

WEST LOTHIAN PROJECT

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 2019/20 and over the year supported:

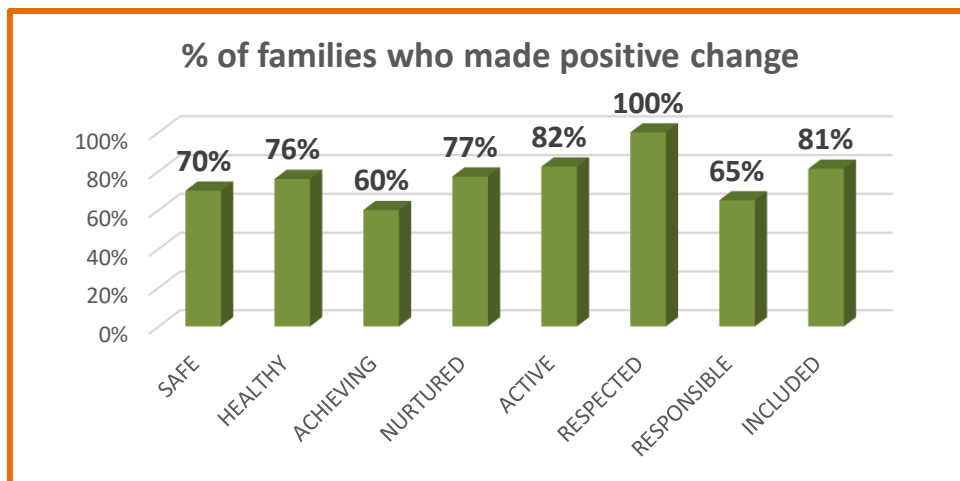
Families	56
Parents	86
Kinship carers	4
Children	100
TOTAL no. of family members	190

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 25 families for whom service ended in the year, of which 20 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:

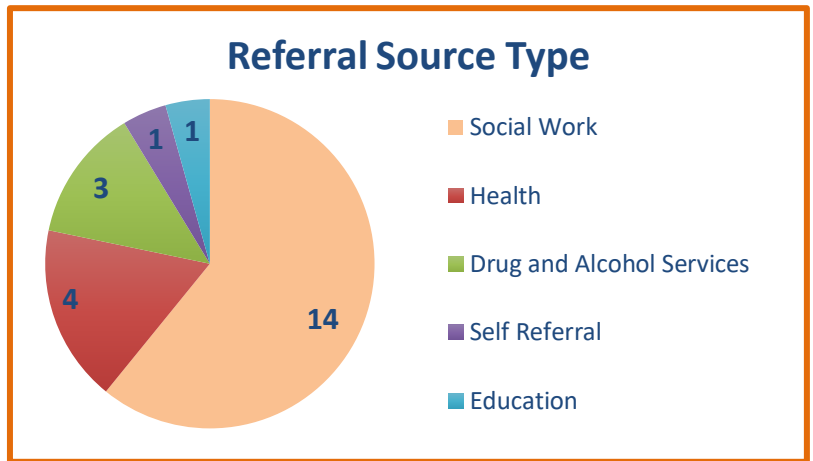
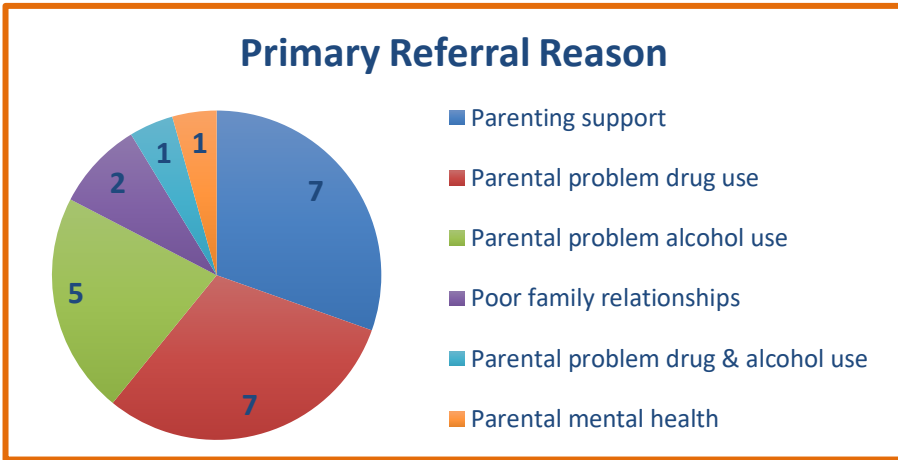
- Developing trusting and healthy relationships
- Increased engagement in community resources
- Accessing recovery support
- Improved living conditions
- Establishing children’s boundaries and routines
- Improved coping strategies and resilience

“I cannot rate our Circle worker any higher. She has been not only a support to the family but to us as a school when assisting our pupil in developing her socialisation skills and her anger management. Her resources and approaches have been well selected and managed to provide progress that we could only have hoped for.”
 (Professional)

“I think if I hadn’t had a Circle worker at the time I did there would have been a high chance of me relapsing. I would probably not have found the motivation to move forward from my depression and would have still not found the strength to want to leave the house and enjoy activities with my kids.”
 (Parent)

REFERRAL TYPE AND REFERRAL REASON

Families were referred to Circle’s West Lothian Project in 2019/20 from a variety of sources and for a number of different reasons as outlined in the charts below:



30 cases were closed this year with length of involvement ranging from 2 weeks to 213 weeks. The average length of involvement was 59 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.

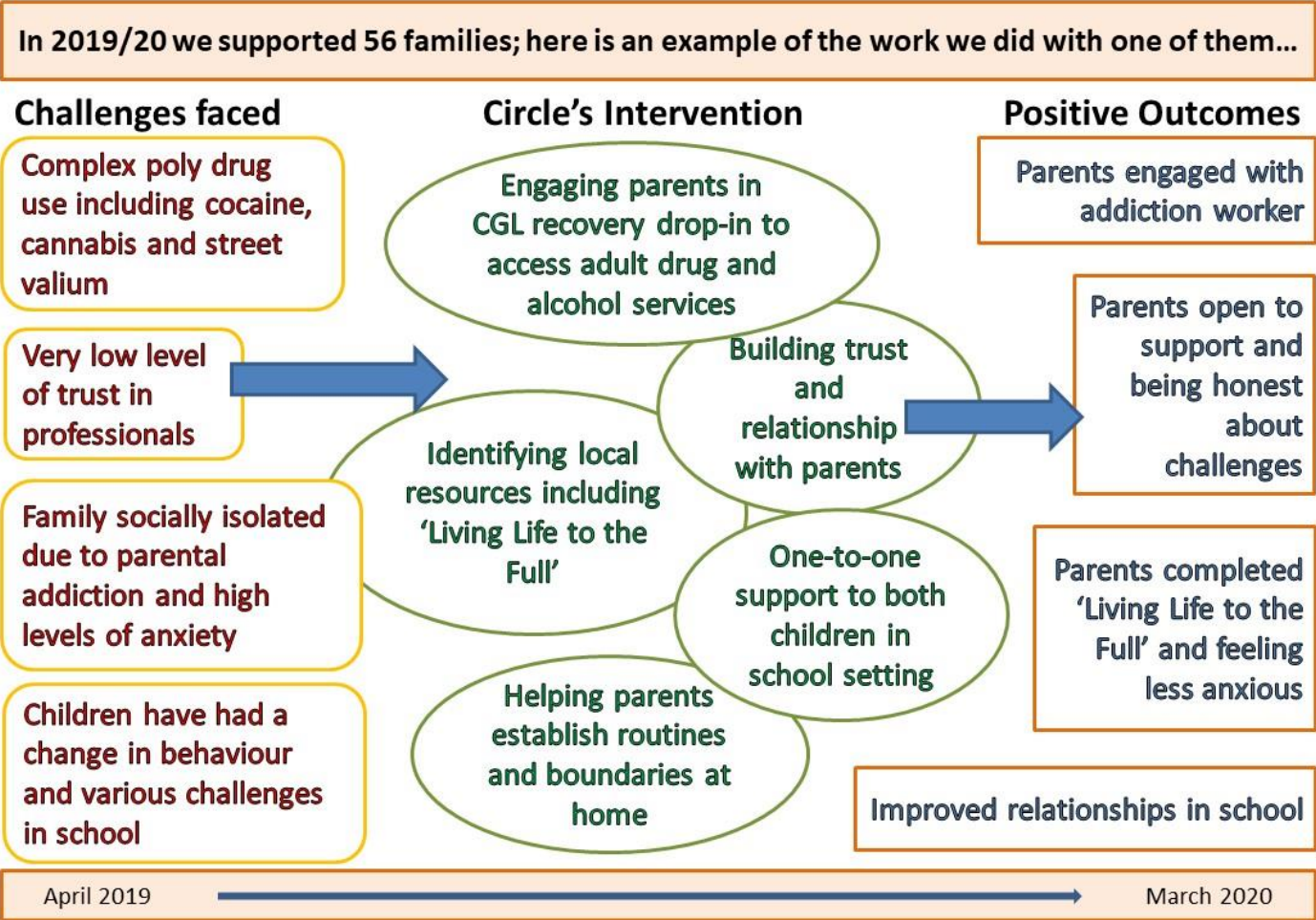
Circle’s West Lothian Project has in the last year worked with The Advice Shop, The Domestic and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT), West Lothian Council Housing Support, Kids Love Clothes, West Lothian Young Carers, Penumbra, Open Secret,

West Lothian Council Whole Family Support Service, Scripture Union and Volunteer Gateway.

FUNDING

In 2019/20 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.

CASE STUDY



PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR YEAR AHEAD

The West Lothian Project aims to continue supporting children and families affected by parental substance use. An extension to the WLADP funding until March 2022 has been confirmed for two full time Family Outreach Worker posts and 0.5 Project Manager post. Corra Foundation have approved an additional two years' continuation funding until March 2022 for the additional one full time post.

"She was there if I needed someone to listen and was great with the kids and helping with routines."
(Parent)



Author: Alex Collop
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