



Welcome to Shetland

A guide to your new area

Introduction

Welcome! We hope you enjoy your new home. This guide aims to help you settle in and get to know your local area. It's mainly for people who are new to Shetland and provides a summary of the main services, contacts and facilities you might need. These may still be useful even if you are already familiar with the area. There's also a checklist of things to think about when you move into your new home. This guide will give you a flavour of what you can find so go out and explore!



Fiona
Housing Options Scotland Volunteer



This guide has been produced by volunteers at **Housing Options Scotland**. We are Scotland's housing charity for disabled people, older adults and members of the Armed Forces community. If you need help with your housing situation, contact us:

housingoptionsscotland.org.uk

0131 510 1567

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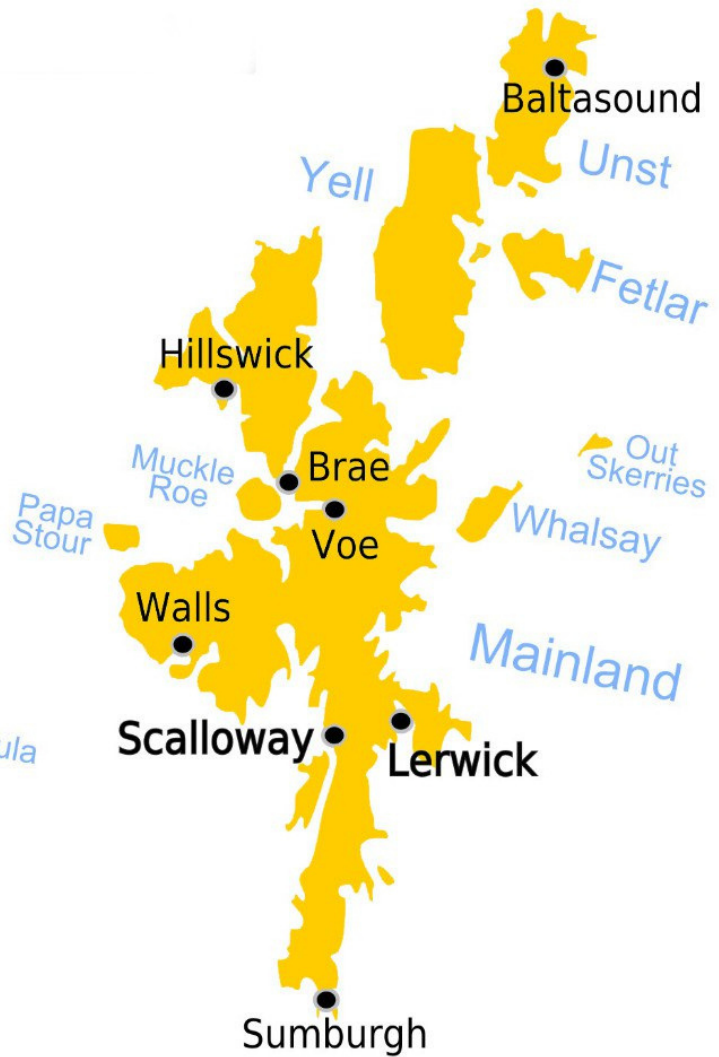
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Background information

Shetland is a group of over 100 islands with a wealth of wildlife, history, culture and archaeology wherever you go. In Shetland you are closer to Norway than to mainland Scotland 130 miles away.

The largest island is known as 'the Mainland' and there are 15 other inhabited islands with a total population of 23,200. Lerwick is the commercial and administrative centre as well as being a busy port. The local authority is Shetland Isles Council. The oil industry is a major factor in Shetland's economy and has allowed the Isles Council to provide modern sports and recreation facilities across the islands.

Shetland has its own dialect – Dunna Chuck Bruck might be the first you recognise!



Stonybreck ● Fair Isle

Moving home

When you move into a new home there are several things you need to think about:

Tell others about your change of address.

This might include:

- Friends and family
- Your employer
- Your local job-centre
- The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP)
- Your bank, insurance, pension and credit card companies
- Your doctor and dentist
- [Shetland Islands council](#)
- The [electoral register](#)
- The [Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency](#) (DVLA)
- Telephone, TV and broadband providers
- [TV licensing](#)
- Charities you might support
- [Post Office re-direction service](#)



Find your way around your new home. Consider getting two copies of keys cut for your new home and ask for instructions/booklets for all appliances to be left for you. Also make sure you know where to locate the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Gas and electricity meters | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Fuse box |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thermostat for central heating | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Landline telephone sockets |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water boiler | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TV and satellite aerial sockets |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hot and cold water tanks | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Access points e.g. to loft points/under floor areas |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stopcock (to turn the main water supply on/off) | |

- **Take electricity meter readings.** Do this at your old and new property when you leave/move-in. This will make sure you only pay for the energy you use.
- **Think about changing providers.** Moving to a new home gives you the chance to review the costs of services you use and try to find better deals. Look at comparison sites [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#) to help. Note that there is no main gas supply in Shetland. Many people use oil or LPG gas as an alternative fuel for heating and cooking.
- **Settle up bills at your old property.** Make sure you pay for all bills due - rent/mortgage; council tax; gas/electricity; garden/common area maintenance.

The following websites might also prove useful for you throughout/after your move:



[Home Energy Scotland](#)

For advice about energy saving, keeping warm at home, renewable energy, greener travel, cutting waste and more. They can offer advice for applying for grants or loans.



[Trusted Traders](#)

This site contains a list of traders who have successfully passed an assessment process carried out by 'Which?' trading standards professionals. Just select the service you require and type in your postcode to find a list of traders locally.



[Repairs](#)

The One Stop Shop run by Hjaltland Housing Association provides private sector homeowners with assistance with disabled adaptations, repairs and maintenance to their properties. You can find information about them [here](#).

Essentials

Council Services

A list of services provided by Shetland Islands Council can be viewed on their website [here](#), including ferry timetables. Trawl down the page to find all the services provided. If you need to contact your local council, contact them [here](#).



Council Tax 🏠

The council tax you pay is related to the value of the property in which you live and the valuation band (category) it falls into. Charges for clean water and waste water are set by Scottish Water and these charges are billed along with the council tax. You can access and manage your council tax account online, including making online payments through your account. To find the current rates of council tax and water charges, you can access your local council's website [here](#).

A full council tax charge has to be paid where two or more adults (aged 18 or over) live together in a property that is their main home. However, students and carers are not usually included in this. Discounts for council tax can be applied for apprentices, school leavers, leavers from a care setting, people in hospital, those officially categorised as disabled and anyone with a severe mental impairment. If you need more information about discounts or exemptions, access your local council's information [here](#).

Waste collection and recycling ♻️

In the Shetland dialect rubbish is 'bruk'. 'Dunna Chuck Bruk' signs encourage people to take care.

- Information about bin collections and recycling can be found on the council's website [here](#).
- There is a recycling site at Gremista, north of Lerwick and you can find out about opening times and other arrangements [here](#).
- Learn more about what you can put in the different coloured bins and the purple bag [here](#).
- Each part of Shetland has its calendar for bin collection. To find out when your bins will be collected put your postcode into the search box [here](#).
- If you require assistance on collection days the information can be found [here](#).

Transport

Shetland transport

Travelling around a network of islands can be complicated but ferry and bus services are designed to connect well and fares are very reasonable. Timetables for all bus, ferry and Inter-island flight services are available [here](#).

Travel on inter-island ferries and buses is free for anyone with a National Entitlement Card or a Blue Badge. Information is available [here](#).

Bus

Information on bus services is available [here](#) and there is a travel app that you may find helpful available from the Apple App Store and Google Play. Look for ZetTrans Travel App. Once downloaded it doesn't need a mobile phone signal to operate.

Inter-island Ferries

Roll on/roll off services carrying vehicles and passengers operate many times a day to the largest islands, Yell, Unst, Fetlar, Whalsay and Bressay. It is advisable to book ahead to reserve a vehicle place if you are travelling at peak times. (Booking is not available on the Bressay ferry.)

Ferry timetables are available [here](#). To make a booking you have to register [here](#).

Mainland Ferries

Ferries to Orkney and mainland Scotland (Aberdeen) are operated by Northlink Ferries. Timetables are available [here](#).

Journeys to and from the mainland take 10 to 12 hours and are overnight. Cabins are available and need to be booked in advance. Online booking is available [here](#). Cabins with disabled adaptations

must be booked by phone – call 0800 1114422 (free from UK landlines and mobiles). Shetland residents with a National Entitlement Card are entitled to 4 Northlink Ferry vouchers each year.



Inter-island flights

Shetland's more remote islands are most easily accessed by plane. Flights to Fair Isle, Foula and Papa Stour operate from Tingwall airport, 6 miles from Lerwick. Timetables and booking information are available [here](#).

Flights to Mainland Scotland

Information about flights to Edinburgh, Glasgow and other locations operate from Sumburgh Airport. Information is available [here](#).

Taxis

Taxis provide a very important service for people in the islands. A list of taxi companies is available [here](#).

Education

Pre-school education and childcare

All three and four year olds, and some two year olds, are entitled to 1140 hours per year of free early learning and childcare. The 1140 hours model enables you to choose to use your hours during term-time only or year round. Information on childminders, term time provision and year round provision is available [here](#).

Primary Schools

Shetland has a network of 22 primary schools across the islands. Some are very small with only one or two teachers so class sizes are small and composite. You can see the list of primary schools [here](#).

Junior High Schools

Shetland has five junior high schools, which provide S1-S4 provision for pupils in rural communities. These are based in Baltasound (Unst), Yell, Whalsay, Aith and Sandwick. Students wishing to proceed to Higher Grade study move at the beginning of their fifth to one of the two six-year high schools in Lerwick or Brae. You can find out more about each of the Junior High Schools [here](#).

High Schools

Shetland has two high schools for S1-S6 students: Anderson High School in Lerwick and Brae High School in Brae. You can read about these schools [here](#).

Anderson High School Halls of Residence

Young people who travel to Lerwick to attend Anderson High school from the outlying islands board at the Anderson High School Halls. You can access the information sheet about living in the halls [here](#).

School Transport

Education authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide and finance the transport of school pupils who live specified distances from school. The statutory qualifying distance for pupils of school age under eight is two miles and for those eight years and over is three miles.

Shetland Islands Council has exercised its discretion by provision additional transport during the "winter period" to pupils, and in addition, extend or divert transport as far as possible whenever a pupil who is entitled to transport has more than half a mile to walk to a pick up point. Further information is available [here](#).

Further Education

The University of the Highlands and Islands (UHI) has a number of bases in Shetland and offers courses from National Certificate to Postgraduate level. Information on learning centres and courses is available [here](#).



Money, work, and debt advice

Financial advice



SCOTLAND'S FINANCIAL
HEALTH SERVICE

[Scotland's Financial Health Service](#) is a gateway to free and impartial advice about your finances.



In Shetland most of the money advice services are provided by the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB). Shetland CAB can provide advice on debt, rent arrears, pension issues, tax and budgeting. You can access their information [here](#).



Age Scotland [Money Matters](#) can provide tailored money advice for people aged 50 and over.

Debt advice

The money advice contacts above can provide debt advice. You can also find specialist advice and assistance to manage debt at:

- [Step Change](#) is a debt charity giving free advice about debt in Scotland.
- [MoneyHelper](#) can also help people in debt.
- There is also a [National Debtline Scotland](#) offering free and independent advice here. Tel 0808 808 4000; you can also [webchat](#) with an adviser.



NATIONAL
DEBTLINE

Pensions

- You can find general government about different types of pensions [here](#).
- MoneyHelper (formerly the Pensions Advisory Service and Money Advice Service) is free and impartial and gives information and advice about all types of pensions. You can find out more [here](#).
- Age UK also provides clear information about pensions [here](#).

Working and employment



Jobcentre

Jobcentres deal with new or existing benefit claims and provide advice and support with finding work. Shetland Jobcentre Plus is based in Lerwick and offers support to help you find a job, improve your job skills and claim for Jobseeker's Allowance, Incapacity Benefit, Universal Credit and Income Support.

Lerwick Jobcentre Plus
Charlotte House
Commercial Road
Lerwick
Shetland Isles ZE1 0LQ



Current vacancies

All the posts currently available in Shetland, advertised by the Islands Council and NHS Shetland, are listed [here](#). Other sources of local vacancies can be found on Indeed – [here](#) for Shetland information, or Totaljobs available [here](#).

Benefits and Grants



After you have moved is a good to get a 'benefits check' to make sure you are getting all the benefits you are entitled to.

- For up-to-date information and advice about benefits contact the Council's [Welfare Rights Team](#), [Citizen's Advice Scotland](#) and Age Scotland.
- Contact Job Centre Plus in Perth on [0800 169 0190](#) for help with claims.
- [Turn2Us](#) and [Entitled To](#) offer reliable online benefits and grants calculators as well as good information and advice.

Scottish Welfare Fund

The Scottish Welfare Fund helps families and people in Scotland who are on low incomes through Crisis Grants and Community Care Grants. Apply [here](#) through the council for a:



- **Crisis Grant**, where you need help in because of a disaster (like a fire or flood), or an emergency (like losing your money or an unexpected expense);
- **Community Care Grant**, to help you or someone you care for to start to live, or to carry on living, a settled life in the community.

Young people

Shetland Islands Council provides clothing grants and free school meals and you can find out about them [here](#). Young people at school or college may be eligible for Education Maintenance Allowance and your can find out more information and apply [here](#). In addition, the Isles Council provides bursaries for students from low income families studying in Shetland or on the Scottish Mainland. You can find out about bursaries [here](#).

Health and wellbeing

NHS Shetland provides healthcare services throughout the Shetland Mainland and other islands.

GPs and other services



There are 10 health centres on Mainland Shetland and the larger islands providing GP and other services. A list of health centres and phone numbers is available [here](#).

To register with a GP practice you need to complete the application form available [here](#).

Health Centres can dispense medicines prescribed by doctors. There are pharmacies in Lerwick and Scalloway. A list of these is available [here](#).

GP and other special services are available on video call via the Attend Anywhere service. This is completely confidential and secure. You can find more about this service [here](#).

Dentists



There are NHS dental practices based on Mainland Shetland and outreach clinics on many of the other islands. A list of dental practices is available [here](#).

Hospitals



Shetland's one hospital is the Gilbert Bain located in Lerwick. It has A&E, medical, surgical and maternity wards but serious or complex cases are often sent to Aberdeen. Some consultants from mainland Scotland run regular visiting clinics at the Gilbert Bain. Information about the Gilbert Bain is available [here](#).

Travel to hospital in Aberdeen is normally made by plane but patients can choose to travel by ferry. If you need someone to travel with you information is available [here](#).

Social Care



Shetland Islands Council supports people who have issues that affect their health, wellbeing or which restrict their participation in community life. This might be due to a



disability, illness or other reason. In the past support was provided in buildings with specific uses – for residential care, day services etc. That is changing and evolving and the new single assessment process know as *With You For You* aims to work out how best to support you in the way you want. Information is available [here](#).

Information on a number of organisations providing support and services to carers and people with disabilities is available [here](#). The Independent Living Centre in Lerwick provides information on equipment and advice and the opportunity to experience how devices might help. A video about the centre is available [here](#). It also explains how the Community Alarm and Telecare might be able to support you.

Information on Carers Support Services is available by phoning [01595 743923](tel:01595743923).

Health and social care for veterans and the armed forces



NHS Inform also has useful information if you are a veteran seeking help with health care. Find out more [here](#).

Every NHS Board in Scotland has an **Armed Forces and Veterans Champion**. NHS Board champions are usually senior members of staff who hold overall responsibility for making sure that the priority treatment guidelines are understood and applied in their NHS Board area. It is important to tell your GP that you have served in the armed forces as this will ensure you receive appropriate information and services specifically for veterans. More information about your NHS rights as a veteran can be found [here](#). There are a number of NHS dedicated services for veterans about which you can find out more [here](#).

The **Veterans Welfare Service** is a UK Government service provided through Veterans UK. It aims to provide a free welfare service that promotes independence, maintains dignity and provides continuous support through life. Check details [here](#).

Leisure

Libraries



Shetland's only library building is on Lower Hillhead in the centre of Lerwick. You can join [here](#). As soon as you are registered you can start to access ebooks. There is a mobile library service and you can view the schedule for the van [here](#).

For people who are housebound or have difficulty getting to the library the Home Library service can organise deliveries via the mobile library service.



The library service launched Bards in the Bog in 2009, displaying original poetry in Shetland's public toilets. You can read some of the poems [here](#).

Museums and Heritage



Shetland has a wealth of museums and heritage centres. You can find links to all of them [here](#). The Shetland Museum and Archives in Lerwick was opened in 2007 and as well as telling the story of Shetland's heritage and culture it offers an education programme and online resources. You can find details about the museum and its facilities [here](#).

Smaller museums are generally open during the summer months and each one highlights aspects of the history and culture of its area. [Scalloway Museum](#) features the story of the Shetland Bus, the escape route for Norwegians fleeing the occupation during World War 2. [Unst Boat Haven](#) displays a range of wooden fishing boats used around the island waters.



Sport and Leisure Centres

Shetland is well equipped with centres for sport and leisure. There are eight facilities around the Isles, all with swimming and gym facilities. You can find out about the facilities and opening hours for each [here](#).

Performing Arts and Film

Mareel in Lerwick is Shetland's centre for music, theatre and film as well as having education and production facilities. You can see what is on offer [here](#). Traditional and contemporary fiddle music is an important feature of life throughout the Shetland Isles and there are many organisations supporting this and other forms of music. Most of the main groups are listed [here](#).

Up Helly Aa

Shetland is well known for the Up Helly Aa festival. You can read about the Lerwick Up Helly Aa [here](#). The website also gives details of the Up Helly Aa exhibition which is open from May to September.

Lerwick is not the only place to hold the festival; many smaller communities have their own Up Helly Aa which involve months of preparation and days of local events.



Nature and Wildlife

You can't live in Shetland without being aware of the richness and diversity of its wildlife. From leaning over the wall at the Sumburgh Lighthouse car park and watching the puffins just feet away to sitting in the [Fjara café](#) in Lerwick watching seals and otters on the rocks beneath.

There are several nature reserves in Shetland listed [here](#). If you are not able to visit in person the Shetland webcams will keep you in touch with what is happening all around. You can access them [here](#).



History and Archaeology



It is impossible to move around Shetland without seeing evidence of its history over thousands of years. [Jarlshof](#) contains Bronze Age remains from 2,500 BC, [Old Scatness](#) provides an opportunity to explore Iron Age buildings and understand how people lived and worked at that time.

Old Scatness also has the remains of a Broch (fort) and there is another one close to the centre of Lerwick at Clickimin. The Broch of

Mousa is one of the best preserved prehistoric buildings in Europe and you can learn about it and find out how to get to it [here](#).



Key Contacts

Shetland Islands council

The Islands Council can help you with:

- Paying Council Tax and rent
- Housing
- Reporting noise and anti-social behaviour
- Information about grants for community projects
- Road and Ferry issues



Shetland
Islands Council

Council departments are based in Lerwick with the Headquarters at the Town Hall. You can find the addresses and contact numbers of the various departments [here](#).

If you have a query or problem that officials can't resolve you can get in touch with your local councillor. Find out who your councillor is and how to contact them [here](#).

MPs and MSPs



UK Parliament (MPs)

Alistair Carmichael (Liberal Democrats) is the MP for Orkney and Shetland and has been in post since 2001.

Constituency office telephone: [01595 690044](tel:01595690044)

Email: carmichaela@parliament.uk

Scottish Parliament (MSPs)

The Shetland constituency elects one Member of the Scottish Parliament by the first past the post method and is one of eight constituencies in the Highlands and Islands electoral region which elects seven additional members.

Shetland's current constituency MSP is Beatrice Wishart (Liberal Democrats). The regional MSPs are:

Ariane Burgess (Scottish Greens)

Emma Roddick (SNP)

Rhoda Grant (Scottish Labour)

Jamie Halcro Johnston (Conservative)

Douglas Ross (Conservative)

Edward Mountain (Conservative)

Donald Cameron (Conservative)

You can find your MSPs and their contact details [here](#) by entering your postcode and email any of them using the format: firstname.surname.msp@parliament.scot.

Euan's Guide

Euan's Guide is a website which reviews the accessibility of different venues across the UK. You can search by location on the website [here](#).

Inclusion Scotland

Inclusion Scotland is a charity aiming to ensure inclusive policy, practice and decision-making for disabled people. Their website has information about employability, human rights, poverty and social security and encourages disabled people to become active citizens to secure their rights and entitlements. Find out more [here](#).

Housing Options Scotland

Housing Options Scotland offer information and advice to disabled people, older adults and members of the Armed Forces Community. Contact us on: **0131 247 1400** or via the website [here](#).

Veterans

Veterans can receive specific support from national veteran charities and groups. **Veterans Scotland** have produced an information guide [here](#) which covers lots of contacts and advice. The Scottish Government has also produced two guides - one with [general information](#), one with [information about housing](#). [Poppy Scotland](#) are also able to offer advice and support.

