



INNISFREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

2024-25

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE & IMPROVEMENT REPORT

ANNUAL COMPLAINTS PERFORMANCE & SERVICE IMPROVEMENT REPORT

CONTENT

1. Introduction	Page 2
2. Compliance with the Complaint Handling Code	Page 2
3. Complaints received	Page 4
4. Escalation to the Housing Ombudsman	Page 7
5. Lessons learned	Page 8
6. Changes made	Page 10
7. Feedback from residents	Page 10
8. Feedback from our Governing Board	Page 12
9. Conclusion	Page 13
10. Our Governing Boards' response to this report	Page 13

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At Innisfree Housing Association (Innisfree), we understand that complaints are a vital form of feedback. A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the landlord, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting a resident or group of residents. At Innisfree Housing Association (Innisfree), we take every complaint seriously and view it as an opportunity to improve our services.
- 1.2 We are committed to listening to our residents, learning from their concerns, and improving our services as a result. Complaints can be raised via phone, email, in-person, or through our website. Once received, they are logged, categorised, and investigated in line with our Complaints Policy with a focus on reaching a timely and fair resolution.
- 1.3 Residents also have the right to contact the Housing Ombudsman, an independent body responsible for reviewing complaints against housing organisations. At any stage of the process, if a resident feels their complaint is not being handled effectively, they may escalate the matter to the Ombudsman for further review.
- 1.4 This report outlines the complaints we received and how they were managed between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, reflecting our continued efforts to respond transparently and improve the experience for all residents.

2. COMPLIANCE WITH THE COMPLAINT HANDLING CODE

- 2.1 We are committed to adhering to the highest standards of complaint handling as set out by the [Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code](#). This code provides a comprehensive framework for effective complaint resolution, ensuring fairness, transparency, and accountability in all interactions with our residents. Our compliance with this code supports our approach of continuous service improvement and resident satisfaction.

- 2.2 On 1st April 2024, the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code became a statutory requirement for landlords to follow. At Innisfree Housing Association, we have been adhering to the Complaint Handling Code for several years, demonstrating our long-standing commitment to high- quality service and resident satisfaction.
- 2.3 In April 2025, we completed an annual self-assessment to ensure that our Complaints Policy and handling processes aligned with any changes to the code; we noted that the code had not changed since April 2024. The self-assessment process for compliance with the Complaint Handling Code is thorough and detailed, breaking down compliance into several key sections:
- 2.3.1 Definition of a Complaint: We ensure that our definition of a complaint is clear, inclusive, and aligned with the Housing Ombudsman's guidelines. A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction about our services, actions, or lack of action, and should be considered a complaint regardless of whether the residents has used the word 'complaint' when expressing their dissatisfaction.
- 2.3.2 Exclusions: Following the Code, our Complaint Policy clearly outlines what falls outside the scope of our complaint handling process, ensuring transparency, and managing resident expectations effectively.
- 2.3.3 Accessibility and Awareness: Over the past 2 years we have made significant efforts to increase the visibility and accessibility of our complaint process, making it easy for all residents to submit complaints through various channels, and adhere to the aspects of transparency outlined in the Code. We have noticed an increase in complaints received due to enhanced visibility.
- 2.3.4 Complaint Handling Staff: Innisfree staff who handle complaints are well-trained in complaint handling procedures, ensuring that every complaint is managed professionally and empathetically.
- 2.3.5 The Complaint Handling Process: Through our Complaints Policy we have established a clear, structured process for handling complaints, from initial receipt to final resolution, ensuring consistency and fairness. Our process includes two stages of complaint handling, providing residents with a straightforward path to escalate their concerns if they are not satisfied with the initial response.

2.3.6 Putting Things Right: Following the Code, we are committed to not only resolving complaints but also putting things right by addressing the root causes and preventing recurrence.

2.3.7 Scrutiny and Oversight: Continuous Learning and Development: We ensure ongoing scrutiny and oversight of our complaint handling, using feedback from our residents and Board, and using data to drive continuous learning and development.

2.3 We are proud to report that we are fully compliant with all aspects of the Complaint Handling Code, as verified through our self-assessment. This comprehensive compliance demonstrates our commitment to best practices and our dedication to providing a high-quality service to our residents.

2.4 In addition to the current year, we also completed self-assessments for the years 2022/23, and 2023/24. These assessments have allowed us to stay in line with the evolving standards of the Complaint Handling Code, ensuring that our processes are up-to-date and effective. Although the completion of the self-assessment became compulsory only in 2024, our proactive approach in previous years reflects our ongoing commitment to excellence in complaint handling.

3. COMPLAINTS RECEIVED

3.1 Over the past two years, Innisfree has taken steps to make the complaints process more visible, transparent, and easier to access. Our aim has been to ensure that all residents feel confident in raising concerns and are supported in doing so.

3.2 As part of this effort, we expected a rise in complaint numbers—and we view this as a positive sign of greater engagement and trust in our complaint-handling processes. A higher number of complaints indicates that residents feel empowered to come forward when things go wrong, which in turn gives us valuable insight into areas that need improvement.

3.3 In line with the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, we proactively survey approximately 60 resident each quarter, to determine resident perception of Innisfree and their satisfaction with services that we provide. As a result of these surveys, we follow up any expression of dissatisfaction and escalate as a complaint where necessary.

3.4 Number of Complaints

3.3.1 During the 2024/25 period, we received a total of 50 complaints, broken down as follows:

- Stage 1 Complaints: 50 complaints
- Escalated to Stage 2: 7 complaints
- Referred to Housing Ombudsman for Investigation: 1 complaint

3.3.2 This represents a significant increase from last year’s total of 23 complaints—a 117% rise.

3.3.3 While a sharp rise in numbers might appear concerning at first glance, we anticipated this growth due to our continued efforts to enhance accessibility. The increase is reflective of residents' growing confidence in reaching out to us and provides a stronger foundation for identifying and addressing systemic issues.

3.4 Topics

3.4.1 The complaints received covered a range of topics, highlighting key areas for improvement within our organisation:

▪ Antisocial Behaviour - Substance Misuse	1
▪ Complaint Against Member of Staff	3
▪ Complaint Against Innisfree Contractor	3
▪ Data Breach	1
▪ Request for Service	2
▪ Service Failure	2
▪ Service Failure - Failure to Respond to Request	6
▪ Service Failure – Housing	5
▪ Service Failure - Incomplete Service	3
▪ Service Failure – Maintenance	10
▪ Service Failure - Unhappy with Service	14

3.4.2 The most common theme was general dissatisfaction with service delivery, followed closely by concerns related to repairs and maintenance. These are critical areas that directly impact the quality of life for residents, and we continue to focus our efforts on improving performance and communication in these domains.

3.5 Response Times

3.5.1 We are committed to responding to complaints in a timely and efficient manner. This year's average response times were:

- Stage 1 Complaints: 8 days (meeting our target of 10 days)
- Stage 2 Complaints: 12 days (well within our target of 20 days)

3.5.2 These results reflect our continued commitment to resolving complaints quickly while maintaining the quality and thoroughness of our investigations. We are pleased to report that we have consistently met or exceeded our response time targets for both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints.

3.6 Findings

3.6.1 Each complaint is assessed individually to determine an appropriate resolution. The outcomes for this year were:

- **Stage 1**
 - Upheld: 12 complaints
 - Partially upheld: 7 complaints
 - Not upheld: 26 complaints
 - Withdrawn: 4 complaints
 - Refused: 1 complaint
- **Stage 2**
 - Not upheld: 7 complaints

3.6.2 While the majority of complaints were not upheld, those that were either fully or partially upheld provided clear opportunities for learning. In each of these cases, we took action to address the issue, improve services, and reduce the likelihood of recurrence.

3.7 In the 2022/23 year, we received 5 complaints. In 2023/24, this rose to 23. For 2024/25, the total increased further to 50. This steady rise aligns with our expectations following improvements to the visibility and accessibility of our complaints process. More complaints do not necessarily signal poorer service - they often indicate that residents are more engaged and willing to speak up when things are not right.

We remain committed to learning from all feedback, meeting response time targets, and delivering services that residents can rely on. These efforts are central to maintaining trust and continuously improving the way we work.

4. ESCALATION TO THE HOUSING OMBUDSMAN

- 4.1 When a resident feels that their complaint has not been resolved satisfactorily through our internal processes, they have the right to escalate the issue to the Housing Ombudsman.
- 4.2 If the Housing Ombudsman decides to take on a resident's complaint, they will formally write to Innisfree to request detailed information about the case. This request includes documentation of the initial complaint, our investigation process, communications with the resident, and the outcome. The Ombudsman thoroughly reviews this information and conducts an independent investigation to assess the complaint.
- 4.3 Upon completing their investigation, the Ombudsman issues their determination through a final report detailing their findings. This report evaluates Innisfree's handling of the complaint, identifies any service failures or maladministration and may include orders or reparations to rectify the issues. The Ombudsman's decisions are binding, and housing providers are required to comply with any directives issued.
- 4.4 During the 2024/25 period, we had one complaint escalated to the Housing Ombudsman. As of the time of writing, their investigation remains ongoing, and a final determination has not yet been issued.

5. LESSONS LEARNED

5.1 As with previous years, the complaints received during 2024/25 have offered valuable insight into how we can improve our services and communication with residents. Building on the lessons identified in last year's report, we have continued to reflect on recurring themes, track progress on past commitments, and adapt our approach based on new feedback.

5.2 **Communication Remains a Priority**

Effective communication was a recurring theme in last year's lessons learned, and it remains a continuing key focus this year. Whilst we have made efforts to improve updates and information-sharing - particularly around repairs - residents have continued to raise concerns about inconsistent or unclear communication. This feedback has reinforced the need to embed a culture of transparency and ensure that residents are kept informed throughout the entire lifecycle of their enquiry or complaint.

5.3 **Improving Operational Efficiency**

Delays and administrative lapses have highlighted the importance of stronger internal coordination. This year, we reviewed several of our core workflows and have begun strengthening the end-to-end tracking of issues raised to ensure greater accountability and visibility throughout the process.

We also identified a recurring challenge in cases where repair responsibilities fall to another landlord. In these situations, it can be difficult to ensure that the same standards and response times are upheld, which has led to frustration for residents and staff alike. Going forward, we are committed to improving communication and coordination with partner landlords where we share properties or land. By aligning expectations and strengthening joint working relationships, we aim to reduce delays and improve the accuracy and consistency of service delivery.

5.4 **Encouraging Early and Informal Resolution**

Our Involved Residents group has provided helpful feedback around the formality of our complaints process. Several members expressed that certain issues could be resolved more quickly and less formally if an informal resolution stage were introduced.

The Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code states that landlords should provide no more than 2 complaint stages, therefore removing our ability to add in informal resolution stage.

While we remain compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, we recognise the value of early dialogue and are actively exploring ways to incorporate more informal discussions at the outset of a complaint—without compromising compliance with the Complaint Handling Code and residents' right to escalate their concerns if needed.

5.5 Policy Feedback and Review

In line with our goal of continuous improvement, we have reviewed and updated several key policies over the past year, including our Antisocial Behaviour Policy, Pet Policy, Transfer Policy, and Safeguarding Policy. Many of these updates were directly informed by complaint themes and resident feedback, ensuring that our policies remain resident-focused, practical, and aligned with current regulatory expectations.

5.6 Turning Feedback into Action

This year has emphasised the importance of closing the feedback loop—ensuring that residents see how their complaints contribute to meaningful change. We are strengthening our internal processes to better capture lessons learned from each case, and to ensure these are embedded across teams. For example, we received feedback that our communication needs to improve in Housing and Maintenance areas, we have created two new positions within these teams to help strengthen our communications. We are also refreshing staff training on key areas and topics from complaints received. Going forward, we continue to place emphasis on sharing these learnings openly with residents through our Involved Residents meetings and our newsletters.

5.7 Conclusion

The lessons from this year's complaints confirm some of the themes we identified last year - particularly around communication and responsiveness - but also show the progress we have made in listening to and learning from resident feedback. By continuing to make our complaints process visible and accessible, and embed learnings into our day-to-day operations, we aim to provide a service that feels more transparent, responsive, and supportive to those we serve.

6. CHANGES MADE

6.1 Building on the changes introduced in the previous year, we have continued to strengthen our services and address key themes raised through complaints and feedback. Many of last year's initiatives such as automated repair text updates, staff training, and improvements to our Housing Management system are now embedded in our ways of working. This year, we have built on these foundations and implemented further improvements to enhance the resident experience:

- **Expanded Use of Repair Notifications**

The automated text notification system introduced last year is now fully operational. This system has significantly improved communication around repair appointments, and we continue to monitor its effectiveness.

- **Complaint Refresher Training**

All forward-facing members of staff will complete refresher training on how to receive and manage complaints, provided by the Housing Ombudsman.

- **Partnership Review with Other Landlords**

Several complaints this year involved delays linked to external landlords. To address this, we have taken steps to gain closer contact with neighbouring and managing landlords, aiming to improve contact with them, improve accountability, and reduce delays in shared repair responsibilities.

7. FEEDBACK FROM RESIDENTS

7.1 At Innisfree, we place significant importance on resident feedback as a cornerstone for continuous service improvement. To gather this feedback systematically, we work with Acuity, an independent research service that surveys approximately 60 residents each quarter. This approach aligns with best practice recommendations from Acuity and the Regulator of Social Housing.

7.2 As part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, residents are asked by Acuity how satisfied they are with Innisfree's approach to complaint handling. This year, 43% of surveyed residents reported satisfaction. While we acknowledge this is an area for further improvement, last year's survey revealed that many residents who indicated they had "submitted a complaint" were, in fact, making first-time service requests rather than raising formal grievances.

- 7.3 When benchmarked against other housing providers with fewer than 1,000 homes using Acuity's service, Innisfree's satisfaction rate is 43%, placing us above the Acuity median for complaint handling of 37%.
- 7.4 The feedback from these surveys continues to provide valuable insight into areas of strength and areas requiring improvement. Key findings from this year's results include:
- Overall Satisfaction: 84% of respondents were satisfied with Innisfree's services overall.
 - Communication: Many residents praised our efforts, though some cited a need for more consistent updates. 84% of residents surveyed are satisfied they are kept informed about things that matter to them.
 - Response Timeliness: Feedback on our response times was largely positive, with room to improve consistency in more complex cases.
- 7.5 Beyond the Acuity surveys, our Resident Engagement Officer plays a vital role in deepening our understanding of resident sentiment. Where residents have consented, follow-up calls are made to discuss survey responses in more detail. These conversations allow us to directly address concerns and gain a richer picture of resident experience.
- 7.6 If a resident expresses continued dissatisfaction during a follow-up call, the issue is formally escalated as a Stage 1 complaint. This ensures that all feedback—no matter how it is shared—is given appropriate attention and resolution.
- 7.7 The insights gathered from both independent surveys and direct resident conversations directly shape our service improvement priorities, as detailed in Section 5.
- 7.8 By combining independent data collection with personal engagement, we aim to gain feedback that drives meaningful change. This approach ensures that we remain transparent, responsive, and focused on delivering services that reflect the needs and voices of our residents.

8. FEEDBACK FROM OUR GOVERNING BOARD

- 8.1 Feedback from our Governing Board is a key part of our accountability framework. The Board plays an active role in monitoring and shaping our complaint handling processes to ensure we continue meeting the highest standards.
- 8.2 The Board receives detailed quarterly reports outlining complaint volumes, response times, outcomes, and recurring themes. This regular reporting allows for timely oversight and ensures that complaint trends are understood and addressed at the highest level.
- 8.3 In line with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, we have appointed a dedicated Member Responsible for Complaints (MRC). This Board member has the specific remit to:
- **Stay Informed:** Receive all complaint-related data and updates throughout the year.
 - **Analyse Trends:** Monitor patterns in complaints to identify systemic issues.
 - **Provide Challenge:** Where necessary, question or challenge decisions to ensure fairness and rigour.
- 8.4 The Board's contributions have been instrumental in shaping our complaint strategy. Their focus on resident experience has strengthened our internal communication efforts and reinforced our drive to resolve complaints at the earliest possible stage.
- 8.5 As part of their ongoing oversight, the Board has also reflected on the unique strengths and challenges of being a small landlord with a close-knit team. While our size allows us to maintain strong relationships with residents and respond quickly to concerns, we also recognise that it can limit the degree of separation between those investigating complaints and those involved in service delivery. In light of this, the Member Responsible for Complaints takes on a particularly important role in ensuring that decisions are fair, objective, and robust. The Board is aware of this risk and actively seeks assurance that our complaints process remains impartial and transparent, even within a smaller organisational structure.
- 8.6 This proactive governance helps ensure our approach to complaints remains dynamic and responsive. The Board's regular scrutiny, combined with their strategic input, supports our aim of providing a high-quality service grounded in accountability and learning.
- 8.7 To maintain transparency, we will publish the Board's formal feedback on our complaint performance at the end of this report. This will give residents a clear view of how complaint handling is being scrutinised and improved at the governance level.

9 CONCLUSION

- 9.1 At Innisfree, we remain committed to delivering excellent services and ensuring every resident voice is heard. This report has outlined the ways in which we manage complaints, learn from them, and implement lasting improvements.
- 9.2 Our focus on accessibility, transparency, and resident engagement has led to a meaningful increase in feedback, helping us identify and act on areas of concern more quickly. The lessons learned this year have already contributed to service changes and will continue to guide our strategy moving forward.
- 9.3 Through independent surveys and direct conversations with residents, we are building a deeper understanding of their needs. The oversight provided by our Governing Board—including the active involvement of the Member Responsible for Complaints—ensures that our complaint processes are robust, fair, and always improving.
- 9.4 We believe that by embedding resident feedback into all levels of our organisation, we can continue to enhance our services and strengthen trust across our communities.
- 9.5 If you would like to share feedback or discuss any part of this report, we encourage you to contact us at complaints@innisfree.org.uk or call us on 020 7625 1818.

10 OUR GOVERNING BOARD'S RESPONSE TO THIS REPORT

- 10.1 One of our core values at Innisfree is that our service provision should be personal. This means we must be customer focused, responsive and always thinking about the individual in our relationships and plans. This is why we particularly value the role played by the complaints process. It ensures we have an opportunity to learn from residents' experiences and improve the ways in which we deliver our services.
- 10.2 The Annual Complaints Performance and Improvement Report set out above demonstrates that we are compliant with the Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code. It shows that the organisation is continuing to learn lessons as a result of complaints, recognising that they are

an important tool in understanding our residents and responding to their needs. Section 6 details the important changes that have been made as a result of those lessons learned. However, there is no room for complacency and there is always room for improvement.

- 10.3 The Board welcomes the significant increase in complaints to the organisation as a sign of the increased visibility and accessibility of Innisfree's complaints process. However, the Board will also carefully monitor the trend in increasing complaints to ensure that this increase is not also related to organisational issues relating to service provision or general resident experiences. The Board will continue to monitor progress on complaints handling, both through regular reports to Board and through oversight via the Member Responsible for Complaints who reviews the quarterly complaints data. The Board and Member Responsible for Complaints will continue to provide constructive challenge.



INNISFREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION
190 IVERSON ROAD
LONDON NW6 2HL

Tel: 020 7625 1818

www.innisfree.org.uk

Email: housing@innisfree.org.uk

Version: Annual Complaints Performance & Service Improvement Report 2025