



Support Leaflet

Housing Services aims to ensure that housing support is available for those who require some assistance in order to help them sustain their tenancies.

This is true both in relation to our permanent Council housing but particularly true for those who have accessed our homelessness services. In relation to homelessness services, we have a legal duty to provide housing support to those assessed as unintentionally homeless and in need of that support.

We are committed to ensuring that high quality services are provided to those who need some additional assistance whether it be for a short time to get through a crisis or whether that assistance is needed in the longer term.

Housing support covers a wide range of issues some covered by Housing Officers and others provided by a dedicated Home Support team. In addition, we work closely with a range of other agencies who can assist in certain situations.

Do you need support?

Our housing staff will complete a form called a “housing support assessment” and will determine whether support is required and to what degree.

This may include assistance with completion of benefit claims including Housing Benefit and the housing cost element of Universal Credit, standing order forms etc which will be done by a Housing Officer and providing assistance with the terms of the tenancy agreement.

More in-depth support may include help with cooking, shopping and budgeting for instance and a Housing Support worker would help with this.

In addition, it may be that you would benefit from being referred to any of a broad range of other agencies who provide support and assistance in various areas. This may include Orkney Citizen’s Advice Bureau for instance who can help you if you wish to challenge a decision made by the Council, or to support you at a case review for instance. In addition, many other agencies may help including Women’s Aid Orkney for women and their children (if any) fleeing domestic abuse, Relationships Scotland for people fleeing domestic abuse or Orkney Blide Trust for those who are affected by mental health issues whether they suffer from a mental health problem themselves or a member of their family does.

How do we decide who gets support?

Housing staff provide general housing support as part of our standard service. This is to give you the best possible chance of sustaining your tenancy.

If housing staff feel you would benefit from more in-depth support we will complete a housing support assessment which identifies any issues arising and which looks at areas where you may benefit from support.

This is then passed to The Housing Support Social Worker who continues this assessment and if necessary identifies appropriate services. Someone will visit you as part of this process.

It is then decided whether you would benefit from some support and if so what type this may be and for how long.

In certain circumstances the situation can be different for instance we may require that a package of support be provided with a certain type of tenancy. This may be the case if you have previously been evicted for anti-social behaviour or you or a member of your household has an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO) for instance. Should this be the case a Housing Officer would explain the situation to you prior to any changes being made to your tenancy.

In relation to homelessness services, we have a legal duty to provide housing support to those assessed as unintentionally homeless and in need of that support.

What if I just would like some support to help me in a crisis?

In some situations some people may feel they would like a bit of extra support to help them through a crisis.

This may happen for instance if they have recently become homeless and are feeling unsettled or upset.

In cases such as these we can put you in touch with various other agencies who may be able to help. We would always discuss this with you and would only ever do this with your consent. In some cases another agency may have referred you to Housing Services in the first place.

Our staff are always happy to offer advice as to the services available and to discuss what options may be available.

What about supported accommodation?

We work jointly with a range of other agencies to address the reasons for homelessness. As a result we have a broad range of supported accommodation available for those who feel they would benefit from this and who are categorised as homeless. We therefore offer this as part of our homelessness services.

The range of supported accommodation is detailed below.

Phoenix House Refuge

This facility is for women and their children (if any) who are fleeing domestic abuse.

It consists of three separate flats inside the refuge with communal areas as well and support is provided on-site by Women's Aid Orkney.

Residents are likely to stay for 3 – 6 months. Thereafter the Council provides move on accommodation either at Phoenix Terrace, which benefits from being within Phoenix House's site, or in other emergency accommodation. CCTV can be fitted and floating support is provided by Women's Aid Orkney.

Young Person's Supported Accommodation

This supported accommodation is available on two separate sites, one in Kirkwall and one in Stromness.

In Kirkwall the facilities consist of three separate flats with a shared kitchen area and care worker's accommodation. There are also six properties within the wider site which are partially supported and are intended for those who have slightly higher independent living skills. In Stromness the facility has three separate rooms as well as a flat which is intended for those who have slightly higher independent living skills. There are also shared kitchen facilities and sitting areas.

Support is provided by Right There and the intention is to equip the young people with independent living skills to enable them to sustain a tenancy in the future.

Residents will be between 16 and 25 years old and are likely to stay for 6 months or until they are assessed as being able to sustain their own independent tenancy. Thereafter they will be placed within the Council's temporary or permanent accommodation with support provided as required. In some cases, the young people will be formerly looked after children and may be placed within permanent accommodation in due course.

Your views

We are interested in your views on our support services and from time to time we may issue surveys or ask our clients to take part in focus groups for instance so we can try to find out whether there are areas where our services could be improved. We also use information from any comments, complaints or compliments that we receive. We continually review services and are keen to ensure we provide the best services possible. Your views are a key part of this process.

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