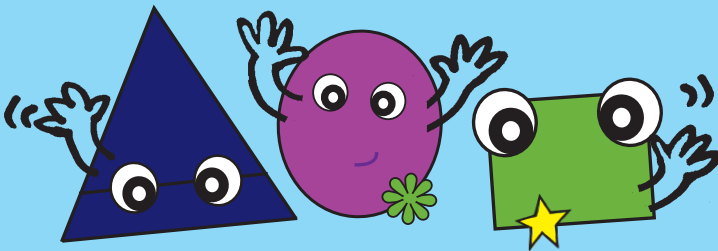


Supporting our Recovery and Enjoying Ourselves

Community Resources in West Dunbartonshire



About this booklet

The FAST group brings together people in West Dunbartonshire who have used addictions services. We give feedback on how services are working and help identify gaps in what people find helpful and what is currently available.

One of the gaps we saw was something to help people get access to all the ordinary resources in the community. Sometimes people who have an alcohol or drugs problem don't use these facilities because they don't know they are there. Sometimes it's because we don't have the confidence, or feel that somehow they are not for us.

We have found that ordinary community resources have helped us on our recovery and we want other people to benefit too. Most of them don't cost much money and lots are free - so it makes it easier to keep up using them as part of managing to stay well.

So we decided to write this booklet to encourage you and give you a wee nudge.

For people who live in West Dunbartonshire

We have described the services that there are for people who live in West Dunbartonshire. Sometimes they are based in Clydebank and sometimes they are in Dumbarton or Alexandria. So you might have to get the bus and go outside your own area for some things. But many facilities are in each local area.

You may be asked for your address or proof that you are a local resident - which is what everyone gets asked.

For people who live in other areas

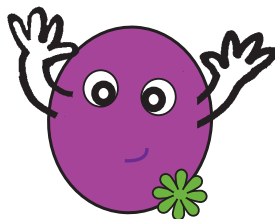
Some of the things we have listed here are there for everyone - like going for a walk along the Clyde. Visitors can come too. For some other things, you may have to pay a bit more if you don't live here. But it would still be nice if you used our facilities to help you in your recovery.

Find out what you have in your own area too. If you do have things like swimming pools – great. And if you don't, this may give you ideas to help you start lobbying for better community facilities in your area.

How we wrote this booklet

We talked over all the things that help people to keep well and use up time in a good way.

We then divided up the list between us. Each person took a topic that they already knew something about or were interested in. We then went off and found out more about our topic - visited a local service and asked them who else we should talk to, or checked out information from the internet.



Our advice for getting started on anything

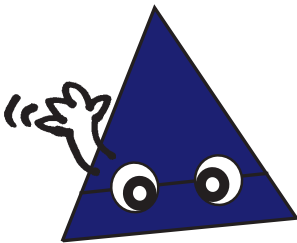
- Think of what you enjoyed before you had problems with drink or drugs. Try it again. Relax, enjoy it.
- Get a pal to go with you. You'll enjoy it more when you've company. And you'll encourage each other.
- Get into a routine. Do it every Monday morning or whatever - just the same time every week.
- People begin to keep an eye out for each other and get to know each other. You often get to know people when you share an interest.
- Think about what makes you comfortable. For example, if you are not very sure of yourself and not good with crowds, go when the place will be quieter.
- You can join a group that does the thing you are interested in. It's easier to get started if you don't have to do too much planning and thinking at the beginning. And again, its other folk to encourage you and give you company.
- If you know someone that already goes along to something, go with them. Give it a try. So one way to start is to ask your pals about the things they do to relax or to keep busy.
- Check out your local Community Centre and see what they've got on.

"If you can't decide what interests you, think about the TV programmes you like. Are there any programmes like documentaries that interest you? You can go the library and find out more about that subject, or join a club or a class to learn more."

"Sometimes the Meadow Centre gets very busy so I avoid these times."

"The cinema is quiet during the day. And sometimes you can get cheaper prices then too."

"If you try something and don't like it, well at least you tried it. So well done for that. But don't stick with something you really don't enjoy. Try something else."



Libraries

Libraries are a good place to get lots of interesting things – books, films on DVD, music on CDs.

The libraries in West Dunbartonshire have computers. There are people who can help you to learn how to use computers – which is good if you are not very confident about that.

So the library is also a good way to get access to lots of other sources of information and to find out about other things you can do.

West Dunbartonshire Libraries has 10 branches: Alexandria, Balloch, Clydebank, Dalmuir, Dumbarton, Duntocher, Faifley, Gavinburn, Ladyton and Parkhall, a mobile library service and a delivery service for people who are housebound. Most of these are open Monday to Saturday. The big ones are open during the day and evenings. The wee ones are not open as long, so it's best to go along and check.

“It’s good. It gets me out of the house for a few hours each day. I check out the music and the DVDs.”

“There is loads on offer at the library. And it’s free.”

“You can check up on all the football clubs you support.”

“Once I got into computers I started to look on the internet for places that interested me. You can go on a virtual tour of a museum in Paris. It’s like being able to go anywhere in the world for free.”



Outdoor activities

You can always go for a walk. And there are lots of other things you can do that get you some fresh air - you can play football, go mountain biking.

There is a great set of maps showing nice easy walks. There is one for Clydebank, Dumbarton, Vale of Leven and the Robert the Bruce trail which goes from Balloch Park down to Levensgrove Park. You’ll get these from the libraries.

Some of the addictions service have walking groups or do other outdoor activities - so you can do that too. Ask your support worker about what is available if you want to try outdoor activities - or anything else - that way.

“If I can get some fresh air each day I sleep better.”

“You can play rounders down at the Havoc. You just use your jackets as the bases. I hadn’t done that in ages.”

"I always enjoyed walking. I've enjoyed in since I was wee. So it is a good way for me to keep fit. I needed to find ways to be more active, get myself out and not hanging round the house. So I tried it again and found I enjoy it still."

"Walking is good and you might find that you enjoy it too."

"Just go for a walk along the beach. Check the tides and wear your wellies if it is going to be wet."

"It's a lovely walk along the Clyde. The scenery is breath-taking. We live in a lovely area. We're lucky."

"You can go on history walks, find out about the history of the area. Clydebank is a great place. There is so much to learn."

"There are also some other groups that keep you busy outside, like the Wednesday gardening project at Levensgrove. Kwasi can tell you about it. Or ask your support worker."

"I started helping my friend in his garden, growing the vegetables and keeping the place tidy. I've loved doing that."

“Some of the services have walking groups - go up to hills, or go on bikes. There is a walking project based in Clydebank. This is for people who are not yet ready to go on long walks. Some of my friends got into walking through them.”

Swimming pools and other sports facilities

There are loads of facilities in West Dunbartonshire. The 3 main ones are easy to get to - so you can go along and see what they have that interests you.

The Play Drome in Clydebank is just beside the shopping centre. They have a pool and gym and sports clubs and classes including martial arts as well as netball, football, trampolining and lots more.

The Meadow Centre in Dumbarton has a pool and a fitness centre. There is a big sports hall where sports like football and basketball happen.

The Vale of Leven Pool also does exercise classes as well as swimming.

West Dunbartonshire Council has a Passport To Leisure Card. It is open to anyone who is resident in West Dunbartonshire and is on benefits. You have to pay for the first session to get you started (it's called an induction session). After that, you get reduced rates for the pools and the other sports.

“Most swimming pools offer lessons if you can’t swim – or if it has been a long time and you need a refresher. So don’t let that put you off.”

“Just come and splash about.”

“I started going swimming every morning. When I’m swimming I’m not thinking about the drink. It gets me up and out, starts the day off with a purpose. Afterwards I feel good about myself.”

Arts activities

The Adult Learning service includes classes on art and of all sorts of crafts. You can talk to them about the arts activities that interest you and see what they have available.

There are arts classes at Faifley Skypoint and other community centres too. Skypoint is where the library is in Faifley, so you can just pop in and see what is on offer.

CAOS is a community arts project which is based in Clydebank. If you contact them they will be able to tell you about the range of things they are doing. Also, if you have skills you want to share they would like to hear from you.

CAOS (Community Arts: Open Space)
Centre 81, 2-16 Braes Avenue, Clydebank, G81 1DN
Tel: 0141 952 2117

The cinemas often have discounts, such as 2 for 1 offers, reduced prices early in the day, and reduced rates when a group of people go together. They also sometimes include cheaper soft drinks and popcorn.

The theatres also often have cheaper prices for the daytime performances. Local theatre groups can be a good way of getting into other types of arts. They often need people to help with painting scenery and things like that. It is a good way to get involved and to enjoy being creative.

“Ask the folk at any groups you go to if they are interested in going to the cinema. Or if only a few of you want to go, each bring a friend. Half the fun is talking about the film afterwards and seeing what you all thought about it.”

“I used to like it when we put on shows at school. I lost touch with that. Then I found this wee amateur drama group and I help out. It’s great.

“I thought I was rubbish at art when I was at school. A friend was going to an arts thing and asked me to go along and keep her company. I loved it. You never know what you can do until you try it.”



Adult learning

The Community Learning and Development Team is part of West Dunbartonshire Council. They have lots of courses for adults. They help you learn new skills. The courses give people more confidence. And they are also good fun.

They support people who don't have much confidence and will go at a pace that suits the people taking part.

Here are some examples of classes they have run: Healthy Lifestyles, First Aid, Computing Basics, Sewing and other crafts, Women's Personal Safety.

They also help people who are not confident about reading and writing.

You can contact them and talk to someone about what you would like to do.

Adult Learning and Literacies Team
Unit 22, Leven Valley Enterprise Centre, Castlehill,
Dumbarton, G82 5BN
Tel: 01389 608 070

Clydebank College do a lot of arts and leisure courses. They have a base in Dumbarton high Street as well as the main one at Clydebank, so it's easy to go in and ask about what's coming up.

You can ring the College Advice Zone on 0141 951 7444

You can also learn about something from people who are really interested in the subject. For example, there are local History Groups and all the knowledge at the Museum at Clydebank Town Hall. There are Photography Clubs and lots more. You'll get information on these at the library.

"I thought it would all be folk who were dead clever. But it's just people like me."

"I went on one course and it was good. This year I'm doing something else. Each year I find I'm getting a lot more confident."

Healthy living and feeling good

The Adult Learning people do classes on different ways to look after yourself - eating well, keeping safe and so on.

There is a community kitchen at Faifley Skypoint., where they run cookery courses. These include Cooking on a budget, Indian Cookery for Beginners and Chinese Cookery for Beginners. Faifley Skypoint is at Lennox Drive in Faifley.

Clydebank College has course on hairdressing and they will give you free hairstyling if you are willing to be a model for the students. It is on a Tuesday and Thursday evening at Clydebank and a Monday morning at Dumbarton.

The Leisure Centres offer Beauty Therapy - you have to pay for it, but it's less than at some other place. Some of the community centres also have sessions on beauty therapy, so it's worth checking them out too.

Some of the addictions services do massage and other therapies. You can ask your support worker about this if you are in touch with any of the addictions services.

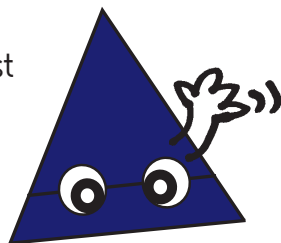
“When your hair is looking nice you feel better about yourself, have more confidence.”

“I used to be good at cooking. I've started making big pots of soup again. It's good food - ham bones for the stock and fresh vegetables. It takes a while to get it ready but it tastes great. It feels good when I know I've made that. And I'm looking after myself and my friends.”

Places to stop at

Part of going out is having tea and a cake, or going for fish and chips - it's all part of looking after yourself.

Here are some of our favourite places in West Dunbartonshire. Tell us about yours.



- Cafe Connect is a community project which gives people who have mental health problems and people with learning disabilities the chance to learn catering skills and have more choices about moving into work. Anyone can go to the cafe in the Resource Centre in Bruce St in Dumbarton.
- Cafe Connect also run some great cafes in the parks in West Dunbartonshire - Balloch Park and Dalmuir Park.
- There are cafes at the leisure centres.
- The community cafes are good. They have them at the Vale of Leven Community Centre, Centre 81 at Clydebank, the Hub Community Centre on Kilbowie Road in Clydebank, Faifley Skypoint and the Concord Community Centre in Dumbarton.

“Think about how you feel about places such as pubs. They can be good to get a coffee and use the toilets when you are out for a walk. But some people feel uncomfortable in them. Other people feel ok and see being there and not having a drink as part of their recovery. You have to work out what is right for you.”

“Going out to the cafe breaks the day up. When I’m there I pick up leaflets about things that are on, stuff I’d never thought about before. It’s all going on and we can be part of it.”

Places to get Advice

Most of us would ask our support worker or social worker for advice if we wanted help with something. But sometimes it is good to use other sources of advice that are there for lots of people.

Welfare Rights Information and other Money Matters

There are 2 organisations in West Dunbartonshire where you can get Welfare Rights information.

The Welfare Rights Team at West Dunbartonshire Council are very good in our experience and we suggest you start with them. The staff there concentrate on this topic and really know their stuff.

They will give you a Benefits check. They don't just stick to the things you ask them about. They'll give you information on what you're entitled to - housing, any needs related to being unwell or disabled, your rights as a carer, everything.

Welfare Rights Team, 6 - 14 Bridge Street, Dumbarton

Tel: 01389 737 052

You can also contact them through the social work offices in Clydebank and Alexandria

Alexandria Area Team, 4 Church Street, Alexandria G83 ONP
Tel: 01389 608080
Clydebank Area Team, Rosebery Place, Clydebank G81 1TC
Tel: 0141 562 8800

The Citizens Advice Bureau has volunteers who get training and have access to people with more expertise if they need to check something.

They deal with a lot of other issues as well as Welfare Benefits. It wouldn't matter what your problems is – their database covers everything.

The CAB is good if you have other money problems, or if your money problems are linked to other things that are happening to you. They can help you negotiate with the people you owe money to and negotiate lower payments over a longer time, for example.

The CAB is independent of the Council, so some people prefer them for that reason.

Citizens Advice Bureau
Bridgend House, 179 High Street, Dumbarton, G82 1NW
Tel: 01389 744 690



Community Resources in West Dunbartonshire

Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service

Independent advocacy helps people get their voice heard. People can use this when they want services to help them - addiction services, housing, employment matters and more things like that. It is good when you are not feeling confident or are not sure who to ask to get things changed.

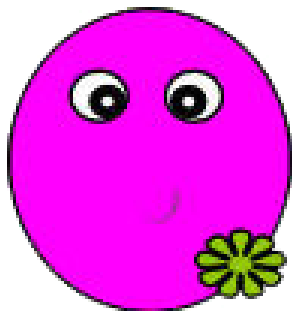
You will get an advocate who will help you work out what you want to say, and then help you make your point. They can follow up to make sure that you are listened to and your problem gets dealt with.

It is confidential and it is independent of the health and social care services.

Lomond and Argyll Advocacy Service

155 Glasgow Road, Dumbarton, G82 1RH

Tel: 01389 726 543



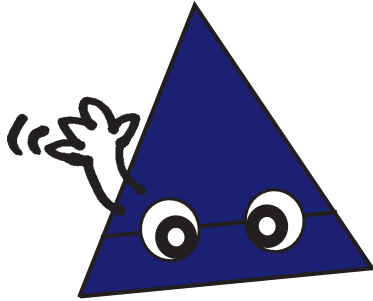
Contacts

FAST Group
c/o Addiction Services
Dumbarton Joint Hospital
Cardross Road
Dumbarton
G82 3PU
Tel: 01389 812 018

Outside the Box
Unit F23
150 Brand Street
Glasgow
G51 1DH
Tel: 0141 419 0451
Email: admin@otbds.org

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