

Midlothian Council Report Quarter 3 2025/26

Progress Against Strategic Outcomes

The Single Midlothian Plan focuses on three main priorities:

- Individuals and communities have improved health and skills for learning, life and work.
- No child or household need live in poverty.
- Significant progress is made towards net zero carbon emissions by 2045.

The 2022 Census results highlight that Midlothian is projected to have the highest percentage change in population size of all mainland council areas in Scotland with an increase of 16.1%. In addition, Midlothian has 10 zones which fall into the most deprived areas living a local share of 8.7% living in the most deprived areas in Scotland.

To accommodate growth within the resources available we will need to think differently about the services we deliver and how we deliver them. Rooted in the creation of a wellbeing economy, in June 2023 Council approved the new Transformation Blueprint 2023-2028. Some services will be transformed to meet our growing population within the financial envelope available, others may be delivered in a different way and some will need to stop. Fostering a collaborative culture where everyone is focused on the same end goal – creating effective and efficient services which will benefit our citizens – will be crucial to future success.

The Transformation Blueprint will focus on the nature of the work we will do, developing a 21st century workforce supported by a workplace fit for the future where joined up services are delivered in a holistic and integrated way.

The 5 key objectives of the Transformation Blueprint are:

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

Our **Workforce Strategy 2024-34** and **Digital Transformation Strategy 2024-29** are core elements of the council's Transformation Blueprint and will support the council's Medium Term Financial Strategy – 2024/25 to 2028/29.

Workforce Strategy 2024-34 is accompanied by a 3-year short-term action plan and the strategic aims are:

- **Plan:** deliver an evidence and outcome-based workforce planning framework that is an integral part of the council's approach to strategic planning.
- **Attract:** ensure the council becomes the employer of choice for the population of Midlothian, by deploying best practice in attracting the best staff.
- **Train:** enable the council to become a "Learning Organisation", providing staff with business-focused training and development to equip them with the skills and knowledge required to deliver their best.

- **Employ:** ensure Fair Work principles continue to be at the heart of management practice, ensuring staff are, and feel, valued and rewarded.
- **Nurture:** create a workforce and leadership culture focusing on the health and wellbeing of a demographically balanced workforce that reflects the community it serves.

Digital Transformation Strategy 2024-29 outlines the key priority areas the Council will focus on over the next 5 years, harnessing digital tools, technology and data. The key areas are:

- **Automate:** For an Efficient, Modern Council
- **Reimagine:** Transform Service Delivery
- **Data:** Deeper Insights and Preventative Operations
- **Secure and Sustain:** Protect and Preserve

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

Single Midlothian Plan Themes in 2023/27

Midlothian will be Healthier – Achievements

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

Social work services in Midlothian are delivered jointly by Midlothian Council and Midlothian Integration Joint Board. Adult social work and social care services, including Justice Social Work, are delegated to Midlothian IJB. Adult Social Care contributes to the Midlothian IJB Strategic Commissioning Plan, the strategic aims of both NHS Lothian and Midlothian Council, and contributes to the work of the Community Planning Partnership through the Single Midlothian Plan.

Learning Disability/Physical Disability

Improved inspection outcome for the Midlothian Council Community Access Team means that none of the adult service providers have grades that are below good.

Care Inspectorate Grades Good or Above

Target = 90% Actual = 100% Exceeds target

Finance – Expenditure Against Budget

Annual Budget = £31.06m Projected Expenditure = £32.8m Below target

Care Package Reviews – Number within 2 years

Target = 90% Actual = 92% Exceeds target

Physical Disabilities and Long-Term Conditions:

PD/LTC interventions recorded as outcome achieved

Target = 85% Actual = 95% Exceeds target

PD/LTC referral screening episode concluded within 3 working days

Target = 90% Actual = 88% Below target

Carers

Number of Adult Carer Support Plans completed by HSCP (accumulative)

Target = 75 Actual = 76 Exceeds target

Number of Adult Carer Support Plans completed VOCAL (accumulative)

Target = 525 Actual = 890 Exceeds target

Care at Home & Learning Development - The number of weeks waiting for a package of care has not reduced much, our aim is to reduce waiting times to a maximum of 6 weeks as a long-term aim, but our medium-term aim is 6 months and this is hopeful within the next 3 months. We have managed to bring down the number of weekly hours on the community care at home waiting list which has demonstrated the effectiveness of the additional USC funding for two social workers who are working through the list and reviewing each person face to face.

There is a slight increase in the number of staff qualified for their role in care at home. Staff within the Care at home service continue to work through their SVQ programmes with some recent successful completions of carers with their SVQ 2 qualification. However, we have had some carers retire who were fully qualified and new carers appointed who are not all qualified but are working towards their qualification, therefore this does affect the qualification rates of staff in the

service.

Older People's Service

Initial Care home reviews completed within 6 weeks – Performance target met.

Measure	Target	Q1	Q2	Q3
Care home review completed within 6 weeks of admission to a care home	60%	98%	90%	96%

A revision of the care home review policy is being planned and in Q4 there will be quality assurance audit of some care home reviews to ensure that standards and quality are of a high level. Improvement planning will be progressed as required.

Newbyres Village – The care home provides 24 hours care and support for **48 permanent residents**. A full programme of Christmas activities was arranged by the management and activities team at Newbyres, raising funds for the forthcoming years activities programmes within the care home. Improvement planning is in place to support improvement in grades in all areas but specifically in management/leadership/staffing and skin care of residents. There were significant issues relating to the provision of nursing care in Q3 and the service had to be supported by the district nursing service. Recruitment has now been completed and 2 new Band 6 nurses have started.

Highbank Intermediate Care Unit – Highbank is an intermediate care unit with **40 beds**, including **3 respite beds**. Planning is at an advanced stage for the move to the new facility in Polton Street, Bonnyrigg – MIDLOTHIAN LIFE. There is currently an underoccupancy of residents being managed at Highbank in preparation for the move to the new site. This is to ensure that the rehabilitation service can be established as soon as possible after the move.

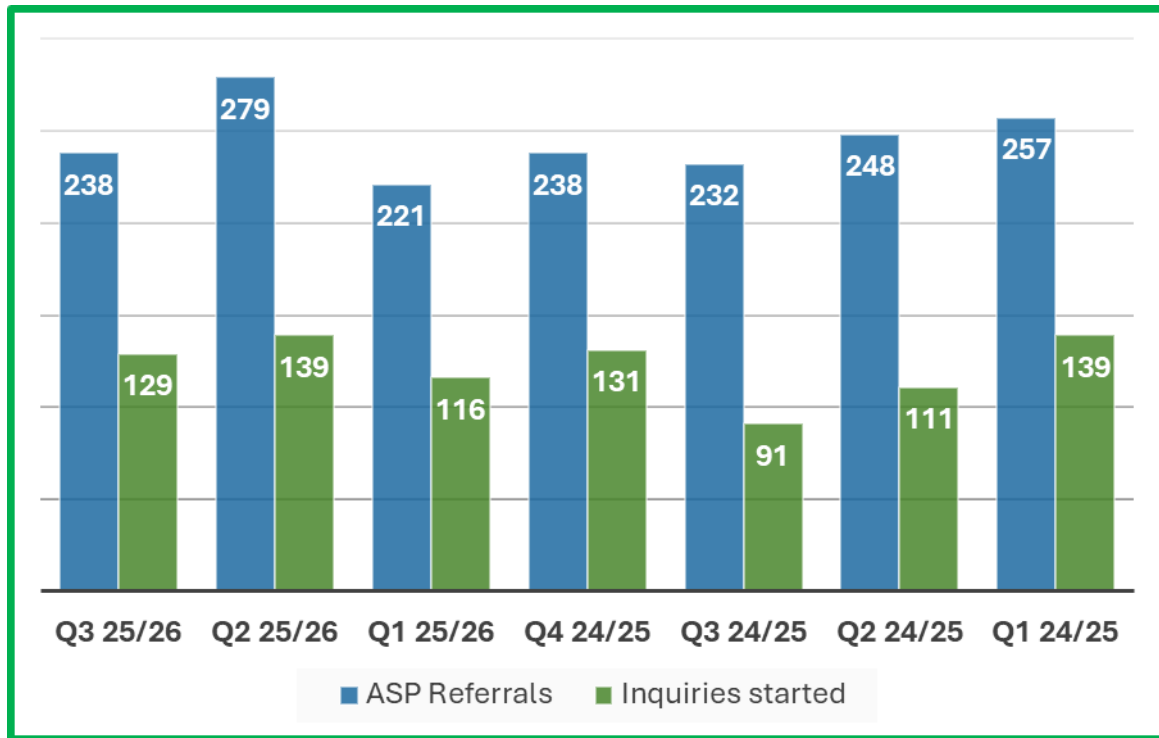
Hospital In Reach Team - Improvement planning continues within the Hospital in reach team. The additional staff employed with budget from Unscheduled Care moneys have allowed for a revision of staff deployment.

Older People's Team – The Older People's social work team continue to work effectively to support clients to identify and achieve their outcomes. The team has changed over the past year with an almost entirely new staff group including a number of newly qualified workers who have almost all completed their Newly Qualified Social Worker activities in conjunction with Learning and Development and Supervision from Team Leader. Improvement planning continues.

Adult Support and Protection (ASP): Social Work staff undertake specific training to become a Council Officer and work to **identify, minimise and manage risk**, and ensure that all suspicions, disclosures or incidents of actual harm are acted upon. An adult is someone aged 16+ although for individuals between the age of 16 and 18 years of age there will be discussion with Children Services colleagues to identify if the matter would more appropriately be managed under **child protection** procedures.

On receipt of a referral related to concerns that there is an adult at risk of harm it is screened to ensure that the relevant information is available and an investigation, often referred to as the Duty to Inquire (DTI) will be undertaken, there is a local aim that the investigation will be completed within 21 days, however there are a number of factors which impact this including being able to speak to the adult to gain their views.

The following graph shows the volume of work during quarter 3.



If risks remain at the completion of the Duty to Inquire, and the three-point test has been met, an **Adult Case Conference** must be convened; this is a multi-agency forum for shared decision-making. A **Protection Plan** is put in place at each case conference and is reviewed at least once to ensure that it is having a positive outcome or if additional action is required. There were no new protection plans started this quarter but there are cases progressing with the plans already in place. There are a range of measures that agencies can take to mitigate and manage the identified risks, and these include the use of **Protection Orders** which are sought through an application to the Sheriff Court. **There were no Protection Orders required in Quarter 3.**

Welfare Rights Team - Provide welfare benefits advice to individuals within Midlothian including advice to cancer patients in partnership with MacMillan Cancer Support. The Welfare Rights Team **offer support and advice** to many of the most vulnerable residents of Midlothian who may have a disability, be at state pension age or over, receiving a social work service (Child or Adult Services).

The Welfare Rights Officers have noted an **increase** in the volume of referrals and during Q3 the team received **219 new referrals**, an increase of 35 referrals on the previous quarter. In addition, they dealt with approximately **90 calls to the advice line**, some of these calls resulted in referrals whilst others were provided with advice and signposting to appropriate services. The total amount of **additional income generated** for individuals through the work of the team during the reporting period was **£791,582.51**.

Public Health - We have worked collaboratively with various partners to apply for funding to improve early intervention measures for veterans and people experiencing homelessness.

Adult Mental Health Service

Mental Health 18+ and Substance Use - The services offer holistic assessments, *What Matters to You* care planning, goal setting and treatment, and coordinates multi-agency support and follow up. Providing individual person-centred care and treatment, and support to enable them to actively participate in this process. Strives together for the maximum benefit to the individual by optimising recovery for the individual, improved mental health and wellbeing, in the least restrictive and intrusive manner. The service continues to have a shortage of social worker availability primarily due to one of the Social workers training to do their MHO training, therefore this continues to impact

on the waiting list social work waiting list.

Dementia Team - The Midlothian Dementia service comprises 4 Social Workers and 2 Community Care Assistants. Currently in Midlothian social work waiting times continue to be monitored within the agreed performance target of being allocated to a Social Worker within 6.9 weeks and/or Community Care Assistant within 13 weeks. The service is progressing with developments to explore ways to manage the current wait list to improve timely access for those who are referred to the service.

Staff Wellbeing - The HSCP Staff Wellbeing support system develops, implements, and evaluates a range of high-quality and research-based wellbeing, experience, and engagement processes, in order to enable, empower, sustain, and retain health and social care staff.

The staff of Midlothian HSCP are all working towards the same goal, that everyone working here is equally valued and supported to succeed. We believe that whoever you are, whatever you do, and wherever you work in the partnership, you can make a valued contribution and feel included. To achieve this, we implement actions which positively influence the 4 key drivers outlined within our Staff Wellbeing, Experience and Engagement Delivery Plan 2025-2028.

Q3 Work Progressed - The HSCP is very aware of the **increased pressures** which take place over the **winter months** due to seasonal illness. This increases the demand on services and creates staff shortage. At the end of 2025, Midlothian HSCP saw an unusually high number of influenza cases. In order to prepare staff and reduce risk, a guide outlining our Winter Support was issued in November (see attachment). It is hoped that promoting this provision in addition to clinical measures such as vaccination, will go some way to limit the negative consequences expected over the next few months.

On the 12th November the **HSCP** celebrated the successes of those working in the partnership through its **Scottish Vocation Qualification Ceremony**. Academic achievements included vocational certificates, diplomas, and degrees.

18th of October designated World **Menopause** Day. Throughout the month a number of sessions were offered to staff including world café meetings, education, and awareness sessions. The purpose of the sessions was to raise awareness of menopause and the common issues experience, while supporting employees by increasing access to appropriate information and care.

During quarter 3, **two teams**, the **Care Home Palliative Care Team** and **Gorebridge Health Visitors**, were offered bespoke positive psychological input as a single face to face session or as sequential interventions over 6 facilitated conversations and education. A total of 16 staff participated.

On the 4th of December the HSCP launched a new initiative to increase staff engagement, Leadership **Question Time** (QT). The aim of QT is to offer **all staff** the opportunity to share experiences, seek information, and clarify concerns. It is a forum for sharing ideas, asking questions, and celebrating successes.

Sport & Leisure

Tonezone membership continues to remain high with a total of 5,018 memberships up to the end of quarter 3. Tonezone membership has increased from 4,872 memberships at the same period last year. Usage figures across our sport and leisure facilities, excluding pools, has decreased this quarter to 71,590 compared to the same period last year of 74,009 and similarly there has been a slight decrease in usage at pools from 43,381 attendances this quarter compared to 44,572 across the same period last year.

Gym refurbishment project has continued to progress this quarter to create modern, high quality fitness facilities that meets the needs of our community and enhances the overall user experience. This quarter saw the completion of Penicuik and Lasswade centre and

Newtongrange is expected to be complete in February.

Midlothian Snowsport Centre - The Alpine Coaster continues to see high sales volumes this quarter due to continued promotional work and ensuring the coaster is more assessible to the public via public transport. Sales this quarter have started to shift to a 3 ride ticket rather than 1 ride bringing in additional income this quarter. In addition, gift voucher sales generated over £40k in December and our snowsports café exceeded income targets for the first time.

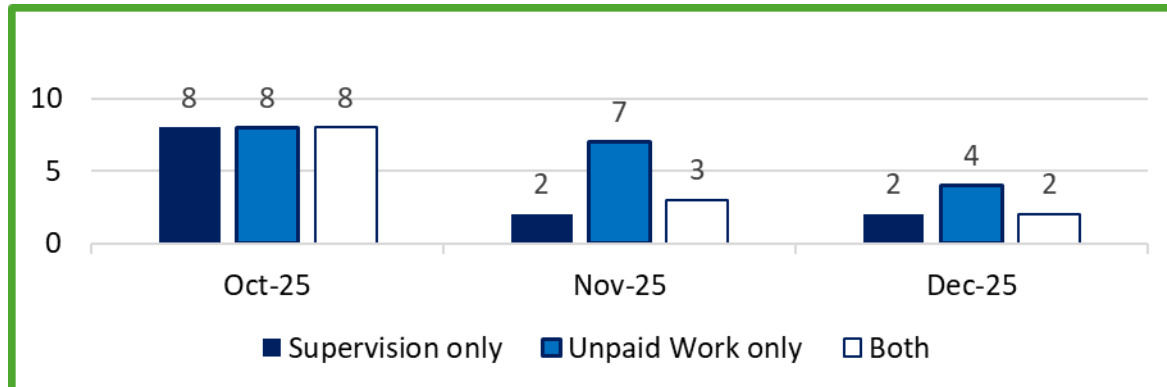
Midlothian will be Safer – Achievements

Justice and Protection Services

Justice Social Work services provide all statutory and associated functions identified in S.27 Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968. The core work includes the preparation of a variety of assessment reports, including Justice Social Work Reports and pre-release reports for serving prisoners involved in the Parole and Pre-release process. The service works with men and women aged 16 and over, subject to Community Payback Orders, Parole, Life and Non-Parole Licences, Extended Sentences and Supervised Released Orders.

During quarter three the Justice Service brought the provision of Diversion from Prosecution in-house to extend the range of early intervention and prevention strategies delivered centrally. This service had previously been provided by colleagues within City of Edinburgh Council.

The main community-based sentence that the service manages is a **Community Payback Order (CPO)**, which can have up to ten requirements. **Supervision** and **Unpaid Work** continue to be the most frequently imposed requirements as shown in image below, and during this reporting period the Courts imposed 44 Community Payback Orders (compared with 46 in the previous quarter).



At the end of quarter three, the Justice Service team were supervising **228 people** who were subject to **265 CPOs**. Justice Social Work staff use a **trauma-informed** and **person-centred approach** to develop effective working **relationships** with people.

On 31 December 2025 **13.6%** (n=31) of people subject to a CPO were in breach of their Order and it had been returned to Court. Of these 31 people, 6 had re-engaged effectively on the Order. In total **89%** (n=228) of people were engaging effectively on their Order.

At the end of service every person is offered the opportunity to complete an exit questionnaire. Current data indicates that 25 CPOs were concluded in the quarter. Twelve self-assessment exit questionnaires were completed by individuals during this quarter, and 100% of respondents reported that they felt listened to.

Substance Use Service (SUS) Treatment Service - The SUS treatment service A11 waiting time, where each individual referred for either substance use or alcohol use is triaged and commenced on treatment if appropriate within 21 days of referral. The service maintained a 100% waiting time

A11 heat target performance. Overall, the services continued to provide direct access to timely and appropriate treatment that best met an individual's needs, psycho-social support and peer led support for those affected by their or another's drugs and/or alcohol use.

Road network - the delivery of carriageway surfacing has significantly increased this quarter. To date, under the combined Capital Works Programme and Residential Streets Programme, 12.72km of carriageway was resurfaced representing 1.81% of our road network resurfaced with **5.94km of carriageway resurfaced** this quarter. The Pothole Pro project equated to 1,741m² of permanent patching, repairing 455 potholes this quarter. The number of potholes permanently repaired this quarter has decreased compared to the same period last year of 584.

The capital **street lighting** programme commenced in June with 331 street lighting columns replaced up to and including quarter 3, meeting target in advance of year end.

Our **Business Regulations Food and Safety team** continue to prioritise proactive interventions at food businesses registered with Midlothian Council with the highest risk for food safety and standards. This quarter, all our highest risk approved premises producing products of animal origin have been inspected during the planned annual cycle from Jan 2025 to December 2025. The majority of these businesses have very high standards and no formal enforcement action was taken at any of these establishments. The team carried out 84 food hygiene/food standards interventions across Midlothian this quarter which is a 33% increase compared to the number of interventions during quarter 3 of last year.

Our **Trading Standards** team received 34 consumer complaints this quarter which is a 33% decrease compared to the same period last year. All consumer complaints were responded to within 5 working days and 32 complaints were fully completed in the quarter. 41 Trading Standards primary inspections took place this quarter, 37 of those premises inspected concerned 'target' premises. This totals 131 inspections of a targeted 186 planned for the year.

Public Health Environmental Protection (PHEP) team received 329 public health service requests this quarter from Midlothian residents and businesses, a slight reduction of 5% compared to the same period last year. 97% of public health complaints received a first response within timescale. A further 74 service requests were received from internal sources, a 12% decrease compared to the same period last year.

Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child – Achievements

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

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

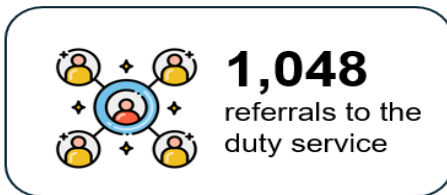
1. Children & Young People's Rights
2. Children & Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing
3. Whole Family Wellbeing
4. Information Sharing and Commissioning

The GIRFEC Board is now progressing with a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and to inform the new Integrated Children's Services Plan 26/29.

The Promise, Corporate Parenting and UNCRC

Quarter three was a busy period for Children's Services for events related to our Corporate Parenting duties. October include care experienced week where staff across the council were asked to make a pledge to our care experienced young people. In October we also celebrated World Children's Day by holding a UNCRC event at Newbattle Abbey College. In November we held our second Corporate Parenting event of the year. This was hosted by our colleagues in the NHS with a focus on mental health and wellbeing.

In December we held the first of our new **Corporate Parenting Board** meetings and together we celebrated our progress and shared new ideas in relation to what our 2026 Corporate Parenting Plan could look like and what our key messages, themes and outcomes should be. All the work is captured on our [Midlothian Promise page](#).



Referral numbers have remained relatively static over the year (1,048 referrals to the duty service this quarter). At first contact, many families present with lower-level or emerging concerns that do not meet statutory thresholds for social work involvement. In these cases, families are supported through universal and targeted services with clear advice and signposting.

However, for those who require statutory intervention we continue to see increased complexity of family circumstances, often with interrelated issues of poverty, neglect, substance use, mental health or violence.

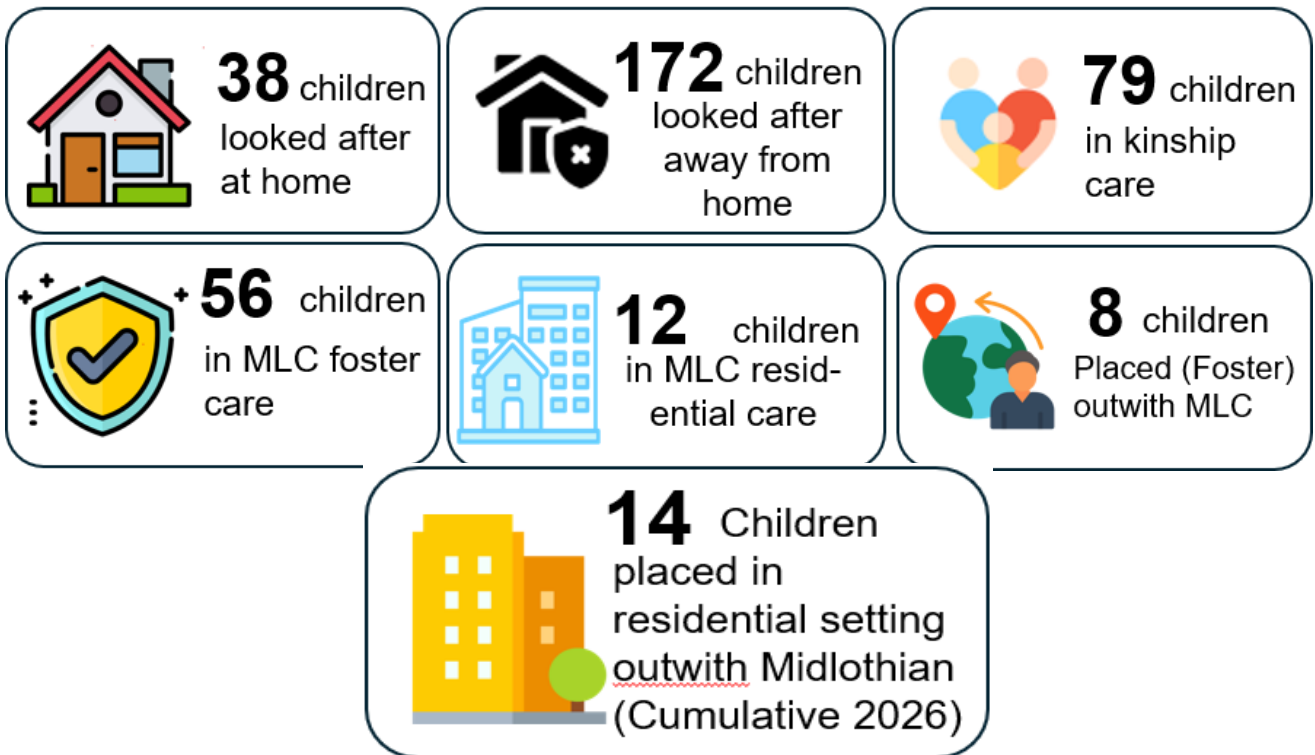
Ensuring families receive the right support at the right time is challenging in the context of increased need and reduced resource. Work is ongoing with partners to refresh Midlothian's local GIRFEC approach to strengthen intervention pathways and ensure timely escalation where risk increases. Our Duty team is planning to test a reset of child-concern referral processes and responses to shift the focus from investigation to meeting unmet needs.

The **Family Wellbeing Service** continues to work with high numbers of children and their families to deliver early-support to families in need in Midlothian. The team is operating a waiting list with the aim that families wait no longer than 12 weeks for support.

Disability Service - We continued to receive high numbers of referrals for children who have received a diagnosis of a disability. Work has been started to develop various areas of the service. The team play a vital role of signposting and upskilling, being part of the larger picture of disability services within Midlothian.

Family Centred Care (FCC) - Following our fostering, adult placement and adoption inspection in September 2025 improvement work has been ongoing.

Child Protection and Looked After away from home population - The number of children on the **Child Protection Register for Q3 is 67** and the number of **Looked After and Accommodated Children for Q3 is 209**. There has been a significant increase in the number of children on the child protection register in Q3. While part of this rise is attributable to large sibling groups being registered together, this does not fully account for the overall trend.



The **Practice Team** continues to support children, young people and their families in a range of circumstances. We have a number of newly qualified social workers who make a positive contribution to the team and are well supported by both their team leaders and more experienced colleagues.

Active Schools Midlothian - 193 activities were delivered this quarter, a decrease of 32 activities offered compared to the same period last year. 2,733 participants attended Active Schools free extra curricular club during the quarter. The number of volunteer hours delivered in the Active Schools Programme was 1,539.

The **Education Service** Improvement Plan is informed by service evaluations and links to the outcomes determined by the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Board. The Q3 period in our schools and ELC settings continued to focus on raising attainment through four key areas - Learning, teaching, assessment & curriculum; Attendance & engagement; Relationships, wellbeing & care and Inclusion, equity & targeted supports and risks.

Throughout 2025/26 education services, schools and settings are focused on a single priority: For academic session 2025/26 the priority remains raising attainment and achievement. Work will be focused around:

- Inclusive Learning, teaching, assessment & curriculum (iLTAC)
- Wellbeing, Support and Partnerships (WSPs)

Workstream 1: Inclusive Learning, teaching, assessment & curriculum (iLTAC)

Aligned to the Service Plan, priorities for 2025/26, key actions, with Q3 updates noted, are:

All learners receive their entitlement to high-quality universal provision (staged intervention levels 1 & 2) which promotes engagement and improved outcomes.

Q3 Update: All schools and ELC settings have had a focus on QI 3.1 this session with quality improvement activity focused on wellbeing, fulfilment of statutory duties and inclusion

and equality

- An effective assistive technology offer tackles digital inequity and reduces barriers to accessing learning.
 - **Q3 Update:** The effective use of digital tools has been mapped to the Inclusive Learning, Teaching and Assessment framework to support staff to make best use of technology in the classroom. Learning Technologists continue to provide bespoke daily support to teachers and pupils.
- A skilled and confident workforce promotes leadership at all levels to deliver excellent learning, teaching & assessment for all learners, making best use of digital technology and in line with professional standards.
 - **Q3 Update:** Consultation with ASN teams and multiagency partners in September 2025 resulted in agreement that provision classes will be allocated five shared devices to best support communication work for young people. All ASGs have a draft curriculum rationale and will work to finalise this by June 2026. Almost all schools are making progress with updating individual school curriculum rationales.

All ELCs, schools and ASGs produce an agreed 3-18 curriculum rationale that engages all learners in appropriate pathways that prepare them for learning, life and work.

ACEL (Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence) Analysis 2025 – Primary

- We are above LGBF (Local Government Benchmarking Framework) averages for the first time since 2021.
- We are above national average for Literacy for the first time, and within 0.1% of Numeracy.
- The above represent significant improvement since 2024

ACEL (Achievement of Curriculum for Excellence) Analysis 2025 – Secondary

- Numeracy continues to be strong overall – above National and LGBF for three sessions in a row.
- Literacy (all measures) is above the LGBF average for the first time. The individual components are above the National figure and overall Literacy is just 0.1% below National.

Workstream 2: Wellbeing, Support and Partnerships (WSPs)

Aligned to the Service Plan, priorities for 2025/26, key actions, with Q3 updates noted, are:

- Culture, relationships and systems ensure that children, young people and staff feel valued and supported to succeed.
 - **Q3 Update:** All schools have a pupil representative body that regularly feed into the local authority pupil representative groups and the Midlothian Youth Cabinet. Parent Council Chairs meetings meet regularly with senior officers to voice their views.
- Collaboration, partnerships and shared learning at ASG level leads to an improved in learner outcomes through a data-informed allocation of resources.
 - **Q3 Update:** Headteachers attend EEG, E&EB and Workstreams to increase participation between school leaders and senior officers in local decisions and to lead change and improvement.

A skilled and confident workforce promotes leadership at all levels to deliver excellent learning, teaching & assessment for all learners, making best use of digital technology and in line with professional standards

Q3 Update: The launch of My Predictable Day and SCERTS to support assessment and intervention provide key professional resources for staff to support Neurodivergent learners.

Design of website in process for Midlothian families with information relating to ND assessment and supports.

Primary Attendance and Exclusions - Primary attendance for the session up to 31 December was 93.88% (National primary average for the past 3 years is 92.29%). Of the 5.24% absence, 3.85% is authorized compared to 4.6% National 3 year average. 2.26% is unauthorized absence compared to 2.5% National 3 year average and 0.01% are exclusion based absence. There have been 44 primary exclusion incidents for the session up to 31 December.

Secondary Attendance and Exclusions - Secondary attendance for the session up to 31 December was 86.52% (National primary average for the past 3 years is 88.20%). Of the 13.48% absence, 7.68% is authorized compared to 6.8% National 3 year average. 5.74% is unauthorized absence compared to 5.0% National 3 year average and 0.06% are exclusion based absence compared to 0.07% National 3 year average. There have been 95 primary exclusion incidents for the session up to 31 December.

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

The vision for this is to reduce the gaps in learning, economic circumstances and poverty.

The new **CLD Partnership Plan 2024 to 2027** aims to build skills for learning life and work through youth work, adult learning, community development and employability in Midlothian.

In Quarter 3 **2,428 people engaged with CLLE services across 260 opportunities. 148 home visits** were carried out to help young people engage with our services and support those not in a positive destination. **187 people accessing our services live in SIMD 20% and 901 in SIMD 40%.**

In Q3 the **No One Left Behind (NOLB)** All Age Employability team have continued to provide support to **255 people**, with **34 new starts** this quarter. The team has continued to support **229 existing parents** including **55 new parents** started in quarter 3.

Youth Work – Q3 1,834 young people accessed CLLE services over **145 opportunities, 129 from SIMD 20% and 644 from 40% SIMD. 266 received one to one** support for positive destinations support.

In Quarter 3 **211 adults** participated in paid courses. **23 community adult learning courses** with **199 participants** in wellbeing, mental health, languages and arts. **71 ESOL learners. 16 literacy learners. 3 digital skills courses** with **21 participants. 66 children and adults** engaged in family activities in Q3.

50th Anniversary Campaign for Adult Learning was promoted across Midlothian to highlight the impact of learning for adults and the positive impacts on their quality of life. **The campaign had local testimonials and consisted of 23 posts on face book, 3 carousel case studies on linked in.** This resulted in **70,313 Facebook engagements** and LinkedIn engagements **21.9%.**

Community Capacity Building - In total, up to and including Q3, **48 community groups** have engaged with CLLE. Support was provided to **23 groups** for Large Grant monitoring and reporting and **15 Community Councils** were supported with governance and operations. Neighbourhood statistical profiles have been produced to support new **Living Well Plans** in five communities as part of our partnership working with Community Planning.

Library services continue to transform and thrive in responding to the needs of our communities. This quarter overall figures for library visits show a **5% increase in total visits** compared to the same period last year and a 10% increase compared to the previous quarter, demonstrating sustained growth and engagement across our library network.

There were **156,228 physical visits** to our libraries during the quarter, representing a **10% increase** compared to the previous quarter and a modest increase compared to the same period last year..

Focus continues on the promotion of our eBook service which plays an important part in our service provision for customers with sight impairment, as well as for those who love to listen to a good book. **50,166 virtual library visits** were made this quarter; a **23% increase** compared to this period last year and a 9% increase compared to the previous quarter. Our online catalogue continues to increase in popularity and provides a flexible, inclusive and efficient way for our customers to engage with library resources.

Library memberships also continue to grow, with **39,657 total memberships** up to the end of quarter 3. This quarter **2,228 events**, clubs, activities and workshops were held across our libraries. Quarter 3 shows a **42% increase** in events held compared with the previous quarter and a **4% increase** compared to the same period last year.

Midlothian will be Greener- Achievements

Midlothian Council is firmly committed to tackling climate change and working towards a net zero future in line with Scottish Government targets. This commitment covers not only the Council's own operations, but also as its role in leading, supporting, and partnering with the wider community to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the impacts of a changing climate.



To ensure our approach remains ambitious and effective, we are currently updating our Climate Change Strategy and its supporting action plan. This refreshed framework will guide the Council and our local authority partners in their shared mission to reach net zero, building a greener, more sustainable, and more resilient Midlothian for future.

Economic Development continues to promote the **Midlothian Business Green Pledge** on social media and in direct conversations with clients to increase education and awareness of climate change and suggest adaptations. The number of businesses signing up to the Pledge continues to rise each quarter with a total of **205 businesses** now committed,

Fleet replacement: as part of our ongoing Fleet replacement programme, we have continued to modernise and decarbonise our vehicle fleet. In total, **14% of the council's fleet** is 'Green', directly supporting our commitment to achieving net carbon zero emissions

Our Bikeability Coordinator won the **Keith Fergus Annual Achievement Award 2025** at Cycling Scotland's Bikeability Scotland Awards in November after successfully overseeing the delivery of Bikeability Scotland Road Cycling Training in every primary school in Midlothian, placing Midlothian among the top-performing local authorities in the country. This achievement reflects a growing commitment to equip the next generation with the skills and confidence needed to travel actively and safely.

38 improvements across our play areas, **parks and green spaces** were completed up to and including this quarter, consisting of landscaping schemes and the installation of benches and street litter bins, as well as deep cleaning projects, which enhance the local environment.

Our **ranger service** continues to deliver activities and school sessions with **74 events** carried out this year so far attracting **1,115 participants**. The **Greenspace Team** have continued to work with our brilliant volunteers across Midlothian, supporting volunteer groups who help manage our countryside sites. Up to and including this quarter, **3,864 volunteer hours** (644 days) were spent in countryside sites. This is a reduction in volunteer hours compared to the same period last year of 5,107 which is largely due to staff availability.

Waste and Recycling - Work continued this quarter on the final stages of the implementation

plan for the roll out of the Twin Stream project which commences in March 2026 and is a major initiative aimed at improving recycling services for residents. This project, which is supported by a £2.2 million grant from Zero Waste Scotland, will introduce an additional green recycling bin for every household.

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

Work continues on the delivery of the Councils Economic Strategy for Inclusive Economic Growth 2025-2030 with supporting delivery plans from 2025-27, setting out how we achieve the objects within the strategy, being shared with Council this quarter. The new strategy aligns with the Scottish Government National Strategy for Economic Transformation and the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region Deal Prosperity Framework. Midlothian's vision is that:

“Midlothian’s wellbeing economy will support our communities, businesses and town centres to thrive, ensuring inclusivity and fair work for all. It will continue to be recognised as home to world leading clusters of science and innovation and be known as an area in which everyone can live, work and do business sustainably to generate wealth and wellbeing for its citizens”

This will be achieved in accordance with four pillars, principles that underpin the strategy's vision: **empowerment, partnership and collaboration, ambition and innovation** sets out the following priorities to achieve our vision:

- Develop Midlothian's proposition within the Edinburgh and South East Scotland City Region
- Enhance skills and employability opportunities in Midlothian, to meet the challenges and opportunities of inclusive Green Growth with entrepreneurship recognised as valuable career pathway
- Maximise the potential of Midlothian's key sectors to support a Just Transition
- Capitalise on the strengths of Midlothian's strategic partners to embed community wealth across all services to realise a wellbeing economy
- Re-imagine our town centres, ensuring they meet Midlothian's economic, social, cultural and environmental needs
- Deliver infrastructure enhancements that will support Midlothian's transition to a Wellbeing Economy

The **Business Gateway Midlothian** Service continues to offer consistent levels of activity across various support services, from pre-start to start-up and existing business growth support. **48 'Planning to Start'** enquiries were received in quarter 3 which is an increase of 9% compared to the same period last year, **6 'Strengthen Your Business'** enquires were also received this quarter. The total number of **new Business start-ups this quarter was 16**, creating a total of **18 jobs** and an estimated contribution of **£220,000 to the Midlothian economy** in their first year of trading.

Community Wealth Building – Procurement. The Economic Development service continues to work collaboratively with the Procurement Service to develop Community Wealth Building activity in relation to the Procurement Pillar. Key areas developing this quarter are:

- Local Supply Chain, the service continues to work with the Procurement service to identify local suppliers to increase local spend.
- Tender opportunities are shared across Business Gateway Midlothian social media channels and with local businesses via Business Gateway Advisers.

Our Locate in Midlothian Business Directory at the end of this quarter has a total of **164 businesses** listed on the directory, 6 of these were added as listings in quarter 3. **95 of the**

businesses on the directory have also registered to support Midlothian Schools to provide work experience, talks and opportunities for learning to pupils.

Locate in Midlothian received **12,372 page views** during quarter 3, a slight increase for the same period last year. Our social media channels target different audiences, and each is performing well in terms of audience growth and interaction with **2,453 'Business Gateway Midlothian' followers** and **2,240 'Locate in Midlothian' followers** across Facebook and LinkedIn and Instagram.

This quarter, 21 Land and Property enquiries were received. 14 are existing Midlothian business and 7 are currently located in Scotland but registered outside of Midlothian.

Tourism, Culture and Heritage - The Midlothian Tourism Strategy for Inclusive Economic Growth 2025 to 2030 has progressed to a final draft and design stage and is progressing to Council for approval with anticipated publication in quarter 4.

Planning application performance: the average timescale to determine local development planning applications continues to remain on target this quarter at 10 weeks, which has reduced compared to the same period last year of 12 weeks. The average timescale to determine major development planning applications is slightly off target this quarter at 55 weeks.

Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty – Achievements

This theme focuses on reducing all aspects of poverty using a data informed approach whilst learning from those with direct experience of poverty. There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services, alongside the increase in energy, food and fuel costs, requiring a comprehensive preventative approach as set out in the Council's Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. Homelessness is not inevitable and can often be prevented.

The Council's Strategic Housing Investment Plan (SHIP) identifies the Council's priorities for investment in new affordable housing in Midlothian over a 5 year period, helping to meet growing demand for housing across Midlothian.

There were **6,514 active housing applicants** placed on the Common Housing Register at the end of this quarter, an increase compared to the same period last year of 5,971. **155 lets** have been made this quarter, averaging 51 lets per month. The lets have increased this month due to the handover of more new builds made available for let this quarter. **58.1% of lets were made to homeless list applicants** and **41.9% to general needs list applicants**. 38 lets were made to new builds and 1 to open market purchases during quarter 3. Re-let times to permanent accommodation properties increased to **47 days** to re-let this quarter compared to 42 at the end of quarter 21.

Homelessness There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services as a result of a rise in the number of people presenting as homeless which is driven largely by the cost of living crisis and lack of affordable housing. The total number of households in temporary accommodation at the end of quarter 3 was 318, a decrease of 16% compared to the same period last year of 378. The number of temporary accommodation households that have been flipped to permanent accommodation this quarter was 57, this is an increase from 24 at quarter 2. Tenants sustaining permanent accommodation continues to be high this quarter with **97.22% of homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year**, an increase from 91.7% during quarter 2.

The percentage of **Secondary School meal uptake this quarter was 34.7%** which is a decrease from 36.06% compared to quarter 2. The percentage of **Primary School meal uptake for this quarter is 59.84%** and increased compared to a 57.07% uptake in quarter 2. Primary school meal uptake continues to sit well above the Scottish Government average of 50.08%. The percentage of school meal **food waste** continues to remain low this quarter at

2.98% from 4.24% for the same period last year.

Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) – 91.38% of our total Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF) budget was allocated up to quarter 3. This quarter 1,589 Crisis Grants and 221 Community Care Grants were received. Requests for crisis funding continue to remain consistently high with a 2% increase in applications received over quarters 1 to 3 compared to the same periods last year and demonstrates the continued significant financial challenges faced by our communities.

1,920 customers received help and support via Housing Benefits this quarter with a gradual reduction each quarter from 2,692 during quarter 3 of last year.

The percentage of current housing **rent arrears sits at 15.93%** at the end of quarter 3 and is consistent with figures from the same period last year at 15.47%. In year **Council Tax collected year to date is 75.4%**, showing a similar rate of collection compared to the same time last year of 77.5%.

October saw the launch of **Challenge Poverty Week** and the re-launch of our four **Warm and Well-coming Hubs**. Support was provided to Midlothian Food Pantry Network through Midlothian Council staff donations (£210 of cash donations and multiple crates of food) and Challenge Poverty Week awareness activities were delivered by CLLE. PES partnered with IKEA Wish Tree to provide Christmas gifts for families.

External Funding - **£17,000 PBIF secured** for Woodburn Hub refurbishment and CLLE as been a key lead in implementing the **£70,000 Fairer Futures** funding to create a community diners delivery network.

Challenges and Risks

Midlothian Council continues to face a challenging environment, with financial, demographic, and economic pressures shaping how services are delivered and funded.

Financial constraints: rising service delivery costs and uncertainty over future funding from the Scottish Government are placing significant strain on the council's budget. Cost and income projections for future years are embedded in the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy which is supported by the Transformation Blueprint containing a range of transformation themes to drive towards a position of financial sustainability. Officers continue to work closely with the Business Transformation Steering Group to respond to the challenges.

Economic pressures: the ongoing cost of living crisis is affecting residents and businesses, increasing the need for council funded support. Inflationary pressures on goods, services, and energy are also significantly increasing the cost of delivering council services.

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

Growing service demands: Midlothian's sustained population growth and ageing demographic continues to drive an increase in demand for education, social care, housing and transport infrastructure. The 2022 Census results highlight that Midlothian remains the fastest growing local authority in Scotland with an increase of 16.1%. The 2011 census data lists Midlothian as having a population of 83,187 which has risen to 96,600 in the 2022 census data. The level of growth is 2.3% higher than our previous calculation and is now 13.4% higher than the Scottish average of 2.7%. In terms of households, Midlothian saw the highest percentage increase at 17.2% since the 2011 census. Population density in Midlothian is 273.1 residents per square kilometre compared to the Scottish average of 69.8.

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

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

- Data Driven Innovation: £751 million
- Integrated Regional Employability and Skills: £25 million
- Transport: £156 million
- Culture: £45 million
- Housing: £313 million

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

In response to all these pressures, a range of reprioritisation activity continues, with an Estates & Asset Management Strategy approved by Council in October 2025 which will enable investment and disposal of assets under Best Value for the Council.

Workforce Challenges: There are workforce challenges across a range of services including health and social care, social work and regulatory services due to on-going pressures in the wider workforce availability which impacts on recruitment.

The **Council's Strategic Risk Profile** is reviewed on a retrospective basis and presented to Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. This process provides regular oversight of the most significant threats to the Council's objectives and operations. At present, the highest priority risks identified relate to financial sustainability, climate change and the successful delivery of the Council's transformations programme.

Pentana Performance Dashboard – Q3 25/26

Off target	On target	Data only	No data
5	3	9	2

Off target indicators:

PI Off Target						
Code & Title	Gauge	Value	Target	Last Update	History	
● CORP8 Corporate Indicator - Percentage of invoices sampled and paid within 30 day...		94.1%	95.0%	Q3 2025/26		
● BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		71.05%	95%	Q3 2025/26		
● BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		66.67%	95%	Q3 2025/26		
● BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		25.97%	95%	Q3 2025/26		
● MC.SPSO.04.3 Average time in working days for a full response for escalated compl...		224.965	20	Q3 2025/26		

← 1 of 1 →