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
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 sue 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!