

INTRODUCTION

Circle’s West Lothian Project aims to work alongside families to identify needs and build on strengths, skills and solutions to reduce the impact of parental substance use. By creating a more stable family environment, Circle supports children to achieve their potential.

To achieve the project’s aims, our Family Outreach Workers adopt a strengths-based and solution-focussed approach in all of the work that they undertake with the children and families they support. This approach allows family members to build on their existing strengths and for staff to offer practical, emotional, relational and connecting support with the whole family.



Some examples of the wide variety of interventions that we carry out on a day-to-day basis are:

- One-to-one support for children to build coping strategies and increase resilience
- Improving family life, e.g. communication, organisational skills, family activities
- Supporting parents with treatment and recovery
- Parenting support around routines and boundaries including mornings and homework
- Supporting children to be involved in more school and community activities

BENEFICIARIES

The children and families who are supported by this project will be dealing with a variety of challenging circumstances such as poor mental health, domestic abuse and low income. The project aimed to support 45 families in 2018/19 and over the year supported:

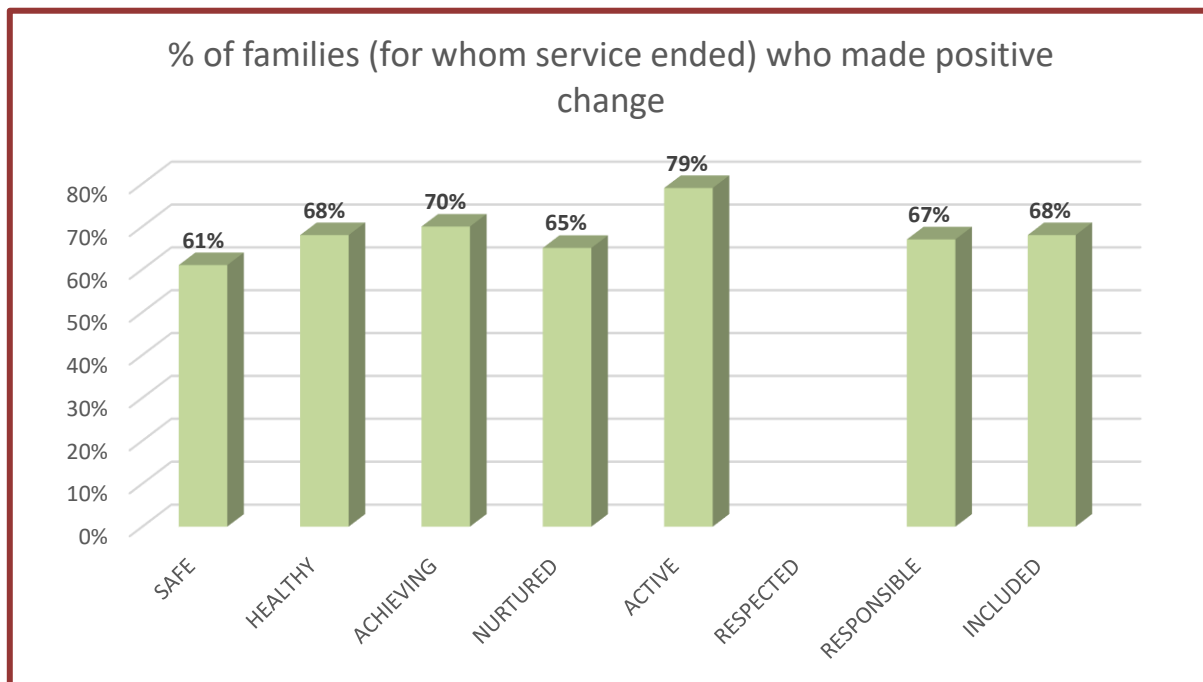
Families	61
Parents	82
Kinship carers	1
Children	110
TOTAL no. of family members	193

OUTCOMES

Circle works alongside family members to identify their specific support needs and concerns, enabling them to work towards improving their health, wellbeing and resilience.

We use the *Getting it right for every child* (GIRFEC) approach which supports children and young people to grow up feeling loved, safe and respected and to realise their full potential. At home, in school or the wider community, every child and young person should be Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included. These SHANARRI indicators are what we use to measure the progress made by the families we support.

There were 31 families for whom service ended in the year, of which 23 have reported outcomes where positive change was made. This is further detailed below:



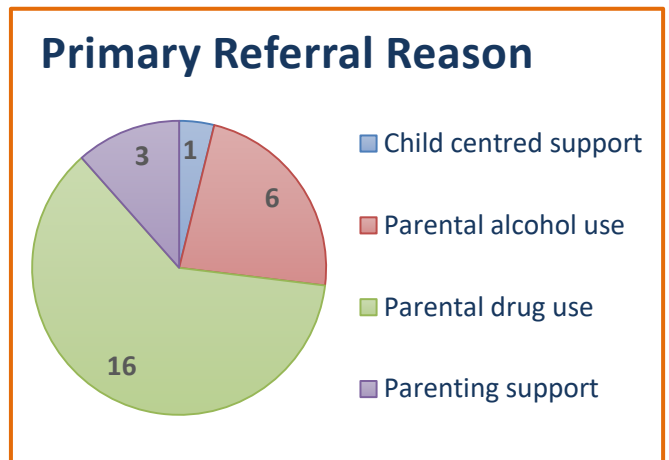
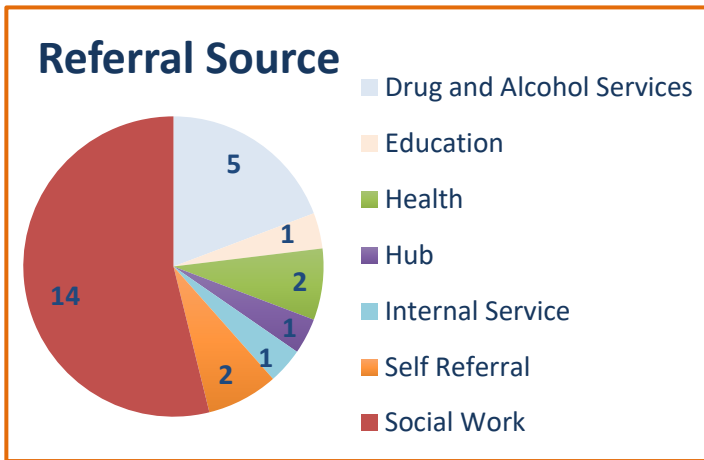
The positive outcomes experienced by families supported by the West Lothian Project include:

- Developing trusting and healthy relationships
- Improved living conditions
- Increased engagement in community resources
- Establishing children’s boundaries and routines
- Accessing recovery support
- Improved coping strategies and resilience

“The family were supported through the process of rehabilitation and continued to have advice and guidance for a period afterwards. I have met with the parent who explained how vital it was for her son and herself to have the Circle worker beside them when she needed her.”
(Professional)

REFERRAL TYPE AND REFERRAL REASON

Families were referred to Circle’s West Lothian Project in 2018-19 from a variety of sources and for a number of different reasons as outlined in the charts below:



31 cases were closed this year with length of involvement ranging from 5 weeks to 264 weeks. The average length of involvement was 49 weeks.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

Circle’s work is rarely done in isolation. The children and families we work with often experience a wide variety of challenges that require a number of organisations and individuals to work together to help them find their own specific solutions.

Circle’s West Lothian Project has in the last year worked with The Advice Shop, The Domestic and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT), West Lothian Council Housing Support, Kids Love Clothes, West Lothian Young Carers, Penumbra, Open Secret, West Lothian Council Whole Family Support Service, Scripture Union and Volunteer Gateway.

FUNDING

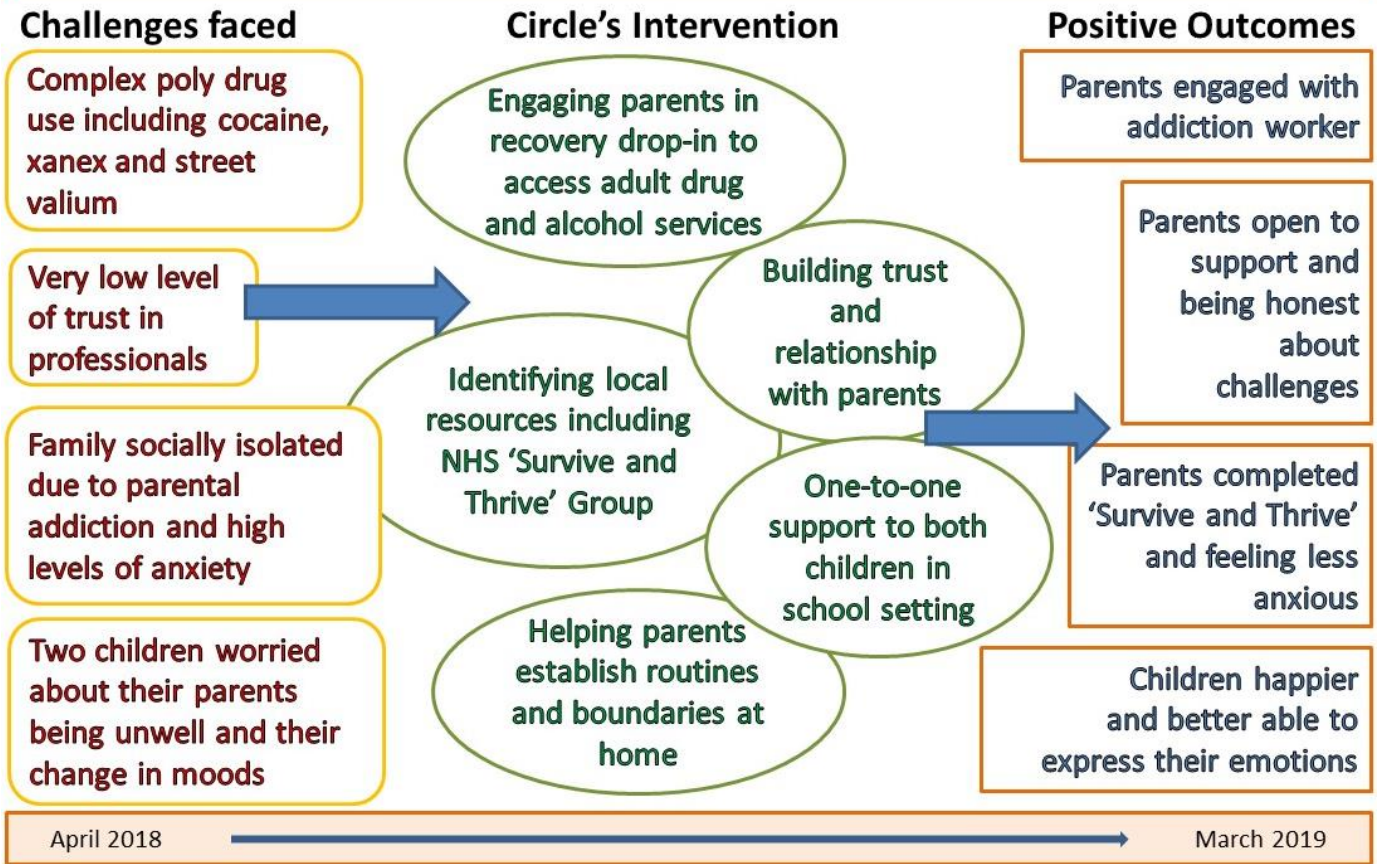
In 2018/19 the project received funding from West Lothian Alcohol & Drug Partnership (ADP) and Corra Foundation which contributed to three full time equivalent Family Outreach Workers and one part time Project Manager. Additional project funding was secured through Forth Cash for Kids and Whitburn Academy.

“The Circle worker has helped me move house twice from homeless into temp and into permanent. I have also been supported to reduce my medication. I think that if the Circle worker hadn’t been involved I would have had to involve social work. She has went above and beyond.”

(Parent)

CASE STUDY

In 2018/19 we supported 61 families; here is an example of the work we did with one of them...



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR YEAR AHEAD

The West Lothian Project aim to continue supporting children and families affected by parental substance use. We plan to secure continued funding through West Lothian ADP and Corra Foundation to provide a service from April 2020.

"Without my Circle worker I wouldn't be in the positive place I am now. I would be dead or have lost my daughter and be living a nomadic lifestyle."
(Parent)

Author: Alex Collop
Date: May 2019

