

**Women’s Pioneer Housing Association Scrutiny Panel**

**Terms of Reference**

**1. Introduction**

The Homes and Community Agency’s Regulatory Framework 2012 for social landlords states that;

*Providers (housing associations) are expected to engage meaningfully with their tenants and offer them opportunities to shape the tailoring of services to reflect local priorities. Tenants should have the ability to scrutinise their provider’s performance, identify areas for improvement and influence future delivery. Providers will also need to continue to support tenants in developing their skills and capacity so that engagement and scrutiny are effective.*

Women’s Pioneer Housing (WPH) is committed to working with residents to increase accountability and scrutiny to achieve a continuous improvement in services provided.

**2. Aims**

2.1 The Panel will take a lead role in scrutinising services and assessing performance (including KPIs) of WPH in key areas including;

* Customer services including complaints
* Resident involvement
* Value-for-money
* Repairs and maintenance
* Tenancy management
* Estate services
* Service charges
* Income management

2.2 The Panel can request that specific WPH officers attend scheduled meetings to discuss performance in their service areas. WPH will ensure that where possible, these requests are met.

**3. Membership**

3.1 The membership shall include tenants who use and pay for Women’s Pioneer Housing services subject to exclusions where the tenant is:

* An employee of Women’s Pioneer Housing Association
* An employee of any contractor providing services to Women’s Pioneer Housing Association
* A current member of the Women’s Pioneer Housing Association Board of Management
* A locally elected council representative
* A representative of any Women’s Pioneer Housing Association Strategic Partner organisation
* A life partner, close relative or shares a household with any employee, Board Member or contractor of Women’s Pioneer Housing Association
* Subject to current legal enforcement action brought by Women’s Pioneer Housing Association

3.2 The Panel will have a maximum of 12 members. Two places on the Resident Scrutiny Panel will be reserved for leaseholders. In exceptional circumstances, a small addition will be agreed. WPH will maintain a list of interested tenants who will be contacted once a vacancy arises.

3.3 Members will complete an application form and may be interviewed by the Chair and an officer of WPH.

3.4 Panel members will serve a term of up to three years after which they must step down. They can re-apply for membership after a break of 12 months.

3.5 Panel members must understand and comply with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

3.6 The quorum of the meetings will be 4 members.

3.7 Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a Panel member who misses three consecutive meetings will no longer be a member of the Panel. The Chair will write to the Panel member confirming the termination of their membership.

**4. Chair**

4.1 WPH will employ an independent Chair until the Panel is able to provide a tenant Chair. The appointment will be by election by all Panel members eligible to vote.

4.2 The Chair and WPH will agree with WPH a schedule of meetings for 12 months at the start of the year and the agenda for each meeting two weeks before the scheduled date.

4.3 The Chair will be appointed for 12 months before standing down and returning to a Panel member if they wish and are within the three year time limit.

**5. Communication and publicity**

5.1 The Chair and up to two other Panel members may meet representatives of WPH Board to provide reports on the work of the Panel, including any service reviews and to receive feedback from Board.

5.2 Service reviews carried out by the Scrutiny Panel will be presented to WPH Board. The Chair of the Scrutiny Panel will attend the WPH Board to discuss the work of the Panel.

5.3 Members may write occasional articles for WPH newsletter (Pioneer Press) on the work undertaken by the Panel to publicise its activities and to encourage new members.

**6. Resident-led Scrutiny**

6.1 Resident-led scrutiny is a formal function delegated by the WPH Board of Management to appointed residents who form the group membership.

6.2 Members are appointed to conduct scrutiny reviews of WPH’s business activities from a tenant and community perspective and to identify recommendations for improvement based on evidence-based findings.

6.3 Members are required to identify priority topics for investigation based on resident intelligence, priorities, aspirations and WPH performance reporting.

6.4 Members are required to conduct scrutiny projects that take into account the social housing regulatory expectations published by the Social Housing Regulator, Homes and Communities Agency.

6.5 Members are required to work independently of WPH’s Board of Management to whom it shall report its findings and recommendations

1. **Remit**

7.1 Resident-led Scrutiny

The Panel will have the following powers and responsibilities;

* To agree an annual work programme
* To agree a schedule of meetings
* To appoint a Panel Chair
* To request reports and information from WPH
* To request attendance from WPH officers at meetings on relevant agenda items
* To undertake reviews on areas of WPH business with agreement of WPH Board
* To present outcomes of reviews with any recommendations to WPH Senior Management Team and/or Board

7.2 Complaints

One Scrutiny Panel member, along with two Board members, will form a Panel that will consider stage 3 complaints, where having been through stages 1 and 2 of WPH’s complaints process, a tenant feels there complaints issue is still not resolved

**8. Resident-led Scrutiny Accountability and Transparency responsibilities**

8.1 To publish details for choice of scrutiny topics selected explaining decisions made.

8.2 To communicate, reporting, feedback and outcomes of scrutiny investigations to, the involvement framework groups and wider residents in an open and transparent manner.

8.3 Provides wider residents with options to recommend scrutiny topics by means of a process that is easily accessible.

8.4 To ensures that investigations are inclusive and equitable demonstrating that it has taken into account the diversity, geographic factors and demographic profile of the WPH tenants.

8.5 To be engaging and not exclusive of the wider WPH resident involvement structure in its approach to scrutiny activities.

8.6 To conduct and publish an annual review of the impacts, cost-benefits and value of the resident-led scrutiny programme delivered.

**9. Resident-led Scrutiny Support and Resources**

9.1 A dedicated support officer at WPH will be a point of reference for the scrutiny membership providing communication, induction and support as and when required.

9.2 An annual budget will be provided to support the training and development of the Scrutiny by WPH. This will enable capacity building and develop skills within the Panel

9.3 An annually agreed budget to support the activities required to conduct good quality scrutiny investigations including where needed access to independent and external support.

**10. Resident-led Scrutiny Approach**

10.1 To develop a project programme detailing specific, measurable and achievable tasks, responsibilities and timeframes.

10.2 To manage scrutiny team communications that are programmed and include flexibility offering face-to-face and remote working options.

10.3 To schedule project activities that include consultation and involvement of wider tenants, residents and customers as appropriate to selected topics.

10.4 To provide project conclusions and recommendations that are supported by evidence and are subject to considerations of lead managers relevant to the service or topic to jointly consider viability.

10.5 Any rejected or amended recommendations will be explained within the detail of final scrutiny reporting to the Women’s Pioneer Housing Association Board

**11. Administration**

11.1 Agenda, minutes and other papers will be dispatched by WPH one week in advancevia emailor if requested by post.

11.2 Meetings will be bi-monthly at a venue agreed by the Panel. Costs of hiring and any refreshments will be borne by WPH. There will be a minimum of six meetings in any 12 month period.

* 1. Minutes will be taken by WPH and agreed by the Chair before publication.

**12. Training**

12.1 WPH will undertake a training needs assessment for all members and agree with the Panel an annual programme to include;

* Chairing skills
* Team working
* Scrutiny in practice
* How housing associations work

12.2 Training will be provided by an independent consultant at times and dates to be agreed with the Panel.

**13. Expenses**

13.1 Panel members will be entitled to claim reasonable expenses towards travel and childcare. Any other costs will be considered by WPH. Panel members will be required to complete an expenses claim form and will be reimbursed by WPH by cheque.

**14. Review**

14.1 The Terms of Reference will be reviewed bi-annually by the Panel and WPH officers.

I confirm that I have read, understood and commit to the requirements of this Terms of Reference.

**Signature:**

**Print Name:**

**Date:**