



West Dunbartonshire Council
Housing, Environmental and Economic
Development

West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy 2008– 2013

CONTENTS

1	Introduction	3
	• Development of the Strategy	4
2	Vision, Aims and Objectives	7
3	Legislative and Policy Context	8
	• Legislative Context	8
	• Strategic Links	9
	• Equal Opportunities	11
	• Minority Ethnic Communities	12
	• LGBT Community	13
	• Gypsies/Travellers	13
4	Review of Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006	14
5	Homelessness Profile of West Dunbartonshire	17
	• West Dunbartonshire – An Overview	17
	• Social and Economic Context	18
	• Population Projection	18
	• In-migration from Abroad	18
	• Household Projections	19
	• Housing Tenure of West Dunbartonshire	19
	• Impact of Homelessness	20
	• How Many People Apply as Homeless?	20
	• Number of Households applying as homeless	21
	• Where is the Homelessness?	21
	• What is the Family Composition of Homeless Households?	22
	• Age Profile of Homeless Applicants	23
	• Gender Profile of Homeless Applicants	23
	• Recorded Reasons for Homelessness	25
	• Relationship Issues	26
	• Loss of Secure Tenancy	26
	• Homeless Decisions in West Dunbartonshire	27
	• Priority Need Status	28
	• Scottish Government 2009 and 2012 targets	29
	• Homeless Housing Outcomes	29
	• Lost Contacts	30
	• Tenancy Sustainment	30
	• Health Context	30
	• Summary of Homeless Profile of West Dunbartonshire	31
6	Key Challenges in West Dunbartonshire	33
7	Strategic Aims	35
	Aim 1 – To Prevent Homelessness Occurring in West Dunbartonshire	35
	Aim 2 – To Improve the Range of Housing Options Available in West Dunbartonshire to Respond Effectively to Households in Homelessness Crisis	39
	Aim 3 – To Ensure a Sustainable Solution for Individuals who have Experienced Homelessness	41
	Aim 4 – To Ensure a Commitment to Continue to Develop and Improve Services to Tackling Homelessness Through a Partnership Approach	43
8	Resourcing the Strategy	45
9	Performance and Monitoring Framework	46
10	Consultation	48
10	Glossary of Terms	50
	Appendix 1 – Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	54

1 - INTRODUCTON

This is the second Homelessness Strategy produced by West Dunbartonshire Council (WDC) in co-operation with our partners. Our Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 is the successor to the West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006.

The first strategy covered the period 2003 to 2006 and was submitted to the Scottish Executive in October 2003. The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 (Part 1 Section 1) requires each local authority to undertake an assessment of homelessness in its area and to submit to the Scottish Government a Homelessness Strategy aimed at preventing and alleviating homelessness.

That strategy set out four medium term aims:

- Aim 1: To link the Homelessness strategy to relevant strategic documents and to ensure that partner's policies and procedures are consistent with the aim of ending homelessness in West Dunbartonshire
- Aim 2: To develop services and joint systems to prevent homelessness
- Aim 3: To develop an integrated and effective system to alleviate homelessness when it occurs.
- Aim 4: To develop the service in a way that promotes tenancy sustainability and reduces the risk of repeat homelessness

Now some 5 years on, it is evident that there has been significant progress made in West Dunbartonshire against the objectives and targets set out in our first strategy and also, the challenges set by Scotland's homelessness legislation which is viewed by many observers as the most progressive in Europe.

In section 4 West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006 will be reviewed in greater detail. However key areas of progress include:-

- Eliminating the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation for homeless households
- The development of a dedicated Housing Support team within Homeless Services
- The introduction of a Health and Homelessness nurse to assess and respond to the health needs of homeless people
- The introduction of an Independent Living Skills Team to provide practical support to homeless households.
- The review and update of homelessness information leaflets
- All Homelessness Services staff have now been trained to HomePoint National Standards for information and advice provision.
- 62 new tenancies created through an innovative use of the furnished tenancy grant by converting temporary accommodation to Scottish Secure

tenancies.

- An increase in the number of temporary accommodation units in West Dunbartonshire from 38 in 2003 to 250 as at January 2008.
- We have in advance met the Scottish Government's 2009 target of reducing the number of non-priority homeless decisions by 50%.
- The award of a 'B' grade from Communities Scotland (now Scottish Housing Regulator) for services to homeless people during an inspection of our Housing functions. A 'B' grade signifies a good performance.
- Established positive working practices with local Housing Associations in the processing of Section 5 referrals.

The new Homelessness Strategy hopes to build on these achievements and act as a road map to ensure that partnerships and services are successfully delivered to prevent and alleviate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire over the next five years.

The new Homelessness Strategy will:-

- Set out our vision, aims and objectives for tackling homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.
- Set out both the national and local policy and legislative framework governing the provision of Homeless Services.
- Review West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006.
- Identify the extent and causes of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.
- Set out the actions proposed to take to meet our aim to prevent and eradicate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire area.
- Set out the framework in which the strategy will be monitored, reviewed and updated.

It is important that the Strategy reflects the views of all organisations working with homeless and potentially homeless people in West Dunbartonshire, as well as the views of homeless individuals. Details of what consultation has already taken place as part of the preparation of West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 and how it is proposed to develop further methods of consultation with service users will be provided within the next section.

The Development of the Homelessness Strategy

This Strategy has been completed in accordance with Guidance issued by the previous Scottish Executive. This requires that Homelessness strategies:

- Establish between partners a shared understanding of, and commitment to, the issues taking full account of the complex needs of homeless people, the priorities in addressing these issues and the way forward;

- Provide an agreed framework within which aims and objectives are set, options identified and appraised, progress is monitored, impact evaluated and resources / finances allocated;
- Be developed consistently with other appropriate thematic and service plans;
- Ensure that equal opportunities are implemented at each stage of the process and embrace diversity, being flexible and responding to the different needs and service requirements of people regardless of sex, race, colour, disability, age, creed, marital status, ethnic origin, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment;
- Make sure that the needs of children are considered during the formulation and implementation of policies to prevent and alleviate homelessness.
- Recognise the essential contribution to service development provided by consultation with homeless people and people who have experienced homelessness or who are at risk of homelessness.

West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners in both voluntary and statutory sectors have worked hard to understand the local causes of homelessness and to agree solutions that can be carried forward in a strategic manner, and recognising the role and contribution a range of services and agencies within both sectors can play in the strengthening of partnership working to tackle homelessness within West Dunbartonshire.

The new West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy is the product of an in depth and wide ranging consultation process where the views of service users and providers have been acted upon. To produce this strategy we have engaged with 112 different organisations and importantly those individuals who have experienced homelessness.

The development of the new West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 has been led a reinvigorated Homelessness Forum, comprising representatives drawn from West Dunbartonshire's Housing, Environmental and Economic Development, Social Work, Finance and Education departments, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde and local accommodation and support providers.

The process of developing the new strategy began with a Homelessness Strategy Development Day held in November 2007; thereafter the Homelessness Forum has met on a regular basis and agreed the local causes of homelessness and ways to tackle homelessness in West Dunbartonshire. Three key themes were identified at an early stage and working groups were established to feed into the Homelessness Forum:

- Homelessness Prevention and Tenancy Sustainment
- Housing Advice and Information
- Young People

The input from the partners involved in the Homelessness Forum and three associated working groups has resulted in the measured action plan contained within this document that the strategic vision, aims and objectives contained within the

Strategy document has the full backing of the range of agencies and services represented on the Homelessness Forum.

2 - OUR VISION, AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching vision behind West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 is:-

“To end homelessness in West Dunbartonshire”

This is an ambitious vision, but one that is shared by all partners working together to prevent and alleviate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire. It is recognised that although West Dunbartonshire Council has the lead role in developing the Homelessness Strategy, homelessness is not solely a Council issue or indeed, a housing issue. Homelessness must be tackled in partnership and by sharing responsibility with a range of services and agencies if we are to meet our aspirations to end homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

We hope to realise our vision **“To end homelessness in West Dunbartonshire”** through the following aims:-

Aim 1 - Prevention

To prevent homelessness occurring in West Dunbartonshire.

Aim 2 – Housing Options

To improve the range of housing options available in West Dunbartonshire and to respond effectively to households in homelessness crisis.

Aim 3 – Sustainable Solutions

To ensure a sustainable solution for those individuals who have experienced homelessness.

Aim 4 – Commitment

To ensure a commitment to continue to develop and improve services to tackling homelessness through a partnership approach.

3 – LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

Legislative Context

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 placed a requirement on all Scottish Local Authorities to develop a strategy to prevent and alleviate homelessness. The first West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy was in direct response to this, and also outlined the main implications and requirements of the Homelessness etc., (Scotland) Act 2003.

The legislative framework has moved on considerably from the publication of our first Homelessness Strategy, and Scotland is considered to have the most progressive homelessness legislative framework in Europe.

This section highlights the main policy and legislative developments since the publication of the first homelessness strategy in October 2003.

Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 –

This legislation amended the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, part II. Elements of the Act are being phased in up until 2012 when anyone in Scotland who is homeless or threatened with homelessness will have the right to permanent accommodation and support. 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 still to be implemented are:

- Priority need assessment is to be abolished by 2012. (section 2)
(In the interim local authorities were required to reduce the number of non-priority homelessness decisions by % 50 by 2009)
- The duty to assess intentionality will be replaced with a power to do so; local authorities are required to grant a Short Scottish Secure Tenancy with housing support to intentionally homeless households (Section 5, section 6)
- The removal of the local connection requirement (section 8)
- The requirement of landlords and creditors to notify the relevant local authority when they raise repossession proceedings (section 11)

The Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 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
- The duration of homelessness is reduced

West Dunbartonshire's progress with regard to delivering these outcomes is monitored annually by the Scottish Government through the submission of our Local Outcome Agreement and Progress Report.

In 2007, the Scottish Government outlined their commitment to the ambitious legislative framework by including as one of the 45 National Indicators and Targets:-

“All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012.”

The national discussion document **Firm Foundations – The future of housing in Scotland, a discussion document** (October 2007) endorses the current legislative framework on homelessness and the commitment to fulfil key objectives. The document also referred to a greater role for the private rented sector as a sustainable housing option for homeless households’.

“It is important that homeless households are offered housing solutions that are appropriate and suitable to their needs and the private rented sector has a role to play in this, particularly for younger people.”

In addition there will be consultation to allow Scottish local authorities more flexibility in discharging their homelessness duties. However, it is recognised that existing duties and targets remain at the heart of our service planning and delivery.

Strategic Links

As identified within the first strategy, homelessness is a complex issue and is rarely only a housing problem. The response to it therefore must come from the Council as a whole, and in partnership with other statutory and voluntary organisations.

The first homelessness strategy was supported by West Dunbartonshire’s Homelessness Forum. This multi-agency forum has continued to meet regularly to oversee the implementation of the strategy and as such, has played an integral role in the development of West Dunbartonshire’s Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013.

This section demonstrates how the Homelessness Strategy links to other Council and partnership strategies and outlines the partnership arrangements for the development of West Dunbartonshire’s Homelessness Strategy.

The **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 WDC 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.

West Dunbartonshire Council’s Corporate Plan 2008-2012 provides a sense of direction that will guide the work of Council’s services over the next four years. It sets out a vision for West Dunbartonshire, shared by all our partner agencies, and identifies our six key themes:

- regeneration and the local economy;

- health and well-being;
- safe and strong communities;
- sustainable environments;
- education and lifelong learning; and
- an improving Council.

WDC Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Service Plan 2008-2012 sets out the Housing Environmental and Economic Development (HEED) department's work in the context of the Council's Corporate Plan, identifies the departmental objectives and also how these objectives will be delivered. Homelessness Services in West Dunbartonshire are provided by the Housing, Environmental and Economic Development department.

The Homelessness Strategy is integrated with the Corporate Plan, Service Plan, with our approach to Community Planning, and essentially the **Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009 (LHS)**.

The aim of the **Local Housing Strategy 2004 -2009 (LHS)** is to identify housing issues affecting communities of West Dunbartonshire and to set our action plan for tackling these over the period of the strategy. Tackling homelessness is one of the key themes of the LHS, which provides a framework for a partnership approach to ensuring good quality affordable housing for communities of West Dunbartonshire in a safe and pleasant environment. .

It is also essential that the Homelessness Strategy continues to ensure linkages to the following as they share so many common issues that cannot be adequately covered without a concerted, strategic approach: -

- **WDC Integrated Children's Services Plan 2005-2008** – provides the framework for an integrated approach to meeting the needs of children and families in West Dunbartonshire. There are particular areas of overlap between the Integrated Children's Services Plan and the Homelessness Strategy in relation to vulnerable young people, families where there are addiction problems and women and children suffering domestic abuse.
- **Anti Social Behaviour Strategy 2005-2008** – The first anti social behaviour strategy launched in 2005 will be reviewed in 2008 and will build on the common links between anti social behaviour and homelessness. The strategy sets out:
 - The extent and nature of anti social behaviour problems within West Dunbartonshire
 - The services already available to prevent and tackle this type of behaviour
 - How we will take the agenda forward in West Dunbartonshire
 - How the Council and the Police will coordinate their functions and exchange information on anti social behaviour.
- **West Dunbartonshire Community Care Plan** – details how the Council and its partners intend to provide a range of social work, health care and housing services to enable people to maintain and improve their quality of life.

West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 also complements and is consistent with other West Dunbartonshire Council and partner agencies strategies and plans such as the :-

- **NHS Health and Homelessness Action Plan**
- **WDC Tenant Participation Strategy**
- **WDC Youth Strategy**
- **WDC Anti Poverty Strategy**
- **Supporting People Strategic Plan (April 2003, revised December 2003)**
- **Local Health Plans**
- **WDC Corporate Action Plan for Drugs and Alcohol**
- **WDC Joint Health Improvement Plan**
- **WDC Domestic Abuse Strategy**
- **WDC Gypsies/ Travellers Strategy**
- **WDC Race Equality Scheme**
- **WDC Equality and Diversity Strategy**
- **Workforce Plus Action Plan**

Equal Opportunities

The planning and delivery of good quality housing and appropriate advice and information services in West Dunbartonshire embraces the principle of equal opportunities. Taking the lead of the Equality and Diversity Strategy which provides a statement of the Council's commitment to equality and diversity, and presents a structure of specific policies and action plans to challenge varied strands of discrimination and equality.

We embrace the spirit of equalities legislation and regulatory frameworks, including:

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001
- The Disability Discrimination Act 2005
- The Equality Act 2006

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 places a statutory duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- To promote equality of opportunity between persons of different racial groups.
- To promote good relations between persons of different racial groups.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 place a statutory duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need:

- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- To promote the equality of opportunity between disabled and other people
- To promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- To take steps to meet disabled people's needs, even if it means more favourable treatment.

The Equality Act 2006, places a statutory duty on all public authorities, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need:

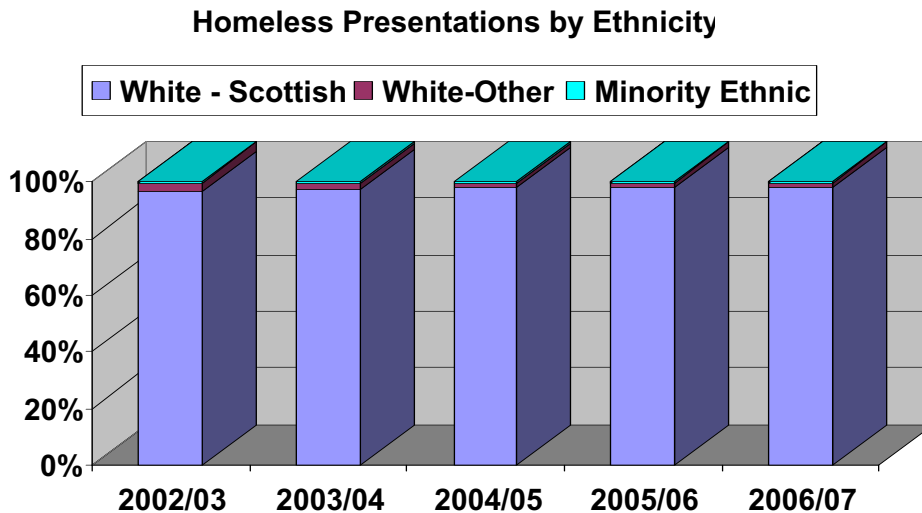
- To eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- To promote the equality of opportunity between men and women

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

Therefore, all the actions proposed in this and related strategies are aimed at overcoming disadvantage and tackling the exclusion of groups of individuals experiencing homelessness. The diversity of individuals is recognised therefore the homelessness strategy aims to ensure that in the development and delivery of services to end homelessness in West Dunbartonshire, the needs of individuals and particular groups are addressed.

Minority Ethnic Communities

We continue to receive low numbers of homeless presentations from the minority ethnic communities as detailed below:-



According to the 2001 census 0.7% of the total West Dunbartonshire population was from the Black and Minority Ethnic community, with homelessness presentations being 0.24% in 06/07. In Scotland as a whole 3% of all homeless presentations are from minority ethnic communities.

We will continue to work with our partners to ensure that we meet the housing needs of West Dunbartonshire's minority ethnic community.

LGBT Community (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans-gender)

At present homeless presentations from the LGBT community are not monitored.

However, we recognise evidence that suggests that homelessness is a major issue, especially among the young LGBT population.

There is a lack of monitoring surrounding the LGBT community which can lead to a lack of awareness of the housing need of this particular community. We aim to improve on this and enable this community to access the appropriate help and support to prevent homelessness.

Gypsies/Travellers

Gypsy/Traveller communities are regarded by West Dunbartonshire Council as a minority ethnic group, and as such come under the protection of the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended in 2000 and the Council's Race Equality Scheme. There is currently no explicit legal recognition of this in Scotland although there are strong arguments that Scottish Gypsies/Travellers are a racial group in terms of the RRA, with specific needs and aspirations.

In the West Dunbartonshire area there is one established Gypsy/Traveller community, based on a 20 pitch site in Dumbarton. The site is for permanent residents and is very popular with mainly long standing residents. There are also a number of families who travel through the area throughout the year, and we are aware that some Gypsies/Travellers have settled in housing in the area. A count undertaken in July 2007 showed 5 households in unauthorised encampments in West Dunbartonshire. As of 2007/08 we began collecting information on the number of Gypsies/travellers making homelessness presentations within West Dunbartonshire.

In partnership with neighbouring local authorities Craigforth consultancy was commissioned to undertake 'An Accommodation Assessment of Gypsies / Travellers in West Central Scotland'. This assessment will inform the development of the next Local Housing Strategy to address the housing needs of gypsy/travellers in West Dunbartonshire.

4 – REVIEW OF HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2003-2006

Much has happened since the production of the first Homelessness Strategy in 2003. The strategy has been a catalyst to drive forward a more integrated and strategic approach to tackling homelessness in West Dunbartonshire. This section summarises the strategic aims within West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006 and how these aims have been realised.

Aim 1 – To link West Dunbartonshire's homelessness strategy to other relevant strategic and planning documents and to ensure that the policies and procedures of partners are consistent with our overall aim of ending homelessness in West Dunbartonshire

It was recognised that during the development of the first homelessness strategy that homelessness is not solely a housing issue and a partnership approach must be adopted to eradicate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

Good progress has been made with regards strategic planning and homelessness was identified as a priority in West Dunbartonshire's Local Housing Strategy 2004-2009.

West Dunbartonshire Council have also reviewed its Housing Allocation Policy and its Homelessness policies and procedures were reviewed as part of a successful Charter Mark assessment in 2006.

The Strategy succeeded in most of its aims and objectives by linking to other strategic and policy areas to emphasis the aim of ending homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

However, no meaningful progress was made in assessing the affordable housing options available to young people in West Dunbartonshire. This will be further investigated through the development of the next Local Housing Strategy and an integrated strategy for housing and related services to young people.

Aim 2 – To develop services and joint systems to prevent homelessness in West Dunbartonshire

The prevention of homelessness is recognised to be our ultimate objective, and since the publication of the Homelessness Strategy 2003-2006 action has been taken to develop services and systems to prevent homelessness. Despite the resources directed towards prevention work since the development of the first strategy, the number of homelessness applications has risen (in line with national trend). However, it is recognised that homelessness prevention is a long term goal and focused activities in this field will lead to a fall in the level of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire (Projections for 2007/08 indicate that homelessness applications are stabilising and decreasing). Developments within homelessness prevention include:-

- Housing Support Officers – The establishment of a team of support workers, providing necessary support to persons at risk of homelessness, in temporary accommodation and during and after resettlement.
- Homeless Prevention Officer – This post was created to provide information, advice and assistance to individuals threatened with homelessness through having difficulties in paying their rent.

- Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme – A rent deposit scheme has been established to allow those threatened with homelessness access to the private rented sector.
- Advice and Information – All WDC homelessness staff have been trained to HomePoint national standards; this training is being rolled out to all partners agencies.
- Internal protocols –Internal arrangements have been developed to identify individuals who are at risk of homelessness with ASIST and Arrears teams. These protocols have also been expanded to included Housing Association tenants.
- Homelessness/Addictions Protocol – A working protocol was developed in partnership with the statutory and voluntary sectors working in the addiction field to assist in those individuals with addiction issues maintaining settled accommodation.
- Referral and Discharge Protocols – In partnership with NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde , the Health Support Worker has developed a range of referral and discharge protocols, ensuring that there is a free flow of information and that clients are not discharged into a homeless situation.
- Housing Education: - In partnership with the Scottish Council for Single Homeless 2,000 Streets ahead packs were distributed to local youth organisations.
- Initiatives have been established which are helping to support the most vulnerable families and children in West Dunbartonshire.

Aim 3 – To develop an integrated and effective service to alleviate homelessness when it occurs

A target was to increase the number of temporary furnished units to meet new duties to provide temporary accommodation. The number of units has increased from 38 in October 2003 to 250 as at January 2008. These include 2 properties provided by Knowes and Cube Housing Associations. This increase in temporary accommodation provision has allowed West Dunbartonshire to cease the use of bed and breakfast accommodation.

In keeping with the partnership approach to homelessness in West Dunbartonshire, formal Section 5 agreements have been put in place with nine mainstream Registered Social landlords (RSLs) operating in the area. This has allowed homeless households greater access to RSL housing stock, and has resulted in approximately 1/3 of all RSL lets being made through Section 5 referrals.

We aimed to establish 27 supported accommodation place for people with more complex needs, in three units. However due to restrictions in Supporting People funding, only two projects in partnership with Blue Triangle Housing Association which provide accommodation for 21 individuals were created.

Arrangements to ensure homeless households can access health services have also been greatly improved, principally through the appointment of a Health and Homelessness nurse and through implementing the agreed actions within the Health and Homelessness Action Plan.

The emphasis on joint working has continued throughout the life of the Strategy with the multi agency Homelessness Forum being responsible for monitoring and developing West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy.

Joint training initiatives have been established which we intend to add upon during the development of the new homelessness strategy.

Aim 4 – To promote tenancy sustainability and reduce the risk of repeat homelessness

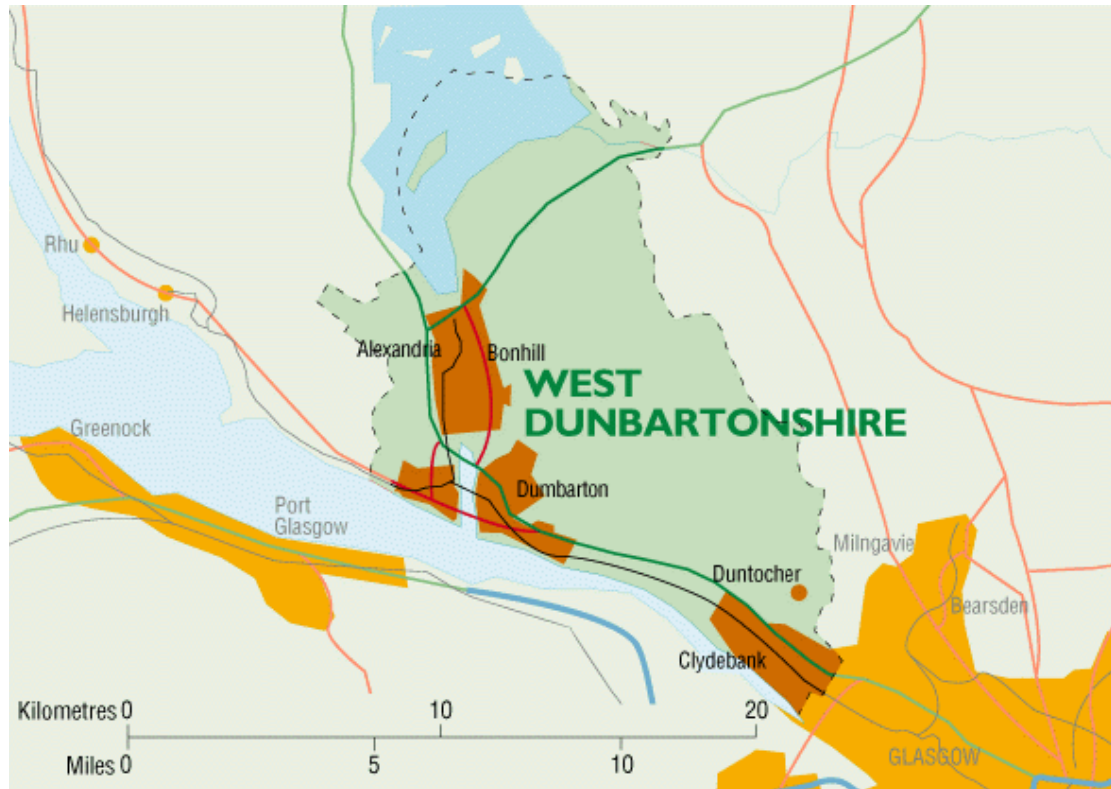
The establishment of the Housing Support team has been crucial in working to realise this aim by providing support and advice to previously homeless households to assist them to sustain their tenancies.

Progress was also achieved progress in developing services for women experiencing domestic abuse. Progress has also been good in the assessment of health needs for homeless families; the findings of which have informed the Health and Homelessness Action Plan.

Tenancy sustainment remains a high priority for West Dunbartonshire and it is hoped to take forward through the implementation of the new Homelessness Strategy a more targeted approach to promote the role of employment and training in developing self esteem and economic independence for homeless people. We are also keen to promote and support opportunities for homeless people to develop social networks to overcome isolation.

5 – HOMELESSNESS PROFILE OF WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

West Dunbartonshire – An Overview



West Dunbartonshire as an area has much to recommend it, including the designation of the Loch Lomond and the Trossachs as a National Park in the summer of 2002 and the retail and leisure developments at Loch Lomond Shores that include the National Park Gateway Centre. The opening up of the Forth and Clyde Canals provide another major outlet for recreational and heritage pursuits. The current regeneration of the River Clyde Waterfront is seen as vital to the transformation of the Clydebank and Dumbarton central areas and forms part of wider initiatives covering both the north and south banks of the Clyde.

However, it is recognised that West Dunbartonshire suffers from significant and persistent levels of inequality and poverty based upon factors such as unemployment, low incomes and poor health. In West Dunbartonshire, 1 in 5 people are income deprived. Outwith of the major city area of Glasgow, this is the highest proportion of the income deprivation in Scotland.

In addition West Dunbartonshire has five areas which are in the top 5% most deprived areas in Scotland. Income levels are less than average for the rest of Scotland and unemployment levels are almost double the average for the rest of Scotland.

In West Dunbartonshire alcohol related deaths are the third highest levels in Scotland. These high level indicators of social deprivation further exacerbate

pressure for an affordable housing supply in West Dunbartonshire and are key contributing factors to the levels of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

West Dunbartonshire's Social and Economic Context

West Dunbartonshire's Social and Economic Profile 2006/07 contains a range of information on the local area. This section selects relevant indicators from the profile to illustrate some underlying reasons for routes into homelessness.

Population Projection

At the time of the 2001 census, the total population of West Dunbartonshire was 93,378. Since then the population in the local authority area has steadily declined, the 2005 mid-year population estimation was 91,400. Current projections indicate that this trend will continue, despite a population increase trend in Scotland. The most recent population projections indicate a reduction in population of 2.5% over the period of the new Homelessness Strategy.

In-Migration from Abroad

In the period from 2003-07 there were 730 NI registered migrants working in West Dunbartonshire. West Dunbartonshire has the smallest share of migrants among neighbouring local authorities.

Scottish Shares of National Insurance Registered migrants 2003/07						
	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	
Great Britain	349,240	370,750	439,730	662,390	713,450	Total
Scotland	14,520	15,500	22,850	41,370	52,480	
West Dunbartonshire	90	100	100	160	280	730
Argyll & Bute	180	240	360	700	820	2,300
East Dunbartonshire	110	100	130	170	310	820
Inverclyde	180	140	230	320	240	1,110

Of the 280 migrants who registered in 2006-07 10 are from Australia, 10 are from the Peoples Republic of China, 20 are from India, 10 from Ireland, 10 from Italy, 10 from Nigeria, 10 from Pakistan, 100 from Poland, 40 from the Slovak Republic, and 10 from the USA.

The gender split was 61% male 39% female. There were 8 dependents of this group aged under 17 and 33 dependents aged over 17. The increase in migrant workers has too date placed no additional pressures on homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

Household projections

Despite, the overall population decline, there has been a significant increase in the overall number of households in West Dunbartonshire; in line with a national trend this has included a sharp increase in the number of single adult households in West Dunbartonshire. Single person households will rise over the lifetime of this Homelessness Strategy by 8.8%. It can be assumed that the increase in single person homeless presentations is likely to increase at a comparable rate.

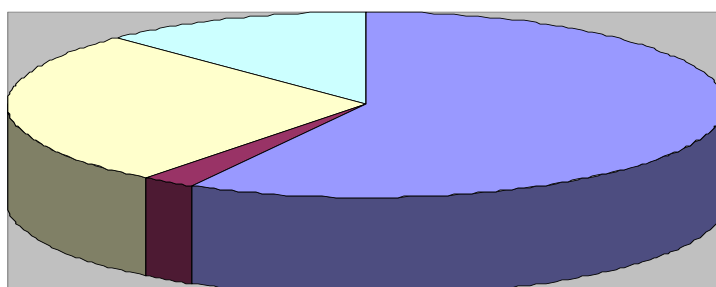
	West Dunbartonshire Household Projections 2008-2013
Total No. of households (2008)	41,020
Total No. of Households (2013)	42,020
% change	+ 2.4%
Total No. of single adult households (2008)	15,680
Total No. of single adult households (2013)	17,050
% change	+ 8.8%

(Source: - Scottish Executive 2004 Based Household projections)

Housing Tenure of West Dunbartonshire

In total there are 43,898 dwellings in West Dunbartonshire. Owner occupation now accounts for 25,437 dwellings or 58% of the housing stock in the West Dunbartonshire area and social rented housing from West Dunbartonshire Council accounts for 12,012 or 27% of the total stock. Social rented housing from housing associations accounts for 5,352 dwellings or 12% and the remaining 1,097 or 2.4% is taken up by the private rented sector. This is a significant reversal of the situation in the past when rented housing from the local authority formed the largest part of the total housing stock. The growth of owner occupation is typical not only of West Dunbartonshire but of Scotland as a whole.

West Dunbartonshire households by tenure



Source: - WDC Social and Economic Profile 2006/07

Homelessness Profile of West Dunbartonshire

This section of the strategy will focus on the key features of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire, and will:

- Compare the extent and nature of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire;
- Identify any significant changes and consider the reasons for them;
- Identify key areas for action over the period of the new Homelessness Strategy

Impact of Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire

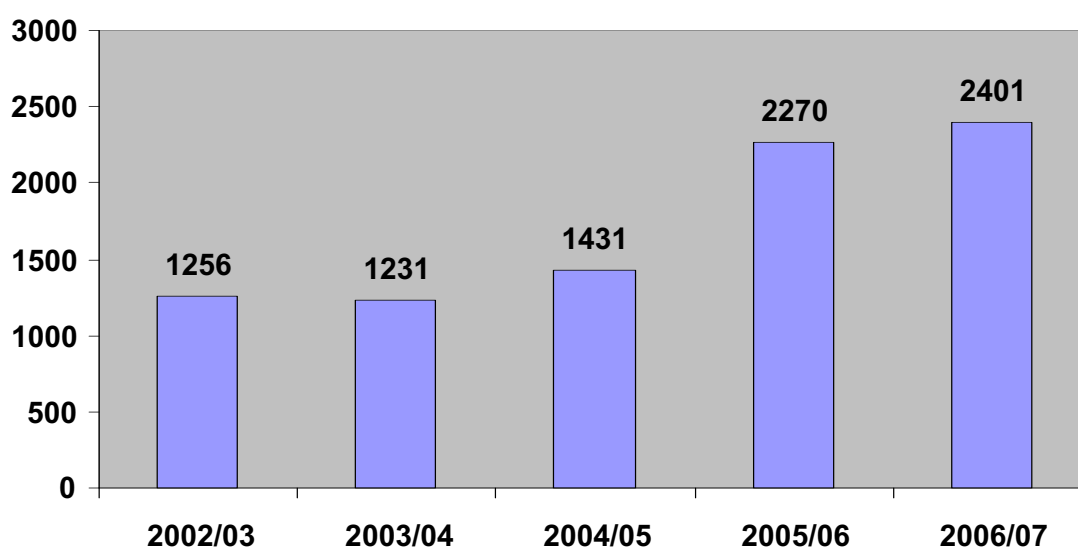
Despite many achievements since the publication of the first West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy, homelessness remains a significant issue in the area. Homelessness is the most extreme form of housing need and increasing numbers of applications further pressurise supply of council and RSL housing within the West Dunbartonshire area.

In addition, an incidence of homelessness can have a detrimental effect on an individual's general health and well-being and can exacerbate existing complex needs such as mental health and addiction issues.

How many people apply as homeless?

In 2002/2003 when the first homelessness strategy was produced, 1256 homeless households applied to West Dunbartonshire Council for housing. In 2006/2007 the number of applications had increased by 91% to 2401. The increase is the second highest amongst all Scottish local authorities over this time period, where the cumulative average is 14%.

Homeless Presentations in West Dunbartonshire



It should be noted that the above average increases in presentations is partially due to a change of recording mechanisms within the council. Communities Scotland (now known as the Scottish Housing Regulator) recommended during a Pathfinder inspection in 2004 that all homeless cases that engage with the service but subsequently lose contact should be recorded.

Number of Households applying as homeless

The extent of the homeless problem faced in West Dunbartonshire is evidenced through the number of individual households who present as homeless within the West Dunbartonshire area. In 2006/07 in West Dunbartonshire 2,237 households presented as homeless, this represents 5.46% of the total number of households. This equates to more than 1 in 20 households in West Dunbartonshire presenting as homeless, and is the highest percentage within Scotland.

Number of Individual households applying as homeless by local authority

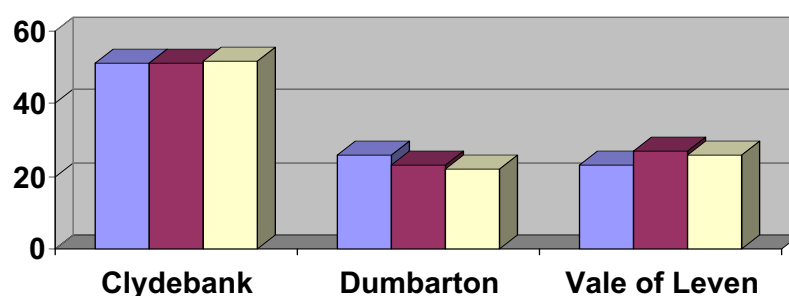
	Number of Households	% of all Households	Position
West Dunbartonshire	2237	5.46%	1 st
Argyll and Bute	944	2.30%	14 th
East Dunbartonshire	638	1.49%	31 st
Glasgow City	9794	3.54%	3 rd
Inverclyde	709	1.93%	23 rd
Renfrewshire	1521	1.97%	22 nd
Stirling	1031	2.77%	6 th
SCOTLAND	56275	2.46%	

Where is the Homelessness?

The extent of homelessness is relatively consistent throughout West Dunbartonshire when viewed alongside the population and household information available from the 2001 census. However, since 2003 there has been a slight % increase in the number of homeless applications in Clydebank (2%) compared with the other two areas whose % figure has dropped by 1% each.

Area of Homeless Households in 2006/07 compared with Total population and number of households

■ % Homeless Applications ■ % Population ■ % No. of Households



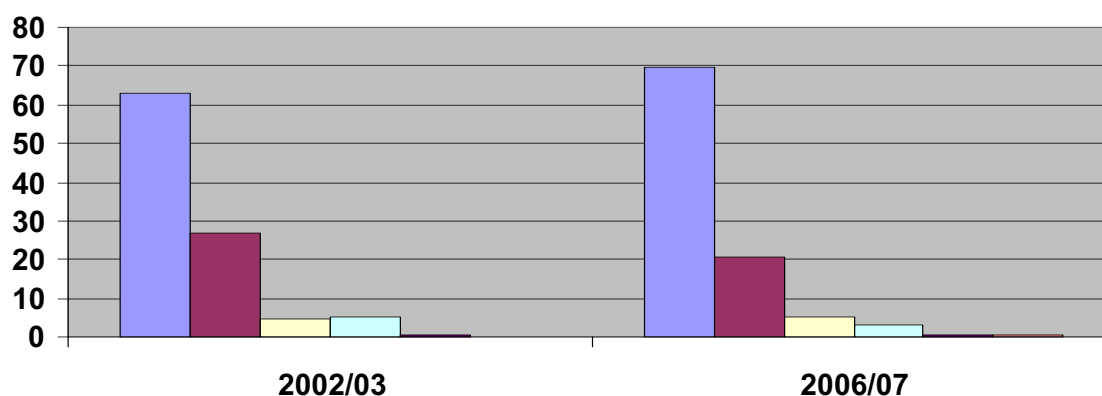
Comparison of % of Homeless Applications by area 2002/03-2006/07

	2002/03	2006/07	% change
Clydebank	49%	51%	+2%
Dumbarton	27%	26%	-1%
Vale of Leven	24%	23%	-1%

What is the family composition of homeless applicants?

There has been a significant change in the family composition of homeless applicants since our first strategy was produced in 2003. The following comparisons can be made:-

Households Presenting as Homeless in West Dunbartonshire



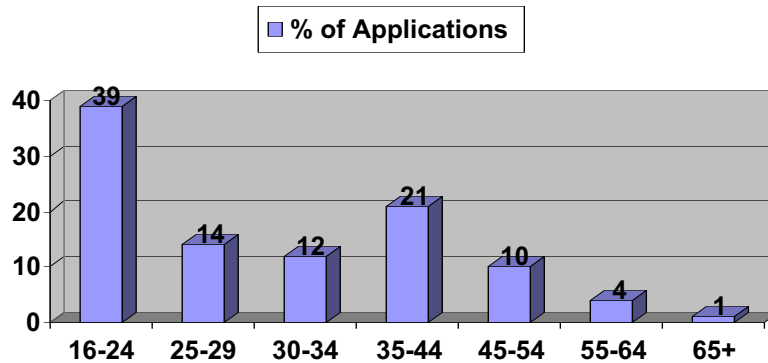
The increase in single person household applications over this period is replicated throughout Scotland. The Homelessness etc (2003) Act is one of key drivers of this increase, as single applicants benefited most from the legislative changes. Although, the increased number of single household applicants also reflects wider social change.

As illustrated earlier within this section, household estimates and projections show that the number of single person households is increasing both locally and nationally. In West Dunbartonshire 69% of all homeless presentations were made from single adult households, this represents the third highest % rate in Scotland. Significantly, West Dunbartonshire also has the highest % rate of single females presenting as homeless.

Age Profile of Homeless Applicants

The age profile of applicants has significantly changed since the production of the first homelessness strategy which intimated that 6% of homeless applicants were under the age of 25. This age group now provides 39% of all homeless presentations in West Dunbartonshire, and represents an increase in applications of 101% from 2002/03.

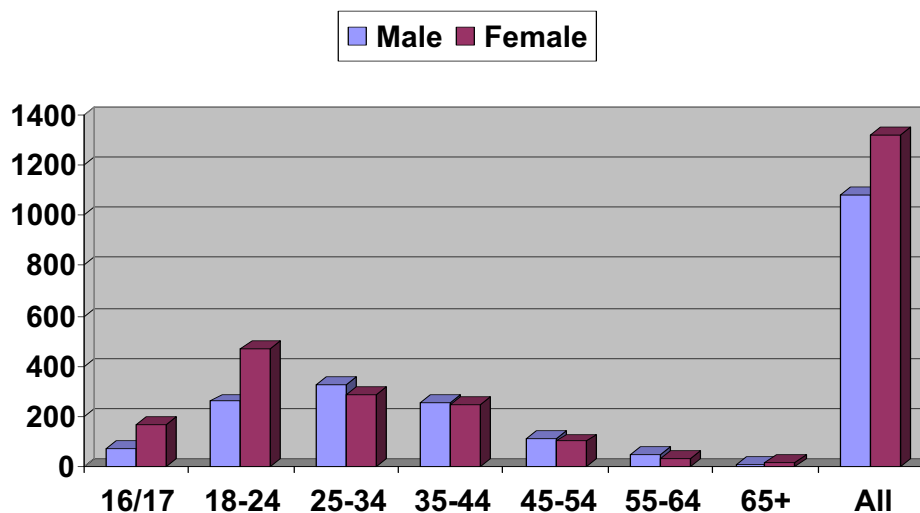
Age of Homeless Households 2006/07



Young people aged 25 and under are also the largest age group which loses contact prior to an assessment decision (50%). To fully understand the factors behind such large percentages, a study will be carried out to examine the causes and nature of homelessness amongst the young people of West Dunbartonshire by working in partnership with youth organisations and other agencies in West Dunbartonshire to develop an integrated strategy for housing and related services to young people.

Gender Profile of Homeless Applicants

Age and Gender Profile of Homeless Applicants 2006/07



The age and gender profile further illustrates the high number of young females presenting as homeless within the West Dunbartonshire area. In 2006/07 66% of all homelessness presentations from under 25s were from females. Male applicants in line with national trends continue to outnumber females in every other age group and

we are concerned to understand and address this issue surrounding the threat of homelessness to young females in West Dunbartonshire.

Recorded Reasons for homelessness

The table below sets out the most immediate reason for homelessness amongst those presenting to the Council.

Reason for Applying as Homeless	2002/03		2006/07	
	Number of Apps	% of Apps	Number of Apps	% of Apps
No longer able/willing to accommodate				
Parents	275	22%	689	29%
Relatives	62	5%	104	4%
Friends	39	3%	74	3%
Total	376	30%	867	36%
Relationship Breakdown				
Dispute with spouse co-habittee – Violent	248	20%	336	14%
Dispute with spouse co-habittee – non-Violent	130	10%	249	10%
Dispute with parents, family member :Violent	13	1%	59	2%
Total	391	31%	644	27%
Loss of Tenancy				
Loss of WDC tenancy				
Arrears	1	0.07%	78	3%
ASB	3	0.2%	0	0%
Other	5	0.4%	9	0.4%
Total	9	0.7%	87	4%
Loss of RSL tenancy				
Arrears	4	0.3%	123	5%
ASB	1	0.07%	0	0%
Other	4	0.3%	13	0.5%
Total	9	0.7%	136	6%
Loss of Private Sector Tenancy				
Arrears	4	0.3%	31	1%
ASB	1	0.07%	1	0.04%
Other	39	3%	67	3%
Total	44	4%	99	4%
Total Arrears	9	0.7%	232	10%
Total ASB	5	0.4%	1	0.04%
Total Other	48	4%	89	4%
Total Loss of tenancy	62	3%	322	13%
Other Main Reasons				
Mortgage Default	13	1%	27	1%
Discharged from Prison	45	4%	67	3%
Gave up Secure accommodation	40	3%	56	2%
Harassment – Racial	2	0.2%	8	0.3%
Harassment – other	92	7%	139	6%
Fleeing non-domestic violence	29	2%	44	2%
Not reasonable to occupy	31	2%	56	2%
Other	174	13%	168	7%

Relationship Issues

The main reasons for homelessness have not radically changed over the years between the strategies. Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate remains the main reason for homelessness in West Dunbartonshire (29%), and this is consistent with all areas throughout Scotland.

Domestic abuse also remains a significant reason for homelessness in West Dunbartonshire, accounting for 14% of all presentations. Despite a drop in the % of homelessness presentations, incidents of homeless applications as a result of fleeing domestic violence have increased by an average of 20 a year.

In total, more than 3 in 5 (63%) of homelessness presentations are as a direct result of some form of relationship breakdown. Relationship breakdown may be the most immediate reason for homelessness but this may hide wider and more complex issues including addictions, abuse, mental health issues and offending behaviour. As a result recording mechanisms have been adapted that will allow closely monitoring of all reasons for homelessness.

Loss of secure tenancy

There has been a significant increase in the number of households presenting as homeless as a result of losing a tenancy or being threatened with homelessness in both social and private rented sectors. The most common determinant is the increase in presentations from individuals who have lost or are threatened with losing secure accommodation as a result of rent arrears.

This is particularly prevalent in the social rented sector (8% of all homeless presentations in West Dunbartonshire) compared with the private rented sector (1%). The current level of homeless presentations as a result of rent arrears is also considerably higher than the national average of 4%.

It is worth noting that not all homeless presentations due to rent arrears lose their accommodation, and these figures include those who will have the crisis of homelessness averted due to preventative activity. Nonetheless, the importance of ensuring earlier intervention to repel the threat of homelessness should be pursued.

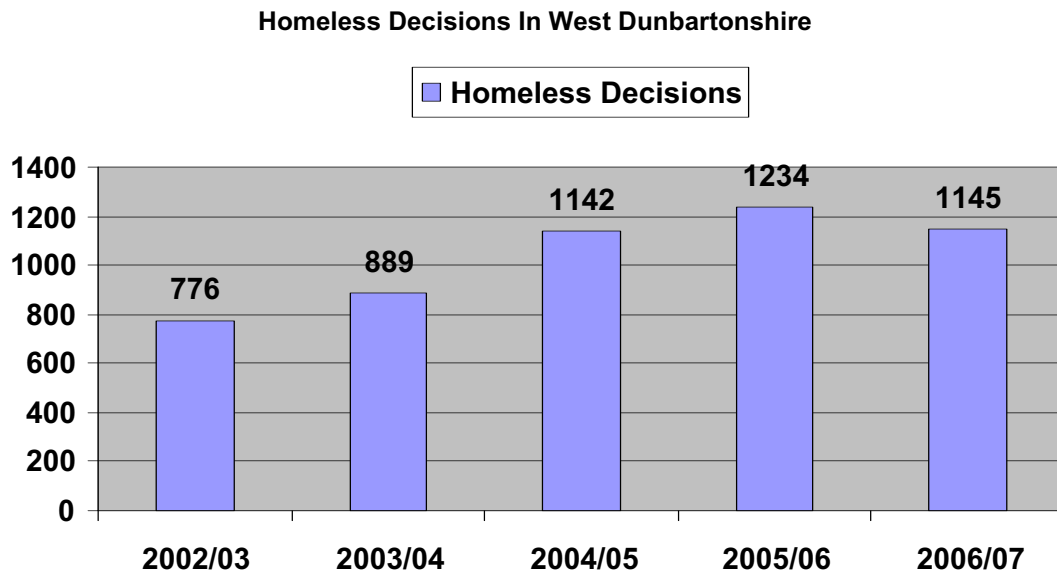
Since 2002/03, the % increase for some of the main reasons for homelessness are highlighted below:-

Reason for Homelessness	% Increase since 2002/03
No longer willing to accommodate	130%
Relationship Breakdown	65%
Rent Arrears	2477%
Mortgage Default	108%

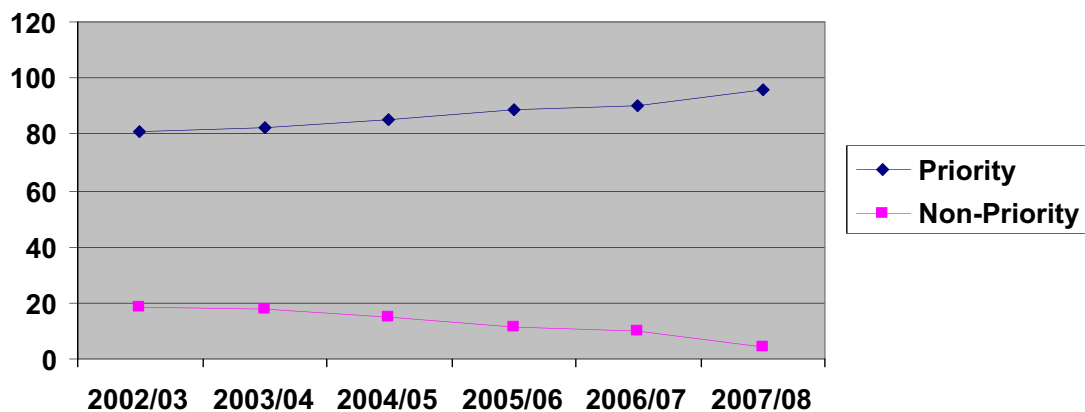
Increases in real terms stress the importance to maximise preventative activities to combat homelessness. The prevention of homelessness was a key aim in the first homelessness strategy and this will underpin West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013.

Homeless Decisions in West Dunbartonshire

Together with the rapid rise in presentations, a more valid indicator of the trend in real terms of incidences of homelessness are homeless decisions. This is where a decision has been made by the council that an applicant is homeless in terms of legislation. As the table below illustrates homeless decisions have increased by 48% since 2002/03.



Homeless Assessments by Assessment Type



In the years from 2002/03 to 2006/07 Priority Need assessments have increased by 8.8%. This has been planned as part of West Dunbartonshire's continued progress to meet the Scottish Executive's aim of abolishing priority need by 2012. West Dunbartonshire has already surpassed the 2009 target of 90% priority need assessments.

	Baseline 2003/04	2006/07	2008/09 Target
% in Priority Need	81.3	90	90

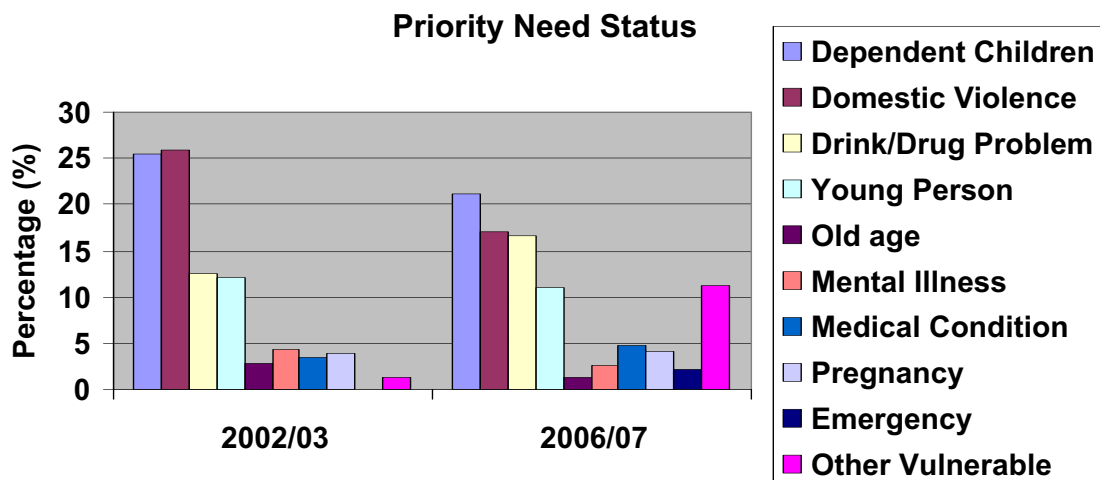
The increase in priority need assessments combined with the increased number of homeless presentations places great pressure to house applicants in appropriate council stock, as traditionally the council has housed the greatest number of

homeless households. However, with an ever reducing council housing stock it is necessary we will increasingly have to look at alternatives to house homeless households.

Priority Need Status

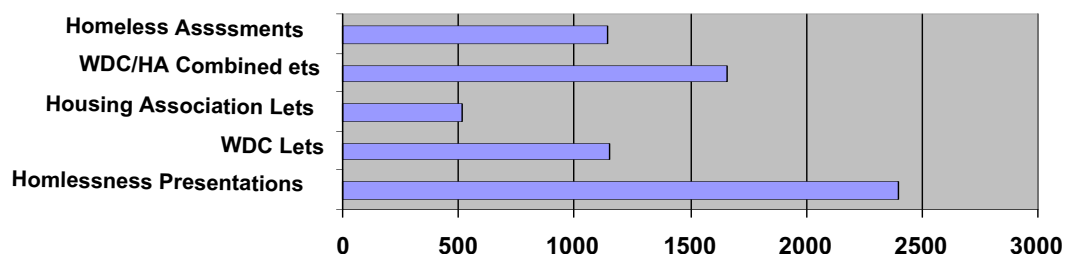
Priority Need status is awarded to people who are homeless and are vulnerable. The most common reasons for awarding priority in the last year were as follows:-

- Applicant has/has access to dependent children – 21%
- Fleeing Domestic Violence – 17%
- Vulnerability due to Drink/Drugs – 17%
- Young People – 11%



In 2006/07, 2401 presented as homeless within West Dunbartonshire, of which 1145 were assessed as homeless or potentially homeless. The average number of lets made by WDC each year is 1148 properties. These figures evidence the requirement that alternative housing solutions be sought for homeless households.

Homelessness Presentations and WDC and Housing Association Lets 2006/07



Scottish Government 2009 and 2012 targets

The priority need test is to be abolished throughout Scotland by 2012. We have chosen to approach 2012 by gradually phasing additions to those in 'priority need' including the extension of individuals classed as vulnerable based on a local context.

This method has allowed the 2009 target to be met some two years early, despite an increase in homelessness presentations and decisions. We aim to continue this approach and review it on an annual basis.

	2002/03	2006/07
Homeless Presentations	1256	2401
Assessed as Homeless	776	1145
Assessed as Homeless and in priority need	631	1032

The phased approach will allow the 2009 target to be met and will assist in avoiding particular pressures that could impact on the service due to the impending removal of the local connection test.

To ensure that work continues towards the proposed abolition of priority need in 2012, the following action will be taken:

March 2009	Increase the extension of priority groups to 19-21 year, displaced spouses and over 55's
March 2010	Increase the extension of priority groups to 21-25 year olds
March 2011	A year in advance of legislative guidelines abolish priority need in West Dunbartonshire

This will be monitored in relation to the Scottish Government's 2009 and 2012 targets.

Homelessness Housing Outcomes

The following table outlines the last action taken by the council when dealing with homeless applicants. Most homeless applicants secure accommodation from West Dunbartonshire Council and partner housing associations. We have concerns of the high levels of refusals of offers of Council accommodation by homeless households (9%).

Last Action By WDC	2002/03	%	2006/07	%
Offered Scottish Secure Tenancy	403	89.2	744	82.12
Offered Private Rented Sector (PRS)	0	0	4	0.44
Offered Temporary Accommodation	11	2.4	61	6.73
Referred to other Local Authority	7	1.6	4	0.44
Offered Advice and Assistance Only	23	5	61	6.73

None of the above	8	1.8	32	3.53
TOTAL	452	100	906	100

Lost Contacts

There are high levels of lost contacts during the assessment process In West Dunbartonshire, 36% in comparison with the national average of 13%. These are mainly young single households and many appear to have a complex set of needs. Improvements to the assessment of needs will help develop an understanding of the unmet needs of this group, but in addition we will focus on finding ways to maintain contact.

Tenancy Sustainment

There is close relationship between homelessness prevention activities and tenancy sustainment, together with a compelling social and economic argument. In 2006/07 16% of the total number of lets made to homeless households were not sustained longer than a year. Although some of these tenancies may have come to an end for positive reasons, such as the formation of a new household or employment opportunities, anecdotal information suggest that the majority would have been as a result of a negative episode.

To illustrate the cost of tenancy failure to a local authority the Scottish Council for Single Homeless (SCSH) undertook research in 2007 which indicated that tenancy failure could cost the Local Authority over £24,500. In developing this Homelessness Strategy to prevent homelessness occurring in West Dunbartonshire we must ensure that we adopt robust and measurable practices that assist tenancy sustainment and avoid the heavy social and economic costs attached with tenancy failure.

When we benchmark tenancy sustainment rates in West Dunbartonshire with other Scottish local authorities, we are in the bottom quartile and anticipate this is an area we can make significant improvements through the development of services and initiatives to assist in the sustainment of tenancies throughout the social rented sector.

Health Context

The Scottish Executive's Health and Homelessness Standards for NHS Boards were launched in 2005. The standards are at the centre of the Scottish Executive's commitment to improve the health of homeless people.

The evidence base shows a high level of health needs amongst local people. Between July and September 2007 we carried out a health assessment of homelessness applicants in West Dunbartonshire to inform the development of the new Homelessness Strategy.

This assessment highlighted the following:-

- One fifth of homeless applicants have physical health problem
- More than 1/3 of homeless applicants have mental health issues
- A third of homeless applicants have addiction issues
- 29% of applicants suffer from depression
- 1 in 10 applicants self harms or have suicidal thoughts

- 82% of homeless applicants indicated that homelessness is detrimental to their well-being

Individuals presenting as homeless often have multiple needs, and the true extent of mental health and addiction issues is often hidden as those individuals meet homelessness priority through other avenues of vulnerability, this is particularly prevalent among West Dunbartonshire's young community.

Summary of Homeless Profile of West Dunbartonshire

- The number of homeless presentations has risen considerably higher than the national average. (92% since 2002/03 against the cumulative national average of 14%). One in every 20 households in West Dunbartonshire is affected by homelessness.
- The increase in homeless presentations has placed great pressure on WDC housing stock. To alleviate this pressure, mechanisms must be in place to maximise the success of homelessness prevention activities and to seek alternative housing solutions in both private rented and Housing Association sectors.
- WDC has already met the 2009 target of reducing non-priority homeless decisions, due to a structured approach in expanding priority groups. This approach will continue and we have set an ambitious target to ensure the abolition of priority need a year in advance of the Scottish Government 2012 target.
- Single adult households continue at an expanding rate to be the largest demographic presenting as homeless. It is expected that this trend will continue. Projections indicate that single adult households will increase by 8.8 over the life of this Homelessness Strategy placing additional pressure on the affordable housing supply in West Dunbartonshire.
- West Dunbartonshire has the highest % rate of single females presenting as homeless in Scotland (29%), we must identify the underlying causes of this and ensure services are developed to combat the increase in homelessness among young females in West Dunbartonshire.
- Homeless is a major concern for young people in West Dunbartonshire. 39% of all homeless presentations are under 25 years of age. Over half of these presentations are due to parents no longer willing / able to accommodate. In WDC our prevention focus has been on financial routes into homelessness. We need to re-assess this to examine other routes into homelessness.
- The incidences of a household presenting as homeless from a Scottish Secure Tenancy have dramatically increased. In 2006/07 this equated to 10% of all homeless presentations. To reverse this trend we must ensure that we maximise tenancy sustainment measures to prevent homelessness.
- The increase in financial related routes into homelessness (11% of all homeless applications) illustrates that there appears to be an issue accessing

affordable housing options within West Dunbartonshire. The development of the next Local Housing Strategy will address this issue.

- Homelessness is not solely a housing issue, Homelessness seriously impacts on an individual's life choices and individuals experiencing homelessness require access to training, education and employment opportunities combined with access to primary health care services to ensure homelessness does not become a way of life for individuals.

6 – KEY CHALLENGES IN WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE

Significant progress in tackling homelessness in West Dunbartonshire has been made over the past five years, as highlighted in this strategy document. However, homelessness continues to be a major social issue within the local authority area.

The new homelessness strategy 2008-2013 hopes to build on the achievements of its predecessor and aspire to the vision

“To end Homelessness in West Dunbartonshire “

We recognise that homelessness is always liable to occur as a result of a crisis such as family breakdown, fire or flood. What we aim to do is reduce the incidence of homelessness so that it becomes an exceptional occurrence and not a way of life for individuals.

The assessment of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire, the legislative framework surrounding homelessness and stakeholder consultation have enabled us to recognise the key challenges to tackling homelessness in West Dunbartonshire and identify the ways in which these will be tackled :-

- Improve mechanisms to ensure the key aim of preventing homelessness in West Dunbartonshire can be achieved
- Ensuring that we can provide secure housing for all homeless households by 2012, and meet the interim target of reducing non-priority homeless decisions by 2009 whilst continuing to provide a person centred approach to every individual
- Ensure that the current corporate focus on homelessness issues is enhanced
- Raise awareness of homelessness and associated issues and campaign to change public attitudes and perceptions to homeless people
- Develop a Housing Options Guide to improve access to Housing Options to West Dunbartonshire communities
- Ensure that our approach to meeting the needs of homeless households can deliver settled sustainable housing solutions
- Develop a Tenancy Sustainment Strategy to prevent homelessness
- Develop systems for managing the care of homeless households with complex needs

- Continue to ensure that we possess an adequate and appropriate supply of temporary accommodation to ensure we meet demand over the life of this strategy
- Ensure individuals who have experienced homelessness can get the services and support so that they don't become homeless again
- Ensure that all actions contained within the Health and Homelessness Action Plan are realised
- Develop a service user consultation strategy to inform strategic and service development
- To improve the health and well being of homeless households
- Develop a Young Persons Housing Strategy which can be a catalyst to reduce homelessness among West Dunbartonshire's young people

These are ambitious and exciting challenges and ones that all partners involved in tackling homelessness in West Dunbartonshire are committed to and plan to take forward over the life of the strategy. To achieve these targets we have set specific strategic aims. These strategic aims have been agreed with our partners and are closely linked to the Scottish Government's five high level national outcomes:-

- 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
- The duration of homelessness is reduced

7 – STRATEGIC AIMS

In this section we have related each of our four strategic aims to the legislative and policy context outlined in Section 3 and to the causes and extent of homelessness as summarised in Section 5. The aims and objectives are directly linked to action plan contained in Appendix 1 identifying actions, outcomes and timescales.

The Multi-Agency Homelessness Forum has adopted the following four strategic aims under the following headings:-

- Prevention
- Housing Options
- Sustainable Solutions
- Commitment

Aim 1 – Prevention

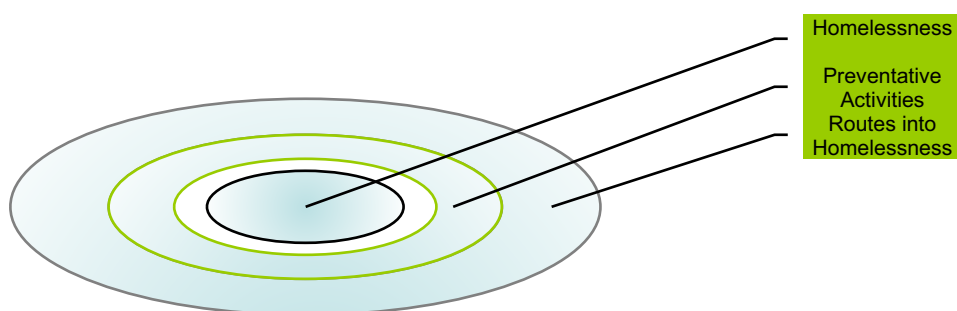
To prevent homelessness occurring in West Dunbartonshire.

A focus on prevention is a key aim of this Strategy. West Dunbartonshire Council and our partners aim to place prevention at the very heart of the drive to tackle homelessness in the area. This will include working across all tenures to avoid households losing existing accommodation by providing required support levels and targeting services towards those who are assessed as vulnerable. Partnership working will be key to preventing homelessness and a number of actions focus on effective partnership working.

We plan to build upon a well established base in homelessness prevention activities, and take forward the prevention agenda. Our approach will focus on ensuring 'early intervention' services are developed for particular 'at risk' groups within the community.

There are many activities that contribute towards preventing homelessness, however we recognise that to maximise the aim of preventing homelessness, all agencies and services must be in a position to recognise the risk of homelessness at an early stage.

West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Prevention Model



It is crucial to prevent individuals from becoming homeless in the first

instance.

'Prevention is better than the cure'

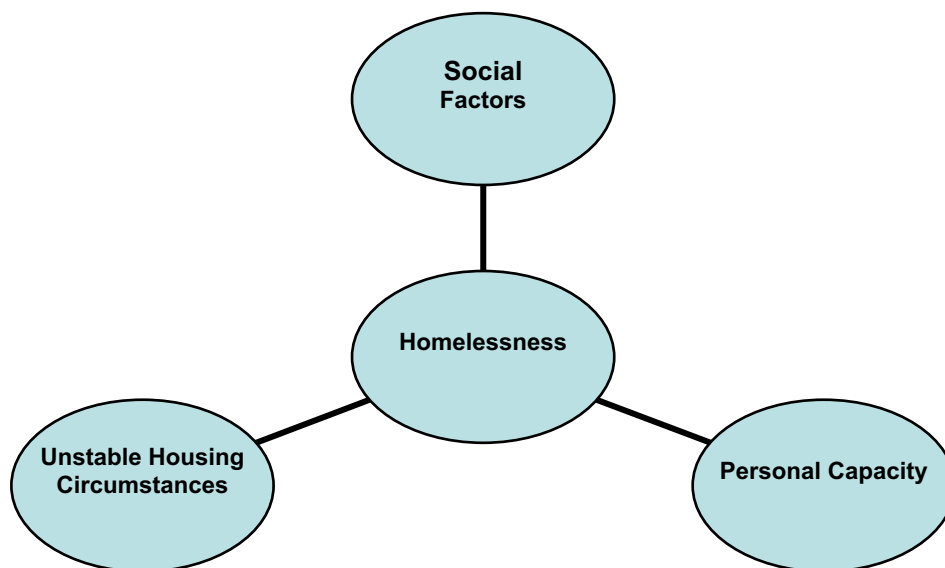
We recognise that the key aspects of homelessness risk are:-

Social Factors: - Domestic abuse, family breakdown, involvement in crime and anti social behaviour, addiction issues, mental health issues, not in employment or training, low educational attainment, change in family circumstances.

Unstable Housing Environment: - Rent Arrears, mortgage default, security of tenure, transient lifestyle, experience of homelessness, hospital discharge, prison discharge

Personal capacity: - Poor educational attainment, lack of positive social network, lack of family support, empty lifestyle.

Routes into Homelessness



The long term aim in relation to working with partner services is to move to develop shared outcomes, standards and pathways for all households who are threatened with homelessness. There is now a strong recognition that those individuals who present as homeless are also clients of other services, particularly the Community Addictions Team and criminal justice services.

Prevention Objectives:-

- By November 2008, we will raise awareness of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire to assist in the prevention of homelessness.
- By April 2010, we will ensure provision of a comprehensive range of information, advice and assistance to prevent homelessness.
- By April 2011, we will have developed support and services to prevent homelessness occurring as a result of relationship breakdown.
- By April 2011, we will have developed support and services to prevent homelessness resulting through domestic abuse.
- By April 2011, we will have developed services and support to prevent homelessness occurring as a result of any financial hardship.
- By April 2011, we will reduce homelessness occurring to young people in West Dunbartonshire by 25%
- By April 2011, we will continue the development of services and support to reduce and ultimately prevent homelessness resulting through health and addiction issues.
- By April 2012, we will have developed capacity to maximise tenancy sustainment levels in West Dunbartonshire.

Main Actions Planned

We will set up a partnership group which will be responsible for reviewing and developing the provision of housing information and advice in West Dunbartonshire. We will ensure that all agencies continue to be trained to the national standards for advice and information and our Homelessness Service will attain Homepoint accreditation for housing advice and information by October 2009.

Linked to this, we will raise public awareness on homelessness issues and work towards removing the negative attitudes towards homelessness by campaigning locally and in partnership with other local authorities on a national level.

We will build on the existing arrangements in place to ensure there is capacity for 'early intervention' to prevent homelessness within the communities of West Dunbartonshire. We will develop mechanisms which will combat people experiencing homelessness through a variety of routes including relationship issues, domestic abuse, and financial hardship.

To prevent homelessness in future years we will undertake research to develop an integrated an integrated strategy for housing and related services to young people. We will ensure that all S4 children receive housing advice and information that will not only prepare them for successful independent living but will also prevent homelessness affecting the young community of West Dunbartonshire.

We will in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies prevent homelessness occurring as a result of health and addiction issues, and develop more comprehensive support packages for applicants with complex support needs. We

will move to establish shared outcomes, standard and pathways for all households who are vulnerable and have an immediate risk of homelessness. This approach recognises the growing overlap between those who present as homeless and clients of other services, particularly the Community Addictions Team (CAT) and Criminal Justice services.

In the longer term we will also deliver a tenancy sustainment strategy that will ensure that our tenants have the support and assistance available to them to maintain a successful tenancy which will help build strong, safe communities within West Dunbartonshire. As illustrated in this strategy there is a strong social and economic argument for ensuring services are available from day one to secure successful sustained tenancies.

Aim 2 – Housing Options

To improve the range of Housing Options available in West Dunbartonshire to respond effectively to households in homelessness crisis

West Dunbartonshire's previous homelessness strategy 2003-2006 identified the need to continue to develop joint working arrangements between agencies to increase the range of options and opportunities for homeless households and those households threatened with homelessness.

Although significant progress has been made including developing effective partnership arrangements with local Housing Associations. The increased need to house homeless households either on a temporary or permanent basis has placed added pressures on the supply of housing in the social rented sector in West Dunbartonshire.

Combined with other determinants such as the high levels of refusals of offers of Council accommodation by homeless households (9%) and high levels of incidences of households losing contact with the homelessness service after presenting would suggest an imbalance between people's housing aspirations and the quality and type of housing available in West Dunbartonshire.

We aim to develop processes which will enable us to meet the needs of the West Dunbartonshire community. The development of a Housing Options Guide will form an axis to which increased housing advice and information will be available to agencies and to services, but also to individuals to be able to assess potential housing solutions.

By providing increased housing options to respond effectively to households in housing crisis, it should in effect also prevent whenever possible the crisis of homelessness itself.

A Housing Needs and Supply Study carried out in 2007/08 estimated the annual rate of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire to be 1,014 rising to 1,143 households in 2011/2012. The increase reflects the removal of the priority need distinction by 2012, and the Council having a duty to accommodate 100% of unintentionally homeless households.

In order to ensure effective planning throughout the life of the strategy, West Dunbartonshire Council and its partners need to consider a combination of different factors including:-

- Identifying what role the private rented sector can have to be a housing solution for homeless or potentially homeless households.
- Identifying what % of available social housing allocations should be made to homeless households.
- Identifying the need for temporary accommodation and striking the appropriate balance between all tenures including supported accommodation.

Housing Options Objectives

- By July 2009, we will ensure mechanisms are in place to plan, manage and develop the supply of temporary accommodation in West Dunbartonshire.
- By July 2009, we will plan to improve affordable housing options to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- By April 2010, we will have improved access to housing for people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.
- By April 2010, we will have developed capacity for the private rented sector to meet the housing needs of homeless households
- By April 2010, we will expand choice to include accessing furnished tenancies.

Main Actions Planned

We will improve access to housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness by delivering a Housing Options Guide for West Dunbartonshire. This resource will allow the future development of Housing Options interviews which could prevent individuals experiencing the crisis of homelessness.

In partnership with private landlords through the development of a private landlord forum, we will research the private rented sector to ascertain whether it can provide a sustainable housing solution to homeless or potentially homeless households. We aim to increase opportunities for individuals to access private rented accommodation through a Deposit Guarantee Scheme and we also wish to examine the feasibility of developing a Private Sector Leasing Scheme in West Dunbartonshire.

We aim to expand access to furnished accommodation to increase levels of tenancy sustainment. We will also investigate in partnership with other agencies the introduction of starter tenancies for young people to promote successful independent living.

We plan to continue to ensure the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless households is eliminated within West Dunbartonshire by ensuring the requirement for temporary accommodation is annually reviewed and provision met by the Council in partnership with housing associations and private landlords. We will develop a temporary accommodation strategy that will ensure future need is met through service delivery and provision. This will include developing a standard for temporary accommodation within West Dunbartonshire.

We wish to ensure that we have an adequate provision for the demand and need for supported accommodation in West Dunbartonshire, and will investigate opportunities to establish additional supported accommodation projects in the local authority area for identified 'in need' groups.

Aim 3 – Sustainable Solutions

To ensure a sustainable solution for individuals who have experienced homelessness

West Dunbartonshire Council and our partners in developing the Homelessness Strategy take the view that homelessness is not solely a housing management or housing supply problem. Becoming homeless is often the final stage of an individual lacking access to the network of support that they need.

This places great detriment on an individual's quality of life. Getting somewhere to stay and expanding individual life choices is a crucial element in ending homelessness and ultimately building stronger communities within West Dunbartonshire. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that the crisis of homelessness does not become a way of life for the individual.

We have signalled our intentions to focus on preventative activities and increasing the range of housing options available to homeless or potentially households in West Dunbartonshire in Strategy Aims 1 and 2, but we also recognise the need to look at other issues and what needs to be done to resolve homelessness in the longer term and ensure that individuals who require support and opportunity to assist them to live successful lives have access to this.

We have identified key issues around resolving the cycle of homelessness and these have informed our strategic objectives to ensure a sustainable long term solution to individuals who have experienced homelessness:-

Sustainable Solution Objectives

- By December 2008, we will ensure people who have experienced homelessness can access a full range of health services
- By April 2009, we will ensure that ex-offenders have access to services and support to ensure a sustainable resettlement
- By September 2009, we will positively expand social networks for individuals who have experienced homelessness
- By September 2009, improve the health and well being of homeless households
- By April 2010, we will ensure that people have access to appropriate housing support
- By April 2010, we will develop capacity so that more individuals who have experienced homelessness can access appropriate employment, training and volunteering opportunities

Main Actions Planned

We will carry out a review of Housing Support within West Dunbartonshire to plan for future service provision. The Council and our partners recognise the importance of

ensuring that we are meeting the support needs of homeless households more effectively.

We also recognise the importance of ensuring that homeless households have access to opportunities in the following which are appropriate to their needs:

- educational;
- social;
- recreational; and
- employment

The emphasis will be towards assisting homeless households to access mainstream services and an ongoing review to ensure that there are no households who are not able to take advantage of these opportunities.

We aim to expand social networks for individuals who have experienced homelessness through a range of actions to ensure the health and well being of vulnerable households in West Dunbartonshire.

Aim 4 – Commitment

To ensure a commitment to continue to develop and improve services to tackling homelessness through a partnership approach

The final objective within the Strategy is to ensure a commitment to deliver the new obligations set out in the 2001 and the 2003 Acts. The introduction of the remaining elements of the Homelessness etc., (Scotland) Act 2003 will ensure a corporate focus to tackling homelessness in West Dunbartonshire

It is evident that the 2012 objectives cannot be achieved without the significant involvement of other agencies from other housing providers, to agencies that will play a key role in the key objective of preventing homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

The 2012 Homelessness Support Project report stressed the importance for the following to ensure Homelessness strategies were implemented effectively:

- Political and Senior Officer Endorsement of the Homelessness Strategy
- Corporate and Partnership Working
- Positive role of other Housing providers
- Prevention of Homelessness
- Performance Monitoring and Management

The new Strategy identifies new aspects of service and new activities, the effectiveness of which will be monitored. Actions under this aim also focus on ensuring that the required information is in place. In addition, it is recognised that there is room for improvement in sharing information between services and agencies.

We have signalled our intentions to increase joint working through the development of the multi agency Homelessness Forum and through the following strategic objectives.

Commitment Objectives

- By April 2009, We will have improved communication with partner agencies to enhance services to prevent and alleviate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire
- By April 2009, we will develop a comprehensive performance management framework to measure the impact of the Homelessness Strategy in preventing and alleviating homelessness in West Dunbartonshire
- By September 2009, ensure that the Homelessness Strategy continues to be linked to all other relevant strategic linked to all other relevant plans and strategies
- By April 2012, we will have complied with the new duties arising from the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Homelessness etc., (Scotland) Act 2003

Main Actions Planned

We will ensure that all actions identified within West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy are implemented to ensure that we comply with legislative requirements, including the 2009 and 2012 targets.

We will also develop an outcome-based performance management framework to measure the impact of the strategy in preventing and alleviating homelessness, which will also involve the development of a service user involvement programme to enhance service development.

We lose contact with a relatively high proportion of those who present to the homeless service, more than a third of all presentations. These are mainly young, single households and many appear to have a complex set of needs. Improvements to the assessment of needs will help develop an understanding of the unmet needs of this group, but in addition we will focus on finding ways to maintain contact. Partner agencies also report that they have difficulties in maintaining contact with these same clients and improved information sharing and collaboration is planned.

In addition, combined with our already stated strategic objective of raising awareness about homelessness, we intend to strengthen communication channels with partners involved in ending homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

8 – RESOURCING THE STRATEGY

In November 2007 a concordat between the Scottish Government and COSLA was agreed. This concordat sets out the terms of a new relationship between the Scottish Government and local government and encompasses a new outcomes focused National Performance Framework.

Under the new concordat, the Scottish Government will set the policy direction and the over-arching outcomes that the public sector in Scotland will be expected to achieve. The concordat also underpins the funding to be provided to local authorities over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11.

One of the key elements of the new relationship is to work in a partnership of mutual respect. Therefore, the relationship between the Scottish Government and local authorities is being simplified and streamlined.

As part of this process, the ring fencing of funding is being removed from a number of previously separate funding streams from the Scottish Government.

In respect of homelessness services, changes have been made from April 2008. The funding to local authorities associated with the implementation of the Homelessness Task Force recommendations and Rough Sleepers Initiative funding will no longer be ring fenced. The funding has now been incorporated into the overall settlement made for the Council.

The Homelessness Strategy Action Plan 2008-2013 (Appendix 1) sets out the tasks and responsibilities involved in delivering the strategic aims and objectives. Overall the great majority of the Strategy will be delivered within existing staffing resources, from the Council and its partners in both the statutory and voluntary sector.

The Council's Housing, Environmental and Economic Development Department has a key role in leading or supporting many of the activities within the Action Plan, particularly through the Homelessness Services, Tenancy Services and Housing Strategy teams. Extensive support will also be provided by staff in other Council departments, particularly Social Work, Education and Finance. In addition, though, there will be significant involvement of partners in RSLs; the voluntary sector; and Health Services.

However, certain planned activities, such as the provision of affordable housing and housing with an attached support element will require additional capital funding, which will be achieved through accessing other funding streams, including Housing Association Grant (HAG) funding and private finance.

9 – PERFORMANCE AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The effectiveness of the strategic aims and related outcomes set out in West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 action plan will be monitored closely in a number of ways to assess their impact in preventing and alleviating homelessness in West Dunbartonshire:-

A new performance monitoring framework will be established to allow robust monitoring and evaluation of the strategy and assess the impact of the implementation of the actions. This will include identifying and establishing a baseline level; this will draw primarily on the national homelessness return (HL1).

In addition we have established seven high level overarching success indicators which the Performance Monitoring Framework will be structured against. Delivery of these outcomes will demonstrate the success of the strategy.

	Success Indicators
1	The number of incidences of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire is reduced
2	An increased number of individuals have access to assistance to prevent the crisis of homelessness in West Dunbartonshire
3	Tenancy sustainment levels across all tenures of housing in West Dunbartonshire are increased
4	The number of housing options available to homeless households and those households threatened with homelessness is increased
5	Households who experience homelessness will receive an improved service and will spend a shorter period of time in temporary accommodation
6	The health and well being of homeless households will improve due to increased levels of opportunity for homeless households to access appropriate service to meet their needs
7	All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012

An annual report on progress in meeting our strategic aims and outcomes will be published from August 2009. This report will be led by West Dunbartonshire Council in partnership with the services and agencies involved within the Homelessness Forum. .

These arrangements clearly demonstrate that the delivery of the Strategy is the responsibility not only of West Dunbartonshire Council but also of its partners and will serve to ensure the issue of homelessness in the policy arena at the highest level.

The Homelessness Strategy contributes, through the Local Housing Strategy to the National Single Outcome Agreement between the council and the Scottish Government. Outcomes for the Homelessness Strategy will be identified within the Single Outcome Agreement, including:-

National Indicator 22 – All unintentionally homeless households will be entitled to settled accommodation by 2012

In addition the strategy will contribute to a number of local outcome indicators by assisting households to achieve settled living arrangements.

West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Forum will have lead responsibility for the monitoring and evaluation of the progress against the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan and key success indicators.

10 – CONSULTATION

West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 has been developed in partnership with our stakeholders, including local community representatives, all housing providers and services and agencies working together to tackle homelessness in West Dunbartonshire. A full list of all participants is contained within this section.

The development of the strategy began in November 2007, when a development day was held which identified key themes and issues, and was the starting point in developing the strategy. The consultation process has enabled all interested parties to discuss the key issues and influence the strategic aims and objectives which form the basis of West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013.

As a result, the development of the vision, aims and objectives of the strategy has been a shared process and reflects a partnership approach to ending homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.

West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy was subject to a public consultation exercise between May and July 2008. The following groups were consulted on the strategy:-

ACRG Age Concern Renton Alternatives Argyll, Bute and Dunbartonshire Criminal Justice Social Work Partnership Asian Women's Group Balloch and Haldane Community Council Bellsmyre Housing Association Bield Housing Association Blue Triangle Housing Association Bonhill Age Concern Bonhill and Dalmonach Community Council Bonhill and Jamestown Older People's Welfare Association Bonhill Senior Citizens Bonhill Youth Action Group Bowling and Milton Community Council Brucehill Action Group Building Better Futures Cairn Housing Association Castlehill and Westcliff Action for Change Central Alexandria Tenants and Residents Association Cliffs and Hills Youth Action Group Clydebank East Community	Dalmuir Park Housing Association Dalmuir West Tenants and Residents Association Dalvait & Carrochan Tenants and Residents Association DDHF Drumry Youth Action Group Dumbarton and District Disabled Children's Forum Dumbarton and District Womens Aid Dumbarton Area Womens Network Dumbarton District Forum on Disability Dumbarton East and Central Community Council Dumbarton Mental Health Forum Dumbarton North Community Council Dumbarton Senior Citizens's Committee Dumbarton Seniors Forum Dunbritton Housing Association Duntocher Tenants and Residents Association Faifley Housing Association Faifley Neighbourhood Forum Gypsy Travellers Action Group	NCH NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde North Drumry MSF Tenants and Residents Association North Mountblow Tenants and Residents Association O'Hare & Ladyton Tenants and Residents Association Old Kilpatrick Community Council Old Mountblow Tenants and Residents Association Parkhall Disabled Group Parkhall & District Tenants and Residents Association Parkhall, North Kilbowie and Central Community Council Radnor Park Tenants and Residents Association Renton Youth Forum Rosshead Tenants and Residents Association Scottish Association for Mental Health Silverton and Overtoun Community Council Strathclyde Police Soldiers, Sailors Airmen and Families Association SPARC Thenew Housing Association Tontine Park Residents and Tenants Association
---	---	---

Council Clydebank East Tenants and Residents Association Clydebank Forum on Disability Clydebank Health Issues Group Clydebank Housing Association Clydebank Mental Disabled Association Clydebank Seniors Forum Clydebank Special Needs Forum Clydebank Voluntary Organisation for handicapped Clydebank Womens Aid Clydebank Womens Issues Group Clydebank Youth Forum Community Health Alliance Cordale Housing Association Cube Housing Association DACA Dalmuir Multi Story Flats Tenants and Residents Association	Haldane Womens' Group Home from Home Homelessness Service Users Impact Arts Includem Job Centre Plus John Knox Street Area Tenants and Residents Association Key Housing Association Kilbowie Tenants and Residents Association Kilmarnock Community Council Knowes Housing Association Link Housing Association Littleholm Tenants and Residents Association LGBT Youth (Scotland) Lorretto Housing Association Margaret Blackwood Housing Association Millburn Tenants and Residents Association Milton Tenants and Residents Association	Trafalgar Housing Association Trust Housing Association Tullichewan Tenants and Residents Association Tullochan Trust Turning Point (Scotland) Westbridgend Tenants and Residents Association West Dunbartonshire ADHD Support Group West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau West Dunbartonshire Community Councils Forum West Dunbartonshire Community Health Partnership West Dunbartonshire Community Planning Partnership West Dunbartonshire Council West Dunbartonshire Mental Health Forum West Dunbartonshire Minority Ethnic Association West Dunbartonshire Seniors Forum West Dunbartonshire Youth Trust Vale of Leven Youth Forum Y-Sort-it
--	--	---

Ongoing Consultation

We are committed to ensuring that consultation about West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy and services is an ongoing process. Consultation with stakeholders will be a regular part of the annual strategy review and will be achieved through a range of routes, including:

- Homelessness Form
- Service User Involvement Activity
- Homelessness Forum Working Groups
- Exit Survey Returns
- Partner Surveys

We strongly believe that all stakeholders need to be involved in the ongoing implementation and evaluation of West Dunbartonshire's Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013 for it to deliver the best possible outcomes.

11 – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This section contains an explanation of terminology used in this Homelessness Strategy.

Action Plan	A plan that details how the actions to achieve the strategic aims and objectives will be implemented.
Affordable Housing	Housing of a reasonable quality that people on modest income can afford. WDC Standard Housing Investment Plan contains more information on affordable housing within West Dunbartonshire
Anti Social Behaviour	Any activity that causes alarm, distress to an individual, community or group of households
B & B	Bed and Breakfast
BME	Black and Minority Ethnic
CharterMark	CharterMark is the government's national standard for customer service excellence
CBL	Choice Based Letting Choice based letting is a relatively new way of allocating council housing which requires people on the housing waiting list to select and bid for available properties, rather than waiting for the council to offer them a home.
CHP	Community Health Partnership
Common Housing Register (CHR)	Where a group of landlords operating in a specific area devise a single application form by which anyone seeking housing in their area can register their need and specify their housing choice. Landlords will then prioritise and select applicants from a single pool of applicants according to their own allocation policy
Communities Scotland	The Scottish Government's housing and regeneration agency. Communities Scotland was abolished in April 2008
Deposit Guarantee Scheme	A scheme which aims to assist those in housing need access and maintain accommodation within the private rented sector by providing a guarantee to landlords to cover the deposit required.
Fuel Poverty	A household is said to be in fuel poverty if it needs to spend more than 10 per cent of its income on fuel to heat itself. Those in the lower income brackets are more susceptible to fuel poverty.
GIRFEC	Getting It Right for every child
Hidden Homeless	Individuals who fulfil homeless criteria but do not make a homeless application and is not known to homelessness services.
HomePoint	A department of the Scottish Government (previously Communities Scotland) that works to improve the standard and consistency of housing advice and information provision.
Housing Association Grant (HAG)	HAG is awarded to Housing Associations which are registered with Communities Scotland to build housing for affordable rent and shared ownership for both general and particular needs clients.
Homelessness	As defined in the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003
Homelessness Task	The Homelessness Task Force (HTF) was set up in 1999

Force (HTF)	to review the nature and causes of homelessness and make recommendations for change. The Task Force published two reports, the first of which was published in 2000 and formed part of the 2001 Housing Act. The second and final report was launched in February 2002, and contained landmark recommendations for changing how homelessness is dealt with in Scotland.
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender
Local Connection	Local connection is the fourth homelessness test (homelessness, priority need, intentionality and local connection) and establishes whether a homeless person has any links with the council's area. Section 8 of the Homelessness etc (Scotland) Act 2003 suspends the local connection test – no date has been set for this section's commencement.
Local Housing Strategy (LHS)	The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 requires local authorities to make a comprehensive assessment of housing needs and conditions, and to produce a strategy to tackle housing problems in their area over a five year period.
Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO)	Affordable housing for people, who want to buy, but cannot afford market prices. There are various kinds of LCHO, shared ownership, grants or equity loans
Mortgage to Rent	Mortgage to Rent assists those threatened with repossession to stay in their own home. If eligible, owners can apply to have their property purchased by a local RSL whilst they continue to live there and pay rent instead of a mortgage.
Priority Need	Priority need is the second of the four homelessness tests). People in priority need are considered to be more vulnerable than other people, and so more in need of help to find accommodation. Priority need will be abolished in 2012, so that all unintentionally homeless people will then be entitled to permanent housing.
Private Sector Leasing (PSL)	PSL properties are owned by private landlords. These properties are leased by the Council who sublet them to individuals in housing need.
Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)	Registered social landlords are usually housing associations or housing cooperatives which are registered with the government housing agency, Communities Scotland. They aim to provide good, low cost accommodation for people who really need it.
SCSH	Scottish Council for Single Homeless
Section 5 referrals	Section 5 referrals (introduced in Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001) are the formal means by which councils can ensure that homeless people are housed by registered social landlords. RSLs have to comply with the council's request for accommodation, unless they have a good reason not to.
Shelter	Campaigning organisation to end homelessness throughout the United Kingdom
Social Housing	Social housing is owned by councils or registered social landlords. Social housing may be houses, flats, high-rise

	flats, etc. Social housing is sometimes referred to as public sector housing.
Social Networks	Personal networks made up of people who can be called on for help, pass the time of day with or seek advice from.
SPS	Scottish Prison Service
WDC	West Dunbartonshire Council
WD CAB	West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau



West Dunbartonshire Council
Housing, Environmental and Economic Development

West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy Draft Action Plan 2008– 2013

Draft April 2008



West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Aim 1 Prevention

‘To prevent homelessness occurring in West Dunbartonshire’

Objective 1.1 By April 2010, we will ensure the provision of a comprehensive range of information, advice and assistance to prevent homelessness in West Dunbartonshire				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
1.1.1	We will develop a West Dunbartonshire Housing Options Guide	WDC, HEED	Web Based Housing Options Guide available to all partners and the West Dunbartonshire community.	September 2008
1.1.2	We will publish on the Councils' website and websites of partners information and advice to prevent homelessness	WDC, HEED, All Homelessness Forum partners	Advice and Information to prevent homelessness available on WDC and partner websites	September 2008
1.1.3	We will undertake an assessment and review of current preventative activities in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	Review undertaken, gaps in preventative activity identified and actions implemented to address them.	September 2008
1.1.4	We will ensure that there is ongoing access to independent advice and information	WDC – HEED, SHELTER and voluntary sector partners	Independent Housing advice and Information accessible to everyone in West Dunbartonshire.	September 2008
1.1.5	We will review and update current information material available relating to Housing Advice and Homelessness	WDC – HEED	New leaflets and information published.	December 2008
1.1.6	We will ensure that housing advice and information is in a suitable format and is accessible to everyone	WDC, HEED	Access to information for those who may not easily access it in standard formats	December 2008
1.1.7	We will establish a Partnership group which will develop Information and advice provision in West	WDC, HEED	Homelessness Forum – Advice and Information Working Group established.	March 2009

	Dunbartonshire		Information and Advice Strategy agreed by partners and implementation plan put in place.	
1.1.8	We will enhance and further develop protocols to reduce the risk of homelessness for those leaving: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Armed forces • Hospital • Care • Prison 	WDC, HEED	Protocols in place for each of the groups identified.	March 2009
1.1.9	We will ensure intensive housing management services are in place for tenants who have been identified as 'vulnerable'	WDC, HEED All housing providers	Consistent referral approach to ensure those in need of tenancy support have access to it.	March 2009
1.1.10	We will develop and produce a Homelessness Information Guide	WDC, HEED	Homelessness Information Guide available	April 2009
1.1.11	We will assess the success of the Housing Advice surgery within Greenock Prison and plan to develop services in other prisons within Scotland.	WDC HEED, SPS, Criminal Justice Social Work Partnership	Evaluation of Housing Advice provision in Greenock Prison published and actions implemented. Plan implemented to provide housing advice and information at other suitable prison locations in Scotland.	April 2009 April 2009
1.1.12	We will attain HomePoint accreditation for standards for housing advice and information for Homeless Services	WDC, HEED	HomePoint Accreditation	October 2009
1.1.13	We will assist all agencies in meeting accredited standards for housing advice and information ensuring people access the highest quality housing advice everywhere in West Dunbartonshire.	WDC, HEED	All front line staff in partner agencies trained to HomePoint national standards for Advice and Information provision.	March 2010

Objective 1.2 – By November 2008, we will raise awareness of homelessness issues in West Dunbartonshire to assist in the prevention of homelessness				
	Action	Who?	What? (What will we achieve)?	When?
1.2.1	We will develop and distribute homelessness factsheets aimed at raising awareness of homelessness among staff in Health, Education and Employment services	WDC, HEED	Factsheets distributed to key personnel within partner agencies to allow them to identify trigger points to prevent homelessness.	September 2008
1.2.2	We will develop a single homelessness and support service directory that is web based and all services can access	WDC, HEED Homelessness Forum – Advice and Information Working Group	Homelessness and Support Service Directory established	September 2008
1.2.6	We will publish a Homelessness newsletter and distribute to all WDC and partner agency staff	WDC, HEED	Homelessness newsletter published and distributed twice a year.	September 2008
1.2.3	We will hold an annual homelessness conference in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	First Homelessness Conference held in November 2008	November 2008
1.2.4	We will develop and hold locally a homelessness awareness week	WDC, HEED	West Dunbartonshire Homelessness awareness week held culminating in Homelessness conference	November 2008
1.2.7	We will distribute posters and leaflets to raise awareness of homelessness services	WDC, HEED	Information provision in place.	November 2008
1.2.5	We will develop an awareness/publicity plan to remove the stigmatisation and negative attitudes towards homeless households	WDC, HEED Homelessness Forum – Advice and Information Working Group	Plan implemented in January 2009 to raise awareness to assist in the reduction of the stigma and negative attitudes towards homeless households.	January 2009

1.2.8	We will develop a training programme for staff working with homeless people including addiction, mental health, domestic abuse and child protection staff	WDC, HEED	Training programme in place to raise awareness of homelessness triggers.	September 2010
Objective 1.3 – By April 2011, we will have developed support and services to prevent homelessness occurring as a result through relationship breakdown				
	Action	Who?	What? (What will we achieve)?	When?
1.3.1	We will in partnership with the voluntary sector investigate the possibility of establishing a family mediation service to prevent homelessness as a result of parents no longer/willing to accommodate including the provision of 'nightstop' accommodation.	WDC, HEED Voluntary Sector Partners	1) Study complete 2) Assess options from completed study.	December 2008 March 2009
1.3.2	We will develop in partnership with the SCSH a Parents Guide for West Dunbartonshire to assist in the prevention of homelessness	WDC, HEED, SCSH	Parents Guide available to all parents in West Dunbartonshire	December 2008
1.3.3	We will review the extent and nature of relationship breakdown in homelessness	WDC, HEED	Report produced and actions recommended.	March 2009
Objective 1.4 – By April 2011, we will have developed support and services to prevent homelessness occurring as a result through domestic abuse				
	Action	Who?	What? (What will we achieve)?	When?
1.4.1	We will ensure that the prevention of homelessness is a key aim of domestic abuse strategies in West Dunbartonshire – ensure a co-ordinated approach across West Dunbartonshire.	WDC, Social Work Department, HEED	Prevention of homelessness addressed within Domestic Abuse Strategies	April 2009
1.4.2	We will ensure that homelessness prevention is a crucial element of the Domestic Abuse pathfinder initiative	WDC Social Work Department, HEED	Homeless Service will be actively involved in the planned roll out of the initial	April 2009

	within Clydebank and is key to the Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) agenda		domestic abuse pathfinder throughout West Dunbartonshire.	
1.4.3	We will investigate with partners the development of a new Women's Aid refuge in Clydebank	WDC Social Work Department, HEED, Clydebank Womens' Aid, Scottish Government	Identify development options.	September 2009
1.4.4	We will ensure that victims of domestic abuse have access to services and agencies that will aim to prevent the crisis of homelessness.	WDC, Womens Aid, Strathclyde Police, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Identify gaps in interagency service knowledge. Develop and deliver joint training initiatives to improve signposting of services	March 2010 March 2010
Objective 1.5 – By April 2011, we will have developed services and support to prevent homelessness occurring as a result of any financial hardship.				
	Action	Who?	What? (What will we achieve)?	When?
1.5.1	We will promote income maximisation and benefit take up to assist in the prevention of homelessness as a result of rent arrears.	WDC – Social Work Department, HEED, Finance Departments	Information and advice available in suitable formats.	December 2008
1.5.2	We will ensure early intervention to prevent the threat of homelessness by improving public awareness of money advice services through targeted information and advice.	West Dunbartonshire Citizens Advice Bureau	Sustainable publicity campaign established	December 2008
1.5.3	We will develop clear access to money advice services by establishing an effective referral system and promoting joint training to all front line officers	WDC – HEED, Social Work Department, West Dunbartonshire CAB	Protocol established between Homeless Services and Money Advice/ income Maximisation services Joint training initiatives launched.	December 2008 December 2008

1.5.4	We will respond appropriately to regulations arising from the implementation of the duties arising from Section 11 of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003	WDC, HEED	Implement Scottish Government's guidance of the implementation of Section 11 of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003.	March 2009
1.5.5	We will ensure people that have mortgage arrears have access to advice and information to assist in the prevention of homelessness.	WDC, HEED, West Dunbartonshire CAB	Information and Advice readily available in suitable formats.	March 2009
1.5.6	We will investigate the feasibility of introducing schemes within West Dunbartonshire that will assist in the prevention of homelessness as a result of mortgage default. E.g.; mortgage to rent scheme	WDC, HEED Scottish Government	Options assessed and recommendations progressed.	March 2009
1.5.6	We will promote energy efficiency methods to prevent homelessness occurring as result of fuel poverty	WDC, HEED	Implementation of Home Energy Conservation Act Strategy	March 2009
1.5.7	We will examine alternatives to eviction as a result of rent arrears to prevent homelessness occurring.	WDC, Finance and HEED	Report published and options assessed	March 2009
1.5.8	We will explore links between preventing homelessness and tackling financial inclusion	WDC, HEED	Establish issues, develop and implement action plan to ensure fewer people become homeless due to financial difficulties and poverty	April 2009
1.5.9	We will ensure that the prevention of homelessness is a key aim of rent recovery policies and strategies for all landlords in West Dunbartonshire.	WDC, HEED, All local housing associations	Prevention of homelessness addressed within rent recovery plans and strategies.	April 2009
1.5.10	We will deliver a housing education programme within all West	WDC, HEED	Housing Education Programme established in	August 2011

	Dunbartonshire secondary schools which incorporates budgeting skills and money/debt advice		West Dunbartonshire	
Objective 1.6 – By April 2011, we will have reduced homelessness occurring to young people (16-25) in West Dunbartonshire by 25%				
	Action	Who?	What? (What will we achieve)?	When?
1.6.1	We will develop in partnership with West Dunbartonshire's young community and with youth organisations a Young Persons Information Pack	WDC, HEED, SCSH, Y Sort It	Localised Young Persons information pack in place.	December 2008
1.6.2	We will support the Young persons Addiction Service and will provide direct access units for young addiction service users.	WDC, HEED, Social Work, Alternatives	Direct access units available to individuals supported through the Young Persons Addiction Service	December 2008
1.6.3	We will work in partnership with youth organisations and other agencies in West Dunbartonshire to develop an integrated strategy for housing and related services to young people	WDC, HEED	Delivery of West Dunbartonshire's Young Persons Housing Strategy	March 2009
1.6.4	We will research the high incidences of homelessness amongst young females in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	Report produced and actions identified	March 2009
1.6.5	We will investigate the feasibility of introducing furnished starter tenancies for young people to promote successful independent living	WDC, HEED	Report on introduction of 'starter tenancies' for young people produced and options assessed.	March 2009
1.6.6	We will support national organisations in lobbying for the review of the Single Room Rent restriction for under 25s particularly in relation to single pregnant	WDC, HEED, Shelter, SCSH	Active participation in campaign to review legislation.	March 2009

	women.			
1.6.7	We will investigate opportunities for young people to access a sustainable housing solution within the private rented sector, including the feasibility of introducing a 'flat sharing' in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED, Private Landlords	Development and Promotion of Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	September 2009
1.6.8	We will establish a Housing Education programme to be delivered to all West Dunbartonshire school pupils S4 to ensure every S4 pupil knows the facts about homelessness and can avoid it	WDC, HEED and Education	All S4 pupils and above in West Dunbartonshire will know the facts about homelessness and can avoid it. The programme will be piloted in 2 schools and rolled out to include all secondary schools in West Dunbartonshire by 2012 (pilot on site August 2008)	August 2011
Objective 1.7 – By April 2011, we will have developed service and support to reduce and ultimately prevent homelessness resulting through health and addiction issues				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
1.7.1	We will enhance and further develop protocols to reduce the risk of homelessness for those leaving hospital	WDC, HEED NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Protocol reviewed and updated.	September 2008
1.7.2	We will continue to work in partnership and Homeless Services will contribute to play a key role within the rug and Alcohol Forum and Treatment and Support group	WDC HEED	Effective partnership working between Homelessness and Addiction Services	September 2008
1.7.3	We will continue to work in partnership review and implement an area wide Homelessness and Addictions protocol	WDC Social Work, HEED, Alternatives DACA, WD Alcohol and	Homelessness/Addictions protocol agreed and implemented.	December 2008

		Drug Forum		
1.7.4.	We will review the current mechanisms to ensure that clear, referral, assessment, support planning and information sharing procedures are in place to assist individuals with addiction issues	WDC Social Work, HEED	Intensive co-ordinated support available for those at risk of homelessness.	December 2008
1.7.5	We will ensure that all Homelessness Services staff have access to training to develop understanding of health and addiction issues	WDC Social Work, HEED	Range of training opportunities available for Homelessness Services staff on health and addiction issues. Improved communication between homelessness services and addiction services	December 2008
1.7.6	We will promote healthy living to all homeless households residing in temporary accommodation including sexual health information	WDC, HEED	Health Living Information and advice contained within resettlement package	December 2008
1.7.7	We will monitor that all actions incorporated within the NHS health and Homelessness Action Plan.	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Health and Homelessness Action Plan actions implemented	March 2009
1.7.8	We will continue to ensure in partnership with statutory and voluntary partners resources are available to address the support needs of a range of service users including addiction and mental health issues	WDC, Social Work, HEED, Partners within Homelessness Forum	Intensive co-ordinated support available for those at risk of homelessness	March 2009
1.7.9	We will provide housing advice and information resources within all local hospitals to ensure that people have access to relevant advice and information to prevent homelessness on their discharge.	WDC, HEED, NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Information available at all local hospitals.	March 2009

1.7.10	We will provide ongoing training to NHS staff in relation to homelessness issues	WDC, HEED NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Training Day and Resource information available to NHS staff	March 2009
Objective 1.8 – By April 2012, we will have developed capacity to maximise tenancy sustainment levels in West Dunbartonshire				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
1.8.1	We will include within the new Homeless Performance Monitoring Framework levels of tenancy sustainment of homeless applicants in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	Increased awareness and monitoring of tenancy sustainment levels	September 2008
1.8.2	We will in partnership with Impact Arts support a 'Fab Pad' tenancy sustainment project in West Dunbartonshire	Impact Arts, WDC, HEED, Local Housing Associations	Fab Pad project in place in West Dunbartonshire and increased tenancy sustainment levels among young people aged 16-25 involved within project	September 2008
1.8.3	We will strive to maximise where appropriate the use of discretionary housing benefit (DHB) to assist homeless households moving from temporary to permanent accommodation	WDC, Finance, HEED	Increase awareness of DHB to assist the formation of successful sustained tenancies	November 2008
1.8.4	We will put in place systems and processes to ensure that contact is made with housing support services when a tenant is at risk of losing their tenancy as a result of arrears or anti-social behaviour across all housing tenures.	WDC, HEED Local Housing Associations	Increased support to ensure maximised tenancy sustainment levels and reduction in the incidences of homelessness.	November 2008
1.8.5	We will develop a West Dunbartonshire tenancy sustainment strategy to improve tenancy sustainment levels in West Dunbartonshire.	WDC –HEED, Local Housing Associations	Strategy published and actions implemented	April 2009

1.8.6	We will maximise the opportunity to reuse recycled furniture to assist people setting up a new home	WDC, Home for Home, Partners within Homelessness Forum	Assistance to homeless households in establishing a successful tenancy.	April 2009



West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Aim 2 Housing Options

‘To improve the range of Housing Options available in West Dunbartonshire and respond effectively to households in homeless crisis’

Objective 2.1 By April 2010, we will have improved access to housing for people who are homeless or at risk of homeless							
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?			
2.1.1	We will develop and deliver a Housing Options Guide for the communities of West Dunbartonshire.	WDC, HEED	Housing Options Guide available to all partners and the West Dunbartonshire community.	September 2008			
2.1.2	We will continue to ensure allocations made to homeless households are suitable for their needs.	WDC, HEED	Carry out review of homeless offers within West Dunbartonshire including Service User consultation exercise.	June 2009			
2.1.3	We will assess and examine introducing Housing Options interviews to ensure individuals have access to information about potential housing solutions to prevent the crisis of homelessness	WDC, HEED	Housing Options interviews piloted within Homeless Services	September 2009			
2.1.4	We will undertake a comprehensive review of our allocations policy and procedures and examine the possibility of introducing a choice based letting system within West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	Review of allocations policy and actions implemented	March 2010			
2.1.5	We will develop and implement a Common Housing Register (CHR) within West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED, Local Housing Associations	CHR operational	August 2010			
2.1.6	We will continue to monitor and review the % of WDC lets made to homeless households and set targets on an annual basis in order to achieve the 2012 targets in relation to abolition of priority need.	WDC, HEED	Target of 50% of all Council allocations to homeless households in 2011/2012	08/09 40%	09/10 42%	10/11 45%	11/12 50%
2.1.7	In partnership with our local RSL partners we will maximise the use of Section 5 referrals to increase opportunities for homeless households to be housed. We will continue to monitor and review the % of WDC lets made to homeless	WDC, HEED Local Housing Associations	Target of 50% of all RSL allocations being made to homeless households in 2011/2012	08/09 38%	09/10 42%	10/11 45%	11/12 50%

	households and set targets on an annual basis in order to achieve the 2012 targets in relation to all abolition of priority need.						
Objective 2.2 By July 2009, we will plan to improve affordable housing options to people who are homeless or who are at risk of homelessness							
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?			
2.2.1	We will publish a new Local Housing Strategy that will have been informed by a Housing Needs and Supply Study to determine affordable housing options to people who are homeless or are at risk of homelessness.	WDC, HEED	The delivery and implementation of West Dunbartonshire's Local Housing Strategy	July 2011			
Objective 2.4 By April 2010, we will have develop increased capacity for the Private Rented sector to meet the housing needs of homeless households							
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?			
2.3.1	We will include up to date information on the Private Rented Sector (PRS) within our Housing Options Guide	WDC, HEED	Information on Private Rented Sector (PRS) contained within Housing Options Guide	September 2008			
2.3.2	We will review, and if appropriate increase the opportunities for individuals to access the Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	WDC, HEED WDC Citizens Advice Bureau, Private landlords	Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme re-launched as West Dunbartonshire Keys and accessible to target groups resulting in an increased number of homeless households sustainably accommodated in the PRS	December 2008			
2.3.3	We will undertake research into whether the Private Rented Sector within West Dunbartonshire to ascertain whether it is a sustainable housing solution of homeless and low income households	WDC, HEED Private landlords	Research report published and recommendations implemented	April 2009			

2.3.4	We will examine the possibility of establishing a Private Sector Leasing Scheme within West Dunbartonshire to increase our supply of permanent and temporary accommodation.	WDC, HEED	Report published and recommendations implemented	April 2009
2.3.5	We will work with internal partners and private landlords to establish a Private Sector Landlords' Forum.	WDC, HEED Private Landlords	Landlords Forum established	April 2009
2.3.6	We will offer tenancy support that is available to homeless households accommodated within the PRS to ensure help and assistance with housing benefit applications and successful independent living.	WDC, HEED	Individuals receive required support no matter their tenure.	April 2010
Objective 2.4 By April 2009, we will expand choice to include accessing furnished tenancies				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
2.4.1	We will develop a plan to enhance programme of conversion of temporary accommodation units into permanent accommodation for homeless people to assist tenancy sustainment	WDC, HEED	Plan implemented that will ensure Ten temporary tenancies being converted to permanent furnished tenancies on an annual basis	April 2009
2.4.2	We will continue to ensure that tenants have access to basic furnishings on day one of their tenancy to assist them to successfully sustain their tenancy	WDC, HEED	Basic starter packs available to assist with transition from temporary to permanent accommodation	April 2009
2.4.3	We will investigate the feasibility of introducing furnished starter tenancies for young people to promote successful independent living	WDC, HEED	Report on introduction of 'starter tenancies' for young people produced and actions implemented.	April 2009

Objective 2.5 – By July 2009, we will ensure mechanisms are in place to Plan , manage and develop the supply of temporary accommodation				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
2.5.1	We will continue to ensure that the use of Bed and Breakfast (B & B) is eliminated for homeless households in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	No homeless households is to be accommodated in B&B	Ongoing
2.5.2	We will establish a model to determine the requirements for temporary accommodation provision to meet current and future need in West Dunbartonshire including supported accommodation.	WDC, HEED	Model in place as part of Temporary Accommodation Strategy to ensure people entitled to temporary accommodation have access to accommodation which meets their needs	December 2008
2.5.3	We will develop a resettlement package for homeless households accommodated in temporary accommodation	WDC, HEED	Package developed and in place for all homeless households to support independent living and make successful transition to mainstream accommodation	December 2008
2.5.4	We will develop a cross authority temporary accommodation protocol	WDC, HEED East Dunbartonshire Council, Stirling Council and Argyll and Bute Council	Protocol in place, to ensure homeless households placed in B&B accommodation by neighbouring local authorities are not at risk and do not pose a risk for the communities of West Dunbartonshire	January 2009
2.5.5	We will ensure that our temporary accommodation provision includes barrier free accommodation suitable for disabled service users.	WDC, HEED Local Housing Associations	Temporary Accommodation provision extended to include barrier free accommodation	April 2009
2.5.6 (2.3.4)	We will examine the possibility of establishing a Private Sector Leasing Scheme within West Dunbartonshire to increase our supply of	WDC, HEED	Report published and recommendations implemented	April 2009

	permanent and temporary accommodation.			
2.5.7	We will establish a temporary accommodation standard within West Dunbartonshire and ensure service user needs and aspirations are being addressed in the provision of temporary accommodation	WDC, HEED	Standard implemented and monitoring framework developed. Reduction in people being evicted from temporary accommodation	April 2009 April 2009
2.5.8	Consider the feasibility of establishing a supported accommodation resource to prepare for independent living for :- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homeless people with complex needs • Homeless Young Females 	WDC, HEED	Review conducted to inform local housing strategy and decision to proceed taken.	July 2011



West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Aim 3 Sustainable Solutions

‘To ensure a sustainable solution for those individuals who have experienced homelessness’

Objective 3.1 By April 201, we will ensure that everybody has access to appropriate housing support including:-				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Homeless people in temporary accommodation ○ People in the early stages of permanent accommodation ○ People identified as at risk of homelessness ○ People identified as in need of support to sustain their accommodation 				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
3.1.1	We will improve understanding of those homeless or vulnerable households who have particular needs, where current services are not adequate to achieve a sustainable housing solution.	WDC, HEED, Social Work	Careplan approach agreed for all vulnerable households	November 2008
3.1.2	We will review all protocols and identify gaps and take appropriate action	WDC, HEED, Social Work, Voluntary Sector partners	All protocols reviewed and updated	April 2009
3.1.3	We will ensure that everyone who has been rehoused from a homeless situation is assessed within 6 months of the commencement of their tenancy to identify support needs.	WDC, HEED, Local Housing Associations	Assessment of whether support needs are being met and identify future support needs to assist tenancy sustainment	April 2009
3.1.4	We will carry out a review of Housing Support in West Dunbartonshire to plan for future service provision.	WDC, HEED	Review of Housing support in West Dunbartonshire published and actions implemented	April 2010
Objective 3.2 By April 2010, we will develop capacity so that people who have experienced homelessness can access appropriate employment, training and volunteering opportunities				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
3.2.1	We will establish a partnership with Job Centre Plus and local Careers/Employment agencies to examine the scope for developing training and employment opportunities for homeless people.	WDC, HEED DWP (Job Centre Plus), Careers Scotland	Increased Training and Employment opportunities for individuals who have experienced homelessness	April 2009
3.2.2	We will improve links with the Job Centre Plus and develop appropriate protocols	WDC, HEED DWP (Job Centre Plus)	Protocol agreements which will ensure more homeless people are routed into	April 2009

			employment.	
3.2.3	We will ensure effective partnership arrangements are in place to allow homeless households the opportunity to participate in NEET (Not in employment, education or training) activity in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	Increased opportunities for homeless households to access employment, education and training.	April 2009
3.2.4	We will ensure Homelessness Services link into the Workforce Plus Action Plan to assist in improving employment opportunities for homeless households	WDC, HEED	Support provided for homeless households to access employment opportunities	April 2009
3.2.5	We will as part of housing support provision ensure individuals have information and access to employment, training and volunteering opportunities.	WDC, HEED	Access to information for homeless households on training and volunteering opportunities	April 2010
3.2.6	We will examine opportunities for individuals who have experienced homelessness to have access to employment initiatives within the house building industry, e.g.; Youthbuild	WDC, HEED	Development of initiatives which will have an impact in ensuring individuals who have experienced homeless have access to employment	April 2010
Objective 3.3 By September 2009 we will positively expand social networks for individuals who have experienced homelessness				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
3.3.1	We will map existing provision and make links with Community Education and partners in the voluntary sector to develop networks to overcome isolation for homeless people	WDC, HEED	Links established and future action agreed in partnership to promote positive social networks for homeless households.	October 2009
3.3.2	We will establish a service user consultation group on homelessness issues	WDC, HEED	Service User Consultation Group established. Opportunity to inform service delivery and increased social networking opportunities for homeless households	April 2009
3.3.3	We will provide information packs on local	WDC, HEED	Information packs available.	September 2009

	services to people moving into permanent/temporary accommodation			
3.3.4	We will engage with Scottish Social Networks to plan to increase social networking opportunities for homeless or potentially homeless households	WDC, HEED Scottish Social Networks	Information and training available to all services and agencies working with homeless households	September 2009
3.3.5	We will actively promote physical and leisure pursuits to build social capacity for homeless households.	WDC, HEED	Information provided on sport and leisure opportunities for homeless households.	September 2009
3.3.6	We will explore options for developing a befriending / mentoring service to assist and support successful resettlement.	WDC, HEED	Options assessed to the value of the Implementation of befriending / mentoring service for homeless households	September 2009
Objective 3.4 By December 2008, ensure people who have experienced homelessness can access a full range of health services				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
3.4.1	We will in partnership with the NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde ensure that all relevant actions within the Health and Homelessness Action Plan are realised.	NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde WDC, HEED	All actions within Health and Homelessness Action Plan implemented	December 2008
3.4.2	We will continue to develop care pathways between addiction, mental health and homelessness services	WDC, Social Work, HEED	Care pathways approach to ensuring positive outcomes for individuals	December 2008
3.4.3	We will improve communication between homelessness services and addiction services regarding service access and ensure officers within Homelessness Services can access services.	WDC, Social Work, HEED	Improved joint care planning services across all services	December 2008
Objective 3.5 By September 2009, Improve the health and well being of homeless households				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
3.5.1	We will raise awareness of homelessness among	WDC, HEED	Awareness day held with	December 2009

	staff of NHS and other health agencies		NHS staff and fact sheets distributed to all health agencies	
3.5.2	We will include information promoting health awareness within our temporary accommodation resettlement pack including information on sexual health.	WDC, HEED NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Increased access to health information for service users in temporary accommodation	December 2009
3.5.3	We will undertake targeted work to address the nutritional needs of homeless households in West Dunbartonshire.	WDC HEED, HHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde	Increased access to assistance to achieving improved Health and well being for all homeless households	December 2009
Objective 3.6 By April 2009, we will ensure that ex-offenders have access to services and support to ensure resettlement				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
3.6.1 (1.1.11)	We will assess the success of the Housing Advice surgery within Greenock Prison and plan to develop services in other prisons within Scotland.	WDC HEED, SPS, Criminal Justice Social Work Partnership	Evaluation of Housing Advice provision in Greenock Prison published and actions implemented. Plan implemented to provide housing advice and information at other suitable prison locations in Scotland.	April 2009 April 2009



West Dunbartonshire Homelessness Strategy 2008-2013

Aim 4 Commitment

‘To ensure a commitment to continue to develop and improve services to tackling homelessness through a partnership approach’

Objective 4.1 By April 2012, we will have complied with the new duties arising from the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 and Homelessness etc., (Scotland) Act 2003

	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
4.1.1 (1.5.4)	We will respond appropriately to regulations arising from the implementation of the duties arising from Section 11 of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003	WDC, HEED	Implement Scottish Government's guidance of the implementation of Section 11 of the Homelessness (Scotland) Act 2003.	March 2009
4.1.2.	We will enhance the assessment of applicants to ensure judgements of priority need are more comprehensively informed	WDC, HEED	The elimination of non-priority decisions to less than 10% in 2008/09.	April 2009
4.1.3	We will develop and adopt a planned phased approach to ensure we meet our obligations in terms of the abolition of priority need. This will involve:- (i) Extend priority need groups to include 19-21 year olds, displaced spouses and over 55's. (ii) Extend priority need groups to include 21-25 year olds. (iii) Abolish priority need assessment within West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	The % of homeless households assessed as in priority need to increase to:- (i) 95% (ii) 98% (iii) 100%	(i) April 2009 (ii) April 2010 (iii) April 2011
4.1.4	We will monitor and report on the total number of households that are declared intentionally homeless	WDC, HEED	Inform planning for the fulfilment of Sections 5 and 6 of the Homelessness etc., (Scotland) Act 2003	April 2009
4.1.5	We will develop a plan to respond effectively to the suspension of local connection	WDC, HEED	Support and accommodation needs of homeless people presenting in West	September 2009

			Dunbartonshire met.									
4.1.6	Ensure that actions identified in this action plan are implemented, specifically actions under Strategic Aims 1 and 2, prevention and housing options.	WDC, HEED	Reduction in the number of Homelessness presentations within West Dunbartonshire as a result of increased homelessness prevention activity.	April 2012								
Objective 4.2 By April 2009, we will develop a comprehensive performance management framework to measure the impact of the Homelessness Strategy in preventing and alleviating homelessness in West Dunbartonshire												
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?								
4.2.1	We will develop and implement a Performance Management Framework for Homeless Services in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	Performance management framework to measure the impact of the Homelessness Strategy in preventing and alleviating homelessness in West Dunbartonshire	September 2008								
4.2.2.	We will introduce a service user involvement programme to inform and influence homelessness service development in West Dunbartonshire	WDC, HEED	Service User Involvement programme in place.	April 2009								
4.2.3	We will analyse current records from across services to improve understanding of those households with whom contact is lost from the homeless service	WDC, HEED	Report produced and actions identified	April 2009								
4.2.3	We will reduce the number of homeless households and potentially homeless households with whom contact is lost	WDC, HEED	Reduction by 25% from 2006/07 baseline of lost contact cases (36%)	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>08/09</td> <td>09/10</td> <td>10/11</td> <td>11/12</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30%</td> <td>25%</td> <td>15%</td> <td>10%</td> </tr> </table>	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	30%	25%	15%	10%
08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12									
30%	25%	15%	10%									
Objective 4.3 By September 2009, ensure that the Homelessness Strategy continues to be linked to all other relevant strategic linked to all other												

relevant plans and strategies				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
4.3.1	We will ensure that future strategic and service development adheres to the Getting it Right for every child agenda.	WDC, Social Work, HEED	The prevention of Homelessness plays a key role in the GIRFEC agenda	April 2009
4.3.2	We will ensure the impacts of homelessness are included in the development of West Dunbartonshire's Corporate Debt Policy	WDC, Social Work, HEED	The impacts of homelessness are highlighted within Corporate Debt Policy	April 2009
4.3.3	We will investigate a system of reviewing all relevant departmental plans and policies for the impact on the prevention of homelessness	WDC, HEED	System in place and all relevant plans and policies assessed regarding impact on the prevention of homelessness	September 2009
4.3.4	We will continue to ensure that tackling homelessness remains a priority within West Dunbartonshire's Local Housing Strategy	WDC, HEED	Preventing and alleviating homelessness in West Dunbartonshire remains one of the key objectives of the LHS	July 2011
Objective 4.4 By April 2009, We will have improved communication with partner agencies to enhance services to prevent and alleviate homelessness in West Dunbartonshire.				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
4.4.1	We will continue to work in partnership through the multi-agency Homelessness Forum to implement strategy	WDC, HEED	Programme of Homelessness Forum meetings and activities established	August 2008
4.4.2	We will through the Homelessness Forum, survey partners regarding the effectiveness of homelessness services on an annual basis	WDC, HEED	Improved awareness to develop services to tackle homelessness in West Dunbartonshire	April 2009

4.4.3	We will put in place a protocol to set out how housing providers can share and access key information about sex offenders and violent clients.	WDC, HEED Local Housing Associations	Information Sharing Protocol agreed.	April 2009
Objective 4.4 By April 2010, we will ensure all strategic and operational developments are consistent with equality and diversity agendas				
	Action	Who?	What? (what will we achieve)	When?
4.4.1	We will examine the outcomes of the research into housing needs of gypsies / travellers	WDC, HEED	Ensure our approach to preventing and alleviating homelessness is responsive to the needs of gypsies / travellers	April 2009
4.4.2	We will research housing and homelessness needs of LGBT people	WDC, HEED	Ensure our approach to preventing and alleviating homelessness is responsive to the needs of LGBT community	April 2009
4.4.3	We will research housing and homelessness needs of Minority Ethnic Groups	WDC, HEED	Ensure our approach to preventing and alleviating homelessness is responsive to the needs of minority ethnic community	April 2009
4.4.4	We will implement all actions highlighted during Integrated Impact assessment of the Homelessness Strategy,	WDC, Partners within Homelessness Forum	Actions contained within Integrated Impact Assessment implemented	April 2009

