

Housing News

The newsletter of Orkney Islands Council's Housing Service.

Issue 84, Autumn 2025.



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If you would prefer to receive a digital copy of this newsletter, please email claire.pritchard@orkney.gov.uk to request the newsletter preference form.

Featured Articles

The Radio Teleswitch Service update

The Housing Service has worked to keep tenants informed with news relating to the Radio Teleswitch Service. There have been some further changes since the article that was featured in the Spring 2025 Housing Newsletter.

The Radio Teleswitch Service (RTS) relies on radio signals to provide information to a range of older style electricity meters. This information consists of tariff and timings, such as telling the meter when to switch to an 'off peak' period. The RTS is old technology and is becoming costly and difficult to maintain. As a result, the RTS is being phased out and replaced by newer, more modern technology.

Important reminder -



The Radio Teleswitch Service will begin a phased shut down from **30 June 2025**.

If you benefit from 'off-peak' energy, this may affect you.

Contact your energy provider as soon as possible. 

The Service was originally scheduled to end in March 2024 – however - this was extended until 30 June 2025. It has since been announced that there will be a **phased switch off**, as opposed to a complete end to the service. The RTS will be phased out on an **area-by-area basis from 30 June 2025**.

On the 18 June, the UK Government announced that the RTS shut down will take place through a controlled and managed process. The phased approach will help to prevent disruption to the heating and hot water supply of households and businesses who have not yet upgraded.

Energy suppliers are committed to contacting customers in advance of the phase out activity in their area. If you have not yet spoken to your energy provider, please contact them as soon as possible to organise a meter upgrade. Please also note that Orkney Islands Council is not involved in organising meter upgrades. You will need to **contact your energy provider** directly for more information, and to organise the required upgrades.

Preventing condensation & mould

Damp and mould

There are several causes of damp and mould within the home, including; excessive condensation, penetrating damp and rising damp. If left untreated, excessive damp can lead to mould growth. Damp and mould in your home can negatively impact your health, home and belongings, which is why it is important to deal with the problem as soon as possible.

Signs of damp and mould:

- Discoloured patches on the wall and peeling wallpaper.
- The feeling of high humidity within the home.
- Areas of black mould appearing in cold places, such as uninsulated corners of the property and around the windows.
- A musty smell within the home.
- Walls and other items feeling wet to the touch.

Condensation can cause damp

Everyday tasks and behaviours such as cooking, showering, and even breathing can add extra moisture into the atmosphere of the home. This build-up of excess moisture needs to be removed. If it isn't, the warm excess moisture will settle onto cold surfaces to form condensation. If condensation in the home clears quickly, it is unlikely to cause any issues. However - if condensation is left to build to excessive levels - it can contribute to mould



growth. A good way to prevent condensation is to reduce the amount of moisture present within the air of your home through adequate ventilation.

Damp can be seen more frequently in the winter as temperatures cool, and people open their windows less. It is important to adequately ventilate your home, even in the cooler weather.

Ways to reduce the condensation in your home:

- Open your windows for 15 minutes per day to allow fresh air to circulate into your home and remove any excess moisture. If you have a mechanical ventilation system, you should use this daily and all year round.
- Keep your trickle vents open and avoid blocking them up. You may want to shut trickle vents during very high winds, but be sure to open them when possible.
- Use extractor fans or open windows when cooking or showering. Close the door when performing these activities to stop moisture escaping into the rest of your home.
- Wipe condensation from your windows daily using a clean dry cloth.
- Let coats & shoes dry thoroughly before putting them away in the cupboard.
- If you dry your washing indoors, give your washing machine an extra spin to remove moisture and ensure that the drying area is well ventilated. If you use a condenser dryer, empty the water tray regularly. If your drier has a vent, ensure that the vent is directed outside and isn't blocked.
- Condensation is formed when the warm moisture settles on cold surfaces – therefore - adequate heating will help to prevent condensation. Try to maintain the heat in your home, adequate levels of insulation can help with this. Your home should be heated to at least 18 degrees Celsius (or, 21 degrees Celsius for those with enhanced heating needs).
- Ensure that the heaters in your home are free from obstruction and avoid placing items of furniture in front of them.
- Don't place your furniture up against the wall – leaving gaps around items and furniture will allow air to flow. You should also keep your windowsills clear of items to allow proper air flow and make it easier to open windows.
- If necessary, you may want to consider using a dehumidifier to remove the excess moisture from the air in your home (these are relatively cheap to run).

Remember – it is harder to heat a damp house. Reducing the moisture in the air of your home can help it to feel warmer.

Damp and mould growth

Mould is caused by spores which occur naturally in the air around us. If these spores settle on to damp areas, they can lead to a growth in black mould. Regular vacuuming and wiping down of hard surfaces can help to remove these spores.

If you notice black mould on hard surfaces such as window frames, wipe them down with warm soapy water. Ventilate the area and allow it to dry thoroughly. Do not re-use a cloth that has come in to contact with mould spores, machine wash following to ensure no transfer of spores to other areas.

If these simple changes don't help to address the damp, please report it as soon as possible. In Scotland, landlords have a duty to ensure that the houses they let are; wind and watertight, and in all other aspects, fit for human habitation. Houses must also be kept in this condition throughout the tenancy.

Penetrating damp & rising damp.

Damp and mould can also be caused by excessive water leaking into your home through the walls or roof, this is known as penetrating damp.

A common cause for penetrating damp is blocked gutters. If your gutter is blocked, water cannot flow properly, this may lead to an overflow of water that can penetrate the roof and walls. You can help to prevent penetrating damp by cleaning your gutters regularly.

Rising damp is caused by moisture in the ground soaking into the foundations of your home and rising up the walls. This is the least common type of damp.

If you have any leaks, or notice rising damp – contact your landlord as soon as possible. If left untreated, damp and mould can worsen over time. It is important to deal with the problem as quickly as possible. If you are a tenant of OIC and you are dealing with a persistent case of damp and mould in your home, please report the issue as soon as possible.

For more information on the causes of damp and steps you can take to help reduce it, please refer to your Tenants' Handbook that you were provided with at the start of your tenancy.

Our responsibilities

Orkney Islands Council is required by law to maintain its housing stock to a tolerable standard. This includes ensuring that each house is:

- Wind and watertight;
- substantially free from rising and penetrating damp and;
- provided with adequate heating, insulation and ventilation.

If you are a tenant of OIC, your tenancy agreement also requires us to 'carry out repairs relating to water penetration, rising dampness and condensation dampness'. If

condensation in your home is caused or made worse by a lack of ventilation, heating or insulation, we will carry out repairs to address this issue.

If you are dealing with a persistent case of damp, please report by contacting Customer Services. We will respond to your report by organising a home visit from a Housing Officer and a Building Inspector who will inspect the nature of the damage. They will also determine the most appropriate course of action to address the damp and treat the mould.

Further support

If you would like further support and guidance on matters relating to damp in the home, you can contact:

Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau

- Address: Anchor Buildings, 6 Bridge Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1HR.
- Telephone: 01856 875266.

THAW Orkney

- Address: Unit 4, Anchor Buildings, 6 Bridge Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1HR.
- Telephone: 01856 878388.

Scam awareness

A 'scam' may be described as a fraudulent scheme involving attempts to obtain money or personal information through deception, or dishonesty. Individuals carrying out the scam may be referred to as 'scammers'. Scammers use of a variety of methods to try and deceive individuals and obtain something of value. Scammers will often pretend to be a specific company in an attempt to deceive individuals in to providing their personal information. Scammers will attempt to make contact using a variety of methods, including letters, text messages, emails and telephone calls, etc.

Types of scams

Some common types of scams include:

Phishing – phishing occurs in cases where scammers pretend to be a particular company or organisation, such as a bank or the DVLA. Scammers may do this in an attempt to convince a person to provide them with their personal information, or bank details.

Spoof websites - Scammers will often pose as a well-known company – they may send a message under the guise that something is wrong, luring people to click a link to a spoof website. This website will then direct the victim to enter their personal information to resolve the non-existing problem.

Viruses and malware – A virus is a malicious type of software that is often attached to legitimate files. A virus may enter a device if the user downloads infected files, clicks unknown links or opens an infected email attachment. Once infected, the virus can damage files and corrupt the device's software.

Fake charities – Scammers may impersonate charity or disaster appeals and make fake donation requests.

Recently reported scams

OSAG – Orkney Scam Action Group (OSAG) have received reports of various scams throughout Orkney in 2025:

Care alarm upgrade scam

People with a care alarm should be wary of telephone calls from individuals claiming that they are calling to help with the switch to digital alarms. Callers are reported as being very pushy and desperate to attempt to convince the person they are calling to provide their bank details. These calls may begin with the numbers, '0204'.

Scam council tax payments

There have been reports from some people in the county that they have received emails notifying them that there is an unpaid balance on their Council Tax Bill. These emails claim that the unpaid balance has occurred due to an oversight, or a bank processing issue. Please be aware that these emails look official and appear very convincing.

Bulb energy scam calls

There have been reports of local businesses receiving calls claiming to be from Bulb Energy. These callers then reference a non-existing energy contract. Bulb Energy no longer exist as they went into liquidation in 2022 - this resulted in most of their customers being transferred to Octopus Energy.

iCloud storage scam

People have been receiving emails that are marked as 'urgent', falsely claiming that their iCloud storage is full. The email notifies them that a paid upgrade is required to prevent them from losing their storage and emails.

If you are unsure whether a letter, email or call is legitimate, please contact the organisation directly to check. If you suspect a scam, do not respond without checking first.

What do you do if you suspect a scam, or have been a victim of one?

OSAG receives regular reports of scam emails, texts and phone calls, supposedly from organisations' you would normally trust such as Paypal, DVLA or your Bank. These messages are likely to contain alarming information like unauthorised transactions on your account, or that your payment is overdue, etc. You should always treat these messages with suspicion and never click on any links that request confirmation of your account information. You can report these by forwarding any scam texts to 7726 and scam emails to report@phishing.gov.uk.

If you have been a victim of a scam, you can report it to Police Scotland by telephoning 101.

If you think your account has been hacked, change your password immediately and monitor your account for any suspicious activity.

If you have transferred any money to a scammer or given them your bank account details, contact your bank immediately to report it.

Follow Orkney Scam Awareness Group on Facebook - www.facebook.com/orkneysagroup

Orkney Scam Action Group Email:
Orkneyscamactiongroup@gmail.com.



Shopping Week 2025

The tenants at Rae's Close and their guests enjoyed a visit from the 2025 Stromness Shopping Week Queen and her entourage. The tenants were also presented with a beautiful basket of fruit and box of chocolates. The weather stayed fine for the event and everyone enjoyed an afternoon of sandwiches, treats and home-bakes.

Many thanks to the Shopping Week Committee for including the Rae's Close tenants in the Shopping Week celebrations.



Information and updates (Housing Service)

Wholesale tenant satisfaction survey

The Scottish Social Housing Charter requires landlords with more than 1500 tenants to carry out a wholesale tenant satisfaction survey. Landlords who conduct this survey must achieve at least a 40% response rate.

The wholesale tenant satisfaction survey will be carried out by an independent company in the early part of next year, on behalf of Orkney Islands Council (OIC). IBP are an impartial and independent company, this allows respondents to be more open with their answers. The survey will assess OIC tenant's satisfaction with our services, the results will then be submitted to the Scottish Housing Regulator. The findings from this survey will help the Council to make the necessary improvements to our services.

We will be inviting all of our tenants to take part in this survey. Your feedback is very valuable to us and will help us to make a positive change to the service we provide.

Rent consultation reminder

Orkney Islands Council (OIC) are required by law to consult with tenants on any proposed rent increase. In previous years, we have conducted the rent consultation on a yearly basis. However, the decision was made in 2024 to consult with tenants on the proposed rent increases over a three-year period. We continue consult with new tenants on their views relating to rent increases on an on-going basis.

The most recent whole scale rent consultation was conducted in December 2024. During this consultation, our tenants were provided with a survey that asked for their views on the proposed rent increases for 2025-28. We sent a total of 869 surveys to tenants, and 67 of these were returned. The Education, Leisure and Housing Committee considered the responses, and it was decided that Council Housing rent would increase by:

Time period	Rent increase (%)
2025/26	4%
2026/27	4%
2027/28	2.5%

One of the main reasons behind the increase in rent is due to the requirements imposed by the Energy Efficiency Standards for Social Housing. These standards were introduced in Scotland to and improve the energy efficiency of social housing. In turn, this helps to reduce household energy consumption and address fuel poverty.

Any change to the rent you pay comes into effect on the 31 March of each year. We will send you a letter 28 days in advance of this date to notify you of any increase.

We will shortly undertake a consultation with any new tenants that have moved into a new council tenancy since December 2024, to ascertain their views. These responses will be reported to Education, Leisure and Housing Committee in November 2025.

Capital works programme

We would like to notify you of the works scheduled for 2025/26 that may affect you and your home. Orkney Islands Council are looking to carry out improvements to some of our properties in 2025-26. You can find further information on when and where we aim to carry out these works. –

Existing Windows and External Doors replacement at:

- Market Green
 - Nicolson Street
 - Palace Gardens
-

- Meadowbank

Windows and doors will be replaced with new uPVC double glazed units. Installation is scheduled to begin in late spring / summer 2026. The properties for the 2027 replacement programme are currently being determined.

Heating Units

Existing and aging storage heaters are to be replaced with modern fan assisted units at 26 properties.

Kitchen and Bathrooms

The current 3-year kitchen replacement / bathroom refresh contract that targets properties where kitchens and bathrooms that are approaching their end of life will be nearing its end in Autumn 2025. A new contract targeting the replacement of 20-30 properties per year will be in place before the end of 2025.

The Right to Repair

Our responsibility

As a registered social landlord, we have certain responsibilities required by law. At the beginning of your tenancy, we must ensure that your home is wind, watertight and in all other ways, reasonably fit for human habitation. We must ensure that your home remains in this condition throughout your tenancy.

We are also responsible for:

- Repairs to the structure and the exterior of the house, such as the roof and windows.
- Maintaining installations, such as heating and hot water systems.
- Keeping fittings that we have provided repaired and good working order.

Your responsibility

Tenants have a responsibility to take reasonable care of their home. This includes:

- Minor repairs, such as replacement of lightbulbs and fuses.
- Sweeping chimneys.
- Internal decorations.
- Putting up TV aerials (you must seek our permission before doing this and it cannot be placed in a communal area).

What is the Right to Repair Scheme?

Scottish Secure Tenants and Short Scottish Secure Tenants are entitled to have small urgent repairs carried out within a set time scale. Landlords are required by law to complete these repairs within the relevant timescale - this is known as the 'Right to Repair'. Small and urgent repairs that fall under the 'Right to Repair' scheme are known as

‘qualifying repairs’. If Landlords do not complete the qualifying repairs within the relevant timescale, the tenant may be entitled to a set level of compensation.

Social landlords are required to manage their businesses so that: ‘Tenants’ homes are well maintained, with repairs and improvements carried out when required, and tenants are given reasonable choices about when work is done’.

What is the law that covers the ‘Right to Repair’?

The Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 is a key piece of law that provides tenants with the ‘Right to Repair’.

What does the ‘Right to Repair’ scheme cover?

The scheme covers certain qualifying repairs up to the cost of £350. These repairs include:

- Unsafe electrical fittings;
- blocked drains;
- loss of power or water supply;
- flooding;
- unsecure doors, and windows;
- and more.

If you report a fault, the council will notify you whether it is their responsibility to deal with. The Council will also notify you if the fault is classed as a qualifying repair under the ‘Right to Repair Scheme’. Where the fault is considered a ‘Qualifying Repair’, the Council will need to resolve the issue within the set timescale. The maximum time permitted to carry out a qualifying repair begins on the first working day after:

- The date you informed the Housing Service, Orkney Islands Council of the repair or;
- in cases where we inspect the house, the actual date of inspection.

The maximum time limit will NOT apply in cases where there are exceptional circumstances affecting our ability to carry out the repair. Examples of exceptional circumstances include cases of bad weather, or where parts needed to complete the repair are unavailable. In cases where we need to suspend the maximum time limit, we will notify you of our need to do so. We will also make arrangements to help the situation in the short term.

Compensation

If the contractor appointed by Orkney Islands Council does not begin the work within the set time period, you have the right to appoint another contractor. Please note however, that the alternative contractor must be one from our approved list of contractors. We will provide you with details of our approved contractors when you first report the repair. If you appoint an alternative contractor, the contractor will notify the Council that you have appointed them to complete the repair. You will also be entitled to £15 compensation for the inconvenience caused.

If you appoint an alternative contractor, they are still required to complete the repair within the set time scale. If they do not complete the repair within this timescale, you will be entitled to £3 compensation for each working day the repair is not completed – this is capped at a maximum of £100 per repair.

Access

If your home requires repairs, you will need to agree to a suitable date and time for the contractor to enter your home and carry out the work. If the contractor is unable to enter your home at the agreed time, the right to repair will be cancelled. You will need to report the repair again and the process will start over.

How to report a repair

You should report repairs to Customer Services by telephoning 01856 873535 Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm (excluding public holidays).

For emergency repairs that are out of hours, please call - 01856 873430.

If it is an emergency repair, we will respond within 24 hours. Emergency repairs include repairs that affect your health and safety, such as a blocked toilet when it is the only toilet in the home.

If it is an urgent repair, we will respond within 3 working days. An example of an urgent repair is a loose banister rail.

If it is a routine repair, we will respond within 20 working days. Examples of routine repairs includes repairs to doors and windows.

You can find more information by visiting our website: www.orkney.gov.uk/our-services/housing/i-am-in-a-property-and-need-advice/council-housing/housing-repairs-improvements-and-adaptations/

Water Safety Risk Assessments

Water Safety Risk Assessments are being carried out to all of our properties as part of our routine maintenance. These tests will help to ensure that the water supply in your home is safe and free from bacteria like Legionella, along with the risks associated with it.

We have arranged for Environmental Technical Services UK LTD to carry out these assessments. Testing has already been conducted to a small number of our properties and is on-going. If your home is scheduled to have a Water Safety Risk Assessment, you will receive a letter beforehand to notify you of the assessment. It is important that you respond to these letters to arrange a suitable time for the contractor to carry out the assessment. Assessments should take approximately twenty minutes to complete and will require

Water Safety Risk Assessments



Key Information for our tenants - Water Safety Risk Assessments will be carried out to Orkney Islands Council properties.

If you receive a letter relating to this, please respond to arrange your visit.

access to your hot water cylinder and any thermostatic mixing valves, where applicable. These visits may also require loft access if your hot water cylinder or mixing valves are located in your loft space.

Please do not ignore these letters if you receive them – they are very important. If you have received a letter and would like to confirm that you are due a genuine visit, please contact Housing Services on 01856 873535 (between Monday to Friday 9am – 5pm, excluding public holidays).

Tenant Participation

Newsletter Preference Survey 2025

The Council recently conducted a 'Newsletter Preference Survey'. This survey gave tenants the opportunity to choose their preferred method of receiving the Housing Newsletter, with the options being either online, or via post. Thank you to everyone who responded to the survey.

The Housing Newsletter is a great way to stay up to-to-date with information and updates from Housing Services, along with other relevant information. The Housing Newsletter forms part of our commitment to tenant participation and the provision of information in line with our Tenant Participation Strategy. It is therefore important to us that you receive the Housing Newsletter in a way that suits you.

If you have responded to the Newsletter Preference Survey in the past and did not respond to the 2025 survey, we will presume that your preferences have remained the same. If you have not responded to past surveys or informed us of your preferences, you will continue to receive the Newsletter as a paper copy via post. If you wish to change your preferences at any time, please contact our Tenant Participation Officer on:

Email: claire.pritchard@orkney.gov

Telephone 01856 873535 extension 2179 (please note, our Tenant Participation Officer is available between 8:30am – 5pm Tuesday & Wednesday, excluding public holidays).

Find us on Facebook

We post regular information and updates to the Housing Service Facebook Page.

You can find us on Facebook by visiting the following website – www.facebook.com/OIChousingservices - Please 'like' and 'follow' our page to stay up-to-date.

(Please note, you will need a Facebook account, internet access and a suitable device to access our Facebook Page).

Grieveship Residents' Association

Grieveship Residents' Association (GRA) is currently Orkney's longest standing Residents' Association. Located in Stromness, GRA will be celebrating their 40th anniversary later this year. Members of the Association have worked hard in recent years towards the provision of a new playpark in the local area. The first part of the project was installed earlier this year by OIC, and the remainder of the playpark equipment is due to be installed in late September.



Initial stages with funding from OIC

How might members of my community benefit from forming a Residents Association?

There are many benefits to forming a Residents' Association, including:

- An increased sense of community.
- Access to grants and funding – registered Residents' Associations may have access to sources of funding that can be used towards running the group and improving the local area.
- Strengthened communication with Orkney Islands Council – members of Associations can share their feedback on matters that may affect their local area. Residents' Associations have the ability influence policy and decisions relating to Housing Services.
- The ability to make improvements to the local area.

Are you interested in forming a Residents' Group?

If you are interested in forming your own Residents' Group, OIC can help to guide you in setting up your Residents' Association and direct you to other sources of support. If you'd like to discuss how a Residents' Association could benefit your local community, or you'd like to register an Association, please contact our Tenant Participation Officer on:

Email: claire.pritchard@orkney.gov.uk

Telephone: 01856 873535 ext 2179.

Benefits, support & further information

NHS Henry - Healthy Families

HENRY is a charitable organisation who are passionate about babies and children getting the best possible start in life. This means supporting the whole family to make positive lifestyle changes, creating healthier and happier home environments, and building healthier communities.

NHS Orkney are delivering two HENRY Healthy Families 8-week programmes right here in Orkney; Healthy Families: Right from the Start (0-5 yrs) and Healthy Families: Growing up (6-12 yrs).



The programmes provide a range of support, skills and resources to help build upon and achieve a healthy lifestyle focusing on building parents' confidence and strengths. Through this approach, HENRY helps parents and carers make lasting changes by supporting them to develop solutions they feel will work best for their own families. Together the group will explore key themes such as emotional well-being, whole family lifestyle habits, mealtimes, screen time, sleep and physical activity. The programmes and resources are completely free and available to any parents or carers who have a child, or children aged between 0 – 12 years old.

Committing to a full programme can be overwhelming, especially if we're not sure it's the right fit, this is where HENRY workshops come in. The workshops are 1.5-2-hour sessions covering topics such as: Fussy Eating – Eating Well for Less – Healthy Teeth – Starting Solids – Understanding Children's Behaviour and Getting Active. These are a great way to give it a go and learn alongside other parents in Orkney.

Details of upcoming sessions can be found on our NHS Orkney Public Health Facebook page or to find out more information, you can contact the Orkney HENRY team on ork.henry@nhs.scot, 888084 or by completing our 'Getting in touch' [form](#)

Could you get financial support this winter?

We understand how difficult it can be to balance the cost of living and higher energy bills during the winter months. Social Security Scotland delivers 16 benefits for families, low-income households, disabled people, people of State Pension age and carers. We are here to help you get everything you're entitled to.

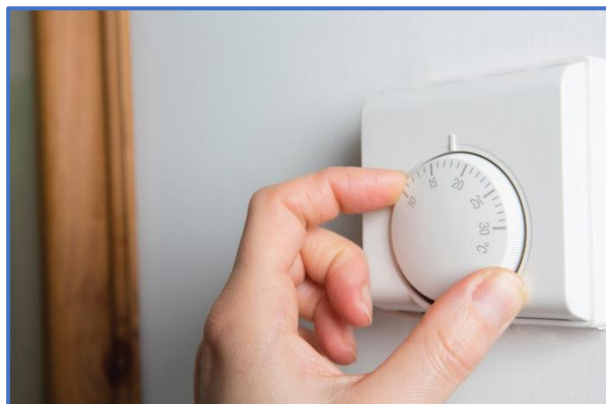
Help with your heating bills

[Winter Heating Payment](#) is paid automatically to people who get certain low-income benefits, including households with young children, disabled people or older people. It is a

guaranteed payment to everyone who is eligible. (You can visit the following website for more information - www.mygov.scot/winter-heating-payment)

[Child Winter Heating Payment](#) is paid once a year to children and young people under 19 years old who receive certain benefits (www.mygov.scot/child-winter-heating-).

[Pension Age Winter Heating Payment](#) helps people of State Pension age who live in Scotland to pay their heating bills. If you're eligible, you could get a payment once a year worth between £101.70 and £305.10. (www.mygov.scot/pension-age-winter-heating-payment).



In 2024, Pension Age Winter Heating Payment was paid by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It will be paid by Social Security Scotland in winter 2025.

Help for young people starting a new job

Young people and care leavers who secured a seasonal or permanent job over the summer holidays could be eligible for [Job Start Payment](#). (www.mygov.scot/job-start-payment)

Job Start Payment is a one-off payment of £319.80 that can help with the cost of starting a new job including traveling to work, childcare costs, or buying new clothes. A higher rate of £503.10 is available for people who are the main carers of children.

People can apply for the payment up to six months after the date of their job offer. Social Security Scotland urge people to check if they might be eligible for Job Start Payment and to apply today.

Help with funeral costs

[Funeral Support Payment](#) has helped thousands of people who have had to pay for a funeral. It is available to eligible people in Scotland who need assistance after someone has died. It can be used towards funeral costs for a baby, a child or an adult. The payment also includes stillborn babies. It can cover the costs of burial or cremation as well as transport and travel and other administration costs (www.mygov.scot/funeral-support-payment).

Financial support for carers and disabled people

Social Security Scotland also delivers payments for disabled people including [Child Disability Payment](#) (www.mygov.scot/child-disability-payment), [Adult Disability Payment](#) and [Pension Age Disability Payment](#). (www.mygov.scot/browse/benefits/disability-benefits)

Carers can apply for [Carer Support Payment](#) and



[Young Carer Grant](http://www.mygov.scot/carers-support-payment). (www.mygov.scot/carers-support-payment)

Check what benefits you're entitled to and apply online at mygov.scot, by post or over the phone by calling Social Security Scotland free on 0800 182 2222.

[Information in other languages](#) is available and an interpreter can be arranged if people need support to apply for benefits.

Further support this winter

The Warm Home Discount

If you qualify for the Warm Home Discount, you can receive a £150 discount off your heating bill. To qualify, you must either:

- Receive the guarantee element of pension credit or;
- be on a low income and meet the eligibility criteria set by your energy provider.

You can contact your energy provider to find out more about the Warm Home Discount.

Energy debt

If you are struggling to afford your energy bills, speak to your energy provider in the first instance to discuss your options. You can also contact Orkney Citizens Advice for further support and information, or to book an appointment with an adviser:

Email: bureau@orkneycab.casonline.org.uk

Telephone: 01856 875266 between 10am – 2pm Monday – Friday.

Crisis grants

You can apply for a crisis grant to cover the cost of an emergency. Examples of emergencies include:

- Needing help to cover the cost of food and heating bills.
- An unexpected crisis occurs.
- You face a reduction in your income due to redundancy or a change at work.
- You are a victim of domestic abuse and need help moving away.

To be eligible for a crisis grant you need to be on a low income, this does not mean that you need to be on benefits. You can apply for a crisis grant through your local Council.

Tackling Household Affordable Warmth Orkney

THAW Orkney is a charitable organisation that was established in 2014. THAW helps to provide energy advice and access to wider energy support to the people of Orkney.

THAW provides a range of services to help tenants who are struggling to keep their heating on. THAW also provides help to those struggling with energy debt, energy bills and energy efficiency. The help that THAW provides includes:

- Information and advice on energy efficiency and heating systems.
- Electricity tariff switching and billing support.
- Assistance to access other grant funded programmes.
- Financial support for prepayment and credit meters.
- Support with energy debt.

If you are experiencing issues with your bills or energy supply, please contact your supplier first as they may be able to resolve issues with you over the telephone. Alternatively, if you are experiencing short term energy debt or struggling to heat your home, you can apply for the Home Heating Support Fund (details below).

Otherwise, if you need any other help with energy efficiency, energy bills or your heating system, feel free to contact THAW Orkney on Email: info@thaworkney.co.uk

website: <https://www.thaworkney.co.uk/>

Telephone: 01856 878388

THAW have recently moved premises - they are now located at **12-14 Queen Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1JE**

Office hours: Monday - Tuesday &
Thursday - Friday, 9.30am-4.30pm



Greener Orkney's Community Fridge

Greener Orkney's Community Fridge Project offers surplus food to individuals, free of charge. One of the primary aims of the Project is to limit the amount of food waste going to landfill. The Community Fridge is located in Stromness and Kirkwall. Greener Orkney Community Fridge receives donations of surplus food from many local organisations on a regular basis. Anyone can pop along to the Community Fridge – but, please be aware - supply may be limited or restricted. Generally, there is a limit of three items per person, unless there is a surplus. A 50p donation is requested to help towards the running costs of the Project.

Regular updates are posted to the Greener Orkney Community Fridge Facebook page with information on the food that is available – www.facebook.com/greenerorkneycommunityfridge

Locations:

- 26 Bridge Street, Kirkwall
- 116 Victoria Street, Stromness

Opening times:

	Kirkwall – 26 Bridge Street	Stromness – 116 Victoria Street
Monday	8:30 pm – 9:00 pm	8:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Tuesday	12:00 pm – 2:00 pm 8:30 pm – 9:00 pm	8:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Wednesday	8:30 pm – 9:00 pm	12:00 pm – 2:00 pm 8:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Thursday	12:00 pm – 2:00 pm 8:30 pm – 9:00 pm	12:00 pm – 2:00 pm 8:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Friday	8:30 pm – 9:00 pm	12:00 pm – 2:00 pm 8:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Saturday	12:00 pm – 2 pm	12:00 pm – 2:00 pm 8:30 pm – 9:00 pm
Sunday	Closed	8:30 pm– 9:00 pm



Worried about Council Tax?



Many of us are struggling to keep up with bills just now, including Council Tax. **If you're having difficulty making your payments, or you've fallen behind, we're here to help.**

Don't wait for the Council to contact you, you should get in touch to tell them about your issues. If you have Council Tax arrears or other debts, you should also contact Orkney CAB to make an appointment for debt advice.

- **Call Orkney Islands Council Revenues Team on 01856 886322**
- **Call Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau on 01856 875266**

Check if you can reduce your Council Tax bill

- **Citizens Advice Scotland have an online Council Tax Savings Tool** which checks if you're eligible for any reductions, discounts or exemptions on paying your council tax bill.
<https://www.checkmycounciltax.scot/>
- **There are various reductions and discounts if you or a member of your family is disabled**, including the Disabled Band Reduction and the Severe Mental Impairment. You can find out more about these schemes for disabled people on Turn2Us's website **[Council Tax Discounts - People with Disabilities | Turn2us](#)**
- You will need to **apply for Council Tax savings through Orkney Islands Council**, by calling **01856 886322**, emailing **revenues@orkney.gov.uk** or online at **www.orkney.gov.uk**

Office contact details

Housing Management:

Telephone: 01856873535.

Email: allocations@orkney.gov.uk

Homelessness and Advice:

Telephone: 01856873535.

Email: homeless@orkney.gov.uk

Homelessness Out of Hours Service:

If you require emergency housing outside regular office hours, please telephone 07921582962. An alternative is to contact Police Scotland on 101 and ask for Kirkwall Police Station.

Write to us:

Housing Services, Orkney Islands Council, School Place, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY.

Emergency Duty Worker Service:

This service can be accessed by telephoning the Balfour Hospital on 01856888000 and asking to speak to the Duty Social Worker.

Out of Hours Repair Service

The out of hours service is for emergencies only. Emergencies are defined in the tenants' handbook. The staff on standby will act in a supportive manner and help any caller.

Where the caller genuinely needs immediate technical guidance or an emergency repair to be carried out, this service is included within the tenants' rent, and no further charge is due.

If the caller has called where there is obviously no emergency, then Housing Services will decide if there is a charge to be made.

Recharges will reflect the cost of providing the callout service as well as an abortive charges by workmen.

If you need to contact the out of hours service in an emergency, call 01856873430.

If you lose your keys and call our out of hours repair officer, we will charge for this. You may wish to consider keeping a spare set with a friend or relative who you can trust.

Homelessness Service

If you require immediate emergency housing outwith office hours, please telephone the mobile number 07921582962. An alternative is to contact Police Scotland on 101 and ask for Kirkwall Police Station.