



Homelessness: Your Temporary Accommodation

This leaflet will be of use to you if you have been offered temporary housing by the Council as it gives information about the type of temporary accommodation that we provide.

This leaflet can be provided in a range of different languages or formats as required, such as large print, audio format or Braille.

What type of temporary accommodation will I get?

The Council provides a range of temporary accommodation to meet the needs of people in different circumstances. These include:

- Fully furnished properties owned by the Council or by Orkney Housing Association Limited.
- Fully furnished properties owned by a private sector landlord such as Orkney Islands Property Developments Limited.
- Supported accommodation for women and their children (if any) fleeing domestic abuse and for young people who lack independent living skills.
- Partially supported accommodation for young people who have some independent living skills.
- Bed and Breakfast establishments (where appropriate, as determined by the Homeless Persons (Unsuitable Accommodation) (Scotland) Order 2004).

Where possible your preferences and needs will be taken into account when finding you temporary accommodation. However, because of the high demand on the Council's homeless service, it may not be possible for you to choose where you stay or the type of temporary accommodation you stay in.

Standard of Temporary Accommodation

The quality of our temporary accommodation is high. All properties are decorated to a clean standard, carpeted and furnished throughout. The provisions will be functional, carpets will be entire and furnishings will meet appropriate legal standards. The properties will normally be furnished throughout and fully equipped. The result is a good overall standard of accommodation.

Will I have to pay rent?

There is a charge for all types of temporary accommodation. The cost will vary depending on the type and size of the property and whether there is a service

charge(that is to cover the costs of managing the accommodation and providing any food, heating or furniture). Our staff can give guidance on current rental charges.

If you are unemployed, receiving benefits or on a low income, you may qualify for some assistance with paying your rent. If you are state pension age or above, you may be able to claim Housing Benefit. If you are below state pension age, you may be able to claim the housing cost element of Universal Credit. If you claim Universal Credit, you will not be able to claim Housing Benefit. Depending on your circumstances, Housing Benefit or Universal Credit housing costs may cover some or all of the costs.

How to claim Housing Benefit

When you are offered temporary accommodation, if you are above state pension age, and on a low income, you will be given a Housing Benefit application to fill in. You must provide certain information and documents for the Housing Benefit claim to be processed. This could include, for example:

- Proof of identity (such as birth certificate, national insurance card, passport).
- Verification of your income and financial resources (for example original payslips, benefit letters, bank statements etc).

Help with filling in a Housing Benefit application will be offered when you sign the lease for your temporary accommodation. In addition advice is available from staff at the Housing Benefit Section.

It is important that you make your claim for Housing Benefit as soon as possible, or you may lose benefit you are entitled to.

Universal Credit and Housing Costs

When you are offered temporary accommodation, if you receive Universal Credit you will not be able to claim Housing Benefit. Instead you will have to claim a housing costs element in your claim for Universal Credit.

You will be responsible for telling the Universal Credit Support Centre that you have changed address and what your new housing costs (rent payments) are. In the first instance they can be contacted by telephoning 03456000723 or by signing into your Universal Credit account at <https://www.gov.uk/>

It is important that you tell Universal Credit about your new rent as soon as possible, or you may lose benefit you are entitled to. You will also be responsible for making your rent payments to the Council.

You should note that the housing cost element of Universal Credit may not be calculated on the actual rent that you are charged in temporary accommodation. It will instead be calculated on the lower of the actual rent charged or on a standard Local Housing Allowance rate for your household size – which may not cover all of the rent. Although you may not receive housing costs that cover your rent you will still be responsible for making payment of the full rent to the Council.

In some instances you may still be able to claim Housing Benefit instead of the housing costs element of Universal Credit. This will only apply to a small number of tenants and mainly only applies if your temporary accommodation is in a refuge or hostel. If this applies our staff will advise you accordingly.

What happens if I have pets?

This depends on the type of temporary accommodation you are offered. Generally you would not be allowed to keep pets in Bed and Breakfast or Supported accommodation. Where possible you should make other arrangements for your pets while you are in these types of accommodation.

In some instances you may be allowed to keep pets in other types of temporary accommodation, however you must ask for permission to do so and must take full responsibility for any damage caused by your pets. Please speak to our Homelessness and Advice Section for further information before taking any pets into the accommodation.

What about my furniture?

Depending on your circumstances we can arrange to store your furniture. There may be a charge for this service.

What happens if there is a problem with my accommodation?

If you move into temporary accommodation which you later have problems with perhaps because you need a repair done, please contact our Homelessness and Advice Section who will assist you with this.

What happens if I am unhappy with my offer of temporary accommodation?

We hope that you are happy with your offer of temporary accommodation and will always make sure that it meets your needs as far as possible.

If you feel that your temporary accommodation does not meet your needs you may wish to appeal the offer. This may be because you feel:

- The property is not of a size that meets the requirement of your household.
- The property does not meet your health or medical needs and you have told us about these needs.
- The property is located in an area which could lead to a continued risk of domestic abuse, racial harassment or external violence.
- The property is outwith the area of other needs you have. For example your child's education/welfare is likely to be severely affected by having to change school or it causes difficulties for you to reach your place of employment.
- The property is not wind and watertight and does not meet the Council's repairing obligations.

If you feel you may have grounds for an appeal please complete our Homelessness Appeals Form. If you require assistance with this appeal please contact Orkney Citizen's Advice Bureau who will be pleased to help.

Contact Details

Orkney Islands Council Contacts

Housing Services

Address: Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY.

Telephone: 01856873535.

Website: <https://www.orkney.gov.uk>

Email: homeless@orkney.gov.uk

Emergency out of hours repairs service: 01856873430.

Emergency out of hours homelessness officer: 07921582962.

Housing Benefit Section

Address: Finance Service, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY.

Telephone: 01856873535 extension 2116 or 01856886312 (direct dial).

Fax: 01856876158.

Email: benefits@orkney.gov.uk

Orkney Health and Care

Address: Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY.

Telephone: 01856873535.

Fax: 01856886453.

Emergency out of hours duty social worker service: 01856888000.

Education and Leisure Services

Address: Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall, KW15 1NY.

Telephone: 01856873535 extension 2477.

Fax: 01856876327.

Email: education.leisure@orkney.gov.uk

Voluntary Sector Contacts

Citizens Advice Bureau

Address: 6 Bridge Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1HR.

Telephone: 01856875266.

Shelterline

Telephone: 08088004444 (free 24 hour advice).

Website: <https://scotland.shelter.org.uk/>

Other Useful Contacts

Jobcentre Plus

Address: West Tankerness Lane, Kirkwall, KW15 1AQ.

Telephone: 01856885300.

Fax: 01856872392.

Universal Credit Online

<https://www.gov.uk/universal-credit>

