



Strategy 2024 – 27: Progress Report September 2024 – September 2025

Youth Work • Adult Learning • Volunteering • Community Development • Employability

Contents

Background and Introduction	2
Community Planning Structure	3
How are we doing?	4
Priority Outcome 1 Progress - Sustaining and expanding the number and range of local people engaging in CLD activities by creating a stronger identity for CLD. (Based on the CLD National Review Recommendation 2024)	5
Priority Outcome 2 Progress - CLD and Partners' Contribution to Reducing Poverty (Based on the CLD National review recommendation for the potential for CLD activity to reduce poverty)	8
Priority Outcome 3 Progress- CLD and Partners' Contribution to Improving Social Interaction, Health and Wellbeing (Based on the CLD National review recommendation for the potential for CLD activity to provide life changing and sometime lifesaving impacts)	11
Priority Outcome 4 Progress - CLD and Partners' Contribution – Improving Pathways for Learning, Personal Development and Employment (CLD building skills for learning, life and work)	13
Priority Outcome 5 Progress - CLD and Partners' Contribution –Living Well in Communities, including digital resilience	16
Priority Outcome 6 Progress- CLD and Partners' Contribution to Climate change, sustainable learning and outdoor spaces	19
Priority Outcome 7 Progress - CLD and Partners' - Enhancing Our Workforce and Volunteer Skills	21
Unmet needs, opportunities and challenges going forward	23



**a great green
place to grow**

Background and Introduction

Local authorities in Scotland are required to produce a Community Learning and Development (CLD) plan every three years due to statutory duties outlined in The Requirements for Community Learning and Development (Scotland) Regulations 2013. Here is a summary of why this is necessary:

1. Legal Obligation

Under the 2013 Regulations, local authorities must:

- Assess the needs for CLD in their area.
- Consult with communities and partners to identify priorities.
- Secure the delivery of CLD in collaboration with relevant stakeholders.
- Publish a CLD plan every three years that outlines how these needs will be met.

2. Policy Alignment

The requirement supports broader Scottish Government policies, including:

- Community empowerment
- Lifelong learning
- Improving life chances
- Reducing inequalities. These plans are expected to reflect the Strategic Guidance for Community Planning Partnerships (2012), which emphasises the importance of CLD in building stronger, more resilient communities.

3. Local Accountability and Improvement

CLD plans are scrutinised through processes like His Majesty's Inspectorate for Education (HMIE) Inspections (Midlothian CLD Inspection Report) and Shared Risk Assessment (SRA) coordinated by Audit Scotland. This ensures:

- Transparency in how CLD needs are addressed.
- Accountability to local communities and learners.
- Continuous improvement in service delivery.
- Local scrutiny through our Midlothian Community Planning Partnership

4. Support for Public Service Reform

The Scottish Government views CLD as a key contributor to:

- Preventative approaches in public services.
- Better partnership working at local levels.
- Financial sustainability of services in times of constrained budgets.

This document sets out progress made in the first year of the Midlothian Community Learning and Development Partnership Plan September 2024 to 2025. It highlights successes, challenges, unmet need and outcomes and actions that will need more focused attention between September 2025 and September 2026

Community Planning Structure



Community Planning Partnership Board

Citizens Panel and Direct Experience Panel

Community Planning Partnership Working Group

Midlothian will be Healthier



Midlothian will be Safer



Midlothian will Get it Right for Every Child



Midlothian will strengthen its Community Learning and Development Partnership Plus



Midlothian will be Greener



Midlothian will have a Wellbeing Economy and be Better Connected



Midlothian will Work Towards Reducing Poverty



Trauma Informed Practice Steering Group



Resettlement Steering Group



Equally Safe Steering Group



How are we doing?

The report shows how we are achieving our actions in each area. We have included progress towards our targets, feedback from people who have used our services and case studies.

The table below indicates areas which are on target, and those that have not been met in year one (September 2024 to Sept 2025). None are off target.

Priority	Green	Orange	Red	Total
Priority 1 - Sustaining and expanding the number and range of local people engaging in CLD activities by creating a stronger identity for CLD	4	1	0	5
Priority Outcome 2 Progress - CLD and Partners' Contribution to Reducing Poverty (Based on the CLD National review recommendation for the potential for CLD activity to reduce poverty)	4	1	0	5
Priority Outcome 3 Progress- CLD and Partners' Contribution to Improving Social Interaction, Health and Wellbeing (Based on the CLD National review recommendation for the potential for CLD activity to provide life changing and sometime lifesaving impacts)	5	0	0	5
Priority Outcome 4 Progress - CLD and Partners' Contribution – Improving Pathways for Learning, Personal Development and Employment (CLD building skills for learning, life and work)	2	4	0	6
Priority Outcome 5 Progress - CLD and Partners' Contribution –Living Well in Communities, including digital resilience	2	4	0	6
Priority Outcome 6 Progress- CLD and Partners' Contribution to Climate change, sustainable learning and outdoor spaces	4	1	0	5
Priority Outcome 7 Progress - CLD and Partners' - Enhancing Our Workforce and Volunteer Skills	2	0	0	2
Total	23	11	0	34

Very good progress has been made working in partnership to implement the Community Learning and Development Plan.

- 23 of our actions are on target out of 34 which is 67.6% in year one of the Partnership CLD Plan;
- 11 of our actions are amber and require further work over the next two years;
- None are red or off target.

From September 2025 – September 2026, we will work as a partnership to ensure the following areas are developed further:

- A Consultation on priorities for the new CLD Plan for September 2027 to September 2030, as part of the Single Midlothian Plan Consultation for 2027 to 2030.

- Priority Outcomes 4 and 5 which focus on learning pathways, living well plans and digital resilience require further focused attention in year 2 of the plan Sept 2025 to 2026.

Priority Outcome 1 - Sustaining and expanding the number and range of local people engaging in CLD activities by creating a stronger identity for CLD.

Case study: Transform

When IH joined the project, she was quiet, nervous, and unsure of herself. Social situations often made her anxious, and she found it difficult to engage with others. With gentle encouragement, IH was introduced to the team and gradually began to take part in group activities, starting with simple tasks like watering plants and helping at tea breaks.

As the weeks went on her confidence began to grow. She discovered a love for painting and took great pride in transforming our fences and trellises, painting garden signs – like the lovely ones in our tea garden. Her reliability and enthusiasm have become an asset to the whole team; her energy and enthusiasm are like a ripple in a pond! Recently she started supporting newer volunteers, making them feel welcome and telling them about the project.

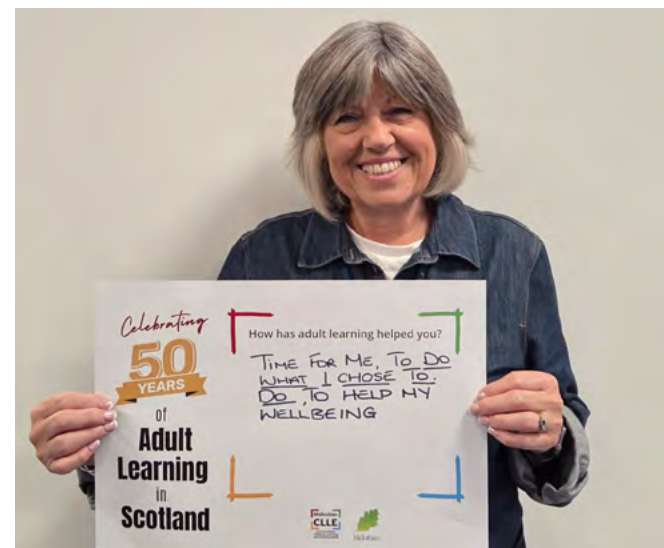
Her progress has extended beyond the garden gates. In the summer she was invited to act as a young judge on the Saltire Awards Panel, in recognition of her growing confidence and leadership. IH also took part in our Event Volunteers Programme, learning customer service skills along with planning and event management, she also made lots of new friends on the programme.

Forming new friendships through volunteering has really helped IH broaden her horizons and boost her self-esteem. Recently she completed a two-week NHS placement, taking part in a range of activities and exploring potential career paths. IH is a bright young woman who continues to develop her skills and self-belief. She now feels ready to take the next step and is actively seeking employment, this is testament to how far she has come since those early anxious days when she first joined us in the community garden.

“I have made so many friends and feel so much happier. People in the garden are very understanding and kind.” IH

“The biggest change is her confidence, she loves the garden and looks forward to coming every week, she has made new friends it’s all made a huge difference.” KF, IH’s Gran

Making change happen for young people



Priority Outcome 1 - Sustain and expand the number and range of local people engaging in CLD activities by creating a stronger identity for CLD (based on the CLD National Review Recommendation 2024)

Area	Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Create a clear identify for CLD work including employability	Rename the MIEOC thematic Community Planning Partnership (CPP) group to provide CLD activities through partnership working (CLD Partnership Plus) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication Plan produced 	The MIEOC group has been renamed and launched with new partners providing a focus for CLD partnership activity and communications plan produced.	On Target
CLLE will sustain and expand levels of engagement with local people	CLLE will actively work in partnership to promote activities and reach new learners and community groups. Engagements 6,000 - Year one 6,251 Home Visits 550 – Year one 1,296 Opportunities offered 500 - Year One 604 Learners from 20% SIMD 380 - Year One 372 Learners from 40% SIMD 2,000 - Year One 2089 Qualifications achieved 2,500 - Year One 2,174 Satisfaction Levels 98% - Year One 99% Key Skills Secured 90% - Year One 97% One to One Support 700 – Year One 645 Community Groups engaged with 55 – Year One 51 Participants in paid for adult learning 500+ - Year One 297 Young people engaged 3,300 - Year One 3,982 (867 from street work)	CLLE has increased engagements overall by 251. Some engagements with adults have decreased whilst some aspects of work with young people have increased. New partnership activities created: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hawthornden Family Learning • Family Learning with Active Schools • Promotion to third sector through TSI briefings • Forest Learning Newbattle Abbey College 	Further work required in next 2 years
Reflect better the breadth, quality, volume, and impact of CLD work taking place in Midlothian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Twelve national key performance indicators have partnership contributions secured • Review individual learning plans • Create partnership self-evaluation 	Joint evaluation and tracking of volunteering as a pilot CLLE reviewed individual and group learning plan templates Statutory agencies sponsoring volunteer awards.	On Target

Area	Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Young People are involved, supported and build skills for learning, life and work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CLLE will engage with 3,300 (24/25 and sustain for three years) young people through youth work and employability • Guaranteed youth work universal offer each week in each school cluster consisting of transitional youth club, open youth club, CLLE D of • One bespoke youth work offer in each cluster to prioritised young people e.g. boys to men, glitter group, dungeons and dragons, art/cooking groups, care experienced and young carers. • Ensure a flexible NOLB offer to young people to secure positive destinations • Youth participation is supported by CLLE through the youth platform and MYP/SYP • Participation measure baseline 94.0% (progressive target (94.5% (24 & 25), (95% (26 & 27) • 12/15 young people supported per year • One youth influence event supported per year for example Community Planning Hackathon Annual youth work survey to influence the development of the youth work offer 	<p>3,982 young people have been engaged by CLLE through youth work and employability support.</p> <p>CLLE youth work offers in place in each cluster, 3 bespoke/ targeted youth groups running weekly. Plans underway to introduce 2 hour, twice weekly meetings for care experienced groups.</p> <p>CLLE secured funding for extended transition programme for P7 to S1 in each cluster in 2025/26.</p> <p>MYP/SYP elected postholders in place and supported Pupil Leadership/Youth Council Established by Education generated by an Elected Member Motion.</p> <p>A Youth Hackathon planned for 2026 to inform next Single Midlothian Plan.</p>	On Target
Young People are involved, supported and build skills for learning, life, and work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Volunteering is supported through the Transform Project and associated volunteering sessions. 	60 young people engaged in Transform volunteering with 80 volunteering sessions delivered.	On Target

Priority Outcome 2 - CLD and Partners' Contribution to Reducing Poverty (Based on the CLD National review recommendation for the potential for CLD activity to reduce poverty)

Case study

Midlothian Surestart, in partnership with Midlothian Council, secured funding from the Child Poverty Accelerator Fund (Jan 2024–Mar 2025) to train and support community members as peer researchers. This ethnographic initiative explored the lived experiences of families affected by child poverty in Midlothian, aiming to influence local and national policy through community-led insights.

The project gathered rich qualitative data from priority groups via a co-designed peer research model involving thirteen trained parents with lived experience. Over the project, sixty-two in-depth stories were collected, representing diverse demographics including lone parents, families with disabilities, immigrants, and those in in-work poverty.

An abridged final report, *Our Voices*, provides robust insights into root causes and impacts of child poverty, with recommendations for national and local action. Findings were shared with decision-makers throughout, and an action plan is being taken forward by the Child Poverty Working Group. Early changes include sharing qualitative experiences with newly qualified teachers.

After funding ended in March 2025, Midlothian Council's CLLE department continued supporting the researchers to complete Adult Achievement Awards, undertake an online

Understanding Poverty course (University of York), and participate in an 8-week Making a Difference programme to develop critical thinking, engage with decision-makers, prioritise actions, and explore lived experience panel models.



Co Authored: Tim Porteus with
Alan Copland, Bella Tanzer, Claire Williams, Donna Burton, Heather Brown, Johanna Fraser, John Bell, Josephine Isles, Lorna Paterson, Monika Piotrowska, Roman Tanzer, Tamara McDouall and Tatjana Smulova.

APRIL 2025

Our Stories: Voices of Midlothian Families
A PEER RESEARCH PROJECT Abridged Final Report



**Priority Outcome 2 - CLD and Partners' Contribution to Reducing Poverty
(Based on the CLD National review recommendation for the potential for
CLD activity to reduce poverty)**

Area	Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Reduce child poverty through partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Midlothian Council, CLLE and Public Health NHS Lothian produce the child poverty action plan annually and report impact. • Pilot a shared approach to food and pantries in Midlothian with central storage 	<p>The 2024-25 Local Child Poverty Action Report will be presented for sign off November 2025. Most actions reported over this time have successfully targeted drivers of child poverty.</p> <p>3 actions complete and 19 in progress. Focus remains on data, lived experience and equitable access to income maximisation.</p> <p>Midlothian input into the creation of a national child poverty data set, due to be released shortly by PHS. This will help establish priority actions and monitor impact.</p> <p>Midlothian Council and NHS Lothian have provided feedback to PHS on the data dashboard. The Community Planning Strategic Welfare Rights Group had its first meeting in June 2025, and the Welfare Rights Forum had its first meeting in April 2025 to support the equitable access to income max.</p> <p>Midlothian Pantry Network now established and funded by COLT. 6 member pantries signed up, terms of reference established, shared food drives supported by volunteers across the network, collaborative buying trial underway and volunteer celebration event hosted. "Bulk purchasing has significantly reduced costs, and surplus food can now be distributed efficiently across multiple sites.</p>	On Target

Priority Outcome 2 - CLD and Partners' Contribution to Reducing Poverty (Based on the CLD National review recommendation for the potential for CLD activity to reduce poverty)

Area	Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Sustain an accessible cash first support for local people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with the Cost-of-Living Task force to secure funding and support trusted partners to operate cash first in local communities. 	<p>Trusted Partners continue to provide cash first supports to local residents whilst ensuring they are signposted to relevant support agencies</p> <p>Trusted partners now include 6 schools</p> <p>877 allocations of cash first have been made to support local people totaling £127,551 (average payment £145)</p>	On Target
Volunteers have opportunities to volunteer in projects to reduce poverty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer Midlothian promotes anti-poverty volunteering opportunities 	5 organisations have published volunteering opportunities with a specific anti-poverty work theme	On Target
Young people have access to free food	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore with Food Facts Friends evening access for young people to the pantry and associated youth activities, with the right supports available 	Young people have access to free food at all CLLE activities with food provided free to DoE participants. Evening access with Food Facts Friends and other partners is being explored	Further work required in next 2 years
Poverty approaches are better informed and influenced by lived experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Surestart, Midlothian Council and other CPP partners deliver the Child Poverty Peer Research Project and set milestones 	<p>13 community members were trained in ethnographic research approaches and carried out over 60 interviews to inform reports. They are now working with CLLE on a learning programme to develop critical thinking skills and prioritise actions.</p> <p>The publication of the 'Our Stories: Voices of Midlothian Families' Final Report Abridged-report-final.pdf</p> <p>CLLE are continuing to support the lived experience researchers through a learning programme to develop critical thinking skills and prioritise actions from the research report.</p>	On Target

Priority Outcome 3 - CLD and Partners' Contribution to Improving Social Interaction, Health and Wellbeing

Case study

The green health prescribing group is a network of 26 partners, including providers of activities and prescribers. They have worked on a project with NHS Lothian Charity and Health in Mind to improve the green health prescriptions pages on Midspace and ensure consistency across NHS Lothian. The group tested the new pages [Mid space | Green Social Prescriptions and provided regular updates to ensure the information stays up to date with latest events, activities and case studies. This space has been promoted at various events throughout the year and during National Green Health Week.

The Green Health Group has engaged with researchers from Edinburgh University looking at 'developing and pilot testing a primary care-based toolkit to improve engagement with green health prescribing of older people living in deprived areas.' A toolkit has been developed called 'Deep Green' www.deepgreen.scot and this is now being promoted with Primary Care Team.

Two volunteer projects were delivered in 2024–25 through the No One Left Behind (NOLB) funded initiative. Further funding is currently being sought to continue this work. The conservation and volunteering project (Wildlife and Woodland Conservation) was highly successful, with the work shortlisted for a Nature of Scotland Award.

Green Health Prescribing



Walking



Gardening



Outdoor



Nature

Priority Outcome 3 - CLD and Partners' Contribution to Improving Social Interaction, Health and Wellbeing

Area	National Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Adults participating in CLD have improved health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLLE will deliver 5 courses for adults per year relating to health and wellbeing 	27 CLLC health related projects have taken place, 165 attendees 7 dedicated health courses delivered including full Mental Health and Wellbeing Award consisting of 3 units, Level 4 Mental Health and Coping Strategies, Mental Health first aid award, healthy air fryer cooking, wellbeing cookery	On Target
Families participating in CLD have improved health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CLLE will sustain the number of family learning participants and help improve health and wellbeing knowledge 	CLLE has delivered 22 family learning projects, with 218 attendees Four 'Healthy Cooking on a Budget' courses offered to families in Aim High and Mayfield Pavillion with 514 participants. 2 family cooking groups at Hawthornden PS and 2 family Active Schools programmes run in Lasswade cluster area.	On Target
ESOL learners participating in CLD have improved health, wellbeing and feel better connected to the community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain and develop opportunities for ESOL speakers to connect with the local community 	MCA supported 17 learners through Conversation Café CLLE has operated 24 ESOL Projects with 92 learners.	On Target
Volunteering supports social connections, health and wellbeing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteer Midlothian will promote volunteering to have a positive impact and help support connections, health and wellbeing in the community 	5 promotional stalls and 2 presentations/talks took place with over 400 contacts. 63 volunteers registered to volunteer with aim of improving their health and wellbeing. Health, wellbeing and better connected are anticipated not individually tracked.	On Target
Deliver Better me (whole systems approach diabetes) and access to healthier foods, access to money, increase opportunities for physical activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to healthier foods, access to money, increase opportunities for physical activity 	Better Me funded 11 projects with 1,510 people involved. 327 were offered a pantry shop at MAEDT, 116 young people took part in cookery class, 100% of Council buildings have Breastfeeding Welcome accreditation, Pension Credit uptake by 22 clients with financial gain of £85,000. This project has now ended but whole systems model is being developed widely.	On Target

Priority Outcome 4 - CLD and Partners' Contribution – Improving Pathways for Learning, Personal Development and Employment (CLD building skills for learning, life and work)

Case study

A father from Afghanistan, now living in Midlothian, joined CLLE Parental Employability Support Services facing multiple barriers to work. Despite strong English skills, they had limited experience, significant caring responsibilities, including a child with a disability, and no clear route into sustainable employment. His long-term goal was ambitious: gain qualifications in a specialist trade and become self employed.

After assessment, gas engineering emerged as the ideal pathway - offering flexibility, strong earning potential, and a clear route to self-employment. CLLE sourced an accredited course and, with support from Business Gateway, helped him secure funding that fully covered training and transport costs. Ongoing guidance ensured he stayed motivated and confident throughout. He completed the course, passed all exams, and qualified as a Gas Engineer. He has since launched his own business, achieving financial stability while maintaining the flexibility he needs for his family circumstances. His confidence, independence, and outlook have been transformed.

Personal Statement:

“The CLLE Parental Employability Support Service has changed my life. With their help, I gained the qualifications I needed and started my own business... Without this support, I would never have achieved my dream.”



Are you a **PARENT** who is unemployed or experiencing in-work poverty?

Are you looking for support to address barriers to employment
and / or upskill while in work?



Priority Outcome 4 – Improving pathways for Learning Personal Development and Employability

Area	National Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
A family learning aligned offer across Midlothian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a Midlothian joint family learning pathway 	A Family Learning Partnership Group has been established involving a wide range of partners to ensure we provide opportunities that meet the needs of local families. CLLE is piloting partnership with one local primary school working closely with Home School Practitioners, Early Years and Children and Families staff to support family wellbeing through parenting courses, family craft and cooking sessions.	On Target
An expanded SQA qualifications offer by the CLD sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review pathways for key thematic learning including distance learning • Explore music, climate change/ green job qualifications being available in the community 	<p>An increase in the number and range of qualifications offered as part of CLLE paid adult learning programme including National 4 and 5 in sciences and Modern Studies as well as English, Maths and Care. New PDA in Sociology piloted. Some courses did not go ahead due to numbers enrolled</p> <p>Care Pathway in place with qualifications offered at levels 4 and 5 and delivered annually, mainly online. Currently developing possible entry level qualifications and training with schools for those wishing to become learning assistants.</p> <p>Further work underway on CLD Qualifications.</p>	Further work required in next 2 years
Volunteering opportunities sustained or expand the range	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-work with the Storehouse Penicuik to support vulnerable adults seeking volunteering or work experience relating to retail, food, hospitality, stock control, social media marketing. • Co-work with Food Fact Friends to support volunteer placements. 	<p>Penicuik Storehouse – supporting 74 volunteers including 21 ASN volunteers and 6 DoE young people.</p> <p>58 registered with Volunteer Mid to help them enhance their employability. MCA met with a member of FFF staff to discuss supporting and developing volunteers. MCA delivered 'PVG – Don't Panic!!' (June 25) which aims to encourage Volunteer Involving Organisations to be more open-minded in their approach to engaging volunteers who have criminal convictions. There were 7 attendees.</p>	Further work required in next 2 years

Priority Outcome 4 – Improving pathways for Learning Personal Development and Employability

Area	National Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Local people of all ages are supported to secure employment or next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NOLB funded programmes deliver effective support through keyworker support, qualifications and job and training outcomes • Collaborate with Midlothian Council Sport and Leisure to grow placement opportunities and pathways to employment • Collaborate with Midlothian Councils Sports & Leisure to create S&L Modern Apprenticeships 	<p>PESF worked with 332 clients with 104 progressing into employment/self-employment, 11 into FE/HE and 20 into paid work placements. 374 qualifications secured.</p> <p>NOLB All Age Employability worked with 362 clients with 206 new starts, 46 jobs and 10 Foundation Apprenticeships (FA's) achieved, 49 moved into college, 13 into volunteering and 61 qualifications gained overall.</p>	Further work required in next 2 years
Improve employability outcomes for Midlothian residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify opportunities to establish collaboration with NHS Lothian/Health and Social Care (HSC) which results in more pathways for local people to enter Health and Social Care 	<p>3 paid work placements with NHS Lothian in 2024/25 resulted in 3 people securing sustainable employment. 3 new placements in operation from September 2025.</p>	Further work required in next 2 years
Increase access to qualifications and support pathways to lifelong learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train two local community partners to deliver Adult Achievement Awards, expanding qualification delivery in local settings 	<p>Two local partners trained in Forest Schools (one from CLD and one from a local business). Delivery of Adult Achievement Awards began during 2024–25, with 18 learners achieving an Award through these new partners. Both partners plan to continue delivery in 2025–26.</p> <p>NAC trained 2 local partners (CLLE and a local business) to deliver Adult Achievement Awards with 18 learners achieving this.</p>	On Target

Priority Outcome 5 - Living Well in Communities, including Digital Resilience

Case study – Living Well in Central Dalkeith and Woodburn

As a project town the Living Well in Central Dalkeith and Woodburn working group were supported through the Improvement Service's Shaping Places for Wellbeing programme. We undertook a Place and Wellbeing Assessment of the previous neighbourhood plan to build on its strengths and focussed the refreshed plan on the 5 wellbeing outcomes. The Living Well in Central Dalkeith plan sets out actions we will do together to secure improvements in Central Dalkeith and Woodburn. It covers areas like services, access to affordable food, employment, our environment, making it easier to get about and to support people's health, sense of wellbeing and safety.

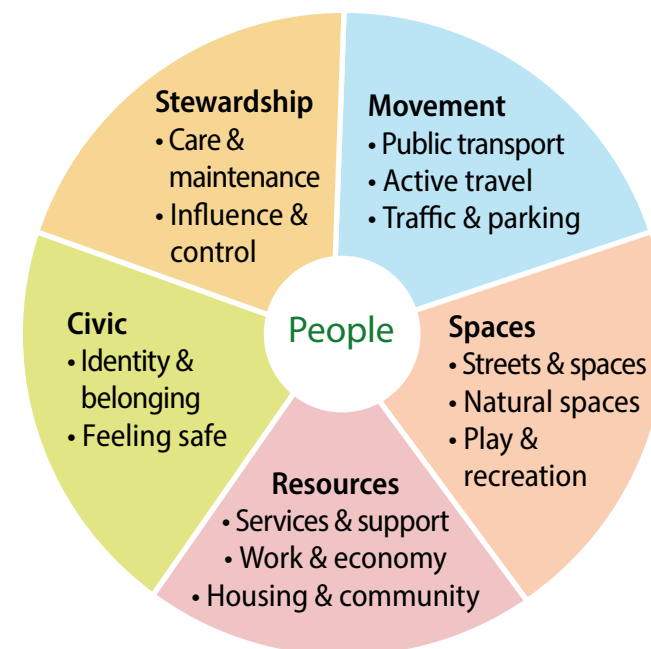
Under the "Community Asset mapping and communicating what is happening in Dalkeith and Woodburn" theme there is an action to "Carry out a feasibility study to identify needs for future improved facility on the Woodburn Community Hub building site and use the results of the study to apply for funding to take the project to the next stage". Having this evidenced within the plan allowed CLLE, Midlothian Council to secure funding from the UKSPF to undertake a Stage 1 and 2 feasibility study using feedback from current and prospective users. This evidence then formed part of an application to the RCGF for capital funding which unfortunately did not make it through to the next stage but remains a priority for the working group.



The MARC Building in Woodburn has been formally renamed Woodburn Community Hub in a special ribbon cutting ceremony. The change in name marks a significant step in providing the council-owned building an identity that resonates with the local community. More here: <https://ow.ly/lv8V50TQ1ug>

Place and wellbeing outcomes

The principles of equality, net-zero emissions and sustainability underpin all of these themes, and all themes should be embedded in policy and action.



Priority Outcome 5 - Living Well in Communities, including Digital Resilience

Area	National Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Digital opportunities offered to meet local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Partners will be responsible for delivery of group learning and 1:1 support across Midlothian. This will range from basic digital skills through to a range of digital qualifications Digital learning opportunities will include topics such as avoiding scams and staying safe online, good passwords, cloud storage, using smart home technology, engaging with services and businesses online Library services will provide knowledge, space and technology to support users in the community 	<p>MCA worked with over 200 people to increase digital skills across 7 groups with some one-to-one support. This included 18 home visits, 12 device loans and 20 volunteers.</p> <p>CLLE has 51 learners engaged in specific digital skills programmes including community based digital skills, PC Passport, and an ESOL focused digital skills programme. CLLE also delivered specific programmes around staying safe online to target groups including foster carers and parents.</p> <p>We are using google classroom for the delivery of a range of courses and qualifications online and supporting in person classes with google classroom as a way for participants to access their course materials.</p> <p>CLLE and libraries are jointly producing a set of self-directed resources and available devices for those wanting to develop their digital skills who are unable to attend community or online classes.</p>	On Target
Effective partnership working is sustained	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Compact between the third sector and Midlothian council 	A draft updated Compact has been produced after consultation.	Further work required in next 2 years
Priority local communities are supported to improve community outcomes through locality planning – Living Well Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the implementation of the Central Dalkeith and Woodburn Living Well Locality Plan and support 5 communities to progress Living Well plans 	Woodburn Plan has been produced and most of the actions have progressed apart from securing funding for the Woodburn Hub.	Further work required in next 2 years
Communities and third sector organisations remain active and involved in Midlothian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity building support provided by CLLE and TSi CLLE to support Federation of Community Councils and subgroups 	<p>53 organisations supported by CLLE with 216 separate interactions. MCA supported thirty-four charities, community groups and social enterprises 1-2-1. Advice/support offered with governance, funding, signposting, policy development, consultation/engagement, and large grant link officers.</p> <p>Co-produced New Scheme for Establishment of Community Councils (CC's), supporting them to review constitutions and register with Information Commissioner to comply with Scheme.</p> <p>Co-prioritisation with MTrap and Roads Capital Works influencing service priorities.</p>	On Target

Area	National Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Reduction in ASB calls to Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers are targeting Youth ASB within Midlothian (including on buses). Police are working in partnership with CLLE, CAP, SW, LRT and Housing Associations to divert youths from ASB within the area. Officers are conducting high visibility and plain clothes patrols in the area and patrolling on foot, pedal cycle, quad bikes and vehicles 	<p>In this period there were 126 youth incidents across Midlothian attended by the Community Action Team. Parental advisory letters issued to youths involved in ASB, and engagement held within education and with parents where required.</p> <p>Carrying out joint visits with SW with youths charged for ASB.</p> <p>Regular joint agency meetings are held with a partnership approach to identify Youth Hot Spots, attend in the area and implement diversionary activities.</p> <p>Crime Prevention Surveys carried out in hot spot areas and joint visits with local Councillors provide advice and suggestions for environmental improvements.</p> <p>Hot spot areas include Dalkeith town center where there was the highest record of 40 ASB related incidents reported in October 2024. These predominantly involve young people causing a general nuisance.</p>	Further work required in next 2 years
Safer Roads and Public areas. Reduction in ASB off-road bike calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officers are targeting off-road bike ASB within Midlothian. 	<p>Legislation and advice re use of Off-Road Bikes posted on social media.</p> <p>Sharing with partners and members of the public what information is required to identify bikes and riders to allow progression of enquiries to bike seizures and charges.</p>	Further work required in next 2 years

Priority Outcome 6 - CLD and Partners' Contribution to Climate Change, Sustainable Learning and Outdoor Spaces

Case Study – Growing Skills and Confidence through Wildlife and Woodland Conservation

The Wildlife and Woodland Conservation Skills project at Newbattle Abbey College gave young people in Midlothian hands-on experience in wildlife monitoring, woodland management, and sustainable conservation, while building confidence, teamwork and motivation for further learning or employment. Funded through Midlothian Council's No One Left Behind grant, it supported 16–25-year-olds not in education or employment through a ten week SCQF Level 5 accredited course followed by an optional five week volunteering placement. Two groups completed the programme between October 2024 and March 2025.

The project delivered strong outcomes: 11 young people achieved a National 5 Forest and Outdoor Learning Award, all learners completed the additional volunteering placement, one progressed to a full time course at Newbattle Abbey College, and biodiversity across the college estate was enhanced.



Sustainability was embedded throughout. After storms brought down several trees, learners repurposed timber to build a dead hedge with a badger highway, created new habitats and formed natural pathways from sawdust and logs. In the meadow, they planted yellow rattle to support biodiversity and reused turf to create a bench. These practical tasks helped learners understand sustainable practice and the Scottish Sustainable Development Goals. Participants reported increased confidence, improved wellbeing, and a sense of making a meaningful impact.

The project has been shortlisted for an RSPB Nature of Scotland Award (20 November 2025), recognising its contribution to environmental action, education, and inclusion.



Priority Outcome 6 – Contribution to Climate Change, Sustainable Learning and Outdoor Spaces

Area	National Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
CLD activities have embedded climate change and sustainable learning built into them Digital opportunities offered to meet local needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build capacity of staff and partners to embed climate change into CLD learning and projects 	CLLE worked with a total of 564 participants across 78 projects on climate change issues	On Target
Capacity will be improved to act on local climate change through the inputs of Midlothian Climate Change Hub	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Midlothian Climate Change Hub will continue to undertake capacity building work with local communities 	3 activities to be taken annually funding dependent Carbon Literacy Training (January 2025) TRIPOD Training on facilitation (April 2025) Attracting & Retaining Volunteers (August 2025)	On Target
Delivery of Forest Schools courses to adults, families, and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One CLD member of staff trained and starting delivery February 2024 	Five Forest and Outdoor Learning Courses were delivered to adults and young people by Newbattle Abbey College. Fast Track Leadership training was offered to CLD, with one uptake.	On Target
More people are aware of and engaged in Green Prescribing Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roll out Green Prescribing project across Midlothian and establish a monitoring and evaluation framework 	The Green Health Prescribing Group has worked with NHS Lothian Charity and Health in Mind to improve the green health prescriptions pages on Midspace and ensure consistency across NHS Lothian. Engaged with researchers from Edinburgh University who are carrying out research looking at developing and pilot testing toolkit called 'Deep Green' to improve engagement with green health prescribing of older people living in deprived areas. www.deepgreen.scot	On Target
Provide hands-on learning and volunteering opportunities focused on conservation and climate awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand volunteer opportunities at Newbattle Abbey College grounds, focusing on conservation and outdoor learning projects 	Two outdoor learning volunteer projects were delivered in 2024–25 funded by No One Left Behind (NOLB) grant. The conservation and volunteering project (Wildlife and Woodland Conservation) was highly successful, with the work shortlisted for a Nature of Scotland Award. Funding to continue has not been secured. MCA delivered Attract & Retain Volunteers (August 25) in partnership with MCAN – training on providing good practice in volunteer engagement.	Further work required in next 2 years

Priority Outcome 7 - CLD and Partners' - Enhancing Our Workforce and Volunteer Skills

Case Study – Enhancing Third Sector Practice with AI

Midlothian Community Action (MCA) partnered with Dr Louise Drumm, Associate Professor in Digital Education at Edinburgh Napier University, to explore community use of AI. On 27 May 2025, 31 participants attended the Innovation Morning at St John's & King's Park Church to learn practical, safe, and ethical approaches to AI in the third sector.

The session covered key topics including data protection, AI policy development, board AI literacy, ethical considerations, and environmental impact. Participants engaged in hands-on exercises demonstrating how AI can support—but not replace—tasks such as funding applications, newsletters, and data analysis.

Feedback highlighted the event's practical value: attendees gained actionable tips, increased awareness of AI's environmental footprint, and reported intentions to apply their learning to research, spreadsheet management, and communications.

The event demonstrated that targeted AI education can empower third sector organisations to adopt innovative tools responsibly, improving efficiency and enhancing their operational capacity while fostering ethical and sustainable practice.

Joint workforce training

- 55 members of staff attended wellbeing courses and sessions, 10 gained SQA Level 4 qualifications
- 4 gained an SVQ Level 4 qualification for the 'Influences on Mental Health' unit
- 5 gained an SVQ Level 4 qualification for the 'Mental Health Coping Strategies and Building Resilience' unit
- 1 gained an SVQ Level 4 qualification the Wellbeing course
- 1 member attended the Wellbeing course
- 1 member attended the Mindfulness course
- 8 members attended the 'Embedding Wellbeing into Practice'
- 35 members attended the 'Wellbeing for Managers' session



Priority Outcome 7 - CLD and Partners' - Enhancing Our Workforce and Volunteer Skills

Area	National Indicator	Progress Against Annual Target	Progress
Staff capacity and confidence increased around working with mental health and wellbeing, creating CLD informed approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All staff holistically trained and supported around working with mental health and wellbeing in CLD context, creation of CLD staff pathway for support, reflection, and action 	<p>2 CLLE staff completed the Armed Forces Mental Health Course.</p> <p>9 members of staff completed SQA Mental Health and Wellbeing Award and 2 completed Mental Health First Aid.</p> <p>Midlothian Community Action funded a Mental Health First Aid Course in the community through Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.</p> <p>35 members of staff attended Council wide Wellbeing for Managers and 10 attended Wellbeing for Staff courses. 7 CLLE staff attended courses on embedding wellbeing into practice. In addition, 53 staff from Council and partners attended a range of courses including mental health coping strategies, building resilience, mindfulness for wellbeing and influences on mental health and wellbeing courses.</p>	On Target
Raised awareness of neurodiversity including support for parents within our services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working group re training suite and creation of CLD staff pathway for support, reflection, and action Working group re mental health and wellbeing includes equalities Raise awareness of neurodiversity needs of users and staff, staff training and feedback Plan programmes to address needs of neurodiverse adults/parents 	<p>CLLE Staff and Volunteer training calendar offered a range of courses to raise awareness on neurodiversity. 22 CLLE staff attended an Understanding Neurodivergence course. 8 adult learners attended a Raising Teens with Confidence course with specific focus on neurodiversity. Understanding Neurodiversity course was delivered to the VOCAL parent group with 7 participants.</p> <p>12 CLLE staff members/partners attended Autism Awareness session.</p>	On Target

Unmet Needs, Opportunities and Challenges Going Forward

Case Study – Enhancing Third Sector Practice with AI

We have reduced the risks associated with four challenges identified in the original plan. These are: Locality Improvement Plans, Mental Health, Trauma Informed and lack of suitably qualified adult learning tutors. The following work has been undertaken:

- Locality Improvement Plans – A plan has been approved by the Community Planning Board to roll these out over the next 4 years
- Mental Health – Staff have completed a variety of training courses including SQA Awards and funding has been distributed to community groups to support mental health via Midlothian Community Action.
- Trauma Informed – has been recognised as part of the community planning process, third and public sector staff have been trained including those issuing community cash first supports.
- Lack of suitably qualified adult learning tutors – an increased number and breadth of tutors has been secured.

Below are the risks that remain in relation to unmet need and challenges for 2025 onwards:

- Grant Funding – awaiting outcome of the grants reviews and associated decision making, further reductions in funding have occurred exacerbating the funding risks for example UK Shared Prosperity now becoming a regional growth fund and Midlothian not being allocated Pride of Place funding.
- Reduction in staff
- Community Development staff resource
- Population growth against no growth investment
- Free childcare
- Premises which are free to offer CLD opportunities for all
- Sustaining social peer groups run by volunteers

Further challenges identified for 2025 to 2026 are:

- PVG changes and adherence to new guidelines particularly for third sector
- Changes to OSCR guidelines for charities
- Low participation in paid for adult learning qualifications programme
- Funding for youth work in relation to growing youth population
- Growing population of those aged 65 plus and the need for resources to invest in keeping them active and involved.