



NEW TO THE FAROE ISLANDS

PRACTICAL INFORMATION FROM PUBLIC AGENCIES



ÚTLENDINGASTOVAN
IMMIGRATION OFFICE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Design: EGAARD v/ Tróndur Ellingsgaard

Print: Foroyaprent

Illustrations: Janus D. Guttesen

Edition: 2017

Website: www.immigration.fo

Proofreading: Sprotin

ISBN: 978-99918-877-4-6

Photos: Johannes Jansson/www.norden.org (p.11), Kommunufelagið (p.17), Magnus Fröderberg/www.norden.org (p.28), Yadid Levy/www.norden.org (p.25), Landsverk.fo (p. 61), Visit Tórshavn (p.49, 54, 73), Barnaverndin (p.57), Ólavur Frederiksen (p.75), Mauritia Kirchner (p.82), Landssjúkrahúsið (p.41), icons from www.flaticon.com.

ÚTLENDINGASTOVAN WOULD LIKE TO THANK

- The Faroese Occupational Safety & Health Administration
- TAKS
- Landsverk
- Gjaldstovan
- The Unemployment Fund
- The Ministry of Social Affairs
- The Department of Social Services
- Gigni
- The National Health Insurance
- The Ministry of Education, Research and Culture
- The Evening Schools
- The Faroese Occupational Safety & Health Administration
- The Women's Shelter
- The Gender Equality Board
- The Police Department in Tórshavn
- The Faroese Vehicle Administration
- The National Hospital
- Visit Tórshavn
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
- The Danish High Commissioner in the Faroes, *Ríkisumboðið*
- The Association of Municipalities, *Kommunufelagið*

- The University of the Faroe Islands, Faroese Research Council and EURAXESS Faroe Islands

For information on employment and the labour market we would like to thank Samtak, The Faroese General Worker's Union, The Faroese Fishermen's Union, The Public Employee Union, The Teachers' Association, The Ministry of Finance and The House of Industry.

Welcome to the Faroe Islands

This handbook was prepared in cooperation with public institutions and agencies for newcomers planning to live here in the Faroe Islands long-term. The handbook provides key information about Faroese society, public agencies, rights and duties, and other useful information you might need in order to familiarize yourself with daily life here.

The handbook is divided into seven sections to provide you with the following topics:

- Moving to the Faroe Islands
- Learning Faroese and Culture
- Work
- Health
- Children, School, and Education
- Transport and Services
- Leisure

Each section details the basic information of the area and if you would like more detailed information about any of these topics, please contact the relevant agency or check their website.

You can use the list of content to find a given topic or you can look up keywords

in the alphabetical index. At the end of the handbook you will find general information on the main public agencies, interpretation and an overview of trade unions and associations.

The handbook is intended to provide you with up-to-date information, but it is your responsibility to check for the latest information using the contacts and addresses listed herein. The content in this handbook is only intended as guidance and is not legally binding under any circumstances. We cannot be held accountable for any recent changes to the information provided in this handbook.

The Faroese Immigration Office, Útlendingastovan, is responsible for editing, organising, and distributing the written content of the handbook.

Should you have any comments or suggestions for changes to the handbook, please send an email to info@utlendingastovan.fo.

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Useful information at the end:

- Unions & employers
- Interpretation: Recommended services, rights & legal basis and good advice
- Public agencies profiles
- Alphabetical index

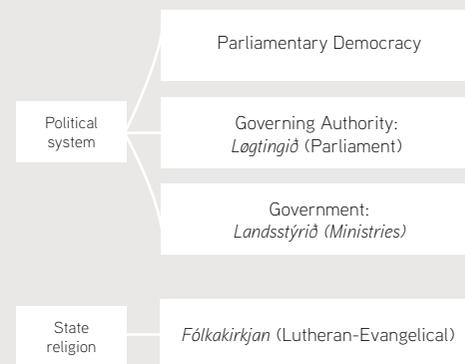
A General Overview of the Faroe Islands

The Faroe Islands are a self-governing nation within the Kingdom of Denmark. The islands govern independently in a wide range of areas, including taxation and customs, social security, culture, education and research. Currently, Denmark administers monetary, judiciary, police, and defence affairs, family and inheritance law, as well as immigration and border control in the Faroes. An important distinction to note is that the Faroes and Denmark are two different legal territories in terms of immigration regulation. Furthermore, the Faroe Islands is not part of the European Union, despite Denmark's membership of the EU. Travel and immigration regulations differ between the Faroe Islands and Denmark.

A residence permit in the Faroe Islands is not valid for Denmark and a Danish residence permit is not valid for the Faroe Islands.

The Faroese political system is a variation of the Scandinavian type of parliamentary democracy, with its own democratically elected legislative assembly, *Løgtingið*, and an executive government, *Føroya Landsstýri*, headed by the Prime Minister, *løgmaður*. The core values of Faroese society are, by and large, inspired by European heritage and values. This is reflected by the fact that the European Convention of Human Rights is directly incorporated into Faroese Law. The Faroes are also subject

to the core UN Human Rights Treaties, e.g. the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.



We want to highlight that in the Faroe Islands, by law:

- Children and their rights are protected. Everyone is required by law to report any suspected abuse or violence against children to the Child Protection Services.
- Women and men are equal. Domestic violence is illegal and the victim is protected by law regardless of immigration status.
- All people have individual freedom, religious freedom and freedom of expression and association.
- Individuals who operate a vehicle on the road must obey all traffic regulations, at all times.

FAROESE

Faroese is the mother tongue and official language in the Faroes. Faroese is a Germanic language, which descends from Old Norse and is closely related to Nordic languages such as Icelandic, Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish. For centuries Danish was the primary language for state affairs, but is now a second language taught in schools.

Faroese is used at all levels of society. In addition to this, Danish may be used in official matters by institutions under the Danish government, e.g. the High Commissioner's Office, *Ríkisumboðið*, and the court.

Just about everyone in the Faroes understands Danish and you will often meet fellow residents and professionals who speak Danish as a first language.

English is gradually becoming more significant in both the education system and society. Faroese schools allocate almost the same teaching time to English as to Danish and the use of English in higher education is growing.

QUICK FACTS ON IMMIGRATION

Nordic citizens do not need a permit to live or work in the Faroes. EU citizens need a permit for work and residence. Non-Nordic and non-EU citizens may or may not need a visa as tourists but will need a permit for work or residence.

If you need more details, any clarifications or have specific questions about immigration, please visit the Faroe Islands section on the Danish Immigration Office's website or the Faroese Immigration Office.

YOUR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Faroe Islands adheres to the Danish constitution, international law and declarations on human rights, including children's rights. Nobody should live in fear, as stated in the mentioned conventions. Whether you are a newcomer or a visitor, if you are victim of a crime or your rights have been violated, contact the police immediately.

If you hold a Faroese personal identification number, *p-tal*, you have the right to access public services like any resident Faroese citizen. Please be aware, however, that access to certain services, such as unemployment funds, may be limited. Always ask the responsible department or agency before applying for the public service in question

TOURIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individuals who need a visa to come to the Faroe Islands can visit within the duration granted in the visa. Visa free individuals can visit for up to 90 days.
WORK PERMIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You apply and submit a work application in your home country and wait for a final decision.
FAMILY REUNIFICATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You can apply and submit a family reunification application either in your home country or in the Faroe Islands, provided that you are staying in the Faroes legally.

about the requirements or limitations. It is your responsibility to understand the terms and conditions when you apply for a permit, whether for work or residence. Please be aware that temporary permit holders are responsible to renew their permit before the application deadline and according to the instruction given in the letter granting the permit from the immigration authority in Denmark. *Not applying for extension of a residence permit before its expiry date leads to a lapsed permit and an illegal stay. This is taken very seriously by the immigration authorities and can ultimately be a police matter.*

Please enquire The Immigration Office or the police for more information.

Whether your stay is temporary or long-term, please take the time to familiarise yourself with Faroese laws and regulations, including traffic regulations, as they may differ from your home country. You can contact the police to learn more about laws and regulations.

ELECTIONS

There are three types of elections held in the Faroe Islands:

LØGTINGSVAL

General elections for the Faroese parliament, *Løgtingið*, which consists of 33 elected members serving for a period of four years by popular vote as a single constituency.

FÓLKATINGSVAL

Additionally, two Faroese representatives are elected for the Danish parliament, *Fólkatingið*.

KOMMUNUVAL

Local elections for the councils/municipalities. Elections are normally held every four years

THE RIGHT TO VOTE

The local municipal elections:

- All Faroese/Danish nationals aged over 18 registered in the Faroe Islands
- And citizens of other countries who have been residing in the Faroe Islands for three years prior to the election (including a right to stand for election in the municipal elections.)

The Faroese and Danish parliamentary elections:

- All Faroese and Danish nationals aged over 18 residing the Faroe Islands.

Domestic Violence

If you have experienced domestic violence, please contact the Women's Shelter, *Kvinnuhúsið*, and/or the police.

As a victim of domestic violence and a family reunification permit holder leaving a violent husband/partner, meaning moving to another address, this might affect your residence permit. The Danish Immigration Service can choose not to revoke or refuse to extend your residence permit, if you have left your spouse/partner because you are the victim of domestic violence, mistreatment or any other form of abuse. This includes serious psychological abuse.

In order for the authorities to consider making an exception in your case you must prove that domestic violence is the reason you no longer live with your spouse/partner.

Domestic violence can be documented by presenting a police report (if the abuse has been reported to the police), statements from social workers or reports from a hospital emergency room, general practitioner or crisis centre. You

must also verify that domestic violence is the reason you no longer live with your spouse.

The Immigration Service will determine whether extenuating circumstances apply in your situation. Such extenuating circumstances include: whether you have children living in the Faroe Islands, or whether returning to your country of origin would jeopardise your social well-being – for example, if you risk social ostracism because you left your spouse. For how long you have lived in the Faroe Islands and how well integrated you are will also be considered.

Normally, victims of domestic violence who have lived in the Faroe Islands for two years or more before leaving their spouse are granted a waiver. If you have lived in the Faroe Islands for less than two years, you will normally only be granted a waiver if there are extenuating circumstances.

If you wish, the Immigration Service can help you file a police report against your spouse/partner.

For further information on this matter,

you can visit the Danish immigration website, www.newtodenmark.dk or call the Danish Immigration Service, tel. +45 3536 6600.

Special note about Work Permit Holders and Rights

Work permit holders' rights (i.e. sickness benefits, holiday allowance) are regulated by law and contract with the employer. It is best practice to talk with the employer first about the contract conditions if there is any doubt or misunderstanding. However, if the issue is sensitive, please contact the trade union representative or the legal aid service, *Rættarhjálpin*, if you are not a member of a Faroese trade union.

MOVING TO THE FAROE ISLANDS

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FAMILY REUNIFICATION

Provided that certain requirements are met, family reunification is usually granted to:

- Spouses and cohabiting partners
- Children under the age of 18

A family reunification permit entitles the holder to live and work in the Faroe Islands for one year. You must renew your permit no later than one month before your residence permit expires. Extension is granted if you continue to meet the requirements. The requirements and conditions differ slightly between the categories under Family Reunification, so please check what requirements and conditions apply to you.

After three years, you can apply for a permanent residence permit. A permanent residence permit is not unconditional. If granted, your residence duration is permanent until you no longer meet the conditions stipulated in your permit.

WORK PERMIT

Non-Nordic citizens who wish to work in the Faroe Islands must apply for a work permit, which is processed by the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration in consultation with the Faroese Immigration Office.

For EU citizens there is a special EU-scheme in place for easier access to work permits that only applies when unemployment in the Faroe Islands is below a certain level – below 3.5 per cent in general and within the construction industry, for ordinary skilled-labour in a specific trade, unemployment must be lower than 6%. For more information regarding this scheme, please visit the websites www.nyidanmark.dk or www.utlendingastovan.fo.

Generally, work permit applicants are classed as:

- Employee
- Student
- Au pair
- Intern
- Researcher
- Athlete
- Professional/ Semi-professional trainer
- Religious Worker

It is the applicant and the employer who begin the application process together.

Both you and your employer/sponsor must provide adequate information including a job offer and signed contract between the employer and the employee. Depending on the category you apply in, your employer/sponsor may also need to certify other job conditions.

The conditions for you to live and work are based on your employment contract with the employer. If the conditions change for you or your employer, please check with the Danish immigration authorities about the next steps you should take.

Regarding extension of a permit, you must submit your application for an extension no later than one month before your residence permit expires. Your employer must also confirm the continued job offer, as well as provide certification from the Faroese unemployment insurance agency confirming that the employer sought to hire labour if you have held the work permit for less than two years. If you have held a work permit as an employee for seven consecutive years on the same grounds, you might meet the requirements for a permanent residence permit.



DENMARK



UDLÆNDINGESTYRELSEN

DANISH IMMIGRATION SERVICE

Processes cases in the Faroe Islands related to:

- Visa
- Family reunification permits
- Permanent residence permits
- Asylum

Provides information and guidance, e.g. on a pending case - by phone and email.

www.newtodenmark.dk
☎ +45 3536 6600



STYRELSEN FOR INTERNATIONAL REKRUTTERING OG INTEGRATION

DANISH AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT AND INTEGRATION

Processes cases in the Faroe Islands related to:

- Work permits
- Students (all levels)

Provides information and guidance, e.g. on a pending case - by phone and email.

www.newtodenmark.dk
☎ +45 7214 2000



FAROE ISLANDS



ÚTLENDINGASTOVAN
IMMIGRATION OFFICE

FAROESE IMMIGRATION OFFICE

Works as an advisory service in regards to local Faroese issues for the Danish immigration authorities.

Guides and provides foreign nationals in the Faroe Islands with general information regarding permits. The Office also coordinates activities promoting integration and diversity in the Faroes.

www.immigration.fo
☎ +298 357979



POLICE STATIONS IN THE FAROES

Accept applications for residence permit, extension of a residence permit, re-entry permit, visa, including extension of a visa.

The police in the Faroe Islands also issues re-entry permits and laissez-passes on behalf of the Danish Immigration Service.

www.politi.fo
☎ +298 351448



REMINDER

All letters from the Danish immigration authority serve as legal proof of your residency. They also contain important information about the conditions you must fulfil or follow. Please do not throw them away!

All letters from the Danish immigration authority are in

Danish. It is important to understand the terms written in the letter.

Please remember to renew your permit before it expires or you may be expelled from the Faroe Islands.

When you are traveling overseas, please be aware of the

period of time you are allowed to be outside of the Faroe Islands if you wish to continue to reside in the Faroe Islands. Please contact the Danish immigration authorities for more information.

EXTENSION

According to the website of the Danish immigration authorities, www.newtodenmark.dk, you must submit your application for an extension no later than one month before your residence permit expires – always make sure to check with the authorities regarding this matter so you apply on time.

CAN I BRING MY FAMILY MEMBERS TO THE FAROE ISLANDS?

Your spouse or cohabiting partner can apply for a residence permit as an accompanying family member if they wish to live with you in the Faroe Islands. If you have children under the age of 18, they can be included in your spouse's or cohabiting partner's application.

HOW AND WHERE DO I REGISTER?

If you are granted a permit, you must register at the local municipality where you will live – follow the instructions stated in the letter from the immigration authority.

P-tal – The Faroese Personal Identification Number

Once you are granted a permit to reside in the Faroe Islands and you have registered at your local municipality, you will be issued a personal identification number known as a *p-tal*. You will be automatically registered in the National Register, *Landsfólkayvirlitið*, which is essential for both tax and social security.

Once you have a *p-tal*, you will be able to open a bank account and subscribe to phone- and internet services.

CAN I BRING MY PERSONAL BELONGINGS TO THE FAROES?

Bringing your personal belongings (furniture, household appliances etc.) to the Faroe Islands is permitted and exempt from tax and import duty, as long as the belongings have been your possession for at least six months in your home country. Please note that there are certain items such as tobacco and alcohol that you cannot declare as personal belongings. Please check with the TAKS customs office for specific details on what items are tax-exempt.

Special note about bringing a vehicle: You are allowed to import one motor vehicle as removal goods exempt from tax and duty. The vehicle must be intended solely for your own personal use. If the vehicle changes owner within 1 year after the day of import, it will be subject to tax and duty according to the general import rules. A vehicle imported as removal goods must be registered with the Faroese Vehicle Administration, *Akstovan*, within the first two weeks after arriving in the Faroe Islands. The registration fee is a combination of a value based tax and a carbon dioxide tax.

HOUSING

Finding a home and settling in

You can choose between buying or renting a place to live in. The purchase of a house or an apartment is usually handled by a real estate agent. Property for sale is often advertised in the newspapers or on one of the estates agents' websites.

When you are looking for a rental property some landlords prefer to respond to advertisements placed by potential tenants. Therefore, it may be a good idea to publish an advertisement specifying your particular rental needs on websites and in the yellow pages of newspapers.



Holders of family reunification permits must take notice of the requirement regarding adequate housing.

Renting a home

When renting a house or an apartment you should be prepared to pay a deposit. In some circumstances, the landlord may also require you to pay rent in advance. Unlike purchasing a house or an apartment, you will not need an initial capital to rent. A deposit is an amount the tenant pays as security for rent owed or damage to the housing property. The amount should not exceed three months'

rent. The deposit is returned when the tenant moves out in full, provided that the apartment of house is in the same condition as when the tenant moved in.

In the Faroe Islands, the Faroese Tenancy Act provides that a standard contract specifying the rent and conditions for the tenancy must be drafted and signed by the landlord and the tenant. The notice period to vacate a rented flat is 3 months if the apartment is part of the landlord's home and 5 months if the landlord does not live in the same house. The contract must contain written terms detailing rent, deposit, notice period to vacate, utility bills, and any particulars relevant to both parties. The Faroese Property Rental Appeal Board, *Leigunevndin*, handles complaints about tenancy matters. Further information: Faroese Property Rental Appeal Board: www.leigunevndin.fo (ENG.).

More information about the Property Rental Appeal Board is available at www.leigunevndin.fo, tel. 358000.

Bústaðir is the name of the Faroese housing association. It currently has 104 rental properties around the islands and is working to enlarge its pool of rental properties. *Bústaðir* is a public agency

and its main task is to provide, build and run rental properties. As a member of *Bústaðir* you can sign up to waiting lists for rental apartments.

For more information you can contact *Bústaðir* at www.bustadir.fo, tel. 401000.

Buying a home

There is no law preventing non-Danish/Faroese nationals purchasing property in the Faroe Islands. If you wish to buy a home, you must make sure that you have the required funds. Most people start by talking to their banking adviser, before or at the same time as they start looking for a house or apartment.

The purchase price of a house/apartment is determined through people bidding for a property. Remember that the transaction is binding when the seller accepts your offer. You must therefore never make an offer before you are certain that you can finance the purchase. A real estate agent usually handles such processes.

Before buying a house, it is advisable to thoroughly investigate the condition of the house – preferably with a reputable builder or carpenter – and that you check for any liens/mortgages on the house that

may not be fully disclosed.

The agency in charge of mandatory registration of properties is the Environment Agency, *Umhvørvisstovan*, www.us.fo

The main real estate agencies are: Skyn, www.skyn.fo and Inni, www.inni.fo.

Insurance

Homeowner's insurance covers damage to your house that cannot be attributed to wear and tear or inadequate maintenance. In addition, the insurance usually covers any compensation you may be held liable for in case of damage to another person or their belongings (liability insurance). You may add optional insurance features that are available from the insurance company.

Typically insurance companies offer separate insurances packages, one covering your house as a homeowner, another for the contents of your home (damage to your belongings in case of fire, water damage, burglary), as well as car insurance and other forms of cover. Remember that for any insurance policy it is always the terms and conditions that decide what the insurance covers.

Read more about banking and insurance services in the section Transport and Services.

MUNICIPAL SERVICES

Each municipality offers a range of services such as elderly care, school transport, funeral services, fire department, water and sanitation. Please check the available services with your municipality.

Waste Disposal and Recycling Services

Waste disposal schemes in the Faroe Islands differ slightly across the country but are regulated by the same legislation.

IRF, *Interkommunali*

Renovatiónsfelagsskapurin, is an agency that is owned jointly by several municipalities. IRF collects waste and operates other household and commercial waste services in these municipalities – e.g. recycling centres.

The Municipality of Tórshavn has its own waste collect service and recycling centre.

If you have any questions concerning waste disposal or need any further information you should call IRF, tel. 414243, www.irf.fo. If you live in the Municipality of Tórshavn, you can call tel. 302010 or visit www.torshavn.fo.

For households IRF issues a grey waste bag, which is only to be used for household rubbish and only these specific

grey bags will be collected. One roll of the grey waste bags is handed out to each household (four individuals) twice a year. In the grey bag you should only put general waste that does not require recycling or separation. Items such as glass, electronics, or light bulbs must be separated. Other waste bags marked for sorting paper (or a waste-bin for paper) and hazardous waste, are handed out to households that are registered for waste collection – either by IRF or the Municipality of Tórshavn.

The bag stand must be placed close to the road, maximum 20 meters from the road. And it should be easy to collect the waste.

Household-waste, the grey bag, is collected once a week. Other bags are collected as needed or at certain intervals. The paper-recycling bin is collected once every 6 weeks in Tórshavn.

If your waste is not collected or if you have no waste bags, you should contact your local municipality or IRF, tel. 414243, for further details and information.

OVERVIEW OF
THE MUNICIPALITIES



LEARNING FAROESE AND CULTURE

This section contains information about Faroese language courses offered at the evening schools, what they teach, where and how to join, as well as information about your right to an interpreter in your contact with the Faroese authorities.

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THE EVENING SCHOOLS

As a newcomer, you have the right to Faroese courses offered by evening schools, kvøldskúli, managed by municipalities and financed by the Ministry of Culture and Education. Learning Faroese is an important first step, not only to obtain important information about your rights, obligations, and available services, but also to making the Faroe Islands feel like home. Currently, Faroese language learning is not mandatory by law. However, it is highly recommended to enrol in Faroese language courses, they can make it easier to settle in your new environment.

The bigger municipalities offer tuition or language learning courses in the Faroese language. These courses are held at the evening schools.

The courses are dependent on a minimum number of participants and courses may therefore be cancelled or be unavailable if not enough participants sign in.

You will need to check with the administration of the evening school or the municipality which courses are offered. The following is intended to give you an overview of where tuition is available and other practical information.

CONTENT OF THE COURSES

The language courses are designed as a beginner's course with two or three learning levels (beginner, intermediate, and advanced) dependent on the evening school. Some schools have separate courses intended for Nordic speaking learners and English speaking learners, if needed. The level and the design of the classes are usually based on the need and capacity of the students with a hands-on perspective.

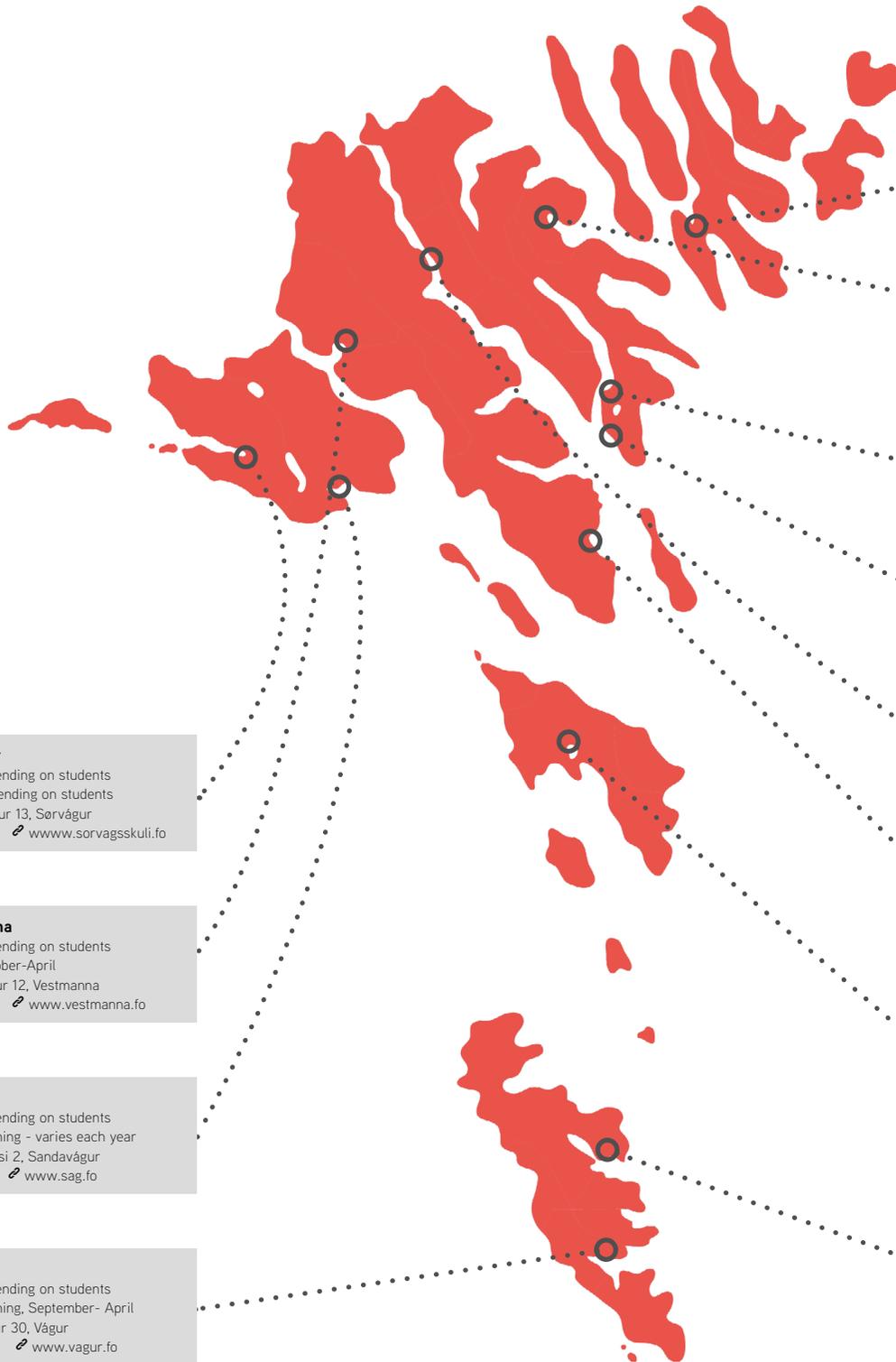
The content of the introductory courses is primarily language and partly culture and society including aspects of the local community, such as visits to public agencies and large workplaces. However, each of the evening schools teach uniquely and may differ from each other.

HOW DO YOU APPLY?

As a participant, you will always need to sign up before the announced deadlines (if you want to be sure to participate). This can be done simply by contacting the evening school administration or the municipality.

The evening school in Tórshavn has also an online sign-up service (in Faroese) where you need the Faroese identification number, *p-tal*.

Usually the start of a course is in September or October running until April. Lesson times are mostly in the evenings and are often adjusted according to the working-hours of the participants. Some schools may not follow this schedule so please check in with your residing municipality for accurate details.



Klaksvík

Level: Beginner/intermediate/advanced
When: Evening, varies each year
📍 Nólsoyar Pálsgøta 32, Klaksvík
☎ 215826 🌐 www.kks.fo

Fuglafjørður

Level: Beginner & Culture
When: Evening - varies each year
📍 Ennisvegur 38, Fuglafjørður 3
☎ 238010 🌐 www.fuglafjordur.fo

Runavík

Level: Depending on students
When: Morning, October-April
📍 Rökavegur, Runavík
☎ 237133 🌐 www.kurk.fo

Toftir

Level: Depending on students
When: Evening, varies each year
📍 Heygsvegur 28, Toftir
☎ 447332 🌐 www.toftaskuli.fo

Oyrarbakki

Level: Depending on students
When: Evening, September-April
📍 Skúlavegur 8, Oyrarbakki
☎ 281296 🌐 www.svs.fo

Tórshavn

Level: Offers various levels
When: Day & evening, Varies each year
📍 J.H. Schrøtersgøta 1, Tórshavn
☎ 302474 🌐 www.kvoldskulin.fo

Sandoy

Level: Depending on students
When: Evening, October-April
📍 Heimasandsvegur 142, Inni í Dali
☎ 272914 🌐 www.meginskulin.fo

Tvøroyri

Level: Depending on students
When: Evening, September-April
📍 Kirkjubrekka 3, Tvøroyri
☎ 581821 🌐 www.tvroyrarskuli.fo

Sørvágur

Level: Depending on students
When: Depending on students
📍 Skúlavegur 13, Sørvágur
☎ 233222 🌐 www.sorvagsskuli.fo

Vestmanna

Level: Depending on students
When: October-April
📍 Toftavegur 12, Vestmanna
☎ 506670 🌐 www.vestmanna.fo

Giljanes

Level: Depending on students
When: Evening - varies each year
📍 Á Giljanesi 2, Sandavágur
☎ 344424 🌐 www.sag.fo

Vágur

Level: Depending on students
When: Evening, September- April
📍 Vágsvegur 30, Vágur
☎ 269567 🌐 www.vagur.fo

IS IT FREE?

All foreign nationals who do not have Faroese as a first language and are registered with an identification number, *p-tal*, have the right to participate in courses on Faroese language and culture at an evening school free of charge.

It is possible to apply for a special travel allowance to cover travel costs to attend the more comprehensive courses that run in the daytime. For now, these are only offered in Tórshavn. Please contact the evening school administration for more information.

OTHER LANGUAGE LEARNING OPTIONS

There is no official list of private tutors for Faroese language learning but it is not too difficult to ask people about a tutor in your community or through social media.

The Faroese University offers bachelor level courses in Faroese language for foreigners each semester. In addition, every second year, the university offers a three-week summer course, International Summer Institute, intended but not limited to Nordic speakers. The tuition fee is app. 6500 KR. Please contact the university for more information.

INTERPRETATION

In criminal cases at the court interpretation services are provided free of any charge if it is assessed that interpretation is needed. This is according to the Danish Procedural Code. In other cases than criminal cases, the interpretation expenses are part of the overall court costs. In Faroese courts when needed, telecommunication with or without video is also used for interpretation.

The law on Faroese health insurance stipulates that the National Health Insurance pays the costs of interpretation when it is needed in connection with a primary doctor's or a specialist's appointment.

Regarding other medical treatments, e.g. at a hospital, it is vital that the patient understands what is being said about a treatment and the health situation. In the act governing patient's rights in the Faroe Islands, it is stated that the patient has a right to get information on his/hers health situation and possible treatment, including risks and side-effects. Furthermore, it is stated that information about for instance

USEFUL PHRASES

ENGLISH	FAROESE
My name is ...	Eg eiti...
How are you?	Hvussu gongur?
I come from...	Eg komi úr...
I don't understand	Eg skilji ikki
Do you speak English?	Tosar tú enskt?
How much is this?	Hvussu nógv kostar hetta?
Where is the toilet?	Hvar er vesið?
Thank you	Takk fyri
Help!	Hjálp!
Call the Police	Ringið eftir politinum!

intended treatment, should be given in a manner that is appropriate for the receiver.

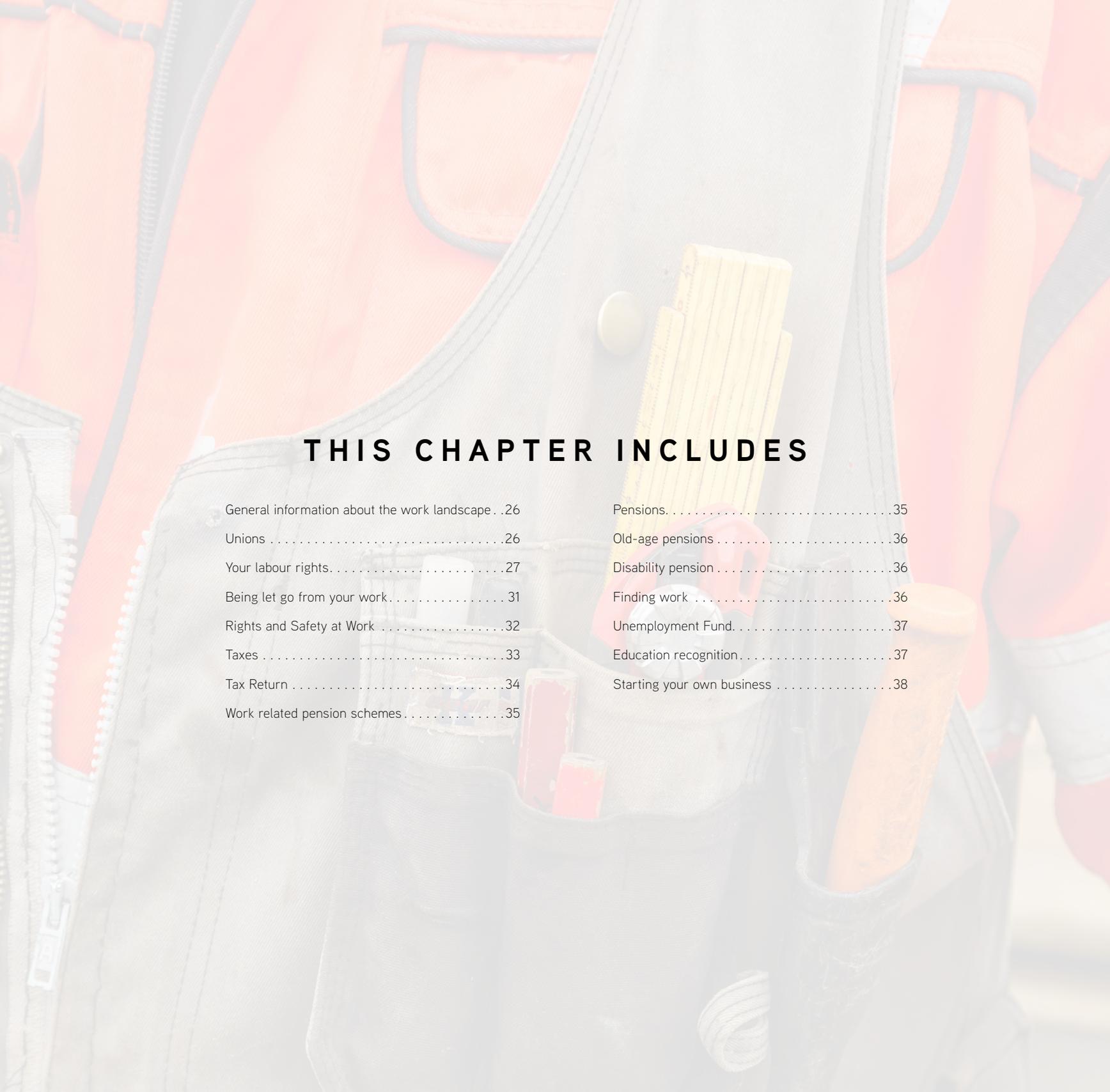
In other contexts, such as during parent-teacher meetings in schools, or meetings with the municipal social services or similar, an interpreter might also be needed. It is always advisable to check first with the agency regarding its policy on interpreting expenses.

Therefore, in matters relating to health services and the judicial system, you may be provided with an interpreter and/or translated documents. In other contexts the user might have to pay the expenses or find a solution together with the agency concerned. Individual public authorities assess independently whether to use an interpreter in the situation at hand. And it is the agency concerned that decides whether it pays for the interpretation service or not.

Available interpretation services are listed at the back of this handbook.

WORK

In this section you will find information about your rights and duties as an employee in the Faroe Islands. It provides general information about the labour market, what your employment contract should include, how taxes are paid, and other issues related to work.



THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES

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GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE WORK LANDSCAPE

In the Faroe Islands almost every adult is in work. Most are employed in the public service sector (health and social work) or in private businesses that are related to the fishing industry, that is by far the most important source of income for the national economy – usually fish products account for over 95 per cent of Faroese exports. Many Faroese are also self-employed, with their own shop, restaurant or other small businesses, such as smaller fishing vessels.

A considerable proportion of the Faroese workforce has been employed abroad. In 2014 their wages accounted for about 7% of GNP, a record in a European context. This group has typically been employed as skilled workforce, e.g. carpenters or electricians in Norway, as sailors in the Danish merchant fleet or on foreign fishing vessels.

The workforce is organised in unions and employers are organised in federations. These parties negotiate agreements that set out the conditions for employment and wages – on behalf of workers and employers. Additionally, national

legislation governing minimum wages for the fishermen (*minstaløn*), the duration of the working week, holiday entitlements, parental leave, unemployment benefits etc. These collective bargaining agreements between unions and the employers' federations apply to the whole Faroese labour market, but, at the same time, any employee can negotiate additional individual benefits with their employer.

UNIONS

Trade unions represent workers, provide legal advice, and help workers if problems arise. You need to be a member to access these services and benefits. In order to be a member you must pay an annual fee. The unions' main task is to uphold and advance workers' rights and benefits. Unions have representatives at larger workplaces. It is always possible to reach one of these representatives or contact the union's office.

Unions are organised according to the type of work or the vocational/educational background of the employees. The workforce both at sea and on land is organised in different unions, for instance fishermen, engineers, captains, office and retail workers, nurses, etc. Because of this diversity of union representation, some of the terms and schemes mentioned in the following sections may differ from one employee to another, e.g. on a fishing vessels.

Membership in a specific union might give you access to relevant benefits, such as insurance schemes tailored to the work environment, e.g. a fisherman or craftsman.

YOUR LABOUR RIGHTS

There is freedom of association in the Faroe Islands so nobody is forced to join any union.

Note!
Go to page 84 for a general list of Unions and Associations.

Employment

By law anyone who is working at least 8 hours a week for more than one month is entitled to a written employment contract. The employment contract must, as a minimum, contain the following: who has entered into the contract, the date on which the employment commences, information on seniority, job title, the expected duration of the employment if it is temporary, the workplace, a description of the work or position, term of notice for dismissal and resignation, terms and conditions of wages, length and specification of working hours, breaks and any collective agreements regulating the employment relationship and possibly other agreements concerning employment, if applicable. (Please note that fishermen follow another scheme as each fisherman signs on with a ship according to agreements of the fishermen's union.)

The employer is by law obliged to present an employment contract to the employee no later than one month after the start of the employment relationship.

Pay regulation

As a main rule wages are not regulated by law in the Faroe Islands and there is, for instance, no general minimum wage. Therefore, it is very important to have a clear and unambiguous written employment contract stipulating your wages.

Depending on the labour market sector in which you are employed, wages may be defined in collective agreements or contracts between the employers' federation and your union.

Not everyone receives wages at the same time. Some wages are paid at the end of the month, while hourly wages are paid either on a weekly basis or every second week. If a worker does not receive their wages on time the employer should be notified. If this does not help, the union is available for assistance with free legal advice if necessary.

YOUR LABOUR RIGHTS *CONTINUED*

Each time you are paid you receive a pay slip – either on paper or in electronic format. The pay slip shows how much you have been paid, maybe the number of hours worked, and other details regarding overtime, holiday allowance, pension contributions etc. It is therefore advisable to keep your pay slips. Using your online banking service, you can see how much is deducted in taxes and obligatory contribution to the Unemployment Fund, the Parental Fund, Health Insurance, pension etc.

Working hours

As a general rule, the number of weekly hours is defined in collective agreements between the parties on the labour market. Normal working hours are around 40 hours per week in the private and public sector. Work in excess of normal working hours is compensated with an overtime supplement – normal working hours are defined as starting at 7.00 AM and may not continue after 18.00 PM on weekdays. Conditions concerning lunch breaks and other breaks are usually defined in agreements between the union and the employers.

Holiday, holiday entitlement, holiday pay

In general, the annual holiday entitlement is five weeks, in addition to public holidays. Every worker accumulates a right to a certain amount of holidays, with or without pay/allowance. For hourly paid workers the allowance is 12% of their wages. Monthly paid salary earners are entitled to paid holiday and a holiday contribution at 1.5 % of wages earned in the previous year.

Employees not only have the right to holidays but also the duty to make use of them. The annual holiday allowance is paid out once a year by the 2nd of May.

You should let your employer know in advance when you want to take your holidays. This can usually be made in agreement with the employer. The employer has the final decision.

The legislation regulating holidays on the labour market does not apply to fishermen or sailors. Another scheme is applying here.



Illness – right to sickness benefit or right to pay when sick (short term)

If you get sick and are not able to work you have a right to have your income compensated (see below). The terms for accessing compensation differ across the sectors of the labour market.

If you do not have the right to receive pay from your employer while you are sick then you can apply for a sickness benefit from the Department of Social Services, *Almannaverkið*. Such is also the case when your children are sick on their first and second day of illness. The benefit is 80 % of a worker's wage and is calculated according to your average income over the last 5 weeks before calling in sick. Certain conditions apply. The Social Services must receive the application within 60 days of the first day of absence.

If you have the right to receive pay from your employer while absent from work due to illness, you are not obliged to prove that you are not able to work, as a main rule. However, you are obliged to notify the employer as soon as possible that you are not able to work. An employer can demand to see a doctor's certificate, though usually not before a week's period of illness.

Child's sick day

The right to stay home to care for a sick child while receiving pay from your employer is not stipulated in any law. It is determined by the contract that applies to your employment.

Hourly-paid workers will only have the right to stay at home and care for their sick child with pay if their employment contract stipulates that they have that right. If your child is sick then you can apply for sickness benefit from the Department of Social Services, *Almannaverkið*.

For monthly paid workers (minimum 20 hours a month), the days of absence allowed in case of a child's illness is determined by the employment contract.

It is stipulated by law that all workers collect holiday entitlements during this legitimate absence.

Sick Leave

Employees, who are sick for a longer time than allowed by the collective agreement between their employer and union, may need to get in touch with their primary doctor in order to get a medical certificate. If the doctor regards sick leave as necessary, the doctor will issue a medical certificate for the required period.

Loss of income due to illness and injury may entitle you to sickness benefit. This is stipulated in the law regarding sickness benefit, *dagpening vegna sjúku v.m.*. There are conditions to be met and the benefit is a temporary one. The maximum period of receiving the benefit is 40 weeks. If offered, you have a duty to accept any medical treatment helping you regain the ability to work, in order to keep your entitlement to sickness benefit.

Fishermen are guaranteed a sickness benefit if certain conditions are met. If the fisherman becomes sick when at home, it is possible to apply for sickness benefit from the Department of Social Services, *Almannaverkið*.

Further information:

**Almannaverkið, www.av.fo,
tel. 360000**

Leave

An employee is entitled to take leave in connection with pregnancy, birth and parental leave.

All wage-earners who are registered and pay tax in the Faroe Islands have the right to paid leave when having a child. Parents are entitled to 52-weeks' leave after childbirth. For more information regarding parental leave and benefits, see the section Children, School and Education.

If you should need leave to take care of a close relative, e.g. during the final stages of their life, there is no law or collective agreement in place for this situation. You should contact your employer to decide what options are available in this situation. In other cases, a worker may have a right to benefits from the Social Services if the primary doctor finds it appropriate.

Other circumstances for leave could be when an employee is elected to serve in public office.

Further information: Parental Leave Fund, www.barsil.fo, tel. 352600

BEING LET GO FROM YOUR WORK

Dismissal – period of notice

Different terms and conditions apply to dismissals. The period of notice correlates to the seniority of the employed person. For an hourly employed worker who has been employed for 6 months the period of notice is at least 7 working days. While for a worker receiving regular monthly wages (employed under the terms of the agreement of the Faroese General Workers' Union, *Føroya Arbeiðarafelag*) who has worked for more than 6 months and less than 2 years the period of notice for dismissal is 2 months. (When work comes to a halt because of bad weather or lack of raw materials the periods of notice do not apply and workers are not entitled to receive pay from their employer. Instead, a scheme applying for workers in the fish-processing sector is available through the Unemployment Fund, *ALS*.)

For salaried employees (e.g. in the Office and Retail Workers' Union, *S&K*) who have been in work between 6 months and 3 years (excluding temporary or probation period employment) the period of notice is 3 months.

The notice of termination of employment must be presented in writing, whether by the employer or the employee. Employees who have been employed for 9 months (e.g. employed under the agreement for the Faroese General Workers' Union, *Føroya Arbeiðarafelag*) can request that the grounds for dismissal be given in writing, if they so wish.

Circumstances leading to dismissal can arise at any workplace. An example of circumstances relating to the employee could be serious breach of the employment contract. Examples of circumstances relating to the employer/enterprise could be a necessary reduction in the size of the workforce or reorganisation.

An employee cannot be dismissed because she is pregnant. If the employer cannot prove that the dismissal is unrelated to the pregnancy, the dismissal is unlawful. This is stipulated in the pregnancy law. The same applies in relation to adoption.

Immediate Dismissal

The difference between immediate dismissal and dismissal is that when employees are dismissed immediately, they lose the right to pay from the moment they are dismissed, whereas people who have been dismissed receive their salary during the period of notice (and must work during this period).

When a person is immediately dismissed his/her employment ceases forthwith. Immediate dismissal is only applicable in cases in which employers consider that a salary earner has been grossly and significantly negligent of his employment.

Whether or not a situation warrants immediate dismissal will always be a matter of judging the concrete situation. Examples are: Refusing to carry out a task ordered; absence from work (without legitimate reason); being late for work (after having received a warning stipulating that if this happens again the her/she will be dismissed immediately); alcohol abuse; theft; or disloyalty.

RIGHTS AND SAFETY AT WORK – THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The law concerning the work environment states that you have a right to a safe and healthy work setting. The employer is responsible for ensuring that the working environment is as safe as possible. The employee is obligated to actively assist the employer in this task.

In short, the employer has the obligation to ensure the following, according to the Working Environment Act: that work activities are carried out in the safest possible way; that employees are instructed about potential work-related risks and trained accordingly; that there is an active workplace cooperation regarding safety and that the safety representatives are properly instructed, informed and have attended the mandatory courses. The employer is obligated to follow instructions and decisions from the relevant authority.

The employer's responsibilities are to ensure the following: that work activities are carried out in a sensible way; that employees are instructed about potential risks in their work and trained accordingly; that the

cooperation regarding safety and health is performed according to the relevant regulation (Working Environment Act); that safety representatives are informed about newsletters from the Faroese Occupational Safety & Health Administration, and that the employer performs safety procedures or investigations if the authorities demand this.

The employee has the obligation to comply with the safety instruction and regulations provided by the employer and stipulated in law.

As a general rule, children under the age of 15 may not be employed. Children who are 13 years old may undertake certain types of light employment. Children under the age of 13 may receive payment for participation in cultural performances of various types, with the consent of their parents or guardian.

Youths under the age of 17 may not work for more than 10 hours a day. Youths under the age of 17 are required to have a consistent period of rest of no less than 12 hours a day. Youths under the age

of 15 are required to have a consistent period of rest of no less than 14 hours a day.

All employees are automatically insured for work-related injuries by their employer. If you are injured in a work-related accident, it is important that your employer reports the incident to the relevant authority. It is also important that the accident is reported to *Føroya Vanlukkutryggingarráð*, a public authority that assesses insurance claims regarding work-related accidents and work-related illnesses and disabilities. These illnesses or disabilities could be related to an unhealthy work environment, such as hearing impairment, back-injuries etc. In cases of accidents at work or possible work-related illnesses or disabilities you can contact your union for further information.

**For more information: www.arb.fo
tel. 556400.**

TAXES

All individuals who are living in the Faroe Islands must pay tax on all income.

The taxes we pay are for the most part government tax, and to a smaller degree municipal tax, pension-tax and many islanders also pay a church tax. Taxes can, for example, be collected on income, interest, gifts and inheritance, as well. Additionally, there are fees that are paid by the public at large. An example is the value added tax that is paid on almost all transactions relating to services and goods. Customs are paid on all goods and services that are imported.

There are a lot of services that are paid for by the public sector in the Faroe Islands. And the taxes and fees that we pay are spent on these public services, including healthcare, hospitals, education, and transport and communication infrastructure. The tax system is also designed to contribute to greater equality between individuals.

Obligation to pay taxes

When you move to the Faroes you are required to pay tax on all income. How

much you will be required to pay in tax altogether is dependent on your income and which municipality you live in.

Regarding limited tax liability

If you are living in the Faroe Islands for a limited time only and without registering a permanent address, then you are liable to limited tax payment only. This means that the tax you pay is a fixed amount and it is not contingent on your income or in which municipality you live in. If you are staying in the Faroes for a period longer than 180 days within a timespan of 12 months, then you must pay tax on all income derived in the Faroe Islands and abroad, including from the first day of entry to the Faroe Islands.

Social security duties

In addition to taxes most individuals pay mandatory contributions to various social funds. These are deducted from your income in the same way as tax. Contributions deducted go to the Faroese Labour Market Supplemental Pension Fund (*Samhaldsfasti*), the Parental Fund, the Unemployment fund, to the National

Health Insurance, and there is also a media-license fee that is deducted from your income.

Deductions

All taxpayers may be entitled to a personal deduction in taxable income before paying government tax and municipal tax.

Taxpayers with dependant children (only one of the parents) are entitled to deductions in government and municipal taxes for each child under the age of 18.

Private pension contributions to Faroese pension plans can be deducted from taxable income.

Subsidies

Residents in the Faroes can apply to receive interest subsidy for private mortgages and education loans. No subsidy is granted for private consumer loans. Interest subsidy is only offered for mortgages on houses in the Faroe Islands in which the owner lives.

Other subsidies include transport subsidy,

double household subsidy, child support and alimony.

For more information regarding conditions and how to apply for subsidies visit www.taks.fo or call TAKS tel. 352600.



BORGARAGLUGGIN

Online self service: TAKS' online-service enables users to do their tax-return online and provides an overview of a range of information such as wages, how much tax is deducted, pension, holiday allowance, and more.

To access Borgaragluggin.fo you will first need a digital key, called *mínlykil*, a safe login feature. Go to www.minlykil.fo to download the digital key and follow the instructions.

TAX RETURN

Everyone who works in the Faroe Islands receives a tax return in the spring, March or April, following the income year. Either you will receive a tax form to complete or, if TAKS already has the relevant income-details, you will receive a completed tax sheet.

There are two kinds of income - wage income (A-income) and business income (B-income). Taxes are automatically withheld from A-income. Tax that is not deducted from income received by a worker or business-owner (or similar) is categorised as B-income. TAKS estimates what the tax will be on a B-income.

Taxpayers who only have A-income receive a pre-completed tax return each year from the tax administration with information received from their employer, amongst others. If the pre-completed information is incorrect, the taxpayer has to file a tax return. Taxes deducted from your income may have been over or underestimated. Therefore, you might receive a bill from the tax authority or you might receive a deposit in your bank account.

Self-employed persons are obliged to keep accounts and must submit a tax return along with their accounts.

Rental income from real estate property in the Faroe Islands or abroad has to be registered as B-income.

WORK RELATED PENSION SCHEMES

1. Obligatory pension-scheme

Individuals are, by law, required to save a portion of their salary in a pension-scheme, from the age of 21 up to Faroese state pension age of 67. Beginning from 2014 with at least 1% and increasing by 1% for each year, all individuals will be saving 15% of their salary by 2029 in the obligatory pension-scheme.

In the collective agreements applying to the labour market, it is stated that the employer contributes an amount to employees' pension. If no pension saving requirement is part of the agreement between your employer and union, then you will be required to save at least as much as is stipulated by law.

Employees are responsible for joining a pension scheme with either pension savings institutions or financial institutions in the Faroe Islands.

Pension savings are pre-taxed at 40% and the remainder will be saved according to the regulations.

2. Faroese Labour Market Supplemental Pension Fund

Individuals who live in the Faroe Islands for at least 3 years between the age of 15 and Faroese state pension age can receive a proportion of the Faroese labour market supplemental pension (*Samhaldsfasti*) equivalent to the number of years they have lived in the country.

The total number of years required to receive full benefits from this pension scheme is 40.

This pension scheme is financed partly by the employer and partly by the employee, currently at the rate of 2.25% of the salary paid by each party.

It is possible to export the right to benefits from this pension scheme to wherever you decide to live after reaching Faroese state pension age.

For more information, see www.taks.fo or call the tax and revenue office (TAKS) on tel. 352600

PENSIONS

The general requirements for having pension rights in the Faroe Islands is either Danish citizenship or marriage to a person with Danish citizenship, living in the Faroe Islands or having worked on a ship registered in the Faroe Islands, and having lived in the Danish Kingdom for at least 3 years between the ages of 15 and 67.

By agreement with the Nordic countries, the required Danish citizenship expands to include Scandinavian citizenships, and furthermore is the right to receive earned pension rights in EEA-countries based on this agreement.

OLD-AGE PENSIONS

Having the proper requirements for pension rights, everyone can receive a retirement pension on reaching the age of 67.

Pension rights are divided by the number of years of residence in the Danish Kingdom. Acquiring full pension rights requires living in the Danish Kingdom for at least 40 years.

For more information regarding old-age pensions and benefits that might be available to the elderly, see www.av.fo or call *Almannaverkið* on tel. 360000.

DISABILITY PENSION

Anyone meeting requirements for pension rights can apply for a disability pension between the ages of 18 and 67.

Disability pension is divided into 3 categories: full loss of ability to support oneself by work, 2/3 loss, or halved ability to support oneself by work. The ability to work is tested through a series of activities, including medical examinations, with the intention of re-establishing the ability to work, before providing disability pension.

Pension rights are divided by 4/5th of the years of residence in the Danish Kingdom between the age of 15 and the time when disability pension is granted.

For more information: www.av.fo or call *Almannaverkið* on tel. 360000.

FINDING WORK

Finding work is always dependent on your own initiative, whether you are out of work or you would like to find a new job opportunity. When you are out of work you will need to consider your options. A good place to start may be at the Unemployment Fund, *ALS*. It administers the website www.starv.fo that provides updated information on vacancies and it is possible to register with a profile and CV on this site.



REMINDER

As a holder of a time-limited work permit or similar you are obliged to notify the Danish Agency for International Recruitment and Integration if the conditions for your work permit have changed, e.g. if you lose your job or your employer's business closes. If you have found a new job or plan to start up a new company you must apply for a new work permit before beginning work or before your company begins operation.

UNEMPLOYMENT FUND

The Faroese unemployment scheme is known under the Faroese abbreviation ALS, *Arbeðsloysisskipanin*.

Employers and employees in the Faroe Islands fund the unemployment scheme. ALS gives benefits to those who are entitled to them and can provide guidance to anyone seeking to return to the labour market.

Please note that non-Nordic citizens with a temporary work permit (e.g. a contract worker for 1 year) are not entitled to unemployment benefits from the Faroese Unemployment Fund.

An unemployment fund contribution is automatically withheld by the tax system from all wages paid to registered residents in the Faroe Islands. Foreign citizens with a temporary work permit (1 year) can apply for exemption from paying this fee, which is 1.25% of A-income.

Employees who are dismissed and have the right to unemployment benefits must inform ALS immediately that they are unemployed. Unemployment benefits are based on the wages received over the last 12 months prior to becoming unemployed. Benefits are

75% of the normal salary up to a maximum of DKK 17,500 per month.

You will need to meet certain conditions in order to be entitled to unemployment benefits. A main rule, for instance, is that you must live or reside in the islands. Other conditions are that the unemployed person must be available for any kind of work and is obliged to register with a profile and CV on the website www.starv.fo. If he or she refuses to accept a job offered by ALS, the right to unemployment benefits will be suspended for 4 weeks.

Foreign employees who are dismissed from their job and do not have the right to benefits from ALS, may be entitled to temporary public assistance from the Department of Social Services (*Note: be aware of possible conditions regarding your residence permit that require you to be able to support yourself without such public assistance*).

Further information:
**Arbeðsloysisskipanin, www.als.fo,
tel. 349550.**

EDUCATION RECOGNITION

If you have qualifications from abroad and you want to make use of them you may need official recognition of your qualifications.

As countries have different education and qualification systems, employers or higher education institutions abroad do not necessarily approve your qualification.

Recognition of foreign diplomas, degrees and other qualifications in the Faroe Islands will in most cases be similar to the recognition of qualifications in Denmark. Information on recognition of qualifications in Denmark is available from the Ministry of Higher Education and Science and the ENIC/NARIC Networks (www.enic-naric.net/denmark).

For some positions a Faroese or Danish authorisation is needed. For example, foreign-trained doctors and other health personnel must be authorised by the Danish National Board of Health.

If you earned your diploma or higher education from an institution recognised by the Danish ministry of education, then continuing your education in the Faroe Islands is relatively easy when

you apply in your area of study. If your higher education is not recognised by the ministry, then there will be a list of courses you will be referred to take in order to fulfil the requirement for recognition.

If your secondary school diploma is not recognised, you will need to complete any additional courses required for recognition. If you do not have a secondary school diploma, you will need to complete secondary school grade 9 to receive a Faroese lower secondary school diploma, *fólkaskúlaprógv*, which fulfils the requirements to apply for preparatory education before university.

For the grade 9 diploma, there are no English-speaking classes on a wide range of subjects offered in the Faroe Islands. Furthermore, you might also need to learn Danish as many higher education courses use Danish textbooks. Therefore, it is highly recommended that you have a good basic understanding of Faroese reading and grammar before starting grade 9.

For further information:

Ministry of Higher Education and Science, in Denmark, www.ufm.dk, tel. +45 3392 9700.

International Office, University of the Faroe Islands, www.setur.fo/ask, tel. 292513.

STARTING YOUR OWN BUSINESS

If you would like to start your own business you have to prepare well. There are a number of laws and conditions that you need to be aware of. These regulations are in place to protect civilians and workers against poor hygiene and work accidents, as well as to prevent tax evasion.

While there are business funding options you can apply for, provided that a range of conditions are met, it is important also to remember that you will not pay into the welfare schemes as regular employees are obliged to do. Instead, you can choose to pay for welfare insurances at the relevant public agencies. These include sick-day insurance, unemployment insurance with the Unemployment Fund, *ALS*, and it is also possible to take out a parental allowance insurance with the Parental Fund. For the last two of these mentioned here, it is a condition that the insurance has been active for at least one whole year.

In the Faroe Islands common examples of self-employment are restaurant and shop-owners, traders and salesmen,

owners of fishing-vessels operating in waters around the islands and carpenters.

There are places to seek advice on matters relating to entrepreneurship and starting businesses. In Klaksvík and Tórshavn there are consulting services available.

For further information contact

Íverksetarahúsið in Klaksvík (www.is.fo), or Hugskotið (www.hugskotid.fo), in Tórshavn.

You can start business activities without a business registration number from TAKS, v-tal, or you can contact TAKS and apply for a registration number – for further details and your obligations as a business-owner please contact TAKS. You can also establish a public limited company or limited liability company, as there might be certain tax-related benefits. Then you must contact the Company Registration Authority, Skráseting Føroya, for more information – www.skraseting.fo (ENG.).

The Business Development Fund, *Vinnuframi*, supports initiatives, which

diversify commercial enterprise and increase the use of knowledge. The fund provides grants for e.g. development of goods and services, innovative projects and research and study projects.

HEALTH

This section contains information about the National Health Insurance, *Heilsutrygd*, how public health services are organised, and what steps to take should you fall ill and not be able to work.

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NATIONAL HEALTH INSURANCE

All individuals residing in the Faroe Islands who have a Faroese ID number, *p-tal*, are automatically covered by the National Health Insurance, *Heilsutrygd*.

The National Health Insurance covers general and specialist medical treatment and subsidises either in full or partially medicine, dental treatment and other specialist treatments, i.e. physiotherapy, psychotherapy and podiatry.

Health care services are financed by the government and by mandatory contributions from all residents, through the National Health Insurance.

Apart from the contribution to the National Health Insurance, health care is generally free in the Faroe Islands. However, exceptions apply to medicines, dental treatment and some other specialist treatments.

All residents from the age of 18 pay a monthly contribution to the National Health Service. The contribution is regulated by law and consists of a fixed amount and a certain percentage of taxable income. It is deducted automatically from income by TAKS (A-income or normal wages) and can be adjusted.

YOUR PRIMARY DOCTOR

The National Health Insurance is the agency with the overall responsibility for primary doctors. When you are registered in the national registry and get your ID number, the National Health Insurance will send you a letter regarding your primary doctor (general practitioner).

The tasks of a primary doctor, *kommunulækni*, are providing general medical services, such as vaccination and regular health check-ups of children. Your primary doctor can refer you to another specialist if this is needed, e.g. an optometrist.

Check your local municipality for addresses, opening hours, phone numbers and when the lines are open for booking appointments.

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR DOCTOR

Within normal working hours you can call the doctor's office and book a time/session for you to see the doctor – or your doctor's office may have an online-booking service (you will always receive a confirmation on your phone, if you have used the online-booking service).

MEDICINE AND PHARMACIES

Your primary doctor might give you a prescription for medication that you need. Then you will need to go to the pharmacy to pick up the medication. The doctor will inform you when the medication is ready for you at the pharmacy.

Medicine is sold at pharmacies. Some are freely available to buy and others are prescription drugs so you will need a doctor's prescription. Some medication is cheaper because of benefits from the National Health Insurance.

PRIMARY DOCTOR - MAKING AN APPOINTMENT



1 ARE YOU ILL AND NEED TO SEE A DOCTOR?

The tasks of a primary doctor are general medical help and vaccination and regular health check-ups of children



2 CALL YOUR PRIMARY DOCTOR AND BOOK AN APPOINTMENT

Be on time for your appointment, preferably five minutes early (you can also book online).



3 THE DOCTOR WILL EXAMINE YOU

The primary doctor has an important and central role in the health care system.



4 PRESCRIPTION

If you require medicine for your condition, the doctor will issue you a prescription.



5 MEDICINE

After talking to your doctor you can go to the pharmacy with the prescription

WHO TO CALL?

PRIMARY DOCTOR, GP SERVICE OR EMERGENCY 112?



Primary doctor: See your primary doctor about general health issues.



GP Service tel 1870: This service, known as *Læknavaktin*, accepts patients who are in immediate need of medical care, this can be owing to illnesses or injuries that cannot wait until the next day. (This service is open outside normal working hours, weekends and holidays).



EMERGENCY CALL TEL 112: In case of life-threatening and acute situations.

EMERGENCY SERVICES - 112 AND 1870

112 is the emergency telephone number in the Faroe Islands. It must be used for emergency calls only, when people are seriously injured or ill and need immediate treatment.

1870 is the telephone number for the after-hours GP Service, *Læknavaktin*. If you are in need of talking to a doctor outside normal working hours and you cannot wait until the doctor's office opens, then you must call the after-hours GP Service. This national service is open after normal working hours, from 16.00 until 08.00 and at all other times when the doctor's offices are closed, on weekends and holidays. This service is able to assess your situation, advise you directly or send a doctor to your home, or they may ask you to go in for a check-up at a hospital.

Læknavaktin can call on doctors in other parts of the country who are on stand by and can drive out to a patient, if there is a need for that.

RECEIVING TREATMENT IN A HOSPITAL

Patients may be referred to a hospital by the primary doctor.

There are three hospitals in the Faroe Islands – in Tórshavn, Klaksvík and Suðuroy.

The National Hospital in Tórshavn is the main hospital. Most illnesses and injuries can be managed at the National Hospital, but in some cases it may be necessary to receive treatment abroad.

PREGNANCY CARE

Health services during pregnancy and childbirth are free of charge for any woman who is living in the Faroes and has received the Faroese ID no., in Faroese known as *p-tal*.

Women who have not received the ID no. are not entitled to free hospital treatment, even if they are married and move to an address in the Faroe Islands. They will be charged as foreigners in accordance with a specific pricing system.

Pregnancy check-ups are carried out by primary doctor and midwives around the country. Ultrasound scans are available, usually scheduled in the 18th week of pregnancy.

The Child Health Care Service, Gigni, can provide home-visits during pregnancy if wanted, or if the family has special needs. The aim is to provide guidance to future parents to ensure that your child has a healthy start in life. The home visits are provided by health visitor nurses, who work at *Gigni*.

Gigni provides regular home visits to new families in the Faroe Islands. The main goal is to promote health, to prevent

sickness, to strengthen and develop parental competency, and to uncover challenges to a child's wellbeing and development as early and quickly as possible.

The health visitor nurse is trained in the field of child and family health. The nurse is able to provide useful advice if you are in doubt about anything, and she will help to ensure that your child has a safe and healthy start in life.

NAMING YOUR CHILD

After your child is born, you have six months to choose a name. You are obliged to register the name officially before the six month deadline. The state church office located in the municipality you live administers the name registration.

If you are a non-Faroese citizen and you choose a name according to the rules and customs of your home country, which is not on the approved list of names, you will need to provide documentation with an application form to the Environment Agency, *Umhvørvisstovan*. **For more information, please contact the Environment Agency tel. 34200, www.us.fo.**

For more general information you can visit the website of the Language Board, *Málráðið*, where there is an official list of names, for males and females: www.malrad.fo.

CHILDBIRTH

Childbirth takes place at the hospital, in most of the cases it is at the National Hospital, *Landssjúkrahúsið*. Mother and child normally stay between 2 and 5 days in hospital after childbirth.

Health visiting nurses regularly examine babies in their home up to the age of 18 months.

School nurses, who are also employed by Gigni, provide regular medical check-ups and personal interviews as well as parental guidance and information on health-related issues.

Primary doctors provide medical check-ups up for children up to the age of 5 and vaccinations according to a vaccination schedule.

DENTISTRY, MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE AND PHYSICAL THERAPY

Dental care for adults is carried out by dentists in private practice. The National Health Insurance covers part of the cost of dental care.

Children up to the age of 18 are entitled to free public dental treatment. Children's dental services are administrated by the municipalities. From the age of 18 until the age of 23 the National Health Insurance, *Heilsutrygd*, covers all of the costs relating to dental checks.

For information on your nearest dentist's clinic, please contact your local municipality.

Mental health services and physical therapy are available at private practices.

If you are referred to a psychologist or a physical therapist by your primary doctor, the National Health Insurance will cover 40% of the cost. If you consult e.g. a psychologist without referral from your primary doctor, you will have to pay the full price. The same applies to physical therapy, occupational therapy and other therapists

CHILD HEALTH CARE SERVICES – COUNSELING AND NURSE HOME VISITS

Health services for children up to the end of school age (16-17) are free of charge. The aim of this service is first and foremost to promote health and prevent ill health. Gigni provides health care service to families with small children, school-aged children and teenagers in the Faroe Islands.

Health visiting nurses examine children in their home regularly up to the age of 18 months. Health visiting nurses visit the family and examine the baby and provide parental guidance and health information starting as soon as possible after the family is back home from the hospital. If the child or the family has special needs, the nurse's home visits can continue up to school age, otherwise the service is provided on request from the family or referral from other practitioners.

Parents and other carers are by law not permitted to hit children – even in connection with disciplining. The health visiting nurse will be happy to offer advice and guidance on raising children.

Anyone moving to the Faroe Islands with small children must contact the children's nurse in order to receive home visits and services provided by the health visiting nurses. This includes families with children older than 18 months. Parents are always welcome to contact Gigni if they would like advice, counselling, home-visits, etc.

To get in touch with Gigni, families can call the main office on tel. 562300 or send an email to gigni@gigni.fo. Families do not need any referral to get counselling or home visits from Gigni.

Primary doctors provide medical checks up to the age of 5 and vaccinations according to a vaccination schedule.

School nurses provide regular medical checks and personal interviews, as well as parental guidance and information.

It is recommended that parents follow the national recommendations on child health checks and vaccinations.

If considered necessary, Gigni works closely together with primary doctors, staff at day-care centres or teachers at school or the local social worker at the child protection office. This is always done in close collaboration with parents.

Local medical officers and primary doctors provide medical checks up to the age of 5 and vaccinations according to a vaccination schedule. Parents have an obligation to ensure that their children attend health checks.

School nurses provide regular medical checks and personal interviews as well as parental guidance and information.



REMEMBER - *RIGHT TO AN INTERPRETER*

In connection with appointments with your primary doctor, or a specialist, you have a right to an interpreter free of charge if needed. This is also the case when your child sees the doctor.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I AM UNABLE TO WORK DUE TO ILLNESS?

As an employee in case of sickness you might need to get a doctor's certificate that describes your condition. This might be the case if you are employed as an hourly paid worker and you want to receive a sickness benefit for any lost income. Anyone who has been in employment for at least 120 hours within the last 13 weeks is entitled to sickness benefit as of the first day of their illness. The Department of Social Services, *Almannaverkið*, implements the law on sickness benefits and an application must be submitted within 60 days of the first day away from work.

You may be entitled to paid leave from your employer as of the first day of illness. This depends on your type of employment.

RELEVANT AGENCIES

Department of Social Services, *Almannaverkið*, www.av.fo, tel. 360000

Child Health Care Services, Gigni, www.gigni.fo, tel. 562300

The National Hospital, *Landssjúkrahúsið*, www.ls.fo, tel. 304500

National Health Insurance, *Heilsutrygd*, www.heilsutrygd.fo, tel. 614000

CHILDREN, SCHOOL AND EDUCATION

This section contains information about the school system on the Faroe Islands. In addition, it provides information about benefits you are entitled to as a parent, and who to contact for advice or help regarding difficult family issues.

A group of approximately ten children are standing outdoors in front of a dense line of evergreen trees. They are all wearing bright, colorful rain jackets and hoods. Some are wearing yellow high-visibility vests with the text 'Trygging og Tíðindi' and a logo. The children are smiling and looking towards the camera. The overall scene is bright and cheerful, suggesting a rainy day activity.

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PARENTAL LEAVE FUND

Benefits related to pregnancy are provided as financial compensation for loss of income when you are absent from work as a result of pregnancy, birth or adoption. The Parental Leave Fund, *Barsilsskipanin*, has as its main task to provide these benefits to those who are entitled to them. Additionally, as an employee, you may have the right to receive a normal wage from your employer, through the union's collective agreement with your employer, for the whole period or part of the period.

The main conditions for receiving the allowance from the Fund are that you live in the Faroe Islands, that you are liable to pay full tax in the Faroes and that you are the one who is caring for the child during the relevant period. Additionally, you need to have had an income (A-Income) in the last 12 months before the parental leave starts (those who are self-employed or receive unemployment benefit can be included). If you do not meet the conditions for receiving pregnancy benefit from the Parental Leave Fund it is possible to apply for parental allowance

from The Department of Social Services, *Almannaverkið*.

If you are in doubt, you can contact The Parental Leave Fund for further information, www.barsil.fo, tel. 352600.

PREGNANCY ALLOWANCE

You may be entitled to this allowance from the day that there are 4 weeks left until your due date. Or, from the day that you have a doctor's certificate confirming that you or your child's health may be at risk because of the character of your work, though no earlier than 8 weeks before your due date.

Examples can be: work with chemical substances, stress, hard physical labour, psychosomatic conditions.

Depending on which collective agreement applies to your employment, your entitlement may vary.

PARENTAL LEAVE INSURANCE – PATERNITY AND MATERNITY

After birth the following applies:

Parents are entitled to 52 weeks' leave after childbirth; however, they are not entitled to salary/pay from the Parental Leave Fund for the entire leave. If you are a wage-earner then you may be entitled to paid leave for a given period from your employer, you can check with your union or the Parental Leave Fund regarding this matter.

A mother has the right to 40 weeks within 44 weeks after birth. The father has a right to four weeks together with the mother within the period of 44 weeks after birth.

Within the first 14 weeks, it is only the mother who can claim parental leave insurance. The last 26 weeks of the 40 weeks, either the mother or the father can claim the parental leave insurance, but not both parents.

The benefit from the Parental Leave Fund is based on the average salary received over the last 12 months before the leave up to a ceiling of DKK 25,000 per month. After the paid leave, the mother or the father has the right to unpaid leave until

52 weeks after the birth of the child.

In case of adoption, the parents have a right to parental leave insurance for 48 weeks after receiving the child. For four of these 48 weeks the parents can receive benefits at the same time.

For more information concerning maternity/paternity and adoption benefits contact the Parental Leave Fund, Barsilsskipanin, www.barsil.fo

WHAT ALLOWANCES DOES MY CHILD RECEIVE?

Child allowance is paid for all children below the age of 18 living in the Faroe Islands. The allowance, *barnafrádráttur*, is tax-free and independent of the parents' income and is paid as a tax deduction. The allowance is initially paid to the mother. Since the child allowance is paid partly by the local authority, the size of the allowance varies by a small amount.

For more information on child allowance contact your municipality.

GOOD ADVICE FOR PARENTS

Day care centres

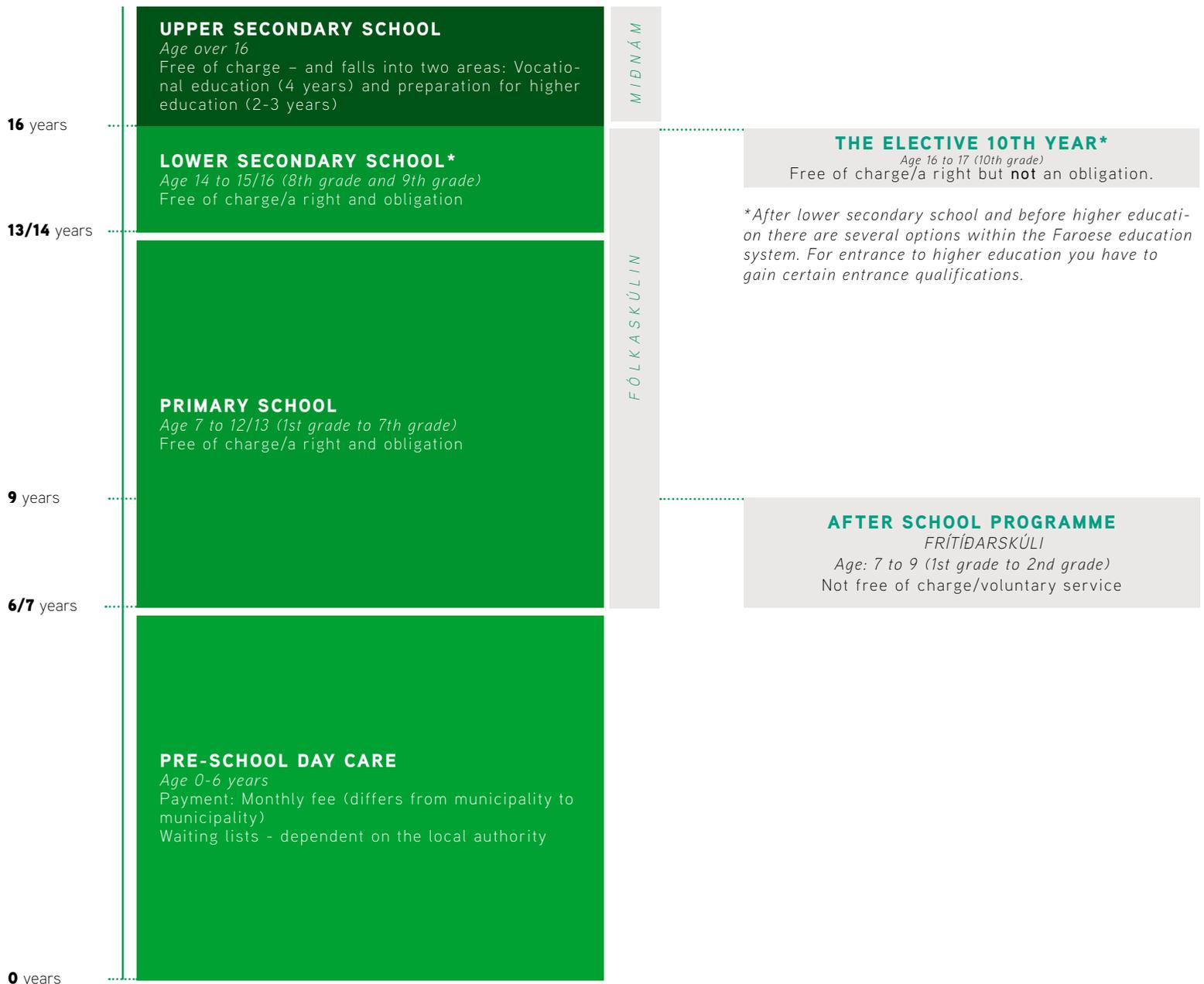
1. Accompany the child to the day care centre and talk to the staff. When a child starts in day care there is special attention given to the child as the surroundings are new. The parent must be ready to take time the first couple of days to be with the child at the day care centre for whole or half working days.
2. You can also ask whether you can spend a day at the day care centre, if you think it is necessary.
3. Notify the staff if anything special happens in the family.
4. Remember clothes for all kinds of weather.
5. Get to know the other parents.

Public school

1. Notify the school if something happens that may affect the child's life or health.
2. Help your children to be on time for school and accompany them if necessary.
3. The children must take part in all types of tuition whatever the weather, so remember suitable clothes.
4. Attend meetings and events at school.
5. Get to know the neighbourhood of the school.

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM:

PRE-SCHOOL DAY CARE - PUBLIC SCHOOL - SECONDARY SCHOOL



PRE-SCHOOL DAY CARE

The municipalities provide day care for children up to school age. Day care can be provided in private homes or in day care centres. Children with special needs can receive specialised pedagogical assistance in the day care centres.

Parents can register their children for day care up to six months before they move to the Faroe Islands.

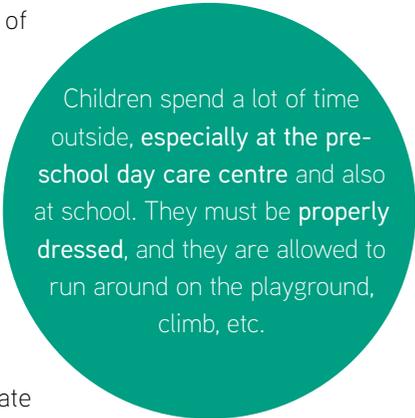
As a parent you have the right to apply for a reduction in day care fee. This reduction scheme is called *fripláss* in Faroese and correlates with parents' income. Most parents make use of this right.

If you are the parent of a child of school age, you must contact your municipality or local school office to register your child for school.

Registration usually takes place in January and the venue and date are usually announced on the radio. The school year starts in August.

After-school programmes are available in most municipalities for children in first and second grade.

If you live in Tórshavn where there are several schools it is possible to apply to a specific school. But it cannot be guaranteed that a place is available, as there can be too many children living in the area around the chosen school. When registering your children at a day care centre or for school you should always contact the local municipality.



Children spend a lot of time outside, especially at the pre-school day care centre and also at school. They must be **properly dressed**, and they are allowed to run around on the playground, climb, etc.

PUBLIC SCHOOL IN THE FAROE ISLANDS, FÓLKASKÚLIN

All children must attend school for 9 years, usually from the age of 7 and until the age of 15.

The public elementary school can be divided into two main parts – an elementary school and a lower secondary school.

If you are the parent of a child of school age, you must contact the municipality or the school office to register your child at the school.

The schools offer 9 years of compulsory basic education and an elective 10th year.

Some public elementary schools also offer pre-school classes for six-year-old children.

Pupils who do not, or are unable to because of a disability benefit satisfactorily from ordinary tuition are entitled to special education.

Pupils who do not have Faroese as a first language may be entitled to additional lessons in Faroese. This is assessed at the local school by the teacher and the school administration office.

PARENT-TEACHER COOPERATION

In the public school system, from 1st to 9th/10th grade, parents are expected to cooperate with school to further their child's learning. Therefore, dialogue between parents and school is considered vital.

Usually the parents and teachers of a class get together once or twice a year. In addition, the contact teacher invites each pupil's parents to a parent-teacher talk once or twice a year. At such meetings the teacher usually informs the parents about how their child is learning and about their progress at school and the parents are asked about their view on the child's development.

The school expects parents to attend such talks. Parents receive a notice in advance. If you need an interpreter, please contact the school in advance.



UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL, *MIDNÁM*

There are several types of secondary schools in the Faroe Islands building on the education received in elementary school.

Secondary schools can be divided into three groups: technical, business, and general education. Secondary education is available at five locations in the islands. Secondary school, Miðnám, is usually intended for at young students between the ages of 16 and 19. But preparatory education for adults is also a part of Miðnám.

The diplomas awarded by the Faroese secondary schools are equivalent to those awarded in the Danish education system.

Diplomas from the general upper secondary school and diplomas after three-years' study at technical and business schools give access to higher education.

For more general information about education: The Faroese Youth Association's website on education in the Faroes: www.les.fo
The International Office at the University of the Faroe Islands: www.setur.fo/ask
- tel. 292513

MARITIME EDUCATION

The maritime education programmes in the Faroe Islands are based on international standards and are IMO-approved. There are two agencies that provide tuition.

Centre of Maritime Studies & Engineering, Vinnuháskúlin, www.vh.fo
– tel. 350250
Sjónám, www.sjonam.fo – tel. 665888

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is offered at the University of the Faroe Islands. The university has two faculties and offers bachelor's and master's degrees in several subjects.

Vocational academic education is offered at the Business College.

The University of the Faroe Islands:
www.setur.fo

The Business College: www.fh.fo (part of the upper secondary education centre, Glasir, www.glasir.fo)

EDUCATION AS AN ADULT

At the evening schools it is possible to receive tuition and complete diplomas in the obligatory courses that make up public primary and lower secondary education, such as Faroese, Danish, mathematics, and also English.

Completing these diplomas may give you the qualifications to proceed to further education, e.g. upper secondary school level.

Some courses at secondary school level are also available through the evening school administration.

These courses are not free.

LEARNING SERVICES

Homework assistance services may be available in your municipality at the local library.

In Tórshavn this service is available for pupils in the lower secondary classes in The Public School, *Framhaldsdeildin*, and pupils in upper secondary school, Miðnám.

In Fuglafjørður there is a homework-assistance drop-in service at the local library, two days a week to help all young students, primary or secondary. Students receive help with a specific assignment or general homework and parents are also welcome to join in. This offer is for all people in the municipality and is also intended for, and used by, pupils with immigrant background.

DISABILITY AND LEARNING CHALLENGES

If your child has a disability or if you are concerned about the development of your child, the services of *Sernám* are available; for parents, youths and professionals in the day care services and education system as well. *Sernám* works to ensure that children and youths between 0 and 18 are able to develop and improve their skills. Special competences that fall under *Sernám*'s four departments are related to speech and hearing impairments; physio- and occupational therapy; pedagogics; and psychology.

Parents can contact *Sernám* directly. You will have to submit a form, or get referral from your primary doctor to *Sernám*, if longer-lasting contact with *Sernám* is needed.

More information: www.sernam.fo, tel. 360200

COUNSELLING SERVICES

The Child Health Service, *Gigni*, provides children, youths and parents with advice and help on a range of issues related to health and the wellbeing of children until they leave the public school system.

School nurses represent *Gigni* at every school and, in addition to giving pupils annual health checks, they teach subjects related to health and welfare in class sessions. The activities of *Gigni* at schools aim to prevent a negative outturn for the wellbeing of a child or youth. All pupils are offered a personal interview with the school nurse at least once a year.

Gigni's health personnel can be contacted through the local school or you can contact *Gigni* by calling or sending an e-mail to their main office in Tórshavn. Counselling is free and can be arranged at the health personnel's office, at the local school, or in the family home.

Children, youth and families may be entitled to a more extensive counselling service if special needs arise. Examples of such cases could be: children and youths with low self-esteem, disability,

behaviour difficulties, where the parents go through separation or divorce, when alcohol abuse is in the home, when a crisis affects the child's surroundings, disease, death, or financial problems that affect the child or youth.

It can be added that if there are family problems or a mother is a victim of domestic violence and is thinking about going to a woman's shelter, she can always turn to Gigni for guidance and counselling.

For further information: Gigni, www.gigni.fo, tel. 562300

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICE

The law concerning child protection states that the authorities must always find solutions that are best for the child – first and foremost – when the health and the wellbeing of a child are endangered.

The Child Protection Service in the Faroe Islands, *Barnaverndartænastan*, is divided into 8 areas each with an office and a Child Welfare Service Board.

A main task of The Child Protection Service on the Faroe Islands is to assist parents with giving their children the best possible upbringing.

Child service workers support and assist children and families in different ways. Most Child Protection Service cases are worked out in good cooperation with parents or guardians. The Faroese Child Protection Service has helped around 850 children every year.

Everyone is required by law to report any suspected violence, physical, mental or sexual, against children to the local office of the Child Protection Service.

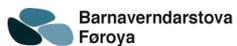
It is also the task of the Child Protection Service to help children in more difficult situations.

The Child Protection Service assesses each case individually to see if the child needs help. Getting help from the services is not a universal right. The Faroese law states that the Child Protection Service can take action if it suspects that a child is suffering at home. In a few cases, for example if the child's health and welfare is endangered, the Child Protection Service may move the child out of the home, usually to a foster family or to an institution for children and youth. If the parents do not agree to the child being taken from the home, they are entitled to legal aid. The case must then be settled by the main Child Protection Committee.

**Further information:
Barnaverndartænastan, www.bvs.fo,
tel. 302480.**

CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

LOCAL OFFICES AROUND THE FAROE ISLANDS



THE NORTHERN ISLANDS, KLAKSVÍK

Office hours: 10.00-16.00 ☎ 410000

☎ **HOTLINE** - OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS: **219181**

THE MUNICIPALITY OF EYSTURKOMMUNA AND FUGLAFJØRÐUR

Office hours: 9.00-15.00 ☎ 238055

☎ **HOTLINE** - OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS: **238059**

AREA AROUND SKÁLAFJØRÐUR

Office hours: 9.00-15.00 ☎ 417000

☎ **HOTLINE** - OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS: **237090**

NORTHERN PART OF STREYMOY AND THE NORTHERN PART OF EYSTUROY

Office hours: 9.00-16.00 ☎ 667271

☎ **HOTLINE** - OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS: **297200**

TÓRSHAVN AND VICINITY

Office hours: 9.00-15.00 ☎ 302060

☎ **HOTLINE** - OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS: **216012**

VÁGOY

Office hours: 10.00-15.00 ☎ 344430

☎ **HOTLINE** - OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS: **344430**

SANDØY, SKÚVOY AND STÓRA DÍMUN

Office hours: 8.00-12.00 ☎ 361024/288024

☎ **HOTLINE** - OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS: **281024**

SUBUROY

Office hours: 10.00-16.00 ☎ 611090

☎ **HOTLINE** - OUTSIDE BUSINESS HOURS: **283033**

OTHER RELEVANT AGENCIES

Other relevant agencies looking out for children's rights and wellbeing are the Children's Ombudsman, *Barnanna Umboðsmaður*, and Barnabati. The Children's Ombudsman is an institution adults and children can turn to if they think a public agency or another authority has not treated a child adequately. For example, you can file a complaint regarding a school that has not been willing to help you or your child. You cannot file a complaint to the ombudsman regarding a court decision, or about your parents or friends, etc. The office of the Children's Ombudsman will most likely be able to direct you to the right place if they cannot help you.

Barnabati operates a helpline for children called *Tú-og-eg Ráðgevingin* or You and Me Support and Guidance. This service is available as a phone line, text messages and private chat-sessions. As a child you can use this service concerning any problems you may experience as a child. It is free and you can write and call anonymously, the helpline is open two nights a week.

For more information on the helpline and Barnabati go to www.barnabati.fo or regarding The Children's Ombudsman, visit www.bum.fo.

MEDIATION IN CASE OF SEPARATION AND DIVORCE

In cases of separation or breakdown of relationships between parents The Danish High Commissioner in The Faroe Islands, *Ríkisumboðið*, is the relevant authority to approach. A mediation process can be initiated in relation to parental responsibilities, the child's situation in the time ahead, where the child is to live, and how much time the child will spend with the parent they do not live with. The High Commissioner can offer child welfare counselling and conflict mediation in disagreements over child custody or similar.

In cases of separation or/and divorce parents can get free counselling from Gigni.

WOMEN'S SHELTER

The Women's Shelter in Tórshavn helps women who are subject to domestic violence. They also provide temporary accommodation for women/children in crisis situations.

A women's shelter is a place you can contact if you are a victim of violence, or if you know somebody who is. The shelter offers advice and guidance to victims of violence, abuse, threats, etc.

The Women's Shelter in Tórshavn is open weekdays from 10:00 to 17:00 PM. Anyone who contacts a women's shelter is guaranteed full anonymity. The shelter has access to interpreting services.

Further information is available at www.kvinnuhusid.fo, hotline: 317200

TRANSPORT AND SERVICES

This section includes information about regulation on the use of a foreign driver's license and a foreign-registered car. Driving and owning a car in the Faroe Islands, and how public transport is organised. Other services, financial and communication services are also described.

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TRANSPORT

The roads are the main transport artery of Faroese society. Roads connect 87% of the population. Even if the public transport system is well established and parts of the population depend on this system (to arrive at work on time, etc.), the preferred means of transportation amongst the majority of the islanders is the car.

Can I use my driver's license?

Driving licenses issued in Nordic countries and EU countries (and countries that have implemented an EU compatible driving license regulation) are valid in the Faroe Islands. Persons with a driving license issued in one of these countries may exchange their license for a Faroese driving license without taking a new driving test. However, it is not a requirement to exchange the driving license when it is issued in one of these countries.

- In order to exchange a driving license the foreign driving license must be valid.

- You will have to submit an application form and any required documents in order to exchange your foreign driving license.

Persons with a driving license issued in a country outside the EU and the Nordic region must exchange their driving license for a Faroese driving license if they intend to stay for a period longer than 90 days. A foreign driving license can be used for up to 90 days. Before exchanging their license, they must pass a new driving test.

The documents you must hand in to the case officers at the Faroese Vehicle Administration, Akstovan, are:

- The valid foreign driving license
- Application form
- Documents proving your identity – e.g. ID card or passport
- Passport photo (Passport photo requirements)
- Medical or doctor's certificate (no older than 3 months)
- Payment for the driving test (incl. theory and practical) DKK 550
- Issuance cost of the driving license DKK 250
- Residence permit or proof of legal stay (if the applicant is not a Nordic citizen)

If interpretation is needed for the tests it can be arranged. In such case you

have to notify Akstovan as soon as possible. Interpretation can be arranged by Akstovan, but you will have to bear the interpreting expenses.

For further information please contact Akstovan: Akstovan, www.akstovan.fo, tel. 350400

Car loan

Most banks can grant you a loan at a slightly higher interest rate than for a mortgage. It is often a requirement that around 20 to 30 per cent of the purchase price is paid in cash.

A bank might give a car loan if the client has a steady income and otherwise a healthy economic situation. The banks are always willing to offer advice on these matters.

ADVISORY CHECKLIST

FOR PERSONS IMPORTING A USED VEHICLE FOR THE FIRST-TIME REGISTRATION



1. BEFORE ARRIVAL AND IMPORT OF VEHICLE TO THE FAROE ISLANDS

Check with the local authority where your vehicle is registered if there are export restrictions and ask the Faroese authorities about what the approximate costs would be.



2. ARRIVAL TO THE FAROE ISLANDS - APPROACH THE CUSTOMS AUTHORITIES

Import fees are to be paid to the customs authorities, including value added tax. If the vehicle is produced in the EU you can be exempted from the GATT-tax. In such a case you must provide documentation, the original certificate documentation from the seller with a stamp from the customs authorities in that country.



3. INSURANCE FROM A FAROESE INSURANCE COMPANY

The insurance provider will notify Akstovan when a new a car or vehicle insurance is obtained (an ID no. is required).



4. DOCUMENTS AND THE NOTICE FORM FOR INSPECTIONS, FRÁBOÐAN TIL SÝN

Use the notification form for inspections at Akstovan and gather the required documents for the case officers at Akstovan. The fees are to be paid at the very end of the procedures.



5. INSPECTION AND REGISTRATION

After inspections have been completed and the fees are paid, the registration and Faroese license plates can be issued.



6. PAY THE HALF-YEARLY WEIGHT TAX/CARBON TAX

After registration of your vehicle you will receive an invoice for a half-yearly weight tax/carbon tax.

Remember

that you may be exempted if you are importing the car as removal goods when you are moving to the islands (also see the section "Moving to the Faroe Islands").

How do I register my car?

All motored vehicles used in the Faroe Islands must be registered with the Vehicle Administration, *Akstovan* (tourists are exempted from this rule).

Anyone who moves to the islands and brings a foreign motor vehicle must ensure that the vehicle is registered at *Akstovan* within the first two weeks after they have registered a legal residence address with the local authority. The foreign license plates will be exchanged with a Faroese set of plates at the end of the procedure.

It is always recommendable to contact *Akstovan* and enquire about registration costs before importing a vehicle.

Registration costs can be considerable, depending on the type and age of the vehicle.

For a first-time registration of a used imported vehicle the following applies:

When the car arrives you should turn to the customs authorities, TAKS, for further instructions. It is always advisable to have the necessary paperwork in order, as soon as possible, including your

removal goods certification and original registration certificate. After customs, it is advisable to contact *Akstovan* for instructions on how to proceed. You will be required to fill out papers regarding inspections and hand in documentation. This includes documentation from the country where the vehicle was registered.

The vehicle must be inspected and approved by the Vehicle Administration, *Akstovan*, and you will be required to pay the fees related to inspection, issuance of license plates, registration, carbon dioxide outlet, and weight of the vehicle. Faroese liability insurance is also required before registration of a vehicle.

The vehicle can only be registered if the owner (the user of the vehicle) who signed the notice for vehicle inspection has moved to the Faroe Islands and is registered with a legal address.

The registration costs increase considerably when the age of the vehicle is 5 years or less.

Required documentation:

The owner of the vehicle is obliged to

provide documentation for the original value from the car manufacturer or an approved agent.

Concerning the original value of the vehicle approved documentation must be provided:

- The original invoice from the manufacturer with the car model no./ vehicle identification no., or
- Original value of the specific vehicle model from an approved agent.

Freight costs are added to the original value of the vehicle for the purpose of calculating registration costs.

The required documentation is as follows:

- Notice for inspection (form regarding inspections in the Faroe Islands)
- The original foreign registration document (concerning ownership and technical details)
- Copy of the invoice from the foreign manufacturer or agent addressed to you, the importer of the vehicle
- Freight letter or invoice (incl. waybill no.)
- Receipt from customs with value added tax

It is very important that you familiarize yourself with the applicable regulations before you import or use a foreign-registered motor vehicle in the Faroe Islands. If you violate the regulation, for instance if you fail to register the vehicle within two weeks after registering at the municipality, you risk getting a fine from the police or having the foreign license plates confiscated.

Insurance

Car insurance can be a combination of several separate insurance policies.

Liability insurance is a type of insurance that all car owners must take out, i.e. it is not optional. The insurance covers every type of damage or injury the car can inflict on other people or objects. When registering a car in the Faroe Islands, you will have to take out liability insurance.

Insurance covering loss or damage to your own car is optional. There are two providers of insurances in the Faroes: Tryggingarfelagið Føroyar, www.trygging.fo, tel. 345600
Trygd, www.trygd.fo, tel. 358100



IN CASE OF A MINOR CAR ACCIDENT OR MINOR DAMAGES

In case of minor car accidents or minor damages to a car, a main rule is that the drivers of both vehicles involved should find a solution together. They should exchange names, phone numbers and license plates. The obligatory liability insurance of every car owner covers accidents; the proper thing to do is to contact the owner or to inform the police.

If the owner of the involved car with minor damages cannot be reached, the police can assist. Call them and ask for help.

In case of disagreements between two drivers the police should be contacted, or if the damages are extensive, or if you are in doubt, call the police.

Remember: In case of a violation of the traffic act the police must always be notified.

VEHICLE CHECKS, VEHICLE LAWS, AND ANNUAL OBLIGATIONS

All motor vehicles registered in the Faroe Islands pay weight tax twice a year. For vehicles that are registered after 1st of January 2017, the owner is required to pay a carbon based tax.

From December 1st to April 30th, the use of summer tires (min. 1.6 mm tread depth) is only allowed if the weather conditions permit it. During this period winter tires or studded tires with a tread depth of 3 mm are required, according to regulation, if the weather conditions make it necessary.

Periodic technical inspections, every second year, are mandatory. Akstovan sends a letter with the inspection time, place and date to the owner. The inspection fee is included in the weight tax. The aim of the inspections is to make sure that the car meets all regulations and is in adequate condition.

Short term stay - vehicle registration

Foreigners who plan to stay in the Faroe Islands for less than one year and are in possession of a vehicle registered abroad may usually use their vehicle

without registering it in the Faroe Islands. However, this is not a rule and it is important to request a special permit from Akstovan. The vehicle may not be used by anyone residing in the Faroe Islands or for any commercial carriage.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERS

Use of studded tires is allowed between October 15th and May 1st.

Weight tax – deadlines: January 2nd and July 1st (if the invoice is not paid after two reminders, the police will be notified and will remove the license plates)

From December 1st until April 30th, the use of summer tires is only allowed if conditions permit it. In this period winter tires or studded tires with a tread depth of min. 3 mm is required, according to regulation, if weather conditions make it necessary. In other words – drivers who fail to take the weather conditions into consideration and do not use appropriate tires are violating traffic regulations.

VIOLATION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS

Road traffic regulations are very strict in the Faroe Islands. The police carry out traffic stops on a regular basis on Faroese roads. Particular emphasis is placed on speed controls, random breathalyser tests (both for alcohol and other substances), behaviour in traffic, and the use of protective equipment such as safety belts and child seats. Violations of the Faroese Traffic Act, such as speeding or driving under the influence, can lead to serious penalties like fines, confiscation of driving licenses and, in more serious cases, imprisonment.

The Faroes apply a penalty point system (known as a punch card system, *Klippikortskipan*) and the police can give you a point each time you commit a serious traffic offence (together with a fine). Sanctions are imposed according to the penalty points. Accumulating three penalty points within a period of three years will lead to a conditional confiscation of your driving license.

Driving with
the headlights on is
mandatory at
all times.

TRAFFIC RULES



The use of seat belts is obligatory, including in the back seat. Children must be secured separately in a child seat or carry cot according to the child's age and height.



The prescribed alcohol blood limit for driving a vehicle is 0.2 mg/ml.



When driving, drivers must have their driving license, vehicle registration certificate, and a warning triangle with them in the vehicle at all times



The use of handheld mobile telephones while driving is forbidden.



Speed limits are 50 kph in residential areas and 80 kph outside residential areas, unless otherwise indicated by road signs.



For regularly updated information on weather and traffic conditions in specific parts of the islands, visit www.landsverk.fo or call 340800.



IN CASE OF A TRAFFIC ACCIDENT

- If you are involved in a traffic accident, you must stop and provide assistance and help to secure the scene.
- Persons involved in a traffic accident have a duty to supply their name, address and license number.
- In the event of a death or serious injury, the police must be alerted using the emergency telephone number 112. Vehicles involved in such accidents must only be moved with the consent of the police.

VIOLATION OF RULES AND REGULATIONS - CONTINUED

For new drivers the penalty point system is stricter for the first three years after obtaining a license. The main goal and purpose of this point system is educational and it serves to warn reckless drivers.

If you receive a penalty point in connection with a road accident, or if other people's health was at risk, the court can decide to suspend your driving license.

Minor offences and more serious traffic violations are penalised in different ways:

Penalty charges

For example, failure to use a safety belt, using a mobile telephone, illegal parking, etc. The penalty charge is sent by post. The fine is to be paid according to the instructions in the letter.

Fixed penalties – penalty point

Imposed when the driver admits to the offence or violation on the spot. For example: speeding at 21 kph or more over the limit, if your child is not secured adequately in a child seat or carry cot, driving in the wrong direction on a one-

way street, etc. A penalty point will be imposed along with a fine. A notification concerning the penalty point will be stated on the fine that will be sent to the driver.

Penalty notice

In the case of more serious offences, the driver is fined and the prosecution might bring the case to court. For example: excessive speeding, driving through a red light, dangerous overtaking, if the vehicle poses a danger to traffic, etc. A penalty point will be imposed for such offences. In the event of a conviction by the court, the person in question will be sentenced.

Unconditional/suspended prison sentences

For especially serious offences, such as: driving under the influence, causing injury to another person as a result of speeding, etc. A driver may be tried in court, receive penalty points and subject to a fine.

Disqualification from driving

The police can suspend a driving license in the event of reckless driving or very serious offences: driving under the

influence, speeding, collisions, traffic accidents.

Contact the police for further information regarding traffic regulation. Furthermore, The Faroese Road Safety Council, *Ráðið fyri Ferðslutrygd*, is an organisation that works to improve road safety - www.rff.fo, tel. 220064.

TUNNELS – NO STOP TOLL ROAD

There are two sub-sea tunnels and a payment system is in place for each of these two.

You have to pay a toll to use the sub-sea tunnels. The road toll is to be paid afterwards at a gas service station - either at a Magn or Effo service station. Alternatively, a bill will be sent to the address of the driver/owner of the vehicle via automatic photo-registration of the license plates. The billing process is initiated when the vehicle returns to the mainland islands. A discount subscription is available.

For subscription details and for further information contact the office:

Tunnil, www.tunnil.fo, 350200

PUBLIC TRANSPORT - BUSES AND FERRIES

The Faroe Islands have a well established public transport system and an extensive network of buses and ferries covering the islands. The local helicopter service connects remoter islands to the mainland islands.

Towns and villages are connected to the public bus network. The public transport company, Strandfaraskip Landsins, operates the bus and ferry service.

In Tórshavn and Klaksvík there are urban bus services free of charge. These are run by the local municipalities.

The helicopter service is run by the airline company Atlantic Airways.

Regular flights as well as car and cargo ferries are available all year round for transport of people and goods to and from the Faroe Islands.

For further information: Strandfaraskip Landsins, www.ssl.fo, 24/7 Information desk on all routes, tel. 343030, or Atlantic Airways, www.atlantic.fo, 341000

Special transport for disabled people

If you are not able to use any kind of public transport due to illness or handicap for a shorter or longer period, you can apply to use the special transport service.

The service is accessible in the municipalities of Klaksvík, Eysturoy and Tórshavn.

For more information, please contact the municipality office.

BANK SERVICES

How can I get an account for my wages and other things? Which options do I have? What documents will I need?

You will need a Faroese ID no., p-tal, to open an account with a Faroese bank. The bank is under legal obligation to see and get a copy of the legitimate identity documents of each person who opens an account, e.g. passport or an EU-driving license.

A range of payments, such as wages, public allowances, pension and excess tax, are transferred to a bank account. Therefore you will need an account.

Faroese banks offer regular payment services and provide loans for various purposes.

With these services you can enter into an automatic payment agreement with your bank in order to pay your bills on time. This means that the amount due is debited from your account on the due date. This is a very common way to make regular payments and transactions for mortgage payments; electricity, heating bills and phone bills; and so on. In this way you will avoid reminder fees

The banks offer mortgage loans for

buying real estate property and loans for other purposes, e.g. for purchasing a car. The bank will make an assessment of your financial situation before granting a loan. Usually, the bank will need to see documentation of your income, for instance your pay slips from the last months. Interest rates are higher for cash credit.

Banking services also include the issuing of credit cards and a personal online-banking service, which is also available in English. Customers are advised to use the online-banking system as banks often take service fees each time you make transactions in person at the counter in the bank.

Banks can provide good advice on your private economy and are available for personal meetings regarding what options you have as a customer. But at the same time, remember that banks are private commercial operations with their own commercial interests.

When choosing a subscription for a mobile phone, a fixed landline or broadband internet, it is advisable to check the terms, prices and your own needs. There are two providers to choose from.

TELEPHONE AND INTERNET

When choosing a subscription for a mobile phone, a fixed landline or broadband internet, it is advisable to check the terms, prices and your own needs. There are two providers to choose from.

NATIONAL TELEVISION

The National Faroese Broadcasting Company, Kringvarp Føroya, transmits Faroese radio and TV programmes, as well as Danish and Norwegian TV programmes and other TV programmes with Danish subtitles.

The Faroese Broadcasting Company is financed through a combination of licence fees, radio and TV commercials and TV bingo.

HOW DO I OPEN AN ACCOUNT?

- You will need a Faroese ID no., p-tal.
- A copy of legitimate identity documents, e.g. passport and driving licence proving Faroese ID number and address in the Faroe Islands.
- Contact the bank for a meeting.

POSTAL SERVICE

Posta is the national postal service in the Faroe Islands. There are seven post offices around the islands. Opening hours vary from place to place. Services include the following:

- Sale of envelopes
- Sale of stamps for letters, postcards and small parcels
- Sending letters by recorded delivery
- Sending letters, postcards and parcels
- Sending international reply coupons or pre-payment of reply postage
- Sending insured letters
- Collection of parcels and letters sent by recorded delivery

For information about opening hours, your nearest post office, and Posta's services, visit www.posta.fo or call the main office, tel. 346000.

PETS

Dogs and cats can only be brought to the Faroe Islands if the owner has a permanent address in the Faroe Islands or is moving to the Faroe Islands to live. Pets are not permitted on stays shorter than 3 months or in transit through the Faroe Islands to another country.

As a general rule, it is prohibited to import exotic and dangerous animals to the Faroe Islands.

Fighting dogs and other dogs with aggressive behaviour are not allowed to enter the Faroe Islands.

A dog or a cat that is to be imported to the Faroe Islands must meet a number of requirements. These are related to ID no. (for dogs and cats) in line with ISO standards, vaccinations, completed treatment against parasites, a veterinary certificate, etc.

The Food, Veterinary and Environmental Agency, *Heilsufrøðiliga Starvsstovan*, supervise the import of animals to the Faroe Islands. The agency can refuse import of an animal if the disease situation in the country of origin is insecure, or if the veterinary certificate is lacking or incomplete.

For further information contact the Faroese Food and Veterinary Authority, *Heilsufrøðiliga Starvsstovan*, www.hfs.fo, tel. 556400.



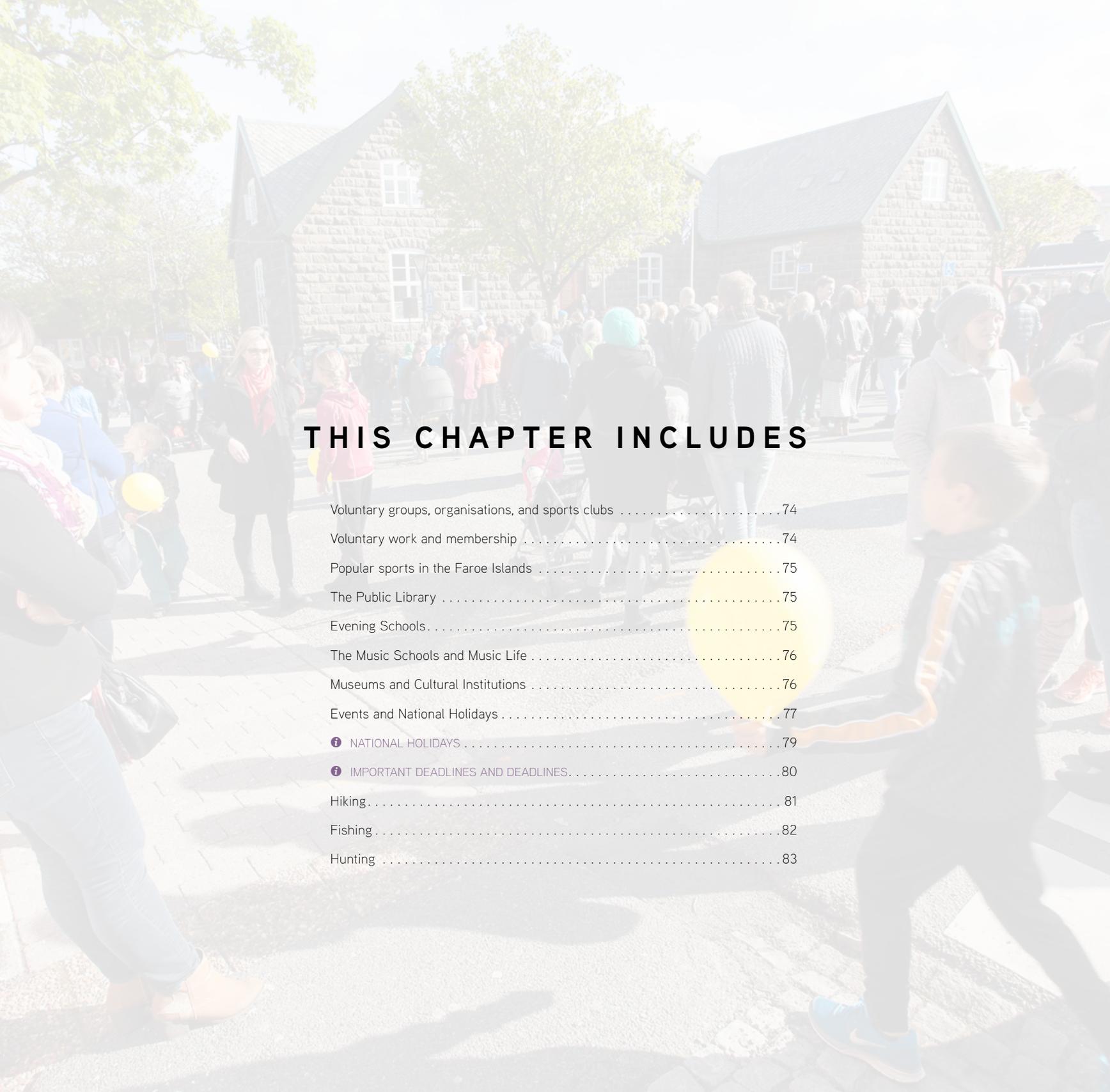
REMEMBER

Regarding Postal Services

- Mark your letterbox with your full name. If you have children, their full names should also appear on the letterbox
- Letters from Faroese public authorities are not sent by recorded delivery. You should therefore open every letter you get, as it may contain important information and deadlines for you to respond

LEISURE

This section contains information on recreational activities, cultural facilities, voluntary groups and organizations, and the rules that apply to hunting, fishing and whaling.

A photograph of a busy outdoor event in a town square. In the background, there are two large, traditional stone buildings with gabled roofs. A large crowd of people, including children and adults, is gathered in the square. Some people are holding balloons. The scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast on the ground. The text 'THIS CHAPTER INCLUDES' is overlaid in the center of the image.

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VOLUNTARY GROUPS, ORGANISATIONS, AND SPORTS CLUBS

There is a range of voluntary groups and organisations in the Faroes.

There are religious communities, scout associations, choirs, a variety of sports clubs, NGO clubs, and humanitarian organisations. Remember that there might also be activities at a more informal level in your local community, such as knitting clubs, bingo or card playing – please check with the local municipality. The aforementioned knitting clubs are informally organised and usually based around familiar relations, friends, school-friends - but not always.

Swimming pools are open to the public to use for an entrance fee. And as an individual you might also be able to sign on for a regular session at a local sports hall for year at the time, e.g. for badminton or five-a-side football with friends.

Most organisations require a membership fee, usually for a whole or half-year, and most organisations and groups are open for anyone to join.

If you wish to track down a particular sports club or activity your local municipality is a good place to start.

VOLUNTARY WORK, AND MEMBERSHIP

Most organisations are based on voluntary work and are to a very large extent funded through membership fees, lotteries, and sales at events of hot-dogs, cakes and the like. For each organisation and club it is of great value to have active members and volunteers who help to organise activities and fundraise.

NGOs and others

A number of NGOs working for specific goals of a philanthropic character are established in the Faroes and are open to new members and volunteers – for instance Amnesty International and Red Cross. The political youth associations are also open to volunteers and new members.

Religious and belief-based communities

Many islanders are members of religious or faith-based communities. Some people participate actively in work with children and youth, such as Sunday schools, children's choirs or summer camps. Otherwise, whether it is for the state church or other communities, volunteers and part-time employees help

organise meetings and services for faith communities.

Other islanders only participate in more ritual contexts, such as baptisms and confirmations, or are married and buried in ceremonies organised by the church or a religious community.

Religion plays an important role in Faroese culture. The Lutheran-Evangelical church is the official church, but there are various other churches in the Faroe Islands as well. The Plymouth Brethren are the second largest faith community. Others include Catholics, Seventh-day Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses and Baha'is.

According to the constitution, everyone is entitled to associate in communities to worship according to his or her convictions. The public sector supports religious communities financially.

POPULAR SPORTS IN THE FAROE ISLANDS

Football, handball and gymnastics are amongst the most popular sports activities in the community. There are sports organisations in almost every larger village. Especially children and youth are active in the most popular sports.

Faroese sports clubs are open to everyone, although the ambition and level of professionalism do vary between sports clubs and types of sport. Children's sports activities take place on the children's terms and all children are included, regardless of ambitions or needs. The goal is for the children to enjoy themselves and have fun with friends. Parents must pay a membership fee for their children to join a sports club.

Boat racing, *kappróður*, is the national sport of the Faroe Islands. Rowing competitions are held in different towns and villages at festivals in late May, June and July, and the final competition is held in Tórshavn on St Olaf's Wake, Ólavsøka, on July 28th.

Other sports include swimming, chess, bridge, darts, badminton, golf, judo and table tennis.

THE PUBLIC LIBRARY

Every municipality has a public library. Most public libraries are established as parts of the local school. Libraries are open for everyone to use and you can get a user card if you have an ID no., p-tal. You can borrow books, videos, DVDs, CDs, etc. for free. The libraries vary in terms of the books and literature that are available and also which languages are represented. Often literature in English is available, in addition to Danish and Faroese literature. Library users also have access to a computer with internet connection in most libraries. The libraries have different opening hours and do vary in terms of available services from one municipality to the other.



EVENING SCHOOLS

Evening schools offer tuition in different subjects – from learning English to learning how to weld. You sign up to a subject of your liking, you pay the fee and you should expect an interesting course and a nice regular social event where you meet other people with whom you have a shared interest. The courses are almost all in Faroese. **For more about Faroese language tuition, see also the section Learning Faroese Language and Culture.**

There is normally a deadline for signing up and paying for courses.

The social aspect is an important part of evening school courses. Sharing cake and coffee, *drekkamuður*, literally meaning a drop of tea or coffee, is an important element of courses at the evening school. When you are looking for the nearest evening school, start with the local municipality or school – they will know where to direct you.

THE MUSIC SCHOOLS AND MUSIC LIFE

The pleasure derived from music is immense in the Faroe Islands. Almost every occasion is an opportunity to sing or play, or both, be it at national holidays, religious gatherings, weddings, funerals, or other occasions. There are also several choirs around the islands for male, female and mixed voices.

The Faroese music schools are very popular, and many children are learning to play a variety of musical instruments. The music school programme is partly public and partly municipally funded with over 10 music schools around the islands offering qualified music tuition. There might be waiting lists to join your local music school.

MUSEUMS AND CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The Nordic House

The Nordic House, *Norðurlandahúsið*, is a cultural organisation under the Nordic Council of Ministers with the objective of supporting and promoting Nordic and Faroese culture. It offers a wide range of events all year round, including concerts, exhibitions, and theatre performances.

Further information: The Nordic House in the Faroe Islands, www.nlh.fo

The National Art Gallery

The Faroese National Art Gallery, *Listasavnið*, in Tórshavn features a permanent exhibition of older and modern Faroese artists, as well as travelling exhibitions of foreign artists and special showcase exhibitions of Faroese artists.

Further information: National Gallery of the Faroe Islands, www.art.fo

The National Theatre

The National Theatre of the Faroe Islands, *Tjóðpallur Føroya*, is set in a former milk dairy in the centre of Tórshavn. The theatre performs Faroese plays, as well as classic and modern plays from other countries.

Further information: The National Theatre, www.tjodpallur.fo (in Faroese)

The Playhouse Theatre

The Playhouse Theatre, *Sjonleikarhúsið*, in Tórshavn has been the centre of a rich and diverse cultural life for a very long time. It hosts a wide variety of plays and cultural performances.

Further information: The Playhouse Theatre, www.sjonleikarahusid.com (in Faroese)

The National Library

The National Library, *Landsbókasavnið*, is the national book depository and library of the Faroe Islands. It collects, registers and preserves examples of Faroese literature, as well as books and articles discussing the Faroe Islands.

EVENTS AND NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

Further information: The National Library, www.flb.fo

The National Museum

The National Museum, *Tjóðsavnid*, is both a cultural and natural history museum. It offers displays on geology, archaeology, folk life and history. The museum has an open air branch located close to the permanent exhibition.

Further information: The Natural Museum, www.savn.fo

Reinsariid

This venue is part of the capital's cultural programme and on a weekly basis offers musical performances of different kinds, mostly contemporary pop/rock music.

Further information: www.reinsariid.fo

There are several recurring cultural events that are popular amongst the islanders and shed light on Faroese culture and arts, the fishing industry and other aspects of society.

Every year in June the Culture Night, *Mentanarnattin*, is held in Tórshavn. The programme of the event draws a lot of people out to visit workplaces that open to the public only on this evening, and art exhibitions are open all evening with no entrance fee – just to name a couple of items on the programme.

The Day of Faroese Seafarers and Fishermen, *Føroya Sjómannadagur*, is an annual event in Klaksvík that takes place over a weekend in early August. While informing about Faroese fishermen's life at sea and subjects related to the sea with lectures and exhibits, this is also a family-friendly event culminating in a grand and popular water fight in the harbour of Klaksvík.

A seafood day is held in Tórshavn in early May - showcasing various seafood products from Faroese waters, including the more exotic ones, fresh from the fishing vessels.

The Knitting Festival is an occasion to experience the knitting culture on the islands where locals and guests from abroad learn about knitting and enjoy each other's company. The Faroe Islands Knitting Festival has in previous years been held in mid April.

Local Festivals

Local festivals with sports, concerts and various other activities for all ages have traditionally been held around the islands during the summer. These festivals, known as *bygdastevnur*, take place annually starting in Klaksvík, Runavík, Sundalagið and Suðuroy in June and in Fuglafjørður, Vágur, Skálafjørður and Vestmanna in July. And in early August Ovastevna is held. The traditional rowing competition is a main attraction at most of these festivals.

St Olaf's Wake

The national holiday of the Faroe Islands, St Olaf's Wake, *Ólavsøka*, is held in Tórshavn on July 28th and 29th. People from all over the islands gather in the capital to celebrate the national holiday,

which is also a cultural and sports festival with rowing, football matches, art exhibitions, folk music, and Faroese chain dancing.

Ólavsøka starts on the eve of St Olaf, July 28th, with a procession of sports people and horse-riders and an opening ceremony in front of the parliament building. This event is usually broadcasted live by the National Faroese Broadcasting Company, KVF.

On the day of St Olaf, July 29th, the Faroese Parliament opens its session after the summer holiday with a procession and a service at the Cathedral in Tórshavn.

Music Festivals

There are several music festivals and concerts to choose from during the summer period. Both local musicians and internationally acclaimed artists visit Faroese venues

G! Festival is a large festival with international and local musicians held in Gøta in mid July.

Further information: www.gfestival.fo

Summar Festivalurin is a large festival with local musicians and international bands held in Klaksvík in early August. Further information: www.summarfestivalur.fo (in Faroese)

Summartónar is a classical and contemporary music festival with a programme of concerts in churches, museums and other public venues around the islands in June and July. Further information: www.composers.fo

The Country and Blues Festival is held in Sørvágur in early June. Further information: www.country.fo

Voxbotn is a one-day festival held in Tórshavn in late June.

Further information: www.voxbotn.fo

NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

JANUARY	FEBRUARY	MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE
<p>1st of January New Year's Day</p>		<p>Falls between March/April</p> <p>Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Easter Monday</p>	<p>25th of April Flag Day <i>A half day off for some employees, for others it is whole day off</i></p> <p>Dýribíðidagur <i>Danish/Faroese public holiday falling on the fourth Friday after Easter</i></p> <p>Whit Sunday <i>Public holiday falling on the Sunday that is nearest to the 50th day after Easter</i></p> <p>Whit Monday <i>Public holiday</i></p> <p>Ascension Day <i>Public holiday falling on the 40th day after Easter</i></p>	<p>1st of May May Day <i>Labour Day, a day off for most workers</i></p>	<p>5th of June Constitution Day <i>A half day off for most employees</i></p>
JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER
<p>28th of July Eve of St Olaf's Wake</p> <p>29th of July St Olaf's Wake <i>Ólavsøka or Ólavsøku dagur</i></p>					<p>24th of December Christmas Eve</p> <p>25th of December Christmas Day</p> <p>26th of December Second Christmas Day /Boxing Day</p> <p>31st of December New Year's Eve</p>

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

January

-  Biannual motor vehicle weight tax/carbon tax *Around 2nd of January*
-  Registering children for elementary school start. Contact the municipality or the school office. *During the course of January - place and exact date announced on the radio.*

March

-  Grækarismessa – Return of the national bird, the oystercatcher, tjaldrið. Celebrating the arrival of spring *12th March*
-  Application deadline – for Secondary School, Miðnám *15th March*
-  Easter week school vacation *Follows the Easter week*
-  Application deadline – for higher education (Kvota 2, in Denmark) *15th March*
-  Summer time begins *Between 25th and 31st of March*

April

-  Before 1st of April use of summer tires only allowed if conditions allow it *1st April*
-  Application deadline – for higher education (Kvota 2, Faroe Islands) *15th April*
-  Lambing season *During April-May*

May

-  Studded tires not allowed after 1st May *1st May*
-  Deadline for filing in the tax return (regular) *Around 1st May*
-  Mother's Day *Second Sunday in May*

-  Holiday allowance payment *2nd May*
- Start of the local festivals, Norðoyarstevna in Klaksvík *End of May/start-June*
-  Father's Day *5th June*

June

-  School year ends *End of June*

July

-  Application deadline – for higher education (Kvota 1, Faroe Islands) *1st of July*
-  Application deadline – for higher education (Kvota 1, Denmark) *5th July*
-  Biannual motor vehicle weight tax/carbon tax *Around 1st July*
- St. Olaf's Wake, Ólavsøka *27th – 29th July*

August

-  School year starts *Usually mid August*

October

-  Studded tires allowed *15th October*
-  School autumn vacation *Mid October*
-  Summer time ends *Between 25th and 30th October*
-  Herding of the sheep and slaughter *During October*

November

-  Hare hunting season starts *2nd November*

December

-  Use of summer tires only allowed if conditions allow it. Winter or studded tires required *1st December*
-  Hare hunting season ends *31st December*

HIKING

Access to the mountains, the shoreline and beaches is always an option – there are very few restrictions. Hiking in the mountains has become an increasingly popular activity in the Faroe Islands.

Before asphalt roads and drastic improvements in infrastructure from the 1960s onwards, walking in the mountains and between villages was almost the only means of transportation. On a regular basis, postal services, doctors, priests, etc. used mountain paths that linked villages together. On these paths there are guiding cairns, used as a guide in thick fog, a legacy from a bygone time. And when walking the mountains nowadays, it is advisable to use these old paths, instead of climbing over fences.

However, there are restrictions. And for some plots of land there are stricter rules, such as all cultivated fields, and land where sheep or cattle are kept and other fenced-in plots. Where there are fences there are usually gates that can be used. But remember that it is prohibited to trespass through fields, please bear in mind that all grass is intended for winter fodder.

When walking in the Faroese nature you need to take some precautions. Some come naturally, others perhaps not. Some precautions:

- Plan your trip beforehand.
- Where you find the old village paths visible in the landscape these are to be used instead of climbing over fences.
- Take notice of the weather conditions – do not go hiking if the weather is foggy. And be aware of sudden fog.
- Ask for advice in the local community on where to go and where not to go.
- Take care not to disturb birds or sheep. And close all gates behind you.
- During winter, be aware of the hunting season (2nd November to 31st December for hare hunting).

There are also hiking clubs you can join – there usually is a fee to be paid for each trip or membership.

For further information and to see the annual hiking programme of the Hiking Association, Gongufelagið: www.Visittorshavn.fo.



If you do get into trouble while hiking, if you should get lost, or if you should fall, then call 112, the emergency hotline, for help. Please be aware that there is not network coverage for mobile phones in all mountainous terrain or far from inhabited places.

FISHING

At the pier or from land

Saltwater fishing, at the pier for instance or coastal fishery, is generally free for everyone to do. You just need to stay outside the areas marked for industrial activities and make sure that you are not disturbing any industrial fishery activities at the quay.

In small boats

If you go fishing in a small boat you must make sure that you have the necessary safety equipment on-board and that everyone on-board wears a lifejacket or a life vest.

Fishing in inland lakes and rivers

Fishing wild salmon and trout in rivers and inland lakes can require a license/ permit and is not always free, especially when the lake is on a landowner's private property, and there is regulation in place concerning fish catches. Therefore, it is a good idea before you plan your trip to ask in the local community, e.g. the municipality or the fishing club, Føroya Sílaveiðufelag, about places, good spots, and where to buy permits for fishing. There is a regulation in place, which you need to take into consideration. General rules can be studied at the website of

The Faroe Islands Fishing Club, *Føroya Sílaveiðufelag*, www.laks.fo – also in English.



HUNTING

Hare hunting

The hare-hunting season is 2nd November to 31st December. The owner of the land is the one who holds the rights to any hunting activity. In most parts of the islands there are areas for hunting hares and hunting rights can be bought from the owner of the land.

Bird hunting

Bird hunting is still practiced to a certain degree in the Faroe Islands by catching with nets or shooting. The law states that it is not allowed to hunt birds on Sundays or holidays. Please consult with the police regarding hunting seasons, which species may be hunted, and other terms.

For further information, contact the police. www.politi.fo – tel. 351448.

Whaling

Whaling has always been a communal hunting activity and a method to secure food and survival in a remote island group in the middle of the North Atlantic Ocean.

Whale drives in the Faroe Islands take place to provide food, and can happen at any time of the year. The driving,

beaching, killing and distribution of pilot whales are fully regulated by law and regulations. Catches are shared among the participants and local community.

When a school of pilot whales has been beached and killed, the catch is distributed. The district administrator calculates the shares and distributes tickets, showing how much meat and blubber each person, who is entitled to a share, will receive.

The whale meat and blubber is divided according to how many have participated in the hunt and how many whales are caught. Depending on the size of the catch, the people who live in the area typically also receive a share.

When the district administrator has distributed the tickets, known as *sedlar*, people go to the whale indicated on the ticket. Often, several people share a whale. They will butcher the whale together. You should contact the district administrator personally if you would like to get a share or further information.

TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS ASSOCIATIONS

List of some of the Faroese trade unions and employers' associations:

- Havnar Arbeidsmannafelag (Tórshavn General Workers' Union)
- Havnar Arbeidskvinnufelag (Tórshavn Women Workers' Union)
- Føroya Arbeðarafelagið (Faroese General Workers' Union)
- Klaksvíkar Arbeidsmannafelag (Klaksvík General Workers' Union)
- Klaksvíkar Arbeidskvinnufelag (Klaksvík Women Workers' Union)
- S & K-Felagið (Office and Retail Workers' Union)
- Føroya Handverkarafelag (Confederation of Faroese Unions for Craftsmen)
- Landsfelag Handverkaranna (Faroese National Confederation of Craftsmen's Unions)
- Føroya Fiskimannafelag (The Faroese Fishermen's Union)
- Samtak (Umbrella organisation for several workers' unions, www.samtak.fo)

The umbrella organization for Faroese employers associations in the private sector is: *Føroya Arbeidsgevarafelag*

For the public sector it is either the municipal organisation or the Department for Wages at the Ministry of Finance that are party to collective bargaining with the unions on the Faroese labour market.

Other unions:

- Felagið Føroyskir Sjúkrarøktarfrøðingar (Nurses)
- Heilsurøktarafelagið (Health carers assistants in the public health sector, e.g. the hospitals.)
- Heilsuhjálparafelag Føroya (Health care assistants in retirement homes, institutions or private homes.)
- Starvsmannafelagið (Salaried professionals in different positions, journalists, secretaries and others)
- Føroya Lærarafelag (Teachers in Faroese public primary and lower secondary school)
- Føroya Pedagogfelag (Social educators, in e.g. day care centres)
- Akademikarafelag Føroya (Academics)
- Búskapar- og Løgfrøðingafelag Føroya (Economists, legal experts and lawyers)

Other employers associations in the private sector include:

- Føroya Handverksmeistarafelag (Carpentry)
- Reiðarafelagið fyrri Farmaskip (Shipping)
- Føroya Prentsmiðjufelag (Printing houses)
- Arbeidsgevarafelagið hjá fíggjarstovnum í Føroyum (Banking)

INTERPRETATION SERVICES AVAILABLE IN THE FAROE ISLANDS

Several languages are interpreted in the Faroe Islands, typically in court and with the police, and from time to time at the police station or the national hospital in Tórshavn.

But there might not be interpreters present in the islands for all languages spoken in the Faroes. In such cases, interpreting services from abroad might be used via telecommunication, e.g. in court – interpreting into English or Danish.

Another related and important aspect is that an interpreter might not necessarily be schooled or certified for a given interpretation-task; or the subject matter might be highly sensitive. Again, in such cases, interpretation services from e.g. Denmark or other locations might be used.

Available and recommended interpretation services abroad

The Faroese Immigration Office is aware of the following services that are available over the Internet or telephone communication. These services are used in our Nordic neighbouring countries

and they offer a professional service to e.g. courts and the hospital sector on a regular basis.

- **Language Line, +800 752-6096, www.language.com (USA)**
- **Social-Medicinsk Tolkeservice, +45 7020 9012, www.tolkeservice.dk (Denmark)**
- **TolkeService (Dansk Flygtningehjælps Tolkeservice), +45 3373 5335, www.tolkeservice.flygtning.dk (Denmark)**

It is recommended that any agency that uses an interpreter ensures in advance that the interpreter is qualified and suited to the task – if the subject matter might be sensitive, it is always recommendable to hire a certified and trained interpreter for the task. The Faroese Immigration Office is ready to help individuals or agencies in matters relating to interpretation. If you have questions or matters about interpretation you can contact the Faroese Immigration Office.

The languages that have been interpreted in the Faroe Islands with an interpreter

present in the islands are, besides the Nordic languages, the following:

English	Polish	Serbian
French	Spanish	
German	Russian	

Individuals living in the Faroe Islands who speak the following languages fluently are also available for help with interpretation tasks: Italian, Portuguese, Arabic, Filipino (Tagalog), Ilocano (ethno-based language in the Philippines) and Thai.

Rights – legal basis

Løftingslóg um almenna heilsutrygd, § 3,4 – Public Health Insurance Act.

Anordning om ikrafttræden for Færøerne af lov om patienters retstilling, § 7 – The Patient's Rights Act for the Faroe Islands. The two aforementioned laws can be found at the official website www.logir.fo.

GOOD ADVICE FOR INTERPRETATION

The Danish interpretation service of the Danish Refugee Council recommends the following practical advice when interpretation is used:

Before the conversation:

- Make sure to book in advance the right interpreter for the right language or dialect.
- Make sure to set enough time aside as an interpreted conversation can take twice as long time as an ordinary conversation.
- Inform the interpreter in advance about the content of the conversation or interview.
- Consider if the overall setting and seating of the interpreter and other participants is appropriate according to the plan of the interpreted conversation, or if you use telecommunication devices, make sure that they work properly.
- Make sure that it is you who are in charge of the conversation and not the interpreter.

During the conversation:

- Take time to introduce the interpreter to the user.
- Explain the role of the interpreter, also by using the interpreter, and

inform the user about the code of confidentiality that applies.

- Talk directly to the user/client, not to the interpreter.
- Be aware of the body-language of the user/client.
- Make sure that you express yourself clearly and avoid difficult specialist terms.
- Use clear, concise and shorter sentences.
- Expect the interpreter to interpret everything that is said by each and every person during the conversation.

For long conversations

Remember that it can be exhausting to interpret, especially if it is a long conversation. Have a break or two during the conversation.

After the conversation

- Everybody should leave the room at the same time, so as to maintain trust between the parties.
- Consider whether it is necessary to have a talk with the interpreter, if the subject has been difficult and sensitive.
- Consider if you should rebook the interpreter for a next time.

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Emergency

Dial 112 for emergency: Police, Fire, Ambulance

Police

Tel. 351448

The National Hospital

J.C. Svabosgøta 41-49, 100 Tórshavn

Information-desk, tel. 304500

Læknavaktin/GP Service (outside office hours): call 1870

See also page 44 for further information regarding essential services.

USEFUL SERVICES



WOMEN'S SHELTER

- *KVINNUHÚSIÐ*

The Women's Shelter in Tórshavn - helps women who are subject to domestic violence; they also provide temporary accommodation for women/children in crisis situations.

www.kvinnuhusid.fo

tel.: 317200



FREE LEGAL HELP

- *RÆTTARHJÁLPIN*

The advisors at Rættarhjálpín can assist you in almost all kinds of cases, for example appeal against decisions made by public authorities, divorce, legal separation, child custody and access (visitation rights), consumer law, debt rescheduling, wills and inheritance.

Rættarhjálp Føroya

Gongin 20, 110 Tórshavn

www.raettarhjalpin.fo, tel. 319823



BARNABATI

- *TÚ OG EG RÁÐGEVINGIN*

Barnabati operates the help-line for children called Tú-og-eg Ráðgevingin or You and Me-Support and Guidance. This service is available as a phone-line, text-messages and private chat-sessions. As a child you are able to use this service concerning any problems you may have. It is free and you can write and call anonymously, the help-line is open two nights weekly.

www.barnabati.fo

Tú-og-eg Ráðgevingin

tel.: 807010



TAKS

TAKS is the Faroese Tax Administration, a public agency under the Ministry of Finance. The staff numbers around 120 and TAKS has departments in Klaksvík, Saltangará, Tórshavn, Tvøroyri and at the airport in Vágur.

The main tasks of TAKS are to ensure that the state receives revenues, to administrate tax returns and customs, as well as to protect against illegal import and export. TAKS administrates laws regarding taxes, customs and other levies. Also, TAKS manages certain allowances and public funds, such as the Parental Leave Fund, Travel Fund, interest deductions and holiday allowance.

Contact information

Telephone: 352600

Internet: www.taks.fo



HEILSUTRYGD

The Faroese National Health Insurance, Heilsutrygd, oversees the implementation of public health insurance legislation. The agency administrates allowance and benefits covering the cost of most primary health services available on the islands.

Health care services are financed by the government and by mandatory contributions from all residents, through the National Health Insurance.

The National Health Insurance covers general and specialist medical treatment and subsidises a proportion of medication, dental treatment and other specialist treatments, e.g. physiotherapy, psychotherapy and podiatry. Other services that the National Health Insurance oversees are travel-expenses related to treatment and expenses in relation to burial.

Contact information

Telephone: 614000

Internet: www.heilsutrygd.fo



THE FAROESE VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION

Akstovan is responsible for vehicle inspections and driving licenses. Akstovan's main goal is to improve safety in traffic. In addition to organizing driving tests, performing inspections and assisting other authorities with matters related to traffic, Akstovan oversees the driver's license registry and the registration of vehicles, as well as taxes related to vehicles.

Contact information

Telephone: 350400

Internet: www.akstovan.fo



GIGNI

The Child Health Service, Gigni, provides children, youths and parents with advice and help on a range of issues related to the health and wellbeing of children until they leave the public school system.

Gigni provides regular home visits to families with new-borns in the Faroe Islands. The main goal is to promote health, to prevent sickness, to strengthen and develop parental competency and to uncover any challenges to children's well-being and development as early and quickly as possible.

Gigni has staff representing the service at all schools.

Gigni also has qualified staff available for counselling regarding issues related to abortion. Gigni can provide advice and counselling to any woman with questions about abortion. This service is available by email and telephone.

Contact information

Telephone: 562300

Internet: www.gigni.fo (Gigni@gigni.fo)



THE CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

The Child Protection Service in the Faroe Islands, Barnaverndartænastan, is divided into 8 areas each with a local office and Child Welfare Service Board.

A main task of The Child Protection Service on the Faroe Islands is to assist parents with giving their children the best possible upbringing.

Contact information

Telephone: 302480

Internet: www.bvs.fo



STRANDFARASKIP LANDSINS

The public transport company, Strandfaraskip Landsins, operates the bus and ferry service. Their main task is to connect islands and villages both on mainland islands and in remote locations. About 160 people work at the public transport company. There are 7 ferries and over 30 busses in its fleet.

The helicopter service is operated by Atlantic Airways (www.atlantic.fo).

Contact information

**Telephone: Main Office, tel. 343000 –
Route and schedules, tel. 343030**

Internet: www.ssl.fo



LANDSVERK

The headquarters of Landsverk are located in Tórshavn. It operates eight road stations throughout the country, as well as three forges, one asphalt plant, four stone and broken stone quarries, one bitumen storage facility, and one salt depot.

Landsverk oversees road, harbour and entrepreneurial tasks. The institution consults, plans, carries out, runs and maintains main roads, harbours, buildings, helipads, and the area around the airport.

Contact information

Telephone: 340800

Internet: www.landsverk.fo



ALMANNAVERKIÐ

The Department of Social Services, Almannaverkið, administers a range of social welfare schemes. As a cornerstone in the Faroese welfare community Almannaverkið staffs around 750 people. Almannaverkið provides, amongst other services: counselling on rights and options for individuals; old-age pension schemes for approximately 8.000 individuals; services for people with special needs, living at home or at an institution; as well as the sick day scheme and the family income supplement for families with very low household income.

Contact information

Telephone: 360000

Internet: www.av.fo



THE POLICE

The police force in the Faroe Islands is under the authority of the Danish Ministry of Justice. The police in the Faroes work to maintain peace, security and the rule of law – the main activities are:

- Prevent, stop, investigate and prosecute offenses
- Cooperate with others – provide assistance and service to other parties, within the remit of the police force, prosecution and district sheriffs, sýslumenn.

There are six police stations in the islands – in Klaksvík, Runavík, Tórshavn, Miðvágur, Sandur and Tvøroyri.

The Prosecution Authority in the Faroe police district has a staff of around 10 people.

The court in the Faroe Islands is also under Danish authority. The court in the Faroes has its main office in Tórshavn, with another office on Suðuroy. Around 25 people work for the court.

Contact information

Telephone: 351448

Internet: www.politi.fo



BARNANNA UMBOÐSMAÐUR – THE CHILDREN’S OMBUDSMAN

The Children’s Ombudsman is an institution adults and children can turn to if they think a public agency or another authority has not treated a child adequately. For example you can file a complaint regarding a school that has not been willing to help you or your child. You cannot file a complaint to the ombudsman regarding a court decision, or about your parents or friends etc. The office of the Children’s Ombudsman will most likely be able to direct you to the right place if they cannot help you.

Contact information

Telephone: 358500

Internet: www.bum.fo

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NEW TO THE FAROE ISLANDS

Have you recently moved to the Faroes? Do you have colleagues, friends or others you wish to inform about life in the Faroe Islands?

This handbook contains practical information regarding public agencies and other that you may find useful.

- Do I need to exchange my driving license?
- Where do I get tuition in Faroese language?
- When do children start in school?
- What do I do if I get ill?
- How are health care services organized in the Faroes?
- How do I open a bank account?

This handbook answers these and many other questions.



Útlendingastovan – The Faroese Immigration Office www.immigration.fo