

# An Núacht “The News”

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



## Welcome

This is a year we will all remember because of Covid-19; how our lives changed for a while, or in some ways – for ever.

As you know, like many other organisations, we had to make some changes to the way we provided services to you, particularly when the lockdown arrangements were first introduced by the Government. I would like to thank you all for your patience and understanding during that period.

As the Government guidelines have changed, we have been able to get nearly all of our service arrangements back to normal and we have had great support from our repairs and maintenance contractors, who helped us keep doing your emergency repairs the whole time, and are back doing routine jobs as well now.

Elsewhere in the newsletter we've got some stories about things that happened during lockdown, particularly the help and support that we saw being shared. It was great to see, and it showed the best of our communities.

At the start of lockdown, our Housing Officers made a lot of phone calls – and we tried to speak to every one of our tenants to check in and see how things were going for you. We thought we knew most of you reasonably well already – but we've been surprised at how much “news” we've gathered from those calls. We'd like to keep doing similar calls in the future – and it would be great to hear from you about how useful you feel those calls are.

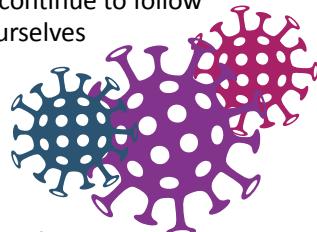
Again, like most organisations, we are looking for lessons we can learn from this time. We've found new ways of doing some of our work already – with some arrangements that will probably save money, and certainly save time. In the next few months we'll be looking to get your views on some of these possible changes. We also want to find out what you've learnt during this time and whether you think our services could be changed or added to.

We don't know exactly how Covid-19 affected all our residents and their families and friends, but from the many contacts we've had, thankfully it seems that we weren't as badly affected as some have been – and that applies to our staff team too.

I'll sign off by reminding you all that we aren't finished with Covid-19 yet and we'll all have to continue to follow Government guidelines to help keep ourselves and others safe.

Please do let us know if you need support during these challenging times; we might not always know the answer to your question immediately or be able to help with everything, but we'll probably know others who could.

**John Delahunty**, Chief Executive



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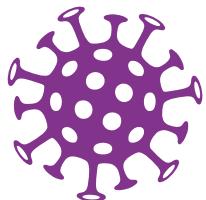
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SUPPORT THE



## Covid news

# Covid 19 experiences



Throughout the Coronavirus Pandemic our team have been working hard to ensure our services run smoothly and our tenants receive as much support as possible.

Below highlights some of the good news stories that have happened at Innisfree during this time.

We have kept you safe by **completing our gas safety checks on time**. Thank you to all those tenants who supported us to do this.

We have supplied PPE kit to our residents in Clochar Court, including full masks where requested.



We sent out colouring sheets to over 60 of our homes who are in lockdown with their children. **Thank you to Hamza for sending us his!**



Brent Irish Advisory Service (BIAS) has been providing a home shopping service and also distributing Irish branded foods (Tayto crisps, Barry's Tea etc) donated by O'Kane Irish foods and our residents received some hampers.

Camden London Irish Centre have been providing **freshly prepared meals to residents across London**, and some of our residents have enjoyed three meals a week.

Jackie, a winner in last year's gardening competition, wrote to us: '**thank you for the vouchers. I thought you would be interested to know what we spent them on, so here are some photos.**  
**We bought lots and lots of compost and have planted vegetables. And we had enough to buy some more geraniums too.'**



completed four socially distanced lettings.

**Innisfree has made a number of donations to charities from our Welfare Fund including:**

- £1,000 to Solace Women's Aid who provide funding for women fleeing domestic violence.
  - £500 to Brent Foodbank who have seen an 89% increase in emergency food parcels compared to last year.
  - £500 to Brent Irish Advisory Service who have been out and about with one to one doorstep contact delivering Irish food hampers
  - £1,000 to ICAP, the Irish counselling service, who have launched a helpline for clients of Irish community organisations where there are concerns about mental health and isolation, as well as a helpline for staff.



# Our Performance – at a glance

As we do each year, we wanted to let you know how we are doing, and this summary is taken from our key performance indicator results for the year to the end of March 2020. It isn't a list of everything we measure, but it does help us compare how we performed against other housing associations, and also to help us ensure the service we provide to you is a good quality service.

The Housing Sector Scorecard measures our performance against other landlords, we have seen some areas where we seem to be really strong compared to others, and some where we think we could improve.



## Your customer experience



Overall satisfaction **92%**

We are pleased our overall resident satisfaction has increased this year to 92%.

Your feedback is important to us. To help us get your opinions and feedback more frequently, a company called Callerz carries out monthly telephone satisfaction surveys on our behalf.

Please talk to them when they phone you. It will only take a few minutes of your time. This regular feedback will help us to improve our services so that we can be more responsive to you.

## Complaints



Complaints received **7**



Complaints resolved on time **85%**

We received 7 complaints in the year with all but one of these being resolved on time. We recognise when we get things wrong, and we take the opportunity with each complaint to try to improve our services.

## Repairs



Repairs satisfaction **83%**



Reactive repairs **99.9%** completed within target

Repairs performance continues to be good, with repairs satisfaction at 83%. This year Callerz will also contact residents for feedback following repairs carried out in your home. This feedback helps us to monitor our contractors and strive to improve our repairs satisfaction.

## Collecting rent



Rent performance **101%**

Our rent performance is good at 101% and is in the top bracket compared with other housing associations of our size. We were on target with the collection of rent arrears but did have to end one tenancy in the last year where rent arrears had reached a very high level in spite of all our support.

# Our Services

## Staffing update

**Sadly, we said goodbye to our Housing Officer, Aisling in June. We wish her all the best in her new community development role, we know she will be fantastic!**

Holly Gibson joined us in September as our new permanent housing officer. Holly comes to us from a community-based housing association and has worked in the housing sector with both charities and local government.

Also in September we will be joined by Iona Wilkie as resident engagement officer. Iona comes to us through Charityworks as a graduate placement.

**Our housing officers are available on our normal office number **0207 625 1818** but are currently still working from home.**

# Who is your housing officer?



Kathy

BRENT

- Kilburn Lane
  - Innisfree House

CAMDEN

- Aerynn House
  - Belmont Street
  - Belsize Road
  - Belsize Square
  - Broadfield
  - Chillfield Road
  - Claddagh Court
  - Cotleigh Road
  - Faversham House
  - Gladys Road
  - Hemstal Road
  - Inkerman Street
  - Linstead St
  - Lir House
  - Loveridge Road
  - Lowfield Road
  - Mansfield Road
  - Medley Road
  - Messina Avenue
  - Parkhill Road
  - West End Lane



# Juliet

BRENT

- Airco Close
  - Carlton Vale
  - Claremont Road
  - Corcoran House
  - Ealing Road
  - Hirst Crescent
  - Maybank
  - Salusbury Road
  - Sellons Avenue
  - Shakespeare Drive
  - Sudbury Croft
  - Tookey Close
  - Woodgrange Close
  - Waterfront Heights
  - Westfield Close

EALING

- Castle Road
  - Greenway Gardens
  - Holly Park Road
  - Newdene Villas
  - Whitton Avenue

HARROW

- Glynn Court



# Holly

BRENT

- Anson Road
  - Boyne Court
  - Brook Road
  - Cambridge Close
  - Charterhouse Avenue
  - Clochar Court
  - Harrington Close
  - Lagan Court
  - Liffey Court
  - Mowbray Road
  - Nore Court
  - Paul Daisley Court
  - Shannon Court
  - Slaney Court
  - Warren Way
  - Waterford Way

EALING

- Maldon Road
  - Vale Grove

ENFIELD

- Burren Court
  - Brandon Place
  - Yeats Court

## Your sole and principal home

Here at Innisfree Housing Association we manage just over 550 properties. The majority of our tenants have been with us for over 10 years and we value each one whether they are long term or have recently signed a tenancy agreement with us.

However, of late we have found a small number of unauthorised people living in our properties either where tenants have been subletting their homes and living elsewhere, or in a few cases following the death of a tenant. Subsequently, properties that have been sublet have been repossessed and a few are still being investigated.

In 2013 an act was passed in Parliament called 'The Prevention of Social Fraud Act' making it a criminal offence to sublet a social housing property. Successful prosecution carries a custodial sentence of up to two years and/or a fine amounting to £50,000.

In addition, some tenants were committing benefit fraud by receiving housing benefit to cover the weekly rent. Subletting affects other tenants and people in housing need; there is less stock for people to downsize and families on the transfer list must wait longer for a property.

Should you notice a neighbour is no longer residing in their property please call our office on **020 7625 1818** and talk to us. We will never reveal your identity to the tenant.

## Test It! Carbon Monoxide detectors

**Ensuring you remain safe in your home is something we take seriously here at Innisfree.**

Carbon monoxide (CO) is a highly poisonous gas produced by the incomplete burning of natural gas. This can happen when a gas appliance has been incorrectly fitted, badly repaired or poorly maintained. It can also occur if flues, chimneys, or vents are blocked.

As your landlord we have an obligation to carry out a gas safety check on each appliance and flue in your home annually. This is to ensure the installation is safe to use and performing efficiently, therefore ensuring your continued safety in your home.

We also ensure there is a CO detector/alarm in your property and that it is operating correctly at the time of your safety check.

The detector/alarm we have provided to you is a small device which will be located in the same room as your appliances. You can test it in the same way you would test your smoke detectors, by pressing the small button that says 'Test', you should do this on a monthly basis. Have you checked yours recently?

We also recommend that you replace the batteries each year or when the alarm sounds to show that the batteries are running low.

If you smell gas, or your CO alarm is activated, you must act fast:

- turn off the gas emergency control valve (also called gas emergency shut off valve) at the meter.
- extinguish all naked flames and do not smoke
- do not operate electrical switches (including turning light switches on or off) because this can ignite escaping gas
- get fresh air immediately; make sure you open all doors and windows to ventilate the area
- contact the National Gas Emergency service number immediately **0800 111 999**
- follow the advice of the attending emergency operative
- once the emergency situation has been dealt with contact us and we will arrange for your gas supply to be re-instated
- do not turn the gas supply on again until it has been checked by a Gas Safe registered engineer.



Should you have any concerns regarding your CO detector let us know straight away on **020 7625 1818 (option 2)** or email us at [maintenance@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@innisfree.org.uk).

## Community

# My Experience of the Covid19 Pandemic

By Marie at Clochar Court



Hi, my name is Marie and I live at Clochar Court, Innisfree's sheltered Housing for older Irish people. It is a super place, complete with a beautiful garden and supportive neighbours.

When the early measures to contain the Virus were announced, I was not terribly worried. I was comfortably situated and had help coming in most days as my mobility is very poor. I had been ordering my groceries online for years, had my own computer and was very independent, quite self-contained and barely went out anyway, except to doctor's appointments. In fact, my doctor did Home Visits, unheard of these days. I only had one health worry, and this was being looked into.

So far, so good.

My first problem was that my main helper could not come in as she has three sons and they were at home once the schools closed. Thankfully, I have other helpers who come in as needed and they were able to fill the gap for me.

I foolishly thought that, as I had been a loyal customer with two major supermarkets and had Delivery Passes for both (in other words, I paid a monthly fee to ensure my groceries would be delivered at a convenient time, on a day convenient to myself) that this would just continue. To cut a long story short, it did not, impossible to get slots, at any time, convenient or not. It turned into the old "Pay Up and Shut Up." To get my groceries, I had to pay other companies for my supplies. There were many offers of help with shopping from all corners, volunteers included, but I always like to make my own arrangements.

One Thursday afternoon I looked in my fridge, pretty forlorn. Me and the Fridge. My doorbell rings and next thing I am the grateful recipient of a huge box of Irish food, compliments of Brent Irish Advisory Service. Talk about good timing. Well, it did not do my figure any good, but I was not going to worry about that. Irish Whiskey Cake, Porter Cake, Bracken Bread, Irish biscuits, Barry's Tea and Irish Packet Soups. As well as that, fresh fruit and vegetables, enough to feed a horse. The same arrived for some other residents and we all shared as it was far too much for one.

I was affected in several ways but always aware that I had much to be grateful for. Staying alive for a start. I am now in my 70's and have enjoyed a full life. This made me look at things rather differently. Life was sweet, even with severe arthritis and poor mobility, but this pandemic has made me look at things from a different viewpoint.

For now, it appears that the worst of it is over and I am, once again, grateful for my blessings.

# Community

# Irish in Britain: Cuimhne Champions

**Do you have time on your hands but would like to put back into the community?**

Irish in Britain are looking for volunteers with skills such as art and design, listening and communications, writing and social media, to help promote the inclusion of people living with dementia, their family or carer. You would be given training on understanding dementia and memory loss and would be paid travel expenses. To apply, email [champions@irishinbritain.org](mailto:champions@irishinbritain.org) or call 0203 903 0985 to arrange to have an informal chat about your interests, availability and Cuimhne Champion opportunities.



# London Irish Centre – Library Outreach



Did you know that the London Irish Centre has a library with over 7,000 Irish books as well as CDs and DVDs? They can also deliver on request!

This London Irish Library is open to the public at the following times: Monday, Wednesday and Friday 11am-4pm. You can also request a visit outside these times by emailing [library@londonirishcentre.org](mailto:library@londonirishcentre.org).



Alternatively go to [www.londonirishcentre.interleaf.ie](http://www.londonirishcentre.interleaf.ie) to create an account and join up!

# TV licence help for over 75s

**From 1 August 2020, TV licences for over-75s have changed. Previously, the Government funded TV licences for over-75s but after August only those who are on Pension Credit will be able to apply, otherwise you will have to start paying for your licence which costs £157.50 per year.**

For information, the law says that you must have a TV licence if you:

- watch or record live TV programmes on any channel, even if it's not on the BBC
  - watch or stream programmes live on an online TV service such as ITV Hub, All 4, YouTube, Amazon Prime Video, Now TV and Sky Go
  - download or watch any BBC programmes on iPlayer

The rules apply to any device on which a programme is viewed, including a TV, desktop or laptop computer, mobile phone, tablet or set-top box.

TV Licensing will write to all licence holders aged over 75 during August and September with clear guidance about how to pay or how to claim your free licence if you are eligible.

With this in mind, it's important to find out whether you're eligible to claim Pension Credit. Lots of people are, but just don't realise. Please call your Housing Officer to find out where you can get support with your claim or call Mary Gleeson on **07947 108 467**.



## Have a repair, please report it!

We are starting to get our repairs service back to some form of normality. If you have a repair please make sure you report it, we may not be able to hit our usual response times, but we will endeavour to get it done as quickly as we can.

Give us a call on **020 7625 1818** and press **option 2**  
or email [maintenance@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@innisfree.org.uk)



## Please report rubbish to your local council

We have had some reports that rubbish is an issue around some of our properties, especially in the hot weather. Please note Innisfree is not responsible for the waste created by your household.

Please make sure that you report any fly tipping to your local authority. If you have large items or furniture you will need to take them to your local recycling centre – you can't put these in communal bins. Some councils will take away large items, but you need to check with them first and they may charge a fee.

## Like us on Facebook

[www.facebook.com/  
InnisfreeHousingAssociation/](https://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.



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**Innisfree**  
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## 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](http://www.innisfree.org.uk)

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

Tel: **020 7625 1818**

Email: [housing@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:housing@innisfree.org.uk)