

Midlothian Council Report Year End/Quarter 4 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 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/Carers

Care Inspectorate Grades Good or Above

Target = 90% Actual = 100% Exceeds target

There has only been one inspection in this quarter. Improved inspection outcome for 'The Action Group' means that none of the adult service providers have grades that are below the 'good' rating.

Finance – Expenditure Against Budget

Annual Budget = £31.06m Projected Expenditure = £34.17m Below target

There has been an increase in the financial commitment in Learning Disability in this quarter.

Care Package Reviews – Number within 2 years

Target = 90% Actual = 92% Exceeds target

Reviewing care packages continues to be a priority. Capacity in the team has impacted on this target area.

Physical Disabilities and Long-Term Conditions:

PD/LTC interventions recorded as outcome achieved

Target = 85% Actual = 89% Exceeds target

PD/LTC referral screening episode concluded within 3 working days

Target = 90% Actual = 93% Exceeds target

Carers

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

Target = 100 Actual = 98 Below target

Number of Adult Carer Support Plans completed VOCAL (accumulative)

Target = 700 Actual = 921 Exceeds target

VOCAL continue to exceed targets for completion of Adult Carer Support Plans due to sustained demand for carer support in the community.

Care at Home & Learning Development

Number of weeks waiting for a package of care in the community

Target = <6 wks Actual = 52 wks Below target

The reported number of 52 weeks is the longest wait. However, this is not the experience of most people. As the data does include this outlier number, a more representative assessment would be to consider the median. The median wait time is 9 weeks.

Number of Telecare referrals allocated within timescale (3 days)

Target = 90% Actual = 99% Exceeds target

Telecare referrals referred within 3 days continues to be above target as these are meticulously allocated as soon as the referrals come in.

Percentage of clients referred for telecare have equipment installed within timescales (1 week)

Target = 90% Actual = 49.52% Below target

This indicator continues to be off target due to a considerable amount of Midcare staff time devoted to the analogue to digital switch over.

There is an increase in the number of staff qualified for their role in 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 and SVQ 3 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	Q4
Care home review completed within 6 weeks of admission to a care home	60%	98%	90%	96%	95%

This includes data from Highbank where it has been necessary to implement a programme of care home review due to the length of stay for some clients as a consequence of lack of care home placements. A programme of Care Home review audit has started, and this will be progressed going forward. Older People Service Manager has now completed care home visits to all Midlothian Care home and continues to work closely with the Care home support team. Maximising occupancy is a target for improvement in the next quarter.

Newbyres Village – The care home provides 24 hours care and support for **48 permanent residents**. An inspection completed in January 2026 has demonstrated an improvement in one grade and identified 2 areas for improvement. These have been included in the Improvement Plan. Overall there has been a reduction in medication errors due to the implementation of significant improvement plan with additional audit, staff training, support and supervision.

Highbank Intermediate Care Unit – Highbank is an intermediate care unit with **40 beds**, including **3 respite beds**. There are currently 10 beds closed at Highbank in preparation for the move to Midlothian Life. These beds will constitute the 10 rehabilitation flats. The Care Inspectorate have advised that they do not plan to complete inspection at Highbank care home until after the intended move to the new build (Midlothian Life). Anticipated move date June 2026.

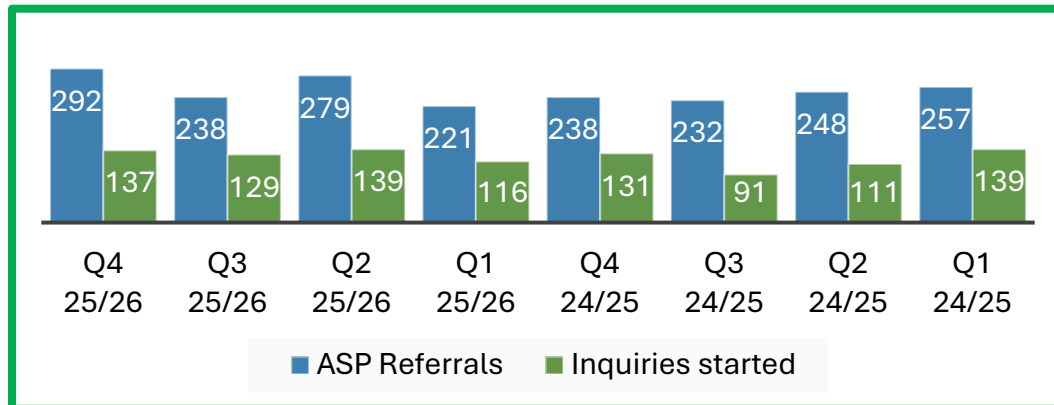
Hospital In Reach Team - Improvement planning continues within the Hospital in reach team.

Older People’s Team – The Older People’s social work team continue to work effectively to support clients to identify and achieve their outcomes. Due to multiple workstreams and changes in leadership it has not been possible to complete improvement planning. This will be progressed in Q1 2026 with the support of planning officer who has now been recruited.

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 4 and previous quarters.



If risks remain at the completion of the Duty to Inquire, and the three-point test has been met, an **Adult Support and Protection 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. During this quarter, 2 protection plans were commenced. During the whole of 2025/2026 there were 8 adults assessed as being at risk of harm being supported through a protection plan. 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 4.**

Welfare Rights Team - During Q4 the Welfare Rights Team received approximately **100 calls to the advice line** increase in the volume of referrals and during Q4 with **246 new referrals**, an increase of 12 % from Q3. During Q4 the Welfare Rights Officers worked with **204 clients**. The total amount of **additional income generated** for individuals through the work of the team during the reporting period was **£1,025,179.65**; this is an increase on Q3 of £233,597.14

Public Health - The Health Inclusion Team have carried out 15 Health assessments in Q4 bringing the total for the year to 140. This exceeds our target goal of 130. The weight stigma pilot project ended on the March 31st. This was a jointly funded pilot between Midlothian HSCP and NHS Lothian Public Health. The aim of the pilot was to increase skills and confidence of staff and volunteers in Lothian to have conversations on obesity and address the issues of weight stigma. To date 19 sessions have taken place, reaching 193 staff. The training has targeted Primary Care teams, including GPs, School nursing and Health Visiting teams, Allied Health Professionals and Active Schools.

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.

Mental Health Assessment refers to assessments by Mental Health Social Workers not Mental Health Officers (MHO), assurance can be given the service continues to meet the needs of high-risk priority individuals in a timely manner. However regrettably the waiting list has increased in its wait time, this is due to the 1 wte social worker has commenced the MHO training, currently 9 individuals awaiting Mental health input with 23 weeks wait.

The mental Health service set a realistic performance target of 12 weeks from the point of request to the allocation of an AWI case. The mental Health team has seen an increase of urgent applications which has had an impact on the wait times, the service is currently 78.95% 15/19 individuals report allocated within 12 weeks.

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. Waiting list times have improved as well as average overall wait times. Over Quarter 4 social work assessments are provided within 5.5 weeks and CCA within 5.3 week wait, continued improvement from Quarter 3.

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 winter period remains a difficult time for staff due to issues both in and out of the workplace. While the HSCP continues to fulfil its commitment to iMatter, our belief is that staff experience must go beyond the annual iMatter survey to engage at a deeper personal level with individuals, teams, and services. Evidence of this can be seen with the ongoing reflective practice and new support offered to areas caring for service users with complex needs and/ or undergoing change.

During the fourth quarter nine group support and reflection sessions were delivered. Areas involved included residential care services, Highbank, and Newbyres, the learning disabilities team at Cherry Road, and Midlothian Community Hospital staff. Areas of concern included violence and aggression from service users, death and dying of residents, relational dilemmas and communication breakdown, and psychological distress secondary to uncertainty and change. While each of these circumstances can be expected as part of the human experience in community care environments, our aim is to offer staff a safe place in which they can be listened too, have their experiences validated, and their coping strategies explored. Approximately fifty members of staff participated.

During the past three months three specific projects have been progressed. These aim to offer practical skills to increase resilience during times of stress, promote the importance of gender equality, and focus on the value of addressing our own health needs. The first of these projects, The Power of Touch hand massage training, was funded by NHS Lothian charity and Highbank Residential care. It aims to support staff and service users through the use of therapeutic touch.

Staff were encouraged to come and participate in the Essentials to Work Well session by engaging with the information and resources and taking part in the various quizzes and competitions. Approximately 50 staff participated on Wednesday 1st April. Those who were unable to take part will have further opportunities to engage with the material and access resources as we promote other activities such as walking later in the year.

Sport & Leisure

New sport and leisure branding was recently launched as part of the gym refurbishment programme, with **Mileisure** branding fully operational this quarter. To further promote leisure facilities, new Instagram and Facebook pages were created this quarter to increase customer engagement. Focussed promotional activity, combined with our gym refurbishment programme, has seen an increase in usage across our facilities this quarter.

Our **Mileisure** (formally known as Tonezone) memberships continues to grow this year through improved marketing and promotion with a total of **6,315 memberships** up to the end of quarter 4, the highest number of memberships to date, with an increase of 25% compared to last quarter and an increase of 18% compared to the same period last year 2024/25.

Our **gym refurbishment programme** at Penicuik, Lasswade and Newtongrange was completed and became fully operational this quarter, creating modern, high quality fitness facilities that meets the needs of our community and enhances the overall user experience. Additionally, our tennis court refurbishment project was completed this year with upgrades to local park tennis courts.

Usage figures across our sport and leisure facilities, excluding pools, has significantly increased this quarter to **103,031** compared to the same period last year of 88,905. **Annual figures** of **339,570**, show a **9% increase** in the total number of attendances at our leisure facilities compared to 310,297 in 2024/25. **Pool use** has also **increased this quarter to 54,074**, showing a **25% increase compared to last quarter**. **Overall pool use** for the year has slightly **decreased** with **199,317 attendances** at pools compared to 208,500 during 2024/25.

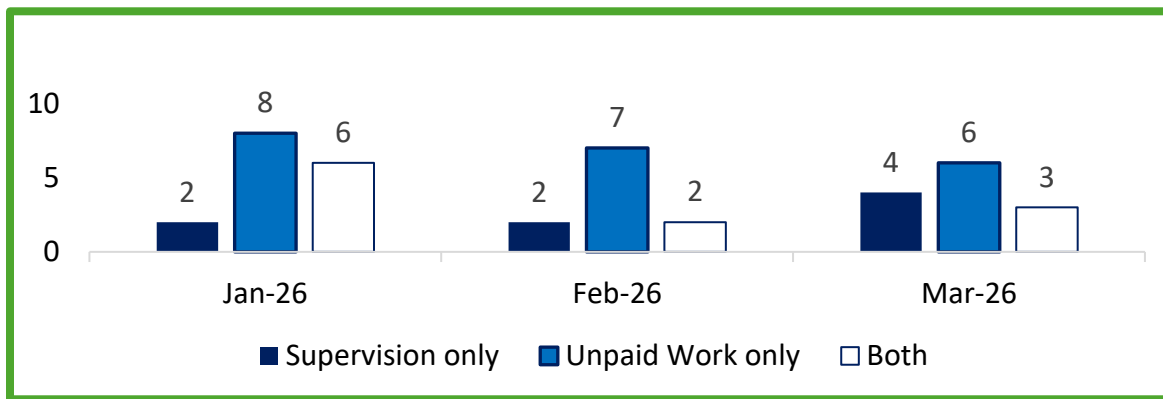
Midlothian Snowsport Centre - Various promotional campaigns have taken place across the year, including a TV advert to attract more visitors to Midlothian Snowsports Centre. The Alpine Coaster continues to see high sales volumes this quarter due to continued promotional work and ensuring the coaster is more assessible to the public via public transport. Sales over the year have started to shift to a 3 ride ticket rather than 1 ride, with an average 31% increase on 3 ride tickets this quarter compared to quarter 4 of last year, bringing in 11.31% of additional income for the year compared to last year.

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.

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 40 Community Payback Orders.



At the end of quarter four, the Justice Service team were supervising **232 people** who were subject to **263 CPOs**. Justice Social Work staff use a **trauma-informed** and **person-centred approach** to develop effective working **relationships** with people.

On 31 March 2026 **12%** (n=28) of people subject to a CPO were in breach of their Order and it had been returned to Court. Of these 28 people, 6 had re-engaged effectively on the Order. In total **90%** (n=210) of people were engaging effectively on their Order.

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 maintains the 90% performance target over quarter 4. Overall, the services continue 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. Over quarter 4 there has been a significant investment by the service into reviewing all our current protocols and standard operating procedures to ensure that the service is ready for final submission for 25/26 implementation of the MAT standards.

Road network - This year, under the combined Capital Works Programme and Residential Streets Programme, a total of **16.6km of carriageway was resurfaced** and delivered within budget, representing 2.37% of the road network resurfaced, of a targeted 2.75%. In comparison to last year, this is a decrease from 23.7km of carriageway resurfaced. This year a total of 7.11km of footways were resurfaced, representing 1% of the network. Footway resurfacing has improved significantly this quarter with **4.95km resurfaced**, compared to 1.93km in quarter 3, exceeding the annual target set for the year. In comparison to last year's figures, this is an increase of 2.15km of footway having been resurfaced.

The **Pothole Pro** project equated to **18,902m2 of permanent patching** this year, an increase of 18% compared to the same period last year. Quarter 4 saw 3,052m2 of permanent patching, an increase of 7% compared to quarter 4 2024/25. The number of potholes permanently repaired this year was 3,053, a slight decrease compared to last year at 3,122. Quarter 4 figures show 922 potholes were repaired, an increase of 58% compared to the same period last year.

The capital **street lighting** programme commenced in June with 331 street lighting columns replaced, meeting target in advance of year end. A further 900 LED upgrades to existing columns were replaced, of which 197 were complete during quarter 4. Repairs to street lighting continues to remain high this year with 97.88% of street lighting repairs completed within 7 days.

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. All priority 1 and 2 premises received completed food law interventions in line with our service plan for the year. The team carried out 378 food hygiene/food standards interventions across Midlothian this year which is a 31% increase compared to the number of interventions during last year. 105 interventions were carried out this quarter. 202 food law service requests were received this year from Midlothian business residents, which is consistent with 208 requests

received last year. 93% of food related service requests were responded to within 10 working days.

Our **Trading Standards** team received 150 consumer complaints this year which is consistent with 153 received last year. 99% of consumer complaints were responded to within 5 working days and 147 complaints were fully completed in the year. 39 of those were received during quarter 4 with a response rate of 97%. 183 Trading Standards primary inspections took place across the year, an increase of 18% compared to 154 inspections last year. 51 inspections were carried out during quarter 4, an increase of 46% with 35 carried out during the same period last year. This year 50 interventions were carried out regarding tobacco and nicotine containing products which is consistent with last years interventions of 52.

Over the year a minimum of 21 people have received some kind of positive result after Trading Standards involvement in their complaints. 14 of these have been refunded, totalling over £16,500 and others have included advice from Trading Standards about scam warnings, advice on cancellation of contracts including subscriptions, received goodwill payments and had repairs carried out.

Our **Public Health Environmental Protection (PHEP)** team received 1,440 public health service requests this year from Midlothian residents and businesses, an increase of 15% compared to last year. 97% of public health complaints received a first response within timescale this year which remains steady with the same response rate as last year.

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 has now had 3 sessions to plan the new Integrated Children's Services Plan 26-29. Each session was well attended by a range of partners. A small team is now collating the final input into the new plan that will be presented to the GIRFEC Board for approval in May.

The Promise, Corporate Parenting and UNCRC

This year we are sharing a Corporate Parenting corner which is an opportunity for corporate parents to share practice which evidences how they are upholding their duties. In February we celebrated Care day, the theme this year was connection. Our unaccompanied young people have established a group called Smart36 which meets twice a week, to provide peer support to one another. Also, in March we celebrated Kinship Care Week with a disco, bouncy castle, party treats, games and

music. Our families shared that it was a great event and that allowed our children to play and have fun together.

All the work is captured on our Midlothian Promise page which you can access via the following QR code.

Children's Services came together for a two-day conference on 27th & 28th January 2026, with a shared focus on realigning, reconnecting and rebuilding our service. Over the two days, staff took part in a range of keynote sessions and workshops designed to refresh practice, deepen knowledge, and support staff wellbeing. The conference provided valuable time and space for reflection, collaboration and renewed momentum as we continue to strengthen how we work together to support children, young people and families.



In an effort to make the Children's Services building brighter and more welcoming, over Q4 staff volunteered their own time to decorate areas of the building, creating a trauma informed environment for children and families.

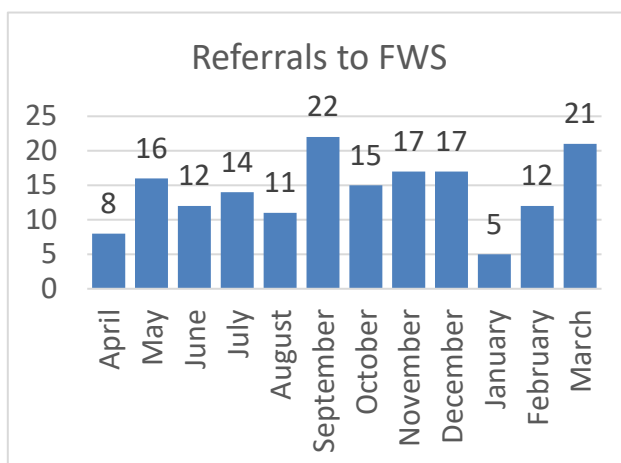
The **British Association of Social Workers (BASW)** Amazing Social Workers is a campaign to recognise individual and collective achievements in social work. We are proud to share that this year, Sorcha Brown, a social worker in the duty team was recognised under BASW's Amazing Social Workers Newly Qualified Social Worker category

Referrals in Q4 have slightly increased from the previous quarter but remain significantly lower than the 23/24 data following the change in how referrals are processed. Whilst rates of referral have been fairly stable over the year, a growing proportion of referrals present with increased complexity and levels of risk meaning that even where referral volumes are lower than historical peaks, the time, skill and multi-agency coordination required per case is increasing, which has implications for overall service demand and throughput.

1,218 referrals were made to the duty service

Referrals to the **Family Wellbeing Service** continue to increase, alongside a growing complexity of need among the families supported.

Demand on our **Disability Service** has continued, as the number of children and young people seeking a Section 23 assessment has increased. There has been focus upon providing earlier intervention with the launch of the Waiting Well parenting group and the Connected and Understanding Behaviour (CUB) Group.



Disability service – by numbers

- 103 children allocated for complex needs (MARG, CP, LAC, LAAC)

- 230 children currently in receipt of SDS support

- 65 children on post transition pathway



Respite

- 15 children receiving overnight respite residential
- 19 children receiving outreach respite support
- 13 children attend LASC respite – term time
- 27 children attend LASC holiday club

Front Door

- 70 new referrals for children awaiting first proportionate assessment
- 38 children awaiting first s23 assessment to consider SDS
- 2 parent groups for carer and behaviour support

We continue to promote a proportionate response - those with the most need, receive the greater support. Demands continue to reflect the significant level of need and challenge that increasing disability, and Neurodiversity presents for all our communities and services.

Practice Team - The practice team continues to support children, young people and their families in a range of circumstances. During this quarter across the service we have had **192 children cared for away from home** and **fifty children on the child protection register**



17 Children placed in residential setting outwith Midlothian (Cumulative 2026)



41 children looked after at home



192 children looked after away from home



83 children in kinship care



62 children in MLC foster care



12 children in MLC residential care



10 children Placed (Foster) outwith MLC

We continue to support children and young people in conflict with the law and we are currently linking with colleagues in Justice Services to support children and young people who may be subject to diversions from prosecution. We have significantly fewer referrals to Children's Hearings due to children allegedly committing offences that other local authorities, due in no small part to our effective early intervention and positive working relationships with partners.

Family Centred Care (FCC) - In February 2026 we held our Foster Carer Appreciation brunch. Inspection improvement work has continued with briefings recently held across the service to launch the updated Unplanned Ending and Continuing Care policies

Active Schools Midlothian - Data shows that 616 activities were delivered this year, an increase from 581 delivered during the same period last year. 8,521 participants attended Active Schools free extra curricular clubs this year which is an increase compared to the same period last year of 8,388 participants. The number of volunteer hours delivered in the Active Schools Programme this year was 4,387, a decrease compared to 4,874 last year.

This year our holiday programmes continued to be well attended, generating income and resulting in a good base to continue to build off for next year. A total of 2,401 children participated in the programmes throughout the year, with 381 during the quarter 4 holiday programme.

The **Education Service** Improvement Plan is informed by the outcome of quality assurance activities and links to the outcomes determined by the Getting it Right for Every Midlothian Child Board and national priorities

The Q4 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 focused on a single priority: For academic session 2025/26 the priority remains raising attainment and achievement. Work focused around:

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

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

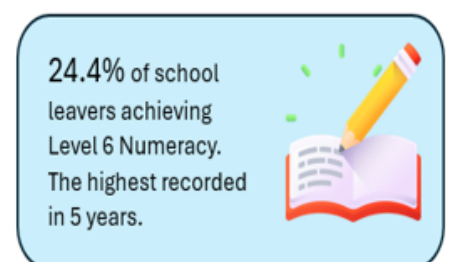
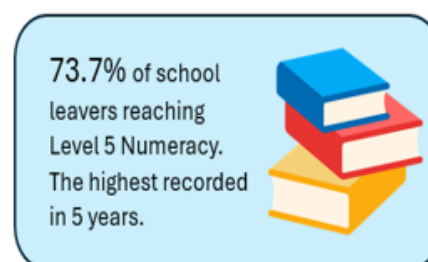
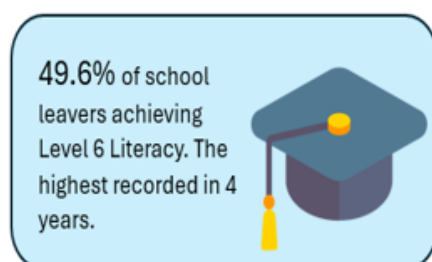
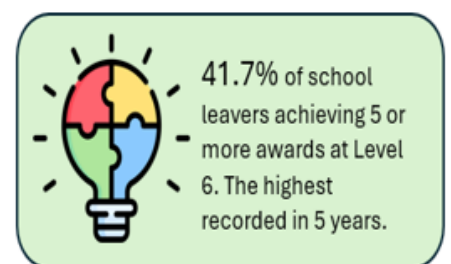
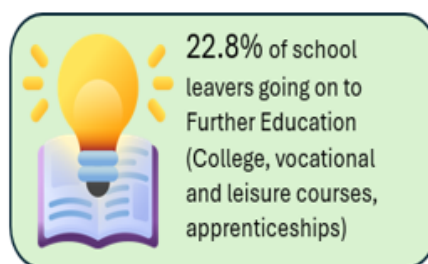
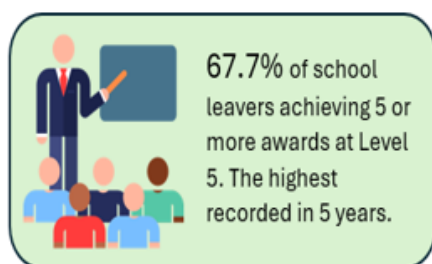
Aligned to the Service Plan, priorities for 2025/26, key actions, for 2025/26, are:

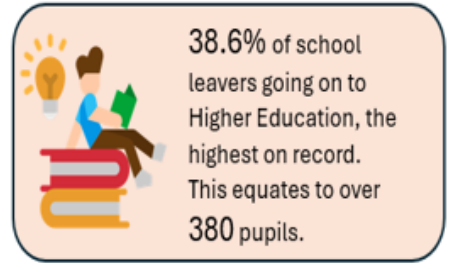
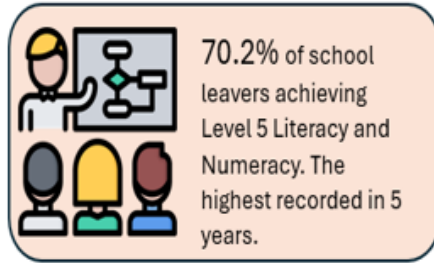
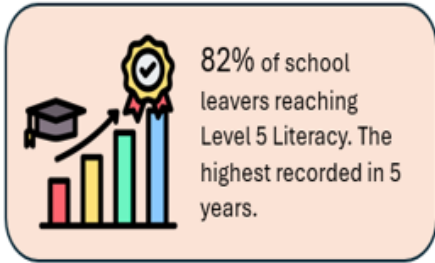
All learners receive their entitlement to high-quality universal provision (staged intervention levels 1 & 2) which promotes engagement and improved outcomes.

- An effective assistive technology offer tackles digital inequity and reduces barriers to accessing learning.
- 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.

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.

Midlothian schools and ELC settings offer a relevant, progressive and motivating strengths-based 3-18 curriculum, that enables all learners, including those with ASN, to move on to highly skilled, sustained positive destinations.





Midlothian Aligned Curriculum Offer (MACO) expansion has facilitated significant growth in both cohort and student number across all schools, demonstrated in the following tables:

	Number of FA Frameworks Delivered	Number of Cohorts
Session 24/25	7	14
Session 25/26	9	21
Coursing for Session 26/27	10	30

	Total Number of FA Students	Total Number of Midlothian Only SCP Places	Total Capacity Built through MACO
Session 23/24	147	0	147 non-MACO
Session 24/25	216	106	322 learners
Session 25/26	275	137	412 learners
Coursing for Session 26/27	390 spaces	182 spaces	572 learners

Workstream 2: Wellbeing, Support and Partnerships (WSPs)

Aligned to the Service Plan, priorities for 2025/26, key actions are:

- Culture, relationships and systems ensure that children, young people and staff feel valued and supported to succeed.
- Collaboration, partnerships and shared learning at ASG level leads to an improved in learner outcomes through a data-informed allocation of resources.

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

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and Parental Engagement

There is now a structure in place for strengthening pupil voice in our decision-making. All schools have a pupil representative body. These feed into the local authority pupil representative groups and the Midlothian Youth Cabinet which meets regularly with our political leaders. This structure will be reviewed with stakeholders in May 2026 and further improvements made for 2026-2027 school year.

Parent Council Chairs meet with the Education Chief Operating Officer and senior managers four times per year. This supports consultation with parent/ carer groups across all of our schools.

The QI 3.1 (Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion) visits to all Enhanced and Improvement schools showed that there were supportive relationships in almost all schools. The provision of universal and targeted support for learners and the tracking and monitoring for impact of these, was improving across our schools.

Strengthen Rights-Based Relational Approach

All schools have engaged in professional learning and self-evaluation on their rights-based, relational approach. Feedback from schools has been used to inform next steps for professional learning and support. We have introduced professional learning in therapeutic interventions in schools as part of our targeted offer to children presenting with needs relating to mental health and wellbeing.

Staff Support and Wellbeing

Our Service Plan 2026-2027 includes a commitment to pilot a staff wellbeing and support offer. This builds upon the focus on wellbeing integrated into professional learning and piloting of reflective spaces and supervision groups by the Educational Psychology Service.

Our strategic group focussing on Relationships and Behaviour in schools will continue to meet and focus on the recommendations of the Behaviour in Scottish Schools Report.

Delivery with Partners

The multi-agency GIRFEC Steering Group has created a draft Practice Framework and Single Child's Plan template to refresh and promote the values, principles and practice of GIRFEC across all our services. Consultation has taken place with staff in Health, CLLE, Children's Services and Education. Universal training is being developed for delivery to all staff in August and three Network training sessions are being developed for GIRFEC coordinators from each service from August to December 2026. Initial design for pilot project complete. An online, Request for Support, process is now established. The pilot originally planned to run in the Newbattle Associated School Group from October to March has been further delayed.

Neurodiversity (ND) Pathway

Our new professional learning offer 'My predictable day' continues to be very positively received in schools with greater predictability in environments, relationships and activities making a tangible difference to children with neurodivergence. We continue to work with families, agencies and 3rd sector partners to explore ways of strengthening supports for those families of children on the ND waitlist.

Attendance

Our attendance levels have improved compared to similar months in the last school year. Our data systems allow us to identify particular cohorts of young people where attendance has dropped and target support. The Attendance toolkit is used by schools and partners with young people and families to deepen insights into attendance issues and develop plans to increase attendance and engagement in education. We continue to pilot new ways of working to strengthen collaboration with young people to overcome barriers to attendance. Feedback from these projects will inform learning for schools to take into session 26/27.

Primary Attendance and Exclusions - Primary attendance for the session up to 31st March was 93.82%. The National primary average for the past 3 years is 92.29%. There have been 76 primary exclusion incidents for the session up to 31st March.

Secondary Attendance and Exclusions - Secondary attendance for the session up to 31st March was 86.47%. The National secondary average for the past 3 years is 88.20%. There have been 158 secondary exclusion incidents for the session up to 31st March.

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

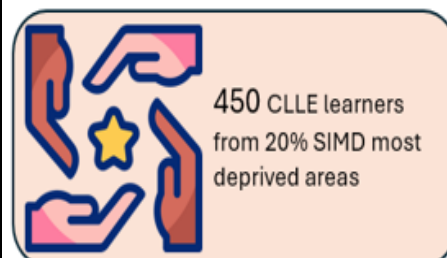
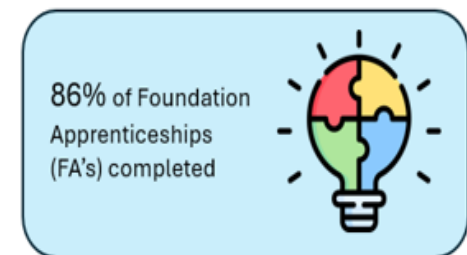
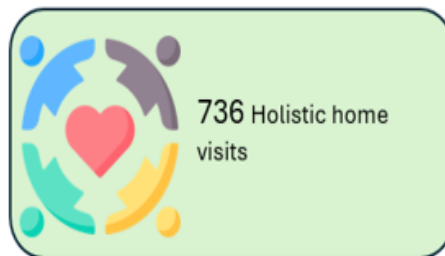
through youth work, adult learning, community development and employability in Midlothian.

In Quarter 4 **2,019 people engaged with CLLE** services across **242 opportunities** bringing the annual total to date to **6,464 participants**. **29 home visits** supported young people not in a positive destinations. **167 people accessing our services live in SIMD 20% and 935 in SIMD 40%**. **244 qualifications** were achieved through CLLE programmes.

259 parents were supported in Q4 (75 new starts). 27 entered employment or self-employment. 86 qualifications achieved by 42 parents. 1 progressed to FE/HE. 20 in long term paid placements; 11 moved into permanent jobs.

In Q4 the **No One Left Behind (NOLB)** All Age Employability team have continued to provide support to **317 people**, with **73 new starts**.

Community Capacity Building - 24 community groups received support with governance, planning, or funding. Engagement with 61 community groups in total up to and including Q4.



Library services continue to transform and thrive in responding to the needs of our communities. This quarter overall figures for library visits remain high with a **6% increase in total visits** (both physical and virtual) compared to the same period last year and a 9% increase compared to the previous quarter. The number of **total visits across the year continues to grow at 808,119**, a 5% increase from last year with 770,877 visits and a 9% increase from 2023/24, demonstrating sustained growth and engagement across our library network.

There were **618,146 physical visits** were made to our libraries, an increase of 2% from last year 2024/25 and a 5% increase from 2023/24. There were 175,355 physical visits to our libraries during the quarter, representing a 12% increase compared to the previous quarter and a 5% increase compared to the same period last year.

Focus this year continued 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. Our eResource provides a wide range of eBooks, Audiobooks, eNewspapers and eMagazines. This year has saw a slight decrease in eBook issues but a 15%

increase in audiobook issues. In total **189,973 virtual library visits** were made this year, a 14.5% increase compared to last year 2024/25 and a 24% increase compared to 2023/24.

Library memberships also continues to grow, with **40,521 total memberships** up to the end of quarter 4. This represents an 8% increase compared to the same period last year. New child library memberships has increased by 16% this year compared to last year. This year we showcased and promoted the exemplary work we do on the Every Child A Library Member ECALM project at a Parliamentary Reception, an event held to celebrate Scottish Libraries. To date 433 babies have been signed up for library memberships as part of the birth registration process, with other family members registering at the same time.

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 **208 businesses** now committed,

Fleet replacement: as part of our ongoing Fleet replacement programme, we have continued to modernise and decarbonise our vehicle fleet. This year 54 vans, 6 Heavy Goods Vehicles and 3 buses and 1 car was delivered. The introduction of 16 additional electric vehicles, 1 during quarter 4, represents a significant step forward in reducing our environmental impact. As of quarter 4, 14.25% of the council's fleet now consists of electric vehicles, directly supporting our commitment to achieving net carbon zero emissions by eliminating exhaust emissions from these vehicles.

This academic year, for the first time ever, every primary school in Midlothian participated in Bikeability Scotland Road Cycling Training, placing Midlothian among the top-performing local authorities in the country. As a result of this achievement, our Bikeability Coordinator won the Annual Achievement Award 2025 at Cycling Scotland's Bikeability Scotland Awards in November.

52 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. Further funded projects are planned for quarters 1 to 3 to enhance the quality and accessibility of our play areas.

Our ranger service continues to deliver activities and school sessions with 86 events carried out this year attracting 1,608 participants. A reduction from 222 events/activities carried out during 2024/25.

Waste and Recycling - Twin Stream recycling was launched this quarter, supported by a £2.2 million grant from Zero Waste Scotland. This project is a major initiative aimed at improving recycling services for residents and introduced an additional green recycling bin for every household. The project saw the delivery of 46,000 240 litre green bins to properties across Midlothian and a move to a three weekly bin collection cycle for grey, blue and green bins as of March 2026.

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. 237 'Planning to Start' enquiries were received this year, which is a decrease from 198 during 2024/25. 79 enquiries were received during quarter 4, which is an increase of 72% compared to the same period last year of 46. 44 'Strengthen Your Business' enquires were received this year, a decrease of 58 from last year. 13 enquires were received this quarter which has increased compared to the previous two quarters.

The total number of **new Business start-ups** this year was 88. Business start-ups have decreased from last year which saw 128 start-ups. During quarter 4, 23 businesses were claimed as starts, creating 35 jobs and an estimated contribution of £465,000 to the Midlothian Economy in the first year of trading. The total estimated contribution to the Midlothian Economy for the year 2025-26 is £2,641,200.00.

With the **Community Wealth Building (Scotland) Act 2026** coming into force this quarter on 25th March 2026 there has been increased activity during the quarter to prepare for the development of a Midlothian wide Community Wealth Building Action Plan.

The **Locate in Midlothian** website received 13,482 page views during quarter 4, with a total of 56,936 views across the year. Commercial properties remain the most popular page on the website and continues to be in the top 5 results on Google for the search terms 'Business premises in Midlothian' and 'commercial property in Midlothian'. Our social media channels target different audiences, and each is performing well in terms of audience growth and interaction with 2,506 'Business Gateway Midlothian' followers and 2,335 'Locate in Midlothian' followers across

Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram.

The **Midlothian Tourism Strategy for Inclusive Economic Growth 2026–2030** is awaiting submission to Council for approval. The revised programme allows for the inclusion of a detailed, delivery-focused action plan, strengthening the strategy's implementation and monitoring framework. In addition, the strategy has been aligned with the Single Midlothian Plan, Community Wealth Building priorities and regional economic frameworks, ensuring a clear line of sight between strategic ambition and delivery.

Planning application performance: the average timescale to determine local development planning applications is slightly off target this year at 10.3 weeks of a targeted 10 weeks. However, performance throughout this year has improved from 14 weeks last year. The average timescale to determine major development planning applications is on target for this year at 49 weeks of a targeted 50 weeks. 77% of all planning applications were determined within target, although this is below the 80% target for the year, this has improved from 70% last year.

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 **6,672 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 6,006. 497 lets have been made this year, averaging 41 lets per month, 305 lets were made to homeless applicants and 192 lets to general needs with 78 lets made to new build properties, 9 to buy back properties and 10 to Housing first applicants. For this quarter, 80 lets were made, a reduction from 169 lets made at the same period last year. Overall, for the year there is a decrease in lets made compared to last year of 586, this is due to the handover of more new builds last year. This year we have largely retained our letting targets of 60% of lets made to homeless households and 40% for general needs with this year's figures at 61.4% for homeless applicants and 38.6% for general needs.

Re-let times to permanent accommodation properties has increased to 50 days to re-let this quarter compared to 47 at the end of quarter 3. Re-let figures reported throughout the quarters have been higher due to a change at the start of the year in the way the Scottish Housing Regulator requires re-let times to be reported where temporary flip tenancies were to be excluded from the performance measure. A further update from the regulator was received in quarter 4 advising flip tenancies are now to be included in this measure for the overall annual return. This means that, overall for the year, our re-let times show 29 days to re-let to permanent accommodation properties, which is a reduction from 34 days in 2024/25. Quarter 4 figures where flips are included shows 43 days rather than 50 days with flips excluded.

Homelessness: There continues to be a significant demand placed on homeless and temporary accommodation services as a result of the sustained number of people presenting as homeless. This year homelessness presentations remain stable compared to last year, with the main causes of homelessness being relationship breakdowns, affordability issues and individuals leaving private rented accommodation 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 the year was 357 which has remained similar to figures of 359 at

the same period last year. The number of temporary accommodation households that have been flipped to permanent accommodation this year was 163, (171 during 2024/25), reducing the need for multiple moves before being permanently housed, allowing for links established within the local community to be maintained. This quarter 9 tenancies were flipped to permanent. Tenants sustaining permanent accommodation continues to be high this year with 94.1% of homeless applicants sustaining a permanent tenancy after 1 year, an increase from 90.7% last year.

The percentage of **Secondary School meal uptake** this quarter was 33.98% which is a slight decrease compared to the last two quarters. Overall annual figures show the uptake rate at 34.60%, a decrease from 38.22% last year.. The percentage of **Primary School meal uptake** for this quarter is 57.71% and shows a steady increase across this year with the overall annual uptake rate at 58.08%, an increase from 56.96% at the end of last year The percentage of **school meal food waste** continues to remain low this quarter at 3.03%, this remains steady with last quarters figure of 2.98%. Overall, there was 3.31% of food waste from meals prepared, a reduction from 4.38% at end of 2024/25.

This quarter **free school meal uptake** was 68.62%, a slight decrease compared to quarters 2 and 3 of 70.58% and 70.46% respectively. The overall annual uptake rate is 68.69%, remaining steady with last year's rate of 68.66% and only slightly off the Scottish Government average target of 70.4%.

Requests for **crisis funding** continue to remain consistently high with a 2% increase in the number of crisis grant applications received this year (7,320) compared to last year (7,168) and an 8% increase from 2023/24 of 6,766 and demonstrates the continued significant financial challenges faced by our communities. This quarter 2,113 Crisis Grants and 385 Community Care Grants were received.

All of the annual **Scottish Welfare Fund (SWF)** budget was allocated up to quarter 4.

1,927 customers received help and support via Housing Benefits this quarter with a gradual reduction each quarter from 2,559 during quarter 4 of last year.

The percentage of current housing **rent arrears sits at 13.94%** at the end of quarter 4. In year Council Tax **collected year to date is 92.3%**, showing a similar rate of collection compared to the same time last year of 94.3%.

As part of our effort to reduce child poverty, Children's Services fund three income maximisation projects, including a dedicated project worker within the FWS. The identified project worker supports families directly to increase household income and reduce debt, strengthening overall financial resilience. In 2024 the financial gain of families who were supported by Income Maximisation via the FWS was **£30,448.31**. In 2025, this figure has increased to **£166,867.99**.

CLLE Poverty & Inclusion Work

- supported the establishment of 10 community diners in partnership with third sector and public health
- supported in partnership a funding bid to CPAF securing £99,000 over two years towards Community Dinners
- working with trusted partners to support cash first and Midlothian Pantry Network funded by the Cost-of-Living Task Force
- supporting consultation work to establish the key priorities for reducing both child and household poverty and identify actions for the new Single Midlothian Plan 2027 to 2030.
- continuing to support the Poverty Peer Researchers (now "Make a Difference" group to make next step in their journey

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.

Our Finance team continued to develop and enhance our financial monitoring arrangements to support financial sustainable planning. The 2026/27 budget has now been set, alongside updated Medium Term Financial Strategy projections through to 2028/29 and formal approval was gained for the 2026/27 Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.

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 – Q4 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...		94.2%	95.0%	2025/26		
● BS.MC.SPSO.05.1 Percentage of complaints at stage 1 complete within 5 working d...		80.48%	95%	Q4 2025/26		
● BS.MC.SPSO.05.2 Percentage of complaints at stage 2 complete within 20 working ...		79.41%	95%	Q4 2025/26		
● BS.MC.SPSO.05.3 Percentage of complaints escalated and complete within 20 work...		50%	95%	Q4 2025/26		
● MC.SPSO.04.3 Average time in working days for a full response for escalated compl...		49.837	20	Q4 2025/26		

← 1 of 1 →