



Women's  
Pioneer Housing  
Est 1920

# BOARD MEMBER

RECRUITMENT PACK



AUGUST 2024

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APPLICATION  
PROCESS  
INFORMATION

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ROLE PROFILE  
AND PERSON  
SPECIFICATION

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# YOUR APPLICATION

Thank you very much for your interest in this post. On the following pages, you will find details of the role and the selection process to assist you in completing and tailoring your application.

To apply you should submit:

- An up-to-date CV which shows your full career history – we recommend that this is no longer than three pages;
- A supporting statement explaining why you are interested in this role, detailing how you are a good candidate for this post and how you fulfil the person specification – we recommend that this is no longer than three pages;
- The diversity form – completion of the diversity form is not mandatory, this is requested for monitoring purposes in line with our commitment to equality and diversity; and
- Indicate in your email if you cannot attend the interview date.

Please note that applications can only be considered if all the documentation is complete.

Applications must be received by midday on Monday 2 September 2024 to [hr@womenspioneer.co.uk](mailto:hr@womenspioneer.co.uk). Please ensure we receive your application in good time.

Interviews for this role will likely be held during the weeks commencing 16 and 23 September 2024.

If you wish to have an informal discussion about the role or our organisation or you have any questions you would like answered to help you decide whether to apply, please contact me for a confidential discussion.

Kind regards,

**Susan Bernard**  
Head of HR and Corporate Services  
[susan.bernard@womenspioneer.co.uk](mailto:susan.bernard@womenspioneer.co.uk)  
020 8749 7112



# WELCOME TO WOMEN'S PIONEER HOUSING

I am delighted that you are considering joining our Board. This pack has been prepared to provide further information about us and the role of Board Member – hopefully the information will stimulate you to apply.

Women's Pioneer Housing has an extraordinary legacy, we were founded in 1920 by women and men who understood the link between providing women with good quality affordable accommodation and the wider fight for women's equality. We have always held true to this mission and after a 100 years since our formation, gender inequality remains a huge issue. The need for an organisation that understands and champions women's housing needs has never been more relevant.

A safe home is the foundation in supporting our residents' independence. A women's life is a journey and we need to be able to support our residents along the way. We do this in many ways. We house women of all ages and we are the largest provider of sheltered housing in Kensington and Chelsea. We work closely with our residents to review and continuously improve our homes and services.

These are exciting times for Women's Pioneer Housing, we have an ambitious development programme achieving planning permission for two major developments in 2023. In 2024 we received a prestigious award for Planning for Affordable Housing for our flagship development scheme which recognised the most impactful efforts in increasing the provision of affordable housing for single women, significantly improving access to below market cost homes. The award also recognised environmental quality and the innovative approach and dedication to address housing affordability which set a benchmark in the industry. This success realises our continuing efforts to be a leading voice on women's housing issues, raising awareness of gender inequality and intersecting inequalities linked to race, sexuality, disability, age etc. In 2024 the need to address women's diverse housing needs is perhaps greater than it was in 1920.

We have a strong management team and in Tracey Downie, our chief executive, we have an inspirational leader who has infused energy into our organisation and inspired our people to embrace change. Our Board is diverse and incredibly committed. We have a robust governance structure in place, essential as we undertake new opportunities, prepare for our growth and respond to increasing regulatory expectations.

As a Board Member you will support and contribute to what is an exciting period of change and growth for us. We are specifically looking for professionals or work experience drawn from HR employment law, finance or audit and risk and governance. What matters is your ability to demonstrate confident leadership in achieving collective strategic decisions and working creatively with others. Ideally you will have had some experience of working with boards or committees and we especially welcome interest from candidates with lived experience of, or a personal connection to our founding purpose and values.

If what we say and do inspires you, we hope you apply.

Yours sincerely,  
*Ruth Buckingham*

Chair of the Board





# ABOUT US



Women's Pioneer Housing own almost 1000 properties in eight boroughs in west and north-west London: Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham, Camden, Ealing, Wandsworth, Hillingdon, Harrow, and Westminster. 80% are studio and one-bedroom flats, mostly in converted Victorian buildings, many of which are listed or in conservation areas. There are also 90 leasehold flats, and a small but growing number of higher rental investment properties that fund our future development plans.

Our sheltered housing for single women over 60 is located in Kensington & Chelsea, where we are the largest sheltered housing provider. We have 178 flats for women over 60 who wish to live independently in their own home but with added security and back-up support on site and on call.

## Our Vision

For all single women across London to have access to a safe, secure and affordable home.

## Our Mission

To offer single women access to safe, secure and good quality affordable homes and services that enable women to live a good quality of life. To influence other housing providers so they understand the needs of single women and offer services that meet this need.

## Our Values

### We Put our residents 1st

Our services are designed through collaboration with our residents, and we aim to achieve excellence in all that we do, providing innovative solutions that ensure our residents are positive about living in a WPH home.

### Are Open, trusted and nurture great relationships

Our customers and partners can trust that we will do what we say we will do and feel confident when they contact us that they will receive a service that is exceptional and responsive to their needs.

### Value Equality, inclusivity and empowerment

We champion equality and diversity and in particular, the role that women's housing plays in tackling gender inequality. We work as one team and empower our teams and residents to think and do things differently in recognition of our diversity and the legacy of our founders.

### Provide a Respectful and safe environment

We respect each other and our residents in all our communications and deliver services and create homes in the right environment so that our residents and teams feel safe

# OUR CORPORATE PLAN

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## Our Homes

Our homes will be safe and warm in desirable neighbourhoods and built to a high standard.

We are committed to providing safe, well-maintained and energy efficient homes where our residents can flourish. To achieve this, we will invest in our existing properties as well as seeking opportunities to grow our portfolio. Our team will work to better understand our stock and our residents' specific needs, to ensure our homes can be adapted as individuals' requirements change. Combined with measures to reduce our properties' carbon footprint, this will make our homes fit for purpose now and into the future.

## Our Services

Our services will be excellent, delivered professionally and designed to meet the needs of single women.

We want our residents to be happy with our services, have a strong voice and work with us to ensure we meet their diverse needs. Our team will get to know our residents well, listen to what they have to say and encourage more people to get involved in shaping our services. To make sure residents get the care and support they need as their circumstances change, we will also work with partner organisations to enhance our service offer.

## Our Organisation

Our organisation will be financially robust, well governed with a culture that values people who are passionate about doing a great job.

In such a challenging economic climate, financial strength is fundamental to achieving our corporate aims, managing our growth and adapting to new legislative and regulatory requirements. For our organisation to thrive, we must also have a committed and professional team. So we will create a framework for staff recruitment and development, while nurturing a culture where our people feel empowered and accountable. We will also ensure we have excellent IT systems which can support modern services and allow us to capture, hold and analyse data effectively. This will help us improve our knowledge about our residents and homes, so we can make more informed business decisions.

We have over a hundred years of experience and a strong portfolio of assets which we can use to lever in funds to support the development of our homes and services. Building on our own strengths and working in partnership with our residents and others wherever possible, utilising new technology effectively we are confident we can meet these challenges.

In addition to increasing and continuously improving our own homes and services, we will continue to highlight women's ongoing housing needs to influence local and central government and other housing providers to do more in this area.

We aim to be small enough to be nimble, agile and responsive and bold enough to stand up to inequalities of the world. Central to achieving this impact is realising our desire to work in partnership with our residents to develop our services and to highlight best practice and its impact on women's lives.

# BOARD MEMBERS

## Ruth Buckingham, Chair of the Board

Ruth is a successful consultant with a background in strategic planning, performance management, service reviews, project management and business improvement. She currently works for SUMS Consulting a not-for-profit membership organisation providing expert consultancy to the higher education sector. Prior to this she worked in the housing sector and local government for over 20 years where she helped to deliver improvements in multiple service areas. Before becoming Chair of the Board, she was the Chair of the Homes and Services Committee and a member of both the Audit & Risk Committee and Remuneration & Nominations Committee.



## Judith Page, Vice Chair of the Boards and Chair of the Development & Asset Management Committee

Judith has over 25 years' experience working in property-related roles in social housing, local government and most recently in the heritage sector with a role at the Science Museum. This includes a number Executive Director roles during her nearly 20 years as a senior manager. Alongside her Board role at WPH, Judith is also on the Board of Homes for Lambeth.

Judith's breadth of experience gives knowledge of new build housing; building compliance; procurement and contract management; repairs and maintenance and health and safety.



## Michael Reed, Chair of Audit and Risk Committee

Mike is an experienced finance and internal audit professional who, prior to retirement, held a number of corporate and policy roles in the Senior Civil Service. He now works part-time providing governance seminars for private and public sector organisations.

## Yemí Aládérún Chair of the Remuneration and Nominations Committee

Yemí is an architect and head of development at Meridian Water, Enfield Council. Yemí advocates for education, income & housing equity and broadening access to the built environment. Yemí is a board member of Women's Pioneer Housing association and the Quality of Life Foundation. In 2020, she was selected as one of the UK's next generation of boundary-pushing designers and innovators by the Architect's Journal in its 40 under 40 awards.



# BOARD MEMBERS

## Emily Orme, Chair of Homes and Services Committee

Emily is a non-practising qualified barrister specialising in housing, local government, and property. She has been recommended in the Legal 500 and Chambers & Partners and is author of a number of publications from books to blogs about the legal framework that surrounds social housing. Since 2016, Emily moved into housing management has established herself as a talented and innovative senior leader in the social housing sector, speaking regularly at seminars and conferences about the challenges facing the sector. Emily has previous Board experience with Zebra Housing Association, a smaller provider with circa 130 homes in central London. She recently stood down after 4 years as Chair of Zebra and has also held roles as Chair of Audit and Risk Committee, and Vice Chair of the Board.

Emily is delighted to be able to bring her skills and experience to the WPH Board. Her values are strongly aligned with WPH and she is passionate about promoting supportive environments for women, not just in housing but in all walks of life.

## Leyla Rahman

Leyla has received an award for over 25 years' in Health and Beauty, and has experience in leading a team to achieve goals on sales, NHS prescription and private services in the pharmacy team. She leads recruitment, health and safety, leaning and development, risk and compliance audits to ensure sure Standard Operating Procedures are followed and clinical governance on confidentiality of patients is followed across the department. She has been a resident since 2001 and is currently a member of the WPH Homes & Services Committee and Development and Asset Management Committee.

## Catherine Parsons

Catherine has over twenty years experiencing of working in housing and the voluntary sector supporting people experiencing homelessness and poverty, young people and people living with serious mental illness. She is currently the Managing Director of Big Issue Changing Lives CIC, which works to provide opportunities for those affected by poverty to earn, learn and thrive.

## Kemi Ayodele

Kemi is a senior leader within the built environment sector with over 18 years' experience of leading diverse and highly motivated teams to deliver exemplary results at every stage of the development lifecycle. She has led delivery of large-scale mixed-use developments across residential, commercial and hotel schemes. Kemi has worked on projects globally having delivered projects in Africa, Europe and the Middle East.

## Maryam Antonini-Soumaré

Maryam Antonini-Soumaré has been a resident with Women's pioneer since 2014 and is a member of the Home & Services Committee.

She has worked in the city for financial institutions in investment banking and her expertise in languages enabled her to translate and communicate working closely with and on behalf of senior managing directors, executive chairs and general managers.

In the last few years she has become a voice over artist in French and Italian languages and has worked as a voice over artist for well-known international brands.

# ROLE PROFILE

The Board is collectively responsible for ensuring the success of Women's Pioneer Housing by setting and monitoring the strategic direction of the organisation and ensuring its compliance with all legal and regulatory obligations .

On an individual basis, you will be expected to contribute using your skills and experience to challenge and support the Board come to the best decisions. Your ability to work well with others is a key Board skill and will make the role fulfilling and productive

## BOARD MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

Leadership and governance:

- Uphold and promote the values and objectives of Women's Pioneer Housing. Contribute to and share responsibility for decisions of the Board and/or any Committee or Working Party of the Board of which you are a member. Work with other Board members and staff constructively and collegiately. Provide support and challenge to the executive staff. Uphold the National Housing Federation Code of Excellence in Governance and Code of Conduct and ensure adherence to the Regulator of Social Housing's regulatory requirements. Work to the highest levels of probity, and governance, including declaring conflicts of interests. Prepare well for Board meetings, proactively seek out information and engage with learning and development opportunities and keep abreast of key issues in the housing sector.

Business and performance:

- Contribute to establishing strategic plans to achieve organisational goals.
- Approve the annual business plan, budget and accounts, and key policies.
- Establish and oversee robust frameworks and systems for delegation, risk management and mitigation, business assurance and control.
- Make decisions on matters that might create significant financial or other risk to the company or which raise material issues of principle.
- Monitor organisational performance, using benchmarking and other data.
- Be satisfied that the company's affairs are conducted lawfully and in accordance with regulatory requirements.

Representation and promotion:

- Represent Women's Pioneer Housing as required, positively promoting its work and values.
- Act as an ambassador for Women's Pioneer Housing with external stakeholders.
- Engage with residents and attend resident events to ensure a connection to frontline services.
- Ensure that the Board takes professional advice when it needs to.
- Maintain company confidentiality.



# PERSON SPECIFICATION

## CORE COMPETENCIES

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- Leadership - has a successful track record of leadership having operated and contributed effectively at a senior level in either the private/public, voluntary or community sectors.
  - Communication - able to listen and make reasoned contributions to debate.
  - Strategic thinking - understands the organisation's overall strategy, able to assess implications before making decisions.
  - Judgement - proven track record of providing clear, balanced advice and guidance with the ability to challenge constructively.
  - Influence - demonstrates effective skills in persuasion and negotiation to influence others.
  - Team working - experience of working in collaboration with others, working towards common goals and shared objectives.

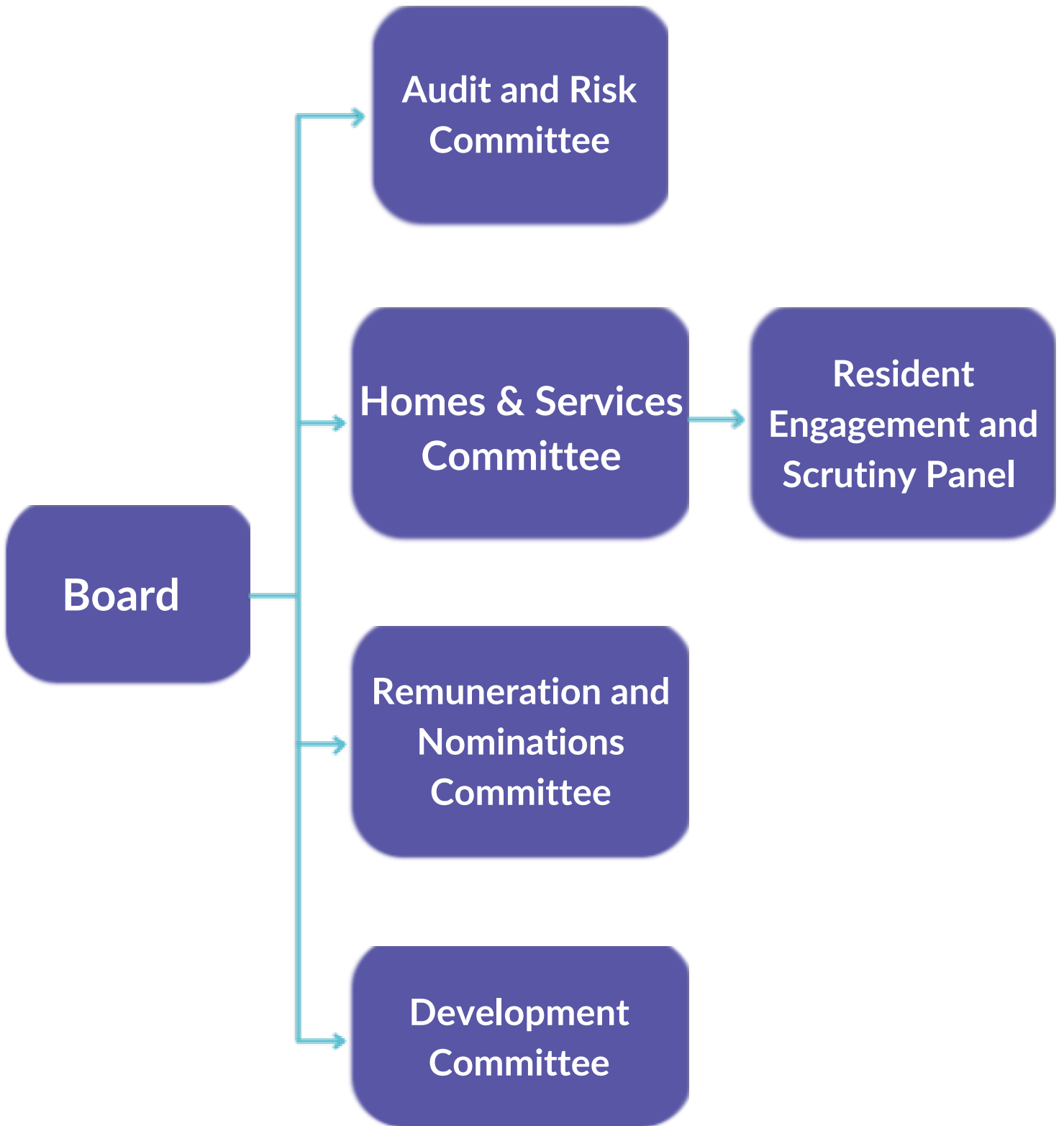
## ABILITIES, SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE

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- Prior experience of Board or committee membership would be an advantage, but not essential.
  - Knowledge of good governance.
  - Track record of managing performance.
  - Able to assess risk and promote risk awareness without being risk averse.
  - Able to apply creative and imaginative solutions, exercising good judgement.
  - Able to participate fully and effectively as a member of the Board.
  - Demonstrate a strong and clear commitment to equality and diversity.
  - Able to inspire others, builds trust and respect from staff and Board colleagues.
  - Comfortable with handling, analysing and prioritising data and information.

## PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES

- 
- Shares the vision, values and commitments of Women's Pioneer Housing.
  - Has credibility and enthusiasm; an effective decision maker.
  - Able to work as a member of a team, likes working with people, thinks corporately with a collaborative style and accepts collective responsibility for decisions.
  - Keeps up to date and informed with relevant issues in the social housing sector and is open to training and personal development.
  - Has the time and energy needed to discharge the responsibilities of the post.
  - Ability to contribute to the corporate management of the organisation, contributing to issues and decisions affecting the whole organisation.

# GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



# KEY TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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## REMUNERATION

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The role is unremunerated. However, all reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out the duties of a Board Member will be reimbursed.

## LOCATION

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Board meetings take place primarily on MS Teams but may occasionally be at our office at Third Floor, 3 Angel Walk, Hammersmith W6 9HX.

## COMMITMENT

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The role is a fixed 3-year term renewable for a further 3-year term (6 years in total). The commitment required is not expected to exceed more than 10 days a year. There are 4 Board meetings a year which are held in the evenings, and 2 away days held in central London. Board members are expected to serve on at least one committee, with the remaining time taken up in attending events, induction and the reading of papers and minutes.

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# KEY DATES AND THE SELECTION PROCESS

**Closing date: Monday 2 September 2024 midday**

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Preliminary Interviews will likely be held during the week commencing 9 September 2024 on Microsoft Teams.

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Final interviews will likely be held during the week commencing 16 September at Women's Pioneer Housing Head office.

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**If you are likely to be unavailable for any of the relevant interview dates specified above, please contact Susan Bernard.**



# WOMEN'S PIONEER HOUSING

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## Contact us



020 8749 7112



hr@womenspioneer.co.uk



<https://womenspioneer.co.uk/>

