

Information can on request be made available in Braille, on tape, in large print and in different languages. For further information please telephone Housing on 01595 744360, or email housing@shetland.gov.uk

For further information please contact us at:
Shetland Islands Council—Housing Service,
Department of Education and Social Care,
6 North Ness Business Park,
LERWICK ZE1 0LZ

telephone **01595 744360**
fax **01595 744395**
Freephone **0800 212 829**

In an emergency out with office hours please contact:
Homelessness: **01595 695611**
Council House Repairs: **01595 693972**
Available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year

Email: housing@shetland.gov.uk
Website: www.shetland.gov.uk/Housing

Our Office is Open
Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm
We are open during lunchtimes.

Information on the various housing options available in Shetland can be found online in the Housing Options Guide
www.shetland.gov.uk/housingoptionsguide/



REGISTERED AS A SCOTTISH CHARITY



Shetland Housing Mutual Exchange Scheme through



www.homeswapper.co.uk

Things to think about when considering a Mutual Exchange

HomeSwapper

www.homeswapper.co.uk

HomeSwapper is a free scheme for mutual exchanges between public sector tenants across the UK. Both SIC and Hjalmland Housing Association are members of HomeSwapper.

The service is web-based and easy to use. An applicant registers with the HomeSwapper website and can choose up to 9 areas. The applicant will be matched to new homes that meet the criteria of what and where they want to move, as these are added to the website. These matches are placed in 'My Matches', a page on the website that can only be seen if you log in. An applicant can be prompted about new matches by email or text message. Once two tenants from different areas agree they would like to swap houses, the mutual exchange can go ahead - subject to the formal approval required of each tenant's landlord.

SIC or Hjalmland tenants wishing to move to alternative accommodation are encouraged to organise a Mutual Exchange with other Council or Housing Association tenants. This scheme does not apply to tenants of privately rented accommodation. HomeSwapper can help you identify someone who may wish to exchange with you, if you are looking for a different property whether it may be smaller, larger or in a different area.

Any tenant who does not have access to a computer can use the public access computers at the Council Housing Office at Shetland Islands Council—Housing Service, Department of Education and Social Care, 6 North Ness Business Park, or at Hjalmland Housing Association at 2 Harbour Street, at Greenhead or at the Shetland Tenants Forum, 1a Water Lane, Lerwick.

www.homeswapper.co.uk

Agency	Phone Number	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	Post Code
Shetland Islands Council Community Care —Social Work	01595 74 4400		92 St Olaf Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0ES
Shetland Tenants Forum	01595 69 5197		1a Water Lane	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0AG
Shetland Women's Aid	01595 69 2070		St Olaf Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0ES
Shetland Youth Information Service	01595 69 2002		62-64 Commercial Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0DL
Victim Support	07541 858 465		32 Hillhead	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0HB
Assessors Office & Electoral Registration	01595 69 2019	Charlotte House	Commercial Road	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0LQ
Ombudsman	0131 225 5300					
Hjalmland Housing Association	01595 69 4986		2 Harbour Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0LR
Police (Lerwick)	01595 69 2110		County Buildings	Lerwick	Shetland	
Samaritans of Shetland	01595 69 4449	Linda Rose House	13 Charlotte Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0JL

Agency	Phone Number	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Address 4	Post Code
Northern Constabulary	01595 69 2110	Police Station	Market Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0JN
Shetland Befriending Scheme	01595 74 3907	Market House	14 Market Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0JP
Shetland Childcare Partnership	01595 74 5400	Bruce Family Centre, Old Bruce Hostel	Lovers Loan	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0BA
Shetland Citizens Advice Bureau	01595 69 4696	Market House	14 Market Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0JP
Shetland Community Drugs Team	01595 69 6698		34 Market Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0JP
Shetland Council of Social Service	01595 74 3902	Market House	14 Market Street	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0JP
Shetland Islands Council Executive Services Department—Finance	01595 74 4629	Charlotte House	Commercial Road	Lerwick	Shetland	ZE1 0LQ

Things to think about when considering a Mutual Exchange

If you are applying for a Mutual Exchange there are a number of important things to consider before deciding upon an exchange

What rent will you have to pay?

Shetland Islands Council and Hjaltland Housing Association charge different rents for the various types of properties. Other Landlords set their own rent levels which may be very different to the SIC and HHA rental amounts, they may also offer a different level of service. You should be aware of the rent you would be expected to pay if you move.

Will your rights and responsibilities as a tenant be affected?

The Scottish Secure Tenancy (SST) replaces both secure and assured tenancies for tenants of local authorities and registered social landlords. This means that if you move from Hjaltland to SIC or vice versa, your tenancy rights are the same for both landlords. However, your responsibilities are likely to differ. It is a good idea to check this with your prospective landlord before you agree to an exchange.

One example where your rights may be affected is your right to buy. If you have an aspiration to buy your property you should seek advice from the Housing Service before agreeing to an exchange.

Viewing

Always view the property before agreeing to an exchange. Once you have identified someone with whom you may wish to exchange homes make sure that you view the property. If you don't view it, how will you decide on important personal issues? For instance:

- Is it a nice house?
- Is it in a nice neighbourhood?
- Is it on a busy street?
- Is it in an isolated or lonely area?
- Is there a shop or bus service nearby?

Selling Points

Your property may also be viewed. It is important to remember that when people come to view your house, that you see your house through their eyes. An untidy and dirty house is not going to appeal to the other person and may jeopardise your chances of a mutual exchange taking place. If you are serious about a mutual exchange, it is a good idea to follow some basic pointers:

- **First impression** - It is important you make a good first impression as many people may only drive by your home. Make sure the outside is looking its best; keep bins out of sight, tidy the garden, cut the grass and if need be, give the front door a fresh coat of paint.

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Section 5 Contact Information

Agency	Phone number	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Post Code
Advocacy Shetland	01595 74 3929	Market House	14 Market Street	Lerwick	ZE1 0JP
Alcohol Support Service	01595 69 5363	44 Commercial Street		Lerwick	
Community Mediation Shetland	01595 69 4696	Market House	14 Market Street	Lerwick	ZE1 0JP
Community Mental Health Team	01595 74 3006	Lerwick Health Centre	South Road	Lerwick	ZE1 0RB
Couple Counselling Shetland	01595 69 2719	Market House	14 Market Street	Lerwick	ZE1 0JP
Disability Shetland	01595 74 3920	Market House	14 Market Street	Lerwick	ZE1 0JP
Family Mediation	01595 69 4696	Market House	14 Market Street	Lerwick	ZE1 0JP
Job Centre Plus	01595 73 2050	Charlotte House	Commercial Street	Lerwick	ZE1 0LQ

Mutual Exchange

Request Form

When you have found someone you would like to take part in a Mutual Exchange with, each tenant should complete this form and send it to Housing Services or Hjalmland.

Your Name

Your Address

Who would you like to exchange your house with:

Name

Address

Reason for the Mutual Exchange:

.....

.....

.....

Your Signature.....

Joint Tenants Signature

Date

- **De-clutter** - Tidying away the day-to-day debris that inevitably accumulates will help to show off a room's potential and will make things feel a lot more spacious. You're aiming to create a space that others can ultimately imagine as their own, so clear away any clutter that might be a distraction.
- **Clean** - Give the property a thorough clean. Wash down paintwork, clean floors and worktops and scrub the bathroom and kitchen.
- **Freshen up** – If it is necessary, smarten up tired looking rooms with a fresh lick of paint. You're aiming to appeal to as wide an audience as possible so stick to neutrals and resist the urge to go down the 'themed' route.
- **Lighting** - Clean your windows and pull back curtains that might be keeping out any light. Lighting can work wonders. Use it to maximum effect to create a mood or by making a feature out of it in narrow corridors or problem spaces.
- **Smell** - Keep the house well ventilated – people viewing your home will not be impressed with bad odours. Open windows to eliminate any strong cooking smells and banish pets to your friends or neighbours.

How to apply for a Mutual Exchange

Once you have viewed one another's property and decided that you would each like to proceed with the exchange then you must each put your request in writing to your own Landlord.

SIC and HHA tenants should provide the following information:

- The name and address of the person or family that you wish to exchange with together with the name and address of their landlord (this is especially important if they are not tenants of the SIC or HHA).
- You should also provide details of your household so that we can make sure that the exchange will not result in overcrowding.
- If you have a joint tenancy you must ensure that any request is signed by each joint tenant

Other landlords may require more information to be provided in the letter.

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Remember

Before you give up any job or sell or move any furniture you should ensure that the exchange has been fully agreed in writing and the necessary documents have been signed.

Do not move house until both parties have signed a new Scottish Secure Tenancy.

Contact

If you would like more information on anything contained in this leaflet or further information on the Shetland Mutual Exchange Scheme please contact your Housing Officer at the following address:

Shetland Islands Council—Housing Service
6 North Ness Business Park
LERWICK
Shetland
ZE1 0LZ
Tel – 01595 744360

housing@shetland.gov.uk www.shetland.gov.uk/housing

Hjaltland Housing Association
2 Harbour Street
Lerwick
Shetland
ZE1 0LR
Tel—01595 694986

mail@hjaltland.org www.hjaltland.org.uk

www.homeswapper.co.uk

Existing Council Tenants Transfer Payment Scheme

By taking part in a mutual exchange and freeing up a larger house you could be eligible for payment under the Transfer Payment Scheme.

The purpose of this scheme is to encourage tenants who are under-occupying their accommodation to move to more suitable accommodation. The transfer payment scheme operated by the Council provides a flat rate payment of £700 to assist with the expenses incurred in transferring to alternative accommodation.

Payment under this scheme is subject to the following conditions:

- You must be a tenant of the council.
- You must be currently living in Lerwick, Scalloway, Bressay, Cunningsburgh or Tingwall.
- You must have an active transfer application to move to smaller accommodation.
- You must have a clear rent account and no other outstanding debt to the council.
- On transfer or exchange from your present accommodation, you would need to be releasing at least one bedroom, e.g. transfer from a three bedroom to a two-bedroom property.

The tenant will be paid once the tenancy agreement for the new property has been signed. We reserve the right to take action to recover the payment in the event that the exchange does not take place.

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What happens next?

SIC and HHA Tenants

Once we have received your written request your rent account will be checked (if you have arrears your request may be refused at this stage). We will then arrange to visit you at home to inspect your property and to check that all the conditions can be met. These conditions are detailed on page 9.

You will receive a copy of the Property Inspection Report and a copy will also be sent to the other tenant with whom you wish to exchange. If you are hoping to exchange with another SIC or HHA tenant you will receive a copy of the Property Inspection Report for the house that you are hoping to exchange into. The information is provided to help each tenant decide whether to proceed with the exchange.

Tenants of other Councils and Housing Associations

If you are a tenant of another landlord we will ask your landlord to provide a Tenancy Report. This information will enable us to check whether you are able to meet all the conditions on page 9.

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How long does it take for a decision to be made?

We will respond to your request for a mutual exchange within one month. If we receive all the necessary information and both tenants are able to fulfil the conditions then a decision can be made quickly. If the application is not straightforward, if any of the conditions are not immediately met or if the exchange involves another landlord, the process may take longer.

Once a decision has been made and agreed by any other landlord involved then both tenants will be informed in writing. If the exchange is approved you will then be able to decide on a suitable date for the exchange to take place. The necessary documents relating to this exchange will be prepared. Each tenant must terminate their current Scottish Secure Tenancy and sign a new SST before the actual move takes place. Where an existing tenancy is in joint names both joint tenants will be required to sign the relevant document.

Remember! A tenant remains legally responsible for a tenancy until the new SST is signed.

SIC and HHA Conditions

The Council and Hjalmland will not unreasonably refuse a Mutual Exchange. However, any tenant wishing to take part in an exchange must meet the following conditions;

- All parties must have a clear rent account
- The exchange must not result in overcrowding or significant under-occupation of a SIC or HHA property.
- SIC and HHA must be satisfied that any tenant wishing to exchange into one of its properties intends to remain in the property for at least six months.
- An exchange tenant will be expected to accept the SIC or HHA property in its existing condition. Where any non-standard feature is to remain e.g. garden shed, built in kitchen appliance, shower etc., the incoming tenant will be expected to accept responsibility for its future maintenance, any future replacement and/or reinstatement of this.
- Any damage within a property may require to be reinstated to an approved standard by the existing tenant before any exchange is approved.
- If the property has been specifically adapted by SIC or HHA to meet specific needs of the individual tenants and the proposed tenant does not require the adaptations then the exchange may be refused. Similarly if the proposed exchange would result in a need for either property to be adapted the exchange may be refused.

If these conditions cannot be met an exchange will probably be refused. If the exchange involves a tenancy with another landlord, different conditions may apply.