



**Women's
Pioneer Housing**
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Pioneer Press
The newsletter for residents of
Women's Pioneer Housing

Driving Engagement, Delivering Excellence

Over the last few months, we have been working to create more opportunities for residents to engage with us directly. Two events that we are especially proud of are *Hear to Hear*, and *Driving Engagement, Delivering Excellence*.

Here to Hear:

During October, WPH staff went door-to-door visiting residents in their homes. This event was an opportunity for our residents and office-based staff to meet each other, putting faces to the names and voices of people they often communicate with but may not have met before. Overall, we spoke with over 200 residents over the course of the week.

During our visits, residents identified outstanding issues that our staff were able to pick up and raise for further action, creating plans with residents to resolve them.



Image: Ruth Buckingham, Board Chair, Natasha Roberts, Director of Operations, and Millie Knight, Customer Services Advisor.

We also spoke with residents about how to get involved in influencing WPH services and invited residents to share valuable feedback about service improvements, specifically sharing ideas for how to strengthen engagement.

This event was the first step in involving the whole organisation in resident engagement, and we will be continuing to explore ways to carry this work forward.

Driving Engagement, Delivering Excellence

The Driving Engagement, Delivering Excellence event was inspired by feedback we received from residents during our *Here to Hear* event, highlighting the need for more in-person opportunities to discuss our service areas with residents. The event was held in-person in February at the University Women's Club.

During the event, residents spoke about barriers to engagement, highlighting themes of time, access, and communication. We also discussed how to strengthen confidence that we have acted on your feedback. Those in attendance also emphasised the importance of clarity within communications, providing clear action plans, and having a system to ensure that staff follow-up to confirm that issues have been resolved.



Image: Driving Engagement event, 22nd February 2025.

We invited residents attending the event to review and provide feedback on our new Resident Engagement Strategy (2025-2028). This was an insightful and important discussion as it helped to identify priorities within the strategy. Residents further highlighted a need for an in-depth action plan of how we intend to achieve our objectives.

We are in the process of developing clear action plans across our services. Valuable insights and feedback shared by our residents are actively being built into these objectives. We would like to take a moment and thank all our residents who attended this event for dedicating their time and sharing their insights with us!

If you are interested in joining future events, we encourage you to contact us and complete our Ad Hoc Resident Engagement Form Please submit this to feedback@womenspioneer.co.uk

Driving Engagement: A Note from our CEO

Over the past 8 months, we have been dedicated to hearing your feedback on our services and listening to your ideas for improvement. Our *Here to Hear* event in October included staff from our HR and finance teams and in February, our *Driving Engagement, Delivering Excellence* event gave us another opportunity to share information about our work, receive feedback to shape how we engage with you and hear from you about how we can improve our services.

As shared on Page 1, these events complemented the feedback from residents who responded to our satisfaction surveys in June and in December. These residents were invited to a meeting at our offices or online, to share their experiences with me and make suggestions for improvement.



Image: Judith Page, Board Member, Aishah Merchant, Customer Services Manager, and Marcia Davis, Resident.

A group of 10 residents engaged in meetings in August 2024 and January 2025 to share concerns, ideas, and feedback to support WPH to deliver a better service. The meetings were both candid and optimistic, with residents giving very clear views about some of our policies or processes that need to change. Although we heard some distressing indications of the impact of unsatisfactory services from WPH, we collectively focused on how we could improve outcomes. These were very productive and inspiring meetings.

We collectively agreed 30 recommendations, and from this, an action plan has been developed. The action plan was shared at the Engaging for Excellence event, where timeframes were added. Whether the actions should already be in practice or they are new ways of delivering our service, we have committed to ensuring the approaches are embedded in our day-to-day work and we are delivering services residents want.

The action plan will be reviewed



Image: Tracey Downie, Chief Executive.

at our next meeting expected to be held in May or June. The CEO & resident group will be monitoring WPH's performance against the action plan and helping us to further shape the plan. This is only the start, and we are dedicated to demonstrating our commitment to being a great social housing landlord and work with you to achieve this. There is more work to be done, and we are committed to creating a service that reflects the type of service that you want.

If you would like to get more involved in our work and help us on our 'Engaging for Excellence' journey, please contact us to complete our Ad-Hoc Resident Engagement form. You will be able to join group meetings regularly or attend one-off events to share your experience and help to shape a better service.

A huge personal thanks from me to all residents who replied to my invitation and joined me in August and/or January to develop this action plan.

[See page 3](#)



Image: Andrea Fraser, Former RESP Chair.

Resident Action Plan

Managing Repairs

Actions:		Timescale
You told us you want us to organise quicker appointments:		
Our action plan set out that we would:		
1.	Book emergency appointments. Health & Safety and other emergency appointments should be booked by WPH and residents must be contacted that day to confirm the time the repair will take place.	Now
2.	Contractor to contact residents for urgent repairs within two days. When residents contact for a repair that needs to be completed within 7 days, the contractor should contact residents within 2 days to make the appointment.	1 month
3.	Contact to contact for routine repairs within 5 days. When residents contact for a routine repair that will be completed within 28 days, the contractor should contact within 5 days to make the appointment.	1 month.
You told us you want us to check that repairs are complete:		
Our action plan set out that we would:		
4.	Invite you to ring back if the repair is not completed. Residents should know when the repair is due to be completed, and encouraged to let us know if there are outstanding repairs or works. Inviting 'ring-backs' or sending emails following the due completion date to check the progress.	Now
5.	Check 60 calls per month. Managers should be more aware of the calls and whether more training is needed so that standard and frequent queries are resolved at the time, or frequently asked questions should be provided to residents.	March
6.	Re-issue satisfaction forms. WPH should return to issuing satisfaction forms to give residents an opportunity to provide feedback on repairs.	April-June
7.	Introduce tenant portals. Residents should be able to access their rent statements and other information, e.g. open repairs or any cases we are supporting with.	July
8.	Close jobs upon completion. We should know if there are any outstanding repairs and contact residents to see if they are still required. For any jobs open 2 weeks after they were due, staff to check with residents if they are complete.	End of April
9.	Hold quarterly contractor meetings. Contractors need to be held to account and told about any complaints, reviewing their performance.	In Progress
10.	Inspect 10% Repairs. We should be inspecting repairs to make sure they have been done correctly, they are good value for money, and residents are happy.	In Progress
11.	Residents to attend annual contractor meetings. Residents should have an opportunity to attend a contractor meeting at least annually.	May
12.	Review poor performing contractors. We need to improve at ensuring our contractors are good at their work, and remove poor performing contractors from our approved list.	Now

Resident Action Plan Continued

Managing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)

Actions:		Timescale
We agreed that when we are managing a case of ASB, we should:		
1.	Provide information on what to expect throughout the investigation. We should have a clear guide for residents setting out what to expect when ASB is reported, and what to do if we do not follow our process.	May
2.	Offer more support for vulnerable residents. Some residents need more support. WPH should find ways of working with other agencies to help provide this support or let residents know how to access support agencies.	October
3.	Issue formal warnings and hold office meetings. WPH should be more formal with residents that are causing ASB.	June
4.	Record misuse of communal spaces as ASB. Residents who misuse communal spaces and put others at risk should be managed through ASB processes.	April
5.	Record misuse of our homes as ASB. Residents who misuse their homes and put other properties at risk should be managed through ASB processes.	April

Managing Communications

Actions:		Timescale
To improve how we communicate, we should:		
1.	Provide a named contact for casework. Residents should know who is dealing with their case and be able to engage directly with them.	March
2.	Provide a case number. Any detailed case should be assigned a reference number to make it easier for residents to track.	May
3.	Provide key information about our services. WPH must provide more information about our services and what residents can expect.	Start in March, Complete in October
4.	Provide information or updates on current cases. Residents should be provided with updates about their cases. The case officer should agree when they will next provide an update, and ensure this timescale is kept.	Start Now, Complete in May
5.	Provide an action plan for more complex cases. For more difficult cases, with several officers involved, a clear action plan should be created and shared with residents. This should be kept updated and residents should know when updates are due to be provided.	Start Now, Complete in May.
6.	Explain who to contact if residents are dissatisfied or the officer does not carry out their promises. All residents should be advised how to raise a concern about a case if they are dissatisfied with the way it is being handled. While this will usually be via our complaints procedure, sometimes residents want someone to talk to about a case, rather than wait for the complaints process.	Start Now. Complete in May
7.	Respect, Listen, Care, Act. WPH to improve how we listen, show professional care, act on our promises and demonstrate respect for resident's views. To be evidenced through testing satisfaction.	Now

Providing Access to your Homes

Our obligation as your landlord is to make sure your home is safe and secure. We do this by carrying out inspections such as gas and electrical safety checks, which we are required to do by law. Other inspections are to ensure that amenities to your home are working the way we expect them to. We do these checks so we can deal with anything that may make your home unfit to live in and so we can make informed decisions on the condition of properties and how we invest in your homes. We also need access to your home if we have an obligation to carry out a repair you have reported to us.

This may involve WPH staff visiting you for instance, we may need to conduct a tenancy audit which allows your housing officer to get to know you and for

you to update them on any changing circumstances or, to inspect a repair a contractor has completed.

Often, we involve contractors or agents acting on our behalf as they have expertise and knowledge to assess or carry out certain checks or works.

In other articles in this newsletter, you will notice lots of activities we have programmed to correctly evaluate how we carry out improvements such as assessments to improve the energy performance of our least energy efficient homes and assessors doing stock condition surveys (see next page). As a result, the number of visits we make are increasing. We can only do this effectively if you provide us with access when we need to visually inspect your home. We will

always try to provide reasonable advance notice and aim to do our checks or works at a reasonable time. Reasonable notice is at least 24 hours unless the issue is an emergency which may be very short notice to prevent damage or danger. WPH staff and contractors doing works on our behalf will always present ID so you can confirm the person coming to your home is genuine.

Refusing access for repairs, inspections and safety checks can put your health and safety at risk, put others who live in your building at risk and may be a breach of your tenancy agreement.

If you have a concern about visits we have advised you we need to make, you can email customerservices@womenspioneer.co.uk or call us on 020 8749 7112

Fire Systems: LD1 Alarm System Installation

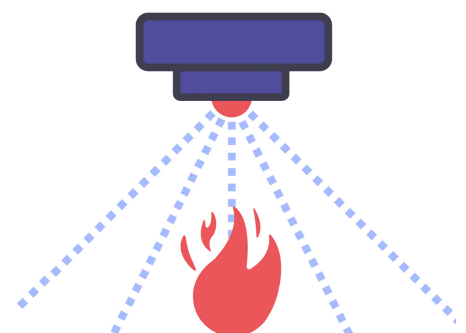
We are pleased to announce that we are nearing completion of our fire alarm installation programme. This initiative to improve fire safety across your homes provides comprehensive fire detection throughout each property, significantly enhancing early warning signs in the event of a fire.

Following recommendations from Fire Risk Assessments completed in 2023, we have been installing LD1 alarm systems across your properties, ensuring wider technologies of fire detection and protection for all our residents.

These alarms will alert you in the event of a fire starting in another area, giving you more time to evacuate your home, significantly improving your safety within your property.

We would like to extend our appreciation to all residents for your support and commitment throughout the installation process. Your participation has been essential throughout this vital project, helping to safeguard our community.

Please bear in mind we are near to completion and the final installations are ongoing. We require our residents to grant access where alarms have not yet been upgraded. Please let us know if you have any queries regarding this.



Stock Condition Surveys

We have recently started conducting stock condition surveys across your homes. This is a specific type of survey which will help us understand the condition of fixtures and fittings within your home. We are working with specialists, Ridge and Partners LLP, who will conduct these surveys on our behalf.

These surveys are vital so we can learn as much information as possible regarding the condition of your home. The surveyors will specifically be looking at internal and external fixtures and fittings, such as bathrooms, roofs, windows, and doors, in and around your property.

Once all the surveys are complete, the data collected will be used to help us to plan for future maintenance and improvement programs.

Ridge surveyors are trained to minimise disruption within your home. However, the surveyors will need to take photos of certain components, such as bathrooms or boilers, along with any hazards that may need attention. The surveyor will need access to all rooms, gardens and external boundaries. We are specifically



collecting information regarding the condition of your property, not how clean or tidy it is!

You may have already received a visit from a surveyor, who will present their ID badge confirming they are from Ridge, and request access to conduct this survey. If you have not yet received a visit, please keep an eye out and ensure you allow access upon request.

If you are not at home, the surveyors will leave a card with their contact details, inviting you to make a follow-up appointment

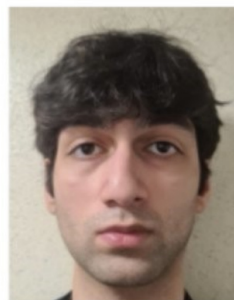
that accommodates you. The surveyor will attempt to visit again on two further occasions to conduct this survey.

This program began in March 2025, and we are aiming to complete all surveys by June 2025. Please provide access when Ridge attends your property so we can plan effectively for major works and future investment. If you have any questions regarding the survey, please contact Customer Services on 020 8749 7112 or email customerservices@womenspioneer.co.uk.



Saways Zalmi

Image: Ridge Surveyor



Fahd Uddin

Image: Ridge Surveyor



Bardya Amin

Image: Ridge Surveyor

Energy Efficiency Grant Funding

We are pleased to announce that Women's Pioneer Housing was successful in our application for £1.3 million in funding from the Warm Homes Fund towards investing in energy saving upgrades to our homes. Women's Pioneer will match this funding creating an overall budget of just over £2.6 million to invest in providing warmer homes.

The fund will help us to upgrade

energy efficiency ratings; this means retrofitting the fabric of the building to bring individual homes up to energy band C with energy efficiency measures like loft and wall insulation and improved ventilation.

By taking these energy efficiency measures we will increase the comfort of our homes, making them warmer, cheaper to run and offering improvements

to help residents possibly save money on energy bills.

We plan to start scoping the work from Spring 2025 to meet the requirements of the fund. We aim that this project will be completed in March 2028. We expect to carry out energy efficiency improvements to 150 homes over the next 3 years.



Energy Price Cap Changes from April

The Energy Price Cap, which controls what most households pay for energy, rose by 6% on 1 April 2025. We've provided some further information below on what this and how it works.

What is the Price Cap?

The Price Cap was introduced on 1 January 2019 by the energy regulator Ofgem. The Price Cap is mostly based on wholesale energy prices, the amount supplier energy companies face for providing energy and applies only to energy providers' customers on standard and default tariffs.

How does it work?

The Price Cap limits what you pay for each unit of gas and electricity that you use, plus it sets a maximum daily standing charge. A standing charge is what you pay to have your home connected to the grid. You must pay this charge even if you don't use the energy.

How much is it?

On 1 April 2025, the Price Cap rose by 6% to £1,849 a year for a typical use household paying by Direct Debit. It is worth noting, it's the rates that are capped, so if you use more energy, you will

pay more. Each Price Cap lasts three months and changes in January, April, July and October.

How do I know if I'm on a price-capped rate?

Remember the Price Cap applies to default tariffs, these are energy plans you don't actively choose and are known as standard variable tariffs. You will be on one if any of the below apply to you:

- You've never switched your energy tariff. You would have always been on your supplier's standard tariff.

Energy Price Cap Changes from April

- You were on a fixed deal but haven't chosen to switch again. If you have previously chosen a fixed deal, once the fix period ends you will be automatically rolled on to a price-capped tariff if you do nothing.
- You were with a supplier that has gone bust. In most cases, if your supplier goes bust, your existing tariff with that supplier ended when or will end you move(d) across to a new supplier.

What can I do to save money?

If your gas supply is provided by a communal boiler, some of these examples may not apply to you but they will apply for your electricity.

1. You can check other energy providers and compare their deals to your current provider. You may find switching supplier offers you a better deal but you should carefully consider how this affects your finances, for example, the different ways you can pay, how long it takes to switch and all the things you need to provide before switching.
2. If you can't get a better deal and have to stay on a standard tariff, you can still pay a little less if you are able to pay for your energy monthly by direct debit as the price cap is set differently according to how you pay.
3. You can also check if your energy provider is offering cheaper deals to the standard tariff and arrange to move away from this.

Due to the recent energy crises, right now very few suppliers are offering better deals.

4. Always try to submit a meter reading when your energy bill is about to become due. This ensures your next bill is based on what you have actually used and not an estimate which may end up costing you more.

If you pay by pre-payment meter and are struggling to top up, your energy supplier should provide 'friendly-hours' credit, additional support credit or emergency credit. You should tell your supplier straightaway if you can't top up your meter for any reason.

Smart energy meters for electricity

There may be benefits to having a smart meter installed in your home to monitor your energy consumption for electricity. With a smart meter's in-home display, you can see your electrical energy use in near-real time. This will allow you to see how much you're using, and what it costs, which may help you make changes around your home to

save energy and money. It's your choice to have a smart meter installed although we recommended that you let us know before you make the change.

If you prepay for your energy, you can still get a smart meter. There are some additional benefits with smart prepay compared to traditional prepayment, or key payment. With a smart meter you can top-up online, on the go or at home.

If you're struggling to pay your energy bills, contact your energy provider first as they may be able to help. They may be able to review your bill and payment plan or have hardship funds available.

There are various charities who support families and individuals struggling with bills. British Gas Energy Trust is an independent charity funded by British Gas and provides money and energy advice. It doesn't matter if you're with British Gas or another supplier. Most of their resources or available on the internet at

<https://www.britishgas.co.uk/energy/help-with-bills/british-gas-energy-trust.html>



Rent and Service Charges 2025

To ensure we can continue to provide excellent services to you, there will be an annual rent increase which is applied across the sector each year. Women's Pioneer residents can face a rent increase in January or in July. For most of the residents, this annual rent increase will take place in July 2025.

We set our rent increases in line with the government's formula, supported by the Regulator of Social Housing. This formula is based on inflation (the Consumer Price Index or CPI) from the previous September plus 1%. CPI in September 2024 was 1.7%, which means the overall rent increase will be 2.7% in 2025. This is the standard method used by all housing associations.

The rent you pay is reinvested in your homes and our services, this includes day-to-day repairs to your home, tenancy management, and major works to make long-term improvements such as replacing bathrooms, kitchens, windows, and roofs. We always aim to ensure your rent is affordable while also funding essential maintenance and service to your homes.



In addition, your service charges are recalculated each year to ensure you are paying the correct amount for the cost of services provided. This will take place in July for every resident, even if your rent charges are increased in January.

Service charges are applied for the maintenance of communal areas, including cleaning, grounds maintenance, pest control, and communal electricity.

We operate a variable service charge, meaning this charge will go up/down each year, based off what was estimated to be spent against the actual costs in your building from the previous year.

Soon you will receive a letter outlining further details to the rent you pay and service charges from July. Please keep an eye out for this information, and let us know if you have any questions or concerns.










If you are experiencing any difficulties in paying your rent, please get in touch with us on 0208 749 7112 or customerservices@womenspioneer.co.uk and a member of our team will assist you. We can support you to ensure you are getting all benefits you are entitled to.

Our 2024 Performance

We are committed to continuously improving our services, to ensure you have a positive experience whilst engaging with Women's Pioneer. To do this we track several key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure service quality, resident satisfaction, and operational efficiency.

We engaged Acuity, an independent research and consultant service provider in 2024 to contact our residents to gain feedback on their views of our service. This provides us with valuable insights into areas where we are performing well and where we have an

opportunity to improve. The latest data provides insights into strengths and areas for improvement. In the below table we are reporting on our performance for 2024 which covers the period 1st January 2024 – 31st December 2024.

Performance Indicator	Target	2024	Rating
Satisfaction with Women's Pioneer's overall service	75%	67%	
Satisfaction that Women's Pioneer provides a home that is well maintained.	70%	69%	
Satisfaction that Women's Pioneer provides a home that is safe and secure	75%	75%	
Satisfaction that Women's Pioneer listens and Acts on resident feedback	65%	47%	
Average number of days to close each ASB case.	85 days	59 days	
Percentage of Stage 1 Complaints responded to on time.	98%	86%	
Percentage of Stage 2 Complaints responded to on time.	100%	87%	
Current Rent Arrears as a percentage of rent due	3%	4.7%	
Percentage of repairs with a first time fix.	85%	90%	

Overall, our performance for 2024 was mixed with several metrics meeting either their target or tolerance. We are delighted that 75% of our residents feel their home is safe and secure and 90% of repairs are fixed on the first visit following it being reported. We also exceed our target in supporting residents with ASB resolutions.

We do acknowledge this data reveals opportunities for areas of improvement specifically around listening to our residents and responding to complaints on time. In 2024, we continued to embed the organisation wide staff restructure and the dedicated front-line services team continue to improve service provisions. In 2025, we will be focusing on

the delivery of our new Resident Engagement Strategy (2025-2028) which outlines a structured approach to involving residents in decision-making, improving services, and fostering an inclusive and collaborative environment. This ensures we listen, act and put residents at the heart of what we do.

Here to Help: Our Customer Services Team

Our Customer Services team is here to support residents and respond to your queries at the first point of contact.

As our Housing Officers, Estate Compliance Officers, and Surveyors are often out in the community and away from their desks, our Customer Services Team are able to support you and answer a range of queries and concerns. When you speak to our customer services advisors, they will aim to help you immediately, asking other team members for advice if it is needed or explain the next step to resolving your enquiry.

Our Customer Service Advisors can help you with matter such as:

- Taking payments over the phone.
- Raising repairs to contractors.
- Offering advice about tenancy matters, such as mutual exchanges.
- Updating your details on our system.
- Advising you on your rent balance or any arrears.
- Providing an update on any repairs or open cases.

We know that many residents are accustomed to speaking to a Housing Officer, however we have a wider range of officers available to work with our customer services advisors and help with specific queries. Our Customer Services Advisors work alongside the following officers to support in answering your queries, or pass you through to



Image: Violet Burrell, Customer Services Advisor

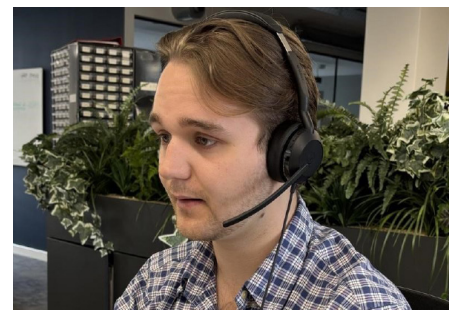


Image: Tom Harrison, Customer Services Advisor

the relevant person if it is necessary:

- Our Financial Inclusion Officer helps you to claim benefits, maximise your entitlement, and support in paying your rent.
- Our Housing Administrator looks at transfer applications, updates tenancy records, and can provide information about moving in or out of your home.
- Our Health, Safety, and Compliance Manager and Property Services Administrator work to keep you safe in your home and arrange appointments to check your gas and electricity is safe.
- Our Finance Assistant is mainly responsible for posting transactions and receipts.
- Our Tenancy Support and Safeguarding Coordinator liaises with social services and ensures the correct support is in place for vulnerable residents.
- Our Resident Engagement and Resolutions Officer oversees our complaints process and implements our resident engagement strategy.
- Our Maintenance Surveyors check damp and mould, organise adaptations to your homes, and inspect work

carried out by contractors.

- Our Scheme Managers can assess your ability to evacuate a sheltered scheme during a fire, and create a personal evacuation plan.
- Our Communications Officer keeps you updated through our website, noticeboards, and this very newsletter, Pioneer Press.
- Our Estate Compliance Team make sure the communal areas of your home are safe and clean.

Our Customer Services Team will be best placed to arrange responses to urgent enquiries, reporting any questions to the relevant officer where needed.

If you still need to speak to your Housing Officer, they will aim to call you back within 5 working days. If you haven't been contacted within this timeframe, please get in touch with Customer Services on the sixth working day where we will be able to help you. Please be aware that our Customer Services team will require details about why you are calling to ensure your query is directed to the most appropriate person.

Join our Editorial Team!

We are inviting our residents to become part of the Pioneer Press editorial team! Whether you have writing experience, have a story you want to share, or feel passionate about keeping the community informed, we want to hear from you. On the editorial team, you will contribute to this very newsletter, ensuring we promote the services and updates you want to hear about.

We are looking to host a Meet and Greet event with our Corporate Services Team so you can ask us questions, provide feedback, and learn more about what it would mean to be on the editorial team. We are really excited to hear from you. Please contact us at customerservices@womenspioneer.co.uk to express your interest in joining, or with any questions you may have.



Tech Talk Workshops

Learning to get online and how to use the internet are important modern skills. With the increasing use of smart phones, tablets and computers, getting to grips with smartphones can feel overwhelming for some, especially if you have problems with your vision, hearing or dexterity.

We want to support those of you who use smartphones to make it much easier for you to get online safely and understand how to do this.



Do you have a smartphone and want to learn about video calling and installing apps safely? Our “Tech Talk” workshops might be just for you.

We will be holding 90-minute roaming workshops across our Older Women’s Housing schemes launching in May 2025.

Our emphasis for these sessions will not only be on the technology itself but on helping you to keep in touch with family and friends. We will be encouraging use of video calling to help avoid isolation and stay in touch with loved ones

These workshops are open to every WPH resident. However, you will need to bring your smartphone so you can experience and participate in the workshop in a meaningful way, tailored to your needs according

to the device you have.

To make each workshop effective, we will provide them in small groups of up to 12 people at each session so that we can provide specific support on the topic. This will be a booking event, unfortunately we will not be able to accommodate a drop-in session where you turn up on the day.

to help us plan how many workshops to arrange, let us know if you are interested by emailing customerservices@womenspioneer.co.uk or call 020 8749 7112 and let our customer services advisor know you want to attend Tech Talk.

We will send you a confirmation notice that your booking has been recorded and will then let you know when and where the workshops is being held.

Thames Water Discount: A Resident's Story

With rising costs putting pressure on household budgets, every discount or saving has a huge impact on daily life. One of our residents, Nicole Ghiani, shares her story about how she saved a significant amount on her Thames Water bill.

Nicole writes "I called them, wondering if I could get a discount and I had a gentleman who said that he would transfer me to a special customer help team, after I told him that I was single and on UC and PIP benefits." Following this, Thames Water offered to assess Nicole over the phone, asking for some details from her latest UC statement. The call handler requested the specific figure for each of the following headings from Nicole's UC statement: 'Total deductions', 'Standard allowance', 'Housing', 'Limited capability for work-related activity', 'Total deduction', and 'Your total payment for this month'.

The call handler from Thames Water then asked Nicole about the amount she was receiving in PIP. Nicole looked at her bank statement to confirm the amount she receives every 4 weeks and passed this information through to the call handler. They also requested information about Nicole's Council tax amount, where Nicole notes "It is worth having the council tax bill handy." The call handler also requested confirmation that Nicole has not been paying council tax as she is exempt. It is worth noting that you may also be eligible for council tax deductions, discounts, or exemptions



such as the single-person discount. You can check this online through your local authority to ensure you are not overpaying on council tax.

Nicole continues that Thames Water "Asked me if I had a chronic illness, because of the PIP, which I was a bit reluctant to disclose because it's embarrassing but she reassured me and said she heard everything possible. So, I told her and she was sympathetic and said there are many people like me, and recorded it for me on my account."

Overall, Nicole tells us the process took less than 10 minutes and did not involve completing a complicated written or online form. The Customer Services Advisor at Thames Water informed Nicole that the assessment had been completed, and she was entitled to a discount as she is single, and her water cannot be on a meter due to living in an old Victorian house which has been converted into flats – similar to many of your homes!

Nicole happily shares that her initial bill of £580.98 had been reduced to £266.73. Further adding, "They confirmed that I was now on their Priority Service Register, and I would receive an email (which I did) with a direct number to call them. They also told me that since I was successfully assessed for discount, next year they will automatically call me to carry another assessment for another discount. So, I won't have to request anything." Nicole expresses that "I wish that I knew this earlier. I am glad I enquired by calling them."

With Nicole's success story in mind, we would encourage you to look at your bills such as your water supply and enquire whether there are any discounts available, especially as a single woman or if you are in receipt of benefits or a low income. This is also applicable to other services such as your Council Tax, so take a moment to investigate this and save the extra pounds.

Meet Our Housing Team:



Committed to providing excellent service and support, our housing team works to ensure every resident feels at home with Women's Pioneer.

From conducting tenancy visits, handling cases, and supporting you in your home, our team brings valuable expertise to each resident and the wider community.



I'm Natasha, Director of Operations, and I hold strategic responsibility for housing and customer services, safeguarding and resident engagement. With 12 years in the housing sector, I bring a wealth of experience in the development and implementation of service improvements.



My name is Laura and I am the new Housing manager with WPH. With a background in both housing and support, spanning 15 years. I'm looking forward to working with the team and residents to ensure WPH homes are a great place to live.



I'm Maureen, and I have many years of experience as a Housing Officer with Local Authorities and support agencies. I have a deep understanding of housing management, tenant relations and community support. I see this role as a constant learning experience allowing me to enhance my skills



I'm Rachel, your housing officer. I have experience in customer services and operations having managed client accounts, audits and processes in the private sector. I look forward to continuing our working partnership as I continue to carry out patch visits.



My name is Eadaoin and I have worked in the housing sector for four years and have greatly valued the opportunity to engage with diverse residents while making a meaningful impact in the community.



I'm Natalie, and I'm coming over from the Compliance team. I am an advocate for the ongoing safety of our residents. I believe that providing service and advocacy to residents is integral to the role and I look forward to working with you to deliver safe housing.



My name is Afiya, and I am the Housing Team Administrator. I'm really enjoying settling into Women's Pioneer Housing and I look forward to supporting you all as best as I can.

Coming Soon: A New Era for WPH's Customer Relationship Management System.

Managing housing services effectively requires a system that is not only efficient and reliable but also responsive to the needs of both residents and WPH staff.

In 2023 we began considering a new Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system as the current system first introduced in 1999 was no longer supporting an efficient way to manage our contacts with you. Following an extensive procurement and testing process, a new Dynamics 365 Housing Management System was chosen. The new CRM is designed to streamline housing services, enhance communication, and improve the overall experience you, our residents.

We have been busy implementing this new system and are excited to announce we aim to launch it later in 2025.

How will this benefit our residents when this is fully implemented?

Faster Issue Resolution - When you call us it is important that your contact is now with our

customer services advisors. They will be key users of the system, will be able to access your records quickly and will ensure that your contacts with us are accurately recorded. Most importantly, they will aim to provide full responses to your enquiries, repairs and complaints which will be quicker and resolved at first contact. This means when you call us you don't have to ask to speak to a particular person and you are not dependent on that person being available.

Real Time Repair Updates - Once a repair is submitted our team can track the status, receive updates and communicate directly with maintenance teams and with you.

Resident Engagement features - Resident satisfaction surveys and forums will improve your ability to engage with us at different resident participation events and improve the different ways we communicate with you.

Support for Vulnerable Residents - The system can flag high priority cases, ensuring that residents who need additional

assistance receive the right support quickly.

Security and Data Protection - Personal data and tenancy details will be stored more securely, ensuring enhanced compliance with data protection regulations.

Resident Portal (Coming Soon)

We aim to introduce a resident portal at the end of 2025 as a key feature of this new system. The portal will empower you with self-service options. You will be able to:

- View your rent account and manage your rent payments
- Report and track repair requests
- Submit and track complaints
- Access important documents and tenancy agreements

This will reduce the need for you to contact customer services for basic inquiries, leading to faster resolutions and a better overall experience enabling you to have more control over your tenancy, your housing needs, and making your interactions with us more convenient than ever before.

At WPH, we are passionate about listening to our residents and ensuring that your voices shape the way we deliver housing services. We believe that meaningful change starts with your opinions, insights, and experiences. We will be consulting with you through the Resident Engagement and Scrutiny Panel (RESP) to ensure the portal best meets your requirements.



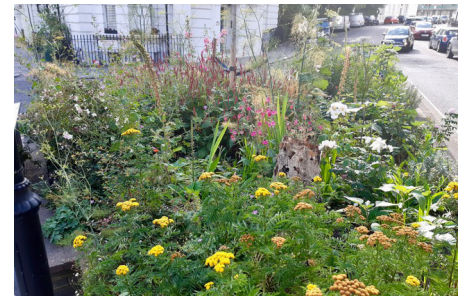
Our Feedback Survey Winner

Following our recent resident engagement event, *Driving Engagement, Delivering Excellence*, we conducted a post-event feedback survey with a chance to win £100 prize. This survey was designed to help us improve future engagement events, and all those who responded to this survey were entered into the raffle to win the prize.

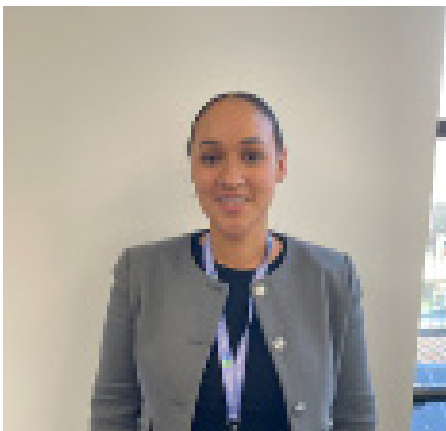
We are thrilled to announce that Alex Julyan was selected as our raffle winner! Alex has been a dedicated gardener over the

past few years, specifically focusing on a neglected traffic island outside her property. Alex contacted us to express that the winnings will go towards plants for the upcoming Summer season to be enjoyed by all within the community.

Alex has sent us some photos of her gardening across previous summers. This spark of floral magic is really heartwarming and a true display of community. We look forward to seeing what blooms this Summer!



Welcome to our New Starters



Jade Faye

Head of Contracts, Compliance and Property Services

Jade leads on gas, fire and other health and safety compliance as well as reviewing and implementing service contracts ensuring we gain the best service and value from them.



Michael Ashley

Maintenance Surveyor

Michael is an accomplished Building Surveyor with extensive experience in the social housing spanning over 15 years in the housing sector. He joined us in March and brings a strong background maintenance services which includes responsive, cyclical and major repairs.



Tom Harrison
Customer Services Advisor

We welcomed Tom at the beginning of April. With extensive experience in customer-facing roles including the estate agency property market, Tom brings transferable skills to support our customer services team.



Michaela McDonald
Executive Assistant

Michaela brings over 12 years of experience as an EA with her most recent role working for an organisation that supports others to measure and manage the contribution their organisation makes to society.



Afiya Johnson
Housing Team Administrator

Afiya has experience both in teaching and social work. Her extensive skills support our housing management team. Afiya joined us in January.



Laura Hagan
Housing Manager

With over 15 years experience in housing and support, Laura brings a wealth of knowledge to Women's Pioneer as our Housing Manager.

Pad Thai

This dish takes inspiration from South-East Asian cuisine with strong and memorable flavours, creating a clean tasting and satisfying offer. We hope you enjoy!

Ingredients (Serves 2)

200g medium with flat dried noodles
4 tablespoons light flavoured oil
200g firm tofu cut into 1.5cm diced (or substitute with 8 large prawns)
3 garlic cloves crushed
1 red onion
2 eggs beaten
1 tablespoon caster sugar
3 tablespoons fish sauce
3 tablespoons lime juice
4 spring onions finely sliced
100g bean sprouts
4 tablespoons roasted peanuts chopped
1 teaspoon dried chilli flakes
2 limes cut into wedges
1 small cucumber cut into chunks

Method

1. Soak the noodles in hot water for 5 minutes to soften, drain well. Heat a wok over medium heat and add 2 tablespoons of the oil,
2. Stir fry the tofu for 3 – 4 minutes until browned all over. Season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and remove from the wok.
3. Add the remaining oil and stir fry the garlic and red onion for 30 seconds or until the garlic is golden, Remove from the wok.
4. Pour in the beaten egg and season to taste. Cook the egg, stirring once or twice for 30 seconds, then add the drained noodles and toss to mix.
5. Add the sugar, fish sauce and lime juice and stir fry for 2 – 3 minutes.
6. Return the garlic and onion to the pan, add the spring onion and bean sprouts. Return the tofu to the wok and toss to heat through,
7. Transfer to a platter and dress with roasted peanuts and chilli flakes, serve with the lime wedges and cucumber.



Free Events in the Community



Yoga for Women

Join these Free Yoga for Women sessions, designed for all levels in a friendly, supportive group setting. Enjoy mindful moments with experienced instructors, focusing on well-being and relaxation. Mats are provided, making it easy for you to step into a practice that nurtures both body and mind. Please note, these sessions are not suitable for pregnant women.

Address: Various Venues

Date and Time: Wednesdays at 10am and 1.45pm

Email ewa.kasjanowicz@vckc.org.uk



Chair Exercises

Run by Age UK every Thursday morning at Mary Smith Court, these chair exercise classes are a great way to get the body moving! Gentle exercise is important for your muscles and your mental health. These classes are free to attend but you must sign up to Age UK and book your place. Contact activities@aukc.org.uk or 020 8969 9105 to book your place. You can enquire about other events at event@aykc.org.uk

Address: Mary Smith Court

Date and Time: Thursdays at 10:30-11:30 am



VE Day 80 Years On...

Learn about your local history and watch Home Front reenactors bring to life what Hammersmith and Fulham would have experienced 80 years ago. Dress up in period clothing at the on-site dress up tent, or come in your own garments and enter the Best Dressed competition! There will be performances, music, jive classes, a military marching performance and more.

Address: Ravenscourt Park

Date and Time: Saturday 10th May from 11:00 am - 5:00 pm.

Website: <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/culture-and-events/be-part-our-80th-anniversary-ve-day-celebrations>



Coffee Mornings

Join your local community for a coffee and a catch up. Hosted every second Thursday at North Kensington Library, this coffee morning offers an opportunity to meet others, get out in the community, and engage with new people. To find out more, please visit <https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/events/coffee-morning-north-kensington-library>

Address: North Kensington Library

Date and Time: Thursday 1st May at 11:00 am., Thursday 8th May at 11:00 am, Thursday 15th May at 11:00 am, and more.

Contact Us

Our Office at Angel Walk is open for pre-arranged appointments only, we are happy to make these arrangements with you. Please only arrive if you have a scheduled appointment as we cannot guarantee the person you need to speak to will be available.

General Enquiries - Monday to Friday between 9:30am and 5:30pm

Phone: 0208 749 7112

Email: customerservices@womenspioneer.co.uk

Feedback

We always welcome your feedback. Please email feedback@womenspioneer.co.uk

Emergency Out of Hours Service



If you need to report an emergency repair when the office is closed, you can call the WPH office number: 0208 749 7112.

The call will automatically be diverted to TCL who will take the details of the repair and alert the relevant contractor.

