



INNISFREE HOUSING ASSOCIATION

November 2024

Good Neighbourhood Management Policy

GOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Innisfree Housing Association (Innisfree) is dedicated to ensuring our residents feel safe and content in their homes by creating safe and welcoming communities. Our goal at Innisfree is to promote good relationships among residents and to increase awareness, understanding, and compromise within our communities.
- 1.2 The aim of this policy is to provide a clear framework for dealing sensitive and proportionally with behaviours which are not Antisocial Behaviour, and therefore unlikely to be a tenancy breach, that require a different response from us as a landlord. Innisfree adopt the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act's definition of housing-related antisocial behaviour as behaviour that is 'likely causing or likely to cause nuisance or annoyance.' However, we understand that there will be behaviours which would not be reasonable or appropriate to categorise as antisocial behaviour.
- 1.3 Where the behaviour exhibited is not antisocial behaviour, and therefore, unlikely to be a tenancy breach we will not seek to label someone as a perpetrator or a victim, nor will we be likely to consider any of our legal tools which are available to use in antisocial behaviour cases.
- 1.4 We understand that whilst some behaviours are not antisocial behaviours, they can still cause a great deal of upset and frustration to residents, creating tensions between neighbours. Whilst we may be limited in our responses, this policy is designed to lead to better outcomes and details the approach that Innisfree will take should our residents experience upset or frustration resulting from a person's behaviour or actions that are not deemed to be antisocial behaviour or a tenancy breach. This policy is designed to complement our Antisocial Behaviour Policy.
- 1.5 The deciding factor of whether a person's behaviour falls under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy, or the Antisocial Behaviour Policy is whether the behaviour is deliberate or intended to cause annoyance, alarm, or distress.
 - Where there is no deliberate intention, the incident will be handled initially through the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy.
 - Where there is no deliberate intention, but the behaviour lasts longer than 30 minutes at a time for more than 5 days in a row, this will be handled through the Antisocial Behaviour Policy.

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- 1.6 Innisfree recognises that reported behaviour can change in terms of severity, and that something initially assessed as falling under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy can evolve into Anti-Social Behaviour. We will continually reassess our cases each time a report is received, ensuring that all cases are correctly handled under the appropriate policy.
- 1.7 This policy applies to the Innisfree's tenants, rent to buy tenants, shared owners, and leaseholders. It affects our residents and members of their households.

2. RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND REGULATION

- 2.1 On October 24, 2022, the Housing Ombudsman published a report titled "Time to be Heard," which recommended changes to how landlords categorise and manage reports of nuisance that do not meet the threshold of the Antisocial Behaviour policy. This recommendation calls for a fresh approach to handling non-statutory noise complaints to prevent neighbourhood disputes and manage expectations effectively. Consequently, landlords were encouraged to develop a Good Neighbourhood Management Policy.
- 2.2 Through our Good Neighbourhood Management Policy we take into account and adhere to the following contractual, legislative, and regulatory requirements:

2.2.1 Contractual

- Tenancy Agreement
- Lease
- Licence to Occupy

2.2.2 Legislative

- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Children's Act 2004
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Care Act 2014
- Dangerous Dogs Act 1991
- Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976
- Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Equality Act 2010
- Protection of Children Act 1978
- Housing Act 1988
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Noise Act 1996
- Protection From Harassment Act 1997
- General Data Protection Regulation 2018 & Data Protection Act 2018

2.2.3 Regulatory

- RSH Governance and Financial Viability Standard 2015 (2.1): "Registered providers shall adopt and comply with an appropriate code of governance."
- National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020

2.3 This Policy should be read in conjunction with the following Innisfree policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Antisocial Behaviour Policy
- Hate Crime Policy
- Pet Policy
- Management of Communal Areas Policy

3. BEING A GOOD NEIGHBOUR

3.1 At Innisfree we encourage people to be respectful of each other and be good neighbours; we expect our residents to act reasonably and be considerate of the different values and lifestyles reflected in our neighbourhoods. Where antisocial behaviour is a criminal offence, we encourage those affected by it to report the matter to the Police.

3.2 Residents can contribute to their neighbourhood in many ways, we recommend the following:

- **Introduce Yourself:** Introducing oneself to neighbours can help create positive relationships within the community.
- **Provide Warnings for Noise:** Residents should warn their neighbours if they are planning to engage in particularly noisy activities, such as DIY projects or hosting a birthday party.
- **Address Noise Complaints:** If a neighbour complains about noise, residents are encouraged to listen to their concerns and seek a solution.
- **Be Observant:** Residents should stay observant around their neighbourhood and report any issues that appear unsafe or problematic.
- **Report Abandoned Properties:** If a property seems to be abandoned, residents should inform Innisfree as soon as possible to facilitate re-letting and avoid potential damage.
- **Report Repair Issues:** Quickly reporting repair issues and monitoring recurrent problems in one's home or community helps maintain property standards.
- **Report Antisocial Behaviour:** Residents should contact Innisfree if they experience anti-social behaviour or notice a rise in crime, so appropriate assistance and practical advice can be provided.
- **Report Illegal Activities:** Informing Innisfree about properties being used for illegal purposes ensures the safety and integrity of the community.
- **Take Pride in the Community:** Residents are encouraged to take pride in their community and regularly maintain their gardens and keep communal areas free of items.

3.3 We will proactively manage our homes and neighbourhoods by clearly outlining our expectations when a resident moves into their property. We also provide residents the opportunity to attend our Estate Inspections, giving them the opportunity to work alongside us to highlight any issues in their local areas.

4. WHAT BEHAVIOURS WILL BE CONSIDERED UNDER THIS POLICY?

- 4.1 Innisfree recognises that certain behaviours can cause nuisance or frustration among residents but do not meet the threshold for our Antisocial Behaviour (ASB) policy. These behaviours fall under our Good Neighbourhood Management Policy, which aims to promote harmonious living environments by addressing common issues in a constructive manner.
- 4.2 The definition of antisocial behaviour is subjective based on how it makes a person feel. We recognise that every individual has different tolerances, expectations, and perceptions when deciding what behaviour is or is not appropriate; this means that some people will see certain behaviour as antisocial even if the behaviour is reasonable.
- 4.3 We understand that some behaviours may be clearly impacting a resident, but that there is no intention by the other person to cause harm, or if the behaviour causing harm is not unreasonable. Examples of these types of behaviour which we do not consider to be antisocial behaviour include but are not limited to:
- **Parking:** Disputes over parking spaces or inconsiderate parking.
 - **Smoking:** Issues arising from smoking in shared spaces or smoke drifting into neighbouring properties.
 - **Boundaries:** Disagreements over property lines or boundary maintenance.
 - **Dogs Barking:** Excessive barking or pets causing disturbances.
 - **Cats in Gardens:** Complaints about cats entering and causing issues in neighbouring gardens.
 - **Fences:** Issues related to the maintenance or positioning of fences.
 - **Untidy Gardens:** Concerns about the appearance or upkeep of gardens.
 - **Cooking Smells:** Strong or persistent cooking odours affecting neighbours.
 - **Babies Crying:** Noise from babies that may disturb neighbours.
 - **Placement of Bins:** Disputes over where bins are placed or left.
 - **Children Playing Ball Games/Bikes:** Noise or disturbance from children playing in shared or public areas.
 - **Use of Trampolines:** Noise or concerns related to trampoline use.
 - **People Looking/Staring at Each Other:** Instances where residents feel uncomfortable due to perceived staring.
 - **Littering:** Issues related to litter or waste disposal.

- **Working from Home:** Noise or disturbances from home-based work activities.
- **General Living Noise:** Everyday sounds such as basic DIY, babies crying, children playing, people talking or walking in their homes, flushing toilets, closing doors, or conversations.
- **Isolated incidents** of loud shouting and arguing
- **One-off Celebrations:** Noise or activity from occasional events or celebrations.
- **Occasional Noise:** Noise made by tenants or household members with protected characteristics, such as a mental health condition or a disability.
- **BBQs** and bonfires – these are not permitted in communal areas or on balconies.

5. HOW TO REPORT CONCERNS TO INNISFREE

5.1 Residents who experience or witness behaviours that cause a nuisance but do not meet the threshold for our Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) policy can report their concerns to Innisfree Housing Association. To ensure these concerns are addressed effectively, residents can follow these steps:

1. **Identify the Issue:** Clearly describe the behaviour causing concern, including specific details such as dates, times, and the nature of the disturbance.
2. **Contact Innisfree:**
 - **Phone:** Call the Innisfree Housing team at 0207 625 1818.
 - **Email:** Send an email to housing@innisfree.org.uk outlining the concern.
3. **Speak to Your Housing Officer:** If residents are unsure whether the behaviour should be reported or need assistance with the reporting process, they should contact their Housing Officer. The Housing Officer will provide guidance, explain the process, and help determine the best course of action.
4. **Provide Details:** When reporting a concern, residents should be prepared to provide as much information as possible. This includes:
 - The nature of the behaviour.
 - When and where it occurred.

- Any relevant context or history.
- The impact on the resident or community.

5. After reporting a concern, residents will receive contact from their Housing Officer to further investigate the concerns that they are raising.

5.2 Innisfree is committed to addressing residents' concerns promptly and effectively, fostering a positive and cooperative community environment. Residents are encouraged to report issues and seek assistance to maintain a harmonious living environment.

6. HOW DO WE MANAGE THESE BEHAVIOURS?

6.1 For behaviours that fall under the Good Neighbourhood Management Policy, we will pass the case to the relevant Housing Officer to investigate the concerns raised. Our Housing Team aim to make contact with the concerned resident within 2 working days and begin supporting residents within 5 working days.

6.2 As we do not work to identify who the 'perpetrator' is and who the 'victim' is we refer to the parties by their names, or by Resident 1 and Resident 2, or we may refer to them as 'Household 1' and 'Household 2' if more than 1 person is involved from an individual property. The purpose of our approach is to build relationships, so residents' names are used to assist with this.

6.3 We will:

- Encourage open communication and mutual understanding between residents to resolve issues amicably. We may recommend a resident uses our Dear Neighbour Card to start a conversation.
- Provide accessible and inclusive methods for residents to gather evidence.
- Agree an action plan with the resident who initially raised the issue and thoroughly investigate without making any assumptions. If it becomes clear during an investigation that a case should be investigated under our Antisocial Behaviour Policy we will inform both parties in writing and agree to a new action plan.

- Provide guidance and resources to residents to help them manage and resolve minor disputes on their own and where needed, know how to inform Innisfree regarding escalation of issues, support needed or any incident of antisocial behaviour.
 - Challenge any unreasonable expectations and we will not create unrealistic expectations.
 - Offer mediation services where appropriate to help residents come to an agreement and foster positive relationships.
 - Monitor and reassess cases to ensure they are handled appropriately and escalated if necessary.
- 6.4 As the central purpose of this policy is to build relationships between parties, it is unlikely that we will be able to assist the person making the report to remain anonymous. There may be times when we cannot guarantee confidentiality, even when a resident requests it. This could include situations where we identify a safeguarding concern, or where a criminal offence has taken place.
- 6.5 As the purpose of this policy is to develop and strengthen relationships between people who live near to each other, we need the cooperation and support from the parties involved to improve situations. Where parties refuse to a reasonable request, we may not be able to assist any further. Where this is the case, it will be clearly communicated to the party concerned.
- 6.6 At all stages we will consider the support needs of the parties involved. We also recognise that sometimes personal circumstances may affect a person's tolerance, perception or ability to cope with certain situations. When we recognise that this could be a contributory factor, we will work to identify suitable referrals and support.
- 6.7 We may not always be able to assist with a situation that is dealt with under this policy as a single agency. There will be times when we may work with our partner agencies to share information and identify the best possible support and guidance we can offer to parties. We will always share, store and dispose of information in line with legislation and local information sharing agreements.
- 6.8 The resident who raised the initial concerns may appeal at any stage if they believe that their report is being handled under the incorrect policy – they can do so by requesting a review in writing to housing@innisfree.org.uk or by contacting the Housing Team on 0207 625 1818. If a complainant

disagrees with the review decision, they can raise their concerns as a complaint through our Complaint Policy.

- 6.9 We will keep a record of any properties where an investigation has concluded that the noise is occurring because of the nature of the property and not the person occupying it.

7. NOISE ISSUES

- 7.1 We recognise that noise can be a significant concern for residents - noise can have a high impact on Resident 1, even when Resident 2 is not engaging in unreasonable activities. In addressing noise issues, Innisfree follows a comprehensive approach to support all parties involved and maintain a harmonious living environment.
- 7.2 Whilst we understand that noise can be a significant concern for residents, we can only investigate concerns for deliberate, recurring, statutory noise through our Antisocial Behaviour Policy. We will investigate other noise concerns that do not meet that threshold through this Good Neighbourhood Management Policy.
- 7.3 Innisfree provides access to The Noise App, an industry standard tool that helps residents record noise disturbances. Residents can use this app to document instances of excessive noise, providing accurate records that can be reviewed by Innisfree staff. The reviewing Officer will listen to these recordings to assess the noise levels and nature of disturbances. If necessary, we can share these recordings with third-party agencies, such as Environmental Health, to facilitate further investigation and resolution.
- 7.4 We aim to work in collaboration with residents; for example, we will work with Resident 2 to explore options for reducing noise. This may include recommending changes in behaviour or arranging for remedial works.
- 7.5 We also acknowledge that noise transfer between properties can be problematic due to construction factors. This can impact residents even when the noise is not a result of unreasonable activities.

- 7.6 In cases where noise impact is significant, Innisfree may inspect properties to identify any outstanding repair issues that may contribute to noise transfer. While we cannot commit to soundproofing properties built or converted before 2003 to Part E of the Building Regulations, we may consider funding measures to reduce noise transfer when all other options have been exhausted and the harm caused is extremely high.
- 7.7 We will conduct inspections to determine whether repair issues are contributing to noise problems, and when implementing net carbon zero programmes; we will strive to ensure that these works do not exacerbate noise transfer issues. Our goal is to improve living conditions without creating new problems.
- 7.8 We will not remove carpets from empty properties unless they are in poor condition, or the incoming tenant has requested their removal. We will usually remove hard and laminate flooring. We will install anti-vibration mats into the washing machine space as standard in our empty flats above ground floor. All our tenancy conditions and our Home Improvement Policy require tenants living in properties with other homes below them to lay underlay and carpet in their home.
- 7.9 When building new properties, we will aim to ensure that flats above the ground floor do not have hardwood or laminate flooring where possible. Innisfree's current requirements specify vinyl flooring or tiles in the wet areas and carpet in all other rooms in the property. When assessing affordable housing to purchase from developers Innisfree does consider whether the layout and grouping of properties is suitable and sensible.
- 7.10 By taking these steps, Innisfree aims to address noise issues effectively, supporting residents in managing noise disturbances while fostering a peaceful and cooperative community. Residents are encouraged to report noise concerns and use the tools provided to ensure that their living environment remains comfortable and harmonious.

8. DATA SHARING

- 8.1 All information will be stored in our Housing Management systems. All case notes, case files, and personal information will be kept confidential in line with the Data Protection Act 2018. We will adhere to the Data Protection Act and comply with General Data Protection Regulation for Sharing Personal Information to ensure that we maintain confidentiality of all parties.
- 8.2 We will share information with third parties where we have an information sharing protocol in place, if there are safeguarding concerns, or we have a duty to do so for the purpose of crime prevention under the provisions of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and the provisions of the Data Protection Act 2018 (and any other relevant legislation) justify it.

9. EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION

- 9.1 We are committed to embedding the Equality Act 2010 into our Policies and Procedures. As part of this commitment, staff should facilitate reasonable adjustments and adapt our standard policies and procedures wherever possible, to ensure every individual can access our services.
- 9.2 To make an adjustment means to change work practices to avoid or correct the disadvantage to a person with a disability. This may include:
- Allowing more time than we would usually for someone to provide information that we needed.
 - Providing specialist equipment or additional support such as a sign language interpreter.

10. CONSULTATION AND REVIEWING THIS POLICY

- 10.1 This policy will be consulted on with residents, and reviewed every 3 years, or with any changes to regulation or legislation.



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