

Orkney Islands Council

The inspection of Orkney Islands Council took place in June 2005. Our purpose in inspection is to provide an independent external assessment of the effectiveness of housing and homelessness service delivery and make recommendations to help improvement. Inspections are conducted within a published framework of Performance Standards. We awarded the following grades:

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|----------------------|---|------|---|
| Housing management | C | Fair | Some strengths, but with many areas where improvement is required or with a small number of significant weaknesses. |
| Property maintenance | D | Poor | Major areas where improvement is needed or where a number of very significant weaknesses are found. |
| Homelessness | D | Poor | Major areas where improvement is needed or where a number of very significant weaknesses are found. |

Inspection Findings

Orkney Islands Council is Scotland’s smallest local authority landlord. It owns 819 houses. The islands have a population of over 19,000, and just under 10% of the population rent their homes from the Council.

The Council delivers its housing and homelessness services through the Housing Division of the Finance and Housing Department. The Technical Services Department is responsible for managing elements of the property maintenance service. Housing and Homelessness services are delivered from one central location in Kirkwall.

The Council has worked hard to support tenants’ and residents’ groups, although the level of tenant involvement is relatively low. The Council needs to do more to find out the views of all the people who use its services and to use feedback to help improve services. It also needs to focus more fully on the needs of its service users in how it publicises its services and manages complaints.

The Council’s current approach to how it plans, monitors and reports its delivery of housing services is poor. This weakness underpins many of the poorer areas of service we identify in our inspection report.

Key strengths in Orkney Island Council’s services are:

- its houses are in satisfactory condition and it has worked well to improve their physical quality;
- it has clean and tidy neighbourhoods;
- it performs well in collecting rent;
- its performance in reletting empty houses is improving;

- its positive approach to providing support to people who may be homeless; and
- quick access to homeless appointments and to temporary accommodation for people who need it.

Key areas for improvement in the Council's services are:

- its poor approach to allocating housing;
- poor performance in completing repairs on time;
- a poor range of information for tenants and other users about its services and how well it performs;
- a lack of publicity on the right to complain, and the absence of recording and monitoring complaints to improve services systematically;
- its lack of compliance with Right to Repair and asbestos management duties;
- its underdeveloped approach to assessing the performance of its contractors;
- poor access to the homelessness service;
- homeless people spending very long periods of time in temporary accommodation;
- long waits for homeless people to access permanent housing;
- delays in assessing homeless applications and weaknesses in how it manages elements of the assessment of applications; and
- an out of hours repairs service that is not user-friendly.

Next steps

Orkney Islands Council should respond to our findings by submitting an improvement plan for agreement with us within eight weeks of the publication of this report. We require the Council to give this summary of the inspection report to all its tenants.

How to get more information and contact details

If you would like to see Orkney Islands Council's improvement plan you should contact:

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The full report is on our website at <http://www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk> .
 This Summary can also be made available on tape, in Braille, large print and community languages. For information please contact Janette Campbell on 0131 479 5162 or email janette.campbell@communitiesscotland.gsi.gov.uk.

اپنی کمیونٹی میں بولی جانے والی زبان میں اس دستاویز کے ترجمے کے بارے میں معلومات کیلئے برائے مہربانی
جینٹ کیمپبل Janette Campbell کو 0131 479 5162 پر فون کریں یا اس پتے پر ای میل کریں

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**如果索取這文件的翻譯版本，請致電 Janette Campbell
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করবেন।

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