

# Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

## Feeling Safe: Impact on Clydebank's Community



### Feeling safe can have a positive impact on people when everyone:

- feels safe and secure in their own home and their local community taking account of the experience of different population groups.

This is why it is one of Scotland's Place and Wellbeing Outcomes.

## The evidence tells us<sup>1</sup>:



Fear of crime can impact negatively on physical and mental health.



Fear of crime, antisocial behaviour or crime itself can make a place feel unsafe.



Perceptions of a place feeling unsafe can lead a reduction in outdoor activities.



Not feeling safe is a key barrier preventing teenage girls and young women from using parks and public spaces.



Perceptions of safety can influence a sense of powerlessness.



Social capital can be lower or perceived to be lower in places regarded as being unsafe.



Some groups within the population can have limited access to safe and well-maintained environments.



A lack of maintenance can lead to a place feeling unsafe.

1. Source: [Evidence Behind Place Standard Tool & Place and Wellbeing Outcomes](#)

# Indicators for Feeling Safe in West Dunbartonshire and Clydebank<sup>2</sup>

**91% of West Dunbartonshire Citizens Panel respondents state that feeling safe is very important to their quality of life.**

## Percentage of Adults who feel very / fairly safe in their home alone at night in West Dunbartonshire (2019)

- Women 91%
- Men 99%
  
- People living in social rented housing 91%
- People living in owned property 99%

## Crime Rate 2017 (Number of crimes and crude rate per 1000 population)

- Clydebank\* 31%
- Dumbarton / Alexandria\* 29%
- West Dunbartonshire 30%
- Scotland 29%

\*Health and Social Care Partnership Locality

## Percentage of Adults who feel very / fairly safe when walking home alone at night in West Dunbartonshire (2019)

- Women 66%
- Men 91%
  
- People living in the 20% most deprived areas 72%
- People living in the 80% least deprived areas 82%

**The most deprived areas of West Dunbartonshire have a 74% higher crime rate than the area as a whole.**

**Crime across West Dunbartonshire would be 61% lower if the levels of the least deprived areas were experienced across the whole population.**  
(2017)

## Hate Crime in West Dunbartonshire (2023)

- Sexual orientation aggravated hate crime is at its highest level in 10 years. (52 charges)
- Racially aggravated hate crime has remained around the same level over the past 10 years. (51 charges)
- Disability aggravated hate crime has increased in the past 10 years and is currently at its highest level. (30 charges)
- Religiously aggravated hate crime is has remained around the same level over the past 10 years. (14 charges)
- Incidents of transgender identity aggravated hate crime have started to emerge in the past few years. (2 charges)

# What we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners in Clydebank in 2023

## Different experiences of feeling safe

Local conversations highlighted that across Clydebank, experiences of feeling safe and perceptions of safety varies amongst different population groups. Reference was made to people living in deprived areas, women, people with physical disabilities and New Scots feeling less safe than other population groups, with a range of factors contributing to this.

## Feeling safe at home

Two factors referred to by local organisations as to why people may not feel safe in their own home, include:

- Neighbours' anti-social behaviour was noted as an issue in areas with high levels of deprivation. New Scots were one of the population groups that made reference to this impacting upon their feelings of safety at home.
- Domestic violence was reported as a key factor impacting women's safety and feelings of safety at home organisations also making reference to the concerning high rate of domestic violence across West Dunbartonshire and Clydebank.

Substance use, particularly alcohol, was highlighted in local conversations, as being perceived to be a contributory element anti-social behaviour and domestic violence.

## Feeling safe in the community

Various factors were frequently referred to by local groups as contributing towards people not feeling safe both within and moving around their local community, including:

- Uncared for and poorly maintained spaces.
- Poorly maintained pathways.
- Narrow pavements or those blocked by parked cars.
- Routes with inadequate lighting when it's dark.
- Routes with busy and high speed traffic.
- Anti-social behaviour in public spaces and on public transport.
- A lack of CCTV or natural surveillance.

In addition to poorly maintained spaces contributing to perceptions of places feeling unsafe, there was concern that this creates a risk for people with disabilities and mobility issues. Inaccessible, poorly maintained or obstructed pathways highlight a barrier to people with physical disabilities or limited mobility ability

to move around the local community independently.

It was also suggested that this will impact some older people's ability to remain independent and living in their own home as they age.

It emerged from local discussions that women in particular had safety concerns about routes and spaces without adequate lighting at night or a lack of CCTV or natural surveillance from housing.

Anti-social behaviour was also highlighted as a key factor contributing towards people feeling unsafe within the community. Again, reference was often made to the use of alcohol being a contributory factor.

In recognition of the factors and population groups identified in local discussions, the need to consider 'feeling safe' from a human rights and equalities perspective and the Public Sector Equality Duty was highlighted by key stakeholders. This was considered as essential to ensure these issues are addressed for both existing and emerging communities within Clydebank and wider West Dunbartonshire.

## Impact on mental health and wellbeing

Local groups and service providers acknowledged the negative impact of not feeling safe on mental wellbeing. They noted that when people feel unsafe within their local community this discourages them from interacting with others, engaging in outdoor activities and accessing services that could be beneficial for their health and wellbeing.

Representatives from local groups involved in delivering services to alleviate the impact of poverty also highlighted that experiencing poverty contributes to people feeling unsafe. It was highlighted that being unable to afford food and other basic necessities places a huge pressure on individuals, with this contributing to more people experiencing anxiety and depression.

## Preventing anti-social behaviour

The role of substance use, particularly alcohol, emerged in many of the discussions in relation to anti-social behaviour. Several organisations made reference to the need to provide activities for young people to provide opportunities for them to engage in positive activities and discourage them substance use and anti-social behaviour. A range of groups and service providers welcomed the introduction of Planet Youth Scotland activity in Clydebank and recognised the value of this preventative approach in providing positive alternatives for young people and contributing towards creating safer local communities.

## Importance collaboration and community involvement

There was recognition amongst local groups and organisations of several initiatives to address various factors that impact upon feelings of safety, including:

- Spring Clean Up initiative that provided free skips and an opportunity for the community involvement.
- West Dunbartonshire Council's Neighbourhood Services work with local housing associations) to address anti-social behaviour.
- Work between Police Scotland and partners to tackle anti-social behaviour on public transport.
- Planet Youth and other diversionary activities for young people to discourage substance use and anti-social behaviour.

However, it was generally suggested that more local action is required to increase feelings of safety amongst local people. It was also highlighted that no one service area or organisation can address all of these issues and that partnership working is crucial to ensure that people feel safe both at home and in the community. With recognition of limited resources, collaboration and pooling resources together is considered essential.

Several statutory partners made reference to the importance involving local communities and of increasing community resilience to increase feelings of safety within local communities.

Third sector organisations were also in support of this, emphasising the importance of community involvement to address safety concerns of different population groups, with solutions being developed that are based on their experience.

Visit the [website](#) for more information on [Clydebank Project Town activity](#). Follow us on X [@place4wellbeing](#) to keep up to date with our latest news and place-based resources.