



**Shetland Islands
Council**



This leaflet is a reproduction of the **Housing Options Guide – Council Housing (Housing for Homeless People)** section.

If you would like this information produced in any other format, please telephone 01595 744360 or email housing@shetland.gov.uk.

Useful Links

SIC Housing Allocation Policy
www.shetland.gov.uk/housing/policyandprocedures/operationalprocedures.asp#AllocationPolicy

Homeless Leaflet
www.shetland.gov.uk/housingoptionsguide/informationandadvice/default.asp#HomelessLeaflet

Homeless Person Decision Review Leaflet
www.shetland.gov.uk/housingoptionsguide/informationandadvice/default.asp#HomelessPersonDecision

Sign Posting Leaflet
www.shetland.gov.uk/housingoptionsguide/informationandadvice/

Homelessness

Shetland Islands Council, as a local authority, has a duty under Section 5 of the Housing (Scotland) Act 2001 to provide accommodation to homeless people. Homelessness is something that happens all too frequently to many ordinary people all over Britain, including Shetland.

A Person is defined in current legislation as homeless or threatened with homelessness when that person is:

- Without any accommodation in which they can live with their family.
- Or - unable to gain access to their accommodation.
- Or - at risk of domestic violence by living in their accommodation.
- Or - they may have accommodation but it is 'unreasonable'; or is overcrowded and a danger to health.
- Or - their only accommodation is a caravan or boat and they have nowhere to park it.

Those persons experiencing one or more the following situations, even if these situations are not covered by the legislation are also defined as being homeless:

- *Roofless*: Those persons without shelter of any kind. This includes people who are sleeping rough, victims of fire and flood, and newly-arrived immigrants.
- *Houseless*: Those persons living in emergency and temporary accommodation provided for homeless people. Examples of such accommodation are night shelters, hostels and refuges. (Within Shetland this list also includes any self contained or shared temporary accommodation provided by the Council).
- Households residing in accommodation, such as bed and breakfast premises, that is unsuitable as long-stay accommodation because they have nowhere else to stay.
- Those persons staying in institutions only because they have nowhere else to stay
- *Insecure accommodation*: Those persons in accommodation that is insecure rather than simply held on an impermanent tenancy. This group includes:
 1. tenants or owner-occupiers likely to be evicted (whether lawfully or unlawfully).
 2. persons with no legal rights or permission to remain in accommodation, such as squatters or young people asked to leave the family home.

3. persons with only a short-term permission to stay, such as those moving around friends' and relatives' houses with no stable base.
- *Involuntary Sharing of Housing in Unreasonable Circumstances:* Those persons who are involuntarily sharing accommodation with another household on a long-term basis in housing circumstances deemed to be unreasonable.

Over the 3 year period from April 2008-March 2011 there were on average 265 households in Shetland who lost their accommodation each year. This is an increase of 10 persons from the average over the period 2007-2010.

Options for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness

Local Authorities have a legal duty to assist all homeless people - firstly by providing quality information and advice, secondly, by taking action to try to prevent homelessness occurring and thirdly, when homelessness cannot be avoided by offering the homeless person or household temporary accommodation and assisting the household to secure their own permanent accommodation. In many instances the Council has a further duty to ensure that permanent housing is made available to those affected by homelessness.

What to do if you are homeless or about to become homeless

- Contact the [Council's Homelessness Service](#) at the Housing Office at Shetland Islands Council - Housing Service, Department of Education and Social Care, 6 North Ness Business Park, Lerwick, ZE1 0LZ on 01595 744360 at the earliest opportunity to seek advice on what action you can take yourself and how the Homelessness team may be able to assist you. [The Homelessness Duty system is explained here.](#)
- If you are assessed and considered homeless according to legislation, the Council will provide you with temporary accommodation for a minimal period of one month. It is therefore important to contact the Homelessness Service at the earliest opportunity.
- Many of the other agencies offering housing information and advice may be able to offer you useful advice and support. (See [Where to get good housing information and advice for details](#)).

Temporary Accommodation

- The Council uses a variety of accommodation to provide temporary accommodation to households and individuals who are homeless. This includes shared accommodation, bed and breakfast accommodation and self-contained flats, houses and chalets. These are located in various parts of Shetland and may be owned by the Council, [other Social Housing providers](#) or owned by private landlords. Most of the accommodation is furnished and fully equipped.
- Temporary accommodation may be provided for an initial period until the Council reaches a decision on whether it has a duty to permanently rehouse the individual household.
- If the Council does not have a duty to permanently rehouse the household they will be offered advice and assistance in exploring the various housing options that are available.
- If the Council does have a duty to rehouse the household the homelessness staff will assist the individual in deciding what type and location of permanent housing they will consider.

Focused Futures

Focused Futures is an exciting initiative to support young homeless people in Shetland.

If you are aged 16-25, homeless or in an SIC or Hjaltland tenancy, and looking for support to move into employment, training, college or volunteering opportunities, Focused Futures could help you to reach your potential. You can take part in the project if you live in your own tenancy, or if you are homeless you can be provided with a place in shared, supported accommodation in Lerwick.

The application process is as simple as we can make it. You can get an application form from the Housing Service and we can help you to fill it in if you want. We will then meet with you to tell you more about how the project will work and look at whether it is right for you. If you get a place on the project, we will support you to develop a personal plan, to help you to improve your understanding of yourself, where you are now, and how to get where you want to be. You will take part in a range of activities and also get support to learn the skills you need to cope with living in your own place.

Focused Futures is a partnership between Shetland Islands Council Housing Service, Hjaltland Housing Association, Careers Scotland, Moving On Employment Project, Bridges, Shetland College and Life Skills.

For more information, or to find out how to apply, contact Idamay Brill at SIC Housing Service on 07825089127.