

WHAT IF I AM NOT SATISFIED?

If you are not happy with any of our decisions, you can make a complaint. Details of how to do this are contained in our leaflet *know your rights*. Copies of our Complaints Policy are available from the office.



Innisfree
Housing Association

A charitable Housing Association



In business for neighbourhoods

190 Iverson Road, London NW6 2HL Website: www.innisfree.org.uk
Tel: 020 7625 1818 Fax: 020 7328 9943

WHAT IS A HOUSING ASSOCIATION?

1



A Housing Association (sometimes also called a 'Registered Social Landlord') is a non-profit making independent organisation.

Innisfree is one of over 2000 Housing Associations in the country, all working to provide good, low cost housing and services to people in housing need. Housing Associations are registered with, and monitored by, the Housing Corporation, (see below). Innisfree is also affiliated to the National Housing Federation an independent body that provides guidance to social housing providers.

Innisfree aims to provide:

- Rented homes, of a good standard, for people on low incomes who were previously homeless or living in poor quality, overcrowded or unsuitable housing;
- Appropriate housing for people who need extra care and support, including elderly people and those with disabilities;
- A good management and maintenance service to our tenants;
- A service which is culturally sensitive to our main client group, the Irish community

WHY AN IRISH HOUSING ASSOCIATION?

All immigrant groups face difficulties when establishing themselves in a different country, with a different lifestyle and culture. The Irish are no exception. London has been a focal point for immigration from Ireland for many years, going back as far as the 12th century. More recent influxes of immigrants occurred in the periods of 1930s-1960s and again in the late 1970s and 1980s. The 2001 Census recorded 696,002 Irish born people living

INNISFREE TENANTS HANDBOOK

in Great Britain. 220,488 Irish people live in London including 195,130 born in the Irish Republic, making the Irish the largest ethnic minority in London. This total is thought to be lower than the true figure.

In the past, Irish people have not been identified as having discernible needs and have often not been taken seriously as an ethnic group because they do not have any immediately distinctive physical characteristics. This lack of recognition towards the specific needs of the Irish has led to the poor provision of services for the Irish, especially in the field of housing. Research undertaken in 2001 shows a disproportionate housing need amongst Irish people of all ages.

INNISFREE FORMED IN 1985

Recognising the importance of a culturally sensitive service for Irish people, Innisfree was formed in 1985 to meet the acute housing needs of homeless and badly housed Irish people in London. Registered by the Housing Corporation in 1989, Innisfree has grown from a small association, managing short-life property in one or two boroughs to a fully-fledged “general needs” association with over 300 properties in ownership as well as sheltered and supported housing.

WHERE DOES OUR MONEY COME FROM?

The costs of managing our property and keeping it in good repair are met mainly from rents and service charges. We also receive some public grants toward the high costs of managing housing for people who need extra support. Supporting People Grant, introduced by the government in 2003, contributes towards Innisfree’s costs of providing support for tenants who cannot afford this in our sheltered and supported housing.

The cost of providing new homes and some of the major repair work is met through a mixture of public grants and loans (from national government, local authorities and health authorities) and private loans (banks, building societies and others).

WHO RUNS INNISFREE?

Board of Management

Innisfree is run by people who bring their expertise to Innisfree in a voluntary capacity - they are not paid for their time. These include tenant representatives and people who

represent local communities, while others are individuals with skills and experience useful to the Association. Board members are elected at Innisfree’s Annual General Meeting. They meet regularly to oversee our work, direct the strategy of the Association, ensure proper controls are in place and make sure that staff are providing a good service. You will be informed of the membership of the Board from time to time, through the Annual Report and Newsletters.

Staff

The Board appoints a Chief Executive who, with an experienced team of staff, is responsible for the day-to-day running of the Association. Staff report regularly to the Board. We will tell you about staff changes in our Newsletters or if, for example, you have a change of housing officer, by personal letter.

WHO DOES INNISFREE ANSWER TO?

A number of organisations and individuals have an interest in Innisfree. These include:

The Housing Corporation

Innisfree is registered with the Housing Corporation (Number LH3829). The Housing Corporation is the national organisation, set up by the Government to supervise, regulate and fund the work of registered housing associations.

The Audit Commission

The work of larger Housing Associations is also checked by the Audit Commission, a government body that carries out detailed inspections from time to time. They often involve tenants in the process. The Commission liaises closely with the Housing Corporation. The audit reports are published on the internet so that tenants can see the outcomes.

The Registrar of Friendly Societies

We are registered as an Industrial and Provident Society (24847R) and must account to the Registrar for our work and finances.

Our partners

Innisfree gets a great deal of support from local authorities, health authorities, voluntary agencies and other, mainly larger, housing associations. They advise on housing needs, help us to secure new housing and to attract funding and they refer people to us for housing.

Our private funders

In the same way as individual home-owners have a mortgage to purchase their homes, Innisfree borrows large sums of money in the private market. Our lenders monitor our work very closely to ensure that their money is in safe hands.

Our tenants and those we seek to house

Most importantly we must answer to you, our tenants. This Handbook sets out some of the ways we do this.

The public

We receive public money and support and must be seen to be working in a fair, open and accountable way.

WHO TO CONTACT AND WHERE TO FIND US

Making appointments

Each housing officer has one day a week which s/he devotes to office cover. Other than in exceptional circumstances, you will always find someone available to help or advise you. You can make an appointment to see someone in the office, have advice over the telephone or arrange for your housing officer to visit you at home.

Offices

Our registered office is at:

190 Iverson Road,
London NW6 2HL.
Tel: 020 7625 1818
Fax: 020 7328 9943

This is at the West End Lane end of Iverson Road and within walking distance of:

- West Hampstead Underground station (Jubilee)
- West Hampstead North London Line
- West Hampstead Thameslink.
- Kilburn Underground station (Jubilee).

The office is open to the public from Monday to Friday between 9.00am and 5.00pm.