

Single parents and secure housing

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Icelandic living conditions in the first part of last century



Rights and benefits

- Child benefit (state benefit through tax system)
- Child support (from the other parent)
- Housing benefit (state and municipality)
- Help with childcare (varies between municipalities)
- Other help may be available through social services on request (varies between municipalities and social service offices)

The Single Parents Association

- A member based NGO
- Partly government funded
- Office open on week days
- Social worker who gives people support and guidance through the system
- Lawyer who gives people legal advice
- Education grants for parents
- Help with summer camp and other activities for children

Emergency housing

- The organization ran emergency housing from 1980-2010
- For some years there were 2 houses housing around 6-8 families each at a time.
- Most of the families were waiting for social housing or other more permanent housing solutions
- There was a great need for this service but the funding was lacking
- Now there is no such a service in Reykjavík and people just have to find solutions while in in-between situations.

Social housing

- Reykjavík has just over 2000 apartments spread over the capital. Other municipalities have only a few, or even none.
- The rent is fairly low compared to the free market but due to system changes a few years ago, this is not always the case.
- The main benefit of social housing is security

What problems face single parents seeking accommodation?

- Competitive rent market
- High rent prices
- High deposits, around 6 months rent up front
- Insecure rent agreements, the risk of all of a sudden getting a few months notice. Frequent moves.
- Non-suitable housing/poor quality housing
- Long waiting lists for social housing (1-3 years)
- Getting a mortgage is impossible with a single wage, unless there is financial backing from a private source.

**There is not a shortage of
housing. The properties
are just not available to
everybody!**