

# More than a Roof

West Dunbartonshire Council's  
Housing Solutions Strategy  
2025 - 2028



**Foreword by  
Councillor Gurpreet Singh Johal**



I am delighted to be able to introduce the Council's homeless solutions strategy 'More than a Roof' which will run until 2028, replacing the previous Rapid Rehousing Transition plan.

There has already been a 10% reduction in homelessness presentations in West Dunbartonshire in 2023/24 compared to the previous year. This is excellent news and reflects the move to a more preventative model of service provision. Despite there being a local and national housing emergency with increased demand and reduced supply, the Council's 'More than a Roof strategy has ambitious aims to reduce homelessness.

This strategy has been developed following extensive consultation with people with lived experience of homelessness and with our key partners and stakeholders. This new strategy sets out how the Council and its partners aim to tackle homelessness in West Dunbartonshire over the next 3 years. It focuses on the prevention of homelessness, housing options and solutions, information and advice, housing support and good quality temporary accommodation.

An action plan has been developed with clear aims. The Council is committed to ensuring that, despite constraints with funding, high interest rates and a cost-of-living crisis, the needs of the most vulnerable in our communities will be met by delivering effective services.

As Convener of the Housing and Communities committee I am committed to reducing homelessness in West Dunbartonshire and ensuring positive solutions and outcomes for those who find themselves in housing crisis.

Councillor Gurpreet Singh Johal

Convener - Housing and Communities Committee

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## More than a Roof – Executive Summary Housing Solutions Strategy

### **West Dunbartonshire Council Housing Solutions Strategy 2025 – 2028**

“More than a Roof” is West Dunbartonshire Council's 6th Homeless Strategy with a strong focus on finding housing solutions for those households in need. This strategy covers the period from 2025 to 2028, which means it is aligned with our current Local Housing Strategy which also runs until 2028.

“More than a Roof” aims to build on the achievements of “Home at the Heart”, our Rapid Rehousing Transition Plan. It has been developed within the backdrop of a Housing Emergency both locally and nationally, where demand is higher than ever, and supply is reducing. At the time of writing, 13 Local Authorities have declared housing emergencies, alongside a national declaration by the Scottish Government on 15th May 2024.

The wider context includes recent legislative changes such as the introduction of the Homeless Person's (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Amendment Order 2020, the commencement of the Local Connection and Intentionality provisions in the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003 and the on-going work of the Scottish Government's Homelessness Prevention and Strategy Group which is taking forward actions identified by the Local Government and Communities Committee and the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Group (HARSAG) to improve the experience of anyone already experiencing homelessness and prevent homelessness altogether.

It is however, in advance of the Housing (Scotland) Bill 2024 being enacted which will see a significant change and improvement to tenants' rights but reinforcing prevention as an action for landlords and other public bodies to take action to help prevent or end homelessness.

The strategy was produced in partnership with key stakeholders, which importantly included in-depth consultation with households experiencing homelessness and staff working in the service and takes accounts of these opinions around how we can end homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

Following this process, four Key Objectives for West Dunbartonshire Council were clear, and they are:

1. Homelessness is prevented by providing good quality advice and information to enable informed decisions on personal housing solutions;
2. Where homelessness does occur households are rehoused quickly;
3. Review and ensure there are a wide range of support services available to prevent and end homelessness; and
4. Working with partners to provide Interim options for temporary accommodation and providing best quality temporary accommodation where required.

In order to achieve these objectives over the three-year period some of the actions which will be taken include:

- Introducing a Housing Solutions Charter for provision of information and advice;
- Rolling out a common housing application form for social housing providers in West Dunbartonshire;
- In line with the Housing Act liaising with relevant public bodies and landlords to help them understand their responsibilities to 'ask and act' and explore actions to prevent homeless;
- Exploring the option of creating a "one door" approach for all housing information and advice which is consistent and robust, and which captures new demand created from the Housing Act;
- Regularly improving our online stock information and further promote so residents have a better understanding of what our stock is like and what becomes available to make informed decisions;
- To increase our supply through our acquisition programme focusing on medical needs and larger family homes to meet need our own stock is unable to address;
- Reviewing the casework support assessment ensuring that it captures all support needs of households to prevent and end homelessness;
- Exploring options to fund and provide more informal and practical type support for particular groups that would not fall into prescribed housing support;
- The creation of a youth specialist housing support team as part of the service restructure;
- Reviewing and creating protocols to ensure positive partnership working between the housing solutions service and all Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) partners;
- Creating a stock profile for dispersed temporary accommodation and review against temporary accommodation standards;
- Explore support and accommodation options for young people 16-21yrs;
- Implementing the recommendations of the Supported Housing Review including smaller and self-contained accommodation options.

## Introduction and Background

### More than a Roof

This builds on our previous strategy “Home at the Heart” – our first rapid rehousing transition plan, but our 5<sup>th</sup> homeless strategy, the key objectives of which were:

- Deliver a Whole Systems approach to the prevention of homelessness;
- Enable service users with low or no support needs to access settled housing quickly;
- To develop interim housing options which enable independent living and housing sustainment; and
- Implement a Housing First model which enables the most excluded service users to achieve housing sustainment.

### Background

Scotland’s Homeless legislation is one of the strongest in the world yet ending homelessness has not been achieved. However, external factors including a world pandemic and then a subsequent cost of living crisis and the impacts that has had on both supply and demand for housing has meant Scotland is facing a Housing Emergency, with the Scottish Government declaring a Housing Emergency on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2024. For full details of Scotland’s Homeless Strategic and Temporary Accommodation legislation please see **Appendix 1**.

For further details on West Dunbartonshire Councils homeless context please see **Appendix 2**.

West Dunbartonshire Council continues to experience high levels of deprivation. It has seen a slight improvement around unemployment levels reducing to 3.4% in 2023 compared to the national average of 3.5%. Owner occupier continues to be the largest housing tenure at 55% with social housing making up 24.5% of housing stock. For further detail please see Appendix 3 for more context on West Dunbartonshire Council.

### Consultation

Local authorities have a statutory duty to involve, consult and engage with as wide a range of their residents as possible. There has been a wide consultation process as part of the formulation of this strategy, this has included:

- Service user focus group to help inform the survey which then went to all service users, staff and other stakeholders;
- Hosted community events for further consultation;
- Hosted a stakeholder event through our Housing Solutions Partnership forum;
- Attended staff meetings.

We thank all those involved in giving comment and time to contribute to this strategy. Full details of the consultation can be found in **Appendix 4**.

## Key Objectives

This strategy builds on the achievements of our previous strategy “Home at the Heart” and takes account of the current context and pressures of housing emergency declarations both locally and nationally along with low supply, high demand and affordability.

It has been developed with key stakeholders, including households experiencing homelessness through a consultation process and represents key asks from all those involved which could help end homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

The four key objectives for the strategy were clear and are as follows:

1. Homelessness is prevented by providing good quality advice and information to enable informed decisions on personal housing solutions;
2. Where homelessness does occur, households are rehoused quickly;
3. Review and ensure there are a wide range of support services available to prevent and end homelessness; and
4. Working with partners to provide Interim options for temporary accommodation and providing best quality temporary accommodation when require.

### **Objective One – Homelessness is prevented by providing good quality advice and information to enabled informed decisions on personal housing solutions**

A key aim will be ensuring residents of West Dunbartonshire are provided with good quality advice and information that allows them to make informed decisions on their personal housing solutions. Thus, strengthening a more preventative approach than crisis as homelessness can only truly end with a robust prevention approach.

Housing options have been part of the Scottish Housing system since 2010 and have been key to improving outcomes and lives.

Housing Options and Advice focuses on people's personal circumstances, helping them explore all options, including council housing, housing association homes and private rented accommodation. It can also provide support for underlying issues that can underpin housing problems such as debt, family breakup and mental health problems.

This means that, rather than just making a homeless application officers can work with other services to help people before they reach crisis point.

However, there is still more that can be done but wider than homeless services. Prevention is going to have a bigger role in Scotland's housing sector with new duties as part of the Housing Bill (Scotland) 2024 which has been published and will be enacted during the time of this strategy. A significant part of the Bill, Part 5 will introduce an ‘ask and act’ duty on social landlords and bodies, such as health boards and the police, to ask about a person's housing situation and act to avoid them becoming homeless wherever possible. It also reforms provision for people

threatened with homelessness up to six months ahead and includes provisions for tenants experiencing domestic abuse.

Prevention and housing options is ensuring households have the right information to make informed choices and we offer daily housing options interview to enable this.

**Table 1** – Outcomes for all closed Prevention cases in 2023/24

<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>2023/24 Number</b>	<b>2023/24 %</b>
<b>LA tenancy</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>9%</b>
Private rented - assured tenancy	18	5%
Hostel - local authority	0	0%
Moved-in with friends/ relatives	8	2%
Other (known)	5	1%
Not known	2	1%
RSL (Housing Association) tenancy	14	4%
Private rented - short assured tenancy	4	1%
Residential care / nursing home	0	0%
Home Ownership - Low Cost Home Ownership	0	0%
Home Ownership - Bought own home via other means	1	0%
Sheltered Accommodation	1	0%
Shared Property - LA	0	0%
Shared Property – RSL (Housing Association)	0	0%
Shared Property - Private Rented Sector	0	0%
Lodger	0	0%
Prison	0	0%
Hospital	0	0%
Lost contact with applicant	24	6%
<b>Remained in current accommodation</b>	<b>179</b>	<b>46%</b>
<b>Made homelessness application to local authority</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>24%</b>
<b>All</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>100%</b>

We have also created clear housing pathways for specific groups which increases people being housed before a crisis need of becoming homeless. They include:

- Prison resettlement pathway;
- Hospital Discharge;
- No Homes for Domestic Abuse;
- Armed Forces.



## **ACTIONS**

### **Key actions to help achieve Objective one:**

- Restructure of the homeless service to a housing solution focus which will review our delivery of housing options interviews and personal housing solutions plans;
- Introduce a Housing Solutions Charter for provision of information and advice;
- Roll out a common housing application form for social housing providers in West Dunbartonshire to make it easier to apply for housing;
- Regularly updating the information about our stock and availability so that our residents have realistic information of West Dunbartonshire housing stock options available to them to enable them to make informed housing solution decisions;
- Ask the Housing Solution Partnership to explore housing options and what it means in West Dunbartonshire to further strengthen the advice and information available to residents;
- In line with the Housing Act liaise with public bodies and landlords to help them understand their responsibilities to 'ask and act' and explore actions to prevent homelessness;
- Reviewing protocols and processes with partner agencies with the aim of delivering positive outcomes for residents. This will include updating partner contribution statements;
- Explore the option of creating a "one door" approach for all housing information and advice which is consistent and robust and captures new demand created from the Housing Act;
- Gain accreditation for information and advice.

### **Objective Two - Where homelessness does occur households are rehoused quickly**

Where homelessness hasn't been prevented, ensuring households spend as little time in temporary accommodation as possible and are rehoused permanently as quickly as possible where they have no to low needs.

This continues on from the progress made from 2019 to 2025 where times were reduced from 23 weeks to 17 weeks for those households with no to low support needs.

The target time for this strategy will be 13 weeks for this group of households with no to low support needs.

The last strategy, "Home at the Heart" had seen the demand numbers reduce until other external impacts have seen demand increase again and is one of the contributing factors for West Dunbartonshire Council declaring a Housing Emergency on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2024.

**Table 2** – Shows the numbers of households who presented as homeless and the decisions in 2023/24.

<b>Assessments</b>	<b>2023/24 value</b>
Number of assessments	1104
Assessed as homeless	1,010
Assessed as homeless, unintentional (duty to house)	1000
Households assessed as homeless - Rate per 10,000 households	235

**Table 3** Shows the reduction in times achieved for those who had no to low needs and were rapid rehousing during “Home at the Heart.”

	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>2023/24</b>
<b>Average time</b>	15 weeks	19 weeks	16.5 weeks	17.5 weeks	17.5 weeks

Of those households experiencing homelessness currently approaching West Dunbartonshire for assistance around 64% have no to low support needs. This is the group that can be rapidly rehoused, but all households should be rehoused as quickly as possible. However, supply, type and need can also impact this.

**Table 4** Shows the outcomes for all cases closed in 2023/24 for households experiencing homelessness.

<b>Housing Outcomes for Closed Homeless Presentations 2023/2024</b>	
Scottish Secure Tenancy	793
Private Rented Tenancy	19
Hostel	0
Bed & Breakfast	0
Returned to previous/ friends/ vol org.	150
Womens Refuge	1
Residential care/nursing home/shared supported	0
Other - Known	78
Other - Not Known	19
No duty owed to applicant	96
Contact lost before duty discharge	68
All	1224

## ACTIONS

### Key actions to help achieve objective two:

- Regularly improving our online stock information and further promote so residents have a better understanding of what our stock is like and what becomes available to make informed decisions;
- To increase our supply through our acquisition programme focusing on medical needs and larger family homes to meet need our own stock is unable to address;
- Continue to lobby for increased affordable housing supply funding from the Scottish Government to enable our programme to meet unmet need;
- Explore further promotion of the service Homeswapper to increase mutual exchanges to meet other housing needs.

### Objective Three – Review and ensure there are a wide range of support services available to prevent and end homelessness.

A key theme from our consultation and one of the asks from service users was more support and not all in the current format that it is currently offered.

West Dunbartonshire Council homeless services have an in-house housing support team along with a housing first support team. This is to meet the needs of those households who experience homelessness in West Dunbartonshire. The housing support team currently provide support while a household is homeless and in temporary accommodation and up to 12 months after they are rehoused.

The recommendations that came from the review of West Dunbartonshire Council residential supported accommodation are already taking shape from the last strategy but will be complete during the time of this strategy.

The consultation also highlighted that the needs of households experiencing homelessness since the last strategy have changed therefore an action of exploring alternative support options has been included.

### Support Data Tables

**Table 5** shows that under our duty to assess support of our homeless presentations, how many have support needs;

	2023/2024
All assessed as unintentionally homeless/ threatened with homelessness	1119
Assessed under the Housing Support Regulations as % of all assessed unintentionally	21%
<b>Support Provided under the Housing Support Regulations as % of all assessed unintentionally</b>	19%

**Table 6** shows of those with support needs how many categories of support they had:

2023/24	
No support needs	651
1 support need identified	260
2 support needs identified	129
3+ support need identified	64
All	1104

**Table 7** shows the categories of support:

2023/2024	
Mental health problem	237
Learning disability	38
Physical disability	44
Medical condition	157
Drug or alcohol dependency	116
Basic housing management / independent living skills	130

From our data along with consultation feedback there are particular groups and types of support which will have a focus.

### **Young people**

Youth homelessness in West Dunbartonshire continues to be one of the highest in Scotland. We have reduced numbers presenting as homeless with a change to our allocation policy which gives priority to those young people at risk of homelessness. However, it still remains an area of concern within West Dunbartonshire. There is no longer a youth specific residential supported accommodation in West Dunbartonshire. Recognising that although this group have similar needs to all households experiencing homelessness, they also have needs unique to them.

Part of this objective will be exploring alternative support provision for young people which can help prevent homelessness from occurring or if it does then help rehousing and sustained resettlement.

### **Informal Support and Long-term support**

Support can make the difference of a household sustaining their tenancy or not. As part of homeless service duties as a local authority support needs must be assessed for those presenting as homeless. This was in acknowledgment that access to accommodation alone will not be sufficient to meet the needs of some of those that are homeless or threatened with homelessness. This support is provided whilst they wait for a permanent offer of housing and for a period of resettlement once rehoused.

What has been highlighted from consultation is that for some people they need more practical support and not necessarily at the resettlement part of their tenancy but during their tenancy. Whilst others may require ongoing support to ensure they can

sustain their tenancy but low level. These options either do not exist or are very limited, demonstrating there is an unmet need.

We will work in partnership with other stakeholders to explore how this need can be met. Other stakeholders will include other social landlords, HSCP colleagues in health, addictions, social work, criminal and community justice along with those in the third sector.

## **ACTIONS**

### **Key actions to be taken forward to help achieve objective three:**

- Review the casework support assessment ensuring that it captures all support needs of households to prevent and end homelessness;
- Explore options to fund and provide more informal and practical types of support for particular groups that would not fall into prescribed housing support;
- Make service users and other stakeholders aware of all support options available;
- Creation of a youth specialist housing support team as part of the service restructure;
- Explore establishing and funding a housing first and other accommodation options for young people;
- Review funding options to expand the existing Housing First Service, including opportunities to prevent homelessness;
- Review and create protocols to ensure positive partnership working between the housing solutions service and all HSCP partners<sup>1</sup>;
- Explore options in partnership with other key stakeholders for providing long term housing support for tenants to sustain their tenancy and avoid homelessness.

### **Objective Four - Working with partners to provide Interim options for temporary accommodation and ensuring best quality temporary accommodation is provided**

Partnership working is key within this objective. Partners will include colleagues across the council within housing operations, HSCP: addictions, mental health, social work and criminal justice along with other social landlords and those in the third sector.

West Dunbartonshire Council pride ourselves on having a portfolio of temporary accommodation in the community and have a very limited use of unsuitable accommodation such as Bed & Breakfast. However, the continued pressures of demand at the same time as a reduction in supply of permanent housing have put pressures on our temporary supply meaning in the last two years we have seen

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<sup>1</sup> HSCP Partner include addictions services, mental health services, social work, criminal justice, community justice.

increased use of unsuitable accommodation. This is one of the contributing factors of why West Dunbartonshire Council declared a Housing Emergency.

Recognising the needs and wants of our community are changing means a review of the options that West Dunbartonshire Council offer as interim housing options during an individual's journey needs to be undertaken.

At the 31 March 2024, West Dunbartonshire had 423 open homeless cases having been assessed with a duty to rehouse.

**Table 8:** Shows the numbers of temporary accommodation stock by area and size.

Area/No. of rooms	1	2	3	4	Grand Total
<b>ALEXANDRIA</b>	12	40	16		68
<b>CLYDEBANK</b>	35	76	21		132
<b>DUMBARTON</b>	15	24	7	2	48
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>248</b>

There are several residential supported accommodation projects within West Dunbartonshire Council area. There are four supported accommodation projects in West Dunbartonshire that provide direct access to people who are homeless. One of these projects which is council owned and managed at Ashton View. Then there are three projects across West Dunbartonshire that are managed by Blue Triangle Housing Association.

**Table 9:** Residential supported accommodation projects in West Dunbartonshire.

Supported accommodation project	Ashton View	Blue Triangle Alexandria	Blue Triangle Bonhill	Blue Triangle Clydebank
<b>Number of places</b>	20	10	8	13
<b>Number of residents at year end 2023/24</b>	14	10	8	11

### Consultation on Temporary Accommodation

Service users, as part of their survey consultation were asked for feedback on the temporary accommodation provided to them. Some of the feedback received showed that;

- The type of accommodation of those who had stayed or were staying in temporary accommodation were:
  - 66% flat in the community
  - 28% Residential supported
  - 6% other

- 88% of those who stayed in temporary accommodation were satisfied with the accommodation;
- 78% were happy with the location of the temporary accommodation; and
- 90% felt the accommodation met their needs.

The feedback indicates reviewing our temporary accommodation profile on a regular basis should continue with a view of reviewing the location.

### **Conversions**

Conversions are a great tool to offer where budgets allow. It is where a household has their Short Scottish Secure Tenancy converted into a Scottish Secure Tenancy. This is an option where the households' needs are being met in the dispersed temporary accommodation and they wish to remain there. This isn't an option for all but we will continue to have it as an option to offer to suitable households.

### **Young People**

As West Dunbartonshire Council continue to see high presentations from young people and as part of the consultation a young persons supported accommodation was raised as an ask, this objective will include exploring alternative support and accommodation options that meets the needs of young people.

### **Residential Supported Housing Accommodation**

The action to review our current provision of residential supported accommodation was carried out in the last strategy and work had begun taking forward the key recommendations and will be complete during the time of this strategy. It will see smaller and self-contained units being provided as supported accommodation.

### **Rapid access**

A key recommendation from the review of residential supported accommodation was a creation of a rapid access accommodation for a small number of households where their needs cannot be met through residential supported accommodation or through housing first support service. The reason being their needs are greater than what housing services can offer, or they do not or are unable to engage with services/supports.

## **ACTIONS**

### **Key actions to achieve objective four:**

- Create a stock profile for dispersed temporary accommodation and review against temporary accommodation standards;
- Continue to offer a conversion programme within available budget;
- Explore support and accommodation options for young people aged 16-21 years;
- Implement recommendations of the residential supported housing review including smaller and self-contained accommodation options; and
- Explore the delivery of rapid access accommodation in partnership with HSCP colleagues.

## Baseline position of Temporary Accommodation supply and use in West Dunbartonshire

### Temporary accommodation

The provision and use of temporary accommodation over the past 4 years has been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The overall length of time spent in temporary accommodation has decreased and is now lower than what it was in 2019/20 – pre pandemic. However, the demand for temporary flats (LA dwellings) is still high. Letting activity has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels and the number of households in temporary accommodation remains high.

**Table 10** shows type of temporary accommodation and average times.

Type of temporary accommodation	2021/22 Ave days	2022/23 Ave days	2023/24 Ave days
LA ordinary dwelling	126.5	135.5	149.7
Housing Association/RSL dwelling	226.5	338.5	760
Hostel – local authority	70.6	37	34.2
Hostel – RSL	431.8	662.8	0
Hostel – other	91.5	110.2	116.1
Bed and breakfast	2.6	4.2	6.3
Women’s refuge	320	139	67.3
Private sector lease	0	0	0
Other placed by authority	541.8	0	0
<b>Total (ALL)</b>	<b>119.4</b>	<b>100.8</b>	<b>97.7</b>

West Dunbartonshire Council currently uses **248** units of existing Council housing stock to accommodate homeless households as detailed in **Table 8** on Page 13. This stock is dispersed and spread around the council area.

There are four residential supported accommodation projects in West Dunbartonshire that provide direct access to people who are homeless. One is council owned and managed and three projects are managed by Blue Triangle Housing Association. The details of each of these projects are in the table below.



**Table 11:** Residential supported accommodation projects in West Dunbartonshire.

Supported accommodation project	Ashton View	Blue Triangle Alexandria	Blue Triangle Bonhill	Blue Triangle Clydebank
Number of places	20	10	8	13
Number of residents at year end - 2023/24	14	10	8	11
Number that place was offered and taken up	81 (91.0%)	19 (82.6%)	41 (74.5%)	34 (91.9%)
Occupancy rate - 2023/24 year end	75%	90%	72%	93%

### Temporary Accommodation Modelling

West Dunbartonshire Council carries out a temporary accommodation modelling exercise twice a year which provides an in-depth understanding of the support needs of homeless households and the temporary accommodation options that are required. The model allows us to meet the demands of the service, by providing the right type of temporary accommodation. The model outputs tell us what type of accommodation is required by area and size.

The latest modelling exercise used homeless cases in 2023/24. This model focused on dispersed temporary accommodation. A residential supported accommodation review is being undertaken to establish the need and demand for this option.

The outputs showed that while presentations have decreased by 10% between 2022/23 and 2023/24 dispersed stock levels have decreased by 12%. This means there is a shortfall between the current supply and what is required.

This shortfall is across all areas – Clydebank, Dumbarton and Alexandria which would be associated with increased use of unsuitable accommodation. In addition, in each area there are not enough one-bedroom properties, too many two- and three-bedroom properties and a small shortfall of four and five bed properties. However, this is in line with West Dunbartonshire Council housing supply. It should also be noted that increasing dispersed temporary accommodation means reducing the availability of supply for permanent housing therefore all impacts have to be assessed and managed.

## More than a Roof Action Plan 2025 – 2028

### Objective One

1. Restructure of the homeless service to a housing solution focus which will review our delivery of housing options interviews and personal housing solutions plans;
2. Introduce a Housing Solutions Charter for provision of information and advice;
3. Roll out a common housing application form for social housing providers in West Dunbartonshire to make it easier to apply for housing;
4. Regularly updating the information about our stock and availability so that our residents have realistic information of West Dunbartonshire housing stock options available to them to enable them to make informed housing solution decisions;
5. Ask the Housing Solution Partnership to explore housing options and what it means in West Dunbartonshire to further strengthen the advice and information available to residents;
6. In line with the Housing Act liaise with public bodies and landlords to help them understand their responsibilities to 'ask and act' and explore actions to prevent homeless;
7. Reviewing protocols and processes with partner agencies with the aim of delivering positive outcomes for residents. This will include updating partner contribution statements;
8. Explore the option of creating a "one door" approach for all housing information and advice which is consistent and robust and captures new demand created from the Housing Act; and
9. Gain Accreditation for information and advice.

### Objective Two

1. Regularly improving our online stock information and further promote so residents have a better understanding of what our stock is like and what becomes available to make informed decisions;
2. To increase our supply through our acquisition programme focusing on medical needs and larger family homes to meet need our own stock is unable to address;
3. Continue to lobby for increased affordable housing supply funding from the Scottish Government to enable our programme to meet unmet need; and
4. Explore further promotion of the service Homeswapper to increase mutual exchanges to meet other housing needs.

### **Objective Three**

1. Review the casework support assessment ensuring that it captures all support needs of households to prevent and end homelessness;
2. Explore options to fund and provide more informal and practical type support for particular groups that would not fall into prescribed housing support;
3. Make service users and other stakeholders aware of all support options available;
4. Creation of a youth specialist housing support team as part of the service restructure;
5. Explore establishing and funding a housing first and other accommodation options for young people;
6. Review funding options to expand the existing Housing First Service, including opportunities to prevent homelessness;
7. Review and create protocols to ensure positive partnership working between the housing solutions service and all HSCP partners<sup>2</sup>;
8. Explore options in partnership with other key stakeholders for providing long term housing support for tenants to sustain their tenancy and avoid homelessness.

### **Objective Four**

1. Create a stock profile for dispersed temporary accommodation and review against temporary accommodation standards;
2. Continue to offer a conversion programme within available budget;
3. Explore support and accommodation options for young people aged 16-21 years;
4. Implement recommendations of the residential supported housing review including smaller and self-contained accommodation options;  
and
5. Explore the delivery of rapid access accommodation in partnership with HSCP colleagues.

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<sup>2</sup> HSCP Partner include addictions services, mental health services, social work, criminal justice, community justice.

## Appendix 1 - Homelessness Legislation

### Strategic Policy Framework

The 1977 Act, now consolidated into Part II of the [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 1987](#), placed the responsibility for meeting homeless persons' needs on local authority housing departments subject to national guidance.

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
- Registered Social Landlords were given a duty to comply with requests from local authorities to accommodate unintentionally homeless households in priority need within six weeks.

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 [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.

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

The Scottish Governments 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. HL1 is our data return to the Scottish Government for every household who presents as homeless to West Dunbartonshire council which is then used as a measuring tool.

The Programme for Government published on 5 September 2017 addressed issues surrounding homelessness and rough sleeping and plans to tackle them. Following these renewed commitments the [Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Action Group \(HARSAG\)](#) was established. The group set out a series of recommendations.

In 2018 the Scottish Government and COSLA published the [Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan](#) which set out the shared direction towards ending homelessness. This action plan was informed by recommendations received from the HARSAG.

HARSAG was reconvened in response to the pandemic. The [HARSAG II](#) recommendations included four areas with 105 recommendations. It recognised that ending homelessness requires more than providing housing. It focused on joint working, support plans, connections with the community, personal health and wellbeing and a sense of purpose.

Following recommendations made by (HARSAG) and the Ending Homelessness Together Action Plan, and consultations with local authorities, the Scottish Government commenced the Local Connection and Intentionality provisions from the Homelessness etc. (Scotland) Act 2003.

1. In November 2019 the legal duty for local authorities to investigate intentionality became a discretionary power;
2. In November 2022 anyone who does not have a local connection to the council they present as homeless too will no longer be referred to the local authority they have a connection to. Instead, the local authority they presented to will have a duty to accommodate the household and find permanent/settled accommodation. The Homeless Persons (Suspension of Referrals between Local Authorities) (Scotland) Order 2022 was laid in Parliament on 20 September.

## **Temporary Accommodation Legislation**

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 and beyond if assessed as homeless.

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](#). This Order required local authorities to ensure households with children and pregnant women are not placed in unsuitable accommodation unless exceptional circumstances apply, [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Order 2014](#) reduced the days in unsuitable accommodation from 14 to 7. [The Homeless Persons \(Unsuitable Accommodation\) \(Scotland\) Amendment Order 2020](#) extended the order to all homeless households.

## **The Scottish Housing Charter**

The [Housing \(Scotland\) Act 2010](#) included the requirement for a Scottish Social Housing Charter. Our approach to tackling homelessness is linked to the Scottish Social Housing Charter, which sets out the outcomes and standards that all social landlords should be delivering for their tenants and other customers.

The Charter does not replace the legal duties that apply to social landlords, but:

“describes the standards and outcomes that tenants and other customers should expect social landlords to achieve.”

The first Charter came into effect on 1 April 2012 and was reviewed during 2016 and 2021. The resulting revised Charter came into effect from 1 November 2022 and continues to apply until the Parliament approves a further revised Charter. The Council must report on these outcomes annually to the Scottish Housing Regulator and makes this information available to the public each year in October

The following Charter Outcomes relate directly to this strategy:

### **Outcome 12 – Homeless people**

Local councils perform their duties on homelessness so that:

- People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness get prompt and easy access to help, advice and information; 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 have a role to prevent homelessness and should ensure that:

- People at risk of losing their homes get advice and information 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.

### **Wider Strategic Policy Framework**

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.

[West Dunbartonshire Council’s Strategic Plan 2022 - 2027](#) is the road map for the Council for the next five years. It sets out the vision for the area led by priorities identified in partnership with the people who live, work and trade here. The following are the key strategic priorities for the future:

- Our Communities - Resilient and Thriving;
- Our Environment - A Greener Future;
- Our Economy – Strong and Flourishing; and
- Our Council – Inclusive and Adaptable.

**Your West Dunbartonshire, Your Place Local Outcome Improvement Plan** sets out the Community Planning West Dunbartonshire (CPWD) long term vision for 2017 - 2027. The plan builds on the Single Outcome Agreements that have gone before it and reaffirms the partnership's shared vision of a West Dunbartonshire that's 'A great place to live, work and visit'.

The Community Plan has several links to the Housing Solutions Strategy. This includes the following outcomes:

- Enhanced quality and availability of affordable housing options;
- Housing options are responsive to changing needs over time.

**West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership Strategic Delivery Plan 2023–2026: Improving Lives Together** sets out the Health Social Care Partnership (HSCP) four strategic outcomes:

1. Caring communities;
2. Safe and thriving;
3. Communities, equal communities; and
4. Healthy communities.

These outcomes build on the previous strategic plan, learning and the data from comprehensive strategic needs assessment.

**The Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027 (LHS)** sets out how West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners plan to address the housing, and housing related opportunities and challenges, over the next five year. The 5 key themes of the strategy and their main components are:

1. Housing Need and Demand;
2. Promoting Quality Homes;
3. Homelessness and Housing Options;
4. Place and Community;
5. Supported, Specialist and Particular Needs Housing.

## Appendix 2 - Homelessness Context

### Homelessness context in West Dunbartonshire

The objectives in our previous strategies have resulted in incidences of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire reducing significantly in recent years.

### Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire

Homelessness Strategy 2008/13	2008/09	2012/13	Reduction
Homeless applications	2140	1364	36%
Homelessness Strategy 2013/16	2013/14	2015/16	Reduction
Homeless applications	1368	1124	18%
Homelessness Strategy 2017/20	2017/18	2019/20	Reduction
Homeless applications	1048	1022	2.6%

### Current homelessness position

There was little difference in the number of homeless applications between 2021/22 and 2022/23 however, there has been a decrease of 10% in 2023/24. However, the numbers assessed with a duty to house continue to increase, meaning an increase in demand for all forms of temporary accommodation and for settled accommodation.

Homeless applications and assessments	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Homeless applications	1205	1217	1095
Total assessments	1199	1216	1104
Assessed with a duty to house	1019	1045	1008
% with duty to house	84.99%	85.94%	90.67%

At the 31 March 2024, West Dunbartonshire had 423 open homeless cases having been assessed with a duty to rehouse.

The reason for homeless applications shows that consistently the core drivers of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire are households being asked to leave their current accommodation and disputes within a household (both violent and non-violent), accounting for just over 70% of all applications.



Reason for homeless application	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Termination of tenancy/ mortgage due to rent arrears/ default on payments	6	0.50%	23	1.90%	16	1.46%
Other action by landlord resulting in the termination of the tenancy	58	4.80%	62	5.20%	31	2.83%
Applicant terminated secure accommodation	24	2.00%	13	1.10%	20	1.83%
Reason for homeless application	2021/22		2022/23		2023/24	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Loss of service/tied accommodation	2	0.20%	4	0.30%	3	0.27%
Discharge from prison/hospital/ care/other institution	45	3.70%	48	4.00%	51	4.66%
Emergency (fire, flood, storm, closing order from Environmental Health etc.)	16	1.30%	13	1.10%	8	0.73%
Forced division and sale of matrimonial home	5	0.40%	9	0.70%	13	1.19%
Other reason for loss of accommodation	31	2.60%	28	2.30%	22	2.01%
Dispute within household: violent or abusive	242	20.10%	209	17.40%	187	17.08%
Dispute within household/ relationship breakdown: non-violent	227	18.90%	225	18.70%	229	20.91%
Fleeing non-domestic violence	50	4.20%	38	3.20%	36	3.29%
Harassment	26	2.20%	19	1.60%	38	3.47%
Overcrowding	14	1.20%	9	0.70%	2	0.18%
Asked to leave	377	31.30%	412	34.30%	367	33.52%
Other reason for leaving accommodation/household	80	6.70%	90	7.50%	72	6.58%
<b>All</b>	<b>1203</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1202</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>1095</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

West Dunbartonshire Council continues to perform very well in relation to the benchmark set by the Code of Guidance on Homelessness and is largely meeting its requirements to assess homeless applications within 28 days. In 2021/2022, 5 applications were assessed outwith this timescale. However, in 2022/2023, 11 applications were assessed outwith the 28 days. Whilst this is an increase, 99% of applications were still assessed within the 28 days. In 2023/2024 this decreased to 6 applications.

Length of time to assess application	2021/2022		2022/2023		2023/2024	
	Same day	80	6.70%	82	6.84 %	114
1-6 days	286	23.90%	301	25.10 %	287	26.00 %
7-13 days	222	18.60%	256	21.35 %	276	25.00 %
14-28 days	603	50.40%	549	45.79 %	421	38.13 %
28-55 days	4	0.30%	10	0.83 %	5	0.45%
56+ days	1	0.10%	1	0.08 %	1	0.09%
<b>All applications</b>	<b>1196</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1199</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1104</b>	<b>100%</b>

The number of homeless households who reported rough sleeping at time of presentation over the past 3 years is outlined in the table below. It shows a drop in people who have slept rough in the 3-month preceding application with those who slept rough the night before presenting as homeless also showing a decrease from 2022/23 to 2023/24.

Households reporting rough sleeping at presentation	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Slept rough during the 3 months preceding application	79	74	62
Slept rough on the night preceding application	37	38	31

As part of our homelessness assessment, further questions are asked to better understand the reasons for instances of rough sleeping that are reported. An annual analysis of any households reporting rough sleeping prior to presentation is carried out. Findings from this exercise show that the vast majority state that they have spent part of an evening rough sleeping in emergency circumstances prior to presenting as homeless and no extended periods of rough sleeping have been identified. This continues to be monitored as part of our wider Performance Management Framework.

The average case duration to discharge of duty reduced in 2023/24 and is now lower than what it was pre pandemic in 2019/20.

Average case duration to discharge of duty	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Average time to discharge duty	31.3	28.8	26.8

## Outcomes

The outcomes of all homeless applications closed during the past three years are outlined in the table below:

Outcomes	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
Scottish Secure Tenancy	750	737	793
Private Rented Tenancy	19	7	19
Hostel	1	1	0
Bed & Breakfast	0	0	0
Returned to previous/ friends/ vol org.	129	121	150
Women's Refuge	2	3	1
Residential care/nursing home/shared supported	0	0	0
Other - Known	65	56	78
Other - Not Known	12	27	19
No duty owed to applicant	174	165	96
Contact lost before duty discharge	43	45	68
All	1195	1162	1224

A higher proportion of all cases being closed are being housed in settled accommodation. In the last 3 years there has been an improvement in the rate of tenancy sustainment for homeless households within West Dunbartonshire. However, in 2022/23 this has decreased slightly and has remained at a similar level for 2023/24.

Tenancy sustainment (homeless lets)	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
West Dunbartonshire Council	91.6%	94.6%	92.8%	92%

## Appendix 3 - Housing Market

### Housing market in West Dunbartonshire

West Dunbartonshire is situated west of Glasgow, north of the River Clyde and is one of the smallest Scottish councils in terms of area (31st out of 32) and population (25th)<sup>3</sup>. Across the three main areas of Clydebank, Dumbarton and the Vale of Leven there is great diversity, ranging from the densely populated urban centre of Clydebank to the more rural setting of the Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park. The area faces a number of challenges including a reducing population, high levels of economic deprivation and relatively poor health outcomes.

Life expectancy in West Dunbartonshire is alarmingly low, with women living an average of 78.4 years and men 73.4 years, both of which are the second lowest in Scotland.<sup>4</sup> This reflects the wider issues of deprivation and health inequality in the region.

Some parts of West Dunbartonshire are prosperous, but significant inequalities exist between communities. Forty-eight of the 121 data zones (population units) across West Dunbartonshire are among the 20% most deprived data zones in Scotland.<sup>5</sup> West Dunbartonshire continues to see an increase in its share of the most deprived areas in Scotland, from 35 to 38 since 2016.

In December 2023, unemployment in West Dunbartonshire was 3.4%, compared to the Scottish average of 3.5%.<sup>6</sup> This marks an improvement from previous years as now below the national average.

On 30 June 2022, the population of West Dunbartonshire was 88,270. This is a decrease of 0.3% from 88,560 in 2021. The majority of the population falls within the 45 to 64 years age bracket, with a working-age population of 25,517 in 2022. The older population (75 and over) comprised the smallest group, with 7,604 individuals.<sup>7</sup> According to Audit Scotland<sup>8</sup>, by 2039 the population of West Dunbartonshire is projected to decrease by 6.7% whereas the population of Scotland overall is projected to increase by 7.5%.

Furthermore, in West Dunbartonshire by 2039:

- The number of people aged 75 and over is projected to increase by 71% (to approximately 12,000) – increasing the demand for health and social care services for older people as well as the type and design of properties required to house them;
- The number of people of working age is projected to fall by 20% (to 46,500) – and a lack of local workforce could potentially make the area less attractive to some businesses;
- The number of children and young people aged 0-15 years is forecast to fall by 12.1% (to 13,700) – affecting services such as schooling and education; and

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<sup>3</sup> Best Value Assurance Report West Dunbartonshire Council, Audit Scotland, June 2018

<sup>4</sup> National Records of Scotland, West Dunbartonshire Council Area Profile

<sup>5</sup> SIMD 2020 council area profile and analysis: West Dunbartonshire, Scottish Government, January 2020

<sup>6</sup> Employment, unemployment and economic activity in West Dunbartonshire, Office for National Statistics, May 2024

<sup>7</sup> National Records of Scotland, West Dunbartonshire Council Area Profile

<sup>8</sup> Best Value Assurance Report West Dunbartonshire Council, Audit Scotland, June 2018

- The number of single person households is also expected to increase by 23% over the period 2012 to 2037.<sup>9</sup>

The estimated number of dwellings within West Dunbartonshire is 43,364.<sup>10</sup> Over half of the stock is owner occupied and over a third is social housing. The share of private rented properties within West Dunbartonshire is considerably less than the Scottish average of 13%. The breakdown of its stock by tenure is outlined in Table 1 below:<sup>11</sup>

**Table 1 – Housing Tenure in West Dunbartonshire**

Tenure	Total Number	%
Council Housing	10,624	24.5
Registered Social	5,507	12.7
Private Rented	2,862	6.6%
Owner Occupation	24,067	55.5
Rent Free	304	0.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>43,364</b>	<b>100%</b>

There is a total of 16,131 social rented properties in West Dunbartonshire, this is a combination of Council owned properties and those of Registered Social Landlords. The number of households living in the social rented sector in West Dunbartonshire is significantly higher than in Scotland as a whole, where 23% of households live in the social rented sector.<sup>12</sup> As is the trend across Scotland, social rented properties remain in high demand in West Dunbartonshire and as such there is an ambitious Strategic Housing Investment Plan to increase the number of affordable homes in the area.

In addition, the share of private rented tenancies in West Dunbartonshire has fluctuated significantly over the past decade reflecting the relatively small nature of the sector and its ability to expand and contract based upon changing economic conditions. In 2016, 13% of properties in West Dunbartonshire were private rented, in comparison to 6.6% in 2023.<sup>13</sup> This decline can be linked to contemporary developments such as Covid-19 and the cost-of-living crisis and the affordability of the private rented sector.

Table 2 below highlights the average Private Rented Sector rents for West Dunbartonshire in 2024 and shows there is a clear misalignment between private sector rents and the Local Housing Allowance in West Dunbartonshire. The table also shows that the gap between private sector and the local housing allowance rents in West Dunbartonshire increases along with the property size.

<sup>9</sup> Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022, West Dunbartonshire Council

<sup>10</sup> [West Dunbartonshire in Numbers 2023](#)

<sup>11</sup> [West Dunbartonshire in Numbers 2023](#)

<sup>12</sup> Local Housing Strategy 2022-2027, West Dunbartonshire Council

<sup>13</sup> Scottish Household Survey (SHS) Housing Data Tables 2022, December 2023

**Table 2 – Private Rented Sector Rents**

Property Size	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	1 bed shared
PRS – Average Monthly Rent <sup>14</sup>	£534	£726	£895	£1220	£521
Monthly Local Housing Allowance <sup>15</sup>	£473.72	£593.36	£673.14	£947.40	£349.05
Monthly Difference	£60.28	£132.64	£221.86	£272.60	£171.95

In Scotland, the number of lone adult households is projected to increase by 35% over the 25-year period between 2012 and 2037. In West Dunbartonshire, the number of lone adult households is projected to increase by only 23% in the same period. The number of larger households in West Dunbartonshire is projected to fall, with the number of households of 2 or more adults with children decreasing by 34% over the 25-year period. The average household size is projected to decrease from 2.13 in 2012 to 1.93 in 2037.<sup>16</sup>

The Council plays a leading role in the West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership, known as Community Planning West Dunbartonshire (CPWD). The partnership includes representatives from the Council, health board, police and fire services and local charities and voluntary organisations. The Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 requires community partnerships to produce a Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP) for its area. CPWD's LOIP for 2017-2027 was approved in October 2017.

Aligned to this is the Council's Local Housing Strategy, which sets out the vision for Housing across West Dunbartonshire for the period 2022/27 and reinforces the following 5 key objectives:

- Ensuring people have access to affordable housing, which is in the right location and is suitable for their needs;
- Ensuring that all residents live in good quality housing regardless of tenures;
- Ensuring that homelessness is minimised through prevention and early intervention measures;
- Providing good quality neighbourhoods and housing services where all people feel safe and secure; and
- Ensuring people with particular needs have access to suitable housing with any necessary support, to optimise their independence and well-being.

<sup>14</sup> [Private Sector Rent Statistics, Scotland, 2010 to 2024](#)

<sup>15</sup> [Local Housing Allowance Rates](#)

<sup>16</sup> Local Housing Strategy 2017-2022, West Dunbartonshire Council

## Housing Supply Target and Investment

West Dunbartonshire Council have set the following Housing Supply Targets:

**Table 3 – Housing Supply Targets**

	<b>2024-2029 total</b>	<b>Per annum</b>
Private	750	150
SR/BMR	400	80
Total	1,150	230

Source: Schedule 7 SDP

Over the 5-year period leading to 2029/30, there are 762 projected completions of affordable new supply housing to be developed by social rented landlords within the area. This includes the provision of 25 shared ownership properties.

Therefore, the number of social rented dwellings within West Dunbartonshire is set to increase by around 5% which will impact positively on access to housing for homeless households due to our commitment of ensuring our lettings target for homelessness also applies to new supply.

The demographic profile in West Dunbartonshire also presents challenges in that it is predicted to both age and decline faster than the Scottish average. The household composition is continuously changing, demand for larger family homes has been growing since the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside the increase of single person households on our housing waiting list. This, therefore, impacts on the design and type of properties required in West Dunbartonshire, which will also be influenced by the Scottish Government's aim to supply 110,000 affordable homes, welfare reform and contemporary developments such as Covid and the cost-of-living crisis affecting people's affordability of housing and thus creating pressure on landlords to supply both affordable and desirable housing.

## Appendix 4 - Consultation

Local authorities have a statutory duty to involve, consult and engage with stakeholders relevant to their policies and strategies. Part of the process of drafting this strategy involved a wide consultation process, to gather views and experiences of our service and identify areas we need to focus on. This included the following:

- Hosting a focus group at Ashton View to talk to current residents about their experiences;
- Attending various team meetings to discuss the strategy and the consultation process. We attended the following team meetings:
  - Homeless Caseworker and Housing Options
  - Housing Services
  - Supported Accommodation
  - Housing First
  - Resettlement
  - Homeless Accommodation;
- An online survey for staff in all of the teams listed above;
- A survey for people currently experiencing homelessness and those who have had experience of homelessness in the last two years. This survey was online and was distributed to all staff and partners via email and service users via text message, as well as being advertised on social media and the council website. Paper copies were also made available;
- Consulting with partners and stakeholders via an online survey, including:
  - Addictions
  - Mental Health
  - Adult Social Care
  - Criminal/Community Justice
  - Housing Associations
  - NHS
  - Third Sector Support
  - Throughcare
  - WDC Housing Operations
  - Woman's Aid;
- Public consultation events were hosted, one in Dumbarton and one in Clydebank. The events were for anyone but people with lived experience of homelessness were encouraged to attend. The strategy was discussed, and paper copies of the survey were distributed;
- Further stakeholder consultation via our quarterly Housing Solutions Partnership meeting and WDTR0.

The main areas of focus within the consultation were:

- Homelessness Prevention;



- Housing Options;
- Housing Support;
- Temporary/Supported Accommodation;
- Information and Advice.

Key themes identified from consultation:

### **Service users**

- The majority of service users said there was nothing that could have been done to prevent their homelessness;
- Most were happy with the location of their temporary accommodation and felt it met their needs;
- Most service users felt they are/were listened to by staff; however, some reported a feeling of being unheard and a lack of choice in where they live;
- More than half felt they were provided with good quality information that met their needs; however, some reported a lack of communication with staff and feeling of not being informed enough about their case;
- That there was enough support from West Dunbartonshire Council was a reoccurring theme throughout, with service users reporting that more help was required to settle into their new tenancy in relation to benefits, employment, mental health and addiction;
- The most said things service users said they needed to end their homelessness were:
  - More available housing options
  - More/continuous support (financial, employment, mental health and addiction)
  - To be heard
  - To feel safe
  - Understanding staff.

### **Staff & Stakeholders**

- Both groups largely agreed that West Dunbartonshire Council do enough to prevent homelessness, however stated that more resources and greater partnership working were required to improve service;
- All stakeholders believe their service has a role to play in preventing homelessness in West Dunbartonshire;
- There was a shared consensus that there aren't enough housing options available in West Dunbartonshire, due to a lack of affordable housing, issues with Private Rented Sector affordability and accessibility, and lack of financial support;
- Both reported a lack of available housing support options in West Dunbartonshire Council, highlighting gaps in support for those with low support needs/at risk of homelessness, as well as those with more complex needs;
- The lack of temporary accommodation options available in West Dunbartonshire Council was reinforced throughout the process, with both staff and stakeholders reporting that more specific accommodation was required to meet client need i.e. young people and those with more complex needs;

- There was agreement that the needs of households experiencing homelessness have changed in the last 5 years in terms of growing support needs, lack of suitable accommodation and external pressures;
- There was a shared consensus that West Dunbartonshire Council /everyone should be doing more to help households experiencing homelessness to be rehoused quicker through improved collaborative working and communication, in terms of ensuring households are tenancy ready before moving on from temporary accommodation and greater housing options – including building more houses and bringing existing stock up to standard;
- Most staff said they were confident in providing good quality information and advice to households, highlighting the importance of managing expectations and regular training to ensure they are up to date with legislative changes;
- The top priorities that stakeholders would like to see in the new strategy were:
  - More new housing supply
  - More support (especially for young people)
  - More funding
  - Better communication among partners
  - Multi agency working
  - ‘Scaling up’ of Housing First.

### **Outcomes of consultation**

The above information was taken into consideration in the development of the new strategy and either included within the main document or the action plan. It is evident from the consultation process that there is a strong need for a greater collaborative approach in the prevention of homelessness. There is also a need for increased and alternative housing support options to meet growing support needs. Such themes, alongside the need for more available housing options and temporary accommodation that meets identified need have informed the objectives and actions of the new strategy.

### **Consultation on the published draft**

Further consultation was carried out once a draft was produced which service users, staff and stakeholders all fed back on. Strong support for the objectives of the strategy was received. Feedback on actions was more mixed but where responses indicated more was required, they referred to actions which were in the plan including strong partnership working and specific youth support and accommodation. The service we provide is person centre, therefore all needs of everyone are taken into account when providing information and support.

## Appendix 5 - Equalities

The Council is committed to fulfilling the **three key elements** of the general equality duty as defined in the Equality Act 2010:

- Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
- Advancing equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not;
- Fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This includes challenging prejudice and building understanding.

### **Protected characteristics:**

- Age;
- Disability;
- Gender reassignment;
- Pregnancy and maternity;
- Race, this includes ethnicity, colour and national origin;
- Religion or belief;
- Sex;
- Sexual orientation;
- Marriage/civil partnership (for which only the first duty is applies).

Everyone has 'protected characteristics', but it is the treatment individuals and groups receive, the level of autonomy they have, and the positive or negative outcomes for them, that are its focus. Therefore, the Council will:

- Remove or minimise disadvantages experienced by people due to their protected characteristics;
- Meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people;
- Encourage people with protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

While it is a legal requirement, these steps contribute to fairer, more efficient and more effective services. Therefore, the Council will:

- Take effective action on equality;
- Make the right decisions, first time around;
- Develop better policies and practices, based on evidence;
- Be transparent, accessible and accountable;
- Deliver improved outcomes for all.

To ensure our processes comply equality data is asked when applications are made to homeless services to understand the needs of our residents. This ensure there are no unintentional or negative impacts of our strategies to any particular group. Below details data we hold on for any household experiencing homelessness who provided the data.

## Presentations by year and age

Age/Year	2021/2022		2022/2023		2023/2024	
16 - 17	37	3%	37	3%	21	2%
18 - 25	306	25%	318	26%	265	24%
26 - 59	796	66%	800	66%	741	68%
60+	66	5%	62	5%	68	6%
All	1205	100%	1217	100%	1095	100%

WDC HL1 SG returns.

## Presentations by year and ethnicity

Ethnicity/ Year	2021/2022		2022/2023		2023/2024	
White Scottish	1119	93%	1124	92%	993	91%
Other British	33	3%	20	2%	39	4%
Irish	5	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Other white ethnic group	10	1%	16	1%	10	1%
African, African Scottish or African British	6	0%	3	0%	8	1%
Caribbean, Caribbean Scottish or Caribbean British	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other Caribbean or Black	1	0%	0	0%	1	0%
Indian, Indian Scottish or Indian British	1	0%	1	0%	2	0%
Pakistani, Pakistani Scottish or Pakistani British	2	0%	1	0%	4	0%
Bangladeshi, Bangladeshi Scottish or Bangladeshi British	0	0%	1	0%	0	0%
Chinese, Chinese Scottish or Chinese British	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Other Asian, Asian Scottish or Asian British	5	0%	7	1%	7	1%
Mixed or multiple ethnic group	0	0%	2	0%	2	0%
Other ethnic group	12	1%	12	1%	15	1%
Not Known	1	0%	2	0%	2	0%
Refused	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Gypsy/ Traveller	1	0%	2	0%	0	0%
Polish	6	0%	9	1%	4	0%
Other African	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Black, Black Scottish or Black British	1	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Arab, Arab Scottish or Arab British	1	0%	1	0%	0	0%
White English	0	0%	13	1%	7	1%
White Roma	0	0%	1	0%	1	0%
All	1205	100%	1217	100%	1095	100%

WDC HL1 SG returns

## Presentations by year and gender

	2021/2022		2022/2023		2023/2024	
Male	621	52%	654	54%	598	55%
Female	584	48%	563	46%	497	45%
All	1205	100%	1217	100%	1095	100%

WDC HL1 SG returns.

## Presentations by year, household type and gender

Household Type	Sex	2023/2024	
Single Person	Male	527	67%
	Female	259	33%
	<b>All</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>100%</b>
Single Parent	Male	30	14%
	Female	178	86%
	<b>All</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>100%</b>
Couple	Male	24	45%
	Female	29	55%
	<b>All</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>100%</b>
Couple with Children	Male	15	42%
	Female	21	58%
	<b>All</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100%</b>
Other	Male	1	14%
	Female	6	86%
	<b>All</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>100%</b>
Other with Children	Male	1	20%
	Female	4	80%
	<b>All</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>

WDC HL1 SG returns.

Our support data from 2023/24 indicates that there are higher numbers of female led households that require low support and if accommodation is required it is temporary furnished flats. Where higher support is required tend to be male led households where supported or hostel type accommodation is required.

17% (188) of households who presented stated their reason for homelessness was domestic abuse which is a decrease in number from 209 (17%) in 2022/23. Of the 17% of households 86% were female. 16% were ages 16 to 24 which is lower than the previous year. In addition to this of all those who stated this reason, 40% were female single parents, 38% were single females and 11% were single males. This is similar to last year.

## Additional Formats of the Document

This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format on request.

### Arabic

هذه الوثيقة متاحة أيضا بلغات أخرى والأحرف الطباعية الكبيرة وبطريقة سمعية عند الطلب.



**British Sign Language** users can contact us via [contactSCOTLAND-BSL](mailto:contactSCOTLAND-BSL), the on-line British Sign Language interpreting service on 01389737198

### Chinese (Cantonese)

本文件也可應要求，製作成其他語文或特大字體版本，也可製作成錄音帶。

### Gaelic

Tha an sgrìobhainn seo cuideachd ri fhaighinn ann an cànanan eile, ann an clò mòr, agus ann an cruth claisneachd ma thèid iarraidh

### Hindi

अनुरोध पर यह दस्तावेज़ अन्य भाषाओं में, बड़े अक्षरों की छपाई और सुनने वाले माध्यम पर भी उपलब्ध है

### Polish

Dokument ten jest na życzenie udostępniany także w innych wersjach językowych, w dużym druku lub w formie audio.

### Punjabi

ਇਹ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਤੇ ਆਡੀਓ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਹੋਇਆ ਵੀ ਮੰਗ ਕੇ ਲਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ।

### Ukrainian

Цей документ також доступний іншими мовами, великим шрифтом та в аудіоформаті за запитом.

### Urdu

درخواست پر یہ دستاویز دیگر زبانوں میں، بڑے حروف کی چھپائی اور سننے والے ذرائع پر بھی میسر ہے۔



West Dunbartonshire Council, 16 Church Street, Dumbarton, G82 1QL



[equalities@west-dunbarton.gov.uk](mailto:equalities@west-dunbarton.gov.uk)



01389 737198