

## **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.



We have adapted to the pandemic by offering socially distanced walks, doorstep/garden visits, by ensuring families have enough food, fuel and clothing and by offering wellbeing packs.

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 2020/21 and over the year supported:

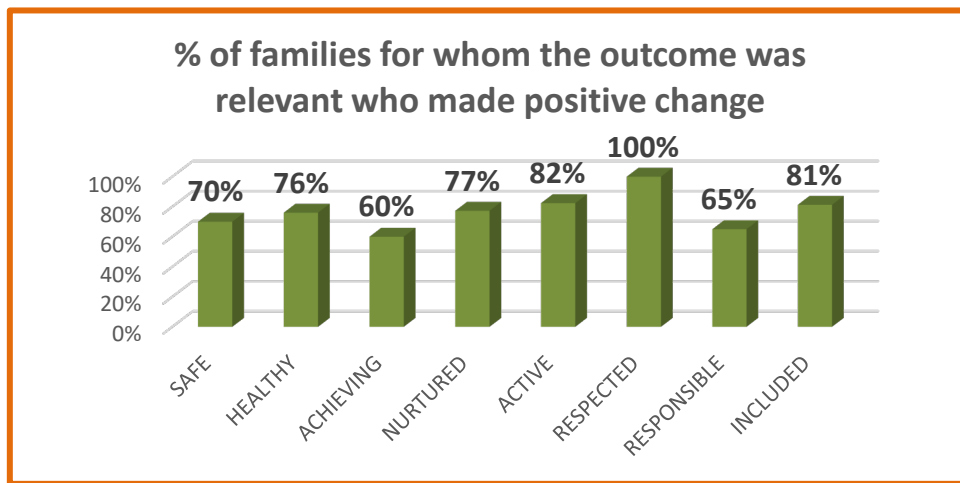
<b>Families</b>	<b>43</b>
Parents	<b>66</b>
Kinship carers	<b>3</b>
Children	<b>83</b>
<b>TOTAL no. of family members</b>	<b>152</b>

## 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 10 families for whom service ended in the year, all of whom 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

*“It is always a joy working on a case with the Circle worker who is so passionate about the work she does with families. Seeing her work with families is not just a job but a vocation that she wills the families to come out better as the end of each work.”*

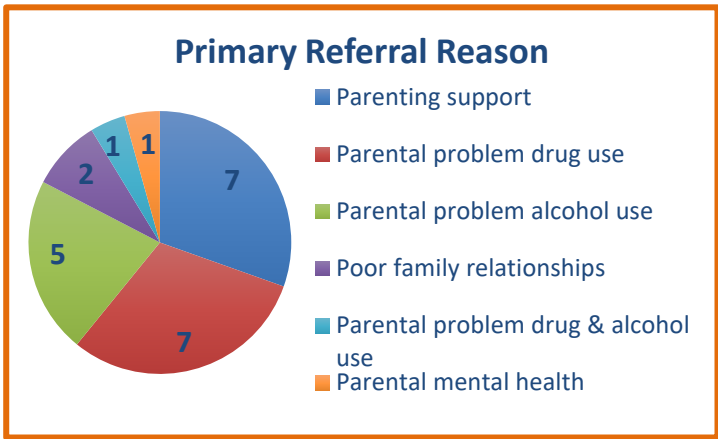
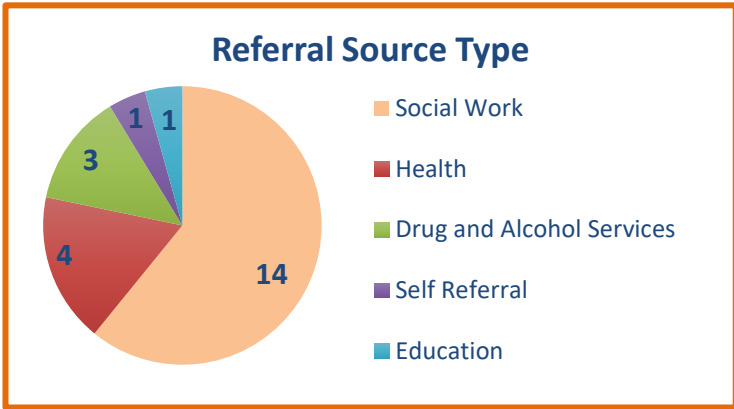
(Professional)

*“I am no longer drinking and taking substances. I have good and bad days, but good days are more frequent. The Circle worker helps me to think about the bad days better and I can bounce back.”*

(Parent)

## REFERRAL TYPE AND REFERRAL REASON

Families were referred to Circle’s West Lothian Project in 2020/21 from a variety of sources and for a number of different reasons as outlined in the charts below:



10 cases were closed this year with length of involvement ranging from 6 weeks to 153 weeks. The average length of involvement was 52 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 West Lothian Youth Action Team, The Advice Shop, The Domestic and Sexual Assault Team (DASAT), West Lothian Council Housing Support, Kids Love Clothes, West Lothian

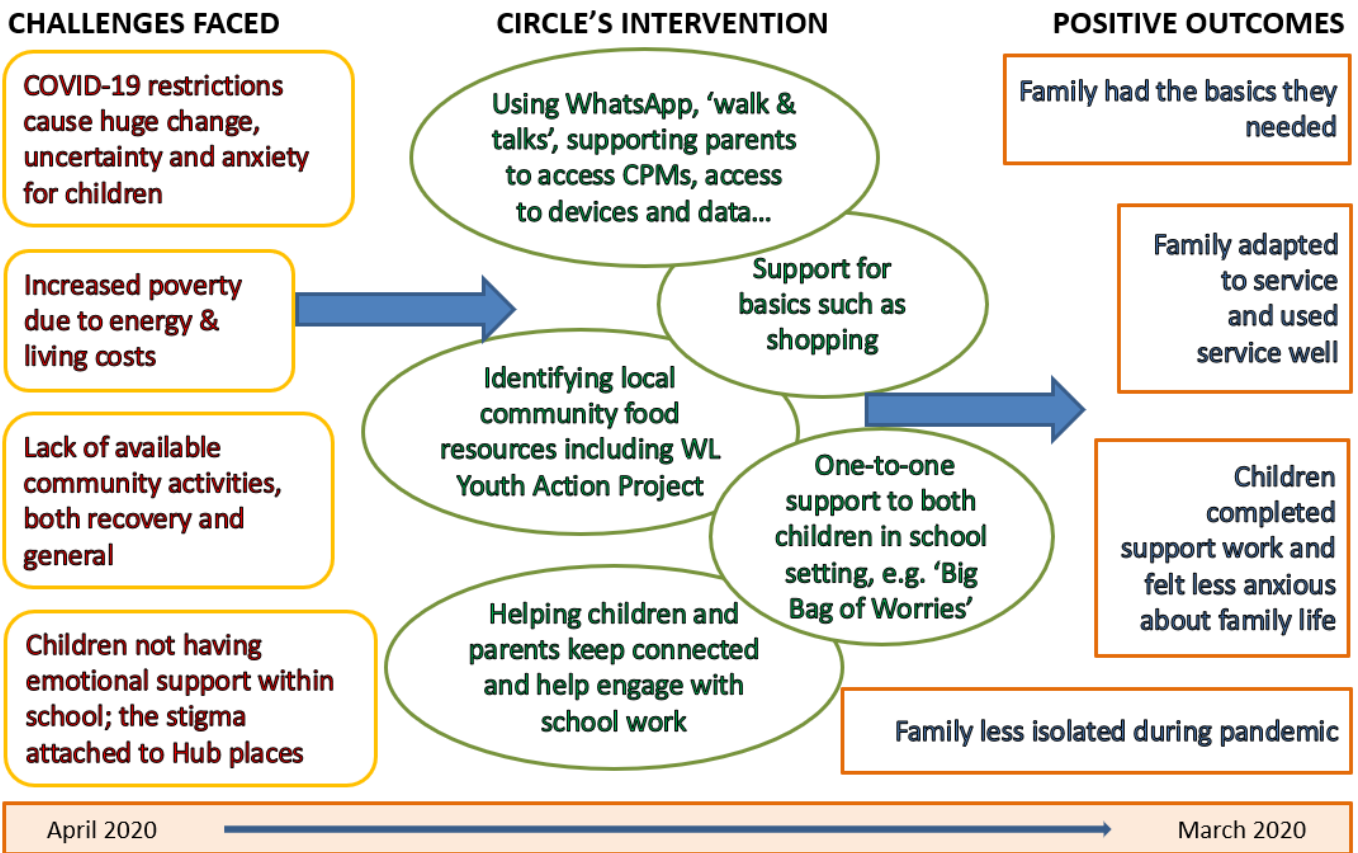
Young Carers, Penumbra, Open Secret, West Lothian Council Whole Family Support Service, Scripture Union and Volunteer Gateway.

## FUNDING

In 2020/21 the project received funding from West Lothian Alcohol & Drug Partnership (WLADP) 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 Radio Forth Cash for Kids.

## CASE STUDY

In 2020/21 we supported 43 families; here is an example of the work we did with one of them...



## 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.

The family support service is part of the WLADP's strategic commissioning plan and Circle will consider the tender when published in the Autumn 2021.

*"Without the Circle worker things would have been a right struggle. The Circle worker is totally amazing. I have turned my life around and couldn't have done this without the Circle worker. She has been incredible."*

(Parent)



Author: Alex Collop  
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