

# Carefree Kids

## East Lothian



### Annual Report

**April 2024 – March 2025**

9 Elphinstone Road  
Tranent  
East Lothian  
EH33 2LG



Website: [www.carefreekidseastlothian.org](http://www.carefreekidseastlothian.org)

## **Background**

Carefree Kids was registered with OSCR in 1999 (SC029677) and became a registered SCIO (SC04873) in 2018 changing our name to Carefree Kids East Lothian.

We are the only Project within East Lothian offering the wide range of services that we do and we have been operating successfully for 25 years. The demand that has been shown for our services show that we are still meeting an identified need.

We are based in Tranent offering services to those living within East Lothian. Our services are open to those on low income/in receipt of benefit with a baby or young child.

The aims of our Project are to:

- ❖ promote child and family health and home safety;
- ❖ reduce the risk of home accidents by offering practical assistance, advice and support; and
- ❖ provide information on relevant health issues.

Carefree Kids improves resilience of children and their parents by providing services that support to help parents where possible overcome issues caused by poverty and social exclusion.

Our services give children the best possible start in life. We do this through:

- ❖ supporting home safety
- ❖ offering a toy library
- ❖ administering a bursary scheme
- ❖ running a school uniform bank
- ❖ offer winter jackets
- ❖ attending baby clinics/groups/events
- ❖ offer First Aid for Parents courses
- ❖ offering period products
- ❖ supporting baby massage practitioners
- ❖ offering a range of HR services

## **Our Services**

Initial referrals for our services are made through an approved agent as these are the ones who know the families that they are working with and what their needs are.

Referral forms do ask for information regarding income to ensure that we are targeting the families who required help the most.

Once a family has been referred and using one of our services we are then aware of any other service that we offer that may be of benefit to them.

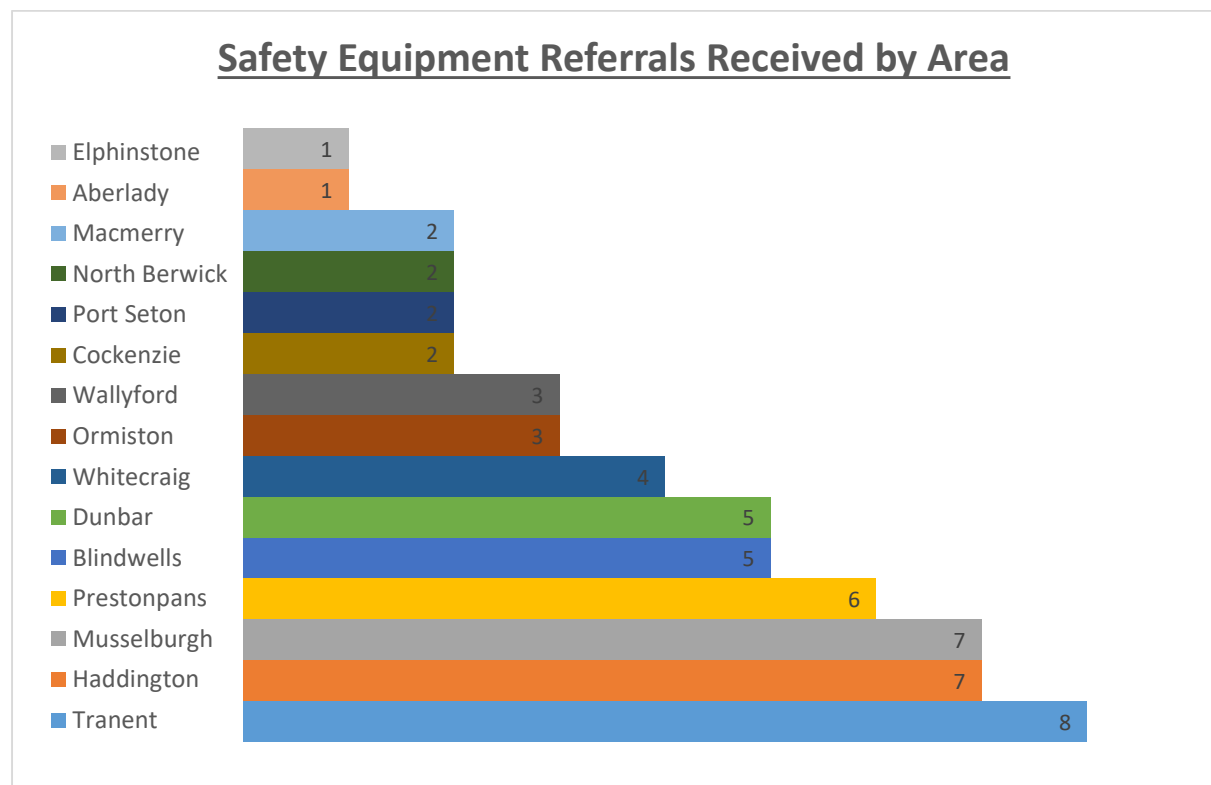
We also have families contact us direct as they are aware of us and the services that we offer.

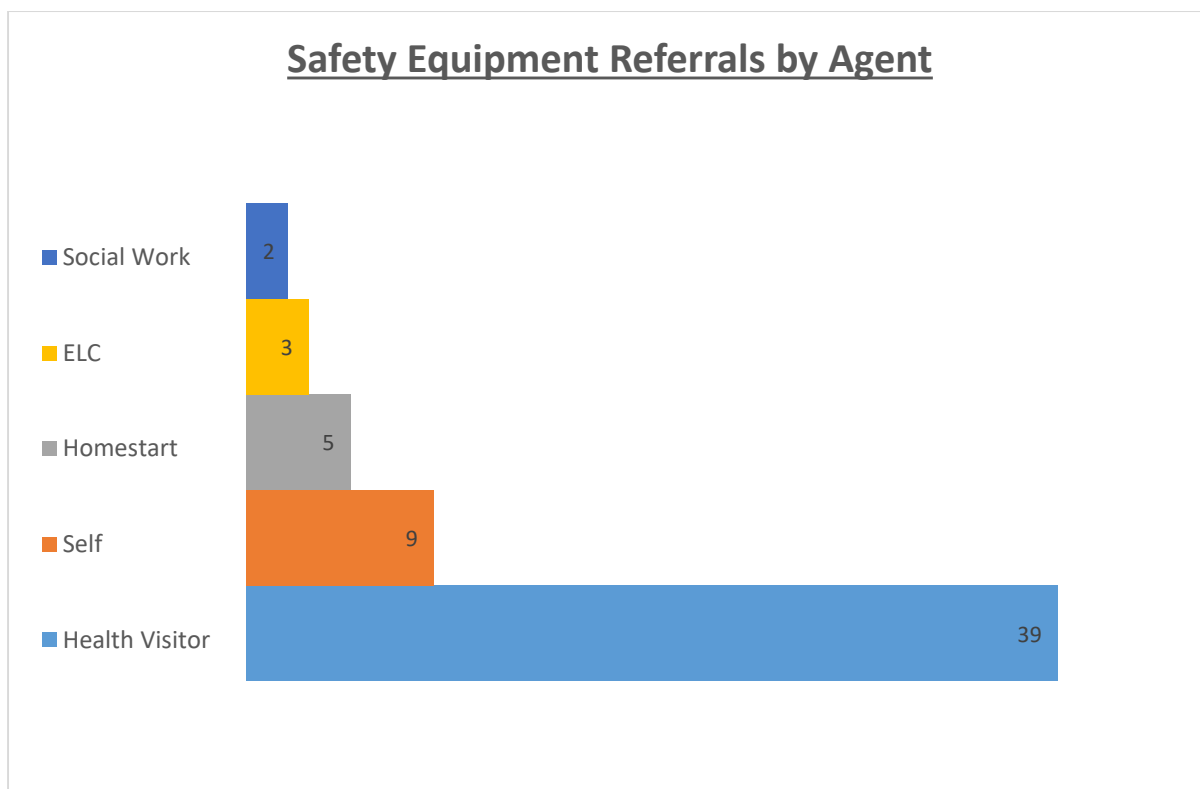
Feedback on any of our services is always welcomed and changes implemented wherever possible.

### **Home Safety**

We provide a safety equipment loan scheme to families who are referred to us who live in East Lothian and have a child under the age of 5 or with special needs. These referrals are made by the Health Visiting Team, Children's Wellbeing Team or other relevant agency. Referrals are made for a wide range of child safety equipment – stairgate, fireguard, cot, high chair, etc.

By lending this much needed equipment we are enabling families to create a safer home environment in which to raise their child(ren) thus reducing the risk of accidents occurring within the home.





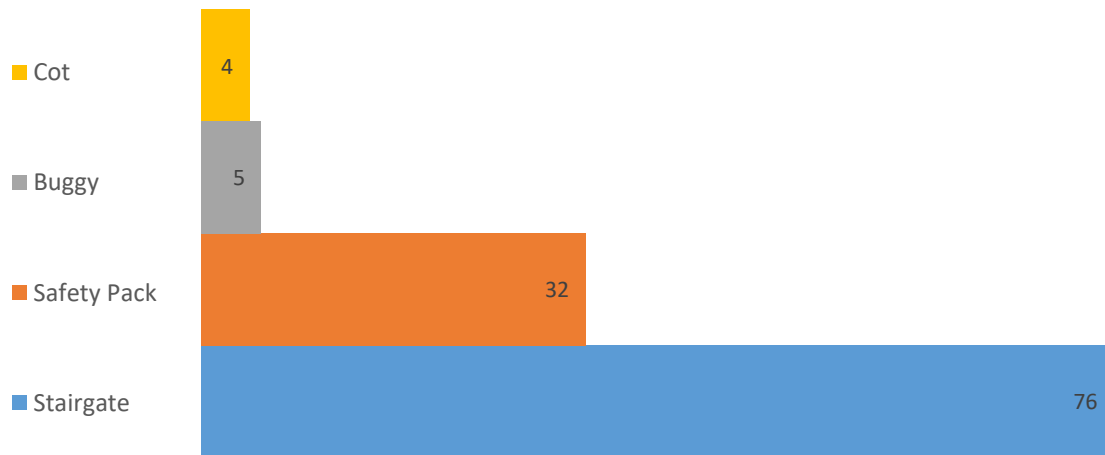
In the current financial year, we have received 58 referrals of which 56 were completed, with 2 unable to be completed. From these referrals a total of 117 items of equipment have been loaned.

As you can see from the chart below stairgates are still the most requested item loaned.

Occasionally we are unable to complete a referral, the reason for this ranges from not having the requested items in stock to the age of the child and the items being requested.

The highest areas in which we delivered equipment were Tranent, Haddington and Musselburgh with the majority of referrals being made by Health Visitors.

### Safety Equipment by Items



All equipment loaned complies with all relevant safety legislation and is suitable for the age and stage of a child's development.

### Toy Library

The Toy Library is open to families living within East Lothian offering a wide range of educational and stimulating toys/games for children from birth to 5 years. We also have a range of additional support needs toys available.

Baby Play

Puzzles

Life/Role Play

Outdoors

Music

Additional Support Needs



Construction

Games

Transport

Electronic

Arts & Crafts

Play is an important part in helping meet a child's developmental needs, not just cognitive but also socially and emotionally. The toys offered through the Library allow the opportunity for more interaction between the child and parent/carers – strengthening bonds within the family unit as a whole.

Unfortunately, due to funding restrictions our Toy Library was not fully open.

### **Bursary Scheme**

We administer the Support from the Start Bursary Scheme in three out of the six areas within East Lothian.

As a child's early experiences are crucial to their development, this scheme gives the opportunity for experiences and challenges out with the home. This helps children build their social, emotional and physical skills that support development throughout their life.

By doing this we are aiming to address inequalities that exist locally by giving children positive experiences so they develop a sense of belonging, become effective contributors and successful learners, along with their families contributing to their local community and feeling included.

We are committed to supporting young children's participation in local classes, regardless of family economic factors.

Although there is still money sitting in the bursary account no referrals were made in this financial year.

### **School Uniform Bank**

Our aim is to ensure that every child in East Lothian has access to a suitable school uniform.

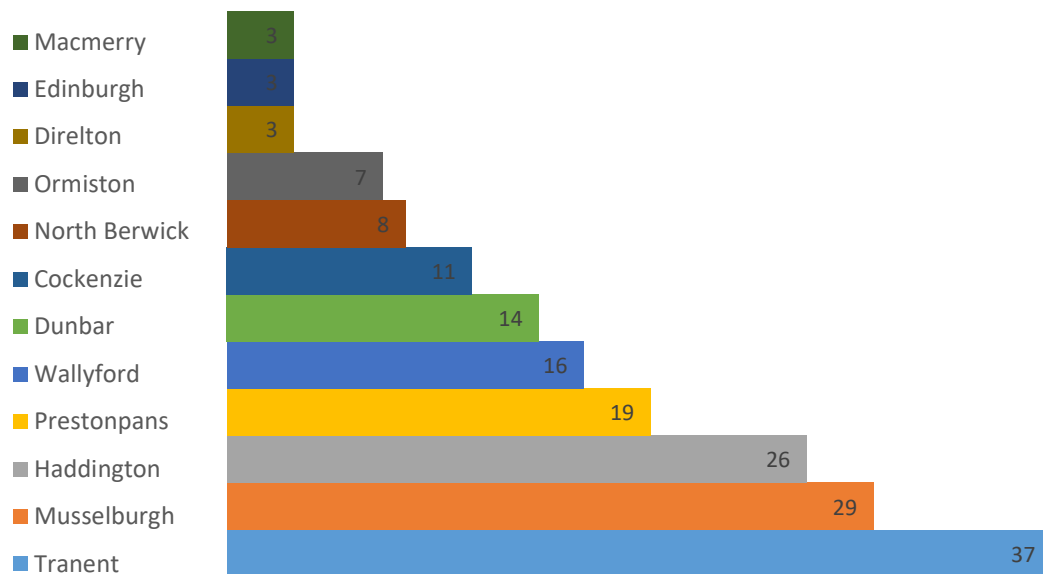
Referrals for this service are made through a health care professional for any child attending a school in East Lothian although families are also able to refer themselves too.

Donations are made of good quality used items or new items of school clothing. We currently hold a large stock of clothing that is used to assist families referred to us.

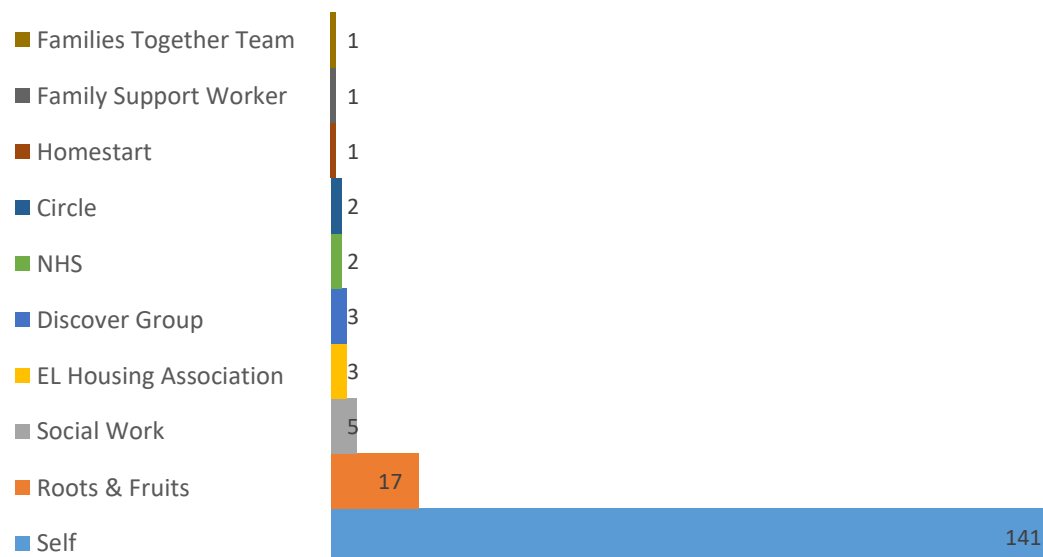
In this year a total of 176 referrals have been received for children aged between 4-15 years for school uniform, new jackets and footwear with a total of 674 items of clothing being given out.

This has increased significantly on figures from last year and it is anticipated that these referrals will continue to rise.

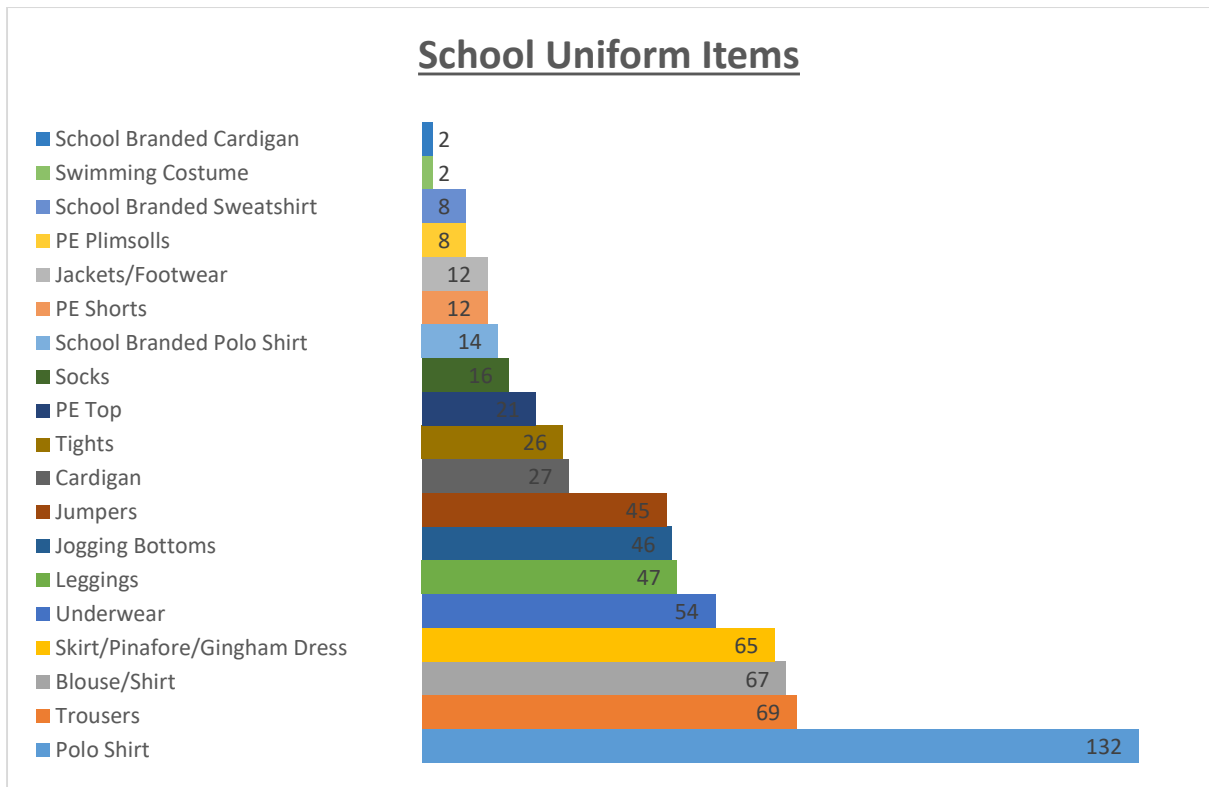
### School Uniform Referrals by Area



### School Uniform Referrals by Agent

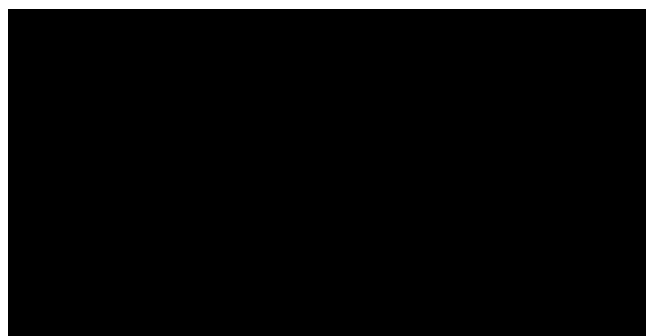


Although the majority of these referrals are received in the run up to school returning in August it is a service that operates throughout the year.



We also worked in partnership with two local charities - East Lothian Roots & Fruits and Tranent Youth and Community Facility (Recharge) making sure that they were both fully stocked with school uniform items.

We were grateful to Tesco, Haddington and the Inner Wheel Club of Tranent for their generous donation of brand new school uniform items and to the Rotary Club of Tranent for their cash donation to enable us to purchase new clothing, winter jackets and footwear as needed.



### HR Services

We currently provide HR support to Support from the Start through the employment of staff and offering support services for them.

We also run payroll for 2 East Lothian charities.



## **Staff**

We have two full time members of staff.

- ❖ [REDACTED], Project Manager
- ❖ [REDACTED], Family Support Worker (Haddington) \*\*

\*\* post was made redundant on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

## **Trustees**

Our current Trustees are:

- ❖ [REDACTED] – former Chief Executive of the local CVS and was responsible for starting Carefree Kids and has been involved since its inception.
- ❖ [REDACTED] – Project Manager of Recharge, a local youth and community facility based in Tranent. Alan has supported Carefree Kids in various ways over the years and has expertise in funding applications.
- ❖ [REDACTED] – Public Health Practitioner and for many years was Carefree Kids Link Officer for NHS Lothian funding.
- ❖ [REDACTED] – local parent who also works with a child with additional support needs.

We are actively seeking further Trustees for our Project.

The Project Manager is responsible for the day to day running of the Project with the Board meeting every second month to deal with normal management business.

Our Accounts are independently audited annually by Glass Accountancy and presented to our Annual General Meeting for approval with an Annual Return and copy of our accounts then being sent to the charity regulator, OSCR each year.

We have all appropriate policies in place and all staff and volunteers with our Project are subject to a PVG check.

## **Volunteers**

We have a bank of volunteers that we can call on when needed for various parts of the Project. This ranges from helping with deliveries, checking over and cleaning

equipment that has been returned, sorting and cataloguing school uniform items, IT skills and within the Toy Library.

## **Community Benefits**

We work in close partnership with a range of agencies – Community Learning and Development, Support from the Start, East Lothian Health Visiting Team, East Lothian Children's Wellbeing Team and other local voluntary organisations.

We provide HR support to Support from the Start through the employment of staff and offering support services for them.

Our Project relies on volunteers to help with many of the services that we offer from helping to deliver equipment through the Safety Equipment Loan Scheme and clothing through the School Uniform Bank to helping to sort out donations of school clothing to checking over and cleaning safety equipment as they are returned and the same with toys as they come back into the Toy Library.

We also rely on donations of school uniform items being made from the community to enable this service to run effectively.

We also accept donations of baby equipment that can be recycled as long as it meets all relevant safety standards.

A wide range of leaflets and literature on child home safety issues are available and are distributed at all our training sessions, events and during Child Safety Week.

Information on all our services are also distributed to all health centres, libraries and community buildings within East Lothian.

We have an active website, Facebook and twitter account.

- ❖ [www.carefreekidseastlothian.org](http://www.carefreekidseastlothian.org)
- ❖ [www.facebook.com/CarefreeKidsEastLothian](https://www.facebook.com/CarefreeKidsEastLothian)
- ❖ [www.twitter.com/CarefreeKids EL](https://www.twitter.com/CarefreeKids_EL)

## **Funding**

Our current funders are:

- ❖ East Lothian Council, One Partnership Funding

- ❖ East Lothian Council, Family Support Worker
- ❖ East Lothian Council, Haddington Area Partnership
- ❖ The Robertson Trust
- ❖ Ponton House Trust
- ❖ Tartan Army Childrens Trust
- ❖ Arnold Clark

Donations to the Project have also been made by:

- ❖ Rotary Club of Tranent
- ❖ Baxters Food
- ❖ Strathmore Foods
- ❖ Tranent Belters Social and Charity Club
- ❖ Inner Wheel Club of Tranent
- ❖ Tesco, Haddington

Fundraising:

- ❖ East Lothian Community Lottery