

INNISFREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

COMPLAINTS POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

1.1 Innisfree tries to provide the best possible service, and sets itself high standards for response, courtesy, efficiency and quality.

1.2 However, if you should find our service unsatisfactory, you will need to know what to do. We have set procedures for complaints and will monitor and log their progress.

1.3 Our objectives are to:

- deal quickly and politely with your complaint;
- investigate fully and effectively the grounds for complaint;
- keep you informed of progress in dealing with your complaint;
- put matters right wherever necessary and within the shortest possible time;
- to learn from complaints and change our practices or procedures to meet the needs of our tenants.

2. Definition of a Complaint

2.1 A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction with our services whether justified or not. A complaint can come from any source. A complaint will come about if:

- we failed to take action following initial contact
- we failed to provide a service
- we delayed in providing a service
- we failed to comply with a procedure
- we provided an unfair service
- we got it wrong

2.2 A complaint is a source of information that helps us to improve the services we provide.

3. Subjects for Complaint

3.1 In general, the *Complaints Procedure* cannot be used to complain about the Association's policies. Policies are agreed by Innisfree's Board of Management (on which 2 seats are reserved for tenant members.) Dissatisfaction about policy issues should be addressed initially to the Head of Housing.

3.2 You can complain if a policy has been unfairly operated in your case. For example, you can complain if you believe that:

- you have been unfairly refused housing
- you have been offered unsuitable housing (and no other offer has been made)
- you have been treated unfairly
- you have made a complaint but received no response
- your repairs have not been properly dealt with

- _ your application to transfer has not been fairly dealt with
- our staff have been unhelpful or rude
- if you are a supported tenant and are unhappy with the support provided.

3.3 However, we are committed to getting things right for our tenants and we urge you to discuss the issue with us informally before you consider the formal complaints procedure so that we can take the necessary speedy action.

4. Responsibility and Conduct

4.1 All staff have a responsibility for ensuring that complaints are dealt with efficiently and that every effort is made to resolve them. However, the Head of Housing and Chief Executive have overall responsibility for ensuring that we have an effective procedure and that all complaints are handled appropriately .

4.2 Whilst anyone has the right to complain, complainants are expected to pursue their complaints in a reasonable and fair manner. If we feel that a complaint is not being pursued in a reasonable manner, we reserve the right not to deal with it in accordance with this policy. The decision as to whether a complaint is being pursued unreasonably can only be taken by the Housing Services Committee.

4.3 Even where a complaint has been pursued in a reasonable manner we reserve the right, in exceptional circumstances, to deal with it in a different way from that outlined in this procedure. The decision to do so can only be taken by the Head of Housing or the Chief Executive.

5. Reporting and Monitoring

5.1 All complaints must be reported to the Housing Services Committee and Board on a quarterly basis.

5.2 The central database for monitoring complaints must be updated when a complaint is made, recording details of who is dealing with it, target response times and action taken.

6. Confidentiality

6.1 Innisfree is committed to the principle of confidentiality and requires that any information known, written or held about any complainant remains confidential, unless we have their consent to divulge information to relevant or interested parties.

7. Equal Opportunities

7.1 We aim to ensure that all tenants receive a fair and equal standard of service regardless of race, colour, ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, religious beliefs, marital status, physical or mental health or HIV/AIDS status.

7.2 It is vital that the response given to those approaching us is based on the principle of equality of service, customer care, good practice and courtesy.

7.3 We will provide translation services where required.

7.4 We will make every effort to accommodate the needs of the complainant throughout the process but especially at the panel stage. For example, we will try

to hold meetings at times to suit the complainant, in a acceptable venue and will try to ensure that the panel composition is balanced. If possible we will try to arrange for a tenant board member to sit on the panel.

7.5 We will monitor all complaints by ethnicity to ensure that all our tenants, applicants and all others who have any dealing with us - Irish and non-Irish, receive the same standard of service.

8. Review

8.1 We will undertake a review of this policy at least every 3 years or earlier should there be relevant changes to legislation or recommended good practice that would require us to do so.