

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 11 November 2025

BY: Depute Chief Executive Resources and Economy

Report title: East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2025-2029

Report status: Public

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with the final version of the East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2025-2029 for consideration and approval.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1 Approve the East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2025-2029.
- 2.2 Note that a detailed action plan based on the six outcomes and 25 new actions will be progressed and reported publicly through biennial Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Reports.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Equality Act 2010 (The Act) places a legal duty on public authorities to address practices which could lead to unlawful discrimination and consequently poorer access and outcomes for the Protected Characteristic groups.
- 3.2 The Act introduced the term 'Protected Characteristics,' which refers to the nine equality characteristics protected by the duty. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. Intersectionality is having one or more protected characteristic which can compound inequality of access or outcome.

- 3.3 As a local authority, East Lothian Council is also legally required to implement the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This is comprised of two elements, the general and the specific duty. The General Duty (GED) requires public listed authorities to consider the need ('due regard') to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
 - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and to
 - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- 3.4 The Act requires public authorities to adopt a new Plan every four years setting out a set of Equality Outcomes for the new period. This plan meets the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 which require an authority to:
- report on mainstreaming the equality duty
 - publish equality outcomes and report progress.
- 3.5 This Equality Plan 2025-2029 sets out what we will do over the next period towards achieving our aim of ensuring everyone who lives, works or receives a service in East Lothian should be free from discrimination, and able to achieve their fullest potential with no one denied opportunities because of who they are. These principles underpin all work across the Council and contribute to its vision of: *'A prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian, with a dynamic and thriving economy that enables (all) our people and communities to flourish'*.
- 3.6 In developing the plan, we worked in partnership with Mid, East and West Lothian councils, NHS Lothian and the associated Health and Social Care Partnership/Integrated Joint Board's¹, we considered the Equality and Human Rights Commission 'Is Scotland Fairer report 2023' and data from national and local third sector organisations to inform a set of outcomes for consultation.
- 3.7 Consultation held online between December 2024 - January 2025 tested the proposed outcomes for relevance. We asked if these are the right outcomes, and whilst there was lots of feedback and various views, overall respondents agreed. More than 100 people took the time to respond, sharing their experience, ideas and thoughts.
- 3.8 These have been analysed and taken into account in the final drafting of the Plan.
- 3.9 The Plan does not sit alone in its objective to reduce inequality of access and outcome but is part of a suite of Council and partnership plans, policies and strategies that contribute to this objective.

¹ With the exception of the City of Edinburgh council

- 3.10 The Council has a large number of other strategies and plans such as the Council Plan, the Local Housing Strategy, the Workforce Development Plan and the Education Improvement Plan, and specific sectoral equality plans and policies such as the British Sign Language Plan, the Education service Inclusion and Accessibility Policy and Respect for All (Anti-Bullying) Strategy, for example, which address equalities and set out how they aim to meet the objective of reducing inequalities.
- 3.11 Our statutory public sector partners, including NHS Lothian and Police Scotland, are also required to produce Equality plans under the Act.
- 3.12 The Equality Plan identifies key priorities to improve equality outcomes across what we do as a Council, Education Authority, Licencing Board and employer. These priorities have been identified through reviewing progress with the previous Equality Plan, and through engagement with the public and with stakeholders and partners such as NHS Lothian.
- 3.13 The Plan sets out seven high level equality outcomes that the Council will work towards during 2025–2029 to meet its statutory duties under the Equality Act and, also align with the overarching commitments within other plans to reduce inequalities within and across our communities. These are:
- **Participation:** Everyone is able to receive the right information in the right place, in the right format, at the right time
 - **Living Standards (poverty):** Poverty decreases across the protected characteristic groups with improved health and well-being
 - **Living standard (housing):** Everyone is able to access timely support and information in the right format to make informed decisions
 - **Education:** All children are valued and respected; improved educational and social outcomes for protected groups
 - **Justice:** People are confident to report hate crimes including sexual abuse and violence and receive help and support to be safe
 - **Work:** Everyone is respected at work and confident to report racism and other unlawful behaviours
 - **Health and Wellbeing:** Who we are is not a barrier to being healthy, active and independent.
- 3.14 The Plan includes 25 aligned actions to be progressed by the Council over the course of this Plan to ensure that it meets its duties under the Equality Act and achieves its overarching commitment to '*reduce inequalities within and across our communities*'.
- 3.15 Progress in meeting the seven outcomes and actions will be reported in biennial Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Reports. The Equality Act 2010 stipulates that the outcomes and mainstreaming reports must be in the 'public domain'; to meet this requirement, these reports will be

published in the Members Library, which is publicly accessible via the council website.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The East Lothian Council Equality Plan 2025-2029 sets out the Council's commitment to equality and demonstrates compliance with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.2 The Plan also takes account of legislative and other developments that have come into force since the previous Plan was adopted including the Fairer Scotland Duty, under Part 1 of the Equality Act 2010, which came into force in Scotland in April 2018.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Finance: None arising from the Plan. Any reasonable adjustments or actions that require resources to be implemented, that cannot be contained within existing budgets, will be considered as part of the budget planning process.
- 5.2 Human resources: none
- 5.3 Other: none.
- 5.4 Risks: Non-compliance with the Equality Act 2010 may result in litigation pursued by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, an individual (including employees/tribunal) or third sector organisation, which could result in financial settlement, or loss of organisational Integrity for example.

6 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The subject focus of this plan addresses barriers to equality informed by the [Is Scotland Fairer report](#) and local consultation, including protected characteristic groups, who identified where negative impacts exist. This has informed the outcomes and actions, to mitigate those impacts.

Select the statement that is appropriate to your report by placing an 'X' in the relevant box.

An Integrated Impact Assessment screening process has been undertaken, and the subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on: equality and human rights; tackling socio-economic disadvantages and poverty; climate change, the environment and sustainability; the Council's role as a corporate parent; or the storage/collection of personal data.

☐

or

The subject of this report has been through the Integrated Impact Assessment process and impacts have been identified as follows:

x

Subject	Impacts identified (Yes, No or N/A)
Equality and human rights	yes
Socio-economic disadvantage/poverty	yes
Climate change, the environment and sustainability	
Corporate parenting and care-experienced young people	
Storage/collection of personal data	
Other	

The Integrated Impact Assessment relating to this report has been published and can be accessed via the Council's website:

https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/info/210602/equality_and_diversity/12014/integrated_impact_assessments

7 APPENDICES

7.1 Equality Plan 2025-2029

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

8.1 None

9 AUTHOR AND APPROVAL DETAILS

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Approval Date	30 October 2025

Equality:

Mainstreaming report 2023-2025

Equality plan 2025-2029

Contents	Page Number
Foreword by the Chief Executive Officer	3
Introduction	4
Our duties under the Equality Act 2010 • Pay due regard • Specific duties • Mainstreaming • Assess impact • Reporting	4
Equality outcomes 2021-2025	7
Outcomes report 2023-2025	8
Equality Outcomes 2025-2029	27
Integration Joint Board Equality Outcomes	35
Licensing Board	36
Appendix: Consultation response summary	40

Alternative Formats: If you would need this document in a different language or format, please email translation@eastlothian.gov.uk or phone 01620 827199.

For all other enquiries please email: equalities@eastlothian.gov.uk, call 01620 89 827827 or write to Equalities Officer, John Muir House, Brewery Park, Haddington, East Lothian, EH41 3HA

Foreword by the Chief Executive Officer

I am pleased to share East Lothian Council's latest Equality Outcomes Progress report and a set of Equality Outcomes for the period 2025-2029.

The report has been prepared in the context of the East Lothian Council Plan 2022-2027, which continues the journey towards realising our vision for an even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian, with a dynamic and thriving economy, which enables our people and communities to flourish.

One of the Council Plan's overarching objectives is 'reduce poverty and inequality – supporting our communities to deal with the growing levels of poverty and inequality.' Our approach to equality links to many other strategies and plans, including our Poverty Plan, as part of our Fairer Scotland duty.

While the council continues to operate in an extremely challenging operating environment, we remain committed to tackling inequality and working with our partners to improve outcomes for people across the protected characteristic groups, as well as those in our communities who may also be experiencing inequality and socio economic hardship. However, within the period of this plan, East Lothian Council is facing an estimated recurring financial gap of over £70 million. Third sector partners who contribute significantly to our work to address inequalities, will continue to be impacted by short-term funding cycles that restrict their strategic planning and contribution to addressing inequality.

In one of Scotland's fastest growing local authority areas, we are working hard to ensure we continue providing excellent housing options, develop infrastructure and grow the local economy for the benefit of all residents, old and new.

It is essential that, in addressing the challenges and grasping the opportunities ahead of us, we ensure that our equality outcomes – together with our council values: Enabling Leading and Caring – underpins all that we do.

This mainstreaming report provides us with an opportunity to highlight the progress we have made against our equality outcomes in line with our legal duty under the Equality Act 2010 and to set out our determination to build on this in the years ahead.

Laurence Rockey
East Lothian Council

Introduction

This document is in two parts. Part one sets out our progress towards the mainstreaming outcomes for the final years of the existing plan (mainstreaming report 2023-2025), and part two, the new 2025-2029 outcomes.

Part one: Mainstreaming report 2023-2025

This mainstreaming report shows progress against our equality outcomes in line with our legal duty under the Equality Act 2010. It sets out how East Lothian Council has taken forward work in its role as both service provider and employer in the final two years (2023-2025) of the current Equality Plan 2021-2025.

This Equality Plan continued our commitment to eliminate unlawful discrimination, promote equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between people. It built on our previous work which informed our overarching commitments. Our previous plans can be viewed on our website.

The Fairer Scotland Duty which came into force in April 2018 forms part of this work and is reflected in the outcomes. This additional duty tasks local authorities to actively consider how to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

This mainstreaming report does not provide an update on the many outcomes and actions set out in our other strategic plans which also deliver on equality, diversity and inclusion including the 2022-2027 Council Plan, the Poverty Plan, and the Local Housing Strategy for example, although some of these actions are demonstrated.

Both the Education Authority and the Licensing Board have an independent duty to report progress on actions to meet their Equality duties as named bodies. This report includes these updates and uses the terms 'East Lothian Council/council' as shorthand for the Council, Education Authority and Licensing Board.

Our duties under the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on public authorities to address practices which could lead to unlawful discrimination and consequently poorer access and outcomes for those affected.

It introduced the term 'Protected Characteristics,' which refers to the nine equality characteristics protected by the duty. These are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage or civil partnership, race, religion

or belief, sex and sexual orientation.¹ Intersectionality is having one or more protected characteristic which can compound inequality of access or outcome.

1. Pay due regard to: As a local authority, East Lothian Council is legally required to implement the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This is comprised of two elements, the general and the specific duty. The General Duty (GED) requires public listed authorities to consider the need ('due regard') to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and to
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

2. Specific duties: Additionally, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) (Scotland) Regulations 2012 require an authority to:

- report on mainstreaming the equality duty
- publish equality outcomes and report progress
- assess and review policies and practices
- gather and use employee information
- publish gender pay gap information
- publish statements on equal pay
- consider award criteria and conditions in relation to public procurement
- publish in a manner that is accessible.

The broad purpose of the equality duty is to integrate or 'mainstream' consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of a listed public authority as set out. To find out more go to the [Equality and Human Rights Commission website](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/).

3. Mainstreaming: As part of this work, we:

- make equality part of the day to day business as service planners, providers and employers, rather than a 'bolt-on' at the end of projects and other programmes of work;
- ensure that equality of opportunity is part of the culture of the organisation, recognising that both employees and customers benefit from organisations where they feel valued, with their interests and issues respected alongside the issues and values of others; and
- demonstrate a commitment to equality by publicly demonstrating that unlawful discrimination, victimisation and harassment are not condoned.

¹ Home Page | Equality and Human Rights Commission ([equalityhumanrights.com](https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/))

The council's equality considerations are mainstreamed into council plans and our day-to-day work. The Equality Plans do not replicate the various equality aligned outcomes, objectives and actions set out elsewhere but a specific set of Equality outcomes which relevant services progress.

4. Impact Assessment

To ensure policy and practice supports equality mainstreaming, an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) of any proposed, or changed policy, practice or strategy is completed. We do this to test for potential areas of discrimination, differential or adverse impact, including socio economic causes, across the protected characteristic groups. These reports accompany council papers to inform decision making as part of an Integrated Impact Assessment process.

5. Reporting

Relevant authorities must report on progress to the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) in a mainstreaming report, every two years. The current specific equality outcomes in the Equality mainstreaming plan 2021-2025, highlight three high level mainstreaming priorities, which set out to:

- Ensure high level commitment to equality through all levels of the Council structure and planning procedures – for example, the current Council Plan has an explicit commitment to reduce poverty and inequality.
- Understand the impact of our work – such as, the completion of an IIA; monitoring and reporting on equalities performance indicators; and building consultation and engagement with equalities groups.
- Build Organisational Capacity – for example by providing equality training and embedding fair work in the council's procurement policy and practice.

The 2025-2029 Equality Plan is in development and builds on work to date to address better outcomes for all.

Equality Outcomes 2021 – 2025

In our current Equality Plan we set out to progress the following outcomes:

1. East Lothian Council services are accessible to and will meet the needs of all in the community, including people who share a protected characteristic;
2. In East Lothian we are breaking the cycle of poverty so that fewer people experience poverty;
3. The gap in educational outcomes for children and young people impacted by socio-economic disadvantage will be closed; and the health and wellbeing of children and young people with protected characteristics will be improved;
4. Everyone in East Lothian has access to a decent, affordable, warm and dry home;
5. People lead healthier, more active and independent lives;
6. People feel safe and experience less crime in their communities, and at home; there is zero tolerance of hate, abuse and violence against women and girls and people feel their communities are inclusive;
7. East Lothian Council is an Equal Opportunities employer, and our workplace feels inclusive to staff with protected characteristics.

The following pages set out the work completed, which either directly, or in the realm, contribute to addressing these ambitions, including the development of skills, knowledge and tools required.

Outcomes Report 2023-2025

This section provides information on progress made against each of the seven objectives in the 2021-2025 Equality Plan and concludes with an update from the East Lothian Council Licensing Board.

Outcome 1: East Lothian Council services are accessible to and will meet the needs of all in the community, including people who share a protected characteristic.

Proposed actions:

- Ensure that the Integrated Impact Assessment tool is used effectively so that protected characteristics and socio-economic disadvantage are taken into account when planning and designing services and when making policy decisions
- Review the Translation and Interpretation service to ensure that communication is provided in minority languages
- Review progress in implementing the recommendations of the Council's British Sign Language Plan
- Review the accessibility of the Council website
- Monitor Customer Feedback for complaints that raise concerns about inequality and discrimination and ensure that appropriate action is taken
- Ensure the Digital Inclusion Strategy takes account of equality issues and the Fairer Scotland Duty
- Review how the equalities and Fair Work clauses in the Council's procurement process are operating
- Monitor the Scottish Government's review into the effectiveness of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) in Scotland and take appropriate action if required
- Update the Council's 'Guide to Monitoring Equalities in Council Services' to ensure it provides clear guidance on how to monitor equalities effectively
- Update the Equality Training Plan
- Re-establish the East Lothian Diversity and Equality Network
- Review the Council's performance indicators and update the suite of Equality Outcomes Indicators that will report on progress in meeting this Plan's outcomes in bi-annual Equality Outcomes and Mainstreaming Progress Reports.

Update

Assessing Impact

Understanding the experiences of people facing discrimination and disadvantage enables us to design inclusive services to better meet different needs. As previously

stated, we have updated our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) framework and supporting information. This supports staff to consider the equality and socio-economic impact of our work, together with consideration of both Human and Children and Young people's rights. Staff are additionally signposted in the IIA to complete a Children's Rights and Wellbeing Impact Assessment (CRWIA) as required.

Leadership is provided by the Council Management Team (CMT including Heads of Service who sign off the completed Integrated Impact Assessments and the CRWIA prior to publication alongside the relevant Strategy, Policy or Plan, prior to Council Cabinet meetings. Completed IIAs and CRWIAS are available on our [website](#).

Our Integrated Impact Assessment guidance and template has also been reviewed and updated within this period; this continues to be reviewed regularly to meet any changes to our legal requirements. Staff are also advised of online face to face learning opportunities, as well as day to day support, and guidance where required.

Accessible services and information

Like many organisations we have adopted a digital first approach to facilitate easier and increased access and inclusion, aligning with our revised [Customer Strategy 2023 - 2028](#) and [Communication Strategy 2022-2027](#). In doing so we are able to provide timely, dedicated and face to face services to people requiring additional support and/or information on more complex matters.

The council website is accessible in line with Web Content Accessibility Guidelines and is monitored to maintain its performance and accessibility. Additionally, service information is accessible via the 'Recite me' function on the council website, this enables adjustments for viewing format preferences and language translation, including Read aloud. We are currently developing a new website which will continue to be accessible.

A review of the Translation and Interpretation service by our Feedback team within Governance, ensures that communications are provided in minority languages with the process now embedded. Services are signposted to suppliers to organise access with agreed providers.

Web editors and content creators receive training and advice in digital accessibility, including the procurement of new websites and application services. Internal IT updates continue to increase accessibility for employees. All staff receive information on IT accessibility, and support as required. Our brand guidelines also support accessible communication.

The 2023 Customer Strategy sets out the intention and actions to ensure we remain accessible and inclusive as we move more services and information online. This

includes the development of in-person customer hubs which are at an early stage of development.

We continue to implement our British Sign Language Plan 2024-2030 and work with Deaf led organisations to support communication with customers and promote the use of the Scottish Government's British Sign Language contact BSL service. Our Digital strategy 2022-2027 is in place to transform the way we work, engage with residents, and deliver council services. It aims to 'put our citizens at the heart of everything we do and will redesign our services accordingly, co-designing whenever it is appropriate to do so.'

Equality monitoring and data collection

The updating of the Equality Monitoring guidance in relation to this outcome has been achieved and will be monitored for ongoing changes. We continue to build practice to ensure we include options to complete equality data in our community involvement and engagement work online or in person.

Human resources via myjobscotland, has access to employment application data, where it is supplied. However, it is not mandatory to complete. Once in post staff are encouraged to complete and update their equality information with periodic reminders. This information enables us to monitor our employment practices across the protected characteristics where it is provided.

We aim to monitor customer feedback for complaints that raise concerns about inequality and discrimination, however, it remains impractical at the point of customer services and systems to capture the data, if asked and supplied. This will continue to be a focus within the Customer Strategy.

Learning and Development

Within this period the E-Learning module has been reviewed, updated and strengthened to ensure staff know their responsibilities to behave and carry out their work and interactions with colleagues and customers in line with the Equality Act, and the recent Worker Protection Act. This is an extension to the existing Equality Act 2010 and came into force in October 2024.

The Worker Protection Act compels employers to take 'reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees in the course of their employment,' that is to take action against inappropriate conduct in the workplace. It also gives workers further protection, rights and support should they experience sexual harassment at work.

Completion of the module is monitored; however, we are identifying ways to ensure that it is completed by those unable to access it online for reasons of venue, IT availability, or format. Recent numbers indicate a 67% (3637 completed out of a total of 5415) completion rate for the current year, which increases to 71% for education

staff. Staff complete the mandatory Equality module, and Sexual Harassment at work (Worker Protection Act) modules annually, it also forms part of induction information for new staff.

We continue to communicate our values, and legal requirements towards each other and our customers, with the aim of equipping staff with the knowledge to implement equality practice, address barriers, and ask questions of their work. Additionally, an E-Learning module to provide information and illustrate the impact of poverty in relation to the Fairer Scotland duty, is in development. The Equality Training plan will be updated within the period of the next plan.

Human rights and children's rights

Since the last update, the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) passed into Scottish domestic law. East Lothian Council has established a lead officer/champion group to provide leadership of UNCRC implementation and also to play a lead role in each service. The Council's work has been recognised very positively by the Improvement Service, particularly given the approach to ensure all Council service areas understand their role around Children's Rights. As a result of these developments, children's rights are now included in the council's Integrated Impact Assessment framework. These are also published online.

Engagement with equality groups

Our ability to connect with our equality communities is an ongoing priority as our population and diversity increases, including Ukrainian refugees and unaccompanied child asylum seekers. Each service takes responsibility to engage with service users, representative organisations, community and protected characteristic groups to inform service actions and outcomes including our Equality duties.

Uptake and feedback through online consultation continues to be low across the population as a whole, which may be due to lack of online access, time constraints or disaffection to affect change. Services engage with communities on specific areas within local venues and localities to explore specific topics which also inform the completion of the Equality Impact Assessment. Monitoring guidance has been reviewed and updated, it underpins best practice and there is evidence of an increased use of equality data questions being included in consultation. A draft Participation and Engagement strategy is in development which will also consider how best to engage all parts of East Lothian's communities.

As part of this approach, we seek to re-establish the Equality and Diversity network/sounding board and a local access panel. In this gap we work closely with our neighbouring local authorities, NHS Lothian and Edinburgh based groups as well as engagement completed within East Lothian Council services.

Across our services we continue to work in close partnership with partner agencies through the East Lothian Partnership (Community Planning Partnership). This supports our shared endeavours to support more effective communications, encourage engagement to shape and inform equality requirements and address barriers. Developing our revised British Sign Language plan in 2024 has enabled the development of a local Deaf group which is supported by VCEL.

Our website Recite me function, as well as dedicated staff support, has enabled access to council services, information and involvement by addressing barriers to participation and information. We continue to use Customer Feedback – complaints, comments and compliments – to improve what we do.

Organisational approach to mainstreaming equality

The increased visibility of the Integrated Impact Assessment process and the requirement to provide an IIA as part of council reports, has increased awareness of equality considerations and encouraged managers and relevant officers to attend training through this period.

Managers continue to support the development and implementation of good practice, and this is particularly true of the IIA process.

Procurement and Fair Work clauses

The council's revised Procurement Strategy 2023-2028, affirms its obligations under relevant legislation, including the Equality Act 2010 and the use of Fair Work clauses. The application of the Strategy will enable the council to lever change more effectively through influencing awards using Equality and Fair Work criteria. To find out more please go to [Procurement Strategy | East Lothian Council](#).

Measuring performance

The council adopted a suite of 50 Council Plan Performance Indicators, with half of these measuring poverty and equality. Where possible the Council Plan and Equality Plan indicators are disaggregated according to protected characteristics. Coupled with the update of the data monitoring guidance, it is anticipated that services will be able to identify disaggregation across the protected characteristics to inform service delivery and the Impact Assessment process.

Working in partnership with Lothian councils, NHS Lothian and the Health and Social Care Partnership we continue to share and analyse data to inform equality practice.

Outcome two: In East Lothian we are breaking the cycle of poverty so that fewer people experience poverty.

The Council Plan 2022-2027 set an ambition to: 'Reduce poverty and inequality - supporting our communities to deal with the growing levels of poverty and inequality' embedding this outcome into core business.

The Poverty Plan 2021-2023 took this forward, setting out how the council and its partners meet their responsibilities under the Fairer Scotland Duty to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage. These are:

- Working and free from poverty
- Financially Included – people have access to income maximisation and money advice
- Having a decent, affordable and warm home
- Educated – reduce the attainment gap and raise the attainment and achievement of our children and young people
- Healthy and Well – people in East Lothian are enjoying healthier lives and health inequalities are eliminated
- Resilient and Well Connected individuals and communities; connected public services taking a prevention and early intervention approach to tackling poverty
- Empowered and Responsible – citizens and communities are empowered to influence policy, and the council and partners take responsibility to reduce poverty.

A review of the forty-nine actions contained in the 2021-2023 Poverty Plan carried out in July 2023 showed that 49% (24) of the actions are complete, 41% (20) are ongoing with 10% (5) to be progressed. For example, the Parental Employability Support (funding from Scottish Government) supported:

- 142 parents
- 80 Paid Work Experience Placements included for example hospitality, administration, classroom assistants
- Forty-seven job outcomes
- Sixty-two qualifications gained
- Eighty non-accredited training courses completed

Update

Fuel Poverty has been addressed through work with Changeworks with the provision of energy advice, including access to grants and billing advocacy. This included advice to lone parents with young children which resulted in significant financial savings to mitigate the impact of fuel poverty and its impact on health. Overall significant financial savings were achieved (circa £85K).

Transport

National Entitlement Cards provide free bus travel for under 22-year-olds. Between April and September 2024, 853,745 free bus journeys were taken in East Lothian with approximately 18k cards being issued. 126 young people in East Lothian have benefitted from the Young Carers package over the past five years. Currently there are ninety-nine young carers from East Lothian signed up to the package.

Money and equivalent benefits

In 2023/24, East Lothian Council Financial Inclusion team carried out 845 benefit checks resulting in monetary benefits.

Child poverty: East Lothian's Local Child Poverty Action Reports set out work to address child poverty.

During this period consultation and engagement took place to inform the new Poverty plan 2024-2028 which focuses on four objectives to increase income (cash in people's pockets), towards creating resilient communities ready for the future.

These focus on:

- Good quality jobs that pay fairly, and where we support people to gain the skills and training needed to find and maintain work, in secure, flexible jobs that pay fairly
- Enough money from benefits, our social security system should provide people with a fair income, but millions of pounds go unclaimed each year. We will support people to claim the income that they are entitled to and provide support with the cost of living
- A good life with access to the essentials. Housing, good health, quality food and a resilient community are part of our human rights. We will take a preventative approach to homelessness, hunger and health inequalities caused by poverty
- Climate change ready, climate change will impact vulnerable and low-income communities the hardest. We will take preventative action to protect and support these communities from the effects of climate change.

This will be underpinned by specific improvements to our current ways of working, such as the impact of budgetary decision-making and poverty.

One of the three overarching objectives in the 2022-2027 Council Plan is to: **Reduce poverty and inequality** - *supporting our communities to deal with the growing levels of poverty and inequality.*

The Poverty Plan 2021-2023 shows how the council and its partners meet their responsibilities under the Fairer Scotland Duty to reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

The 2021-2023 plan builds on the previous 2017-2021 plan and sets out forty-nine actions around seven outcomes which reflect the Equality Outcomes in this Equality Plan:

- Working and free from in poverty
- Financially Included – people have access to income maximisation and money advice
- Having a decent, affordable and warm home
- Educated – reduce the attainment gap and raise the attainment and achievement of our children and young people
- Healthy and Well – people in East Lothian are enjoying healthier lives and health inequalities are eliminated
- Resilient and Well Connected individuals and communities; connected public services taking a prevention and early intervention approach to tackling poverty
- Empowered and Responsible – citizens and communities are empowered to influence policy, and the council and partners take responsibility to reduce poverty.

A review of the forty-nine actions contained in the 2021-2023 Poverty Plan carried out in July 2023 showed that 49% (24) of the actions have been completed, 41% (20) are ongoing / long term commitments and 10% (5) have still to be progressed.

Key actions/ activities to support the delivery of the Poverty Plan and meet the reducing poverty and inequality outcome in 2021-2023 include:

- Developing cash first approaches to supporting people in financial difficulty, including increasing Scottish Welfare Fund funding to provide £50 and £100 cash payments to people as an alternative to referring them for a Foodbank parcel; supporting the Community Wind power Energy Fund that distributed almost £800,000 to help over 1,400 households pay their fuel bills and meet the rising cost of living in winter 2022/23; and, providing additional funds to Children's Services and Adult Social Work to provide cash support to vulnerable children, families and adults including carers
- Running a Benefits Campaign in September 2022 that generated almost £125,000 in financial gain for over sixty people who accessed advice services as a direct result of the campaign
- Establishing a £758,000 Cost of Living Assistance Fund in 2022/2023 to support low income households through the cost of living crisis.

The review of the 2021-2023 Plan and its actions has helped to inform the development of the new Poverty Plan 2024-2028 which was developed by a multi-agency working group and active engagement with the voluntary and community sector and people with lived experience.

Engagement

- Eight community engagement sessions in June 2023 (in Musselburgh, Prestonpans, Tranent, North Berwick, Haddington and Dunbar) listening to people's broad experiences of poverty and how they want to see services developing in East Lothian
- Three Network for Change development days bringing together third sector and statutory partners to develop their key themes and requirements for the poverty plan
- Three poverty self-assessment sessions identifying areas for improvement in the partnership approach to tackling poverty. An online survey hosted and analysed by the Improvement Service guided this work
- Thematic sessions on gender, disability, climate change, childcare, crisis support and housing
- Working for Change Collective conversation cafes at which people with lived experience of poverty were encouraged to feed into the process
- Young people were consulted through the Growing and Changing lived experience group (15-18 years old) and S2 Consultation Group (12-13 year olds). Family feedback was input through the Families Together East Lothian group
- Online consultation with in-person drop-ins.

East Lothian's Local Child Poverty Action Reports are available [online](#).

Outcome 3: The gap in educational outcomes for children and young people impacted by socio-economic disadvantage will be closed; and the health and wellbeing of children and young people with protected characteristics will be improved.

Proposed actions:

Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion inform our universal commitment to inclusive practice set out within our Council Plan 2022-2027. We committed to the following:

- Review progress being made in reducing the poverty-related attainment gap and improving the health and wellbeing of children and young people with protected characteristics
- Review progress being made in reducing the attainment gap of looked after children and young people through the Corporate Parenting Plan
- Review the implementation of the Accessibility Strategy (2020-2023): Included, Engaged & Involved: Inclusion, Equality and Accessibility for all, with a particular focus on ensuring it meets the needs of all children and young people with protected characteristics

- Review the implementation of the Anti-bullying Policy: Respect for All. Promoting Positive and Respectful Relationships in our schools with a particular focus on ensuring it meets the needs of all CYP with Protected Characteristics
- Review Progress in achieving the eight actions under Educated theme in the Poverty plan.

Reporting 2023-2025: Our most recent work is reported through the Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan 2024/25 and reflects that:

- At National 5 level the attainment gap narrowed for students living in the most disadvantaged and least disadvantaged areas by 8 percentage points (from 19 in 2024 to 11 in 2025)
- At Higher level the attainment gap narrowed to 13 percentage points (reduced from 21).
- At Advanced Higher we recorded the largest improvement reducing from 21 percentage points in 23/24 to 7 percentage points in the next reporting period.

Stretch aims in Scotland are part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge, aimed at raising attainment and closing the poverty-related attainment gap. Local authorities are required to set ambitious but achievable stretch aims for progress in overall attainment and in closing the poverty-related attainment gap. These aims include achieving Curriculum for Excellence Levels, passing National Qualifications, and increasing participation in education, employment, or training. The framework emphasises the importance of setting high expectations and using existing improvement systems to track and report on these aims.

East Lothian stretch aims are being adjusted accordingly to ensure that we continue to strive for further improvement.

Our most recent work is reported through the Education Service Progress Report and Improvement Plan 2023/24 and 2024/25

Ensuring Wellbeing, Equality and Inclusion (GIRFEC) In Session 2022/23 we aimed to ensure a universal commitment to inclusive practice. Notable areas of improvement include:

- Autism Support - The Autism Support Service pilot project supported twelve children and young people, sixteen parents and sixty professionals, improving confidence, knowledge and skills.
- Rights Respecting School Award (RRSA) is the main framework to support pupil leadership and voice. The RRSA is now being implemented in 83% of our schools, with one gold award school, eight silver award schools and seventeen bronze award schools.

- LGBT Youth Scotland - The central Equity and Inclusion Team obtained accreditation from LGBT Youth Scotland in the form of the Foundation Charter Mark. Four secondary schools newly attained LGBT's Youth Scotland's Silver Charter Mark.
- Safeguarding & Child Protection – Our Included, Engaged and Involved: Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy was approved at Education Committee in June 2023 and has been subsequently shared and implemented. Associated guidance on the storage of pupil information was also finalised and shared with all educational establishments.
- Young Carers' Service - To increase awareness of the service, awareness raising PSE lessons have been delivered in all secondary schools and workshops were delivered to P6/7 pupils in seventeen primary schools. Two hundred and seventy one young carers were encouraged to register in 2022/23, and one hundred and eighty-one new Young Carer Statements were created. This is an increase on the sixty-two statements which were created in 21/22.
- Strategic Equity Fund (SEF) - Through the Strategic Equity Fund:
 - I. We have set Core and Core Plus stretch aims to support the attainment, inclusion and health and wellbeing of children and young people impacted by poverty, with care experience and additional support needs.
 - II. An equity tracker was produced with key data sets shared with schools on a monthly basis to allow them to track progress against stretch aims.
 - III. A Principal Teacher of Equity was appointed in each of our secondary schools to track and monitor attainment in relation to the stretch aims and identify interventions which contribute to the closing of the attainment gap.
 - IV. Funding for supported study was made available in all of our secondary schools.
 - V. In three Primary Schools, School and Family Support Workers were appointed to support the delivery of the stretch aims.
- Pupil Equity Fund (PEF) - New guidelines to support the efficacy and evaluation of PEF spending was issued to schools in session 22/23.
- Child Planning Framework – Locality Teams - A steering group was established to formulate guidelines for the establishment of multi-agency Child Planning Framework- Locality Team forums as a continuum of GIRFEC approaches. These have since been agreed and the first CPF-LT has been established at the Preston Seton Gosford locality.
- Educational Psychology Service (EPS) - The EPS continued to develop its new service delivery model for Requests for Assistance (RFAs) for individual children and young people, with all requests coming through a central process.
- Single Point of Access (SPA) - The SPA received one thousand two hundred Requests for Assistance in 22/23. During the session 72% of these cases were fully completed in terms of the requests being made e.g., have received an outcome for all requested services. During the school session three hundred and fifty children and young people engaged in and completed a mental health

intervention. Sixty-five percent of young people who received MYPAS or Art Therapy reported an improved outcome. Eighty percent of young people who received an intervention from the Mental Health Youth Workers reported an improved outcome or progress towards a desired goal.

Outcome 4: Everyone in East Lothian has access to a decent, affordable, warm and dry home.

Proposed actions:

- Reviewed how the Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023 meets the needs of people with protected characteristics, including ensuring that people with particular needs are able to get and sustain their choice of housing, including independent living
- Reviewed progress in achieving the seven actions under the 'Having a Home' theme in the Poverty Plan 2021-2023
- Ensure housing pathways for offenders are addressed by establishing a pan-Lothian approach involving the Community Justice Partnership, the Council, Police Scotland, NHS Lothian and the Scottish Prison Service.

In this period, we have developed a draft protocol which aims to ensure that those leaving prison can access a suitable place to live. The protocol (SHORE: Sustainable Housing On Release for Everyone) sets out a formal revised way of working to facilitate access, including defined pathways for prison leavers to have a place to live on release. This will be progressed through our Homeless Operations Policy.

The Local Housing Strategy 2018-2023 is now approaching the end of its timeframe, and the new Local Housing Strategy 2024-2029 is now available.

Complying with the statutory duties of Local Housing Strategies, it will continue to set out how the council will meet the needs of people with protected characteristics, and ensure homes are accessible and adaptable to meet the needs of those with particular requirements and promote independent living.

Outcome 5: People lead healthier, more active and independent lives.

This outcome is led by the East Lothian Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) governed by East Lothian's Integration Joint Board (IJB). The HSCP is responsible for the delivery of community health and social care services locally. The arrangements for the IJB and HSCP are set out in the IJB's Integration Scheme. The IJB's key functions are to:

- Prepare a Strategic Plan for all delegated functions

- Allocate the integrated budget to deliver the aims of the Strategic Plan
- Oversee the delivery of services.

Functions delegated to the H&SCP/ IJB include:

- Adult social care services
- Adult primary and community health care services
- Some elements of adult hospital care.

A full list can be found in the [East Lothian IJB Integration Scheme](#).

The IJB is subject to the duties and responsibilities of the Equality Act 2010 in its own entity. This includes:

- Better and more focused use of Integrated Impact Assessments (IIAs) when considering policy or practice change or development at the outset and during the life of projects
- Assembling better data about equalities groups who use services and potential gaps in our understanding of what particular groups need and potential barriers for them in accessing services.

Since 2023 the HSCP has employed an Equalities and Engagement Officer to maintain an overview of equality, diversity and inclusion, raise awareness, promote effective use of Integrated Impact assessments (IIAs) and ensure IJB members access appropriate training. The IJB publishes an independent Equality Outcomes Report. The [2023-2025 Equality Mainstreaming report](#) sets out their work.

East Lothian Council also contributes to this outcome through our Active Schools programme which has shown significant improvement in combating the decline in youth physical activity since the COVID-19 pandemic. For the purposes of this report:

- The number of active young people who reside in SIMD² 1 and 2 areas has increased from 120 (2023/24) to 193 (2024/25).
- The number of active young people from a minority ethnic community has increased from 128 (2023/24) to 2012 (2024/25)
- The number of active young people with a ASN indicator has increased from 846 (2022/23) to 1,141 (2024/25) no data for 2023/24.
- The number of active young people who have a registered disability has increased from 16 (2023/24) to 67 (2024/25)

Outcome 6: People feel safe and experience less crime in their communities, and at home; there is zero tolerance of hate, abuse

² [Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation](#)

and violence against women and girls and people feel their communities are inclusive.

Proposed actions:

- Implement the Equally Safe Scotland Strategy; analyse how well the Equally safe is being delivered
- Support events and programme such as religious festivals, international women's day

Working towards the aspiration of a zero tolerance of hate and abuse, where everyone, including women and girls, feel safe and included at home, at work and in our communities is progressed chiefly through the Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) work. This is co-ordinated by the delivery group. Work during 2023-2025 includes but is not limited to the following:

- The Violence Against Women Partnership is the principal vehicle for implementing Equally Safe: Scotland's Strategy for Preventing and Eradicating Violence Against Women and Girls . This supports a joined-up, evidence informed approach to prevent and eradicate violence against women and girls, including human trafficking
- Publishing the Equally Safe Delivery Plan August 2024 to support East Lothian Council to develop an Equally Safe Strategy, including governance and financial arrangements, service pathways and gaps
- Focusing on the national Violence Against Women Partnership Guidance published by the Scottish Government and COSLA, to inform and shape local outcomes
- Worked in partnership with the Authentic Voice Project led by SafeLives to understand support needs and embed lived experience of violence against women and girls to effectively shape systems and services. This work included engagement with those directly impacted
- The Authentic Voice project delivered a series of online networking and knowledge sharing workshops for anyone with an interest, to inform their work outcomes and service delivery.
- Time management and meeting review to facilitate more purposeful discussion and engagement for partner agencies
- Taking a trauma Informed approach to Violence against women and girls to inform policy and practice more broadly
- Developed supporting guidance for staff and leaders to embed the Commercial Sexual Exploitation Position Statement in Practice. This is intended to assist practitioners (staff and volunteers) across East Lothian and Midlothian to respond effectively, consistently and safely to people involved in commercial sexual exploitation. This has been promoted across the council.

Good Practice Guidance - Identifying and Responding to Commercial Sexual Exploitation. A briefing was also delivered as part of our work around the 16 days of activism.

Further information on Female Genital mutilation.

Staff briefings such as:

- Secured three accredited trainers to provide in-person staff training and briefings to embed the Safe and Together agenda as a key action of the National Equally Safe Delivery plan in March 2025. This work will continue.
- Three staff modules are also now active:
 - Together for Gender Equality (mandatory for all staff)
 - Understanding Domestic Abuse
 - Understanding Sexual Violence
- Progression of the Equally Safe in Practice framework to support workforce development towards a sustained attitudinal, behaviour and practice change.

The framework aims to equip the Scottish workforce with knowledge, understanding and the tools necessary to improve responses to VAWG and ensure safe and positive outcomes for women, children and young people. The framework is designed to support workers across all levels of the workforce, and targets different levels with specific knowledge and skills. The tiers of the framework range from basic knowledge to a range of enhanced workforce development and improved commitment and understanding, through to engagement with senior and strategic leaders.

The delivery group has been reviewed through this period to examine effectiveness and make best use of resources. The group brings together statutory and voluntary partners to identify and deliver integrated, relevant and effective services to those affected by violence and abuse. Within this period Scottish Government national funding has been reviewed and consequently funding has remained the same, which presents a risk to future service delivery.

In addition to the work listed we also provide safe spaces within our buildings including libraries and museums.

Finally, the Violence against women and girls work is to be integrated into strategic plans, aligning with existing strategies to create culture change across East Lothian Council.

- **Support events and programmes such as religious festivals, International Women's Day**

Our Connected Communities team, libraries and museum teams, continue to support and promote community activities and promote the fostering of good relations in their work.

Outcome 7: East Lothian Council is an Equal Opportunities employer, and our workplace feels inclusive to staff with protected characteristics.

Proposed actions:

- Ensure the Council's Workforce Plan takes into account the specific needs of employees with protected characteristics
- Review the Annual Equal Pay Audit to assess whether it should include information and actions to address pay gaps faced by employees with protected characteristic groups along with the gender pay gap
- Review the Equality in Employment Monitoring Report to assess whether further actions are required to ensure the council is an Equal Opportunities employer and our workforce reflects the demographics of the population with protected characteristics in East Lothian
- Undertake work to ensure the Council meets the recommendations of the Scottish Parliament's Equalities and Human Rights Committee report, Race Equality, Employment and Skills: Making Progress, such as carrying out a review of our recruitment procedures and practice against the Scottish Government's Minority Ethnic Recruitment Toolkit and make the necessary changes
- Carry out a stress and mental health audit of our employees which will include data disaggregated by protected characteristics of employees and use the results to inform further development of training and support services to improve the mental health and wellbeing of all employees
- Seek Equally Safe at Work accreditation.

East Lothian Council is committed to being an Equal Opportunities employer. It aims to ensure that the workplace feels inclusive to all staff and is a positive place for all employees. The following provides our progress towards this outcome which is being progressed as part of a suite of actions contained within the Workforce Plan 2023-2027.

- **Ensure the Council's Workforce Plan takes into account the specific needs of employees with protected characteristics**

The East Lothian Way, which sets out behaviours for all staff has been revised to ensure Council behaviours reflect the Workforce Plan to include an emphasis on

delivering customer focused, person-centred trauma-informed, and inclusive services. The East Lothian Way is now included in the Welcome to the Council Induction and all E-Learning; the Performance, Review and Development process as well as webinars where appropriate. A standalone Equality module is already in place and updated 2024/5.

An Equalities Working Group led by Human Resources, established with Trade Union representatives is assisting the momentum on Equality actions.

- **Review the Annual Equal Pay Audit to assess whether it should include information and actions to address pay gaps faced by employees with protected characteristic groups along with the gender pay gap.**

Employee Equal Pay Audits and Equality in Employment reports continue to be produced annually by our Human Resources department and publically available online. These help to monitor the composition of our workforce, including across the protected characteristics, identifying potential discrimination, as well as actions to address pay differences between men and women.

[Equalities in employment monitoring report 2022-2023](#)

[Equalities in employment report 2023-2024](#)

[Equal pay audit 2023-2024](#)

ELC has achieved accreditation as a Living Wage employer and regularly reviews progress towards equal pay. This includes monitoring pay gap information for ethnic minority and disabled employees

- **Review the Equality in Employment Monitoring Report to assess whether further actions are required to ensure the council is an Equal Opportunities employer and our workforce reflects the demographics of the population with protected characteristics in East Lothian.**

To date:

- Positive Action Campaign for the recent Craft Apprentice recruitment.
- Introduced part time opportunities, which is included in job adverts, for middle management roles to encourage females to apply
- Gender decoder applied to job adverts randomly
- Guidance doc on Flexible Working Policy and procedure finalised and distributed to Head Teachers
- Signposting to East Lothian Works added to all apprenticeships job adverts – includes guidance on completing applications, interview skills, training and further learning opportunities
- Info and signposting for support from East Lothian Works now included as standard on all Craft/Modern Apprenticeship role adverts

- Information on compulsory professional subscription requirement now captured on Job Register managed by Service Review Team.
- **Continue to advertise all vacancies through myjobscotland, enabling potential candidates to easily access information on vacancies**

All vacancies are advertised through myjobscotland, however, to enhance accessibility we continue to use and accept paper applications, as part of adaptations. Additionally, to enable applications, we promote East Lothian Works (ELW) for all apprenticeship job adverts. ELW provides guidance on completing applications, interview skills, training, and further learning opportunities.

- **Equality in Employment Monitoring Report provides an action plan to ensure the council remains an equal opportunities employer.**

Equalities information is captured through the staff survey to inform our understanding of the experience of working at East Lothian Council. This is reported to staff annually and informs policy and practice. We continue to encourage completion of the categories, as the numbers of staff choosing the 'prefer not to say' option is increasing. These are included in our [Annual Equalities monitoring report](#).

Aligned to this is our annual pay gap report which captures data across the protected characteristics of Sex and Gender reassignment. Health and Safety monitoring also delineates along the same protected characteristics. Both Disability and Ethnic minority (Race) pay gap information continues to be measured and is included in the annual pay gap report.

A review of job advertising is ongoing. This includes the use of the [Scottish Governments Ethnic Minority toolkit](#) e.g. Images on myjobscotland website now more ethnically representative; and approaching COSLA to identify modifications in the application form to avoid unconscious bias. Where equality data is provided to myjobscotland it is broadly in line with our local demographic information.

Other actions include:

- Job Evaluation Scheme is applied to ensure equal pay for work of equal value supports equality outcomes
- We continue to apply and improve policies that help support a diverse workforce. These include Flexible working, Special Leave Policy, Work Smart, Domestic Abuse Policy, Family and Maternity Leave, flexible retirement, Menopause and hormonal conditions policy, and Shared Parental leave. All policies are reviewed in line with legislative changes or other information as appropriate

- A new policy on Harassment (including sexual harassment) is in place in response to legislative changes. Additionally, mandatory staff training rolled out for all employees
- We maintain our Carer Positive employer accreditation
- We continue to be recognised as an accredited Disability Confident employer and provide reasonable adjustments as required.

As part of this outcome, we also maintain a Healthy Working Lives Working Group which meets up to twelve times a year, and continue to provide the Employee Assistance Programme, which is regularly promoted with data anonymously monitored. Additional measures to support staff include:

- Occupational health and physiotherapy provision
- Listening Ears Support Service Development
- Menopause: support Menopause Group.

Additionally, we are identifying initiatives to improve work life balance including extending the part-time post option to middle management posts. This will be progressed as an action in our new plan.

These measures ensure that we continue to meet our overarching aim of being a positive place for all employees and acknowledge the support and positive behaviours of all staff working towards this.

Governance

An Equality Working Group has been established to include relevant staff and members from teacher and non-teacher trade unions. It aims to review and test practices for barriers and potential discriminatory practice.

We continue to participate in the Society of Personnel Development Scotland Equality Portfolio Group and associated Equalities Working Groups with focus on developing consistent equalities pay gap reporting and improving inclusive recruitment practices.

As mentioned in this outcome report we continue to utilise an Integrated Impact Assessment process in the development of policies and practice.

Part two: Equality Outcomes 2025-2029

As part of the Equality Act 2010 named public authorities have a legal duty to identify a set of equality outcomes which contribute to a fairer society. A fairer society within the Act is achieved by advancing equality, diversity and inclusion; tackling discrimination and creating good relations between people, as part of the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). The broad purpose of this Duty is to integrate or 'mainstream' consideration of equality and good relations into the day-to-day business of a listed public authority. To find out more please visit the [Equality and Human Rights Commission website](#). (EHRC)

To meet this duty, public bodies must, in addition to day to day practices, identify a set of outcomes which contribute to a fairer society. A fairer society within the Act is achieved by advancing equality, tackling discrimination and creating good relations between people. The Act also identifies a set of protected characteristics. These are: age, disability, gender-reassignment, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation. Intersectionality refers to having one or more of the protected characteristics, which may compound inequality.

As part of this work, we consider, and keep reviewing, how we promote equality, inclusion and fairness in:

- decision-making
- internal and external policies
- procuring goods and services
- the services we provide; and
- recruitment, promotion and performance management of employees.

We also advance equal opportunities by:

- Removing or reducing the disadvantage that people with protected characteristics face accessing services etc
- Taking steps to meet the specific needs of people with protected characteristics
- Removing barriers to encourage people with one or more protected characteristics to participate fully in all activities, especially where they are underrepresented.

Additionally, East Lothian Council has a duty to consult and engage with those impacted by our decisions and the way in which we deliver services and provide information.

Council Plan: the [East Lothian Council Plan 2022-2027](#) continues a commitment towards a vision for an even more prosperous, safe and sustainable East Lothian,

with a dynamic and thriving economy, to enable people and communities to flourish. We continue to:

- Grow our Economy – increase sustainable and inclusive growth as the basis for a more prosperous East Lothian
- Grow our People – give our children the best start in life and protect vulnerable and older people
- Grow our Communities – give people a real say in the decisions that matter most and provide communities with the services, infrastructure and environment that will allow them to flourish
- Grow our Capacity – deliver excellent services as effectively and efficiently as possible within our limited resources.

New Outcomes: Working in partnership with Mid, East and West Lothian councils, NHS Lothian and the associated Health and Social Care Partnership/Integrated Joint Board's³, we considered the EHRC 'Is Scotland Fairer report 2023' and data from national and local third sector organisations to inform a set of outcomes for consultation.

Consultation held online between December 2024 - January 2025 tested the proposed outcomes for relevance. We asked if these are the right outcomes and whilst there was lots to consider, overall respondents agreed. Over one hundred people took the time to respond, sharing their experience, ideas and frustrations; this has been helpful. These will not only inform this plan but shared with services.

A summary of the responses and themes can be viewed in the Appendices.

2025-2029 Outcomes

The following pages set out our new Equality outcomes for the period 2025-2029. They apply to all the protected characteristic groups or a specific protected characteristic where specified.

Outcome 1

Participation	Everyone is able to receive the right information in the right place, in the right format, at the right time • People can communicate with us in a timely, accessible and effective way • People can access our services, facilities and public spaces
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³ With the exception of the City of Edinburgh council

	• We take a human rights-based approach to community engagement.
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Outputs:

- Implement the Customer Strategy 2023-2028 across council functions to meet its customer principles of: customer at our heart; consistently high quality; joined up; digital first; delivering better service
- Undertake a systemic equality and diversity audit to identify customer barriers to access and information, identify staff skills and knowledge, and ascertain support and information gaps within the delivery of our statutory duties
- Staff training and information are available to inform and support a Human Rights Based approach to participation, service delivery, engagement and inclusion
- Procurement requirements evidence consideration of how they meet accessible communication, inclusion and physical access as part of any contract.

Outcome 2i

Living Standards (poverty)	Poverty decreases across the protected characteristic groups with improved health and well-being • People live healthier and more comfortable lives • People have a home that is warm and meets their needs • People have more money.
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Within this section we have linked the existing 2021-2025 outcomes to address the association between poverty, housing, vulnerability, and health; themes which evidence shows are interlinked to create better or worse outcomes.

Context: The East Lothian Partnership Poverty Plan 2024-2028 is leading actions to mitigate poverty and increase wellbeing across East Lothian. It sets out four key objectives to increase ‘cash in people’s pockets’ and create and support resilience against the causes of poverty. These focus on:

- Good quality jobs that pay fairly, where we support people to gain the skills and training needed to find and maintain work, in secure, flexible jobs that pay fairly
- Enough money from benefits, our social security system should provide people with a fair income, but millions of pounds go unclaimed each year. We will support people to claim the income that they are entitled to and provide support with the cost of living
- A good life with access to the essentials. Housing, good health, quality food and a resilient community are part of our human rights. We will take a preventative approach to homelessness, hunger and health inequalities caused by poverty
- Climate change ready, climate change will impact vulnerable and low-income communities the hardest. We will take preventative action to protect and support these communities from the effects of climate change.

The way we work will promote these outcomes:

- Making sure that poverty is everybody's business, and that actions to tackle poverty are part of every service plan. We will make sure that those making budget decisions understand how poverty affects people in East Lothian
- Working in a way that is person-centred and stigma- and trauma-informed. We have heard very clearly that stigma is preventing people from reaching out for support. We will make sure that our services are approachable, discreet and offer dignity and choice. We will help our workforce understand the impact of trauma and poverty
- Working effectively as a partnership, we will build on our existing strong partnership in East Lothian. We will share resources and knowledge more effectively, using shared data to identify tailored solutions, and work towards a collective vision for East Lothian.

This will be underpinned by specific improvements we need to make to our current ways of working. These include actions around our housing, transport, childcare, and the economy. It will require changes in the way we work with people with lived experience of poverty, how we evaluate our projects, share our data and shape our places. It will also shape how we deliver our services, communicate about our work, and advocate for East Lothian residents.

Outputs:

- Implement the poverty plan 2024-2028
- Council budgetary decisions consider evidence of impact across the protected characteristic groups
- Protected characteristic group data is monitored for cumulative negative impact
- Customers can access timely information, advice and support in their right format (reasonable adjustments apply).

Outcome 2ii

Living Standards (housing)	Everyone is able to access timely support and information in the right format to make informed decisions • People live healthier and more comfortable lives • People have a home that is warm and meets their basic needs • People have more money.
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The correlation between the protected characteristic groups and vulnerability to poverty is well documented. This is exacerbated by the lack of housing to meet the basic requirements of affordability, warm, dry and in a good state of repair for health and wellbeing. The Scottish Government identified the following as being at greater risk of poverty:

- Minority ethnic families: 37% of children in relative poverty
- Families with a disabled adult or child: 30% of children in relative poverty

For many, housing also needs to be accessible and provide a place of safety. The East Lothian Housing Strategy 2024-2029 is underpinned by five key principles to support communities to flourish, be distinctive and well connected:

- housing supply is accessible, affordable, and provides a range of choices to meet the needs of households
- homelessness is prevented as far as possible, where unavoidable a rapid response with the appropriate support is provided
- housing and support services are effective, accessible to, and will meet the needs of those most vulnerable in the community
- all homes are maintained to a high standard, are energy efficient and contribute to meeting climate change targets.

Outputs:

- Increase percentage of vulnerable women with or without /disabled child/children, housed in secure, safe, 'forever' homes
- Baseline Data is disaggregated across the protected characteristics to enable measurement, identify gaps and instigate bespoke intervention
- Response time data is disaggregated across the protected characteristic groups
- Vulnerable women and children/disabled child get timely access to appropriate safe, warm housing.

Outcome 3

Education	All children are valued and respected; improved education and social outcomes for protected groups • Everyone achieves well at school • More young people from deprived backgrounds get a job or go to further education • All children feel valued and respected at school • Pupils feel safe at school.
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We aim to address the gap in educational outcomes for children and young people impacted by socio-economic disadvantage and to ensure all East Lothian children are valued and respected.

Outputs:

- Baseline data is disaggregated across the protected characteristics to enable measurement and bespoke intervention
- Education reports apply protected characteristic data to enable and measure outcomes (maintaining child and parent anonymity with smaller populations).

Outcome 4

Justice	People are confident to report hate crimes including sexual abuse and violence, and receive help and support to be safe • People report hate crime if they experience it or see it • People help prevent violence and sexual harassment against women and girls • People help prevent discrimination and violence against people with a protected characteristic.
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Outputs:

- Our Equally Safe, and the prevention of violence against women and girls work (VAWG) will continue to deliver and inform work that contributes to the safety of women and girls in our public spaces
- Third party reporting facilities or functions are reviewed (accessible and free to call)
- Community events supported to facilitate interactions between people with a protected characteristic and those who do not.

Outcome 5

Work	Everyone is respected at work and confident to report racism and other unlawful behaviours • Our staff feel valued and respected • People feel comfortable to report racism and we will do something to stop it • Our staff treat everyone with dignity and respect • People can get qualifications and learn key skills.
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Outputs:

- Employment Equality and Diversity Action Plan 2025-2029 is finalised (outlines employment-specific strategies to increase employee inclusion)
- Manager training to support skills and increase confidence to create inclusive workplace environments in place
- Increased availability, breadth and uptake of employment behaviours in areas such as banter and harassment as well other HR functions including performance management and disciplinary investigations by protected characteristic
- Empowering managers and staff to create inclusive workplace environments through acquiring key knowledge and skills in an accessible way
- Sexual harassment helpline and email helpline operating

Outcome 6

Health and wellbeing	Who we are is not a barrier to being healthy, active and independent Our staff • Encourage and facilitate participation for all • Uphold dignity and respect • Challenge stereotypes.
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East Lothian Council contributes to the improved health and wellbeing of its population in its leisure activities, green spaces, active travel and consideration of safe spaces. Impact assessments ensure we consider the needs and barriers of the protected characteristic groups in this wider work.

Outputs:

- The participation of women and girls in physical activities increases
- Data is collected and disaggregated by biological sex to monitor girls participation in being physically active
- Barriers are identified; adjustments or removal of barriers completed to encourage participation

East Lothian Integration Joint Board

The East Lothian Integration Joint Board (IJB) is the governing body that is responsible for allocating funds, planning delegated services and overseeing the delivery of health and social care in East Lothian. Its role is to direct East Lothian Health and Social Care (East Lothian HSCP) to deliver services to the community in line with national standards and levels of service.

East Lothian HSCP is a cooperation of staff employed by East Lothian Council, NHS Lothian, contracted service suppliers and third sector partners to deliver health and social care services to the community.

East Lothian Integration Joint Board is required by law to develop and publish information that sets out how it will fulfil its commitment to the Public Sector Equality Duty general needs.

You can read the [East Lothian Integration Joint Board's Equality Outcomes 2025-2029 here](#). The services that East Lothian IJB directs (delegated services) can be viewed on pages 3 and 4 of the document.

The East Lothian Integration Joint Board Equality Outcomes 2025-2029 are:

Outcome 1: Participation and co-production

- We will place human rights at the heart of our approach to community engagement
- We will take time to listen to the needs of our community, remove barriers to participation and empower people to participate in health and social care planning
- We will build healthy, long-term relationships with the community based on transparency, honesty, trust and equality.

Outcome 2: Dignity and Respect

- People of all abilities, ages, races and ethnic backgrounds, religions, sexual orientations, genders and /or those experiencing social and health disadvantages feel they are treated with dignity and respect.
- Staff have an awareness of different cultures that supports them to carry out their role.

Outcome 3: Anti-racism

- Service users and staff feel supported and confident to report racism
- Managers and team leaders feel equipped and confident to address reports of racism, harassment or unequal treatment.

Outcome 4: Enabling independence

- We will work collaboratively across our organisation and with partners to support individuals to be more independent, to enable them to live more fulfilling lives.

Outcome 5: Addressing health inequalities

- Our staff and community have a greater awareness of the role of poverty in unequal mental and physical health outcomes
- Our services and those commissioned by us will be trauma-informed, stigma aware, simple to access and focussed on prevention / early intervention.

Enquiries: please email: engagement-hscp@eastlothian.gov.uk

East Lothian Council Licensing Board

The East Lothian Licensing Board is constituted in terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gambling Act 2005. The regimes under these Acts set out broad aims which the Board must and will support in all its functions.

The pursuit of these aims is a principal feature of the Board's statement of policy: https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/27884/statement_of_licensing_policy_2023-2028 and Statement of Gambling Principles: https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/downloads/file/32198/gambling_statement_of_principles_2025-2028

The Board's policies and decisions are governed by legislation in particular The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gambling Act 2005. Under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005's the Licensing Board is directed to:

- prevent crime and disorder
- secure public safety
- prevent public nuisance
- protect and improve public health
- protect children and young persons from harm.

Under the Gambling Act 2005 the Board has duties to:

- prevent gambling from being a source of crime and disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
- ensure that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- protect children and other vulnerable young persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling.

Our Outcomes (2023-2025)

In all the Licensing Board's work we will contribute to the long-term outcome: **'Fewer people are the victim of crime, disorder and abuse in East Lothian.'**

The Board Statement of Licensing Policy 2023-2028, adopted in November 2023, goes a long way towards demonstrating the progress made and the commitment to continuing equalities work, addressing public health issues, preventing crime and disorder, and the protection of children and young people.

Whilst there have been changes to the Statement of Policy these changes have not affected the Integrated Impact Assessment of 2018-2023.

The Board has three short-term priorities:

1) Developing the Licensing Application process to ensure fair access, including the development of electronic applications

- Following new legislation in March 2018, the premises licence application form was updated to include a disabled access statement
- The application form was further updated to reflect a decision taken by the Board (as part of approving the 2018-2023 Statement of Policy) requiring applicants to include specific details of how they will comply with each of the five licensing objectives
- In 2020 every alcohol licence application form was redesigned and has improved layout, font type, white space and page numbering. These are now in use where a paper-based application is requested. All licensing forms now comply with Accessibility Standards (WCAG 2.2)
- A redesign of the Licensing pages on the ELC website was completed in 2024 and all forms are available to be downloaded from the site
- A fully integrated online application and payment system is still to be introduced. At the time of publishing, procurement of a new Licensing IT solution was being progressed. This will be prioritised into the IT workflow.

2) Licensing Board works in partnership with a range of stakeholders to ensure the most effective decisions are made to meet the aims of the Board

- Police Scotland and the Licensing Standards Officer continue to be standard consultees for all alcohol licence applications
- NHS Lothian receive papers for all Licensing Board meetings
- The annual statutory joint Licensing Board and Local Licensing Forum meeting is scheduled annually in November but may take place during a different month to ensure it is quorate
- Community Councils receive the link to all papers for Licensing Board and are statutory consultees for all applications for premises licences and variations.

- Licensing Board meetings are required to be held in public and now take place as hybrid meetings via video-conferencing facilities and in person. Webcasts are made available
- Alcohol Focus Scotland provided information to the Board to help inform the content of the Board Policy 2023-2028
- The Board consulted widely when determining the 2023-2028 Board Policy – this included the general public, the education service and the public protection office.

3) Licensing Board works with license holders and other Council services to support positive behaviour on and around license premises

- The Licensing Standards Officer regularly visits licensed premises, provides advice to current and prospective licensees and acts as a liaison between licensees and neighbours
- Colleagues in the anti-social behaviour team and in Planning are amongst those who have contributed to supporting well run licensed premises.

Gathering Information

The Licensing Board works with a range of partners to ensure that they have the appropriate information they need to make the right decisions about applications presented. Key partners include Police Scotland, Health Services and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, anti-social behaviour team, community councils, and any other relevant stakeholders. Where relevant, this can include information about equalities issues and experiences of equality groups in the community, such as women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

The East Lothian Licensing Board will use the Integrated Impact Assessment Tool that has been developed by East Lothian Council. All reports presented to the Board proposing new policies or guidelines setting out new functions, or proposing any other changes with implications for equality strands will include details of the results of the impact assessment.

The Licensing Board 2025-2029

The Licensing Board contributes to the current Council Plan to ensure that 'Fewer people are the victim of crime, disorder and abuse in East Lothian' and continues our equalities work as it addresses public health issues, preventing crime and disorder, and the protection of children, set out in its [statement of licensing policy](#).

All reports presented to the Board which propose new policies or guidelines, or other changes are accompanied by an equality impact assessment. The Board has also reviewed the accessibility of its application processes, including the application

form and its Disability Access Statement which has resulted in each licensing objective requiring specific accessibility information as part of the licence process.

The East Lothian Licensing Board is constituted in terms of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the Gambling Act 2005. The regimes under these Acts set out broad aims which the Board must and will support in all its functions. It works with a range of partners to ensure appropriate information informs decision making. Key partners include Police Scotland, Health Services and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service, anti-social behaviour team, community councils, and any other relevant stakeholders. Where relevant, this can include information about equalities issues and experiences of equality groups in the community, such as women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation.

The East Lothian Licensing Board will further this work with the implementation of the Integrated Impact Assessment tool. All reports presented to the Board proposing new policies or guidelines setting out new functions or proposing any other changes with implications for equality groups and will include details of the results of the impact assessment.

Appendices: Proposed outcomes 2025-2029

Participation	People can communicate with us People can access our services, facilities and public spaces We take a human rights based approach to community engagement.
Living Standards	People live healthier and more comfortable lives People have a home that is warm and meets their needs People have more money.
Education	Everyone achieves well in school More young people from deprived backgrounds get a job or go to further education All children feel valued and respected at school Pupils feel safer at school.
Justice	People report hate crime if they experience it or see it People help prevent violence and sexual harassment against women and girls People help prevent discrimination and violence against people with a protected characteristic.

Work	Our staff feel valued and respected People feel comfortable to report racism and that we will do something to stop it Our staff treat everyone with dignity and respect People can get qualifications and learn new skills.
Health and wellbeing⁴	Women from Black and/or minority ethnic groups have good NHS maternity care Trans and non-binary people have their health care needs met People have better NHS mental health care People who live in deprived communities have healthier lives People from Black and minority ethnic groups, disabled people LGBT people, older and younger people and women feel they are treated with dignity and respect accessing health services.

Sample of consultation responses

Participation:

- Look after our elderly better and include them in the community.
- Understanding voice of all public.
- As a Council, promote groups in the community that people can join.
- Not everything online.
- We have a generation of older people feeling left out as everything is on the internet these days and also paying bills/renewal etc.
- Disabled people are not in the loop when decisions affecting them are made.
- Reaching out to seldom heard voices and taking action to enable and support their participation in service design and decision-making: this could negatively colour choices made if only a few minority voices are heard.
- We need to get better at using non-traditional methods of communication. Disenfranchised groups do not communicate via email or in attendance at meetings.
- Services are dwindling and they require to go in the opposite direction to allow members of the public to actually have access to them.
- We need to be more accessible and flexible to the needs of our communities.
- Aim for co-production as well as participation.
- Creating and supporting community champions. Give the people a voice let them speak and be listened and understood.

⁴ Progressed by NHS Lothian and where relevant the East Lothian IJB (page 38)

- Systems and policy for lived experience and voice.
- Let people talk and listen.
- Earlier engagement with cultural events for people from disadvantaged/excluded communities
- Community facilities need to be made physically and financially accessible to all citizens. More internet cafes and facilities to encourage communication skills to be built. Teaching the older generation to use tablets or other portable digital devices might help but a resource centre where help is available might help.
- Include young people especially with regards to participation and involvement in wider society
- As UNCRC is being incorporated improving children's rights should be a priority
- Local councils were responsible for ensuring that people with disabilities could have adaptations and equipment required to support them. People are confused about where to go to get what they need. There needs to be clarity.
- Sometimes there is no instructor, not enough places available or lack of transportation.
- Enabling people from rural areas to be able to participate. These areas may have poor/no public transport. Be inclusive in membership of community councils etc by supporting those who may not be IT literate or have communication needs e.g. BSL to be able to take part.
- Make it much easier for members of the public to find everything they need or want to know about sport and physical activity opportunities across the Authority.
- Collaborating with partners to hear the less heard voices.
- Working with the 3rd sector to improve input from those less likely to participate.
- Use the social model of disability and have greater representation for disabled people across the council.
- Educate staff to a professional level of dealing with equal rights.
- Don't just send out surveys. Have people based in communities, building relationships and mechanisms for the views to be heard or represented. The people we need to hear from generally don't complete surveys, vote or engage with local governments.

Themes and key words: transport; keep it open; disenfranchised; publicise (accessible, ELC one stop website page for sport, activities, events); inclusion; computer literacy; safety (criminal activity; anti-social behaviour; barriers); accessible services and language; support to participate; BSL; limited hours = limited access = closures; right support at the right time; trade unions; more staff; availability of simpler information; disaffection.

Living Standards:

- The process of application is arduous and subjective so this needs overhauled and streamlined.

- Help for heroes- disabled and homeless veterans should be included in priority lists.
- Fairer levels of income would surely alleviate these problems. What you have stated are just goals with no action. We also need more affordable homes and fewer luxury ones. We also need services to go alongside these homes - doctors, dentists, schools, transport links, etc.
- I really do hope that you actually improve communication so that it's accessible to everyone including those with hearing loss as we've been told many things over the years, but nothing is actually done to improve it.
- More pressure on builders to pay for community facilities and more Social Housing.
- Poverty as a priority.
- Domestic abuse and its impact among the population - education for young people regarding healthy relationships and domestic abuse. Greater awareness of budgeting and finances for young people - financial responsibilities as an adult.
- Ensure everyone has access to sheltered accommodation and has no need to sleep rough.
- Increase the percentage of social housing that developers are required to include in new housing developments. Ensure adequate public transport links/amenities for households that do not have a car. Too many out of town housing developments are not on bus routes and people have to travel to shops etc, because there is nothing nearby.
- How do young people leave home now, they cannot be housed by the council, especially young single men, they cannot afford mortgages, especially young single men, females are more likely to be housed, especially if they have a child, there is no support and housing for young single MALES.
- More social housing with affordable rents. Housing designed with children in mind e.g. creative play spaces outside and in the home. Passive housing made affordable to buy.
- I think this as a focus should be prioritised over education and working.
- working age people, and people working, who have disabilities or long-term conditions who cannot get social housing or afford to get on the housing ladder due to low income.
- Looking after local constituents and residents as a priority then if possible accommodating newcomers to the local authority.
- Women/men and children should not be forced to stay in abusive relationships because they have no alternative home to go to. People pay rents to the council for substandard accommodation. This needs to be a priority, the council should be called to answer for the state of some of the houses people are expected to live in. Council homes should not be forced upon new houses developments, People feel like they don't belong and find it difficult to integrate.
- Trades Union membership and activities should be encouraged and supported throughout the workforce. Gender, disability and ethnicity pay gap within the

workforce. Pensions gap, especially between men and women and also those with disabilities, which dwarfs the pay gap.

- Increase the availability of social housing.
- Living standards should also include access to green space and play for children as well as local services.
- Financial abuse contributes to the social issues many people face, especially women.
- Some households have two wages coming in but can't afford to eat well. There needs to be an awareness of the problems people face.
- Inclusion within school curriculum.
- Treat male/female people equally

Themes and Key words: wellbeing; struggling; violence and barriers; service connectivity; them and us; no faith in change; equal access to services; improve housing conditions; affordable food; play spaces; financial barriers; belonging; trust in systems; fair income; budgeting; transport infrastructure; sense of belonging; accessibility.

Education:

- Additional support needs more support.
- Enable inclusive environments to work for everyone.
- Better systems.
- Access to education resources for at-risk or vulnerable groups.
- More opportunities for extracurricular activities that are lower cost / free.
- Increasing alternative provision for pupils that the mainstream school environment isn't right for, nor is it safe for them and their peers.
- That children feel safe in the school environment and are not subjected to volatile or violent classmates.
- Make an explicit commitment to delivering the Equally Safe agenda through both ensuring girls are safe in school and providing relevant education for boys and girls.
- Staff within education including support staff should be adequately paid, treated with respect and protected from violence and harassment at work. Improving educational performance of White British, Black Caribbean and Mixed White and Black Caribbean children from low socio-economic backgrounds, especially boys, which evidence shows are underperforming, should be specifically considered, as well as the categories listed. The ethnic and gendered dimension of this should be included in the aim of narrowing the poverty related attainment gap. Even where girls are doing better than average than boys, it can be that they are choosing school subjects which will lead to less well paid careers. Actively aiming to reduce gender stereotyping is important from an early stage, as is good career guidance. By aiming that 'all' pupils feel increasingly valued, the necessary focus on those that currently experiencing poorer outcomes may be lost.

- An outcome to help ensure learning support in classrooms is sustained to ensure pupils requiring different strategies to help them be the best they can be is core.
- Physical and mental health improvement through promoting accessible sports and activities through being free at the point of access.
- Migrant children and their families being supported and accepted by their communities without having to completely assimilate British culture and forgo their native one.
- Young people who are d/Deaf will always have better access to learning in their communication needs are adequately supported and they have access to BSL in the classroom at their required level.
- Teaching children about online misogyny and transphobia at an earlier age.
- You have identified the sex gap as being a concern, with boys generally not doing as well as girls.
- Getting more pupils involved in sport to help create a greater sense of belonging and safety
- Areas of personal development that foster resilience. Leadership Opportunities, Outdoor Education, Work Experience, Volunteering etc. Having systems in place to facilitate the above in collaboration with local community groups.
- A diagnosis shouldn't be needed for children to be treated as individuals and have their rights met. Would be better to change to something like: We will create and maintain inclusive learning environments in which all pupils, regardless of their background, protected characteristics and needs, feel increasingly valued, respected and supported to fulfil their potential. Also, add - reduce numbers of emotional based school avoidance. The current statistics are alarming. As UNCRC is being incorporated some of the articles should be referred to.
- Improving educational outcomes for children in care.
- Issues for pupils from rural communities. These villages may have poor or no transport links. Thus, children may have less opportunity to go to out of school /after school activities e.g. sports, music or socialise with classmates. Issues for children who are gifted e.g. musically being able to progress rather than be held back in mainstream education rather than have to travel to St Mary's Music School. Issues for youngsters whose first language is not English. Issues for children from refugee backgrounds who may either be with family or by themselves. They may have experienced trauma.
- Equal opportunities for all - less grouping at primary school level and more individualised approach to students' progress in school. Outcomes could be more specific in terms of percentages / numbers.
- Range of experiences and opportunities for all children.
- Prevention and reduction of bullying.
- Improving children's attendance in school.

Themes and key words: one size doesn't fit all; timely; responsive; struggling; fighting; systems; neurodivergence; access; inclusion; safety; Rights; frustration; the

right tools; not getting it right for every child; communication needs; age, stage, and ability; resources; trauma informed; inclusive; BSL.

Justice:

- Supportive of the focus on violence against women and girls, but we need to not forget men and boys (as well as trans or non-binary individuals) are also targets.
- I'd ditch the nonsense about hate crime, it's the stupidest thing to be worrying about. Actions are all that matter, regardless of worrying about motivation. All efforts in this area should go into the violence and sexual harassment theme. Focusing both on men and women.
- Educating about hate crime at school, start early, plus the prevention of crime.
- the reporting of hate crimes is being abused. there requires to be very clear guidance of what is considered a hate crime.
- Is the violence against people not required to be a general outcome. Focusing on minority or particular groups can have the opposite effect where they become a target.
- Provision of support in relation to domestic violence within ELC workplaces - informal support networks facilitated by those with lived experience.
- Need to recognise shifting gender identities and related issues.
- Promotion of Zero tolerance to crime. Why are we still discussing religious/ racist based crime in 2024. We have and have had a multicultural society, but we do not address prejudice.
- Hate crime, disability, either as victim or perpetrator - more research needed support for those already doing this work to bring into focus.
- All of the above are important, but older people are also vulnerable. Especially those with memory issues.
- Supporting all young people who are statistically most likely to experience crime. Increasing awareness and understanding for staff, the public, schools and the community about cyber-crime and the dangers facing young people as they begin to use social media.
- There needs to be a focus on young people/teens who are low offending in the community. This is impacting people feeling safe and may lead to more serious offending. We need to find out what will support them and provide services to tackle this.
- focus on rehabilitation and supporting offenders or those on the fringe of the justice system into their communities to prevent reoffending.
- Strengthen preventative and diversionary activities for young people to reduce the risk of them becoming perpetrators or victims of crime.
- You are flogging a dead horse. Women in particular will probably not report crimes against them because they don't think anything will be done. Teenagers are bored and lack ambition because they see that for generations, nothing has changed.

- Social media, misogyny, attitudes towards domestic abuse. be educating young people about healthy relationships giving them the confidence to stand up for themselves. Teaching young people to have self-respect.
- Put police back on the streets. Engage with the public to build trust. Manage teenage bullying of shopkeepers and customers. Work with parents and young people to help them understand expectations of community life. Teach respect, responsibility and accountability. Invest in policing so that the elderly, vulnerable and children can walk freely without fear. Encourage community involvement and tolerance. Don't label people! Everyone has the right to feel safe in the workplace or community.
- Justice social work services need to be easier to access from rural areas.
- People have the right to be treated with dignity and respect at work, to do their job to the best of their ability, free from discrimination and harassment. Employers should also seek to protect staff from discrimination, harassment including sexual harassment, and violence. The 'outcomes' should consider whether it is appropriate to have an increase in reporting of hate crime as a target, or reduction in the amount of hate crime in areas where the organisations have control or influence, as well as ways of monitoring this. Drug misuse is a problem throughout Scotland. Sometimes people use drugs to try to cope with stress at work.
- Educate young people, have better understanding of why these outcomes happen.
- Give Young People a perspective in life. Open skill centres, youth clubs and leisure centres which are financially accessible. Spot talent and nurture it. Give youth opportunities to learn skills they might never have otherwise had. Promote education in all forms. Our children are the future leaders, start building well rounded individuals from nursery care onwards. Pay mums/dads to stay at home for the first 5 years of life, to nurture children. Reduce the working week to allow parents time to bond with their children. Pay grannies to help out with childcare. Have consequences for the youth who terrorise society with bad behaviour. Have consequences for parents who neglect their parental responsibilities.
- Open government policies in easy to read formats.

Themes and key words: early intervention; more (police, social workers, community psychiatric nurses); children's safety; trauma informed staff; visible policing; social media; healthy relationships; disaffection; clear guidance (Easy read); Zero tolerance; support; mitigate tensions; tipping points; better communications; anticipate flash points; teach (respect, responsibility and accountability).

Work:

- Affordable transport to reach workplaces.
- Recognition of the huge role Library staff play in the Community.

- Your staff aren't the issue and aren't the ones suffering the issues that you mention. What can you do to address cultures that are perfectly formed for the outcomes you see; how can you improve them? Or can you accept the validity of cultures that don't want to see the outcomes you believe are correct, aren't you imposing your values onto them?
- Access to employment agencies and support activities.
- The trans-and non-binary concerns can be a real can of worms. Acceptance is one thing (as in I accept that you think you are actually a man/woman) but affirmation is another (I affirm that you are actually a man/woman) and often it is the demand for affirmation that is the problem and leads to feelings of non-inclusivity or harassment. The whole trans movement has the feeling of a moment in history where things go too far and then swing back. I'd be very careful about doing more other than insisting on basic levels of respect.
- Autistic people struggle with work because of burnout, masking, sensory issues, social issues, difficulties with interviews, the ones who do work can't function outside of work because of using all their energy there.
- My workplace is a great advocate for diversity and makes it easy for managers to support this. I think there should be a focus on long-term sickness, more support to bring workers back to the workplace.
- All of our staff have a greater cultural awareness of different groups and their needs.
- Support the equally safe agenda.
- Support families into employment, working with the whole family wellbeing team.
- older people are also subject to not being employable. Making employers aware of the skills that older people bring to a work place. Many employers will only employ younger staff as they are ""cheaper"" to hire.
- All of our employees are and feel increasingly valued and respected.
- role of disabled people and people living with long-term conditions in work, support from employers, the state, fellow employees.
- Removing pay inequality for women.
- Providing the support for women to remain in work after children. E.g. reducing overtime/evening working requirements.
- From an early age encourage boys to take on caring roles. Ensure minority voices are heard and supported. Talk to primary children about unconscious bias. Normalise disability. Encourage employers to hire disabled people.
- There are not enough opportunities for gaining access to quality employment for the groups listed above. East Lothian Council is taking advantage of female staff by employing staff on limited hours and school staff on term time only contracts. People have bills year round.
- Much more focus on peoples mental health.
- Remember racism works both ways white people can be racially attacked as well.
- Stop splitting primary classes by gender, such as lining up based on gender. I have seen this happen. Stop ""boys and girls"" language. Encourage boys to be

hairdressers and girls to be engineers. Let 'children' choose what they want to be, not be guided by the socio economic status or gender.

- Not just race awareness also awareness increased around disability and old age.
- Of course, trans and non-binary people should have their health care needs met. But please ensure that women are also able to access health care in a setting which is for biological women only.
- Transport is a major issue where employment is concerned. Hospitality needs late buses and trains to be operating. The cost of transport is too high in relation to wages. Places like Dunbar are isolated which is not good for economic growth and development.
- BSL local plan need to include this a more direct statement about equality of opportunity would be good.
- Ask minority communities what they need.
- To deliver the outcomes you have chosen is a momentous task and I sincerely hope that you can carry it out. How good it would be if you could.

Themes and key words: transport (accessible, affordable, available); pay (equal, cost of living, fair working conditions); equally safe; carers needs; trans and non-binary; accessible work; support to report abuse; women's rights; trauma informed; impacts (who); safety; apprenticeships; Employment opportunities; whose values; cultural awareness; value diversity; accessible communication and personal choice/need; BSL..

Health:

- There are no improvement targets for men's mental health, specifically rates of suicide.
- Trauma informed approach supports the provision of environments, services and interactions which respect and support everyone.
- Greater support in relation to mental health for young people. Focus on impact of social media and its negative consequences.
- View poverty as 'ill health' or inequality of health.
- Improve the access to the elderly trying to attain their own appointments - making their own phone calls to lines that are full for long periods of time, or ones that you can only get through to at a specific time are not practical and accessible.
- Widening the provision of local healthcare, making healthcare accessible where people are'
- Improve GP services- as difficult to get any appointment unless you say you are really ill.
- Focus on meeting the health care needs of disabled people, of deaf people, of blind people, of learning disabled people.
- Generational repetitive cycles - without supporting people to heal from trauma we will continue to see increased criminality, drug use and children being accommodated. Access to counselling and trauma work is scarce with waiting lists for CAMHS at 3 years and for adult therapy 1-2 years.

- Greater assistance and support for people who become disabled.
- Better access to GP services irrespective of which group in society you align. Earlier intervention could reduce a number of chronic illnesses irrespective of identity.
- Support for people with Learning Disabilities. Services cut back to the bone and beyond and support is virtually non-existent.
- Social prescribing
- Widening the provision of local healthcare, making healthcare accessible where the people are.
- Access to services in rural areas. Centralised services in places like Haddington and Edinburgh can be difficult to get too from places like the Lammermuir villages with poor/no public transport.
- Culturally, many immigrants are covered and Babies kept indoors for the first few months of life. Therefore, more cultural awareness is needed to tackle issues from an insider perspective.
- The elderly and vulnerable need better care and services in the community. Age discrimination in healthcare is a real issue which is not being addressed.
- The infrastructure in East Lothian does not meet the needs of the diverse communities within. Moreover, Mobile services for dental care, vaccinations, CTAC services might help.
- A black woman has the same maternity needs as a white woman. Irrespective of how you identify, a person requires good health and social care. Some people need a wheelchair to accommodate specific needs, others might need gender reassignment surgery. Let's get back to being human beings with specific needs and work together to meet those needs.
- A focus on accessible generalist services that can provide continuity has been shown to have the greatest impact on health inequalities.

Themes and key words: Health education; dwindling; transport; access-keep it open and local; person centred; BSL; relationships matter; barriers impact health; preventative; timely intervention; accessible communication; competing for access to services.

