

More Than A Roof – Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire, A Statistical Analysis

Homelessness in Scotland has continued to fall since the last LHS in 2012. West Dunbartonshire has mirrored this. In 2011/12 there were 1545 homelessness applications taken. This has slowly reduced to 1122 in 2015/16. The figures used in this chapter have been taken from the Scottish Government HL1 statistics and also from West Dunbartonshire's own computer system, AVD Computing.

In addition to the reduction in homelessness applications, West Dunbartonshire Council has seen a reduction in number of homelessness assessments that are taken. This has reduced from 1570 in 2011/12 to 1101 in 2015/16.

The reduction in homelessness applications and assessments is in line with the council's homelessness prevention agenda.

Table 1: WDC homeless applications and assessments since 2011/12

Year	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
Homeless applications	1365	1249	1122

Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

Who is homeless in West Dunbartonshire?

Household Type, Age and Gender

Analysis of who presents to the council as homeless is looked annually by the council to determine any patterns of change and course of action to be taken. 75% of households who presented to West Dunbartonshire council in 2015/16 were single people. A fifth of the households had children in them, most of who were single parents. The majority of the households (75%) were single people.

When looking at all applications in 2015/16 just over half (56%) of the main applicants were male. However when you look more closely at the households type you can see that there are clear differences. Two thirds of the single person households were male, whereas 93% of the single parent households were female. This is a similar pattern to previous years.

Table 2: Household type of homeless applications 2015/16

Household Type	Number	%
Households with children	43	4%
Households without children	62	6%
Single parent families	175	16%
Single persons	846	75%
Total	1126	100%

Source: AVD Computing System

Over a third of people, who presented to West Dunbartonshire as homeless, were aged between 16 and 25. From the table below it can be seen that the number of young people aged 16 to 17 has decreased from 82 to 55 since 2011/12. The decrease is more significant for young people aged 18 to 25 in the same timescale. The number of young people who present as homeless in West Dunbartonshire is a concern for the council, and one which the council is working to address. Although overall the number of males and females aged 16 – 25 is split evenly, on closer inspection over 70% of 16 and 17 year olds who presented were female.

Table 3: Age of applicants between 2011/12 and 2015/16

	2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014		2014/2015		2015/2016	
Age	Number	%								
16 - 17	82	5%	59	4%	57	4%	55	4%	55	5%
18 - 25	500	32%	474	35%	422	31%	372	30%	326	29%
26 - 59	911	59%	790	58%	840	62%	768	61%	702	63%
60+	52	3%	41	3%	46	3%	54	4%	39	3%
All	1545	100%	1364	100%	1365	100%	1249	100%	1122	100%

Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

Homeless Assessments

When someone presents as homeless they are assessed under the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 1987. Over the years there have been amendments to the Act. Since 2012, applicants are no longer subject to the priority need assessment making it more fair and accessible to everyone. In 2015/16, 1101 households underwent a homeless assessment. Of these households, 81% were assessed as homeless or potentially homeless. 10% withdrew their application and 6% resolved their application. Only 1% was assessed as not homeless.

There has been a reduction in the number of people assessed as not homeless and an increase in the percentage of households assessed as homeless. One reason for this is the prevention work that the caseworkers undertake to avoid a household becoming homeless. The number of cases lost prior to assessment has increased from 8 to 19 since 2010/11. At the end of 2015/16 there were 487 homeless households in temporary accommodation. Within these households there were 113 dependent children.

Table 4: Homeless assessment decisions 2015/16

Assessment Decision	Number	%
Homeless/Potentially homeless	888	81%
Not homeless	14	1%
Withdrew application	112	10%
Resolved homelessness	66	6%
Lost contact before assessment	19	2%
Other	2	0%
Total	1101	100%

Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

Why do people become homeless?

There are many reasons why people become homeless. A third of households assessed as homeless in 2015/16 in West Dunbartonshire were *asked to leave* their home. This resulted in the homelessness presentation. At a closer look it can be seen that 51% of those who stated their homelessness reason as being *asked to leave* were aged 16-24. Over half (61%) of these young people were male.

Just over a third of households stated their reason for homelessness as being a dispute within the household. Just over half of these were violent or abusive, in other words they were domestic abuse. 85% of these households were female.

Housing Outcomes

Almost half of all homeless applications resulted in a tenancy with either West Dunbartonshire council or a housing association. A third of these households had dependent children living with them. A fifth had no duty owed to them. In other words they were not homeless. There were a high number (16%) of cases where the contact with the applicant was lost before duty was discharged but an assessment was carried out. 45% of the lost contact cases were people aged 16-24.

Table 5: Housing outcomes of homeless households 2015/16

Housing Outcome	Number	%
Scottish Secure Tenancy	511	48%
Private Rented Tenancy	28	3%
Hostel	0	0%
Bed & Breakfast	0	0%
Returned to previous/ friends/ vol org.	83	8%
Women's Refuge	1	0%
Residential care/nursing home/shared supported	1	0%
Other – Known	37	3%
Other - Not Known	20	2%
No duty owed to applicant	213	20%
Contact lost before duty discharge	164	16%
All	1058	100%

Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

Support Needs

Since June 2013, all local authorities must carry out a housing support assessment on all unintentionally homeless households who require it. They must also ensure that support is offered to that household. In 2015/16, 54% of unintentionally homeless households had a support assessment carried out. Just over a quarter had support provided to them under the housing support regulations.

West Dunbartonshire provides an in-house housing support service to any homeless households who require it. When a household presents as homeless they will be asked questions relating to support needs during their homeless assessment. The case workers have a check-list. Depending on what that household scores they may be referred to out Ashton View project. The staff at this project are trained support workers and will carry out a full housing support assessment.

Table 6: Supports needs of assessed cases

	Assessed as homeless (all cases)	%	Assessed as homeless (young people)	%
Mental health	204	25%	33	16%
Learning disability	34	4%	17	8%
Physical disability	60	7%	9	4%
Medical condition	157	19%	27	13%
Addiction	129	16%	15	7%
Basic Housing management skills	244	29%	107	51%

Source: West Dunbartonshire HL1 AVD system

From table 6 it can be seen 51% of young people had a support requirement for housing management skills. This figure is in line with previous years. A quarter of households assessed as homeless had a mental health support need and 16% had an addiction.

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