

# **More than 7,000 children in West Lothian helped with school clothing grants**

**More than 7,000 children in West Lothian were helped with school clothing grants in the last year, councillors heard.**

The school clothing grants administered by the council are one of a range of services to help families struggling in the cost-of-living crisis.

And a pilot scheme in which the council's Anti-Poverty Service (APS) began working in schools secured more than £1m in financial help for more than 400 families.

A spokesperson for the APS told a meeting of the East Livingston and East Calder Local Area Committee that, as of 31 March 2025, 7,377 children had received help. School Clothing Grants are provided to parents in low-income households, with £150 awarded per child in primary school and £180 for secondary pupils.

Other programmes directed at families included free school meals and holiday meal cover.

In the academic year 2024/25 up to 31/03/25, 3,187 children received a free school meal because they live in low-income households.

From the beginning of the academic year in August 2024, school holiday meal payments totalling £403,770 were made for the

October, Christmas, and February breaks.

An additional payment was made during the Easter holidays, with payments continuing into the 2025/26 academic year for all future school holidays.

In February 2025, the Scottish Government introduced free school meals for pupils in P6 and P7 if their parent or carer receives a Scottish Child Payment, we have provided an additional 176 children with a free school meal.

The spokesperson added that the pilot project where APS staff had begun working out of schools had helped reach more families.

“After initial meetings with primary schools were held, where a contact person within each school was agreed, a round of briefing sessions were held to introduce the Anti-Poverty Service and explain scope and remit of services provided, when and how to refer families for support.

“Throughout 2024/25 a total of 456 families were supported by the Child Poverty Schools Team at the Anti-Poverty Service and a total of £1,120,555 of additional income secured for these families.”

The APS is working to help unmet need, aware that even in apparently wealthy neighbourhoods there can be pockets of extreme deprivation, the spokesperson told councillors. The co-location in schools had been particularly helpful in helping families connect with the service

The East Livingston and East Calder Local Area Committee heard that households in the ward received more than £3m of help in the last year.

The APS delivered households £2,635,480 million by maximising income from social security benefits for people in the ward. Energy efficiency savings of £47,153 were delivered through

access to financial support and advice. Staff offered support to deal with £664,944 of problem debt resulting in reduction in debt repayments of £406,165.

The service also issued 259 emergency food vouchers and 200 fuel vouchers for households at risk of disconnection.

Councillor Veronica Smith asked if there was a particular benefit which was not being claimed.

She was told disability benefits are often unclaimed by many for children or adults largely because people are unaware that they are eligible for help.

By Stuart Sommerville, Local Democracy Reporter