



Homelessness and Advice and Information Service Delivery Plan Leaflet

This leaflet outlines our Service Delivery Plan for the Homelessness and Advice and Information Services.

This leaflet covers three main areas:

1. Who the service is for and what the services cover.
2. How the services are provided.
3. Improvements to the service.

This leaflet is intended as a plain language guide only, not as a precise statement of the law.

It is also available in other languages, on request, and in formats such as in large print, audio format and Braille.

Orkney Islands Council is referred to as “we” throughout this leaflet.

What service do I need?

Our Services relating to homelessness and housing advice are offered free of charge to all members of the public. Our services are publicised widely and are accessible and responsive to enquiries. Our Service Delivery Plan aims to ensure this continues to be the case.

Homelessness Service

We provide a comprehensive service for homeless people. A small team delivers our statutory duties under the homelessness legislation and ensures that we have a suitable stock of properties that are available and fully furnished and equipped.

The Homelessness section provides casework advice in the following areas:

- Homelessness.
- Relationship Breakdown.
- Domestic Abuse.
- Harassment and Illegal Eviction.
- Security of Tenure.
- Discrimination in Housing.
- Housing Options.

Our Homelessness Section can also provide general advice and assistance in the following areas. A referral may be made to an appropriate specialist for more detailed assistance if required.

- Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Repair and Improvement Grants.
- Housing Benefit / Universal Credit.
- Rent Arrears (including payment and arrears).
- Mortgage Arrears.

Housing Advice and Information Service

This service provides a broad range of advice but its main focus is to prevent homelessness wherever possible.

This section provides casework advice in the following areas:

- Housing options (including transfers, exchanges, private sector tenancies, low cost home ownership and related grants and the mortgage to rent scheme).
- Allocation of council and housing association properties.
- Security of tenure and other tenancy matters (covering Council, Housing Association and Private Sector Tenancy Matters).
- Harassment and Illegal Eviction.
- Relationship Breakdown.
- Discrimination in housing.
- Registration of private sector landlords.

The Housing Advice and Information Service also provides general advice and assistance in the following areas but may refer the applicant to an appropriate specialist for more detailed assistance in the following areas:

- Homelessness.
- Domestic Abuse.
- Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Repair and Improvement Grants.
- Disrepair.
- Housing Benefit / Universal Credit.
- Rent Issues (including payment and arrears).
- Mortgage Arrears.

Access to the Service

Our services are delivered through our One Stop Shop in Kirkwall but different venues can be arranged if required. These may include appointments at our Cash Collection Office in Stromness, home visits or joint arrangements with other agencies through their business premises etc. These may include interviews at Phoenix House for instance.

A broad range of written information is also available and this can also be found on our website at www.orkney.gov.uk

Our facilities at the One Stop Shop include private interview rooms, a comfortable reception area and waiting room, toilet facilities and toys for small children. The service can be delivered inter-personally through interviews etc or through telephone calls. Homelessness services are delivered by interview.

We are committed to working in partnership with a range of other agencies in order to ensure that we offer the best services possible and that our services are tailored to the needs of the household/applicant concerned.

Service Improvement

It is our intention to deliver good quality, person centred user friendly, sensitive and efficient services for the people of Orkney. We aim to continually improve our service and part of this process involves collecting information regarding our customer's views.

Central to this aim is a need to adapt to social change and also to determine what our service users think of a range of aspects of our services. In order to assess this we collect and analyse information from a range of sources including:

- Focus groups.
- Customer satisfaction surveys.
- Exit questionnaires.
- Complaints.
- Appeals.
- Comments made by service users in relation to request on footnotes of letters.
- Information relating to the profile of the local community.
- Statistical information from related policies.

This includes consideration of:

- Our premises.
- Our hours of business.
- Quality of our written information.
- Other methods of service delivery including our website etc.
- Extent of client involvement with other agencies.
- Standard of advice given.
- Provision/scope of services in rural areas.
- Accessibility of services.

Service user feedback is vital to the success of our services and staff are fully trained in the importance of this. Your views are very important to us.

The information we collect is monitored and assessed and included in an annual review of our service delivery.

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