West Lothian Volunteer Network

Tuesday September 24th 2pm

Chair and note Taker: Victoria Isbister (VSGWL) Victoria.Isbister@VSGWL.org

Present: Elizabeth Campbell (HCL) Lisa Callaghan (Home Start)

 Sharon Rae (Cyrenians) Lee Dolby (Linlithgow CDT)

 C McLaughlin (Active schools) Dorothy Terhune (NCT)

 J Imrie (Active Schools) Alex (Eastfield)

 Sandra Stark (Cyrenians)

Apologies: Linden Raeburn (West Lothian Council) Linden.Raeburn@westlothian.gov.uk, Maureen Colquhoun (WLC), Leighann Bishop (Xcite), Gareth McKenna, Roz (School Bank), Susan (CAB), Claire Garton (NHS), Ray Fallan (VSGWL), Paula Mark (Mood), Jennifer Harley (HCL)

1. Welcome and Apologies

Victoria welcomed everyone to the meeting and passed on Linden’s apologies.

1. Last minutes and previous actions

Passed as accurate. Some actions standing and others carried forward.

Victoria to email WLVN meeting poster to Food Network mailing list (completed)

1. Guest Speaker: Safe Families: Martin Bethell

Please see attached slides – which include contact details.

Safe Families merged with Home for Good September 1st. The two charities worked together for years and have come together to provide a more holistic service.

Questions:

* How do you match the needs of families with volunteers at a local level? Do you need more promotion of the support available? How can Linlithgow CDT link in / support you? Referrals come through ROOTS. Family support managers then visit families to find out level of support needed. They then match volunteers with family. Always on lookout for volunteers.
* Are there any gaps? Do you need volunteers in a certain area? Very much a need in West Lothian. Couldn’t break it down to specific areas (i.e. what is the need in Linlithgow)
1. Volunteer Fayre: January 2025 w/c 27th

Linden advised the room has been booked and will update further in Oct.

1. Volunteer celebrations – No stories or successes shared this month
2. Social Media Page - Message Ann if anything you wish shared. Victoria also happy to email information round the network and other VSG relevant contacts.
3. Volunteer Friendly Awards update –Ray will update at next meeting.
4. Service Updates
* VSGWL: Corporate volunteer opportunities: increasing contact from companies looking to be partnered with local charities to fulfil their corporate volunteering hours. These offers are sent out to our members, if anyone is not a member and would be interested in hearing about these opportunities (along with other membership benefits, they can get in touch with Tracy. Membership is free <https://www.voluntarysectorgateway.org/organisation-support/our-members/>. Mental Health and Wellbeing fund Y4 opens 30 Sept. Upcoming Events: Saltire awards (9th) and Leadership support event (8th)
* OPAL: Office has been painted by B&Q volunteers and hub launch 1st Oct. 30 people including Kirsteen Sullivan MSP. OPAL and XCITE games upcoming with 20 groups in WL. All play same games then come together at Strathbrock for an awards ceremony with tea and coffee. Good networking at event stalls recently, with some positive outcomes.
* Linlithgow CDT: Lee introduced himself as this is his first meeting. Lee hasn’t been in post long and is building up local contacts however engagement is low. Has CVS background and looking to share skills as well as ideas. There are 180 groups in Linlithgow and he is looking at how to bring everything together: volunteer recruitment, retention and recognition. All groups are short of volunteers.
* HCL Transport: Challenge poverty week Oct 7-13th, Filmed with WLC this morning for social media as Tuesday theme is transport. Team has fundraised some money (various but inc bungee jumping!) and this will be used to promote wellbeing by running free outings. Edinburgh trips well attended and successful. First trip was to Portobello and oversubscribed. Hope to run another in WL Christmas time.
* Active WL: Thanks given to VSG who advertised cross country which then had a good uptake. They are keen to build on this moving forward and work closely with VSG.
* Home Start – Support families with at least 1 child under 5. Group service, baby groups, stay and play. Volunteers provide support alongside group workers and support families at home. Always looking for new volunteers to support families. An hour or two a week, partnered with 1 family at a time. Isolation is a big issue e.g. families moving into the area who don’t know anyone.
* NCT: Two community groups in WL and offer peer feeding support in St Johns. Asked if anyone had any connections in Armadale? Couple anti natal classes struggling with attendance.
* Social Security Scotland – See information below
1. Any other business - none

*Next meeting date: October 29th (TBC) Online*

Event planning subgroup – no meeting in Sept, notes from Aug c/f

Actions C/F Aug

1. Email any volunteer or placements opportunities to Ray.fallan@vsgwl.org
2. All members get in touch with any guest speakers or interested topics e.g volunteer expenses, recruitment.
3. How many volunteers are there in WL? – How can we map this.
4. Contact Carol if any corporate volunteering opportunities (plenty of time needed to plan ahead): carol.tugman@socialsecurity.gov.scot
5. Contact Asda community champion – alorrai.s04176.uk@wal-mart.com: Abi Lorraine: Community Life Champion: Asda Livingston: Tel: 01506835980 ext 222

**Appendix: Social security**

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| **Extending Carer Support Payment** |

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| [Carer Support Payment](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=0af1dd64ca&e=13db7ce213), the replacement for Carer’s Allowance in Scotland, is now available in seven more council areas - Aberdeen, Aberdeenshire, Fife, Moray and North, East and South Ayrshire. Carers can use the postcode checker available online at [postcodecheck.socialsecurity.gov.scot](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=7bf21a8471&e=13db7ce213) to see if Carer Support Payment is available in their area. The benefit will be available across the whole of Scotland from 4 November. Unlike Carer’s Allowance, Carer Support Payment is available to some carers in full-time education or studying for 21 hours or more a week. This includes full-time students aged 20 or over and students under 20 who are in higher education. Some carers can apply to have their benefit payments backdated to when Carer Support Payment was introduced.Carers who live in areas where Carer Support Payment is not yet available are urged to apply for Carer's Allowance to make sure they are not missing out on financial support. More information is available on [Extending Carer Support Payment](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=ea7d9d7994&e=13db7ce213). People can check eligibility and apply at [mygov.scot/carer-support-payment](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=126903e655&e=13db7ce213). They can also apply over the phone or by booking an appointment to apply in-person by calling us free on 0800 182 2222. |

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| **Back to school** |

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| With young people back at school, we are urging parents and carers to check their eligibility for financial support.Extra costs, including new shoes, stationery and lunch boxes, can soon add up.   Our five family payments can help pay for extra school expenses alongside everyday family costs like food, clothing and days out.  This includes the Scottish Child Payment, a weekly payment of £26.70 for eligible families with children up to 16.The three Best Start Grant payments and Best Start Foods, also part of the five family payments, are designed to help families at key stages in their children’s early years, including during pregnancy.  There is no cap on the number of children in one family who can receive these payments.   |

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| **Widening access to Best Start Foods** |

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| Changes to Best Start Foods mean more people can access financial support to buy healthy foods during their child’s early years.In February, we made changes to eligibility rules which meant that thousands more people in Scotland were able to apply.This extends access to non-British as well as British children, whose parent or carer has no access to public funds due to their immigration status or lack of immigration status, such as families seeking asylum. |

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| **What the changes mean and who can get the payment**People who do not currently meet the eligibility criteria may be able to receive payments equivalent to Best Start Foods if they meet the following conditions:* are responsible for at least one child under 3, not including pregnancies
* family income is £1,763.18 or less a month after tax for a single adult or £2,086.00 or less a month after tax for a couple
* are not able to access public funds because of immigration status or do not have immigration status
* they have an address in Scotland.
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| More information on [widening access to Best Start Foods](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=86da35c58e&e=13db7ce213) is available on our website.Please help us spread the news around this change by sharing on your communications channels and asking people within your local communities and networks to check their eligibility.To find out more about Best Start Foods and eligibility criteria, people can visit [mygov.scot/best-start-grant-best-start-foods](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=5eb1dcec76&e=13db7ce213) or by calling us free on 0800 182 2222. |

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| **Helping young people starting a new job** |

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| As school leavers and graduates begin the search for employment, we want young people to check if they are eligible for Job Start Payment.The cost of starting a new role can add up, especially if young people have been unemployed and have less money. Job Start Payment can help. It is a one-off payment of £314.45 to help young people between the ages of 16-24 or 16-25 for care leavers, with the costs of starting a new job.The value increases to £503.10 if they are the main carer for any children. This payment does not have to be paid back, and applicants are free to spend this as they see fit, but it can help to pay for expenses like travel, clothes and childcare.More information on [helping young people to get money they need to start a new job](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=843cd74e3d&e=13db7ce213) and [Job Start Payment resources](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=9ee61960d4&e=13db7ce213) for stakeholders and employers are available on our website.Anyone who thinks they may be eligible can find out more and apply online, over the phone or by booking an appointment to apply in-person, by visiting [mygov.scot/jobstartpayment](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=1c04f89777&e=13db7ce213" \t "_blank) or by calling us free on 0800 182 2222. |

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| **Marketing and Information materials on request**If you are a stakeholder and want to request published materials from us, you can [request copies via our website.](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=e386c9fb9e&e=13db7ce213) If you would like to order print runs of leaflets or posters, please contact us at [marketingmaterials@socialsecurity.gov.scot](https://scot.us19.list-manage.com/track/click?u=11fdff413e50ba7bc51890111&id=b2bd79f3ca&e=13db7ce213). We are also happy to chat about creating  material for your networks or organisation. |

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**Gillian Dunnigan (she/her)**

Client Support Team Leader, West Lothian

Local Delivery

**Social Security Scotland**

Phone: 07501 494 443

Email: Gillian.Dunnigan@socialsecurity.gov.scot

Website: [www.socialsecurity.gov.scot](http://www.socialsecurity.gov.scot/)

**Event Subgroup (Aug)**

**Location:** WLC College Livi – cheapest, fits with aims (student practice)

 Could hire function room (which comes with function room)

 Hillcroft (less than £500 – see appendix) (poor bus issue?)

 Stadium – Simon food creations

 Strathbrock – Xcite, community centre, holds 200

 Bathgate Golf Club

 **Transport**: Ideally on Bus route (issue region wide)

**Date:** Ideally volunteers week, may have to fit in with college, First week in June

**Time:** Afternoon intoEvening, 5pm - 9pm or Afternoon (what would volunteers prefer)

**Dress code:** Posh and fancy but not incurring additional costs, want to look after people and make them feel good. Need to do what people want.

**Decorations:**

**Refreshments:** Sit down meal (100 people exc staff). Food is part of celebration.

The Larder donating to Xcite event. Buffet? BBQ.

**Catering:** College students

**Number of people:** 5 places per org

**Budget: -** £10,000. One big event or 2 or 3 events?

**Entertainment:** Disco, live band expensive. College music. Needs to be something to suit everyone. Disco might put people off. Regal music group. Background music. Choir. Combination of music /games.

**Alcohol:** Would need license or buy someone in or hide a venue.

**Members**

Linden Maureen Ray Hayley (Home-start)

Leighann School Bank

**In the past**

Certificates presented to Orgs and afternoon tea. Numbers restricted to 100 post covid.

Before that there was entertainment with coffee and snacks, 250 people.

**Actions**

1. Ray will ask her Nephew for costings about alcohol van
2. Survey own volunteers (Xcite, WLC and School Bank) on issues such as event timing