This pilot project tests the inclusion of Alcohol Brief Interventions delivered in a custody setting and the increased provision of the existing arrest referral service at Livingston Police Station, West Lothian.

**Background**

**Alcohol and Offending**
- British Crime Survey 2008/10 – 37% of instances of domestic violence are alcohol related.
- 35% of male and 28% of female probation clients drinking at harmful or hazardous levels (Newbury-Birch et al, 2009).
- Estimated half the offenders on the average Probation Officer’s case-load have problems with alcohol (PMSU, 2003).
- Alcohol problems may be one factor inhibiting rehabilitation and influencing re-offending behaviour.
- 50% of prisoners in Scotland’s jails were drunk at the time of the offence.

**Alcohol Brief Intervention in a custodial setting**
- Arrest Referral is an intervention aimed at individuals who have been arrested and whose offences may be linked to alcohol use.
- Generally takes place in police cells or in court premises.
- Involves a brief assessment, giving information and referral to appropriate services.
- Arrest and appearing at court can act as a catalyst for individuals to reflect on their substance use “window of opportunity”.
- Arrest Referral offers a unique opportunity for an early intervention (Effective Interventions Unit 2002).
- Over 1/3 of prisoners said if they were offered help for their alcohol problems they would take it (SPS, 2009).
- Potential to reduce health inequalities in a hard-to-reach group unlikely to engage in other mainstream health improvement initiatives.

**Aims of the pilot**
- To provide increased support and capacity across partnerships to achieve early identification of hazardous and harmful alcohol use and substance use.
- To promote and support multi-agency partnership working.
- To improve the evidence base in this area through evaluation and roll out learning across Lothian and Scotland via NHS Lothian and NHS Health Scotland.
- It is not a diversion scheme or community disposal, it is a voluntary pathway into services.