

Inquilab



Voice

Winter 2015

Responding to
your feedback
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this winter
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Here to help

Meet our new Customer Relationship Managers who will be covering the post for a few months whilst Lise Alleyne works on a special project.

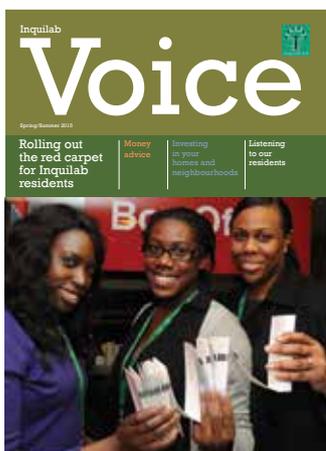


Trinder Panesar covers Brent, Harrow, Elbridge, Kensington & Chelsea and Ealing.



Farheen Tahir covers Richmond, Hounslow, Hillingdon, Kingston upon Thames and Slough.

If you need to get in touch with Trinder or Farheen please call 0202 607 7777.



What do you think of Inquilab News?

We want to make sure that your newsletter is exactly what you want. Please let us know what you think of the articles, the look of the magazine and if you have any ideas of what should be included in the next issue.

Send your comments to:
customerservices@inquilabha.org

Don't get bitten by a loan shark

Christmas is an expensive time of year and when money is tight it can be tempting to turn to pay day loan companies or unofficial money lenders ('loan sharks') to help make ends meet.

But beware, many of these lenders charge very high interest rates and you could end up paying back at least double the amount you borrowed. Your debts will soon spiral out of control. A much better and safer way to borrow money is to use a Credit Union. They are not out to make a profit as their primary aim is to better the lives of their customers.

You can access low cost loans at a repayment rate that you can afford, even if you have limited income or no credit history. Loans can often be provided against Child Benefit, where there is little or no other income.

Credit Unions also offer jam jar accounts that will help you budget your money sensibly so you don't get into rent arrears or other debt.

We recommend using Hillingdon Credit Union. They can even offer a prepaid Visa card that you can use in shops and online. The card also provides a budgeting facility and cashback. Visit www.hillingdoncu.co.uk or call 01895 250958 for details.



Money worries?

If you are worried about making ends meet contact our **FREE, confidential and friendly money advice service £sense** on 0208 6077787 or email poundsense@inquilabha.org

Here's some examples of how we've helped our residents:

- We helped Mrs K tackle her rent arrears and apply for Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) from the local council. We also looked at how she could avoid the bedroom tax by downsizing and taking in a lodger.

- Mrs C and her disabled daughter couldn't afford to stay in their 3 bed home. We helped her apply for DHP worth £800 which means she can pay the bedroom tax and other bills. We also showed how she can receive a Warm Home Discount of £140.

- Mrs W was about to be evicted for high rent arrears. We discovered she was unwell, housebound and spoke very little English. She had not received any Housing Benefit (HB) for several months because she could not understand the forms. We applied for back-dated HB and DHP to cover her bedroom tax shortfall and also helped her son apply for Carers Allowance.



Listening to your feedback

We held a Residents Contact Day in June providing residents with a chance to discuss any issues of concern with our staff.

During the day we visited Mint Close, Sekhon Terrace, Veitch Close, Priory Way and Cranleigh Court; neighbourhoods where resident satisfaction had previously been low. It was a great opportunity for us to find out what you think about our services and how we need to improve.



We are planning meetings with residents in Brent, Harrow and Ealing to get even more feedback and ensure our future plans meet your needs and requirements.



Residents told us that we need to improve the repairs service by increasing communication and carrying out repair jobs quicker.

You said

We did

There are increasing problems with pests (such as mice and rats).

We will be setting up regular pest control visits to treat any issues of mice and rats in communal areas.

You wanted us to be more visible and take your views into account.

We have invested in new technology to allow the property surveyors and customer relationship managers to complete more tasks whilst out of the office and in the neighbourhoods you live so that they can be more visible. We have also set up local residents groups to get your feedback and improve delivery of the service.

More rubbish is being dumped around the schemes.

We are working with contractors to ensure on-site cleaning improves and have asked local authorities to collect refuse on the allocated day. We have also reminded people how to dispose of bulky rubbish correctly and stated that service charges may increase for the schemes affected.

Mint Close

We should have more social fun days and resident involvement.

We organised a successful fun day in June alongside P3 charity, to provide activities and discuss the proposals for Mint Close.

The fun day at Mint Close was a great success.

“It was lovely to get the community together and to work with Inquilab staff.”



Improving your homes



We're making some exciting improvements to properties at Mint Close including installing new windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms.

The work is being carried out by Niblock contractors, who won the contract after proving they offered the best quality and best value for money. All the work should be finished in March 2016.

Residents can choose their new kitchen and bathroom design, including the colour of units, work surfaces and tiling.

A day in the life of...

Paddy Blunden, Maintenance Surveyor

“The main purpose of the job is to maintain all Inquilab homes and oversee repairs to ensure we are getting value for money.

“No two days are ever the same in my role. I look after the day to day repairs and ensure only the necessary jobs are ordered and that they are carried out on time and within budget. I also visit properties to assess the overall condition and see what major works should be included in future programmes.

“I really enjoy visiting properties to diagnose faults and raise the appropriate order. Sometimes this is easier said than done and often you have to think outside the box to come up with a solution.

“It's so rewarding to resolve a problem and know that the resident is genuinely happy.”



Exciting apprenticeship opportunity

If you are interested in a career in horticulture, our new grounds maintenance contractor Lotus Landscapes Ltd is offering an apprenticeship for one local resident.



It's a great way to get your career off the ground. The successful apprentice will:

- learn on the job
- receive support from qualified and experienced trainers
- learn how to use the gardening equipment and machinery
- gain a horticulture qualification.

Lotus Landscapes has recently taken on our grounds maintenance contract and will be working closely with us and our team of Resident Inspectors to ensure green areas and landscaping are first class.

“We would love to hear what you think, good or bad, so feel free to approach our teams when they are onsite with your comments or queries. Our staff always wear uniforms with our logo and will show you their ID cards.”

Gary Millar, Contract Manager, Lotus Landscapes Ltd



Delivering an award winning service



We are delighted to announce that we have achieved the prestigious Investors in People (IIP) Gold Accreditation; a major UK award for business improvement. The accreditation recognises our commitment to staff training and the ways we empower our workforce. We had hoped to achieve this in 2016, so we are ahead of our corporate objectives!



Having a skilled and committed team of staff means we can deliver excellent, well run services to you. We are thrilled with the award and we hope you agree that the service you receive from our staff is second to none.

Surveys

It's really important that you let us know what you think of our services, and how we could make them even better. We carry out regular surveys to give you a chance to tell us your views, and then we use your feedback to make improvements.

We use an independent market research company called Acuity to conduct quick telephone surveys to find out how satisfied you are with the Inquilab service.

Also, we often carry out satisfaction surveys after you have spoken to a member of our staff. We just want to know how you felt we performed and what you thought of the service you received.

If you receive a call to complete one of our surveys, please take the time to participate. The results are anonymous and your feedback has a direct influence on the services we provide, including staff training and development.

Win £100

Take part in our survey and be entered into our prize draw to win.

Check out future issues of Inquilab Voice for details of the survey results and the changes we are making as a result.

In the meantime, if you would like more information, please contact our contact centre on 0208 607 7777 or visit our website on www.inquilabha.org

Right to Buy

Soon you will have an opportunity to buy your own home if you want to.



The Government promised to introduce the right to buy for Housing Association tenants, and the National Housing Federation is currently working with ministers to develop the details.

We don't know exactly how the scheme will work at the moment, or if the discount for our tenants will be set at the same as the Council Right to Buy (up to 70%), but we will keep you posted with details. If you might be interested in the Right to Buy your home, please get in

touch and we will send you on details as soon as we receive them. Email your name, address and your most up to date contact details to customerservices@inquilabha.org

Rents coming down!

It's nice to know that you can save money, and from April 1 2016 most of our tenants will benefit from lower rent payments. Plus we will continue to drop the rents for the next four years! Tenants paying the average rent of £85 a week will see their bill cut to £81.60 by April 2019. That works out at a reduction of £176.80 over a full year. It's all part of the Government's July Budget plans, which included asking Housing Associations to reduce rents by 1% a year for the next four years.

Although lower rent bills mean more money in your pocket, it will have an impact on the amount of money we can collect and invest into your homes and neighbourhoods. We are busy working with our Board to ensure this won't impact on any of the services you receive.

“We know how tight the finances are for many of our tenants and their families at the moment so we hope the rent reduction will help make a difference.”

Jackie Thomas, Director of Operations, Inquilab Housing Association

Don't forget you can pay your rent by debit or credit card. Simply visit www.inquilabha.org or call 0208 607 7777.



Welfare Reform update

In the summer budget the Government announced further changes to the benefits system. Here's a round-up of some of the changes that might affect you.

Benefit Cap

The total amount of benefits that can be claimed will be reduced to:

- £23,000 for couples and lone parents and £15,410 for single households in Greater London.
- £20,000 for couples and lone parents and £13,400 for single households elsewhere in the country.



Housing Benefit

• From April 2016, new claims for Housing Benefit can only be backdated for a maximum of 28 days or four weeks.

• If your circumstances change and you need to make a new claim, you must do this as quickly as possible. You are still responsible for making sure your rent is paid.



Child Tax Credit (CTC)

The family element of CTC will be abolished from April 2017 and will be restricted to a maximum of two children. There will be a new disability element created, paid according to whether the child is considered disabled or severely disabled.



Universal Credit

Universal Credit is a single monthly payment for people in or out of work, which merges together some of the benefits and tax credits that you might be getting now. Universal Credit is paid monthly into a bank account of your choice. If you live with your partner and you are both eligible, you will get one monthly joint payment.

It can take several weeks after you make your claim to get your first payment. We can help you with your UC application and ensure you claim all the benefits you are entitled to.

Please remember that if you move onto Universal Credit your Housing Benefit will be paid directly to you and you must then pay us the rent.

Please get in touch if you need help and support with your application. We can also help you to set up a direct debit to ensure your rent is paid.



Limited capability for work

The work-related activity component of ESA and the limited capability for work element of UC will be abolished from 1 April 2017.

Tax credits threshold and taper rates

To be eligible for the full amount of Tax Credits a household must earn under £3,850 (from April 2016).

Social housing income limits

If your household income is above £40,000 (or above £30,000 outside of London) you will have to pay a higher rent. This is called 'Pay to Stay'.

Housing benefit for young people

From April 2017, the automatic entitlement to housing support for new claims from 18 –21 year olds who are out of work will be removed (but vulnerable young people including those who cannot return home to live with their parents will be exempt).

Childcare

From September 2017, free childcare entitlement will be doubled from 15 hours to 30 hours a week for working parents of three and four year olds.

We are contacting tenants to talk about the best way to reduce the impact of the changes. If you feel that you may be affected by benefit changes please contact us on 0208 607 7780 or by email on customerservices@inquilabha.org

Can you fix it?

At Inquilab, we are responsible for keeping your home in good condition.

We look after your gas and central heating and carry out repairs in your home caused by normal wear and tear. However, there are certain repairs that you are responsible for yourself, including:

- Damage caused by you, your family or visitors.
- Criminal Damage; we can make your property safe but you are responsible for any repairs or replacements needed
- Repairs or replacement fences that separate your property from another (unless your property borders a public highway, footpath or communal garage area).
- Clearing blocked sink/bath/basins and replacing missing or broken plugs and chains.
- Clearing blocked toilets, including toys or anything else that has been put down the toilet by accident.
- Changing light bulbs.
- Bleeding radiators.
- Replacing lost keys or providing additional keys, changing locks.
- Keeping your garden tidy, including cutting grass and hedges.
- Pest control within your home.
- Clearing rubbish.

You can find a full list of the repairs that you are responsible for in your individual tenancy agreement.

If you have any queries please get in touch. Call us on 020 8607 7777 or visit our website on www.inquilabha.org

Please ensure you keep your annual gas safety check appointment so we can make sure that your boiler is working safely and efficiently.

Please keep fire exits clear at all times so that you can escape if there was a fire in your block and enable fire officers to reach you and your neighbours.



Keep your boiler in tip top condition this winter

If you have a problem with your boiler follow our top tips below before you call for an engineer and you may be able to get it working in no time.



01.

Make sure the power supply is on and check that the fuse is working (burn marks around the fuse could indicate that it has blown).

02.

Check the gas supply - if the gas stopcock is open but no gas is coming through, contact your gas supplier.

03.

Make sure your programmer or timer is switched back on. You may need to adjust it so that the heating comes on earlier in the mornings or evenings. If you can't switch the timer on, you may have a flat battery or problem with the power source.

04.

Is the thermostat turned up high enough? The heating will only come on when the thermostat is set higher than room temperature.

05.

Check that the pilot light is lit. If it is out, re-light it by following the instructions in the manufacturer's manual or on your boiler.

06.

Radiators not heating up properly? Try bleeding them to release any air pockets in the system.

If it's still not working please get in touch on 0208 607 7777.



Asbestos and electrical inspections checks:

We are carrying our asbestos and electrical checks to check your homes are safe and secure. If you receive a letter from our contractor please do provide access to allow them to carry out the check in your home, or contact them to make alternative arrangements if the appointment is not convenient.

Help with your fuel bills this winter

If you are on a low income, receive certain benefits and have a young child, you may be able to claim the Warm Homes Discount of £140 off your electricity bill.

Contact your electricity supplier for more details or call Home Heat Helpline on 0800 33 66 99 and apply before 29 January 2016.



Residents can make a difference

There are lots of ways for you to get involved with Inquilab and help improve the service you receive, some opportunities even include financial rewards for you.

Scrutinise our services

Help us to scrutinise our services by applying to join the Residents Scrutiny Panel. It's a chance to make a difference to the service that you and your neighbours receive. If you enjoy working with others joining the Panel can be really rewarding. As we ask you to commit time to scrutinise services, we pay Panel members a fee of £500 plus out of pocket expenses.

“Joining the Panel is a great way to make things better for all residents. We need more residents to get involved with Inquilab and help to make positive changes in 2016, which will be an important year with the ever changing welfare reforms.”

David Pountain, Chair of Resident Experience Panel

If you are interested in becoming a Scrutiny Panel Member please contact Jackie Thomas on 0208 607 7777.

Become a Resident Monitor in your neighbourhood

“I became a Resident Monitor to check on the quality of the cleaning and estate services delivered by contractors in my neighbourhood. It's a way to help Inquilab ensure that standards are high and I can feedback what my neighbours and I think.”

Jason Silvester, Resident Monitor at Triple Court



Join your local focus group

“Being part of the Focus Group means I can raise issues about the building where I live and ensure they are addressed. It's a really effective forum to make sure your voice is heard and that action is taken.”

Adnan Butt, member of the Triple Court Focus Group

If you would like more details about any of these resident involvement opportunities please contact:
Dele Odusanya
on 020 8607 7762
or email:
oladeleo@inquilabha.org

Chair of Residents Scrutiny Panel

£1,500 per annum

We provide and manage over 1,300 good quality, homes to diverse communities in West London, Elmbridge and Slough.

We have a rich history, a distinctive ethos and a clear values based approach to our work. Our sights are set firmly on the future, turning our challenges into opportunities making the most of our unique position in our communities.

We are seeking to appoint a person with high level expertise, with a sound knowledge and understanding of scrutiny matters to chair our Residents Scrutiny Panel.

This is a new arrangement and the Chair and the Panel will work with the Board and staff to help shape and improve services to our residents as the organisation delivers on its ambitions.

Prior scrutiny experience while desirable is not necessary, but a genuine empathy with our vision, values and customers is a must. An annual fee and out-of-pocket expenses are payable.



For further information
and to register your interest
please go to
www.inquilabha.org

If you wish to know more
about the post speak to
Jackie Thomas,
Director of Operations
on 0208 607 7777

Closing date:
31 January 2016

contact with Inquilab

We're available to help from **9am to 5pm Monday to Friday**. Outside these hours, we offer an emergency service.

How customers can contact us



0208 607 7777



customerservices@inquilabha.org



www.inquilabha.org



Somerville House, 50a Bath Road,
Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 3EE

When a customer calls us, we'll

- let them know who they're speaking to
- be polite, positive, professional and friendly
- do our best to deal with their enquiry at the first point of call

Why so many questions?

We need to:

- confirm the caller's identity
- make sure their details (eg mobile number and email address) are up to date
- get as much detail as possible, so we can help them



Helping us to help them

We want to give excellent customer service. Customers can help us by:

- confirming their name address and telephone number
- being ready to answer any additional security questions
- knowing when they'll be at home so we can arrange an appointment (when reporting a repair)
- letting us know as soon as they can if they need to change an appointment
- being courteous to us

Customer satisfaction

We may call or email with survey questions about the following:

- Repairs
- Customer satisfaction
- Our complaints service

These surveys are important and tell us what customers think of our services. The more information we gather, the more we can change and deliver the services customers want.

Christmas Office Opening Hours

- Thursday 24 December 2015 – 9am – 1pm
- Christmas Day and Boxing day - Office closed
- Monday 28 December – Sunday 3rd January 2016 - Office closed
- Monday 4 January 2016 – Normal Service

If you have an emergency over the festive period when our office is closed please call our out of hours emergency repairs service on **020 8607 7777**.

Don't forget the rent this Christmas

It can be very tempting to over spend at Christmas time, but please remember that paying your rent is the top priority. If you don't pay your rent you could lose your home.

Our Customer Account Officers have been working extra hours recently, talking to more tenants in rent arrears about how we can help. If you're worried about making ends meet we can help you by:

- Setting up a Direct Debit to pay your rent
- Applying for other benefit payments you may be entitled to
- Putting you in touch with a Credit Union to help you open a bank account
- Referring you to a £sense advisor for help with budgeting, claiming benefits, tackling debt and boosting your income.



Direct Debits can save headaches



Setting up a Direct Debit to pay your rent and household bills takes just a few minutes but could save you a lot of time and stress!

- Never worry about forgetting to make a payment again.
- Know exactly how much you are paying out every month.
- No more standing in queues or trips to pay over the counter.

Plus, we're even looking into rewarding tenants who pay by Direct Debit for a year.

Performance indicator	Target	How we did April – June 2015 (quarter 1)
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Value for Money Savings	£88,850 of savings	£37,294
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Resident Involvement and empowerment

Calls answered	95%	94%
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Service request resolved at first point of contact	70%	Not in place
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Complaints resolved in 10 working days	75%	75%
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Complaints escalated to stage 2	10%	0%
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Home standard

Repairs completed in time	95%	96%
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Appointments kept	95%	96%
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Repairs completed right first	70%	65%
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Tenants satisfied with the repair (survey)	80%	82%
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Properties with gas safety certificate	100%	100%
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Tenancy Standard

Transfer applications processed in 10 working days	90%	100%
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Rent collected	99.50%	101.10%
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The average number of days to let a property	28 Days	19 Days
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Void (empty properties) loss%	0.50%	0.42%
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Neighbourhood and community standard

Estate inspections carried out	90%	100%
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Estate meeting the gold standard level 3	2	2.1
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Residents satisfied with the cleaning and gardening service	85%	75%
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Customer satisfied with the outcome ASB	75%	67%
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How we did July –
September 2015
(quarter 2)

Commentary

Rating

£78,628	Delivering Value for Money is really important to us, but we have not quite achieved the target in this quarter. However we expect significant VfM savings in Q3 and Q4.	
94%	We have not quite reached our target due to the high number of repairs calls, but we have set up a project to ensure we do better.	
Not measured will report on Q3		
Not measured will report on Q3	A reporting process is being put in place to measure this indicator in Q3	
0%		
90%	We did not meet our target due to the poor performance of one of our three contractors. A performance improvement plan has been put in place to monitor the performance of the non-performing contractor to ensure performance improves.	
93%		
65%	We are working with our staff and contractors and to ensure the diagnosis of works order is correct and contractors have the correct parts to complete the works first time	
89%		
100%		
100%		
103.34%		
19 Days		
0.70%	We have set up the process to improve our performance in re-letting empty properties and we expect performance to improve in Q3.	
100%		
2.1		
Not measured will report on Q3		
Not measured will report on Q3		

Get online with Inquilab



The internet is playing an increasing part in our lives nowadays and we want even more of our residents to get online and benefit from everything it can offer. From finding the best deals, applying for benefits, connecting with friends and family across the world or simply doing your weekly shop; the benefits of being computer savvy are endless.

We're developing programmes to help more people get online and access affordable computer equipment.

We are also recruiting volunteer digital champions to provide support to others. If you are a confident IT user, we can pay for accredited digital inclusion training to enable you to share your IT skills with other Inquilab residents in your local community.

**For more details please contact
Oladele Odusanya on 0208 607 7777
by Friday 8 January 2016.**

Get in touch

Write or visit: **Customer Services, Inquilab Housing Association, Somerville House, 50a Bath Road, Hounslow, Middlesex TW3 3EE**



Call.
0208 607 7777



Email.
customerservices
@inquilabha.org



Online.
www.inquilabha.org

If you need any part of this document in large print or explained in your own language please contact customer services on 0208 607 7777

Gujarati

જો તમને આ દસ્તાવેજની મોટી પ્રિન્ટમાં અથવા ગુજરાતીમાં આવશ્યકતા હોય તો કૃપા કરી અમારી કસ્ટમર એડવાઇસ ટીમનો 0208 607 7777 પર સંપર્ક કરો.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਡੇ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਮਝਾਇਆ ਜਾਏ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਗਾਹਕ ਸਲਾਹ ਟੀਮ ਨੂੰ 0208 607 7777 ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ

Hindi

अगर आप यह दस्तावेज़ बड़े प्रिंट में, या हिंदी में समझाया जाना चाहते हैं, तो 0208 607 7777 पर हमारी ग्राहक सलाह टीम से संपर्क करें

Urdu

اگر آپ کو یہ دستاویز بڑے حروف میں چاہیے یا آپ اسے اردو میں سمجھنا چاہتے ہیں، تو برائے مہربانی ہماری کسٹمر ایڈوائس ٹیم سے اس نمبر پر 0208 607 7777 رابطہ کریں

Farsi

چنانچه نیاز به پرینت این فایل در ابعاد بزرگ یا توضیح آن به زبان فارسی دارید، با تیم پشتیبانی مشتری ما به شماره 0208 607 7777 تماس بگیرید

Somali

Haddii aad waraaqahan ku rabto far waawayn ama in laguugu sharxo Somali fadlan kala xidhiidh kooxda la talisa macaamiishayada 0208 607 7777

Arabic

في حالة طلبك هذه الوثيقة بحروف كبيرة أو شرحها باللغة العربية، برجاء الاتصال بفريق مشورة العملاء على رقم 0208 607 7777

French

Si vous avez besoin de ce document en gros caractères ou expliqué en français, veuillez contacter notre Équipe de Conseil à la Clientèle au 0208 607 7777