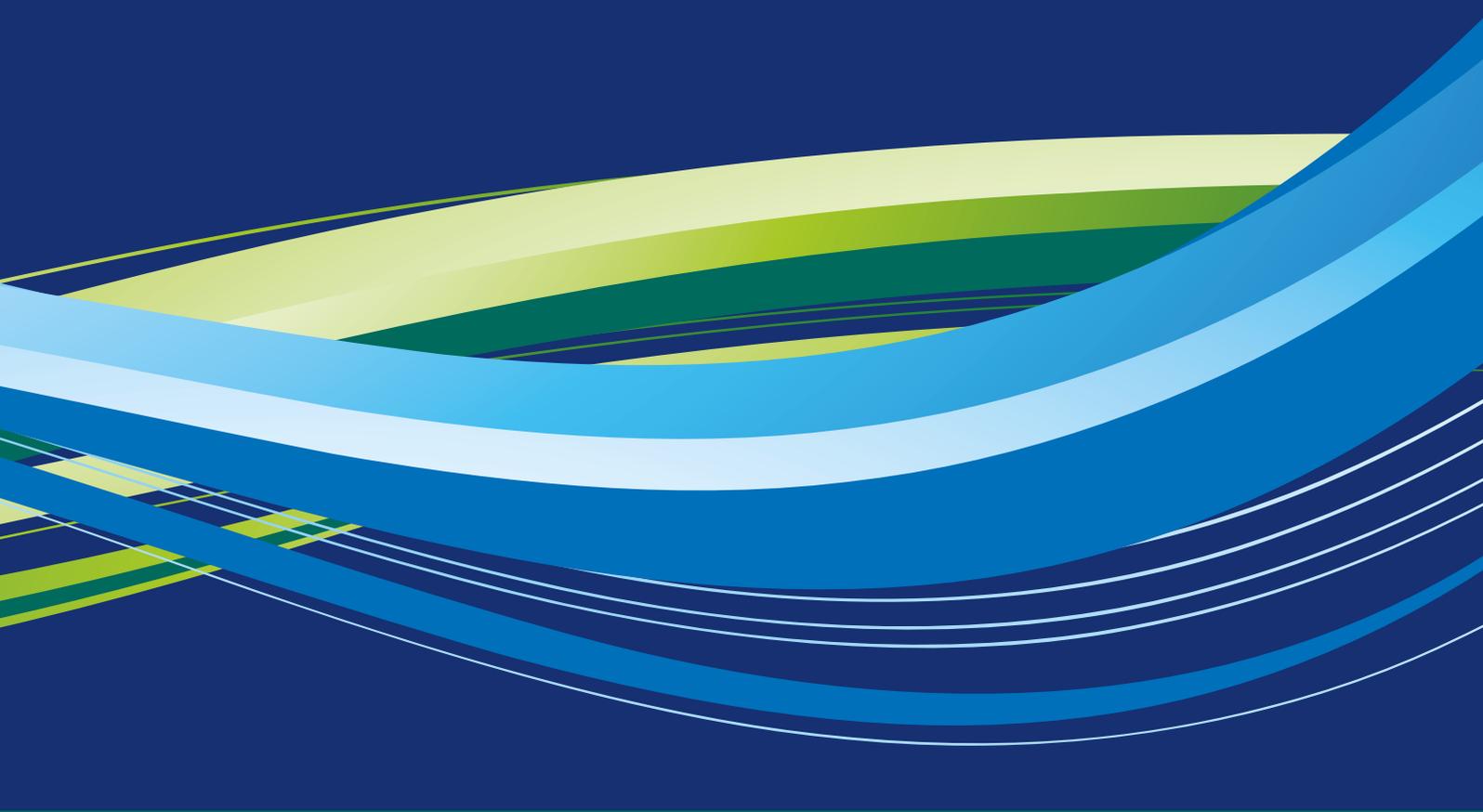


# MORE THAN A ROOF

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL'S  
HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION  
AND TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION  
STRATEGY 2017 - 2020



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# Foreword



***Thank you for reading More than a Roof - West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness, Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2017-2020. This strategy replaces the Homelessness Strategy that was approved in 2013 and the Temporary Accommodation Strategy that was approved in 2012.***

I am pleased to say that there has been an 18% reduction in homelessness presentations over the last three years. This is excellent news and reflects the move to a more preventative model of service provision and intervention.

This new strategy sets out how the Council and its partners aim to tackle homelessness in West Dunbartonshire over the next 3 years. The strategy focuses on the prevention of homelessness and housing options, tenancy sustainment and housing support which are the areas our communities told us are important to them.

The strategy also aims to ensure we have enough of the right temporary and supported accommodation to meet the needs of those who require it.

An action plan has been developed as a result of extensive consultations with partners, service users and residents of West Dunbartonshire. This action plan will be getting delivered under a tough economic landscape with welfare reform and reduced budgets.

The Council is committed to ensuring that despite these constraints we still meet the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities by delivering effective services.

As Convener of the Housing and Communities Committee I am committed to reducing homelessness in West Dunbartonshire and ensuring sustainable solutions centred around the person in need.

Councillor David McBride

Convener - Housing and Communities Committee

## More than a Roof

# West Dunbartonshire Homelessness, Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2017 – 2020

### The Vision

**“** *Our residents succeed and live a fulfilled life in their choice of home, and if they have to face the crisis of homelessness they do so with access to quality information, advice and support which will afford them choice to live successfully in their home.* **”**

# More than a Roof - Executive Summary

## Welcome to West Dunbartonshire Council's Homelessness, Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2017-20 "More than a Roof"

"More than a Roof" is West Dunbartonshire Council's fourth strategy relating to homelessness and covers the period 2017-20. It is designed to deliver one of the main Outcomes of the new Local Housing Strategy 2017-22 that, Homelessness is minimised through prevention and early intervention measures and builds on the progress delivered by previous homelessness strategies.

The strategy reflects the latest statutory framework and recent developments in the housing sector such as the introduction of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and the development of regional Housing Options Hubs.

The strategy has been developed in close consultation with homeless people and with key partners who deliver services and work with homeless people. It recognises that tackling homelessness often requires more than just providing "a place to stay" but also the support required to address a variety of sometimes complex needs. The strategy also outlines the challenges that aspects of welfare reform such as the benefit cap and universal credit pose to the funding of homeless services.

### The 5 key objectives of "More than a Roof" are that:

1. People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness;
2. People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and about the range of housing options available to them;
3. Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice;
4. Homeless people are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and
5. Homeless people are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

Some of the key actions that will need to be taken in order to deliver these objectives are outlined below:

- Increase affordable housing supply in West Dunbartonshire to meet housing need;
- Produce a report outlining future funding options for Homelessness Services;
- Introduce a housing options approach and framework for delivery;
- Invest in our staff and ensure they receive necessary training to best deliver service requirements;
- Review Service delivery to ensure we meet service objectives;
- Increase the range of housing accommodation options available across West Dunbartonshire, including Housing First and sanctuary model housing ;
- Develop an annual Charter Improvement Plan based on annual assessment of performance;
- Carry out annual review of supported and temporary accommodation provision and ensure provision of appropriate supported accommodation;
- Carry out a review of the Housing Support Service and make recommendations to best deliver service requirements;
- Mitigate the effects of aspects of welfare reform where this is appropriate;
- Tackle and reduce the levels of youth homelessness in West Dunbartonshire ;
- Through effective service delivery minimise incidences of repeat homelessness;
- Ensure that homelessness is avoided from households in Scottish Secure Tenancies; and
- Work with Community Justice partners to deliver the new Criminal Justice National Outcomes

# Equality and Inclusion

**The planning and delivery of good quality housing and appropriate advice and information services in West Dunbartonshire embraces the principles of equal opportunities.**

The Equality Act 2010 replaced all previous equality legislation such as the Race Relations Act, Disability Discrimination Act and Sex Discrimination Act. The Act came into force on 1 October 2010 and provides a legal framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all. It simplifies, strengthens and removes inconsistencies in the current legislation to provide Britain with a new discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

The act covers nine protected characteristics, which cannot be used as a reason to treat people unfairly. Every person has at least one of the protected characteristics, so the act protects everyone against unfair treatment. The protected characteristics are:

- age
- disability;
- gender reassignment;
- marriage and civil partnership;
- pregnancy and maternity;
- race;
- religion or belief;
- sex; and
- sexual orientation

The Councils Equality Statement 2013-17 sets out how the Councils commitment to Equality and Inclusion. It is recognised that homelessness is an area where prejudice and discrimination is common. Individuals at risk from homelessness include people with alcohol and drug issues, people involved with the criminal justice system and people with mental health issues. Homeless people are themselves by definition disadvantaged and frequently experience more difficulty than others in accessing mainstream services. It is recognised that some groups of individuals can be subject to 'double oppression' for example Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) community and minority ethnic groups.

This strategy therefore, aims to ensure that those experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, have their individual needs recognised, are treated fairly and with respect and receive fair access to services.

This strategy has been equality impact assessed and the results of this work have been incorporated into its final content.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Homelessness and homeless people's rights have come a long way since the 1977 Homelessness Persons Act. The emphasis has turned from helping just families and single people deemed vulnerable, to helping all people who are homeless. The phasing out of priority need, and the introduction of the support duty has given anyone who is homeless the right to support and accommodation.
- 1.2 The experience of homelessness significantly impacts on an individual's life in a magnitude of different ways. People who have been homeless are more likely to experience mental illness, addiction issues and legal /debt problems. They are more likely to have limited training and employment opportunities. And they have greater potential for becoming homeless again in the future. Getting the correct temporary or supported accommodation suitable to the homeless households is therefore vital.
- 1.3 The statutory responsibility for homelessness lies with local authorities who have a duty to provide a strategy for dealing with homelessness. This Homelessness, Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2017/20 is West Dunbartonshire's response to address the issues surrounding homelessness and the strategic are based around the main themes of previous homelessness strategies and the aims of our Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2012/16 and have been updated to take into account the impact of welfare reform, the consultation process that was undertaken and the Outcomes outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.
- 1.4 The strategy outlines how progress in achieving these aims will be monitored and evaluated and includes an action plan outlining the key steps that will be taken over the three year period the strategy covers.



## 2 Profile of West Dunbartonshire Council area

2.1 In 2014 the National Records of Scotland estimated that the Scottish population as 5,347,600 this was an increase of 19,900. At the same time the population of West Dunbartonshire was 89,730. This was a drop of 0.7% from 2013.

2.2 The median age for West Dunbartonshire was 42, for men it was 41 and women it was 44. A fifth of males and 16% of females were aged 16 and under, 66% of males and 61% of females were are of working age, and 16% of males 23% of females are of pensionable age. For every 100 females there are 91 males.

2.3 There is a rise in the older population across Scotland and this is mirrored across West Dunbartonshire. In 2014 there were 16,720 people aged 16 and under and 21,205 people aged 60 and over. The growing population will have economic implications as well as added pressure on our health and social care partnership.

2.4 Despite the growing population West Dunbartonshire has life expectancy rates that are statistically worse than the Scottish Average with the second lowest life expectancy at birth of all Scottish Local Authorities.

### Housing Tenure in West Dunbartonshire

2.5 West Dunbartonshire is the 2nd smallest Local Authority in Scotland in terms of land, but the 8th smallest in terms of population size. Over half of the population in the area live in Clydebank.

The estimated number of dwellings in West Dunbartonshire is 44,734.

Table 2.1: Housing Tenure in West Dunbartonshire.

Tenure	Number	%
Council Housing	10,759	24%
Registered Social Landlords	5,856	13%
Private Rented Sector	3050	7%
Owner Occupation	25,069	56%
<b>Total</b>	<b>44,734</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Local Housing Strategy 2017 - 2022

The total number of dwellings in West Dunbartonshire is 44,734. Over half of the stock is owner occupied and over a third is social housing. West Dunbartonshire is mirroring Scotland with its growth in private rented properties.

## 3 Strategic Policy Framework

3.1 The 1977 Act placed the responsibility for meeting homeless persons' needs on local authority housing departments subject to national guidance.

3.2 This Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 brought about a series of changes that included:

- Local authorities had to assess homelessness within their area and to submit strategies and approaches for its prevention and mitigation of homelessness;
- Local authorities had a duty to ensure advice and information is available in their area and free of charge;
- Rights of individual homeless people strengthened with the right to temporary accommodation even if in non-priority need; and
- RSLs were given a duty to comply with requests from local authorities to accommodate unintentionally homeless households in priority need within six weeks.

3.3 The Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003 brought about fundamental changes to homelessness in Scotland. One of these changes was the ambitious target of abolition of priority need by 2012. This meant that anyone who is unintentionally homeless will be given the right to temporary accommodation and a statutory duty to have permanent accommodation found by the local authority. In December 2005, the then Scottish Executive issued a Ministerial Statement on how the Act was to be implemented. The main

requirements of the Act were:

- Priority need assessment is to be abolished by 2012; and
- The requirement of landlords and creditors to notify the relevant local authority when they raise repossession proceedings

The Act took five of the Homelessness Task Force's recommendations into legislation. Local Authorities are monitored against the other 54; principally their performance against the 5 high level national outcomes designated by the Homelessness Monitoring Group in 2004:

- No one need sleep rough;
- Existing homelessness becomes more visible;
- Sustainable resettlement is secured for people who become homeless;
- Fewer people become homeless in the first place; and
- The duration of homelessness is reduced

3.4 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 placed a duty on local authorities to assess the housing support needs of homeless or threatened with homeless households, where they believe that households are in need of a prescribed housing support service. It also states that local authorities must ensure that this support is provided. This duty was enacted in 1st June 2013.

3.5 In 2012 priority need was abolished within Scotland. West Dunbartonshire Council was one of the first councils within the country to meet this target.

## 3 Strategic Policy Framework

3.6 The Scottish Government's approach to homelessness has now taken the approach of homelessness prevention and housing options. In April 2014 the Scottish Government launched Prevent 1. Prevent 1 is a measurement tool developed to monitor and evaluate activity around housing options and homelessness prevention work undertaken by local authorities. The data capture and reporting statutory and local authorities return in quarterly to the Scottish Government in the same way HL1 is returned.

### Temporary Accommodation Legislation

3.7 As a local authority West Dunbartonshire Council has a duty to provide temporary accommodation in terms of the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987 as amended by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003. This is a duty to temporarily accommodate anyone who is believed to be homeless until an assessment decision has been made. Anyone found to be unintentionally homeless has the right to remain in temporary accommodation until permanent accommodation has been sourced by the council. For households found to be intentionally homeless, temporary accommodation is provided for a reasonable period of time for the households to source their own accommodation. The council should be in constant contact with them providing information and advice on how to do so.

3.8 In order to ensure households, especially those with children, were being placed in appropriate temporary accommodation the Government introduced the Unsuitable Accommodation Order in 2004. Under the regulations set out by the Unsuitable Accommodation Order

2004, temporary accommodation is assessed as unsuitable by looking at 3 main criteria:

Physical standard - such as toilet and cooking facilities; and that the accommodation is within the local authority area;

Proximity standard - such as the accommodation being near health and education facilities that households use; and

Safety standard - such as the accommodation being suitable for children and pregnant women. Only under exceptional circumstances, should such households be temporarily accommodated in a B&B.

3.9 The unsuitable accommodation order is breached when a family with children or a pregnant female are in B&B accommodation for more than 14 days. The 2004 order was revoked by The Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2014, which came into force on the 21st November 2014. The 2014 order adds the additional requirement that the accommodation must be wind and watertight. West Dunbartonshire Council has never breached the unsuitable accommodation order.

### The Scottish Housing Charter

3.10 The Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 included the requirement for a Scottish Social Housing Charter. The aim of the Charter is to improve the quality and value of the services that social landlords provide by setting outcomes that all social landlords should achieve.

3.11 The following Outcomes relate directly to this strategy:

## Outcome 12 - Homeless people

Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that:

- homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice; are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

This outcome describes what councils should achieve by meeting their statutory duties to homeless people.

The following Outcomes are also relevant:

### Outcomes 7, 8, 9 - Housing Options

Social landlords work together to ensure that:

- people looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them; and
- tenants and people on housing lists can review their housing options.

Social landlords ensure that:

- people at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness.

These outcomes cover landlords' duties to provide information to people looking for housing and advice for those at risk of becoming homeless. These duties include helping tenants and people on housing lists to review their options to move within the social housing sector or to another sector.

3.12 The Scottish Housing Regulator produced a set of indicators following extensive consultations with relevant

bodies. From the 1st April 2013 all housing providers had to return the indicators as the Annual Return of the Charter (ARC) to the Scottish Housing Regulator.

3.13 The following Charter Indicators are used to assess how well local authorities are delivering the Charter Outcome relating to Homeless People:

- Average length of time in temporary or emergency accommodation;
- % of households requiring temporary or emergency accommodation to whom an offer was made;
- % of temporary or emergency accommodation offers refused; and
- % of households satisfied with the quality of temporary or emergency accommodation.

3.14 The Charter Indicators will not be the only information the Scottish Housing Regulator uses to monitor performance in relation to homelessness. They will also use the wide range of information that is currently provided to the Scottish Government via the HL1 and Prevent1 returns.

## Wider Strategic Policy Framework

3.15 Homelessness is a complex issue and is rarely solved by housing alone. The council as a whole and all the statutory and voluntary partners must work together to prevent and reduce homelessness. With this in mind the homelessness and temporary accommodation strategy does not stand alone but is set within and contributes to the Council's wider strategic framework.

## 3 Strategic Policy Framework

3.16 West Dunbartonshire Council's Strategic Plan 2012 -2017 sets out the vision, mission and values of the council and sets out the following key priorities for the future:

- Improve economic growth and employability;
- Improve life chances for children and young people;
- Improve care for and promote independence with older people;
- Improve local housing and environmentally sustainable infrastructure; and
- Improve the wellbeing of communities and protect the welfare of vulnerable people

3.17 West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership Community Plan 2007-2017 is the overarching strategic plan for the whole of West Dunbartonshire and it reflects the close links between the council and a wide range of planning and service delivery partners from the public, private, and voluntary sectors. All other strategic plans prepared by West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners are linked to and integrated with the Community Plan to ensure that they complement and support community planning at all levels.

The Community Plan has several links to the Homelessness Strategy such as the aim to resettle homeless households in sustainable tenancies



and minimise the level of repeat homelessness. This will be realised by developing a range of programmes and joint services to prevent homelessness and support households when and as required

3.18 West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Plan 2015 -2016 sets out the HSCP Partnership Board's following priorities:

- Mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of West Dunbartonshire.
- Purpose is to plan for and ensure the delivery of high quality health and social care services to and with the communities of West Dunbartonshire.
- Core values are protection; improvement; efficiency; transparency; fairness; collaboration; respect; and compassion.

Local Authorities are required to provide a Housing Contribution Statement to set out the role and contribution of the local housing sector in meeting the outcomes and priorities identified within the Strategic Plan. The West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Board Housing Contribution Statement May 2016 provides the bridge between the Local Housing Strategy and the HSCP Strategic Plan and outlines the important part housing will play in the integration process.

3.19 The Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022 (LHS) identifies the housing issues that affect communities of West Dunbartonshire Council and set out an action plan for tackling these over the period of the strategy. Homelessness strategies are now incorporated within the Local Housing Strategy. However, some local authorities will still have

their own Homelessness Strategy like West Dunbartonshire Council. This LHS has been drawn up around the following 5 key themes:

- Housing Need and Demand;
- Promoting Good Quality Housing;
- Homelessness and Housing Options;
- Sustainable and Supportive Communities; and
- Addressing Particular Housing Needs.

The LHS has highlighted some key priorities for the homelessness and temporary accommodation strategy. These include homelessness prevention and housing options, tenancy sustainment and housing support. The LHS also highlighted the impact homelessness has on young people and the need for more support and education of young people to help prevent homelessness.

## 4 Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire; a review of the Homelessness Strategy 2013-16

### 4 Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire; a review of the Homelessness Strategy 2013-16

4.1 Homelessness in Scotland has continued to fall since the 2012 and the situation in West Dunbartonshire has mirrored this. The reduction in homelessness applications and assessments is in line with the homelessness prevention agenda being pursued across the sector. West Dunbartonshire Councils Homelessness Strategy 2013-2016 was structured around four strategic aims and the progress achieving these aims has formed part of developing this new strategy.

#### Aim 1 - To Prevent Homelessness occurring in West Dunbartonshire

4.2 Prevention of homelessness and housing options has been high on the Scottish Governments agenda for a number of years. The main aims are to provide support to people to remain in the home they are and prevent the crisis of homelessness from occurring. As outlined in the table below, the incidences of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire has reduced by 18% over the period of the last homelessness strategy.

Table 4.1: WDC homeless applications and assessments since 2013/14

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

Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

4.3 Whilst the circumstances of individual households can be complex, the key reasons for homelessness across West Dunbartonshire continue to be young single people who have been asked to leave their home and disputes within a household.

4.4 Although the overall number of households presenting as homeless has reduced, Youth Homelessness continues to account for over a third of all incidences of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire. A third of all households assessed as homeless in 2015/16 in West Dunbartonshire were *asked to leave* their home, with 51% of these being aged 16-24. Over half (61%) of these young people were male.

Table 4.2: Age of applicants between 2013/14 and 2015/16

Age	2013/2014		2014/2015		2015/2016	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
16 - 17	57	4%	55	4%	55	5%
18 - 25	422	31%	372	30%	326	29%
26 - 59	840	62%	768	61%	702	63%
60+	46	3%	54	4%	39	3%
All	1365	100%	1249	100%	1122	100%

Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

- 4.5 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. 85% of these households were female.

#### Achievements:

- An 18% reduction in homelessness presentations since 2013/14;
- Reduction in overall homeless presentation from young people;
- Introduction of subletting houses of tenants who are short term prisoners to prevent homelessness upon liberation;
- Introduction of the mortgage to rent scheme to prevent homelessness; and
- Introduction of a number of discharge protocols with partner agencies



## 4 Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire; a review of the Homelessness Strategy 2013-16

### Aim 2 - Improved access to support services and increased tenancy sustainment

- 4.6 As a council we want to minimise the rate of tenancy failure and homelessness by identifying and responding appropriately to those whose tenancy may be at risk.
- 4.7 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.
- 4.8 West Dunbartonshire provides an in-house housing support service for homeless households who require it. When a household presents as homeless a full housing support assessment is carried out where appropriate.

### Achievements:

- 86.8% of council tenancies created in 2014/15 were sustained for at least 12 months;
- We have developed and introduced a Common Approach to Tenancy Sustainment between West Dunbartonshire Council and local RSLs;
- The council opened its first support accommodation project Ashton View. Ashton View was opened to accommodate the increased numbers of homeless households with support needs; and
- The council has worked closely with Alternatives to open up the Safe as Houses project. This project is designed to help people with a substance misuse problem develop new skills and develop a healthy lifestyle before returning to independent living.



## 4 Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire; a review of the Homelessness Strategy 2013-16

### Aim 3 - To improve the range of Housing Options available in West Dunbartonshire and ensure a sustainable housing solution

4.9 West Dunbartonshire has been developing a housing options approach to improve access to housing. It has been proven in the past that by providing a holistic person centred approach, providing advice and information that allows a person to make an informed choice about their housing options increases tenancy sustainment.

#### Achievements:

- Increased options of temporary accommodation by introduction of Ashton View, Dumbarton and Safe as Houses, Clydebank;
- Increased use of the private rented sector with the introduction of WDC Home Finder. This is a website where landlords can advertise their vacant properties to let for free;
- West Dunbartonshire Council has had no breaches of unsuitable accommodation order;
- Continued joint working through the West of Scotland Housing Options Hub. The hub is in the process of developing a training toolkit. Most councils in Scotland have since signed up to be part of it; and
- The council recently launched WDC Homefinder - a website where private landlords can advertise their properties for free of charge. The council is going to advertise some of their properties from low demand areas on this website too.

### Aim 4 - To ensure a commitment to continue to develop and improve services to tackling homelessness through a partnership approach

4.10 Throughout the duration of this strategy a partnership approach to homelessness has been adopted. It is recognised that a joined up approach to homelessness is key to preventing homelessness and increasing tenancy sustainment.

#### Achievements:

- Continued communication between partner agencies and council departments;
- Development of joint protocols such as the Low Moss Prison Discharge Protocol and Housing & Homelessness Services, housing associations and Addiction Services Partners Referral Pathway (Statutory and Third Sector);
- West Dunbartonshire have established a Homelessness and Housing Access Forum which meets on a regular basis and consists of internal and external partners; and
- Continued joint working through the West of Scotland Housing Options Hub

# 5 Consultation Process

## Consultation Process

5.1 Local authorities have a statutory duty to involve, consult and engage with as wide a range of their residents as possible. Part of the process of drafting this strategy involved a wide consultation exercise including the following:

- Initial survey of staff and key stakeholders, including both internal and external partners;
- A comprehensive online survey available to all residents of West Dunbartonshire and promoted via the Council's website, the West Dunbartonshire Equality Forum and to staff via e-mail;
- A focus group discussion with the Homelessness and Housing Access Forum; and
- A focus group discussion with residents of all 5 of the Supported Accommodation Projects in West Dunbartonshire

## Initial Survey - September and October 2016

5.2 A survey was sent out to all staff across Housing Development and Homelessness, Housing Operations and to the Homelessness and Housing Access Forum. The forum is a group that meets quarterly to discuss issues relation to housing and homelessness in West Dunbartonshire. It comprises internal partners such as Working 4U, the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP), representatives from mental health services and addiction services, as well as external partners including housing associations and third sector organisations.

5.3 The questionnaire asked for views around the following areas:

- Have aims of previous strategy achieved;
- Thoughts around aims of new strategy;
- What are the main issues around homelessness in West Dunbartonshire; and
- Thoughts around issues relating to temporary accommodation

5.4 There were 42 responses to the survey, 25 of these responses were from housing development and homelessness, 3 were from housing operations, 2 were from WDC officers within other departments and 12 were from external partner agencies.

Respondents felt that throughout the previous strategy there had not been a clear and consistent approach to preventing homelessness. It was strongly acknowledged that the new strategy should include a more proactive and preventative service that looks to address support needs. Respondents also felt that the strategy should focus on a number of key areas. These are young people, welfare reform and tenancy sustainment. The new strategy should also focus on the development of a housing options approach with trained staff.

## Online survey open to all residents of West Dunbartonshire

5.5 A survey was made up and placed on the website with a copy of the draft strategy. The survey was for anyone who wished to have a say in how they felt the council should be moving forward in dealing with homelessness, homelessness prevention and temporary accommodation. The survey was sent out to the homelessness and housing access forum, the housing providers forum, the section 5 working group and the

housing development and homelessness teams. There were 26 responses to the strategy. Some of the responses were groups of people putting in joint responses.

5.6 The respondents felt that to prevent homelessness we should be introducing a housing options approach that is consistent across all housing providers in the local authority area. Many respondents felt that there is a need to increase our housing stock. This would increase the options available.

5.7 Most respondents agreed that having support available for people to maintain their tenancy this would reduce the number of people presenting as homeless. This alongside

better advice and assistance would help to prevent homelessness for everyone especially young people. However where young people are involved it was felt that there needs to be more options available, such as shared accommodation and a better education program in schools.

5.8 In terms of the aims of the strategy, 100% of respondents agreed with the aim that the council should be providing a good quality of temporary or emergency accommodation when it is needed. The majority of respondents agreed with the other aims with only 1 or 2 respondents disagreeing.



## 5 Consultation Process

### Focus Group discussion with Homelessness and Housing Access Forum

5.9 A session was held with the homelessness and housing access forum. The forum consists of all internal and external partners including representatives from addictions, mental health, NHS, Blue Triangle, Prep 4 Life and local housing associations.

The focus groups at the homelessness forum suggested that a housing options approach would help to prevent homelessness and reduce repeat homelessness. This with increased support to help people maintain their tenancy;

- The council needs to lead on how we mitigate against the effects of welfare reform. It should not be down to individual departments. Information about welfare reform could be made readily available on a website that is updated regularly;
- Make better use of mediation as a prevention to homelessness;
- Affordability is a huge problem. People cannot afford their tenancies, increased rent levels and low income is increasing the number of people in debt. That alongside the lack of one bedroom properties is setting people up to fail;
- Education, housing and employability all needs to be looked at together as a holistic approach. For example; one way of doing this could be pre-tenancy courses, educating young people about life skills, budgeting, etc;
- Ensure services are accessible by all people. Such as young people, people with mental health support needs, etc; and
- There should be more reference to gender based violence within the strategy.



## Focus Group discussion with residents of Supported Accommodation Projects

5.10 The new homelessness and temporary accommodation strategy was discussed at each of the 5 supported accommodation projects within West Dunbartonshire. There was a mixture of ages across the projects. The discussions at each of the projects were similar:

- Residents felt there was nothing that council have been done to prevent their homelessness whilst others felt earlier intervention could have helped. Some stated that they had sought earlier intervention but had been told to come back when homeless. Most of the residents were not aware of prevention methods currently in operation within the council such as mediation;
- Most of the residents did not feel that they had had their options discussed with them;
- For the respondents who had had their own tenancy, some said they had failed because they did not receive enough support, whilst others said they had too much support and did not engage as a result;
- In terms of support for when residents move on some said they would welcome it whilst other said they did not feel that they would need it other than help to furnish the property etc;
- The stigma of being homeless was a concern to many residents. They felt this would hinder their prospects for education courses and for future employment;

- There was a mixed response to the use of the private sector as a housing option. Some felt it was a good idea due to having more options but some said it wasn't an option because they didn't feel it was secure or because of the cost. Some did mention the rent deposit scheme and said they would like to be housed through it; and
- There was a mixed response to shared accommodation. The majority felt that after living in supported accommodation they would prefer to live on their own.

## Outcomes of consultation

5.11 The following main issues were raised via the consultation process and the feedback was taken into consideration and either mentioned within the final draft of "More than a Roof" or within the action plan:

- that there is a strong need for a clearer and more consistent preventative approach to homelessness;
- there is a need to adopt a housing options approach;
- Priority to reduce youth homelessness; and
- Increased focus on tenancy sustainment.

## 6 Key objectives for More Than a Home - West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2017-20

6.1 The strategic aims for this strategy take into account the progress made achieving the aims of previous homelessness strategies and the aims of our Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2012/16. They have also been updated to take into account the impact of welfare reform, the consultation process that was undertaken and the Outcomes outlined in the Scottish Social Housing Charter.

6.2 The 5 key objectives for the Homelessness Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2017-2022 are that:

- People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice;
- People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them;
- Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice;



- Homeless people are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed; and
- Homeless people are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to.

## 7 Objective 1: People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness

- 7.1 Prevention of homelessness is a sustainable and cost effective option and is a key priority moving forward. Homeless departments now record their prevention activity through Prevent1 and statistics around these interventions are sent quarterly to the Scottish Government.
- 7.2 In 2015-16 there were 385 approaches for assistance recorded on Prevent1 and 485 cases closed. The Outcomes of these are outlined in the table below:

Table 7.1: Prevent1 Outcomes 2015/16

Outcomes (Percent)	2015/16
	%
LA tenancy	5.8
Private rented - assured tenancy	0
Moved-in with friends/ relatives	1
Other (known)	2.5
Not known	1.6
RSL (Housing Association) tenancy	1.2
Private rented - short assured tenancy	1.9
Home Ownership - Bought own home via other means	0
Prison	0
Lost contact with applicant	8.7
Remained in current accommodation	27.6
Made homelessness application to local authority	49.7

Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire Prevent 1 Figures

- 7.3 The Council will continue to work to ensure that there are support services in place for a number of “at risk” of homelessness groups. These include:
- Young people;
  - People experiencing domestic abuse;
  - People within the Criminal Justice system; and
  - People in financial difficulty

### Young People

- 7.4 Section 4 outlines the level of Youth Homelessness across West Dunbartonshire and the Council has produced a youth housing statement called “Youth Housing 4U” as a supporting paper to the Local Housing Strategy.
- 7.5 “Youth Housing 4U” outlines the vision and approach for young people and housing that will be taken going forward and its key principles are:
- Reducing youth homelessness across West Dunbartonshire;
  - Delivery of a comprehensive Housing Options service;
  - Increased used of family mediation services; and
  - Changing our approach to young care leavers

### Domestic Abuse

- 7.6 Section 4 also outlines the role domestic abuse plays in the levels of homelessness and a specific work-stream and campaign entitled “No Home for Domestic Abuse” will be developed and rolled out in order to tackle this issue.

## 7 Objective 1: People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness

### Criminal Justice

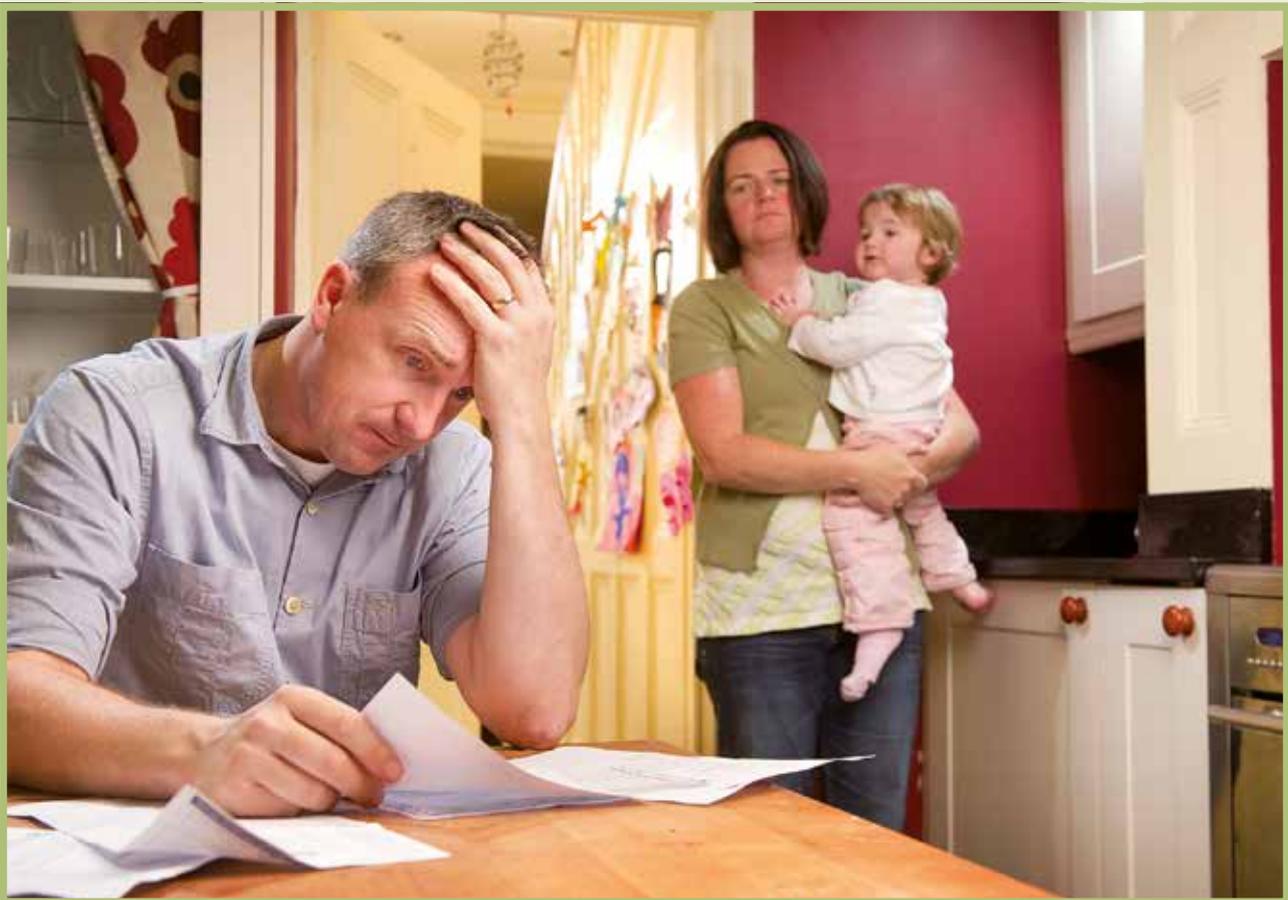
- 7.7 Prisoners run a high risk of being homeless on liberation. This is especially true for short-term prisoners and remand prisoners who then possibly run the risk of re-offending, and living between prisons and temporary accommodation. In 2015/2016 42 people presented to West Dunbartonshire upon release. 79% were people aged between 26 and 59. The rest were aged between 18 and 25. It is difficult to know the true extent of homelessness upon liberation from prison as some prisoners sofa surf for a while before presenting as homeless then state that their reason for homelessness is that their friends or family could no longer accommodate.
- 7.8 The partnership approach between West Dunbartonshire Council and Renfrewshire Council, East Renfrewshire Council, East Dunbartonshire Council, Argyll & Bute Council, Inverclyde Council, Glasgow City Council, Falkirk Council Homeless/Housing Services, as well as HMP Low Moss is currently being updated. This protocol is for prisoners that are in danger of losing their tenancy, or are threatened with homelessness in Prison and upon release. The new protocol will look at preventing homelessness by giving appropriate advice and assistance to prisoners and helps reduce the cycle of re-offending by providing appropriate support and assistance within this multi-agency approach.
- 7.9 The Scottish government has acknowledged that the solution is not simply a matter of being offered a home although this is the first step. Ex-prisoners on liberation often find it difficult to cope with a tenancy, while facing up to debt, drug and alcohol problems. Reducing re-offending is not just the duty of the criminal justice system but also of other important bodies such as housing, health, benefits, education and training and employment. By these agencies making themselves accessible to offenders and working together in partnership, then the community is much safer and stronger and re-offending is reduced
- 7.10 The Community Justice (Scotland) Act was passed by the Scottish Parliament on 11th February 2016, following the Stage 3 debate. The Scottish Government is currently working with stakeholders to develop a new model for community justice in Scotland.
- 7.11 The plans include establishing a national agency (Community Justice Scotland) to provide assurance to Scottish Ministers on the collective achievement of community justice outcomes across Scotland. The current Criminal Justice Authorities will be disbanded.

## 7 Objective 1: People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness

7.12 At a local level, strategic planning and service delivery is expected to become the responsibility of local community justice partners. There will be a statutory duty on statutory community justice partners to produce a local plan for community justice and will have a requirement to engage and involve the Third Sector in the planning, delivery and reporting of services and improved outcomes. The partners include housing, Education, National Health Service, children's services, Fire and Police, etc. There will also be National Outcomes, Performance and Improvement Framework for Community Justice in Scotland.

### Key Actions for meeting this aim

- Review approach to ensuring that children are not adversely affected by homelessness
- Work with Criminal Justice partners to develop and implement actions aimed at achieving the new Criminal Justice National Outcomes
- Reduce the rate of Youth Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire



## 8 Objective 2: People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them

8.1 The Scottish Government and the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (CoSLA) 2012 Steering Group held a joint seminar where they discussed homeless prevention actions, particularly focusing on housing options approaches. West Dunbartonshire is part of the West of Scotland working group looking at a joint approach to housing options.

8.2 In March 2016 the Scottish Government published guidance on housing options for local authorities. The following definition was used.

- a process which starts with housing advice when someone approaches a local authority with a housing problem. This means looking at an individual's options and choices in the widest sense. This approach features early intervention and explores all possible tenure options, including council housing, RSL's, and the private rented sector.
- The advice can also cover personal circumstances which may not necessarily be housing related, such as debt advice, mediation and mental health issues. Rather than only accepting a homelessness application, local authority homelessness services will work together with other services such as employability, mental health, money advice and family mediation services etc., to assist the individual with issues from an early stage in the hope of avoiding a housing crisis.' (Scottish Government)

8.3 West Dunbartonshire is in the process of developing a holistic housing options approach and is keen to expand choices for all households within West Dunbartonshire.

Housing options is delivered with some clear common principles:

- Appropriate links between Housing Options and Homelessness;
- A supportive Organisational Culture;
- Robust Policies and Procedures;
- A well trained workforce;
- Effective Partnership working;
- High standards of customer service;
- Preventative services;
- Person centred Services;
- Tenure- Neutral Services;
- Links with housing support;
- Fully Audible record keeping;
- Appropriate; and
- Performance Indicators.

### Key Actions for meeting this aim:

- Introduce a housing options approach and framework for delivery;
- Ensure staff receive necessary training to best deliver service requirements;
- Review and update Job Profiles to best deliver service requirements;
- Take actions aimed at increasing the range of housing accommodation options available across West Dunbartonshire;
- Take actions to increase the use of the private sector as a housing outcome for homeless households and people looking for housing; and
- Contribute to the development and implementation of a Care Leaver Housing Protocol.

## 9 Objective 3: Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice

### Homeless Assessments

9.1 When someone presents as homeless they are assessed under the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 1987. In 2015/16 1101 households underwent a homeless assessment. Of these households 81% were assessed as homeless or potentially homeless, with only 1% being assessed as not homeless. On 86% of occasions, an assessment was made within 28 days.

Table 7.1: 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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1101</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

### Housing Outcomes

9.2 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. 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 to 24.

Table 7.2: 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%

### Source: Scottish Government - West Dunbartonshire HL1 figures

9.3 A continuous self-assessment process is carried out to ensure that homeless households continue to get prompt and easy access to help and advice. This process is carried out annually and in recent years has identified issues such as repeat homelessness and led to effective actions being taken to address these.

## 9 Objective 3: Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice

### Key actions to achieve this Outcome:

- Produce a report outlining future funding options for provision of Homelessness Services;
- Carry out comprehensive annual assessment around Scottish Social Housing Charter Outcomes and develop annual Charter Improvement Plan;
- Roll out the new Housing, Homelessness, Addiction Partners Referral Pathway;
- Review and update existing partnership protocols; and
- Develop an approach to ensure that homeless households and those at risk of homelessness get prompt and easy access to advice relating to income maximisation and employment / training opportunities.



# 10 Objective 4: Homeless people are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed

10.1 This strategy will see the merging of the homelessness strategy with the Temporary Accommodation strategy. The clear purpose of the West Dunbartonshire Temporary Accommodation Strategy 2012-2016 was to ensure that West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners are able to deliver a range of temporary accommodation across the authority area to meet the divergent needs of the customer base.

## Some of the key achievements of the strategy were:

- A temporary accommodation model was carried out that resulted in the opening of Ashton View- a supported accommodation project;
- Recording customer feedback through the charter outcomes;
- Introduction of a new supported housing tool to assess for support needs and monitor the progress of the individual receiving support;
- Introduction of supported accommodation performance monitoring on a quarterly basis; and
- Written and signed agreements between West Dunbartonshire Council and supported accommodation provider.

## Welfare Reform

10.2 Welfare Reform has increased stresses on already stretched housing and homeless budgets across the country. Some of the challenges and actions to mitigate some of the impacts are outlined below:

- **Benefit cap** - the rent for temporary accommodation has had to be decreased due to the benefits cap;
- **Bedroom tax** - temporary furnished flats are subject to the bedroom tax meaning the homeless households are liable when under-occupying temporary accommodation. The Council does not expect its homeless tenants to be able to make up the difference and this has a budgetary impact; and
- **Universal Credit** - under universal credit the local authority can only charge local housing allowance rates for temporary accommodation (that does not fit the supported exempt criteria). Households in a temporary flat and on universal credit they will only receive local housing allowance rate for their temporary accommodation rent. Rents in this area have traditionally been higher than this to pay for the support provided and this change will have a big impact on the homelessness budget.

Some supported accommodation comes under the Supported Exempt category of specified accommodation. This means that it is not affected by the bedroom tax or the benefits cap.

## 10 Objective 4: Homeless people are provided with suitable, good-quality temporary or emergency accommodation when this is needed

10.3 Welfare reform presents a key challenge for the funding of Homelessness Services. As funding is restricted, the need for temporary accommodation will remain and may increase as increased number of households fall into debt.

10.4 In addition, the support needs of people who are homeless are increasing and becoming more complex. In 2015/16, 54% of unintentionally homeless households had a support assessment carried out under the housing support regulations.

Table 10.1: Supports needs of cases assessed as homeless

	Assessed as homeless (all cases)	%	Assessed as homeless (Young person 16-24)	%
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

10.5 In order to best meet the demands of the service and the financial challenges that exist, a Temporary Accommodation Model has been developed. The model looks at the profile and support needs of homeless households and the estate of emergency and supported accommodation that is available. The model also takes into account the financial framework in light of the changes from welfare reform outlined above.

10.6 This model aims to ensure that the right type and number of temporary and supported accommodation is available and sustainable in financial terms. The model will be refreshed annually with updated year-end data.

Table 10.2: Ideal accommodation options for households who are homeless

Temporary Accommodation Category		
1	Dispersed Self Contained Accommodation	No support needs – can sustain a tenancy, may be in employment/training, aim for short-term temp and offer of permanent accommodation quickly
2	Supported Self Contained Accommodation	Vulnerable low to medium support need with structured support plan
3	Hostel - Support	Vulnerable /high support needs, own bed-room, structured support plan
4	Hostel - Supervision	Chaotic – need on site supervision to manage challenging behaviour
5	Tenancy - Support	Chaotic – unlikely to sustain any form of accommodation without support (Housing First, external provider)

### Key actions to achieve this Outcome

- Carry out annual review of supported and temporary accommodation provision;
- Implement newly developed Temporary Accommodation Standards in Year 1 of strategy (2017/18) and review and update standards in Year 3 of strategy (2019/20); and
- Analyse customer feedback regarding quality of temporary accommodation on an annual basis and develop and implement improvement actions based on this feedback.



# 11 Objective 5: Homeless people are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to

- 11.1 The housing support regulations brought in by the Housing (Scotland) Act 2010 places a duty on local authorities to assess the housing support needs of homeless households when required and to ensure that appropriate support is provided.
- 11.2 The approach toward temporary accommodation outlined above will support homeless households to get a suitable housing solution, however ensuring that these outcomes are sustainable means that continuing support must be available where required.
- 11.3 Over the last few years the Scottish Government has seen tenancy sustainment be an important role of all housing providers. It is a key Outcome of the Scottish Social Housing Charter and is already a central area of focus.
- 11.4 A joined up approach to homelessness is key to ensuring that homeless or potentially homeless households have access to support services. Current actions include:
- Working with the Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) to implement the Homelessness and Health action plan. The aim of this is to ensure that all homeless households have access to health services; and
  - Working with addiction services and adhering to the joint addictions protocol

## Key actions to achieve this Outcome

- Carry out a review of the Housing Support Service and make recommendations to deliver improvements;
- Mitigate the effects of some aspects of welfare reform where this is appropriate;
- Reduce the rate of Repeat Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire;
- Identify and implement appropriate actions to increase the tenancy sustainment; and
- Review and develop partnership approach in place for those affected by domestic abuse.

# 12 Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

12.1 As outlined in section 5, this strategy was developed in consultation with key stake-holders and the final document was drafted taking this feedback into account.

12.2 More Than A Roof - West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy, includes an action plan which has been developed in order to achieve the Outcomes outlined within the strategy. This action plan contains a number of key indicators which will be used to measure progress and will be monitored as part of our wider Performance Management Framework.

12.3 Progress in terms of implementation and progress achieving the desired outcomes will be monitored via:

- A quarterly summary performance report provided to the Housing Management Team;
- Detailed scrutiny at the quarterly Homelessness Performance and Development meeting;
- Summary performance reports provided to the Homelessness and Housing Access Forum; and
- An annual progress report to the Housing and Communities Committee



# 13 West Dunbartonshire Homelessness, Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Strategy Action Plan 2017-20

Icon	Name
	People at risk of losing their homes get advice on preventing homelessness

Action
Through More Homes Better Homes Approach - Increase the supply of new build housing to help meet housing need
Review approach to ensuring that children are not adversely affected by homelessness
Work with Community Justice partners to deliver the new Criminal Justice National Outcomes
Tackle and reduce the levels of youth homelessness in West Dunbartonshire
Ensure that homelessness is avoided from households in Scottish Secure Tenancies

Icon	Name
	People looking for housing get information that helps them make informed choices and decisions about the range of housing options available to them

Action
Introduce a housing options approach and framework for delivery
Invest in our staff and ensure they receive necessary training to best deliver service requirements
Review Service delivery to ensure we meet service objectives
Increase the range of housing accommodation options available across West Dunbartonshire, including Housing First and sanctuary model housing
Take actions to increase the use of the private sector as a housing outcome for homeless households and people looking for housing
Contribute to the development and implementation of a Care Leaver Housing Protocol

Icon	Name
	Homeless people get prompt and easy access to help and advice

Action	
Produce a report outlining future funding options for provision of Homelessness Services	
Develop an annual Charter Improvement Plan based on annual assessment of performance	
Roll out the new Housing, Homelessness, Addiction, Partners Referral Pathway	
Review and update existing partnership protocols	
Develop an approach to ensure that homeless households and those at risk of homelessness get prompt and easy access to advice relating to income maximisation and employment / training opportunities	

Icon	Name
	Homeless people are provided with suitable, good quality temporary or emergency accommodation when it is needed

Action	
Carry out annual review of supported and temporary accommodation provision and ensure provision of appropriate supported accommodation	
Implement newly developed Temporary Accommodation Standards in Year 1 of strategy (2017/18) and review and update standards in Year 3 of strategy (2019/20)	
Analyse customer feedback regarding quality of temporary accommodation on an annual basis and develop and implement improvement actions based on this feedback	

Icon	Name
	Homeless people are offered continuing support to help them get and keep the home they are entitled to

Action	
Carry out a review of the Housing Support Service and make recommendations to best deliver service requirements	
Mitigate the effects of aspects of welfare reform where this is appropriate	
Through effective service delivery minimise incidences of repeat homelessness	
Identify and implement appropriate actions to increase the tenancy sustainment rate of homeless households	
Review and develop partnership approach in place for those affected by domestic abuse	

# Appendix

## 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

Age	2011/2012		2012/2013		2013/2014		2014/2015		2015/2016	
	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.

# Appendix

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%
<b>Total</b>	<b>1101</b>	<b>100%</b>

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

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.



**For further information, contact**

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