

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



## Breathing new life into the ground



*It's that time of year again when, as we come to the last page of the calendar, we might flick back through the pages of the other months of 2025.*

I noticed a few events that I've attended recently:

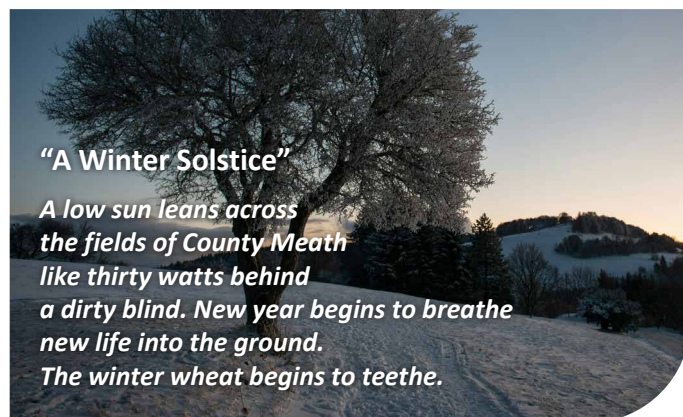
- the annual Remembrance Service of the Irish Chaplaincy, held in St Patrick's Chapel, Westminster Cathedral, was an opportunity to remember those who have died in the last year – with their names spoken out loud;
- an event on World Aids Day in the Irish Embassy, where two men shared their experiences of being diagnosed with HIV and how their families and friends and wider society treated them;
- at the conference of the Traveller Movement, hearing the positive, determined and hopeful voices of young people in the Traveller Community telling how they are making good lives, despite the discrimination they still face;
- a gathering of organisations working to achieve racial justice, in the face of increasing racism in society, sharing the depth of their experience and commitment to make progress.

It led me to reflect on Innisfree's own history, and the reasons we were formed back in the 1980s. In simple terms, it was because people in the Irish communities faced racist discrimination in being able to get access to housing – just because they were Irish.

Innisfree was set up to address that discrimination; partly by welcoming Irish people into housing we provided, but also by speaking up and challenging the racism in society.

In more recent years, we've been able to provide housing to people from a wide range of backgrounds, many of whom have come to London from other countries, and other parts of the UK. It's been a natural change for us to welcome those people into our homes, wherever they are from, and to speak up with them about the racism they experience in society too.

The Irish poet, Peter Fallon, wrote in his poem:



### "A Winter Solstice"

*A low sun leans across  
the fields of County Meath  
like thirty watts behind  
a dirty blind. New year begins to breathe  
new life into the ground.  
The winter wheat begins to teethe.*

I wish everyone a very peaceful and Happy Christmas and New Year.

Nollaig Shona Duit

Best wishes  
**John Delahunty,**  
Chief Executive

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## Our News

# Diversity survey

Housing Diversity Network are running a short survey for us on equality, diversity and inclusion and we would love it if you could take a few minutes to complete the survey. You can either click on this link:

[www.surveymonkey.com/r/InnisfreeTenantEDI](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/InnisfreeTenantEDI)

or scan the QR code which will take you to the survey.



We will also provide other opportunities to complete the survey if you cannot connect digitally this way. Many thanks.

## New Staff Members

We're delighted to introduce two new members of staff who joined us over the summer – Judy and Jess.



Judy is our new Housing Assistant, and chances are you've already spoken to her if you've called us recently. Judy is a key part of the housing team, helping to triage phone calls and emails, take rent payments, log repair requests, and support our Housing Officers during home visits.

You can reach Judy by calling 0207 625 1818 (Option 4) or by emailing [housing@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:housing@innisfree.org.uk).

*We're thrilled to have Judy and Jess on board and know they'll make a real difference to our service and support. Please join us in giving them a warm welcome!*



Jess has joined us as our Compliance Officer, working closely with the maintenance team to ensure our properties meet all legal safety standards. Her role covers a wide range of responsibilities, including compliance with regulations around gas, electricity, asbestos, fire safety, water hygiene, and lift maintenance. Jess plays a vital role in making sure our homes are safe and fully compliant with landlord obligations.

To contact our maintenance team, call 0207 625 1818 (Option 2) or email [maintenance@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@innisfree.org.uk).

# Christmas Safety Tips

The festive season is a time for joy, warmth, and celebration – but it's also a time where we can be easily distracted, so it's best to be extra mindful of safety at home. With decorations, cooking, and colder weather, there are a few seasonal risks to watch out for. Here are our top tips to help you stay safe this Christmas:

## Fire Safety

- **Candles:** Never leave them unattended and keep them away from curtains, decorations, and children. Always put candles on a heat-resistant surface. Be especially careful with night lights and tea lights, which get hot enough to melt plastic.
- **Christmas lights:** Check for frayed wires or broken bulbs before use. Turn them off before bed or when leaving the house. Keep lights away from flammable decorations and materials that can burn easily.
- **Air fryers and other appliances:** Pull them away from the wall to allow proper ventilation and prevent overheating.

## General Safety

- Don't overload sockets with multiple decorations or appliances.
- Keep walkways clear of wires and decorations to avoid trips and falls. Don't store any items in communal areas.
- Dispose of wrapping paper and boxes safely – if bins are full, take them to your local recycling centre. Don't leave them next to the bins, that's flytipping!

We want everyone to enjoy a safe and peaceful holiday season. If you have any concerns or questions about safety in your home, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

# Flytipping

Thank you for sharing your concerns at our recent Resident Forum meetings. Many of you told us that fly-tipping and misuse of bin areas are among your biggest concerns – and we hear you.

When rubbish is left outside of bins or dumped in communal areas, it not only looks unsightly but can also attract vermin like rats and foxes. This creates health risks and affects everyone's enjoyment of their homes.

Here's how you can help:

- Only use designated bins for your household waste and recycling.
- Break down boxes and bag your rubbish properly before disposal.
- Don't leave bulky items (like furniture or mattresses) in bin areas – contact your local council to arrange a collection.
- Recycle correctly – check labels and use the right bins for paper, plastics, and food waste.

If you see fly-tipping or have concerns about pests, please report it to us or your local council straight away. Together, we can keep our neighbourhoods clean, safe, and welcoming for all.



## Our News

# Budgeting at Christmas

Christmas is a special time, but it can also bring financial pressure. The good news is that you don't need to spend a lot to enjoy a warm, festive season. With a bit of planning and creativity, you can make the holidays meaningful without stretching your budget.



### Thoughtful, Low-Cost Gifts

- Homemade gifts like biscuits, jams, or crafts are personal and appreciated.
- Handwritten cards or letters can mean more than shop-bought items.
- Consider gift exchanges with friends or family to keep costs down.

### Smart Budgeting Tips

- Set a spending limit and track your costs to avoid surprises.
- Use timers on lights to save energy and help your home look occupied.
- Reuse decorations and wrapping from previous years – it's eco-friendly and cost-effective.

### Saving on Food

- Plan meals ahead and stick to a shopping list to avoid overspending.
- Use frozen vegetables and supermarket own brands to stretch your budget.
- Cook in batches and share meals with neighbours or family to reduce costs.

Christmas is about connection, kindness, and community. However you choose to celebrate, we hope it's joyful, peaceful, and affordable.

### Free and Cheap Days Out

- Many local libraries, parks, and community centres offer free festive activities.
- A walk to see Christmas lights or a visit to a local market can be a lovely outing.
- Look out for free events advertised on council or community websites.



## HACT Fuel Scheme

### Are you entitled to fuel vouchers?

If you are in rent arrears or other serious debt and have a pre-payment meter and are not a British Gas customer, you could be entitled to **fuel vouchers between £150 to £300**.

If this sounds like you, please contact us to find out more on **020 7625 1818** or email [residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:residentengagement@innisfree.org.uk).

Many residents in debt have already benefited and received fuel vouchers worth £300.







# Warm Spaces and Community Food

As the colder months set in, we know that winter can be a difficult time – especially for those managing tight budgets or feeling isolated. Across the boroughs where our homes are located, there are warm spaces, community food initiatives, and free activities designed to support residents and bring people together.

Whether you're looking for a place to stay warm, enjoy a hot drink, or connect with others, there are welcoming spaces open to all.

## Warm Spaces Near You

Many libraries, community centres, and faith organisations are offering free warm spaces this winter. These are safe, heated places where you can sit, read, chat, or simply relax.

Here's where to start in your borough:

- **Brent:** Brent Libraries and The Yellow in Wembley often offer warm spaces and free events. Check Brent Council's website for updates.
- **Camden:** Camden libraries and community hubs like the Living Centre in Somers Town provide warm spaces and social activities.
- **Lewisham:** Lewisham Council lists warm spaces on their website, including libraries and churches offering hot drinks and Wi-Fi.
- **Enfield:** Enfield libraries and community centres such as Edmonton Green Library are known to host warm hubs.



- **Haringey:** Warm Welcome spaces are available at libraries and centres like Wood Green Library and Chestnuts Community Centre.
- **Barnet:** Barnet libraries and organisations like BOOST offer warm spaces and support services.
- **Hammersmith:** Hammersmith & Fulham libraries and community centres often run warm space schemes—check the council's site for details.



## Community Food Initiatives

Across these boroughs, there are a growing number of community kitchens, food banks, and low-cost food hubs offering support this winter. These spaces help residents access nutritious food in a welcoming environment.

Examples include:

- Community fridges where surplus food is shared
- Food banks providing emergency parcels
- Low-cost cafés offering hot meals
- Cooking clubs and recipe-sharing groups

To find a food initiative near you, visit your local council's website or ask your Housing Officer – we're happy to help connect you.



## Our News

# Free Things to Do This Winter

Winter doesn't have to be spent indoors – there are plenty of free and low-cost activities happening across our boroughs:

- **Brent & Camden:** Libraries host free craft sessions, story times, and festive film afternoons.
- **Lewisham & Enfield:** Look out for free Christmas light switch-ons and carol events in town centres.
- **Haringey & Barnet:** Parks and nature reserves offer beautiful winter walks – perfect for a peaceful day out.
- **Hammersmith:** Museums and galleries often have free entry days or community events during the holidays.

Check your borough's website or social media pages for listings. Many events are family-friendly and open to all.



## Need Help Finding Support?

If you're unsure where to start or would like help finding a warm space, food initiative, or free activity near you, please get in touch. We're here to help.

Call us on **0207 625 1818** (option 4) or email: [housing@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:housing@innisfree.org.uk)

Let's make this winter a little warmer together.



If you are on a low income or on benefits, disabled or have long term health conditions, pregnant or with children under 10, Green Doctors can help!

Find out more at by visiting the links below or give them a ring on **0300 365 3005**. They can also provide advice via video call with a British Sign Language interpreter and have language interpreters available for non-English speakers.

[www.innisfree.org.uk/news/green-doctors-support-to-save-on-your-energy-bills-this-winter](http://www.innisfree.org.uk/news/green-doctors-support-to-save-on-your-energy-bills-this-winter)  
<https://london.greendoctors.org.uk/advice/>

## Struggling with your energy bills?



**We can help.**



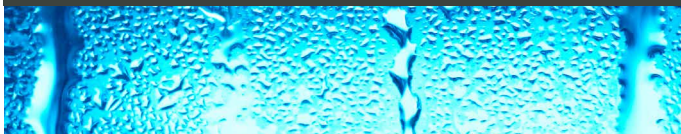
# Awaab's Law – What it Means for Tenants

Awaab's Law was introduced to ensure that social landlords act quickly and effectively when tenants report damp and mould. It follows the tragic death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020, caused by prolonged exposure to mould in his home. The law now sets out strict timeframes for investigating and resolving these issues, helping to make homes safer for everyone.

When you report a concern to us, we will triage it using a risk assessment to determine the severity and assign it to one of three categories:

- **Potential Emergency:** Serious and immediate risks to health or safety – such as extensive black mould, water leaks affecting electrics, or structural damage. We aim to investigate these within 24 hours (1 working day).
- **Potential Significant:** Damp or mould that is worsening but not yet dangerous. We aim to investigate and begin remedial action within 10 days.
- **Potential Other:** Minor or early signs of condensation, damp, or mould. These will be addressed outside of Awaab's Law, under our Responsive Repairs Policy.

To help us assess your report quickly and accurately, it is really helpful to include photos of the affected areas when you get in touch. Email us at [maintenance@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@innisfree.org.uk) or call us on 0207 625 1818 (Option 2).



**Please don't wait** – we want to work with you. If you notice any signs of condensation, damp, or mould in your home, report it to us as soon as possible. Together, we can make sure your home is safe this winter.



## Gas Safety Checks

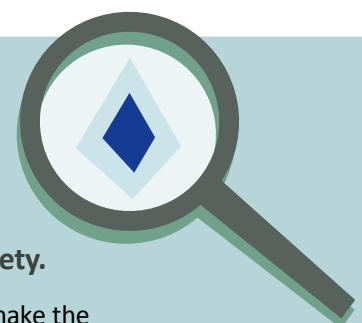
Gas safety checks are a legal requirement and a vital part of keeping your home safe. These annual inspections help ensure your boiler and gas appliances are working properly and don't pose a risk to your health or safety.

If you receive an appointment letter, please make sure someone over the age of 18 is home to allow access. Missed appointments can delay certification and may result in enforcement action – so it's important to let us know if you need to reschedule.

To discuss your appointment or make changes, contact us on: 0207 625 1818 (Option 1 or 2) or email us at [maintenance@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@innisfree.org.uk).

Our team is here to help make the process smooth and stress-free. If you have any questions or concerns about your gas check, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Let's work together to keep your home safe and warm this winter.



## Our News

# Ways Innisfree Keeps Your Home Safe

At Innisfree, keeping your home safe is one of our most important responsibilities. We carry out regular checks and maintenance to ensure your property meets all legal safety standards and remains a secure, comfortable place to live.

Here are some of the key ways we protect your home:



### Fire Safety

We conduct regular fire risk assessments in communal areas and ensure that fire doors, alarms, and emergency lighting are properly maintained. We also check that escape routes are clear and that signage is visible and up to date.

If you live in a building with shared spaces, you may see our team inspecting these areas to make sure everything is safe. We also encourage residents to test their smoke alarms in their home on a monthly basis and keep exits free from clutter.



### Lift Maintenance

If your building has a communal lift, we carry out regular servicing and safety checks to ensure it operates reliably and meets all legal standards. Any faults are dealt with promptly to minimise disruption.

If you have any safety concerns, please contact us on 0207 625 1818 (option 2) or email [maintenance@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@innisfree.org.uk).



### Electrical Safety

We carry out five-yearly electrical safety inspections in all our properties. These checks cover wiring, sockets, fuse boxes, and appliances to prevent faults and reduce the risk of fire. If your home is due for an inspection, we'll contact you to arrange access.

We also carry out monthly tests of the emergency lighting in communal areas.

Please report any flickering lights, faulty sockets, or electrical concerns to us straight away.



### Asbestos Management

Some older buildings may contain asbestos in walls, ceilings, or flooring. We maintain a register of known asbestos locations and ensure that any materials are safely managed and monitored. If work is needed in an area with asbestos, we use licensed contractors to carry it out safely.







## Our News

# Do You Have Home Contents Insurance?

Innisfree's insurance covers the building you live in – but it doesn't cover your household's personal belongings in your home or garden. That's where home contents insurance comes in.

Contents insurance protects your possessions in case of:

- Theft
- Fire or flood
- Accidental damage
- Loss due to unexpected events

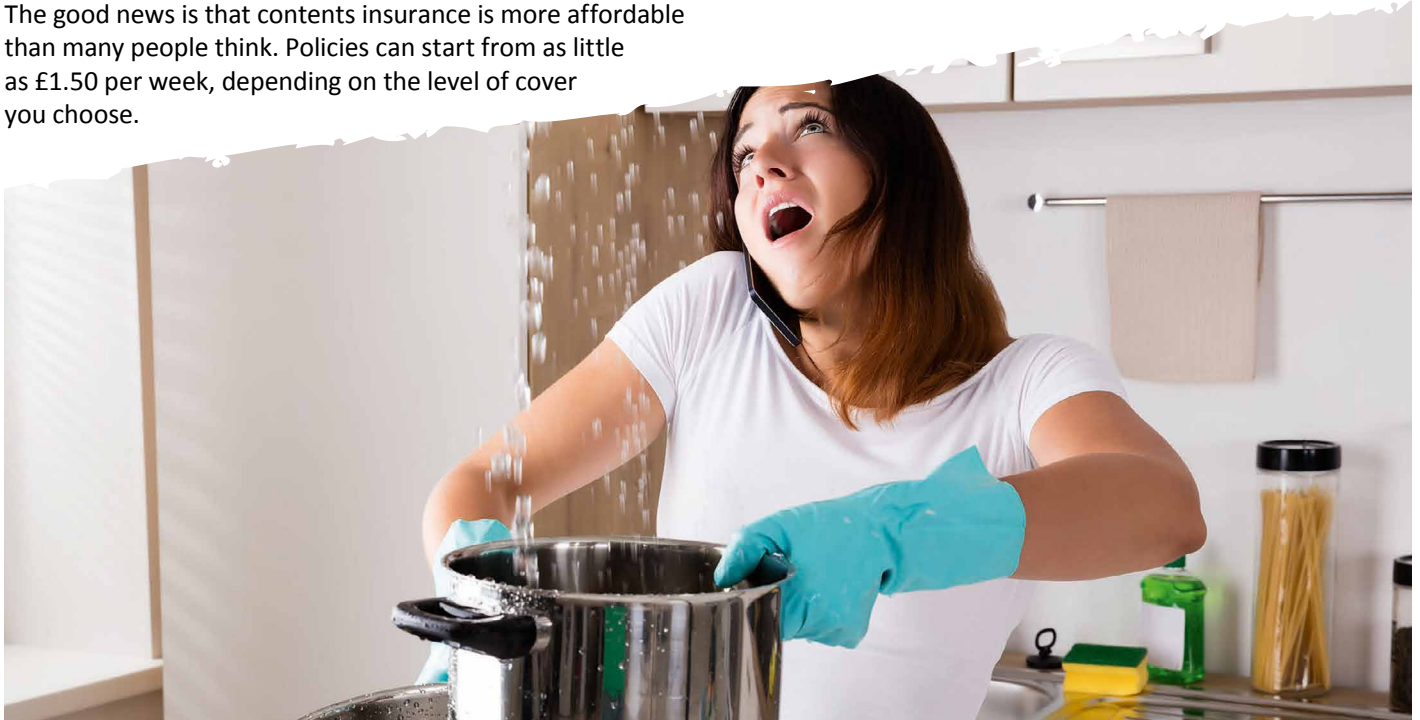
It's especially important during winter, when risks like burst pipes, electrical faults, and weather damage are more common. Without insurance, replacing items like furniture, electronics, or clothing can be costly and stressful.

The good news is that contents insurance is more affordable than many people think. Policies can start from as little as £1.50 per week, depending on the level of cover you choose.

We recommend My Home Contents Insurance, provided by Thistle Insurance Services, which offers flexible, low-cost policies designed specifically for social housing tenants.

You can apply online or find out more here:  
[www.thistlemyhome.co.uk](http://www.thistlemyhome.co.uk) or by  
calling 0345 450 7288.

If you're unsure whether you need insurance or want help understanding your options, feel free to contact Thistle for more advice.



## Leftover Turkey Recipe: Festive Fried Rice

Got leftover turkey? Try this quick and tasty recipe:

- Dice turkey (or tofu) and fry with garlic, spring onions, and mixed veg.
- Add cold cooked rice and stir-fry with soy sauce and a dash of sesame oil.
- Crack in an egg and scramble through the rice.
- Top with fresh coriander or chilli flakes for a festive twist!



**YOU'RE NEVER ALONE**

**Respect – Men's  
Advice Line**

**0808 801 0327**

(Mon-Fri 9-5 or 8)

**Action on  
Elder Abuse**

**0808 808 8141**

(Mon-Fri 9-5)

**Victim Support**

**0808 168 9111**

(24hrs)

**NSPCC**

**0800 800 5000**

(24hrs)

**Childline**

**0800 1111**

(24hrs)

**Samaritans**

**116 123**

(24hrs free)

**National  
Centre  
for Domestic  
Violence**

**0207 186 8270**

**Cruse  
Bereavement**

**0808 808 1677**

(Mon-Fri 9-5)

**Mind**

**0300 123 3393**

(Mon-Fri 9-6)

**Young Minds**

**0808 802 5544**

**Innisfree**



## Our News

### Not everyone is full of goodwill

Unfortunately, the Christmas holidays is a peak time for scammers to do their worst. Here are some of the things to watch out for:

- Fake charity appeals – playing on our generosity, people pose as representing charities. Before donating, take a moment to check whether their organisation is genuine at <https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/en/charity-search>
- If buying a gift card from a store, try to get one from behind the counter or check the packaging as some fraudsters tamper with the cards or copy the numbers and codes.



- If waiting for a parcel delivery don't be conned into clicking a link asking for payment – delivery firms will not ask for money via a text.

### Just for fun Christmas Reindeer Wordsearch

Words can be hidden in any direction – forward, backward, up, down or diagonal.

P	L	A	N	D	D	M	U	O	B	I	R	A	C
M	R	R	T	L	A	N	T	L	E	R	S	O	R
A	E	E	V	I	N	S	L	H	O	O	V	E	S
S	N	D	N	T	C	V	H	T	Y	K	A	C	L
N	N	N	N	G	E	R	B	E	E	A	D	O	O
O	O	O	R	S	R	S	E	E	R	I	K	M	P
W	D	S	W	U	U	S	T	A	B	L	E	E	H
B	H	E	R	E	D	N	D	E	E	R	P	T	T
A	L	L	T	H	T	O	T	H	T	E	T	H	S
N	V	I	X	E	N	L	L	N	G	C	A	N	L
W	H	T	T	R	I	A	T	P	I	N	T	R	E
F	L	E	R	Z	O	H	R	T	H	A	R	T	I
E	U	E	R	E	E	N	A	R	P	R	A	M	G
N	Y	R	D	D	O	N	K	C	U	P	I	D	H

Answers: Rudolph, Dasher, Dancer, Prancer, Snow, Vixen, Comet, Cupid, Donner, Blitzen, Hooves, Sleigh, Stable, Antlers, Herd, Red nose, Fur, Caribou

## Christmas and New Years Opening Hours

# Holiday Office Closure

As the festive season approaches, we want to make sure all residents are aware of our office opening hours and how to get help if needed.

The business will close at 4pm on Tuesday 24th December and reopen at 9am on Monday 5th January. During this time, our team will be taking a well-earned break, but we've made sure that support is still available for emergencies.

Wednesday	24th December	Christmas Eve	<i>Innisfree closes at 4pm</i>
Thursday	25th December	Christmas Day	<i>Innisfree closed (Bank Holiday)</i>
Friday	26th December	Boxing Day	<i>Innisfree closed (Bank Holiday)</i>
Monday	29th December		<i>Innisfree closed</i>
Tuesday	30th December		<i>Innisfree closed</i>
Wednesday	31st December		<i>Innisfree closed</i>
Thursday	1st January		<i>Innisfree closed (Bank Holiday)</i>
Friday	2nd January		<i>Innisfree closed</i>
Monday	5th January		<i>Normal working day (opens at 9am)</i>



### Emergency Repairs

If you experience an urgent issue while our office is closed (such as a major leak, loss of heating, or electrical fault) please call **0207 625 1818**. Follow the options and you'll be automatically redirected to our out-of-hours call handlers at Pinnacle, who are available every day throughout the holidays.

Any emergency repairs will be made safe by our out-of-hours engineers, and additional repair works will be picked up when we reopen.

### Non-Emergency Repairs

You can still report non-urgent repairs via email to [maintenance@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:maintenance@innisfree.org.uk). These will be picked up when we return in January.



### Wishing You a Safe and Peaceful Holiday

From all of us at Innisfree, we wish you a warm, safe, and joyful festive season – and look forward to seeing you in 2026!



### Who to contact

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

**Innisfree**

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

Tel: 020 7625 1818 | Email: [housing@innisfree.org.uk](mailto:housing@innisfree.org.uk) | [www.innisfree.org.uk](http://www.innisfree.org.uk)

- 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



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE  
We invest in people Silver

Irish  
in Britain

BME  
national



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade