

An NÚacht “The News”

“Go n-éiri an bóthar leat... (May the road rise up to meet you)”



A message to our residents

We are all currently living through exceptional times and adjusting to new ways of living our lives during this current pandemic.

Firstly, can I say thank you to everyone for playing your part by following the Government guidelines to Stay at Home, helping us all to stay safe and well and to Protect the NHS. Difficult as it is, we can all help reduce the transmission of COVID-19 by restricting travel to essential journeys only and keeping personal contact to a minimum.

Our office is now closed, and all of us in the Innisfree staff team are now working from home. We are working to keep all essential services running, although there may be some changes as a result of us following government guidelines, so I'll explain what that could mean.

You can still contact us by phone as normal on our **020 7625 1818** number, and our staff team is available to answer any questions you may have. Our email addresses at **maintenance@innisfree.org.uk** and **housing@innisfree.org.uk** are still working as normal. You can also email us via our Facebook page.

Our Housing Officers are busy making phone calls to contact you all to ensure that you are safe and well and to see if we need to adjust our services to meet your needs. We won't know the answers to all of the issues that come up, but we'll definitely do our best to help you find solutions.

When you contact us, we will ask you some simple questions to determine the level of risk there may be to you, our staff and our contractors from coronavirus. We are doing this for all our residents, so please don't be offended and please do answer honestly. We are also keeping our website and Facebook page updated with any news or changes to service delivery.

For the moment, we are only undertaking EMERGENCY REPAIRS and we will explain this when you call us – but we still want to know about all repairs, because we are keeping a record of these for when we get back to normal.

As I mentioned earlier, to help keep our staff safe and follow Government guidelines, we aren't making any journeys - so we aren't doing any home visits at the moment. Instead, we are dealing with more issues over the phone.

I know you'll understand that things are changing almost every day, but we'll keep you updated if we need to change our services again – but please don't hesitate to contact us if there's anything we can help with.

We've chosen a few words of poetry at the end of this newsletter to lift us all.

I was also struck by the words of President Michael D Higgins of Ireland, from a poem of his called "Take Care" and it sums up our message to you at this time:

"In the journey to the light, the dark moments should not threaten."

"Hold firm. Take care. Come home together."

John Delahunty, Chief Executive

Inside this issue...



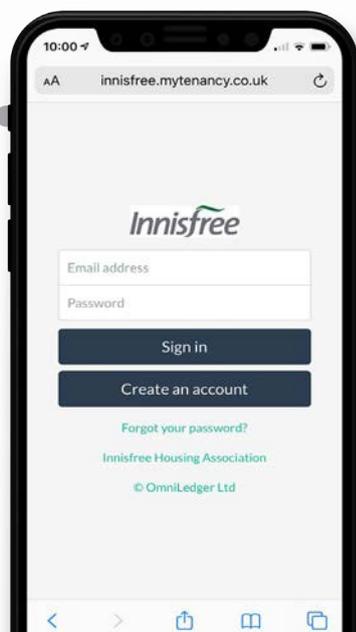
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Our Services

Reminder My Tenancy

If you have access to the internet, you can check and update your information, and complete other tasks such as paying your rent or reporting a repair, using the My Tenancy online facility we provide on our website www.innisfree.org.uk.

If you have not yet created your account, go to the 'My Tenancy – how to use your online account' article in our news section to find out how to do it - <http://www.innisfree.org.uk/news-events>.

Your safety in your home is our top priority

Each year, for those of you with a gas supply to your home, our contractor attends to carry out a gas safety check. This is something we are required to do as a landlord to make sure that the system is safe for you to use.

Obviously, with all the current precautions designed to stop the spread of the coronavirus, this has become more difficult – but we have still been managing to do some testing.

As well as thinking of your safety, we also have to consider the safety of the contractors we use to undertake the gas safety checks.

Our contractor has decided to pause their testing programme for the short term, but will restart their usual pattern of inspections after that. When the normal testing arrangements resume, we will need your full co-operation so that our contractor can book an appointment to get into your home on the first visit to carry out the safety check, without any missed appointments or last minute cancellations.



WE NEED YOUR HELP TO KEEP YOU SAFE IN YOUR HOME.

If you have a gas emergency or can smell gas, please call the emergency service provider on **0800 111 999**.

Are you feeling vulnerable?

If you feel you need extra support, then please contact us on 020 7625 1818. We are here to help you and can direct you to the appropriate services.

If you consider yourself to be extremely vulnerable and need help getting essential supplies, you should have received a letter from the NHS or have been contacted by your GP. If this hasn't happened, you can register on the government portal www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable. If you are unable to access the website call the NHS Freephone number **0800 028 8327**.

Self Employed Income support scheme

- Offering a taxable grant worth 80% of average profits over the last 3 years, up to a maximum of £2,500.
- This scheme is open to those that make the majority of their earnings from self-employment – with trading profits of up to £50,000.
- The scheme will be open for up to 3 months initially, but will be extended for longer if necessary.
- You are only eligible if you have a tax return for 2019 (if you missed the deadline for submission, you have an extra 2 weeks to submit).
- You can claim Universal Credit online at <https://www.gov.uk/apply-universal-credit>.

Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

- If you are suffering from coronavirus or are required to stay at home and want to apply for ESA, it will now be payable from day one.
- Please see <https://www.gov.uk/employment-support-allowance/eligibility> to see if you are eligible.

Other benefits

- You may already be in receipt of the older style benefits such as Income Support, Employment Support Allowance or Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). For these, you should report any changes of circumstances including any changes of income by contacting the DWP on **0800 169 0310**. Please have your National Insurance number to hand.
- As of 19th March 2020, people receiving benefits do not need to attend jobcentre appointments. You will still receive benefits as usual.
- Jobcentres will remain open and continue to support people if they do not have access to the internet, but please call first and do not attend in person if you have any symptoms or are self-isolating.
- If you are in receipt of housing benefit/council tax support you should email your local council benefits office if your income has changed or you have had a change of circumstances (ensuring your name, address and claim number is in the subject heading). You should send evidence of your change of income such as a payslip.
- For Tax credits, if you need to report any change of circumstance for an existing claim you can contact **0345 300 3900**.

For more information please go to <https://www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Help with your energy bills

If you have a prepayment meter with any of the following companies and are self-isolating, please contact them if you need help with your energy bills. They should be able to send out 2 weeks' worth of prepayment meter top up for your gas or electricity, and will also be able to help if you have a smart meter:

- British Gas **0333 202 9802**
- EDF **0333 200 5100**
- EON **0345 052 000**
- N Power **0800 073 3000**
- Scottish Power **0800 027 0072**
- SSE **0345 026 2658**

Community helplines

London Irish Centre:

Camden and Brent - support to older and vulnerable clients, delivering food parcels and hot meals, telephone befriending.
tel: **020 7916 222** email: info@londonirishcentre.org

Food Cycle: various London Boroughs - provide community meals and food parcels tel: **020 7729 2775** website: www.foodcycle.org.uk

Love your doorstep: local community support in Enfield and Barnet - tel: **0203 689 3272** email: hello@loveyourdoorstep.co.uk



Health and wellbeing

We know that this is a challenging time for people and so we have collated some resources that advise you how to make sure you are looking after your mental health, and your family's mental health, in the coming weeks.

Mental Health

NHS Advice: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips>

Mind Advice for Staying Healthy Whilst at Home: <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing>

Childline's Advice for Kids on How to Protect Their Mental Health at This Time: <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/coronavirus>

Mental Health Foundation Advice on Talking to Children About COVID-19: <https://mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/talking-to-children>

Resources for the Elderly

Age UK has a scheme for older people to be paired up with someone to call them regularly to check in and chat. They also run an advice line that is open from 8am-7pm, 365 days a year.

Befriending Service: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/services/befriending-services> or call them on their advice Line: **0800 169 65 65**



Domestic abuse

The government's stay at home advice can create new challenges for people experiencing domestic abuse. Victim/survivors may be at home with their perpetrator and unable to escape from the abuse.

Our advice is to try and keep a mobile phone with you at all times if possible. The police are a key service when in immediate danger. Do not be afraid to call 999 in an emergency. If you cannot speak and you are ringing from a mobile, you can use the Silent Solutions system. Press 55 to be put through to police call management, they will then attempt to communicate with you by simple yes or no questions. If you are not able to speak, listen carefully to the questions and instructions from the call handler so they can assess your call and arrange help if needed.

National helplines, email, text and live chat support services, and local specialist services, are currently open for business as usual, although their delivery is likely to have to adapt over the coming weeks.

recipient that they have been issued a fine for leaving the house during the lockdown. The message claims that the movements of the recipient are monitored through their phone and must pay a fine.

- **Fake Coronavirus testing in your home** – if anyone offers to carry out Coronavirus tests in your home **DO NOT LET THEM IN**. This is a front for a distraction burglary. These kits are not currently available to buy.
- **Counterfeit goods** - fake sanitisers, face masks and Covid19 swabbing kits sold online and door-to-door. These products can often be dangerous and unsafe. There are reports of some potentially harmful hand sanitisers containing glutaral (or glutaraldehyde), which was banned for human use in 2014.
- **Donation scams** - there have been reports of thieves extorting money from consumers by claiming they are collecting donations for a COVID-19 'vaccine'.
- **Refund scams** - companies offering fake holiday refunds for individuals who have been forced to cancel their trips. People seeking refunds should also be wary of fake websites set up to claim holiday refunds.

- **Healthcare workers** – some people are impersonating healthcare workers, claiming to be offering 'home-testing' for coronavirus.

Communities are also being urged to look out for signs of neighbours being targeted by doorstep criminals. While there are genuine groups of volunteers providing help during self-isolation, there have been reports of criminals preying on residents – often older people or people living with long-term health conditions – by cold-calling at their homes and offering to go to the shops for them. The criminals often claim to represent charities to help them appear legitimate before taking the victim's money.

There are genuine charities providing support, but consumers should be vigilant and **ask for ID** from anyone claiming to represent a charity. As a general rule, **pay when you receive your goods, never in advance**.

Poem - John O'Donohue,
excerpt from

'To Bless the Space Between Us'

"This is the time to be slow,
Lie low to the wall
Until the bitter weather passes.
Try, as best you can, not to let

The wire brush of doubt
Scrape from your heart
All sense of yourself
And your hesitant light.

If you remain generous,
Time will come good;
And you will find your feet
Again on fresh pastures of promise,
Where the air will be kind
And blushed with beginning."



Medication delivered to your home

If you can't get out and need your prescription delivered to you, contact your GP who will be able to get your prescription sent to a pharmacy that does deliver. However please make sure you do this at least a week in advance of when you need it because they are extremely busy.

If you have internet access you can order prescriptions for delivery via the following websites:

Coop Pharmacy: www.cooppharmacy.coop

Lloyds Pharmacy: www.lloydspharmacy.com

Pharmacy2U: www.pharmacy2u.co.uk/prescriptions/electronic-prescription-service-nhs

Boots Pharmacy: www.boots.com/online/pharmacy

Like us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/
InnisfreeHousingAssociation/](http://www.facebook.com/InnisfreeHousingAssociation/)



Have you liked our Facebook page yet? Keep up-to-date with activities and opportunities offered through Innisfree. You can also use the page to send an email to a member of our team.



..... *Innisfree*

Who to contact

When contacting us, please dial 020 7625 1818 and select one of the following options:

- to report a fault with your heating or hot water system press 1
- for all other repair and maintenance enquiries press 2
- to discuss your rent account or make a rent payment press 3
- for all other tenancy matters and general enquiries press 4

www.innisfree.org.uk

Innisfree Housing Association,
190 Iverson Road, London NW6 2HL

Tel: **020 7625 1818**

Email: housing@innisfree.org.uk