

East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership

Children and Young People's Services Plan

2023 - 2026



East Lothian Partnership

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Introduction

Welcome to the Children's Services Plan 2023-26 for East Lothian. Our plan sets out our shared vision, aspirations and ambitions for children, young people and their families that will make a meaningful difference to improving their lives. The plan delivers on our requirement under the Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 2014 to set out how services are provided locally in the way which:

- Best safeguards, supports and promotes the wellbeing and rights of children
- Ensures that any action to meet needs is taken at the earliest appropriate time and that, where appropriate, action is taken to prevent needs arising
- Is most integrated from the point of view of recipients
- Constitutes the best use of available resources
- Takes into account children and young people's voice and influence.

This plan has been developed in collaboration with community planning partners including East Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, Police Scotland and Volunteer Centre East Lothian (VCEL) which is the third sector interface in East Lothian.

The East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership involves a range of partners that provide services to safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of all our children and young people by helping to prevent and reduce adversity, and working in partnership to take action to meet their needs at the earliest appropriate time.

The Children Services Plan 2023-26 outlines the way we will work together to ensure all of the different people who work with our babies, children and young people do so in a joined up way. In this post-pandemic period, many families find themselves seeking support for the first time for finance, emotional or mental health and maintaining a lifestyle that enables them to meet the needs of their children. The plan will allow us to continue to build on our strengths and successes whilst supporting the delivery of new ways of working and strengthening our joint approaches to planning and resourcing services to improve the lives of our children, young people and families.

The partnership is committed to keeping the Promise and recognises the collective responsibility of all partners to intervene early and effectively to provide the most meaningful help and support to enable children and young people to thrive within resilient and loving families. Engaging with and hearing the voice of children and young people will guide this work and be placed at the centre of service delivery and partnership working.

Our vision

The East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership (CSP) is committed to safeguarding, supporting and promoting the wellbeing of all children and young people in East Lothian.

We recognise this is a challenging goal to achieve. We have a lot of advantages in East Lothian, it is a great place to live, work, go to school and bring up a family. We have a growing population and are forecast to increase further, bringing potential economic benefits but also increasing pressure on services

However, there are economic disparities between and within our communities. Relative poverty is growing in all of our communities. We know that growing up and living in poverty is linked with poorer educational outcomes and poorer health. The mental health of our children and young people was a concern before the Coronavirus pandemic, and these issues continue to grow. Families are struggling to cope and a lack of resilience is resulting in an increased referrals to statutory services including social work and an increased need for more care placements. Reporting of domestic abuse is increasing year on year, and it is now a major part of the workload of our local police.

While we will not eradicate all of these issues over the period of this plan, this plan sets out the work that we need to do to address the most significant of these challenges for further improvement.

At the heart of this work is our vision, our shared ambition as a Children's Strategic Partnership:

'Making sure East Lothian's babies, children and young people are Happy, Healthy and Heard'



Our principles

The Partnership is built on strong relationships and recognises that we can all make a difference to the lives of children and young people, however, to overcome complex issues that have no clear single agency solution, we need to work together.

This plan is built around a shared set of principles that will guide and shape the culture and behaviours we expect our collective workforce to demonstrate as they work together to achieve our ambitions:

We will prioritise early Intervention and prevention

We will prioritise actions that will help to protect our children and young people from poor outcomes.

Through a range of universal, additional and targeted services, we will ensure that every child and young person is signposted to and has access to opportunities which will allow them to explore and fulfil their potential.

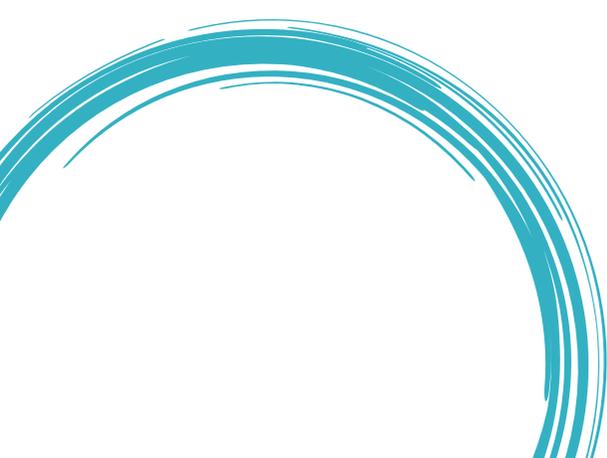
Our aim is to provide an environment that supports good health and wellbeing, as well as ensuring issues are addressed as quickly as possible, thereby allowing our resources to be used more effectively. When need is identified, we will act quickly and provide the right services at the right time, with the knowledge that early intervention and support leads to better outcomes.

Our services and partners will put measures in place to help us better understand how well we are improving outcomes and intervening at an earlier stage.

We will work together across our partnership

By working together across organisational boundaries, we will make best use of the partnership's collaborative gain and the influence that combined service provision can have to address complex social issues.

All priority work within the implementation plan will need to have more than once agency involved in the delivery.





We will engage with and listen to the voices of children and young people

We are committed to ensuring children and young people's rights are at the heart of developing the future of East Lothian. Children, young people, and their families are best placed to determine what they need to live healthy and happy lives. We will empower children, young people, and their families to contribute to how we address issues and design solutions to support their communities. We will ensure all interventions will have community input and inclusion of children's rights into their design with clear plans and reporting mechanisms.

We will reduce inequalities

Our partnership is committed to increasing the life chances of all children and young people and reducing inequalities in outcomes that currently exist. It is therefore essential that the CSP ensures that all actions embed equality, diversity, and anti-discriminatory practice.

National policy drivers

The Partnership acknowledges there is a range of national strategies and plans that are focused on improving the lives of children, young people and their families in East Lothian. Many of these plans have interconnections and common goals/aims to improve the health, wellbeing and development of children and young people and include:

- [Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)
- [Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)
- [The Convention on the Rights of the Child: The children's version | UNICEF](#)
- [The Scottish Government's Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan](#)
- [The Children and Young People's Mental Health and Wellbeing Action Plan](#)
- [The Scottish Attainment Challenge](#)
- [The Youth Employment Strategy](#)
- [The Children and Young People's Rights and Participation Strategy](#)



What have we achieved so far?

Our previous plan

Improving children's mental health and wellbeing

Between 2020-2023, East Lothian Council in partnership with NHS Lothian and the third sector, developed a successful Tier 1 and 2 Mental Health and Wellbeing Service in line with the expectations set out in the Community Mental Health Supports and Services Framework. Tier 1 supports and resources are based within the universal services. Tier 2 services are accessed via a Single Point of Access and comprise a number of interventions and supports depending on need. A one door, single point of access (SPA) is now in place to accept requests for assistance from professionals who have concerns about a child or young person's mental health and wellbeing. Our data is telling us that the approach is reducing the number of children and young people referred to CAMHS and reducing the time those referred have to wait to receive an assessment and support from Tier 3 and Tier 4 services.

Early Years NHS Lothian's Maternal and Infant Nutrition Service

Early Years NHS Lothian's Maternal and Infant Nutrition Service enables teams to link effectively with midwives and health visitors to deliver the preventative approach that underpins the universal health visiting pathway. The team provides expert advice and support for preconception and early pregnancy health, breastfeeding (including support for UNICEF Baby Friendly accreditation) and infant nutrition. The HENRY (Health, Exercise, Nutrition for the Really Young) training programme to increase staff knowledge, confidence and skills has been shared with community learning and development, education, children and family centres, health visiting teams, and community-based food projects through 2021 and 2022 as an aid to support early intervention and prevention of childhood obesity.

Whole Family Support

During the last reporting period, our second priority area was to support parents, carers and families to be more resilient by improving access to the right kind of support at an early stage. Working with the Capital City Partnership, we tested a Whole Family Support approach in Musselburgh East with the 'Our Families' initiative. In addition, within Education and Children's Services, we implemented the



integrated Early Intervention Support Team, providing joint outreach teaching and family support to children who were at risk of disengaging in learning. The jointly-funded parenting coordinator continued to map local resources and engage with third sector providers and families to build an understanding of the kind of support that families need, what works well and where the gaps are. In 2022, the Scottish Government launched its commitment to Whole Family Support through the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund which was aligned with our aspirations to transform our family support resources to ensure East Lothian families can access the right resources at the earliest opportunity, in their own localities.

The CSP bid for Element 2 improvement support from Scottish Government and CELCIS and was chosen as one of only three areas to receive the support. Our application was commended for presenting an honest self-assessment of our strengths and a clear understanding of where we need support to achieve transformational change. This work will form a core priority work stream of this new plan.

Strengthening our approach to joint commissioning

The CSP established a commissioning sub-group in 2022 as the basis for strengthening our approach to collaborative decision making about how we direct our resources.

In the first phase of the work, the group focused on non-recurring funding streams and the development of a new Commissioning Process Model to minimise the risk of duplicating spending of non-recurring funds across a range of services and recognising opportunities for collaborative working.

This process model will act as a guide to those services that are being procured by CSP partners, thus allowing for financial maximisation in the services working hard to support our children, young people and families and allowing the funds to be used even more widely and in new ways, to reach those who need it most.

Supporting Young Carers

Scottish Government estimates there are at least 44,000 young carers in Scotland and 29,000 of them are under 16. Therefore, supporting the health and wellbeing of our young carers is essential.

As part of the last plan, East Lothian Council established a young carers' service in 2021 and this approach has significantly increased the numbers of young people identifying as carers. They continue to receive support in school, to access short breaks and respite and help in understanding and applying for all relevant financial provisions designed to relieve some of the challenges that come with caring responsibilities. School supports include advice on the rights of young carers from professionals, peer support from people in similar situations and circumstances and regular opportunities to gather their input and experiences to influence relevant decision-making processes.

The Young Carers Festival will run again in August 2023, providing Young Carers with a break from their responsibilities and a chance to be amongst peers. All Young Carers can access free term time Active Schools activities as well as support during school holidays and can access Time for Me grants to support them to take part in activities beneficial to their mental health, which allows for greater autonomy than more prescribed activities.

Reducing Child Poverty

Child poverty data shows that one in four children in the Lothians experience household poverty. The increase in universal credit and other benefit claims in Lothian associated with the pandemic is another marker of financial stress. The increase in emergency Scottish Welfare Fund payments and ongoing demand for food banks are other manifestations of extreme poverty[1].

The effects of poverty in childhood, including living in a low income family and in poor quality housing, can be felt into adulthood and can affect every part of a child's life – from economic and material disadvantage to impacting negatively on health and attainment.[2]

[1] [Lothian Strategic Development Framework for website 08042022.pdf \(nhslothian.scot\)](#)

[2] [Lothian Strategic Development Framework for website 08042022.pdf \(nhslothian.scot\)](#)



Although East Lothian life expectancy is above the Scottish average, aggregate figures mask wide inequalities in life expectancy. People in East Lothian living in areas among Scotland's 20% most deprived, have a life expectancy 8 years (males) and 4.8 years (females) lower than those in the least deprived areas. The inextricable link between health and wealth has been evident through the COVID-19 pandemic and the current cost-of-living crisis. Both have brought underlying poor health and structural inequalities to the fore [3].

The Scottish Government has recently published its second Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan - 'Best Start, Bright Futures[4]'. This plan builds upon the initial Delivery Plan - 'Every Child, Every Chance' - and continues to strengthen action on the three drivers of child poverty reduction: income from employment, cost of living, and income from social security and benefits in kind. The offer to families set out in the Delivery Plan includes:

- Providing the opportunities and integrated support parents need to enter, sustain and progress in work
- Maximising the support available for families to live dignified lives and meet their basic needs
- Supporting the next generation to thrive.

The CSP and its members have been working hard to address the poverty challenge in East Lothian. This includes the creation of a number of poverty-related groups to help maximise financial income, access to food and availability of period products for those who are struggling as a result of the Cost of Living Crisis and the impact of financial austerity. Local food pantries and initiatives facilitate access to a range of foods including fresh produce as well as cupboard staples. East Lothian Council established an Equalities and Tackling Poverty Officer post to roll out the Scottish Government's Period Poverty ambition to be the first country in the world to offer free period products.

[3] HF_Health_Scotland_Web_Final (2).pdf

[4] [Executive Summary - Best Start, Bright Futures: tackling child poverty delivery plan 2022 to 2026 - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/resources/documents/2022/04/Executive-Summary-Best-Start-Bright-Futures-tackling-child-poverty-delivery-plan-2022-to-2026-20220427.pdf)



The Financial Inclusion Service offer support to address poverty challenges on a local level with support in financial income maximisation via raising awareness of available supports such as Universal Credit eligibility, Benefits Maximisation, Poppy Scotland Grants and Community Wind Power Energy Fund which (in partnership with Advice Direct Scotland) is delivering a fund of £1,000,000 to people in East Lothian affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

Linked to this, the NHS Lothian Partnership and Place team will focus on strengthening financial wellbeing pathways across midwifery and health visiting services to ensure the identification of, and provision of support to those most in need. This will involve the mapping of services across the area that provide information and advice about income maximisation or welfare advice to inform the work and will be fed into the East Lothian Financial Inclusion network. Staff within key services will be trained to increase their knowledge and skill levels around being able to ask questions relating to issues of welfare and debt and be able to signpost and refer on with confidence.

The work of CSP members is also shaping how we plan future engagement opportunities to be sensitive, supportive and inclusive. The Volunteer Centre East Lothian (VCEL) Poverty Conference highlighted that some stigmatising language was discouraging some people from accessing support services and offered some guidance on how the CSP members can change the narrative around financial maximisation in order to boost engagement and encourage an increase in the uptake of available supports. This is further supported by the findings of the Poverty Working Group who have suggested that cash rather than voucher based supports would reduce the perceived stigmatisation of people accessing support, which is something that will be taken into account for future initiatives.

East Lothian's children and young people

East Lothian is one of a small number of Scottish local authorities with an increasing child population (a 17.1% forecasted increase to 2028/29 for P1 to S6 pupils based on the 2020-census roll). East Lothian also has a rapidly growing population which is projected to increase by 7.2% (2018 based) by 2028. This is likely to be the second highest increase in the whole of Scotland showing that East Lothian is a desirable place to live. Therefore it is essential for the right supports and services to be put in place to meet the needs of a fast growing subsection of the county's population.

This increase poses a significant opportunity to engage and consult with children, families and young people to ensure their voices are being heard in fostering warm, welcoming and supportive communities in the near future which offer resources and amenities to support their residents to the highest possible standard. The CSP has also been working on developing approaches to incorporating children's rights in to our work. We are committed to continuing to build on this work in this new plan as Scotland works towards the full incorporation of UNCRC in to Scots law.



Other partnership outcomes:

- **Safe** In 2021, 94% of East Lothian residents felt that their neighbourhood was a good place to live and the number of crimes per 10,000 population was less than the national rate
- **Healthy** More eligible children received their 13-15 month review from health visitors in East Lothian than compared to the collective Lothian's overall (94.4% for East Lothian vs 88.7% for the Lothian's as a whole) from March 2022- November 2022. This allowed parents to feel supported, early intervention to be offered in a timely manner and children to receive the highest standards of care
- **Achieving** In 2021, 77.5% of people in East Lothian aged 16-64 were in employment, higher than the 72.9% average for Scotland
- **Achieving** 95.6% of pupils leaving secondary school in East Lothian in the 21/22 session went into a positive destination. This includes those young people moving into Further and Higher Education, Employment and Training. East Lothian Works, East Lothian Council's employability service works closely with schools, and other partners to support any young person leaving school to secure a positive destination. Ongoing support is available to young people post-school.



Data	Latest Figures	Notes
0-18 years population*	23,213	
Primary Pupils**	8,498	
Secondary Pupils**	6,594	
Pupils in Special Provision**	141	
Births***	975	
Children in Poverty		
Child Protection Inter-agency discussions	17 IRDs in April 2023	
Families in Temp Accommodation		
Primary pupils with Additional Support Needs**	2,029	
Secondary pupils with Additional Support Needs**	2,444	
Children allocated to Social Work	738	This figure does not include those on our 22+ duty service and unallocated disability cases
Looked After Children and Young People	196	
No of children and young people on Child Protection Register	33	
No of referrals to children's services	2279 in 22/23	

* National Records of Scotland - Mid-Year Population Estimates, Scotland, mid-2021

**Data Source: East Lothian Council, Education Service, September 2022 Pupil Census Return

*** National Records of Scotland – Birth Time Series Data, 2021

Cluster	Number of Pupils 2022-23 (as at Sept 2022 Pupil Census)			Number of Exclusions** (rate per 1000 pupils) (based on 2021-22 session exclusion data)
	P1-S6 Pupils	Pupils with ASN	P4-S6 FSM reg	
Dunbar	2,474	547	484	18.6
Haddington	1,955	509	458	28.4
Musselburgh	3,203	1,076	916	37.4
North Berwick	2,191	512	402	2.7
Prestonpans	2,458	849	624	10.5
Tranent	2,811	983	719	26.2
East Lothian	15,092	4,476	3,603	21.6



Consultation and engagement with children, young people and families

The CSP has continued to consult and engage with children, young people, families and communities. This has taken place in a variety of ways including: feedback from school pupils via small group discussions around specific topics such as the impact of poverty; focus groups for those with lived experience of issues such as poverty to share their thoughts and reflect on how their personal knowledge can help to ensure good decision making takes place; and liaison with the Champions Board to give input on behalf of children and young people who are care experienced. The common themes that emerged throughout were the need for:

- Faster access to support when it is needed
- Opportunities to be involved in decision-making; and
- Better resources in localities.

The most frequently highlighted area was the need for quicker access to mental health supports. Many have found they are needing support in this area for the first time. They were also keen to have more of a voice in their local community. They want to have their say in how resources are distributed across the county and ensure they are able to communicate more easily with decision-makers. Other themes clearly identified were financial support and the cost of living crisis. We also heard concerns about community safety and about the need to help children and adults who people who had experienced domestic violence.

The 'Voice' Lead Officer also carried out a key piece of consultation in early 2023 specifically on the vision of happy, healthy and heard. This involved gathering opinions of those who may be underrepresented in decision making, influence and participation, these included people with disabilities, those within the Youth Justice system, Young Carers, those in Through Care, Supported young people in residential care and those under Child Protection.



The key themes that were identified included:

- Relationships with the important people in my life – family, teachers, carers and social workers
- Understanding my rights and getting better supports for children with hidden disabilities
- Being able to access sports and activities is really important
- Healthy food and connections – pets and friends
- Networks and connections – my family, friends and pets
- Opportunities and activities and play.

Our priorities

The CSP has identified three priority areas for this plan, aimed at supporting the safeguarding, support and promotion of the wellbeing of all children and young people in East Lothian in line with our collective vision for all children and young people to be happy healthy and heard. These are:

Priority 1: Children's and Young People's Rights

- Ensure the rights of every child / young person in East Lothian are upheld by embedding UNCRC into daily practice and processes
- Ensure we keep The Promise and deliver on the new Corporate Parenting plan to ensure families are supported to stay safely together at home
- Increase community-based wellbeing opportunities for East Lothian's children and young people in safe spaces with trusted adults
- Ensure GIRFEC is embedded in our practice and information is shared proactively to support early intervention and prevention.

Priority 2: Children's and Young People's Mental Health

- Further develop our single point of access to ensure children and young people have timely access to appropriate mental health and wellbeing support and timely neurodevelopmental assessment
- Ensure East Lothian's children and young people receive the appropriate needs-based support whilst they are assessed for neurodevelopmental concerns
- Implement Trauma Informed Practice throughout the partnership workforce.

Priority 3: Whole Family Wellbeing

- Implement our whole family wellbeing approach to provide holistic support to families
- Reduce the number of children, young people and families living in relative poverty and referred to statutory agencies
- Develop a partnership approach to test bespoke supports offered throughout pregnancy for women experiencing maternal complex social factors.

Our Plan on a page

VISION

East Lothian's children and young people are happy, healthy and heard

PRINCIPLES

we will ensure every programme adheres to:

Multi-agency

The voice of children and young people shapes direction

Reduces inequalities

Focuses on prevention and early intervention

AIM

PROGRAMME

Ensure the rights of every CYP in East Lothian are upheld by embedding UNCRC into daily practice and processes	UNCRC
Deliver The Promise and the new Corporate Parenting plans to ensure families are supported to stay together at home	The Promise
Ensure GIRFEC remains embedded in daily practice and information is shared proactively to aid prevention and early intervention	GIRFEC
Work to increase community-based opportunities for East Lothian's CYP in safe spaces with trusted adults	Youth Vision
Further develop our single point of access to ensure children and young people have timely access to appropriate mental health and wellbeing support and timely neurodevelopmental assessment	Single Point of Access
Ensure East Lothian's CYP receive the appropriate needs based support whilst they are assessed for neurodevelopmental concerns	Neurodevelopmental Pathway
Implement Trauma Informed Practice throughout the partnership workforce	Trauma Informed Practice
Implement our whole family wellbeing approach to provide holistic support to families	Whole Family Wellbeing Fund
Reduce the number of children, young people and families living in relative poverty	Poverty Action Plans
Develop a partnership approach to test bespoke supports offered throughout pregnancy for women experiencing maternal complex social factors	Maternal Complex Social Factors
Increase community-based opportunities for children and young people in safe spaces with trusted adults	Spatial Planning
Children and Young People's Rights	Children and Young People's Mental Health
	Whole Family Wellbeing



Delivery of the Plan

The CSP is strongly committed to multi-agency partnership working in the delivery of this plan. This means that all agencies will ensure appropriate representation and leadership on our key priorities and will contribute to the ongoing success in delivering positive outcomes for children, young people and families on behalf of the partnership. During the duration of the plan, further work needs to be done to seek, where possible, to align resources to support our key priorities and ensure that we make real progress for East Lothian children, young people and families.

Collaborative leadership and governance arrangements

The CSP is strongly committed to multi-agency partnership working in the delivery of this plan. This means that all agencies will ensure appropriate representation and leadership on our key priorities and will contribute to the ongoing success in delivering positive outcomes for children, young people and families on behalf of the partnership. During the duration of the plan, further work needs to be done to seek, where possible, to align resources to support our key priorities and ensure that we make real progress for East Lothian children, young people and families.



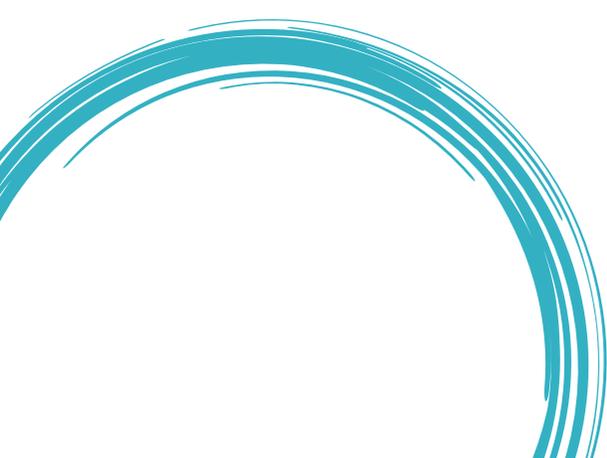
Children's Social
Work



Volunteer
Centre East
Lothian

Education

Elected
Members



References

Children's services planning is mainstreamed in all of these areas:

East Lothian Plan/ Local Outcome Improvement Plan - [The East Lothian Plan](#)

Health & Social Care strategic plan - [East Lothian integrated joint board strategic plan](#)

EMPPC business plan - [East Lothian and Midlothian public protection committee annual report 2021-22](#)

Child Poverty Action Report - [Child poverty action report 2020-22](#)

Local Housing strategy - [Local Housing strategy 2018-23](#)

Local Development Plan - [Local development plan 2019](#)

Corporate parenting plan - [East Lothian Corporate parenting plan 2020 - 2023](#)

National Improvement Framework - [2023 national improvement framework and improvement plan](#)

Early Learning and Child Care - [Early learning and childcare](#)

Self-directed support - [Self directed support information](#)

Carer strategy - [Carer strategy 2023 - 2026](#)

Fairer Scotland Duty - [Equality Plan 2021 - 2025](#)

NHS Child Health Plan

[Community Learning & Development](#)

Equally Safe Delivery Plan - [Summer 2022 - Autumn 2023](#)

Youth Justice and Community Justice - [Youth Justice](#)

Community Justice - [National Strategy for Community Justice - delivery plan](#)

Mid and East Lothian strategic plan - [East Lothian Integration Joint Board Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025](#)



East Lothian Council
John Muir House
Brewery Park
Haddington
East Lothian
EH41 3HA

www.eastlothian.gov.uk

Contact centre **01620 827 827**



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