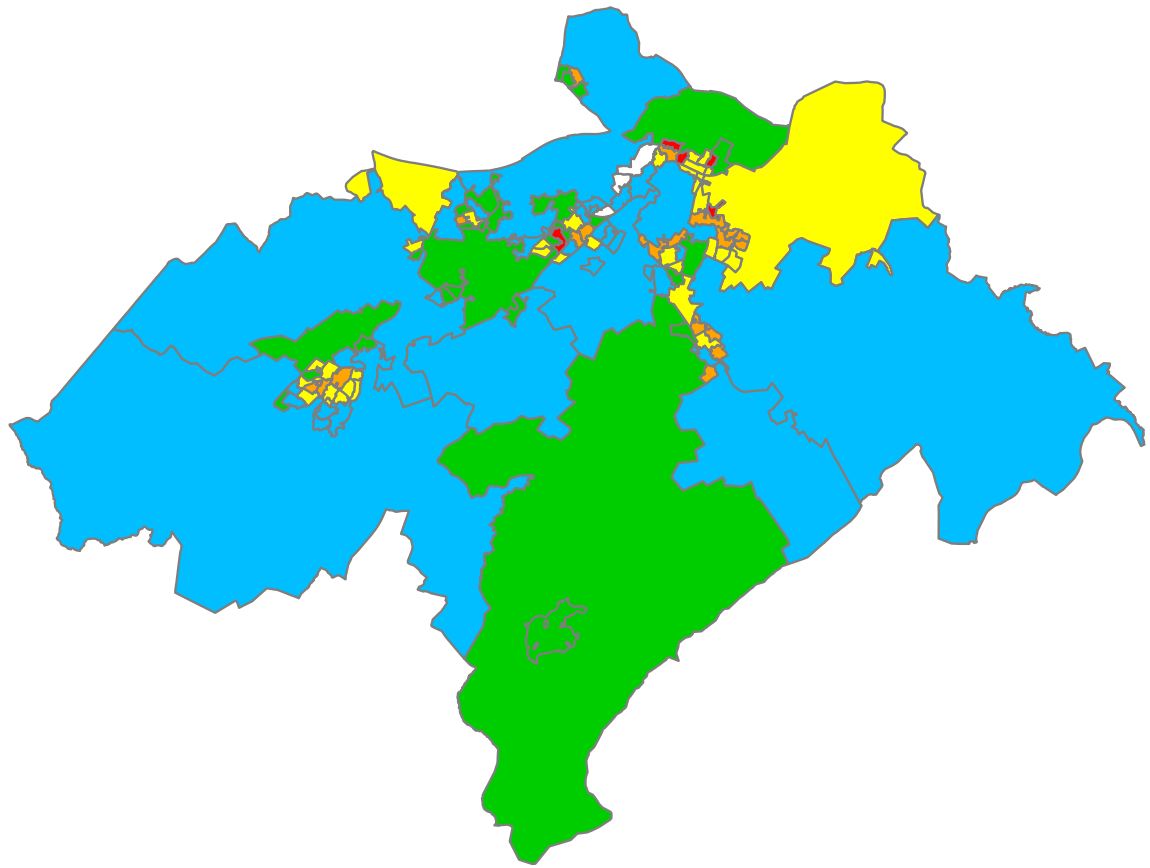
DZ 100.0% 100.0% 100.0% 100.0%



Below are the maps for each component, showing the results for each of the 115 data zones in Midlothian council.

Midlothian Child Poverty Index
 Children in Low Income Families
 Data Source: DWP/NRS

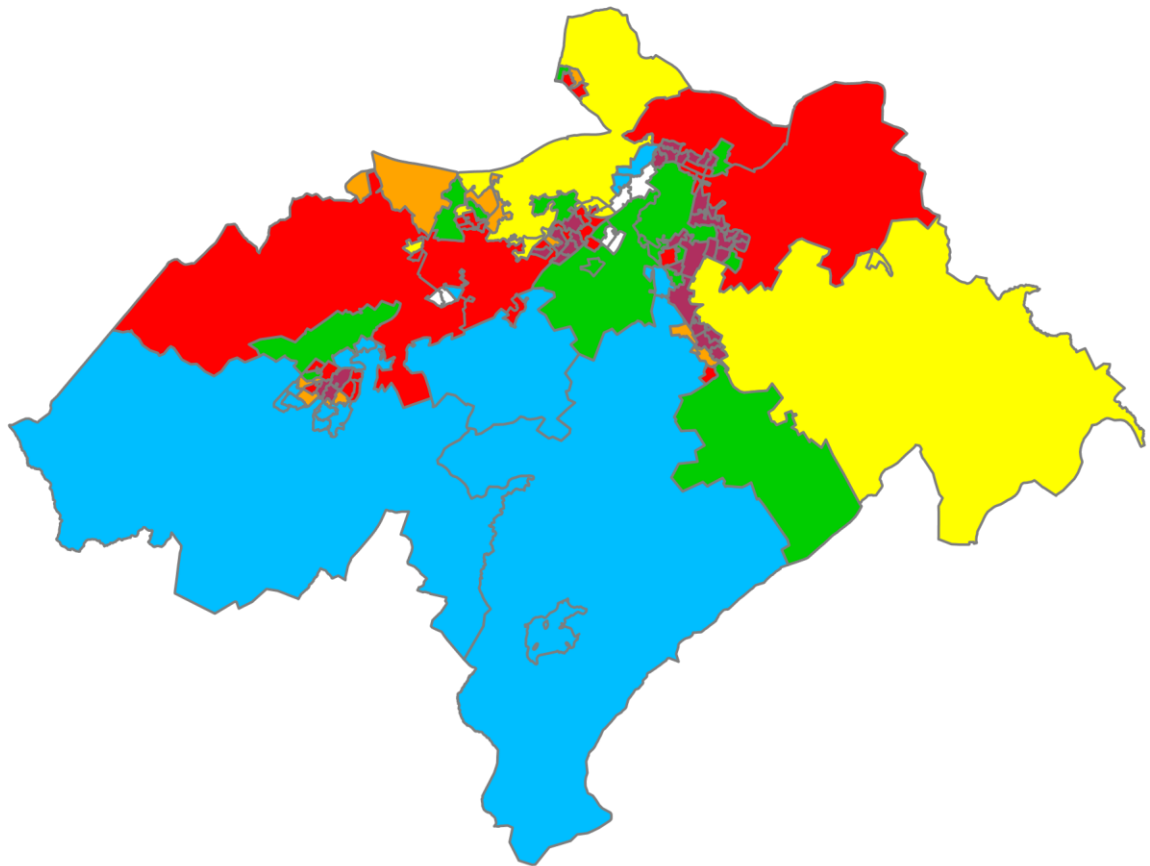
Map 1 - Map of Midlothian showing Children in Low Income Families




() = number of Data Zones in Midlothian in that category.

Data Source: Midlothian council (2023)

Map 2 - Map of Midlothian showing the percentage of all school pupils that are in receipt of Free School Meals by datazone

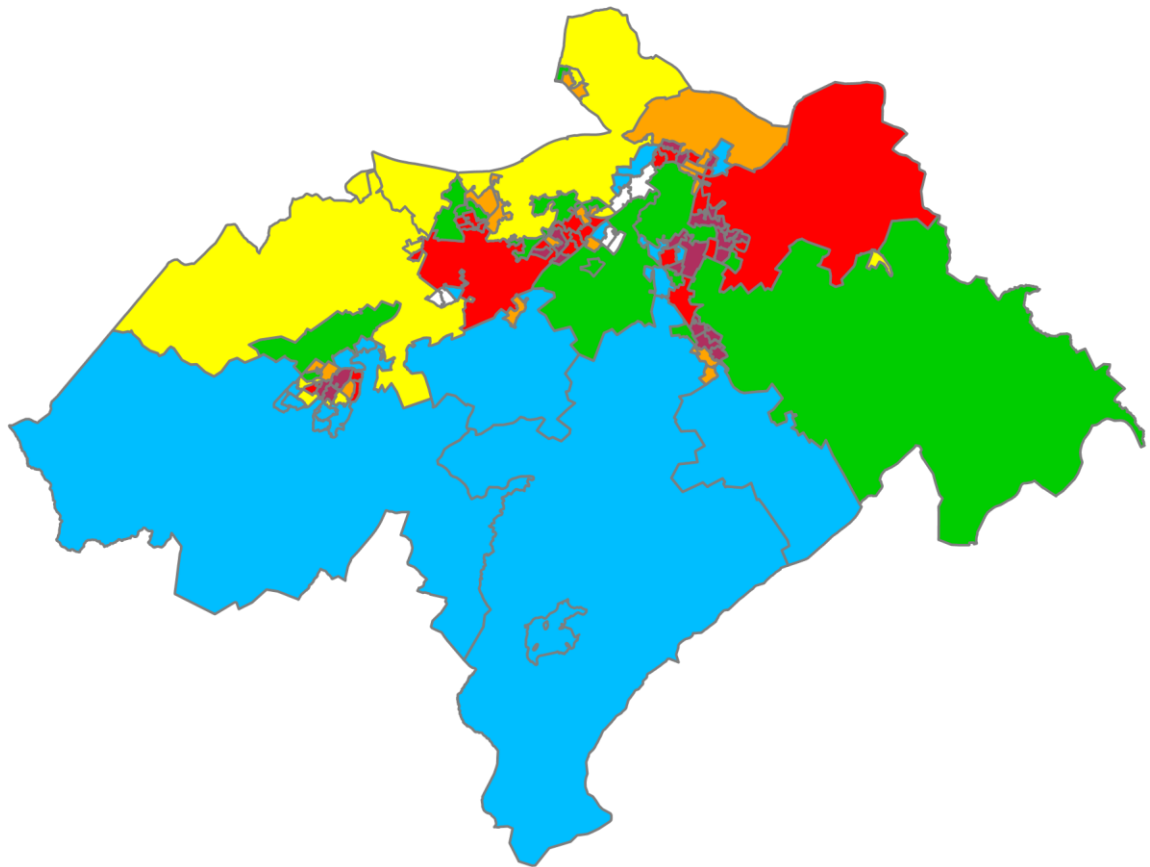


 0: None (6)	 2: 5% to Under 10% (15)	 4: 15% to Under 20% (10)	 6: 30% or More (33)
 1: Under 5% (16)	 3: 10% to Under 15% (8)	 5: 20% to Under 30% (27)	

() = number of Data Zones in Midlothian in that category.

Source: Midlothian council (2023)

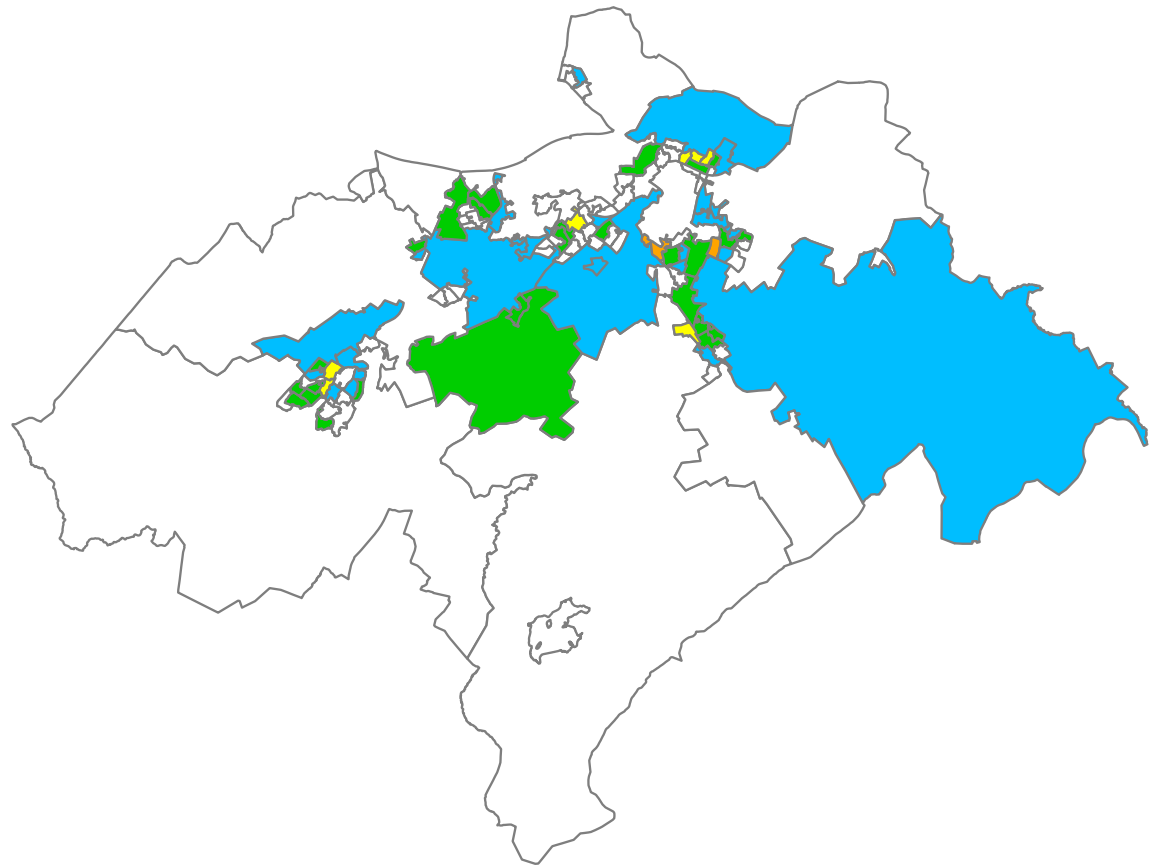
Map 3 – Map of Midlothian showing the percentage of all school pupils that are in receipt of School Clothing Grant by datazone



() = number of Data Zones in Midlothian in that category.

Data Source: Midlothian council (2023)

Map 4 - Map of Midlothian showing the percentage of pupils aged 16+ in receipt for educational maintenance allowance by datazone



0: None (56) 0.5: Under 5% (23) 1.0: 5% to Under 10% (27) 1.5: 10% to Under 15% (7) 2.0: 15% to Under 20%
 () = number of Data Zones in Midlothian in that category.

Midlothian Child Poverty Index Scores

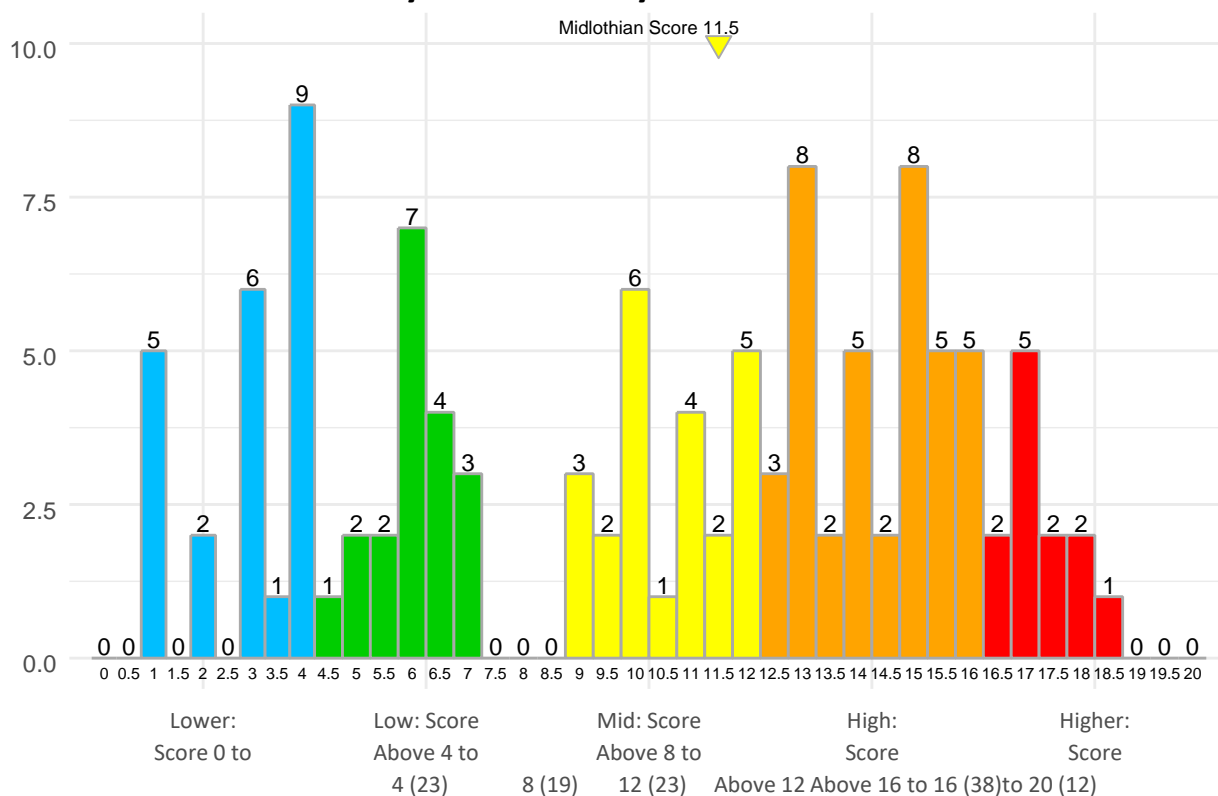
The graph and map below shows Midlothian data zones based on the CPI score, grouped into levels of Child Poverty.

Every data zone in Midlothian council has some element of child poverty.

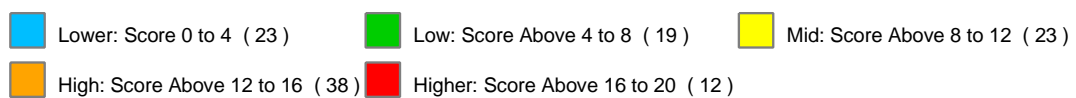
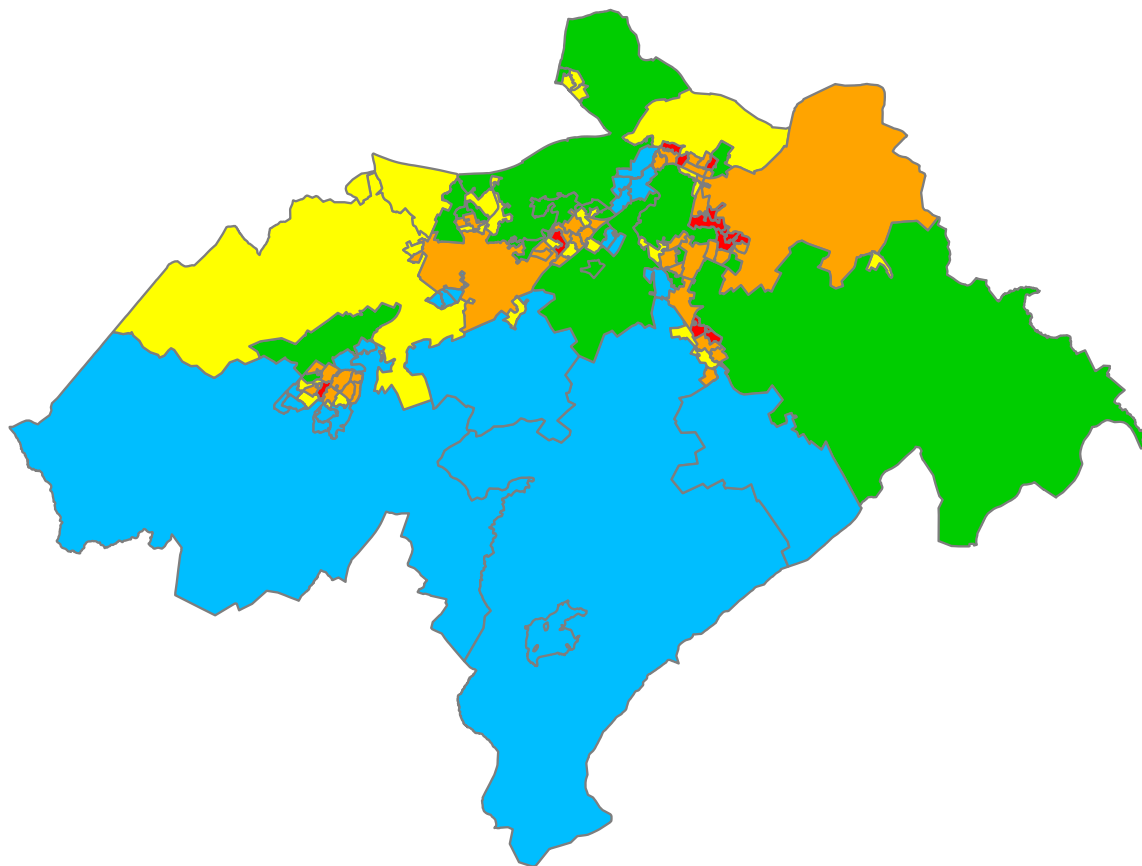
- Higher level (12 data zones) have a score of above 16 to 20;
- High level (38 data zones) have a score of above 12 to 16;
- Mid level (23 data zones) have a score of above 8 to 12;
- Low level (19 data zones) have a score of above 4 to 8;
- and Lower level (23 data zones) have a score of 0 to 4.

The CPI score for Midlothian council as a whole was 11.5, in the Mid level.

Midlothian Data Zones by Child Poverty Index and Score



Map 5 Midlothian Child Poverty Index - Overall Index Score



() = number of Data Zones in Midlothian in that category.

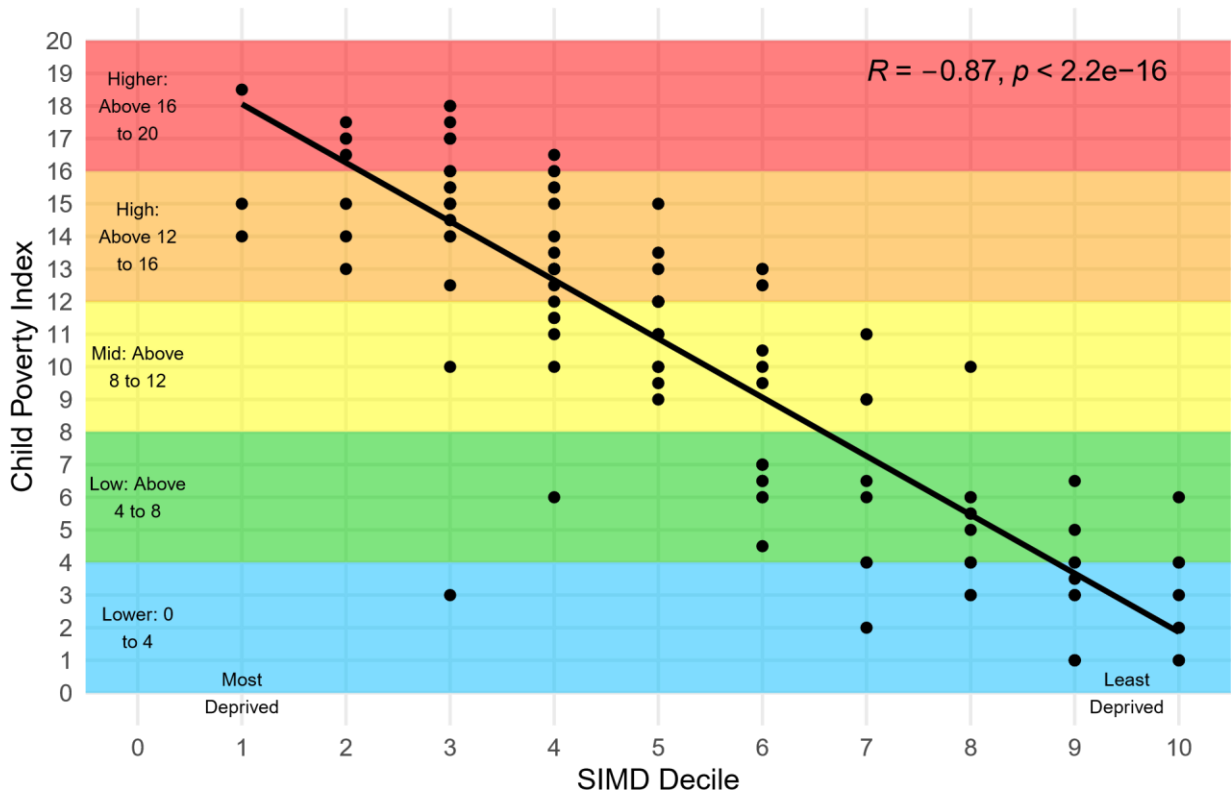
Comparing Midlothian Child Poverty Index to SIMD 2020

The Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) is a good tool for identifying overall deprivation, however, it is not poverty specific or child focused. The CPI is a tactile index created to enable better insight into child poverty within Midlothian council. The following shows a basic comparison between SIMD 2020 Decile and Midlothian council CPI score.

The graph below shows the 115 data zones in Midlothian council by CPI score and SIMD 2020 decile. There is a strong relationship between deprivation and child poverty, as represented by the data zones with most deprivation having a higher level of child poverty. However, there are several areas in Midlothian where the level of child poverty is higher than expected when looking at SIMD decile. Again, it is important to remember that SIMD looks at the whole population and deprivation (not poverty only) and the CPI specifically focuses on children and poverty.

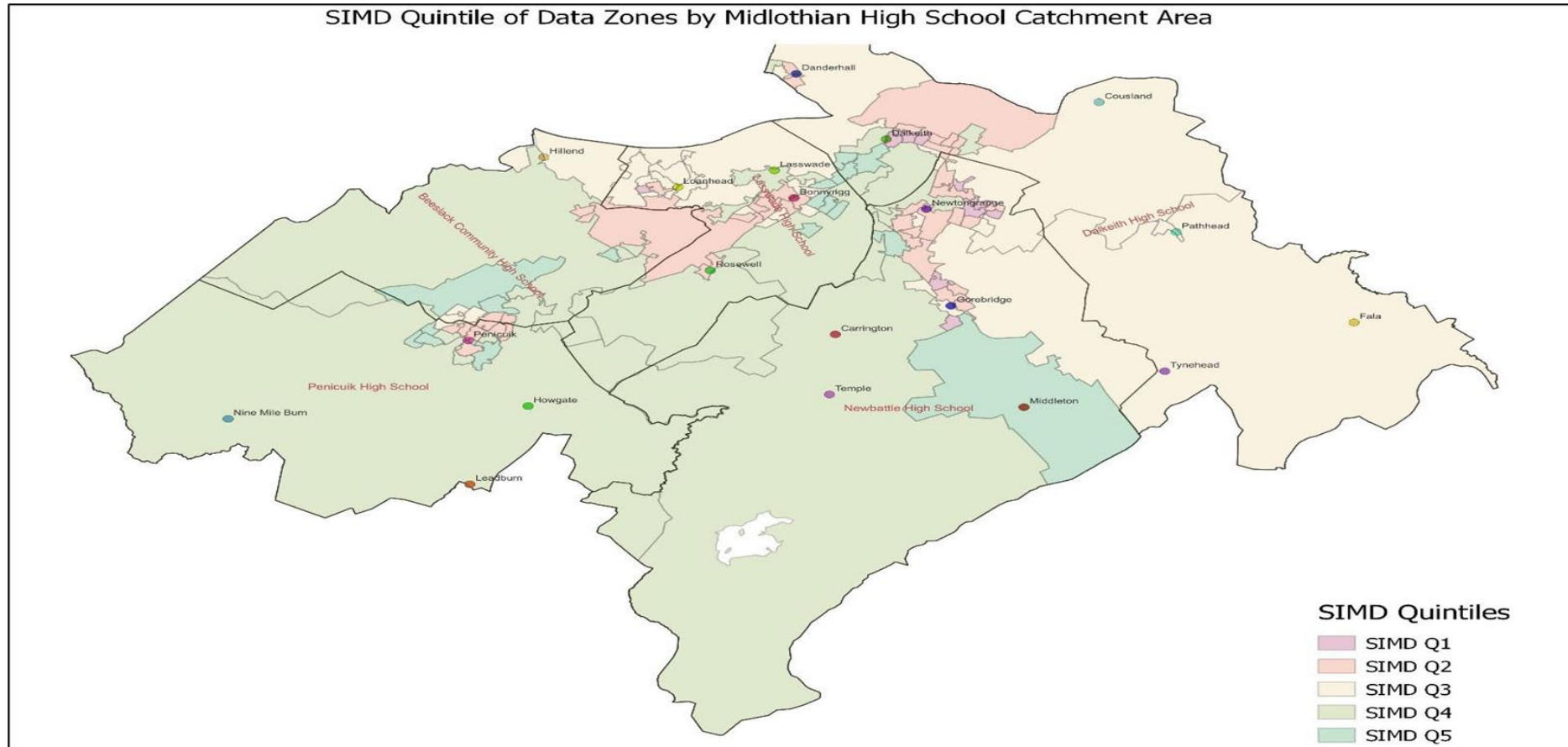
The graph below shows that data zones with a Higher level of child poverty can have an SIMD 2020 decile of 4.

Midlothian Child Poverty Index by SIMD



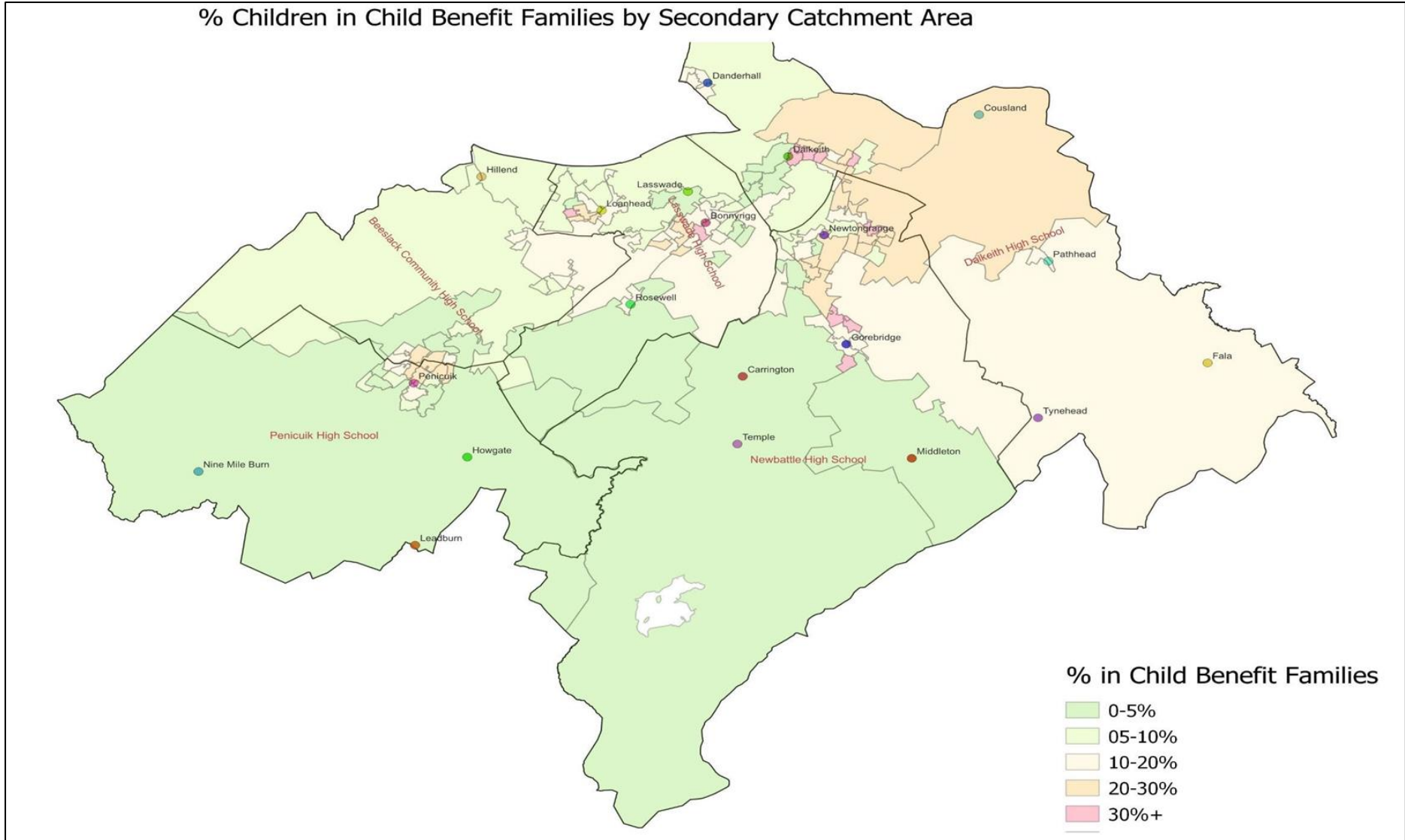
Appendix B – Midlothian Child Poverty Locality Maps

The purpose of this section is to illustrate the extent of poverty in different localities within the school catchments of Midlothian. The initial maps will present common measures of poverty, the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD), children in families that are in receipt of child benefit payments, and children in low-income families. The following maps then present the differences in levels of poverty by exploring the different geographies, from datazone to postcode level.



* Note that the catchment area for St. David's RC Secondary school covers the whole of Midlothian
Data Source: Midlothian council (2023) and Scottish Government (2021)

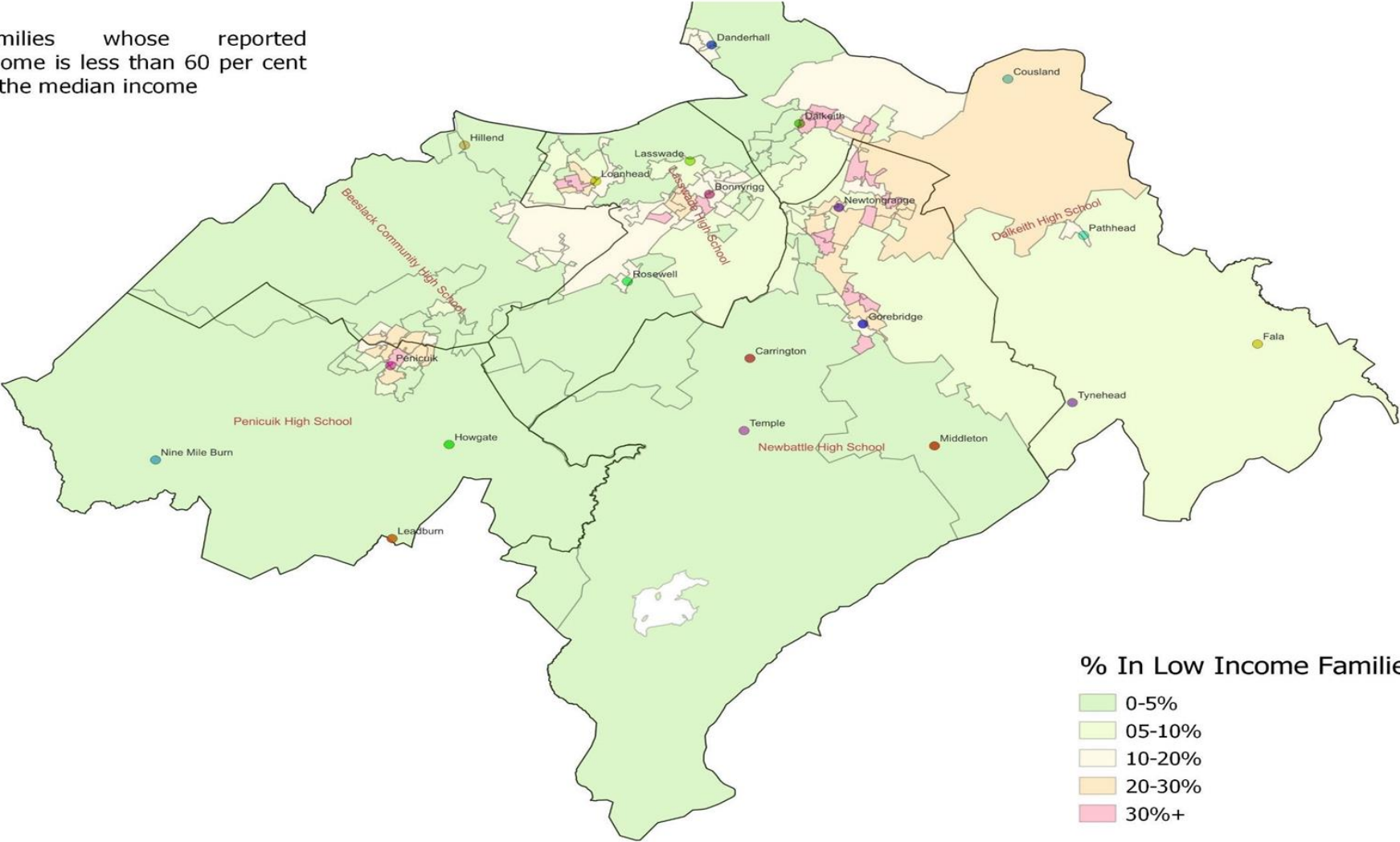
% Children in Child Benefit Families by Secondary Catchment Area



* Note that the catchment area for St. David's RC Secondary school covers the whole of Midlothian
 Data Source: Midlothian council (2023) and Scottish Government (2023)

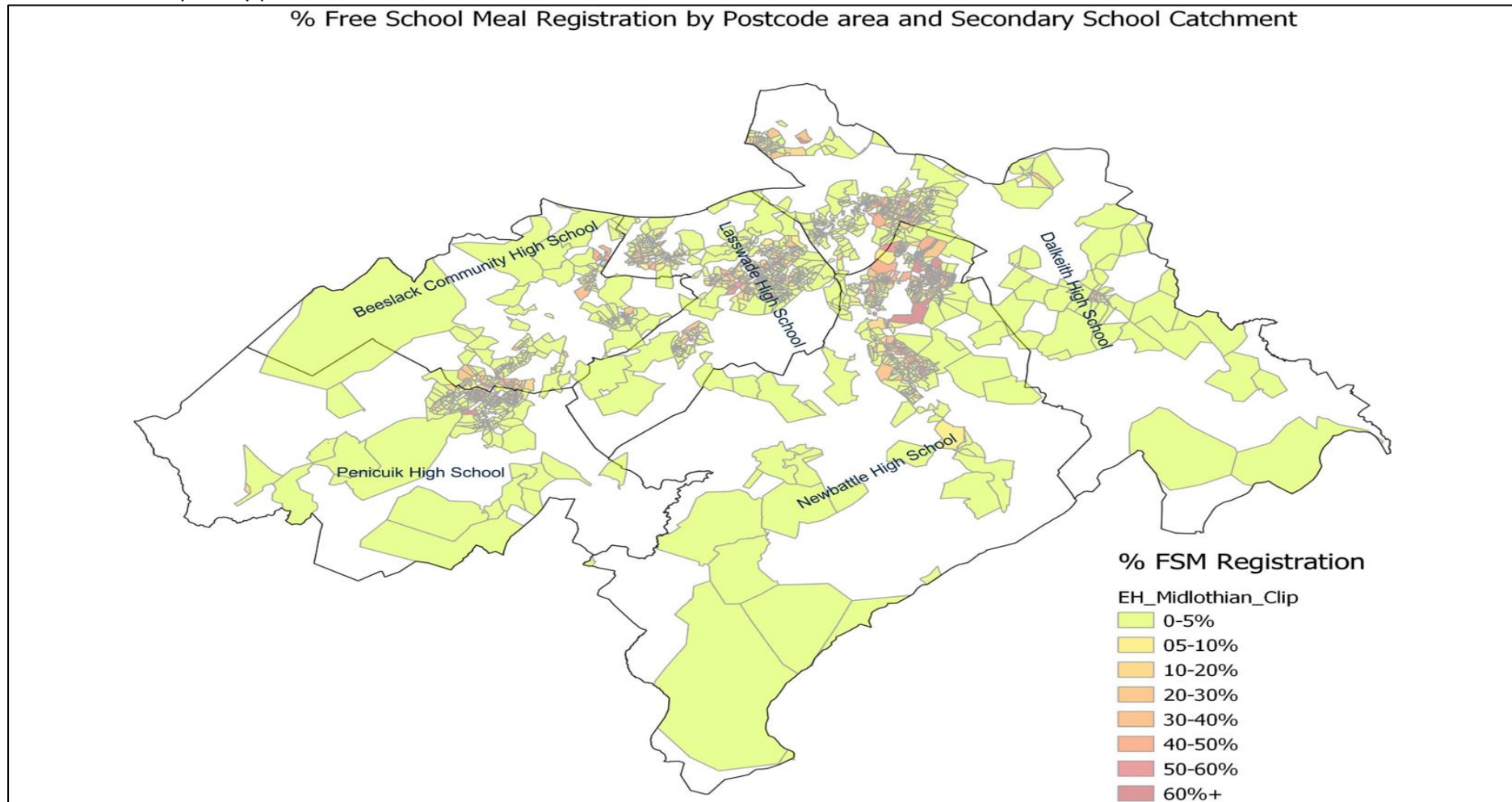
% Children in Low Income Families by Secondary Catchment Area

Families whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median income



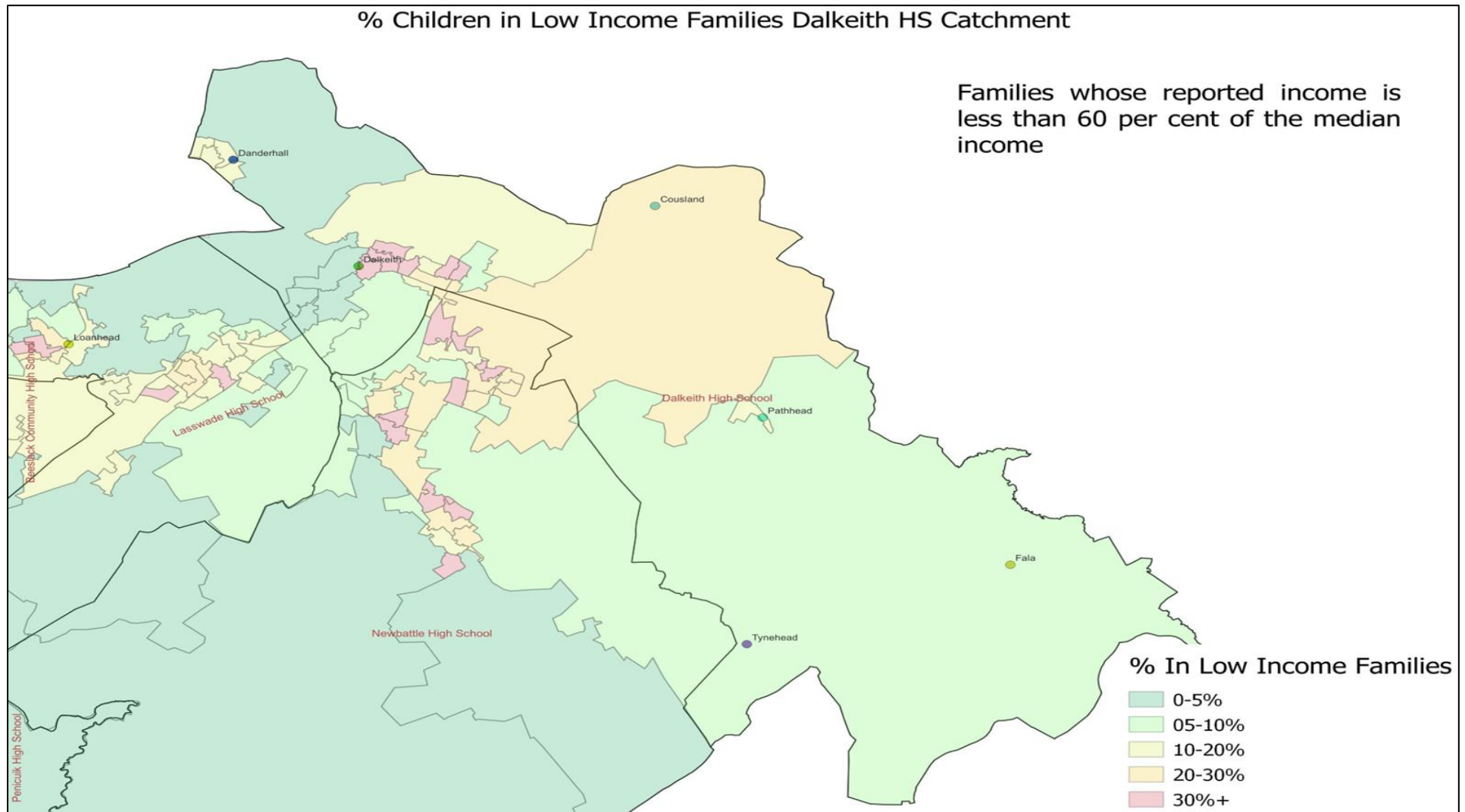
* Note that the catchment area for St. David's RC Secondary school covers the whole of Midlothian
 Data Source: Midlothian council (2023) and Scottish Government (2023)

Data is presented in this map and the preceding maps to illustrate the difference and importance of looking at smaller geographies. Datazones, whilst most commonly used to represent poverty, are not the most effective way to solely represent data for Midlothian, as there are large areas underreported and differences in the poverty profile within localities of datazones.

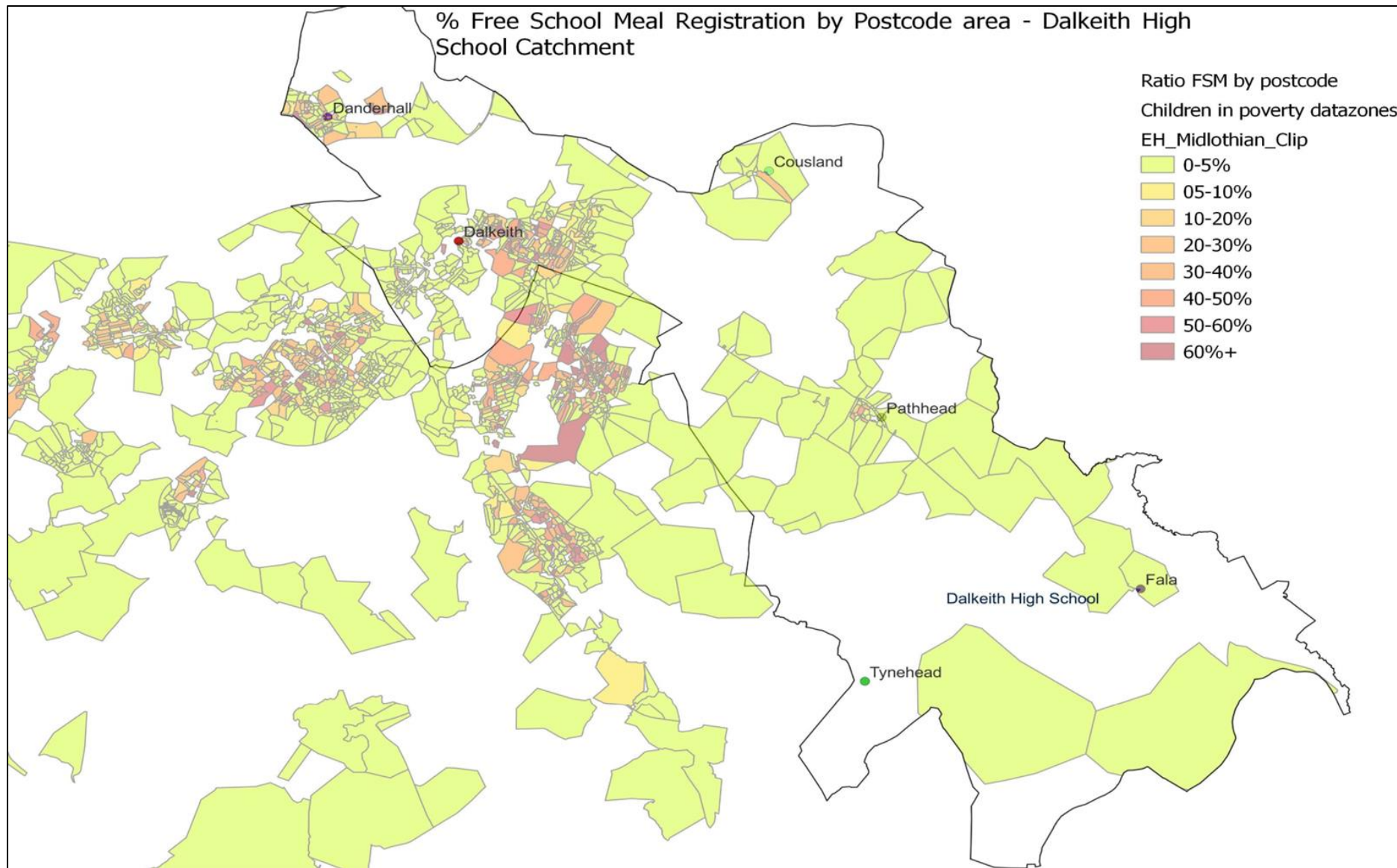


* Note that the catchment area for St. David's RC Secondary school covers the whole of Midlothian
Data Source: Midlothian Council (2023)

This map and the following maps show the difference in geography for each of the school's catchment areas.

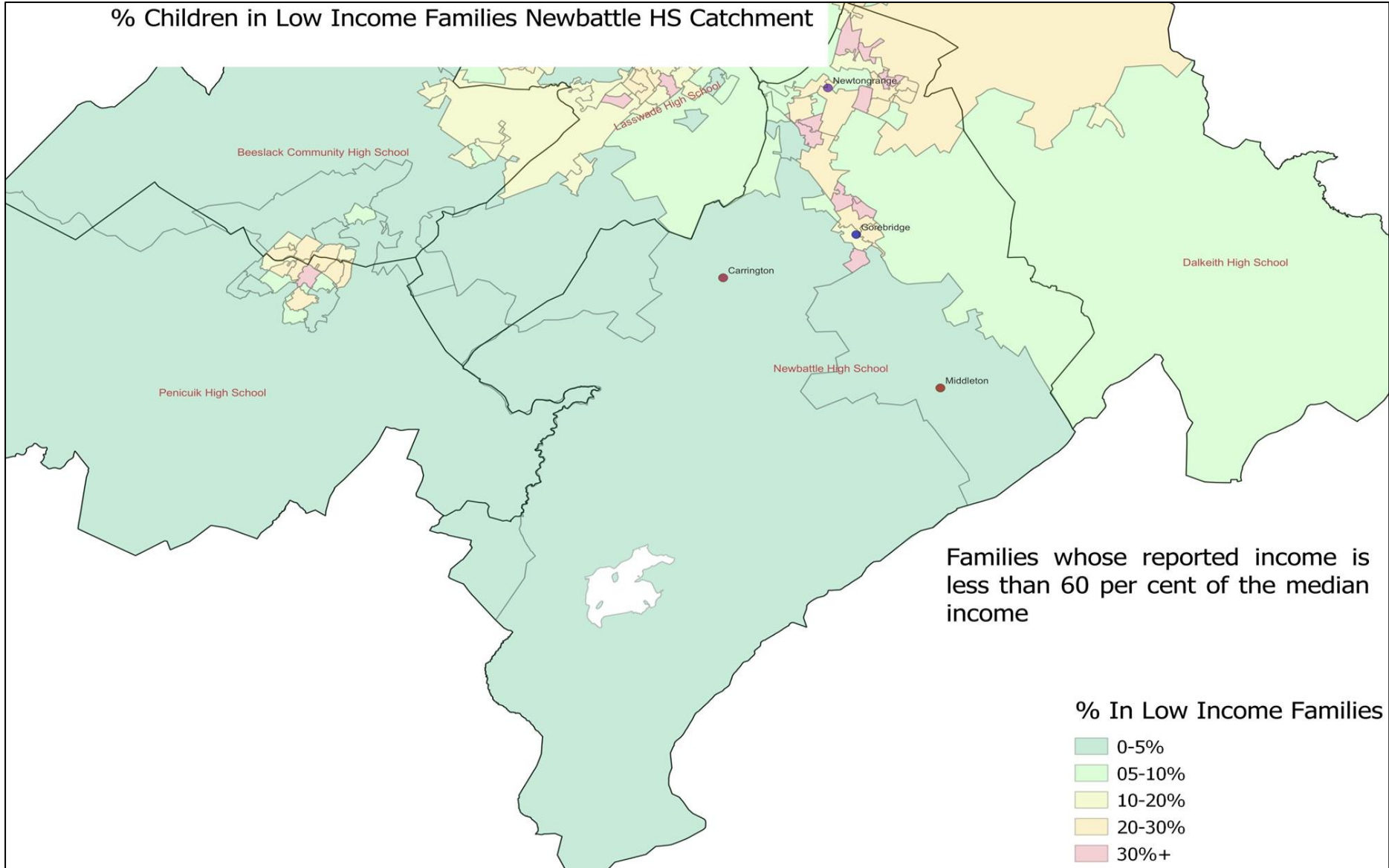


Data Source: Midlothian council (2023) and Scottish Government (2023)



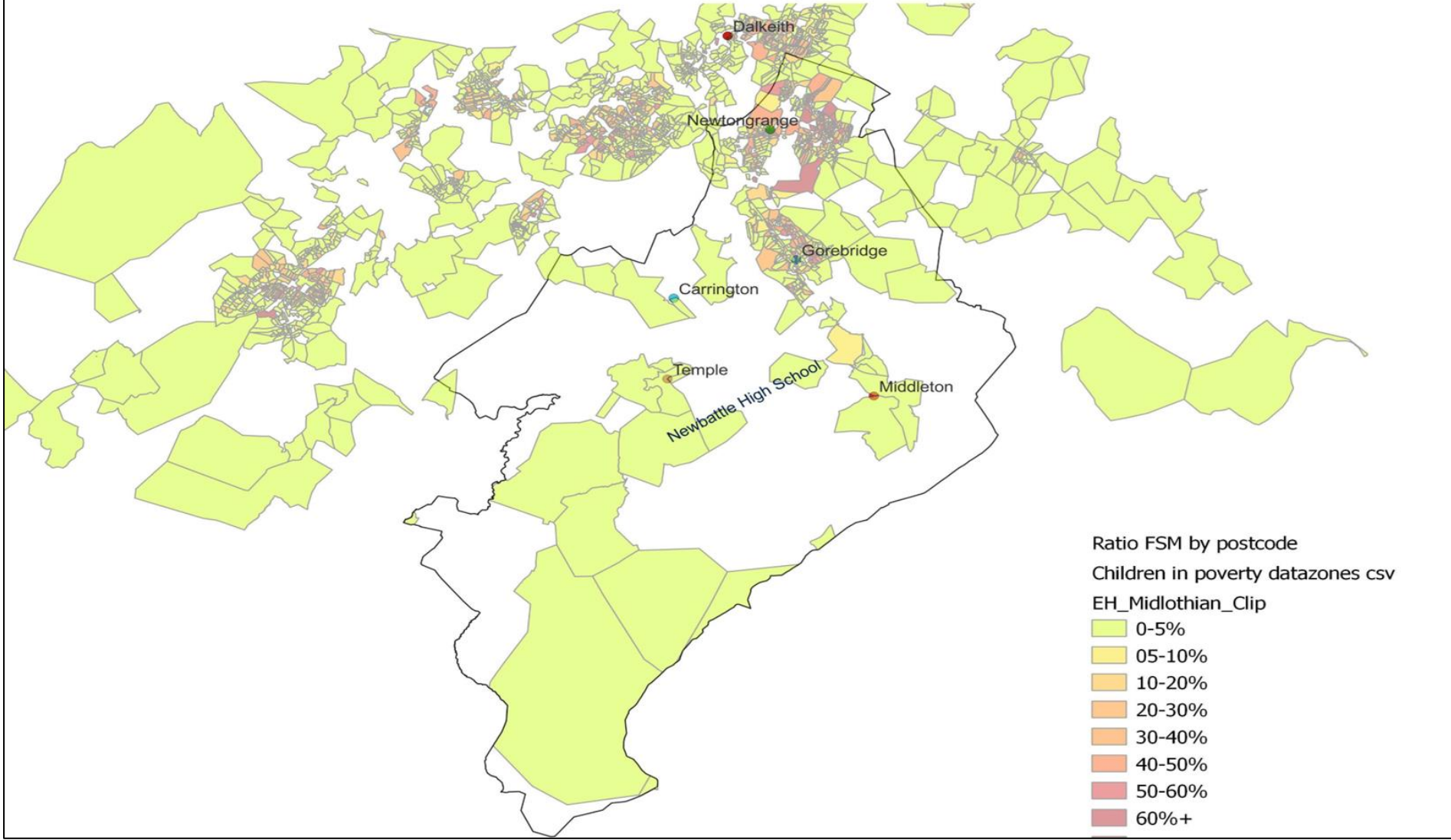
Data Source: Midlothian Council (2023)

% Children in Low Income Families Newbattle HS Catchment



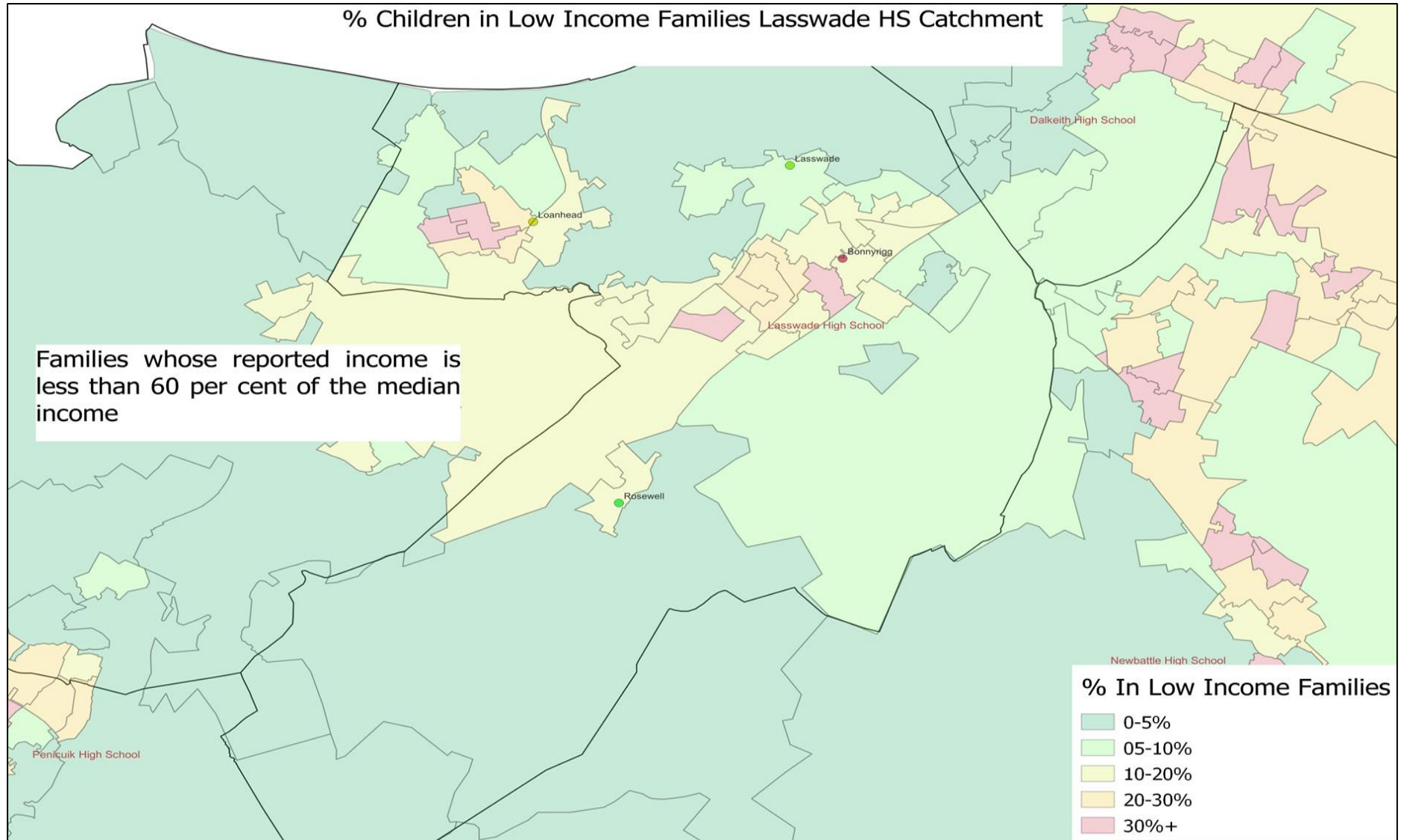
Data Source: Midlothian council (2023) and Scottish Government (2023)

% Free School Meal Registration by Postcode area - Newbattle High School Catchment



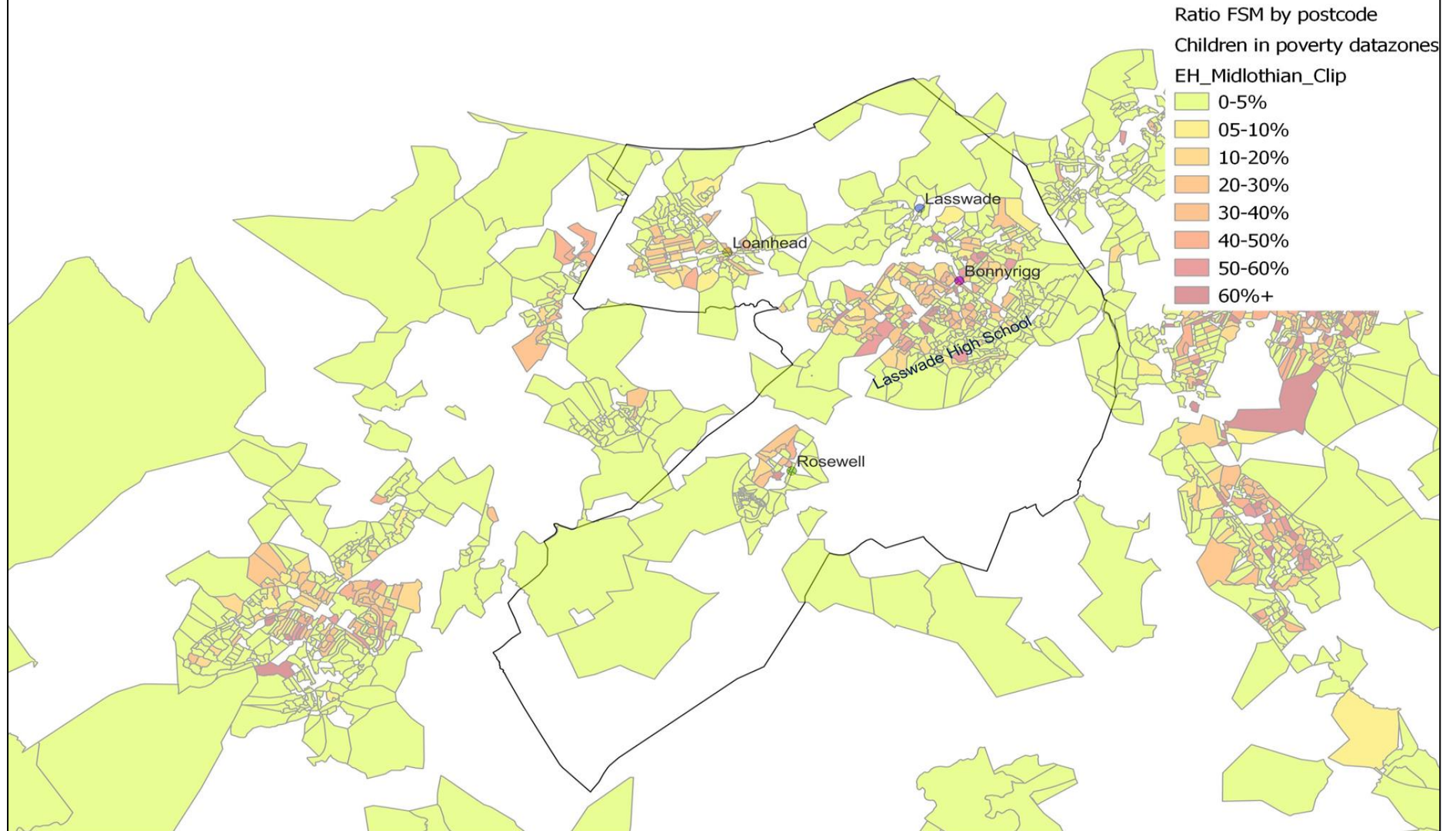
Data Source: Midlothian Council (2023)

% Children in Low Income Families Lasswade HS Catchment



Data Source: Midlothian council (2023) and Scottish Government (2023)

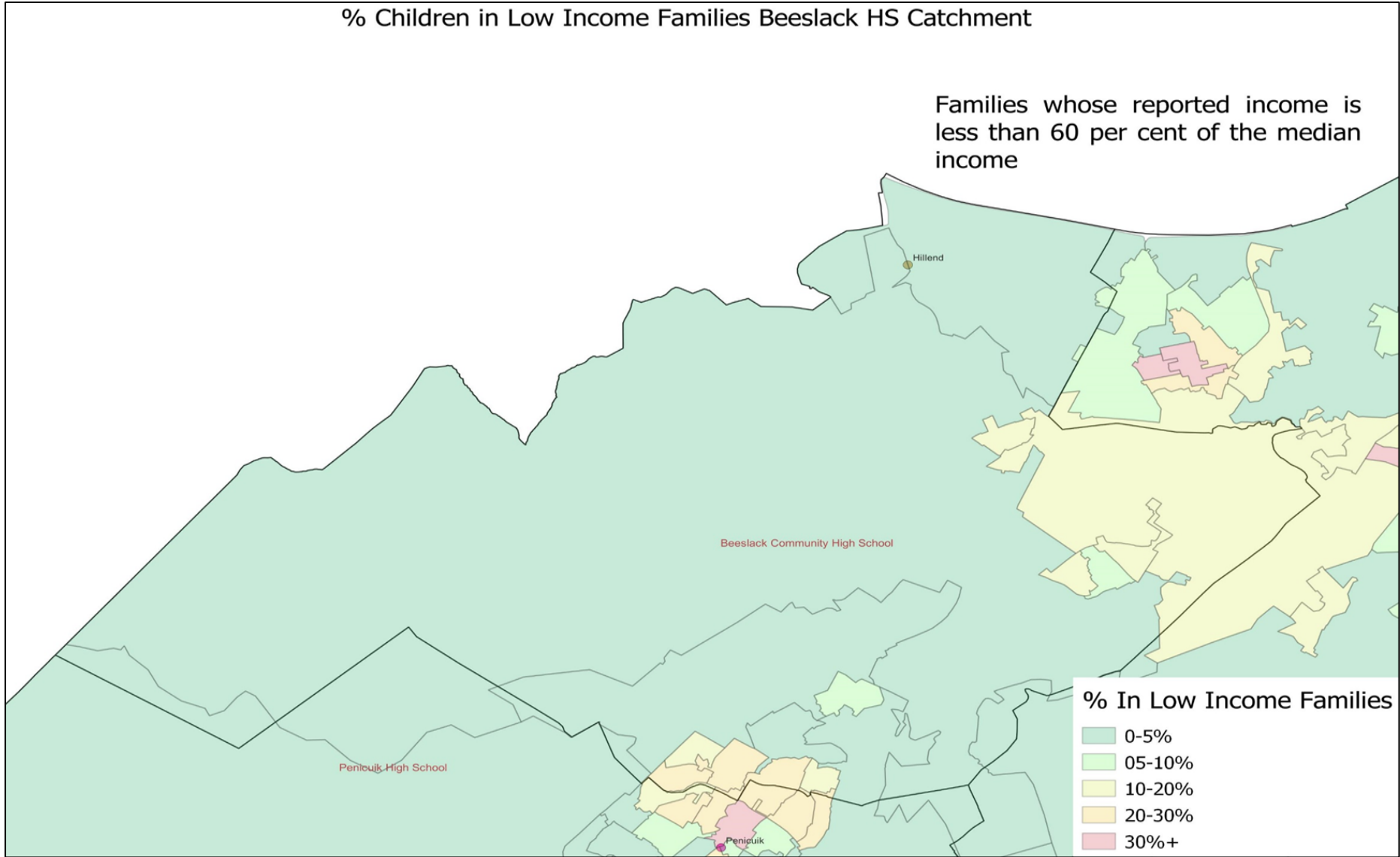
% Free School Meal Registration by Postcode area - Lasswade High School Catchment



Data Source: Midlothian Council (2023)

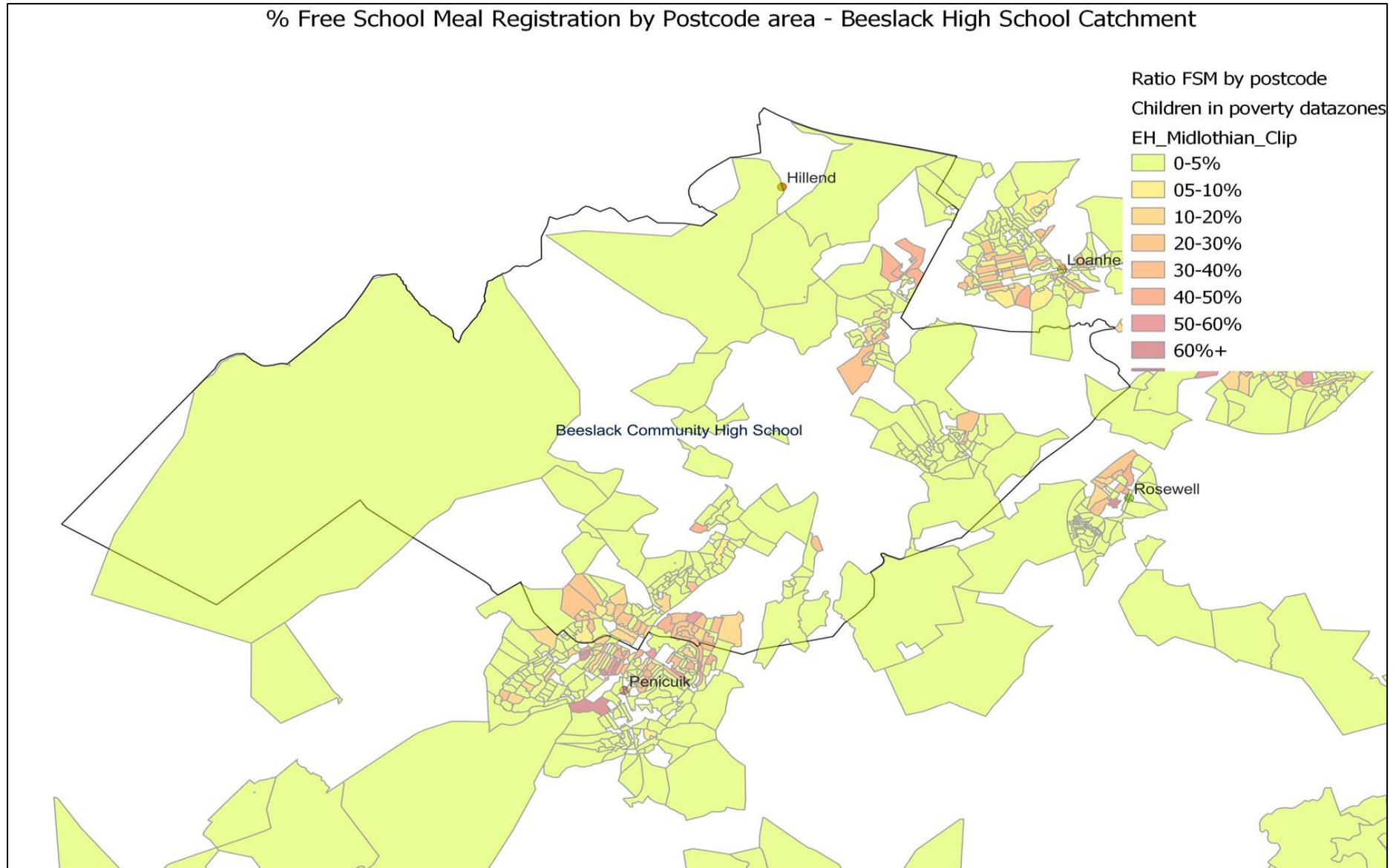
% Children in Low Income Families Beeslack HS Catchment

Families whose reported income is less than 60 per cent of the median income

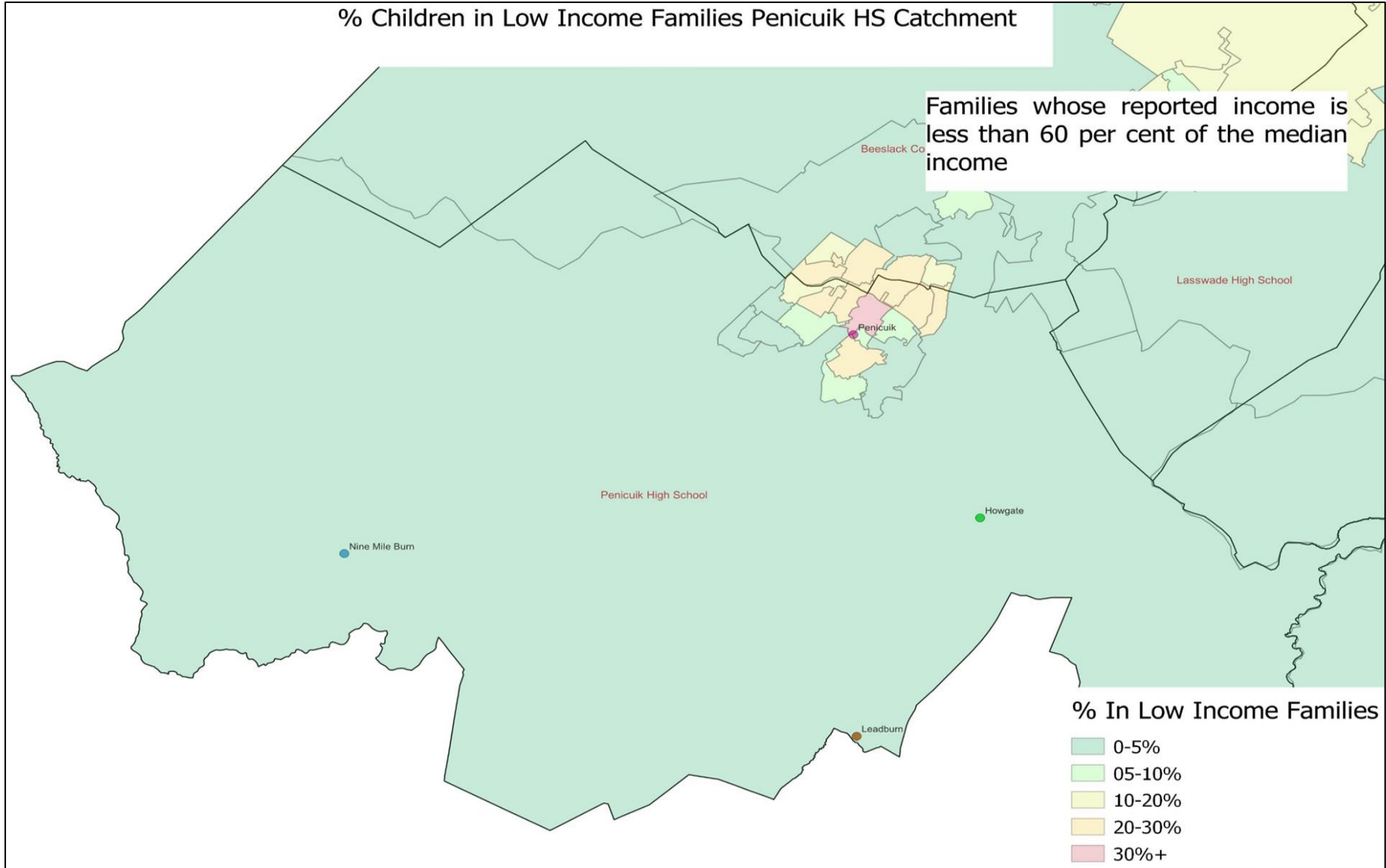


Data Source: Midlothian council (2023) and Scottish Government (2023)

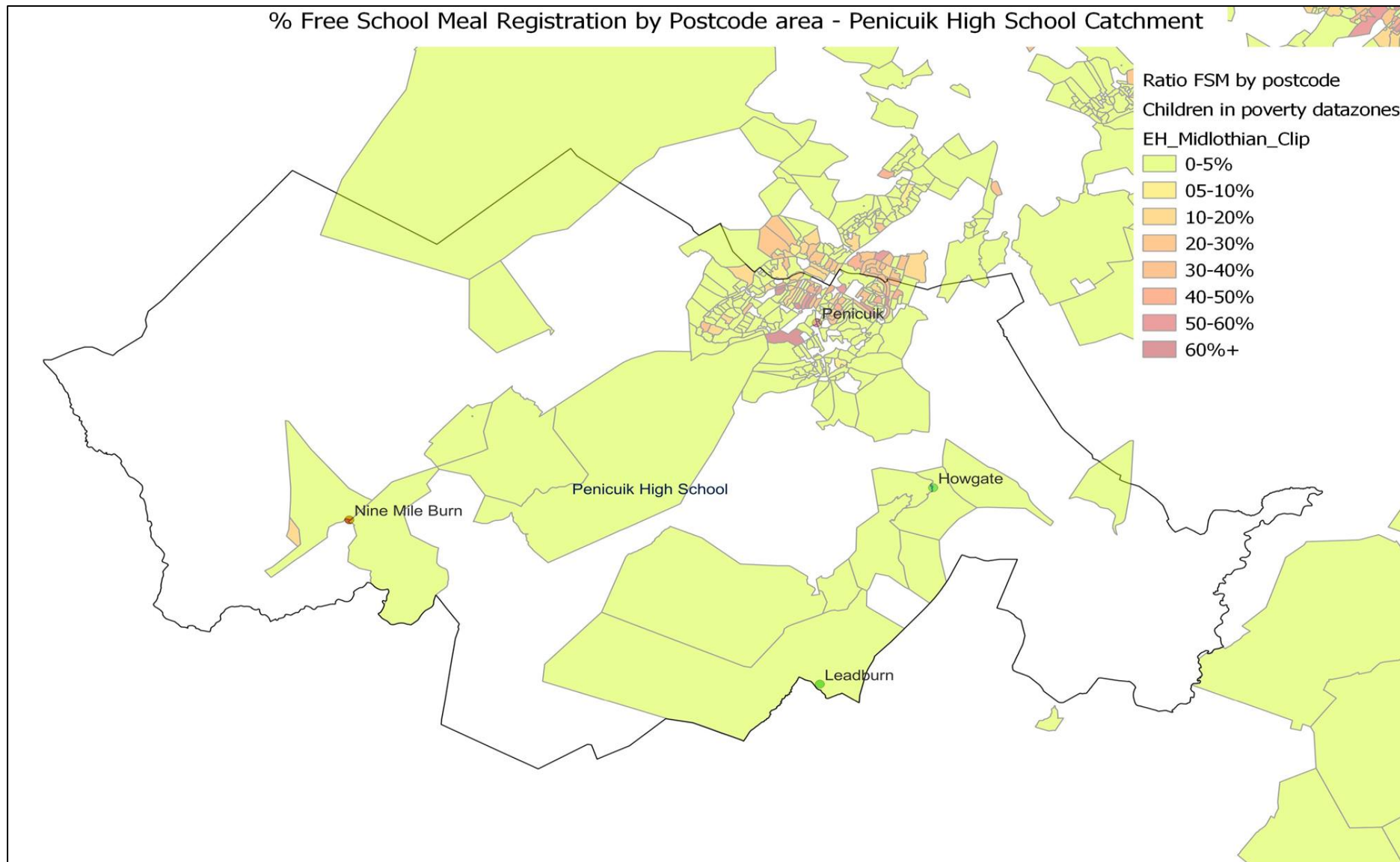
% Free School Meal Registration by Postcode area - Beeslack High School Catchment



Data Source: Midlothian Council (2023)



Data Source: Midlothian council (2023) and Scottish Government (2023)



Data Source: Midlothian Council (2023)