

INNISFREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION CUSTOMER CARE SERVICE PROMISE

Introduction

Innisfree is committed to providing a good quality service. This document sets out the minimum standards to tenants, applicants, the general public and others with whom we have contact.

It explains:

- the services we provide
- the standards we aim to achieve
- and the expectations we have of our tenants

Equality & Diversity

Innisfree Housing Association believes that certain groups and individuals in society are disadvantaged because of discrimination experienced as a result of colour, race, nationality, belief or religion, sexuality, gender, marital status physical or mental disability, HIV/AIDS, age or class. It further recognises that discrimination can be direct or indirect and takes place at personal and institutional levels.

All staff carry out their duties within an equality and diversity framework and with regard to the Innisfree Equality and Diversity Policy. We expect the same of tenants and all those with whom we have contact.

Communication & information

We will ensure that:

- tenants can get a range of information by telephoning or visiting the office during opening hours.
- tenants can make an appointment to discuss more complex problems with their dedicated officer.
- all new tenants will receive a Tenant Handbook containing important information about their home and tenancy.
- all tenants are consulted about changes to existing policy affecting them.
- all Innisfree tenants will receive regular newsletters, annual performance reports and quarterly rent statements.
- all supported scheme tenants will be issued with a Support Charter when they move in.
- consultation is undertaken with tenants on all issues affecting their home and tenancy.
- information in relation to Innisfree services is accessible via the website.

- responses to all correspondence will be within 10 working days.
- requests for forms or literature requested will be sent within 5 working days, subject to availability.
- translations, audio responses or large print are provided when requested.
- tenants are kept informed of progress with their enquiries.
- letters and emails are clear, informative and written in “Plain English”.
- we will apologise where we have failed to deliver a service.

Contact by phone

Our staff will:

- always give their name, be prompt, polite and helpful.
- aim to listen and respond sensitively to the needs of the caller.
- respond to all telephone messages by the next working day.
- arrange for a duty officer to respond to urgent calls each working day.

Callers to the office

Our office will:

- clearly display opening times.
- be a safe, clean and welcoming environment.
- be accessible to people with disabilities in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- deal promptly with all callers.
- provide a private meeting area for confidential interviews.
- have up-to-date service information available.

Appointments and Home Visits

We will:

- visit tenants at home within 5 working days of the request.
- always remember that where you live is your home.
- offer customers a mutually convenient appointment.
- notify tenants as soon as possible of any cancellations to pre-arranged appointments.
- ensure officers calling without a pre-arranged appointment explain the nature of their visit.
- leave a card when no-one is at home, providing clear contact information.
- carry Innisfree ID cards when visiting your home.
- ensure that all contractors comply with Innisfree’s Code of Conduct and produce identification when carrying out repairs at your home.

Out-of-hours

When the office is closed:

- an answer phone service will be in operation.
- messages will be taken from the answer phone and responded to within one working day.
- Innisfree has a contract for emergencies outside of normal office hours. Detailed information is on the answering machine message for our main switchboard number and is given in our newsletters.
- supported tenants can access a dedicated emergency support service.
- sheltered scheme tenants can contact the Warden Call Service

Rent and service charges

We will:

- endeavour to keep rent levels affordable and within the government's guidelines.
- regularly review service charge costs to ensure value for money.
- provide service charge breakdowns on request.
- provide advice and support with benefit claims to help you pay your rent.
- work in partnership with other agencies to ensure that additional support is provided to all vulnerable tenants

Rehousing

We aim to:

- be sensitive to the needs and circumstances of all applicants.
- work within the timescales set out in the Allocations Policy and Procedure.
- provide information to transfers and applicants regarding rehousing options.
- provide accompanied viewings wherever possible.
- ensure that letting interviews are informative about tenancy obligations, property information and Innisfree services.
- carry out settling-in visits within 6 weeks of the start of the tenancy.
- offer resettlement plans to tenants moving from our supported houses to help them sustain their tenancy.
- inform tenants and stakeholders in newsletters and quarterly reports about our lettings performance.

Repairs and Maintenance

We will:

- meet our repairing obligations as outlined in the Tenancy Agreement.
- prioritise tenants' repairs and inform tenants of the priority & timescale for completion.
- provide tenants with a copy of the works order.
- provide contractors with Repair Satisfaction forms for completion by the tenant when the repair is finished.
- investigate any dissatisfaction with work undertaken.
- provide an out-of-hours service for emergencies.
- carry out an annual gas safety check.
- inspect a sample of completed repairs to assess the standard of work.
- let all new properties to the Housing Corporation's agreed minimum standard.
- carry out a cyclical decoration programme in line with our Stock Condition Survey.
- ensure consultation is undertaken with tenants prior to the start of work.
- seek the views of tenants on the standard of our repairs service at regular intervals.
- recharge tenants for the cost of repairs where damage or neglect has occurred or where the repair is the tenant's own responsibility.
- comply with the Government's Decent Homes Standard.
- if it becomes necessary to move you in order to carry out major work, pay all reasonable moving expenses in addition to any statutory compensation.

Anti Social Behaviour

We will:

- provide support to all Innisfree tenants experiencing anti social behaviour
- investigate all cases sensitively, fairly and within published timescales, as detailed in our Anti Social Behaviour Policy.
- carry our emergency repairs within 24 hours and remove graffiti within 48 hours, consulting with victims on additional security measures.
- if appropriate, offer mediation by agreement with the parties involved.
- work with tenants, statutory and partnership agencies to end anti-social behaviour.
- encourage community development and resident involvement on our estates.

Tenant Involvement, consultation and participation

We aim to:

- take your views into account on the services we provide.
- involve and consult tenants with all our service reviews.

- encourage representation on Committees and the Board.
- involve tenants in the monitoring of services provided.

We will:

- actively encourage all tenants wanting to form a tenants group or association.
- provide support and training to these groups of tenants
- work in partnership with tenants to ensure communal and shared areas are monitored and maintained
- actively encourage tenants to comment and feedback on service delivery

Complaints

We aim to get things right first time, however, if we don't, we will:

- positively welcome complaints about the service and ensure a copy of the complaints policy and procedure is available on request.
- ensure lessons learnt from formal complaints lead to service improvements.
- deal with complaints sensitively and will apologise if we have made a mistake.
- positively encourage advocates acting on your behalf.
- ensure transparency by regular reporting to tenants and stakeholders.

Confidentiality and privacy

- all interviews, correspondence and personal information will be treated in accordance with requirements under the Data Protection Act.
- you can see the information held on your personal file by written request

What you can do to help us meet these standards

Your Tenancy Agreement is your contract with us and sets out our responsibilities to you and your obligations to us. It covers:

- paying your rent on time.
- reporting repairs promptly.
- doing the repairs for which you are responsible.
- giving 4 weeks' notice if you are intending to leave your property.
- ensuring that the internal decorative condition of your home is maintained.
- living in the property as your only or principle home.
- not causing nuisance or harassment to others.

In addition we ask that you:

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- provide access for annual gas servicing and repairs.
- keep appointments.
- observe the published timescales by which we aim to complete repairs.
- use the out of hours repair service only for genuine emergencies.
- keep communal areas tidy.
- inform the housing benefit department of any change in your circumstances.
- ensure you have a clear rent account if requiring a move.
- prior to moving, make sure your home is in a lettable condition.
- be polite to our staff and contractors.
- take time to complete feedback forms and surveys as we do take note of all the comments we receive.