



**REPORT TO:** East Lothian Integration Joint Board

**MEETING DATE:** 26 June 2025

**BY:** Chief Officer

**SUBJECT:** Review of the East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan

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## **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To provide the Integration Joint Board (IJB) with an update on progress in relation to the review of the East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan.
- 1.2 To present proposed draft strategic objectives and delivery priorities to the IJB for consideration prior to commencement of the next stages of development.

## **2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The IJB is asked to:

- 2.1 Note progress to date and next steps planned in relation to the review of the current IJB Strategic Plan.
- 2.2 Consider the proposed draft strategic objectives and delivery priorities and provide feedback.
- 2.3 Approve the proposed draft strategic objectives and delivery priorities as the basis for wider engagement and for the development of a revised IJB Strategic Plan Consultation Draft.

## **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Under the Public Bodies (Joint Working) (Scotland) 2014 Act, Integration Joint Boards (IJBs) are required to develop a Strategic Plan setting out arrangements for carrying out the integration functions in their geographic area. Whether developing a new Strategic Plan, or revising an existing Plan, IJBs must include details of how arrangements for carrying out delegated functions reflect the integration delivery principles and contribute to the achievement of the national health and wellbeing outcomes defined by the Scottish Government.

- 3.2 At its February 2025 meeting, the IJB agreed the proposed approach presented in relation to the review of the current IJB Strategic and the development of a revised Strategic Plan.
- 3.3 In the intervening months, a range of engagement activities have taken place to inform the development of an initial set of high-level strategic objectives and delivery priorities for inclusion in the revised Strategic Plan. It should be noted that these are in initial draft form, and will continue to evolve as further engagement takes place
- 3.4 Details of proposed draft strategic objectives and the rationale behind each of these are contained at Appendix 1, in summary these are:

#### **Strategic Objective 1 – Transformation and Change**

We will transform, or significantly change, how services are planned and delivered to ensure that population needs can be met as effectively as possible within the resources available.

#### **Strategic Objective 2 – Prevention, Early Intervention, and Self-Management**

We will continue to invest in services and activities that focus on prevention and intervention and that support people to look after their own health and wellbeing.

#### **Strategic Objective 3 – Reducing Health Inequalities**

We will prioritise the delivery of services to improve health and social care outcomes for those most disadvantaged in our communities and will work with partners to address the factors that contribute to health inequalities.

A number of draft strategic delivery priorities are outlined in relation to each of these strategic objectives and are also included in Appendix 1.

- 3.5 Feedback from the initial engagement stage suggested that the IJB's Strategic Plan should focus on a smaller number of strategic objectives, prioritising the activity needed to ensure the sustainability of key services given the increasingly challenging context. This is reflected in the proposed reduction in the number of objectives from seven to three.
- 3.6 Subject to IJB feedback and approval, it is proposed that these draft strategic objectives and delivery priorities form the basis of the next stage of public engagement working towards development of a full Consultation Draft by the end of August. A number of supporting materials are being developed for the next stage of engagement, with an emphasis on ensuring that these are accessible to a broad audience.
- 3.7 The East Lothian Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is near completion and will be finalised in the coming weeks. The JSNA has already proved to be a valuable data resource for the development of the draft strategic objectives and priorities and will continue to inform this

work. Once finalised, the JSNA will be available online and as part of the engagement materials.

3.8 Details of the next steps in the review are contained at Appendix 2. These include:

- Public engagement over the summer period (July – August);
- Presentation of a ‘Consultation Draft’ of the revised Strategic Plan to the SPG for approval (4<sup>th</sup> September);
- Formal engagement on the Consultation Draft in line with statutory guidance (September – October);
- Presentation of a final draft of the revised IJB Strategic Plan to the IJB for approval (18<sup>th</sup> December).

## **4 ENGAGEMENT**

4.1 Details of consultation and engagement planned in relation to the development of the Strategic Plan are outlined in the ‘East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan Development – Consultation & Engagement Plan’.

## **5 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The report relates to the planned approach to revise the current East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan, with a view to developing a revised Strategic Plan to cover the period 2025-2030.

## **6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

6.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) will be carried out in the autumn once an advanced draft of the Strategic Plan has been developed, prior to it being submitted to the IJB in December 2025. Individual IIAs will continue to be carried out in relation to any planned service developments of other activity in aimed at delivering the strategic priorities identified in the final IJB Strategic Plan.

## **7 DIRECTIONS**

7.1 East Lothian IJB directions will be reviewed and updated as necessary once the East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan for 2026-2030 has been agreed.

## **8 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Financial – The IJB current and projected financial position will be a key consideration in identifying the strategic priorities defined in its revised Strategic Plan.

- 8.2 Personnel – Current and anticipated workforce challenges will be considered throughout the review, and the Strategic Plan will link to the Workforce Plan (currently under development).
- 8.3 Other – None.

## 9 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 [East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan 2022-25.](#)
- 9.2 [Health and Social Care – Strategic Plans: Statutory Guidance](#)

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## Review of East Lothian IJB Strategic Plan

### DRAFT Strategic Objectives & Strategic Delivery Priorities (June 2025)

#### Strategic Objective 1 – Transformation and Change

**We will transform, or significantly change, how services are planned and delivered to ensure that population needs can be met as effectively as possible within the resources available.**

East Lothian's population has grown significantly in recent years and continued growth is projected. Overall, it is estimated that the population will have increased by around 15% from 2018 to 2043<sup>1</sup>. The largest growth will be seen in the older population, with a projected 41% increase in the over 65 age group and a 93% increase in over 75s.

The growing older population is significant in terms of the number of people likely to require higher levels of health and social care service provision- 75% of people receiving social care support in Scotland are 65+ and people over 75 are twice as likely to access outpatient or inpatient hospital care than those in mid-20s.

Across Scotland, IJBs have continued to face increasing pressure on budgets, having to achieve savings year on year to deliver balanced budgets. Inflationary pressures; pay settlements; and the rising cost of treatments and prescriptions have added to this challenge. To date, budget gaps have largely been bridged by non-recurring savings; leaving vacancies unfilled; and making use of reserves – none of which provide a sustainable solution for the longer term.

East Lothian IJB has already carried out a range of efficiency measures and made a number of difficult decisions regarding service provision. It is anticipated that budget pressures will continue over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan and further significant savings will be required.

This combination of demographic change; growing service demand; and continued budgetary pressures presents a considerable challenge. The IJB, through its strategic planning and commissioning approach, needs to ensure that the best use is made of the resources available so that key services can be delivered at the level required to keep people safe and to protect the most vulnerable members of our communities.

There is a recognition that significant changes are needed in relation to how we plan and deliver health and social care services in East Lothian, and that, in some cases, transformational approaches to change will be necessary. The level of change needed will require further difficult decisions to be made and a shift in culture and public expectations. Changes will potentially be unpalatable, and this adds to the challenge.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on 2018-based population estimates (NRS, 2020) - more detailed information on population growth is available in the East Lothian Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

Engagement with communities and other stakeholders will be important as new approaches are developed, as will assessing the impact of any changes, and in particular, the impact on people with protected characteristics and on those more vulnerable as a result of social, economic, or other life circumstances.

The IJB's Five-Year Financial Plan will continue to be reviewed to ensure that it aligns with the strategic objectives and delivery priorities identified in the Strategic Plan. Consideration of budget positions will be a key part of producing the Annual Delivery Plan (the Annual Delivery Plan sets out how the IJB's strategic objectives will be delivered in each year of the Strategic Plan).

## Strategic Delivery Priorities (Transformation and Change)

We will prioritise the delivery activities outlined below to help us achieve this Strategic Objective. Further details of how they will be delivered, including timescales and targets, will be included in Annual Delivery Plans developed for each year of the Strategic Plan. In addition, there are a number of strategies / programmes in place, or under development, that will provide direction (these are highlighted in bold italics below).

### 1.1 Shifting the balance of care

Shifting the balance of care from hospital to community settings has been a key strategic objective for the IJB since its introduction.

Significant progress has been made in developing 'Intermediate Care Services' that provide support to people at home as opposed to hospital inpatient provision. These services deliver better outcomes for individuals; reduce pressure on hospital beds; and make more efficient use of resources. 'Intermediate Care Services' in East Lothian include Care at Home; Hospital to Home; Discharge to Assess; Day Services; Emergency Care Service; and Falls Service, as well as a range of commissioned services delivered by third sector partners.

Activity to support the Lothian wide Unscheduled Care Programme and ongoing development of the 'Home First' model in East Lothian will help further progress the shift in the balance of care from hospital to community. The challenge will be to continue to move service provision in this direction and to ensure that this is reflected in the allocation of budgets.

#### Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:

- Ongoing participation in the pan Lothian ***Unscheduled Care Performance Improvement Programme***, supporting a whole system approach to reducing pressure on acute services and bed based care.
- Continued development of the East Lothian 'Home First' model approach and the Single Point of Contact.
- Ongoing investment in and development of Intermediate Care Services, including delivery of the recommendations from the Planning for Older People Services programme report.
- Delivery of the priorities identified in the ***Care at Home Strategy*** – to include establishing at Care at Home Strategy Delivery Group, with oversight from the Intermediate and Social Care Programme Board.
- Working with NHS Lothian partners to progress reallocation of resources from acute to community budgets to reflect the shift in service provision (including with regards to the set-aside budget).

## 1.2 Delivering Outcome Focussed Services

Developing services that are ‘outcome focused’ means that services are planned around individual need and what is important to the person receiving the service. Outcome focussed approaches help to ensure that services are appropriate and proportionate, promoting independence and, where appropriate, reducing reliance on formal services.

This principle already underpins much of HSCP service delivery and commissioning of services, and will continue to underpin service development, including in relation to the transformation agenda.

Revisiting and improving our approach to the implementation of Self Directed Support (SDS)<sup>2</sup> in East Lothian will be a key area of focus going forward. The overall aim of this work will be to support and enable people to achieve the outcomes that are important to them to lead full and meaningful lives.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Ongoing development of strengths / asset-based assessments by Adult Social Work teams.
- Redevelopment of the *East Lothian Self-Directed Support (SDS) Plan* to guide improvement work in relation to the use of SDS in East Lothian. This will be driven by an SDS Delivery Group, with oversight by the Intermediate and Social Care Programme Board.
- Continuing to take an outcome focused approach to health and social care commissioning (as outlined in the *East Lothian HSCP Commissioning Strategy*).

## 1.3 Working with Third Sector Partners

Third sector organisations in East Lothian have a strong track record of delivering new and innovative service models and are well placed to work with communities to deliver collaborative and coproduction approaches. Development of third sector provision also makes a valuable contribution in terms of promoting community cohesion and resilience, reducing social isolation, and supporting inclusion.

We will continue to work with third sector partners to provide existing services and to explore opportunities for new and innovative approaches to service delivery.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Working with the third sector to review existing partnership arrangements, revising these as required to reflect the IJB’s commitment to the sector as a key delivery partner.

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<sup>2</sup> Self-Directed Support (SDS) gives people choice and control over how their social care is planned and delivered. The Social Care SDS (Scotland) Act 2023 defines values and principles in relation to SDS.



- Implementing the *East Lothian HSCP Commissioning Strategy and Market Facilitation Statement*, updating these as required to ensure that they fully reflect the IJB's commitment to the third sector.

## 1.4 Primary Care Strategy

For the vast majority of people, their main contact with healthcare services will be through primary care, with dentist and GP appointments accounting for the highest proportion of contacts.

In East Lothian, primary care services include those provided by GPs, dentists, opticians, and pharmacy, along with a range of services managed and delivered directly by the HSCP (often described as 'PCIP services').

Given what we know regarding the anticipated increase in demand across all services, future pressure on primary care is clearly an area of concern. Activity is needed to look at current and projected demand to inform the strategic planning and delivery of primary care services that are able to meet future population needs. Supporting General Practice sustainability and resilience must be a key priority within this, alongside the ongoing development of HSCP managed primary care services.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Development of a *Primary Care Strategy* covering all primary care services, based on analysis of current and projected demand and identifying key areas for development and investment.
- Establishment of a Delivery Group to deliver the Primary Care Strategy, with oversight from the Primary Care Programme Board.
- Ongoing participation in work to deliver HSCP priorities within the *Pan Lothian Primary Care Programme* as part of the Lothian Strategic Development Framework.

## 1.5 Community Mental Health Services

Shifting the balance of care from acute to community settings is also a priority in relation to mental health service provision. Operationally, HSCP services continue to deliver activity to prevent unnecessary hospital admission; reduce the length of stay and preventing delayed discharge for patients in mental health inpatient settings. However, ongoing service development and resource allocation will be required to ensure there is sufficient capacity within community mental health services to continue to support this shift, as well as to meet any increase in demand resulting from demographic or other factors.

### Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:

- Development of a *Community Mental Health Strategy* to support the planning and delivery of community mental health services to meet current and projected demand and to support the ongoing shift of provision from acute to community settings.
- Ongoing participation in Pan Lothian Improvement Programmes as part of the *Lothian Strategic Development Framework* (including programmes relating to Adult Mental Health Discharge Without Delay; Older People Mental Health Discharge Without Delay; and Redesign of Mental Health Unscheduled Care Improvement Programmes).
- Participation in Lothian Adult Neurodiversity Pathways Group to develop whole system patient pathway discussions.

## 1.6 Digitally enabled care and support

The use of digital technology offers significant opportunities to enhance and transform how we deliver health and social care in East Lothian. Digital options can help make better use of available resources, as well as supporting self-management and playing a role in prevention and early intervention.

This includes the use of digital technology in people's homes, but also by health and social care services in a range of other settings. Technology can include things like alarms, monitoring devices, and telecare equipment, but also the development of online / digital options for accessing services and online resources providing information and advice.

Digital technology is already used by a number of HSCP services, most notably by the East Lothian Rehabilitation Service (ELRS), including, for example, in relation to the Technology Enabled Care (TEC) Service. We now need to explore and develop opportunities to expand the use of technology across all of our service areas.

### Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:

- Development of an *East Lothian HSCP Digital Innovation Strategy* to identify, develop, and deliver opportunities to use digital solutions to support the delivery of health and social care (with oversight by the Digital and Data Programme Board).

## 1.7 Palliative and end of life care

National projections indicate that the number of people requiring palliative and end of life care will increase significantly as the population ages. We need to ensure that we have services in place to respond to this growth in need, particularly in terms of providing palliative and end of life care and support to people at home or in community settings.

The Planning for Older People's Services (POPS) project's [final report](#) recommended that palliative and end of life care should remain a key strategic priority in the revised IJB Strategic Plan and that a Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy / Delivery Group be formed within the IJB Programme Board structure.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Development and delivery of an *East Lothian Palliative and End of Life Care Strategy*, including reflecting the recommendations in the Planning for Older People's Services (POPS) project's [final report](#) . This work will be led by a Delivery Group with oversight by the Intermediate and Social Care Programme Board.

## **1.8 Working with Lothian Health and Care System Partners**

East Lothian IJB, along with the three other Lothian IJBs and NHS Lothian form the Lothian Health and Care System (LHCS). The Lothian Strategic Development Framework (LSDF) sets out LHCS priorities for the next five years up to 2027-28.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Continuing to work with Lothian Health and Care System (LHCS) partners through a range of forums to deliver the *Lothian Strategic Development Framework* (LSDF) and other shared priorities.
- Exploring further opportunities for collaborative working with other Lothian IJBs to deliver efficiencies and develop service provision.
- Taking forward discussion with LSDF partners to review current arrangements for set-aside and hosted services (including with regard to budget arrangements) and to look at opportunities for efficiencies and potential budget reconfiguration.

## Strategic Objective 2 – Prevention, Early Intervention, and Self-Management

**We will continue to invest in services and activities that focus on prevention and early intervention and that support people to look after their own health and wellbeing.**

As described above, we know that projected population growth in East Lothian will lead to a continued increase in demand for health and social care services over the lifetime of this Strategic Plan.

Investing in prevention and early intervention will help to mitigate against some of the projected demand on services by improving the overall health and wellbeing of the East Lothian population. Investment will also help to keep people well for longer; maintaining their independence into older age; and reducing or delaying their need for more intensive, and potentially more expensive care and support.

## Strategic Delivery Priorities (Prevention, Early Intervention, and Self-Management)

We will prioritise the delivery activities outlined below to help us achieve this Strategic Objective. Further details, including timescales and targets, will be included in Annual Delivery Plans developed for each year of the Strategic Plan. In addition, there are a number of strategies / programmes in place, or under development, that will provide direction (these are highlighted in *bold italics* below).

As well as the priorities below, the operational delivery of HSCP services will continue to contribute to achieving this Strategic Objective through existing activities and approaches that focus on prevention, early intervention and self-management.

### 2.1 Supporting people to stay active and independent

Services delivered by Allied Health Professionals (AHPs)<sup>3</sup> are key in supporting people to remain active and independent so they can live independently, in their own home, for as long as possible. In East Lothian, these services are delivered by the East Lothian Rehabilitation Service and include physiotherapy, occupational therapy, falls prevention, telecare, and pain management.

Alongside directly provided services, ELRS staff have developed a range of self-help guides and interactive online tools providing information and advice. ELRS also provides information and advice specifically on the use of consumer technology (Smart TEC) to support independence and keep people safe, and this is an area of potential development as technology continues to develop and improve.

Third sector and community organisations play a key role in delivering services that support people to be active, engaged and independent and to connect with their local community. As noted above, one of the strengths of the sector is organisations' ability to innovate and respond flexibly, as well as to work collaboratively with communities to develop services that reflect what people want and need.

#### Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:

- Continuing to ensure appropriate levels of investment in ELRS and other HSCP delivered services that support people to remain active and independent.
- Ongoing development of activity to support 'self-management' of issues to enable people to remain active and independent.

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<sup>3</sup> Allied Health Professionals (AHPs) are a group of clinicians who provide care to people across a range of care pathways and in a variety of settings, including Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists.

- Further development of opportunities for the use of consumer and other technology to support independence and self-management.
- Commissioning services focused on preventative and early intervention approaches that are outcome / recovery focussed and promote independence, participation and self-management (as laid out in the *East Lothian HSCP Commissioning Strategy*).
- Continued collaboration with third and community sector partners to develop and deliver activities supporting prevention, early intervention, and self-management, including exploring opportunities for innovation and coproduction with communities.

## 2.2 Ensuring services are accessible

Delivering services that are easy to access is key to ensuring that people engage with services at an early stage and continue to engage and benefit fully from the care and support available. This includes developing services that are as local as possible and that can be accessed directly, and where appropriate, offering alternatives to ‘in-person’ appointments.

Primary care plays an important role in relation to prevention, early intervention and self-management of conditions, so we need to continue to ensure that people are able to access the primary care services they need as quickly and easily- both services delivered by General Practices and those managed and delivered by the HSCP.<sup>4</sup>

We have already made a number of changes to the primary care services delivered directly by the HSCP to make them quicker and easier to access through the development of new delivery models and pathways. We have also improved information on primary care services (including an online directory), helping to guide people to the service best placed to meet their needs.

We know that more people are reporting issues related to mental health and recognise the importance of interventions that provide support as early as possible to help address these issues and to prevent them from becoming more serious or debilitating. The same is true in relation to services that provide early intervention for people experiencing difficulties related to drug and alcohol use.

### Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:

- Delivery of priorities within the *Primary Care Strategy* that focus on further improving the accessibility of primary care services.
- Ongoing development of the Mental Health Single Point of Access model to improve access to mental health services ‘at the front door’.
- Continued investment in Mental Health services providing early intervention – including the CWIC Mental Health and Distress Brief Intervention services.

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<sup>4</sup> HSCP managed primary care services include CWIC, CTAC, Vaccinations, and Pharmacotherapy teams.

- Continuing to develop and deliver substance use services that provide quick and easy access to information, advice, and support - including access to treatment where appropriate<sup>5</sup>.

## 2.3 Managing long-term conditions

The number of the people in East Lothian living with one or more long-term condition<sup>6</sup> continues to increase. National figures and projections on the proportion of the population living with multiple long-term conditions (MLTCs), also known as multimorbidity, is of particular concern and is considered to be one of the most significant challenges facing health and social care services now and in the future. In general, the prevalence of MLTCs increases as people get older, but also tends to increase with higher levels of deprivation.

Planning and delivery of healthcare services that meet the needs of people with long-term conditions, including support with self-management, needs to be a key delivery priority for the IJB.

### **Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- The identification and delivery of priorities related to the management of long-term conditions (as part of the development of the *East Lothian Primary Care Strategy*).
- These priorities should include multi-disciplinary approaches; early intervention to prevent or slow down the progression of conditions; and activity to support self-management.

## 2.4 Supporting families and children

Prevention and early intervention from pregnancy, through to early years, and on into childhood and adolescence is important in terms of improving overall population health, leading to better health outcomes throughout adulthood and reducing the need for health and social care support.

Although children's social work services are not delegated to the IJB, there are a number of delegated healthcare services provided to children and families (including, for example, primary care services; health visiting; and school nursing). HSCP services also provide support to parents and other adults within the wider family unit.

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<sup>5</sup> Including through ongoing delivery of the national Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) Standards.

<sup>6</sup> 'Long term conditions' are defined as those that persist over an extended period and may require lifelong management – for example, diabetes, arthritis, heart disease, and respiratory conditions such as COPD.

### **Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Continuing to strengthen partnership working through active involvement in the East Lothian Children's Strategic Partnership to deliver the priorities identified in the *Children's Services Plan*.
- Ongoing development of HSCP teams involvement in multi-disciplinary working across services and organisations to identify and respond to needs within families.
- Involvement the development of 'whole family support services' to provide families with effective, early help.

## **2.5 Managing frailty and falls**

The growth in the older population will be of particular significance as this demographic group has the highest use of health and social care services. As the older population increases, so will number of people living with one or more long term health condition and / or with challenges related to ageing, including frailty.

Falls continue to be the most common cause of emergency hospital admission for adults in Scotland. Falls put pressure on hospital beds and often lead to people requiring new or additional social care and rehabilitation services. Falls can result in reduced confidence and increased frailty for older people, significantly reducing their health, wellbeing, and independence.

### **Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Development and delivery of *East Lothian Frailty Programme* to implement a multi-disciplinary approach to the management of frailty across primary and community care services in line with Health Improvement Scotland (HIS) Frailty Standards.
- Linking in with other Lothian IJBs and NHS Lothian as part of pan Lothian work on frailty.
- Further development of the local approach to the prevention and management of falls in East Lothian and working as part of the pan Lothian multidisciplinary group to deliver the *Lothian Falls Framework*.

## **2.6 Supporting people with Dementia**

Rates of dementia are expected to increase significantly over the next 25 years. The impact of a dementia diagnosis is wide ranging, not only for the person with dementia, but also for families and carers. The East Lothian Dementia Strategy outlines the IJB's commitment to ensuring that people living with dementia remain active, social connected, and supported within their local communities.



**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Delivery of related priorities within the *East Lothian Dementia Strategy*- including expansion of Post Diagnostic Support (PDS), as well as broader services across the entire dementia care pathway.
- (Note- the IJB has an existing commitment to the delivery of these and other priorities within the East Lothian Dementia Strategy – the Strategy can be viewed in full [here.](#))

## **2.7 Carers health and wellbeing**

The number of people providing unpaid care will continue to grow as the population ages and the percentage of people living with a limiting health condition or disability increases. Unpaid carers play a crucial role, supporting people to live at home and often avoiding or reducing their need for support from formal social care services.

Providing support to carers is important in terms of promoting their health and wellbeing and enabling them to continue to in their caring role.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Delivery of priorities within the *East Lothian Carers Strategy* related to supporting carers' health and wellbeing to enable them to continue in their caring roles.
- (Note- the IJB has an existing commitment to the delivery of these and other priorities within the East Lothian Carers Strategy – the Strategy can be viewed in full [here.](#))

## Strategic Objective 3 – Reducing Health Inequalities

**We will prioritise the delivery of services to improve health and social care outcomes for those most disadvantaged in our communities and will work with partners to address the factors that contribute to health inequalities.**

Evidence shows that people living in parts of East Lothian with higher levels of deprivation and / or those with less advantageous living circumstances have significantly poorer health outcomes. This is evident, for example, from the data on life expectancy, with a variation of around 8 years in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas of East Lothian<sup>7</sup>.

We know that there are a range of socio-economic and other factors, often described as the ‘social determinants of health’, that impact on health outcomes – these include, for example, poverty, education, housing, employment, and access to services. It is recognised that health inequalities need to be addressed via a whole system approach, with Community Planning, and other partners working collaboratively.

The IJB also has a specific responsibility to address inequality by ensuring that health and social care services delegated to it are resourced, planned, and delivered in a way that ensures they are accessible to all and that they meet the specific needs of the most disadvantaged groups in our communities.

Reducing health inequalities and improving outcomes for individuals means that more people will live in good health for longer, with fewer health and care needs, helping to mitigate against some of the projected increase in demand on health and social care services in the future.

Certain IJB delegated functions relate to delivery of services for particularly vulnerable groups, for example, Substance Use Services; Justice Social Work; Adult Protection; and Learning Disability Services. As highlighted under Strategic Objective 1, the IJB needs to ensure that these key frontline services continue to be prioritised and adequately resourced in order to keep people safe; to prevent harm; and to reduce disadvantage.

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<sup>7</sup> Based on National Records of Scotland data - more information is available in the East Lothian Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

## Strategic Delivery Priorities (Tackling Inequalities)

We will prioritise the delivery activities outlined below to help us achieve this Strategic Objective. Further details, including timescales and targets, will be included in Annual Delivery Plans developed for each year of the Strategic Plan. In addition, there are a number of strategies / programmes in place, or under development, that will provide direction (these are highlighted in *bold italics* below).

As well as the priorities below, the operational delivery of HSCP services will continue to contribute to achieving this Strategic Objective through existing activities and approaches that focus on achieving better outcomes for all service users.

### 3.1 Working in Partnership

As noted above, health inequalities are the result of a range of socio-economic factors collectively known as 'social determinants of health'. These include factors that are impacted by services that are not the direct responsibility of the IJB. However, given the need for a whole system approach to addressing health inequalities, priority needs to be given to working with partners both strategically and operationally to help address the issues that result in poorer health outcomes.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Developing IJB / HSCP participation in Community Planning and other Strategic Partnerships to develop a whole system, collaborative response to the issues that negatively impact on health outcomes.
- Working with partners through the Housing, Health, and Social Care Strategy Group to drive collaborative working in relation to the *Housing Contribution Statement*.
- Working with Public Health Scotland partners to build upon our understanding of population health data to help inform service development and prioritise the use of resources.

### 3.2 Accessible and appropriate service delivery

We have a direct responsibility to ensure that the health and social care services we deliver are appropriate and sensitive and that they have effective arrangements in place to ensure that the most vulnerable and potentially excluded groups in our communities are able to access them.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Carrying out robust Integrated Impact Assessments to identify potential adverse impacts of service changes or developments on people with protected characteristics or those potentially disadvantaged due to other factors.
- Delivering the equalities outcomes detailed in the *East Lothian IJB's Equalities Outcomes for 2025-29* and reporting on progress through publication of annual Equality Mainstreaming Report.
- Continuing to develop service models and approaches that increase the accessibility of services for the whole population (see Strategic Objective 2 above).
- Continuing to strengthen partnership working at an operational level, working with colleagues from across organisations to develop and deliver collaborative approaches to identifying and responding to individual need.
- Ongoing activity, including staff training and development to ensure that our services are Trauma Informed.<sup>8</sup>

### **3.2 Keeping people safe and reducing harm**

As noted above, continuing to ensure that key frontline services can be delivered at the level needed to keep people safe and reduce the risk of harm must be an overarching priority for the IJB. This includes the provision of statutory social work functions which are crucial in meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged groups in our communities.

**Specific activity required over the lifetime of the Strategic Plan includes:**

- Ongoing monitoring and oversight to ensure that service provision can effectively meet demand.
- Continued service development, including in relation to prevention and early intervention approaches (see Strategic Objective 2 above), and strengthening of collaborative and multidisciplinary working to meet individual needs.

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<sup>8</sup> Trauma Informed services 'recognise where people are affected by trauma and adversity, and that respond in ways that prevent further harm, support recovery, address inequalities and improve life chances' - more information can be found [here](#).

	Description	Timescale
<b>Analysis of existing evidence from previous engagement / feedback.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Analysis of evidence and feedback already gathered via engagement and feedback processes – key themes to be fed into the IJB Strategic Plan Review.</li> </ul>	Feb – April 2025
<b>Stage 1 Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initial key stakeholder engagement focusing on high level elements of the Strategic Plan (Vision, Strategic Objectives, Strategic Priorities).</li> </ul>	Feb – June 2025
<b>Development of draft Strategic Objectives and Delivery Priorities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of proposed draft Strategic Objectives and Delivery Priorities.</li> <li>Presented to June IJB for feedback / approval.</li> </ul>	June 2025
<b>Stage 2 Engagement and development of Consultation Draft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement over the summer period to gather views on draft Strategic Objectives and Delivery Priorities.</li> <li>Development of Consultation Draft informed by stage 1 and stage 2 engagement feedback.</li> </ul>	July - August 2025
<b>SPG approval of Consultation Draft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consultation Draft to go to SPG for approval prior to formal consultation stage.</li> </ul>	4 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2025
<b>Stage 3 Engagement on Consultation Draft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statutory engagement on Consultation Draft (with prescribed stakeholders as per statutory guidance).</li> <li>Including sharing of Consultation Draft with NHS Lothian and East Lothian Council senior leaders.</li> </ul>	Sept – mid Oct 2025
<b>Development of Advanced Draft</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Feedback from statutory engagement stage used to inform development of an Advanced Draft.</li> <li>Advanced Draft to the SPG for final feedback.</li> </ul>	Mid Oct – Nov 2025
<b>Final Strategic Plan to IJB for approval</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Final Strategic Plan submitted to the IJB for consideration / approval.</li> </ul>	18 Dec 2025
<b>Completion of feedback loop</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication on publication of IJB Strategic Plan, including report on consultation / engagement feedback and how this is reflected in the final Strategic Plan.</li> </ul>	Jan 2026
<b>Engagement will continue to inform the delivery of strategic priorities, and the formation of Annual Delivery Plans linked to the IJB Strategic Plan.</b>		<b>Ongoing</b>

