

WEST LoTHIAN PROJECT 2017/18

AIM OF PROJECT

The overall aim of Circle’s West Lothian Project is to address the needs of and reduce the risks faced by children affected by parental drug and/or alcohol use.

In 2017-18 the project was core funded by West Lothian ADP for two Family Support Workers and one part-time Project Manager, and by Corra Foundation for one Family Support Worker.

The project received funding for activities from Forth Cash for Kids (£1,200) and Whitburn Academy Secondary 3 Pupils’ Youth Philanthropy Initiative (£3,000).

BENEFICIARIES

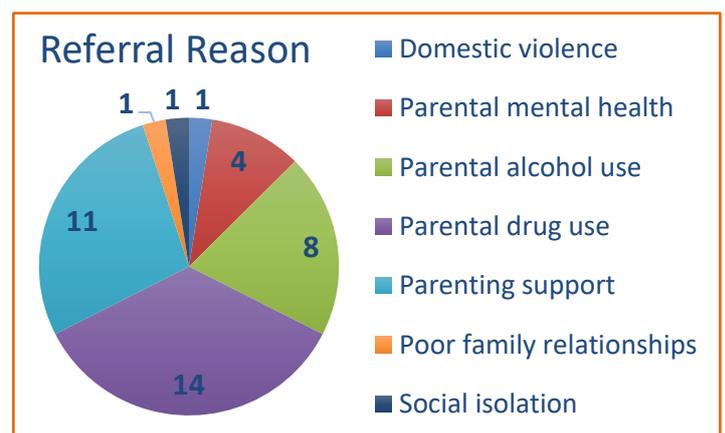
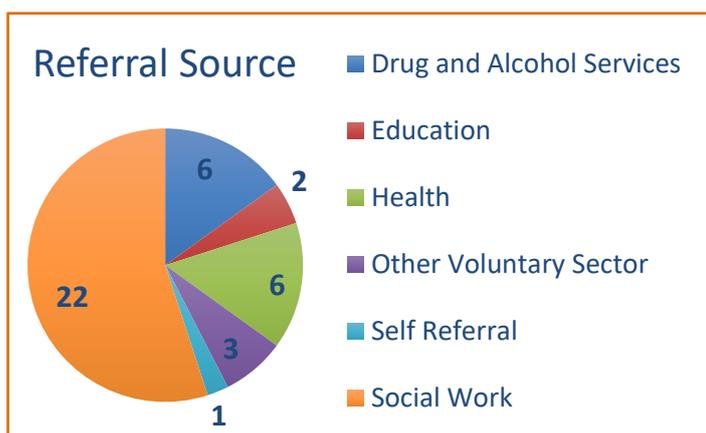
The project aimed to support **45** families in 2017/18 and over the year supported:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Families | 61 |
| Parents | 80 |
| Kinship carers | 5 |
| Children | 107 |
| TOTAL no of family members | 192 |

REFERRAL TYPE AND REFERRAL REASON

At the beginning of the year we were working with **23** families. The number of new referrals for this year was **40**. Of this number, **25** went on to receive whole family support and **13** did not engage.

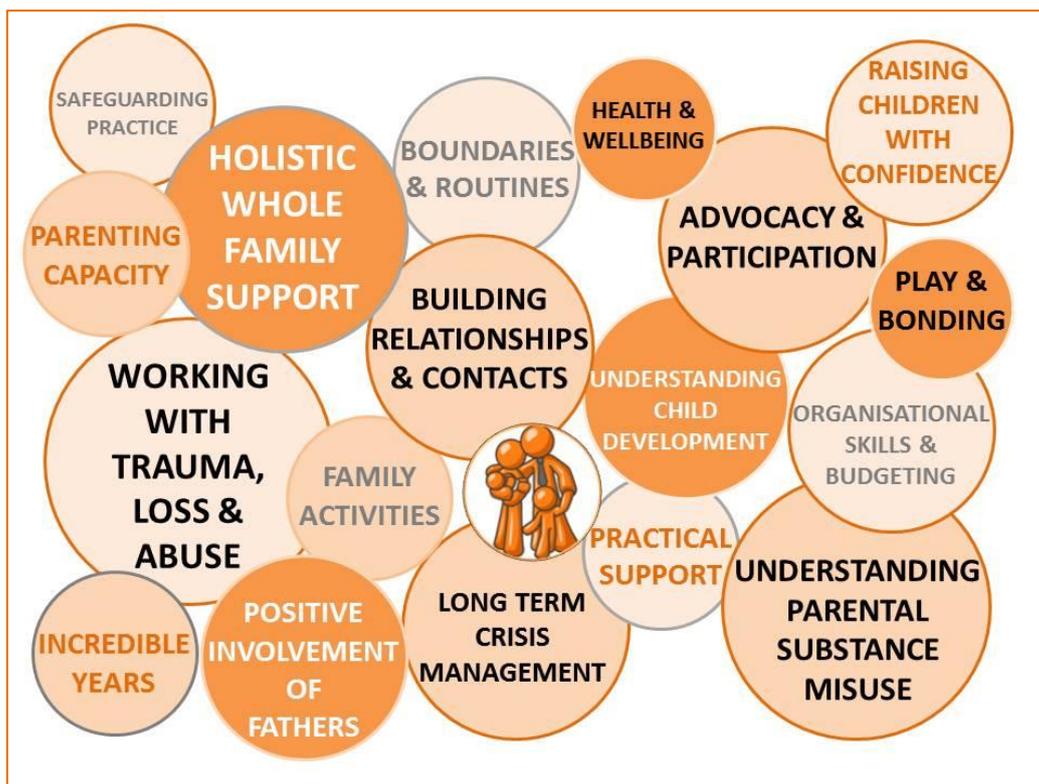
The charts below show referral type and main reason for referral for 2017-18:



33 cases were closed this year with length of involvement ranging from 4 to 276 weeks. The average length of involvement was 53 weeks.

INTERVENTIONS

All of the work that Circle undertakes to support families is strengths-based and solutions-focussed. The Family Support Workers help families to address the diverse needs that they experience including substance use, mental health and trauma (whether physical, sexual and/or emotional). The graphic below shows many of the standard interventions that our Family Support Workers carry out on a day-to-day basis.



Circle West Lothian runs two groups:

1. Living Life to the Full (LLtF) (Aug – Oct 2017 and Jan – Mar 2018)

LLtF supports parents to take control of their own wellbeing and covers the following themed sessions:

1. Why do I feel so bad?
2. I can't be bothered doing anything
3. Things you do that mess you up
4. Are you strong enough to keep your temper?
5. I'm not good enough
6. How to fix almost everything
7. Why does everything always go wrong?
8. 10 things that make you feel happier straight away

2. Raising Children with Confidence (RCwC) (Oct – Dec 2017)

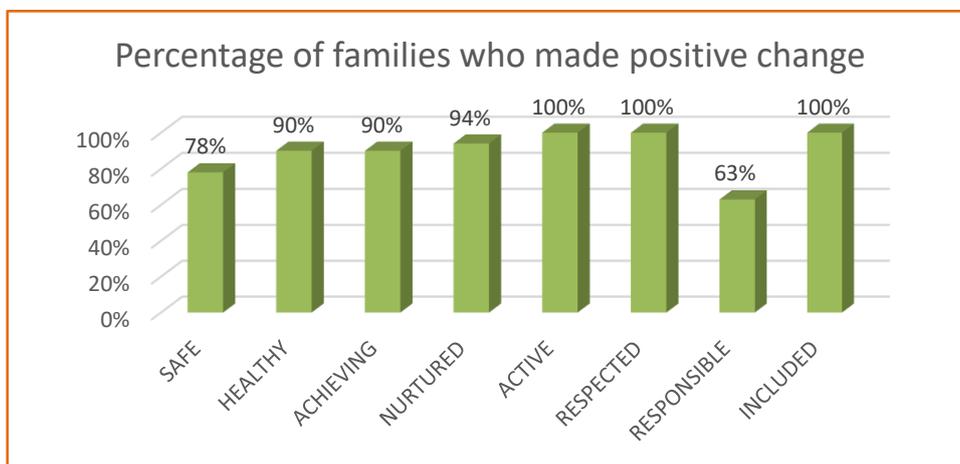
RCwC gives parents the chance to explore how to promote emotional health and well-being for their family.

1. What is emotional health & wellbeing? (Introductory session) And Why Do Kids Do That? (Looking inside children’s brains)
2. What’s Love Got To Do With It? (How relationships shape child development)
3. Cotton Wool Kids? (Helping children cope with the ups and downs of life)
4. Staying Connected! (Listening differently to understand better)
5. What Makes Us, Us? (How thoughts and feelings influence behaviour)
6. 21st Century Childhood? (How to fit it all in, in the 21st century)

OUTCOMES

Whole Family Support outcomes

Of the **33** families for whom service ended in the year, **22** had outcomes recorded. The following charts shows the percentage of families who made positive change against each outcome.



Group Work outcomes

Outcomes for attendees of the groups are recorded as part of their support plan under the Whole Family Support Service and are therefore included in the above table. A total of **18** families attended groups over the year.

FEEDBACK

Circle West Lothian has provided excellent support to children and families over the past year and this is supported by the positive outcomes, feedback from parents and the Youth Philanthropy Initiative Charity Competition win. There have been some considerable changes to the staff team with a change of project manager and one part time Family Outreach Worker recruited. There is a huge amount of experience in the team and a great deal of knowledge of partner services in West Lothian. This will stand the project in good stead for the coming year and allow for continued delivery of support to families.

Whole Family Support Feedback

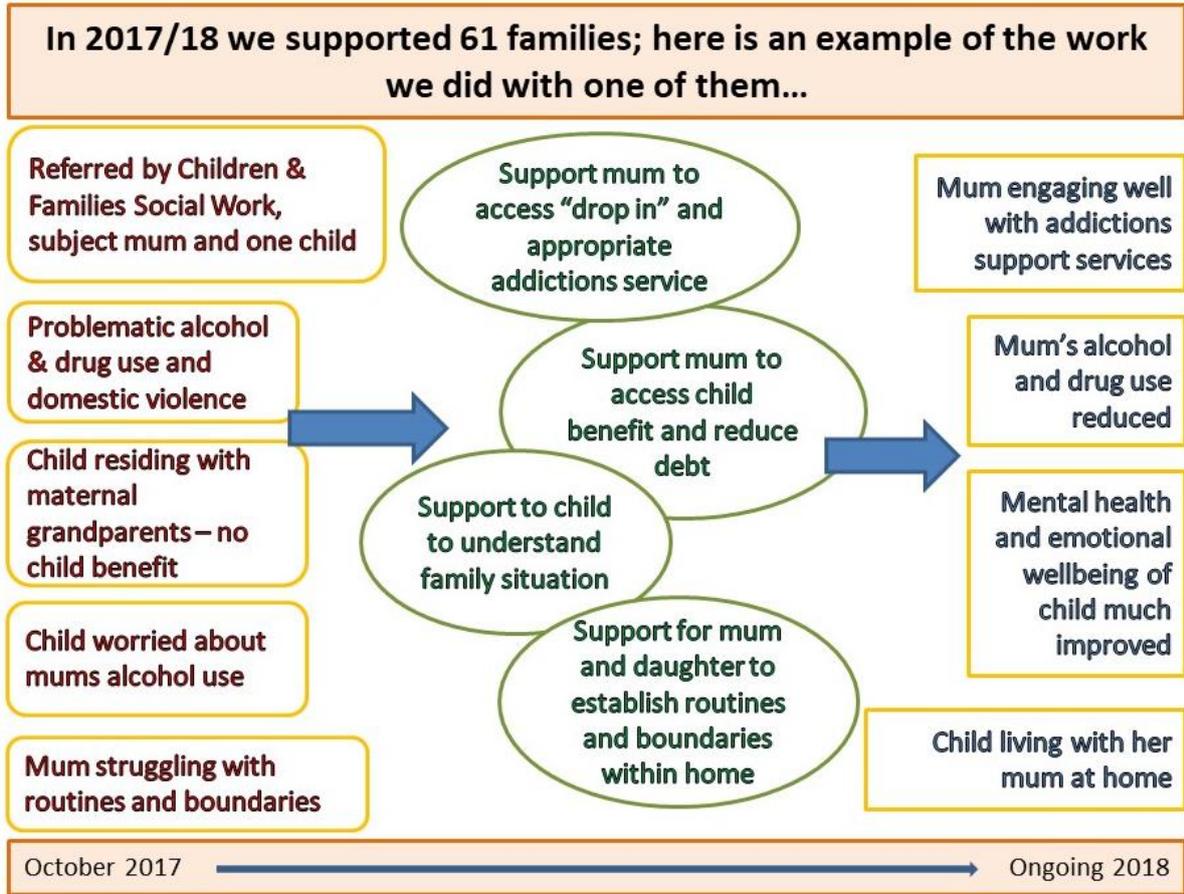
| | |
|--|--|
| <p>89% of referrers were “highly satisfied” with the worker’s ability to engage with complex family situations using a solution focussed approach</p> | <p><i>“It’s always a pleasure working with Circle. I know the people I refer are in very safe, professional hands.”</i> (Professional)</p> |
| <p><i>“All workers have had a positive impact on our pupils and their families.”</i> (Deputy Head Teacher)</p> | <p>94% of referrers were “highly satisfied” with the workers’ values and relationships</p> |
| <p>100% of children felt their Circle worker made “a lot” of difference and rated Circle as “excellent”</p> | <p>80% of parents/carers rated the whole family support as “excellent”</p> |
| <p><i>The Circle worker made a difference, “Giving me confidence, a voice to express feelings. No judgement, only support.”</i> (Parent)</p> | <p>100% of children felt their Circle worker made “a lot” of difference</p> |

Group Work Feedback

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Living Life to the Full Feedback about what was most useful/enjoyable included:</p> | | |
| <p><i>“Finding different ways to deal with things.”</i></p> | <p><i>“Really found the course very helpful in coping with day to day decisions.”</i></p> | <p><i>“Learning to be positive about the future.”</i></p> |
| <p><i>“Enjoyed every minute of the course. Meeting new people, can’t wait for the next course to start.”</i></p> | <p><i>“Learning new ways to cope with problems and ways to make me feel happier and handle life – new friends.”</i></p> | |
| <p><i>“I absolutely loved the group. I’ve took loads out of it and made new friends. The girls were good at facilitating the group and making us all understand.”</i></p> | <p><i>“Meeting new people and learning to cope with situations.”</i></p> | |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>Raising Children with Confidence</p> | |
| <p>When asked about the learning from the group:</p> | |
| <p><i>“Meeting new people aware of we do a good job raising our children”</i></p> | <p><i>“The importance of positive communication and spending time playing and listening to children”</i></p> |
| <p>When asked about positive changes as a result of attending the group:</p> | |
| <p><i>“Consistency and listening to my child”</i></p> | <p><i>“They are always happy and mostly well behaved”</i></p> |

CASE STUDY



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR YEAR AHEAD

Our target over the next year is to support **45** families in the second year of the West Lothian ADP and Corra Foundation contract. There is a possible extension of a third year for 2019-20.

We will be delivering at least two **Living Life to the Full** programmes as well as one **Raising Children with Confidence** course.

As with the majority of local authority areas there is increasing pressure on services for children and young people in general and in particular dedicated counselling supports to children affected by their parents drug or alcohol use. Circle are on an ADP Young People Working Group to scope gaps in services and develop a partnership approach towards filling some of those gaps.

There are areas of concern such as high levels of poor parental mental health, increasing levels of homelessness and the changes to Universal Credit, factors that have an adverse effect on a high proportion of the families that the project support. More strategic links will need to be made with specialist services to allow clearer signposting for specific support in these areas.

We will continue to work in partnership with other agencies to support families and to develop and promote the service. We will continue to be part of the governance, management and screening process of the Whole Family Support Service.

Author: Alex Collop

Date: 04 May 2018