

Orkney Islands Council

Housing Benefit on Two Homes



Housing Benefit is usually paid for the property that you actually live in. This leaflet provides some general information on the circumstances under which Housing Benefit may be paid on two homes.

For example, if you have moved to a new home and could not have avoided paying rent on your old and new home at the same time, benefit may be paid for up to four weeks on both properties.

Changing Address

If you move, benefit will be cancelled from the date you moved out of your old address. However, housing benefit may be paid for up to four weeks after you moved out if ALL the following apply:

- The landlord continues to charge you rent on your old home;
- You have actually moved into your new home;
- You can prove it is unavoidable that you had to pay rent on both homes.

Fleeing violence or fear of violence

If you have left your previous home and remain absent due to fear of violence occurring either in your home or outside of your home by a former member of your family, benefit may be paid on two properties for up to 52 weeks. This can only apply if:

- It is reasonable to pay Housing Benefit for both properties;
- You intend to return to occupy your former dwelling as your home;

Students and trainees

- Couples, one of whom is a student or trainee and has to live in separate rented accommodation, may be entitled to Housing Benefit for both properties.
- It must be unavoidable to have to rent two properties and be reasonable to pay benefit on both homes.
- There is no time limit on the provision other than you or your partner must continue to be a student or trainee.

Large Families

- If you have a large family and the Council has housed you in two separate properties because your household is too large to live in one property, benefit may be paid for both properties.
- Both homes should be owned by the local authority.
- No time limit on dual payments.

How do I apply for benefit on two homes?

Contact the Council at the address shown at the bottom of this leaflet or complete the form entitled "Application for Benefit on Two Homes".

Housing Benefit prior to moving into a property

Housing Benefit cannot normally be paid on a property until you actually move in.

In certain circumstances we can pay benefit before you move into your home for a maximum period of up to four weeks.

The delay in moving into your new home must be reasonable and due to:

- You becoming liable for rent while you were in hospital or residential care;
- Your new home is being adapted to meet the disabled needs of you or a member of your family;
- You were waiting for a decision on a Social Fund Payment to meet the costs of moving or setting up your new home (you must have a child under 5 or meet the criteria for a disability premium).
- You must not be liable for rent anywhere else.

How to apply for benefit prior to moving in

A request must be made in writing, providing the following information:

- state the reasons for the delay in moving;
- the date you intend to move;
- whether your possessions have been moved;
- whether or not you are making payments on the new property.

Further Information

If you need more information you can contact the Benefits Section, Orkney Islands Council, Council Offices, Kirkwall, Orkney, KW15 1NY. Telephone: 01856 873535 Extension 2116 or Direct Dial 01856 886312; email: benefits@orkney.gov.uk
Website: www.orkney.gov.uk

You can also seek free, independent and confidential advice from the Orkney Citizens Advice Bureau at Anchor Buildings, Bridge Street, Kirkwall, KW15 1HR; Telephone: 01856 875266

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