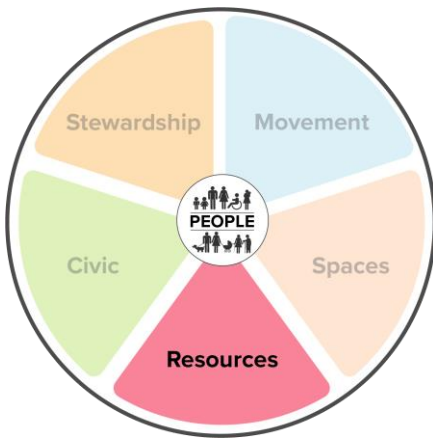


# Shaping Places for Wellbeing Programme

## Housing and Community: Impact on Dunoon's Community



**Housing can have a positive impact on people when everyone has access to:**

- A home that is affordable, energy efficient, high quality, and provides access to private outdoor space.
- A variety of housing types, sizes and tenancies to meet the needs of the community. And of a sufficient density to sustain existing or future local facilities, services and amenities.
- A home that is designed and built to meet need and demand, is adaptable to changing needs and includes accessible/ wheelchair standard housing.
- New homes that are located and designed to provide high levels of climate resilience and use sustainable materials and construction methods.
- Homes that are designed to promote community cohesion.

**This is why it is one of Scotland's Place & Wellbeing Outcomes**

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



Housing should be located close enough to enable residents to easily access facilities and services, social networks, employment and transport



Security of tenure can help people to feel settled, put down roots, and maintain family and social networks



Mental health can be affected through the fear and worry of falling into debt, because residents cannot heat their home



People with mental health illnesses can sometimes find it difficult to access good quality affordable housing, which meets their needs



Certain groups of the population can sometimes find it difficult to access good quality affordable housing, which meets their needs



Inadequate ventilation can lead to poor indoor air quality, which can negatively impact on health



Provision of good quality affordable housing is associated with improved physical and mental health outcomes including quality of life



Fuel poverty can be a particular problem in rural areas because households may not be able to access cheaper forms of fuel

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

## Housing in Dunoon

Dunoon has high levels of single-adult households compared to Argyll and Bute average <sup>2+8</sup>

There were 5316 dwellings in Dunoon in January 2023<sup>3</sup>

Rates of fuel poverty are fairly typical for rural Scotland<sup>3</sup>

Rates of 2nd home ownership are around 2% (Argyll and Bute is 6%)<sup>3</sup>

## What we heard from a range of communities, organisations and practitioners in Dunoon\* in 2023



### Housing in Dunoon

Argyll and Bute Council declared a housing emergency in 2023 and are currently developing an action plan. Some housing issues seen throughout Argyll, are also reflected in Dunoon, such as insufficient social and private rental accommodation compared to demand. There is a diverse range of housing, varied in type, size and quality across the Dunoon settlement area\*. There are no Gypsy/Traveller sites in Dunoon or wider Cowal.



### Energy and heating

The cost and efficiency of heating homes is an issue across Argyll and Bute and is also reported as an issue in Dunoon. Improving insulation of properties as well as supporting people with costs of fuel are seen as priorities.

A significant refurbishment of social housing saw investment in insulation and at least 112 properties in Dunoon insulated in 2022-23<sup>4</sup>.

Damp and mould are often raised as prevalent local issues, especially for elderly people in privately rented accommodation. Self-rationing of energy may also contribute to damp due to ineffective heating of properties.

The cost of living crisis means a wider range of people, including homeowners, are now seeking energy crisis grants. Staff in the free advice sector report that people living alone are particularly struggling financially and subsequently are at risk of eviction. More positively wider awareness of benefits has increased uptake of financial support.

Dunoon settlement is on the gas grid, however in some areas the majority of properties are not connected to mains gas<sup>5</sup>. Other forms of heating currently tend to be more expensive so there is less incentive to move away from gas.

Like many remote and rural places, retrofit experience among contractors can be limited, which impacts on availability of contractors.

How Dunoon homes compare with Scottish average from estimated data<sup>3</sup>

34% of households in fuel poverty (same as average)

10%



Average fuel bill

15%



Average energy consumption

\*Dunoon and Sandbank settlement area as defined by [National Records of Scotland](#) which includes Bullwood, Kirn and Hunters Quay.



## Affordability and availability

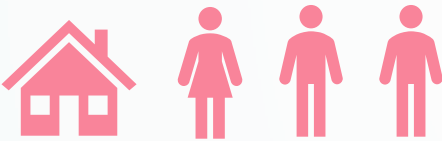
House prices are relatively low in Dunoon but so are local wages, meaning that only around two thirds of the population could afford to buy at the average price<sup>3</sup>. A survey of ACHA tenants in 2023 found that in Cowal only 36% felt their rent was easily affordable<sup>4</sup>.

Some areas within Dunoon have a very high proportion of single-adult households<sup>2</sup>. These include older people living alone in the family home, which is seen to impact on availability due to limited options for people wanting to downsize.

Demand for social housing is mostly for 1-2 bed properties, but large properties are scarce with a low turnover of 3 and 4-bedroom homes<sup>3</sup>.

There were 114 homeless presentations in Cowal in 2022/23, an increase of 18% from 21/22<sup>7</sup>.

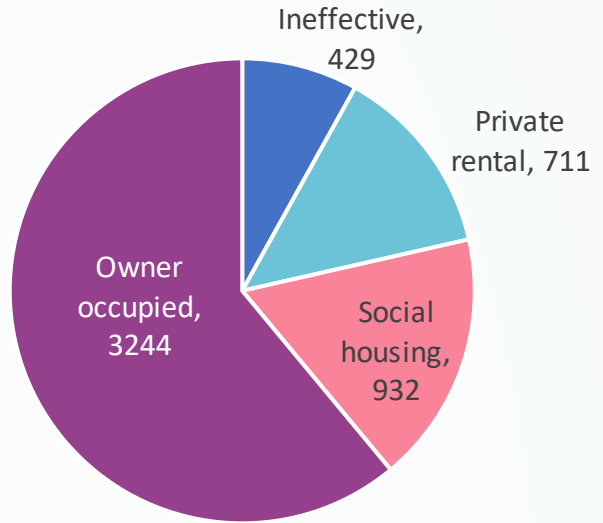
The overall pressure ratio for Dunoon in January 2023 was 3:1, which means for every social house that becomes available there are 3 people waiting for it<sup>6</sup>.



Informal communications networks are seen to regularly have people actively looking for private sector rental, particularly people hoping to move to the area. There is also seen to be an impact on recruitment with it being reported that people are not taking up positions because they can't find suitable housing.

**“ Needs more affordable housing and suitable properties for people wanting to downsize ”**  
*Respondent, Place Standard exercise 2019<sup>9</sup>*

Rates of 'ineffective stock' i.e. homes not available for permanent residential use - are high within the Cowal Housing Market Area (which Dunoon sits in), compared with other parts of Argyll<sup>7</sup>. Second home ownership is actually lower in Dunoon than in many parts of Argyll<sup>3</sup> but is still higher than the Scottish or UK average<sup>8</sup>.



*Housing tenure patterns in Dunoon in January 2023<sup>3</sup>*

Like other rural areas it is seen as challenging to attract property development on the areas identified as potential development sites, due to higher costs and not yet being connected to services. However, there are recent and planned developments which address some of the needs.

Argyll Community Housing Association recently built 4 new homes at Eton Avenue in Dunoon, designed to meet the particular needs of families on the housing waiting list.

Empty homes officers connect people able to take on refurbishment of properties with owners of long-term empty properties.

There are proposed 'affordable housing developments' in the pipeline over the next five years which will improve availability<sup>10</sup>.

Sources: 6 Common Housing Register Waiting List / Annual Lets; 7 [Local Housing Strategy report 2023](#); 8 [NRS, 2022](#); 9 [Place Standard exercise](#); 10 [Strategic Housing Investment Plan](#)



## Maintenance

The number of conversions, extensions and sub-divisions of properties in the years when the military base was operational has left a legacy of properties with unusual access arrangements, some of which may have been unregulated. This is perceived as impacting on clarity for maintenance responsibility.

Generally, Dunoon housing residents are seen as taking pride in their outdoor areas, though there are some common areas for which responsibility is perhaps unclear.

The wet and windy climate impacts on maintenance requirements, which will become more of an issue and highlights the need for locally appropriate solutions.



## Local living

95% of Cowal residents responding to the Council's 2023 Housing Emergency survey said that housing shortage was having an impact on their community<sup>7</sup>

A shortage of appropriate, affordable housing is felt to have an impact on young people's ability to stay in the area, and also on attracting new people to move here. Housing support practitioners in Dunoon reported a particular need from care leavers and other young people for help to sustain their tenancies. Young people looking to return to the area are also reported as being often outpriced by people moving to the area to retire.

The high proportion of single adult households along with the aging demographic that is predicted across Argyll and Bute is seen to have a potential impact on community resilience and demand for services.



## Community engagement and influence

Housing issues cross over with lots of other concerns and are not often raised in isolation through community forums.

It has been suggested that people would like further opportunities for influence, with two specific mentions of particular concern. While second homes are less of an issue in Dunoon than other areas of Argyll and Bute, it has been raised that further consultation on short-term lets would be appreciated. It has also been raised that some private sector homes are seen to be in poor repair and tenants feel that they can't raise concerns due to lack of other housing options.

To help address the challenges of developing new housing, greater partnership with local organisations to identify opportunities was seen as welcome.



## Support and advice

There are a number of organisations working across Argyll and Bute supporting people to address their housing issues. This includes:

- [HOME Argyll](#) to join waiting list
- [ABC housing advice](#)
- [AliEnergy](#) affordable warmth service
- [Home Energy Scotland](#)
- [ABC home energy efficiency](#)
- [ACHA welfare rights service](#)

Sources: Where a specific source isn't indicated the information has been gathered through conversations with local organisations.

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