

Pioneer Press



THE NEWSLETTER FOR RESIDENTS OF WOMEN'S PIONEER HOUSING

Merry Christmas from Women's Pioneer!



Merry Christmas from Women's Pioneer Housing. The Board and staff would like to say a big thank you to all the residents who have worked with us this year to improve our homes and services and to build a community here at WPH.

We have loved working with the Resident Engagement and Scrutiny Panel, who have given their time to provide us with advice and constructive challenge. We are also grateful to all the other tenants and leaseholders who gave us feedback and advice: by email, through focus groups, at "Meet the Managers" or

drop-in sessions and in responding to our quarterly telephone surveys.

Your experience has informed all the changes and improvements made this year. Changes include revised policies and procedures (e.g. service charges, voids, repairs, allocations and lettings, kitchen and bathroom upgrades, domestic abuse). We are also building more homes, which are better designed to meet residents' needs with a focus on accessibility, as well as offering more support and services, e.g. IT training and benefits advice.

Furthering this, we have reorganised our staff teams and are working to improve communications between teams, and we are investing in IT improvements to enable faster and more efficient services.

It takes time to see the impact of all this activity but resident satisfaction is improving. The results from our latest telephone survey suggested that 84% of residents are now satisfied with our overall service.

A housing association dedicated to meeting women's housing needs remains as important in 2018 as it was in 1920 when Women's Pioneer Housing was established. In 2019 we will continue to work with residents to improve our own homes and services and to influence others to do much more to meet women's housing needs.

On behalf of all the staff and myself, I wish a Merry Christmas to all, and let us look forward to another great year in 2019.

Denise Fowler, Chief Executive.

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PIONEERING COURAGE

Office closure over Christmas and New Year



Our offices will close early for the Christmas period, at 1pm on Christmas Eve (24th December).

We will reopen as usual on Wednesday 2nd January at 9.30am.

If you need help with an emergency repair whilst our office is closed, please call one of the numbers listed on the back page, or call the office number to hear a recorded message listing emergency contacts.

DON'T LOOK NOW: ANSWERS TO OUR QUIZ ON PAGE 7

1. David Davis, Dominic Raab,
2. Harry Kane
3. Donald Trump and Kim Jong-Un
4. Meghan Markle and Prince Harry
5. Drive a car
6. Salisbury
7. George Bush Senior
8. X Factor
9. Parliament Square
10. Frances McDormand (for Three Billboards outside Ebbing, Missouri).

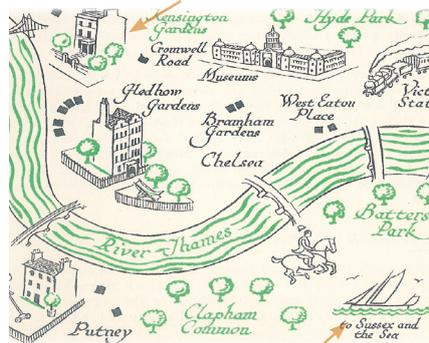
As many of you will have read before, we are currently exploring the roots of Women's Pioneer Housing as part of our Heritage Lottery funded project:

Pioneering Courage: Housing and the working woman 1919 - 1939.

We are delving into our history to explore links between housing, feminism, and the efforts for women to become 'self-dependent' after winning the right to vote.

We are repeating our call for volunteers, and we need family history volunteers to help research the stories of women who lived in our homes 100 years ago, as well as researchers with a background in teaching or nursing. We would also love to hear from people interested in assisting in a film about our early history.

What was life like living here in 1935?



And who designed this map?

Roles include:

- Acting
- Scriptwriting
- Filming
- Designing artwork

If you would like to know more, please contact Sorcha on sorcha.nif@womenspioneer.co.uk.

We speak to volunteer Anne Sharpley about her highlights of the project so far

Why were you interested in the project?

My aunt, Mary Falkner, lived in WPH flats for 53 years, in 4 different WPH properties. So when the U3A (University of the Third Age, an organisation for older/retired people) advertised WPH's history project in London, I applied as I already had fond memories of WPH as well as a general interest in women's history.

What has been your highlight so far?

I enjoy the detective work involved in tracking down the right woman from the list of "possibles" resulting from an online search, and the sense of achievement when "cracking the

case". We have uncovered some fascinating individual histories.

Early WPH tenants included the first woman scientist at the Natural History Museum, the UK's first woman Professor of Geology, writers, actresses, artists and musicians as well as many teachers, nurses and clerical workers.

What's next?

There is a call for more blue plaques for Pioneering Women in London. We have come across many women associated with WPH who might qualify for a blue plaque, and we hope to make a formal application in the New Year.



New Repairs Policy

As a result of your feedback, we have made some changes to our repairs policy and our contractors code of conduct:

1. Repairs will now be dealt with within **24 hours** from when you report them for emergencies, and within seven working days for other urgent repairs. All of our contractors have been advised of the new time frames.

2. WPH will now make good any decorations damaged as a result of a breach of our repairing obligations. If wall or ceiling decorations are damaged, we will either paint the whole area white or offer you a voucher for paint to redecorate.

3. In some sheltered schemes, we will be reintroducing a programme of 'Repair Days' for non-urgent works. On these set days a contractor will attend an area to carry out a list of works. Scheme managers are the initial point of contact for these days.

4. We have now undertaken to replace tap washers where needed and in some cases carry out some other small jobs for vulnerable tenants, or where it would be unsafe for tenants to carry out the repair.

The full policy is available on our website. Contact our repairs team if you would like to find out more information on our new repairs policy, on **020 8743 4422**.

Contractors' Code of conduct

For example:

- All contractors must have their ID on them when working in WPH properties, which will increase safety for our residents.
- Contractors must respect tenant privacy and the regulations stemming from GDPR which will ensure tenants' data is not misused.
- Contractors must press the front door bell/intercom before entering buildings.
- The code of conduct reflects our principles of equality, diversity and inclusion.

Our new kitchen & bathroom upgrade programme

In 2017, we started a pilot project of replacing kitchens when tenants are still in situ.

The pilot included upgrading 11 kitchens, and your feedback so far has been very positive.

We will now roll out a more extensive programme of kitchen and bathroom replacements from 2019.

We are finalising the prioritisation system for the upgrades, and once agreed we will let you know via letter when to expect an upgrade. It will include kitchens over 20 years old and bathrooms over 30 years.

In order to make sure that our homes remain suitable for residents as they get older, we will fit showers rather than baths where it is practical to do so as part of this upgrade programme. We also

want to be able to offer you a choice of colour schemes, and will be setting up focus groups with tenants to help us agree these.



YOUR HELP TO DEVELOP



Allocations and Lettings Policy

We told you in the last edition that we were reviewing our Allocations and Lettings policy, with staff and residents.

We held a focus group in October, and received emails to feedback@womenspioneer.co.uk. A big thank you to all the residents who shared their views and/or came to the focus group.

We have many tenants on our transfer list, and our waiting lists are always over-subscribed. We receive a number of referrals from specialist agencies working with women needing urgent housing. Also, due to historical grant funding rules, WPH need to offer 50% of our empty studios/1 bedroom flats and 75% of our 2+ bedroom properties to local councils to nominate people for housing.

Whilst feedback from tenants recognised that we only have a very limited supply of vacant flats each year, questions were raised about whether people recommended by the council were given priority over those waiting for a transfer or waiting list applicants. Concerns were raised about the allocation of ground floor/accessible flats given the number of existing tenants waiting for such accommodation. A few such tenants are at risk of harm because they would have difficulty evacuating their current flats.

This feedback has been used to review and amend our Allocations & Lettings policy. This is now available on our website but is summarised here.

Existing tenants:

- Where possible, when a property becomes vacant we will first consider whether it meets the needs of someone on our transfer lists. If the property is accepted by an existing tenant, the resulting void may be offered to the Council if required by a nomination agreement.

The priority order for transfers will be:

- Tenants at risk of harm
- Tenants being decanted for major repairs or redevelopment
- Tenants with a category A medical priority
- Tenants with a category B medical priority
- Tenants with a spare bedroom who wish to move to a smaller flat
- Tenants who are severely overcrowded
- Tenants with a category C medical priority

There is a provision in the policy to manage situations where a resident meets more than one criteria, or there are exceptional circumstances.

We are also producing up-to-date guidance on mutual exchanges, including exchanges between WPH properties, and will do more to advertise and facilitate this option. We will re-introduce an online mutual exchange facility on our website.

Our Waiting Lists

- We currently operate three waiting lists for new applicants:
 1. For under 35s in a building with shared facilities.
 2. For women over 35-60 year olds to live in general needs properties.
 3. For women aged 60+ to move into sheltered.
- We agreed with residents to remove the upper age limit on the general needs waiting list. Women 60 or over now have the choice of general needs or a sheltered scheme.
- We received feedback that first-come first-serve was not the fairest way to allocate, so we have created a priority order based on housing need. We will open the waiting lists once a year at a set time for a certain period, so women who work shifts or similar have the chance to join the list.
- Residents agreed with our income and savings limits so these will remain.

Referral agencies:

- When a property is unsuitable for anyone on our transfer or waiting lists, we will often work with a referral agency to find a tenant. We are making changes to our referral agency selection process and will be prioritising referrals for women who specifically need women-led housing.

OUR POLICIES



What reviews do we have coming up?

January & February

1. Rent Arrears Policy task and finish group

Covering:

- Our current rent arrears policy and where we need to improve
- The support offer for those in arrears

We will do this through:

- Members of the Resident Engagement and Scrutiny panel running a task and finish group
- Residents will be asked for their views by the panel members

2. Anti-Social Behaviour pop-up engagement week

Covering:

- Our current ASB policy and procedure where we can improve

We will do this through:

- Surveys & focus groups
- One to one meetings with residents who have had recent experiences with ASB

3. Sign up pack review

Covering:

- The current process for signing up tenants - are we asking the right questions?
- What do new residents think of the process?
- Do we know enough about the background and history of new tenants?

We will do this through:

- Resident Scrutiny Panel meeting with staff and residents



To get involved with these reviews, or for more information, email feedback@womenspioneer.co.uk



How we involve residents:

Tenant board members

Our tenant board members help govern our organisation.

Resident engagement and scrutiny panel members

Our resident engagement and scrutiny panel look at our performance and guide us on topics to review.

Task and finish groups

Who lead task and finish groups, incorporating more residents to give their feedback.

Pop-up engagement, involving a wide range of residents and can include surveys and focus groups

As part of a task & finish group or other one-off reviews.

Goodbye Rachel

We are very sad to announce that our long-serving Housing Officer, Rachel Forrest, is leaving after 24 years with Women's Pioneer to join the John Lewis Partnership in January.

Rachel said that she will miss the variety of the work she does as a Housing Officer as well as the beautiful buildings that Women's Pioneer owns, but most of all she will be sad to leave behind the wonderful residents and staff that she has worked with over all these years.

We all wish Rachel well in her new career.



Universal Credit Update

As of this month, all the boroughs where WPH have properties are moving to **Full Service Universal Credit**.

This means if you are of working age, all new claims for Housing Benefit, JSA, ESA, Income Support, Working Tax Credit & Child Tax Credit will be a Universal Credit claim. Please note that there are five week waits for your first payment, but you can apply for an **Advanced Payment**. These are loans from Universal Credit for the amount you are eligible for.

If you are struggling with money or have any questions please contact Megan or your Housing Officer on **0208 749 7112**.

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An invitation to the DEBUT meeting of the Women's Housing Forum



We are very excited to announce and invite you to the Inaugural Women's Housing Forum's public event! We are meeting on **Friday 18th January**, from 10.30am to 4pm in Central London – put it in the diary now!

WPH Chief Executive Denise Fowler co-founded the forum with Housing for Women's Chief Executive Zaiba Qureshi. The steering group of the forum comprises tenants and women working in different parts of the sector. Our vision for the forum is a place where everyone who cares about women's housing can have an equal voice and come together to tackle the structural inequality that women face, and aims to influence housing providers to address women's needs.

The forum is collaborative by nature, we want to share ideas and suggestions on what the forum should cover, and how. For that reason, we are running the event in a workshop format, with each session led by someone with lived experience of the issues raised and a housing professional. We have been allocated **five priority spaces** for Women's Pioneer residents,

The workshop topics:

- **Women, Young Girls & Homelessness**
- **Domestic Abuse**
- **Older Women**
- **Women and Design**

so please let us know as soon as possible if you would like to attend.

For more information, or to confirm your attendance, contact Symone via email, symone.clark-mcguire@womenspioneer.co.uk, or call the reception on **020 8749 7112**.

The event will then be open to the public, for anyone interested in women's housing issues via Eventbrite. In the meantime, please follow the forum on Twitter, [@Womens_Housing](https://twitter.com/Womens_Housing).

End of the year quiz

What a year it's been! How much of the last 12 months can you remember?



- 1** Name any two of the three MPs who have held the post of Brexit Secretary in 2018.
.....
- 2** Which English footballer won the Golden Boot at this summer's World Cup?
.....
- 3** Which two world leaders held a summit meeting in Singapore on June 12?
.....
- 4** Who got married in St George's Chapel, Windsor, on May 19?
.....
- 5** What have women in Saudi Arabia been allowed to do for the first time this year?
.....
- 6** In which English city was the nerve agent Novichok used this year, allegedly by agents of the Russian secret service?
.....
- 7** Which former American president died in 2018?
.....
- 8** What competition was won by Dalton Harris this year?
.....
- 9** Where in London was a statue of suffragist Millicent Fawcett unveiled this year?
.....
- 10** Which actress won their second Best Actress Academy Award this year?
.....

Feminist Library reopening!

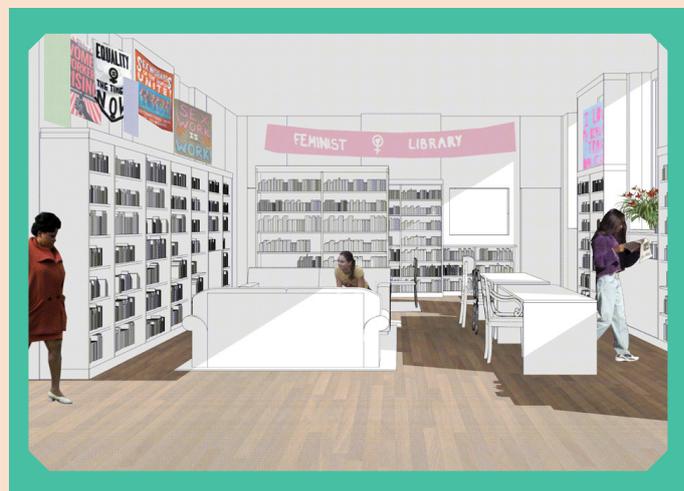


After a long struggle against eviction, the Feminist Library (founded in 1975) has found a new home in Peckham. They will be based in the Sojourner Truth Community Centre on Sumner Road, named after famous slavery abolitionist and women's rights advocate Sojourner Truth.

Following their very successful crowdfunding campaign, the Feminist Library is due to re-open at its newbase in Spring/Summer 2019.

They will be occupying the community centre alongside a number of active local, community organisations, including a couple of other women's groups, and hoping to make the Library an even more accessible, inclusive and vibrant feminist hub than it has been so far, by working with the local community.

Right: their vision for the new building



Free events January to March

Monday 7 January to Friday 15 February, HANDLE WITH CARE

RHS Lindley Library, 80 Vincent Square, SW1P 2PE, Monday to Friday 10am to 5pm - this exhibition describes how we protect and conserve the precious materials that have been entrusted to our care.

Wednesday 9 January to Monday 4 February GERRY LAFFY ART COLLECTIVE EXHIBITION

Lauderdale House, Waterlow Park, Highgate Hill, N6 5HG, 11am to 4pm - a collective of artists established by mixed media artist Gerry Laffy.

Until Sunday 13 January, BLACK MIRROR

Saatchi Gallery, Duke Of York's HQ, King's Road, SW3 4RY, 10am to 6pm - 26 contemporary artists explore art's role in social satire, and how political uncertainty has influenced art of recent years.

Friday 18 January to Sunday 3 February, MARK THOMPSON: THE WORLD DISTILLED

Proud Central Gallery, 32 John Adam Street, WC2N 6BP, Monday to Saturday 10am to 7pm, Sunday 10am to 6pm - exhibiting his most recent collection of formidable landscape paintings.

Until Sunday 20 January, REMI ROUGH: VOLUME

113 Bellenden Road, SE15 4QY, Thursday and Friday 2pm to 6pm, Saturday 12pm to 4pm - a dynamic wall installation that works with 2 dimensions but seduces us with the third and pushes beyond into the infinite.

Until Sunday 27 January, THE ENCHANTED GARDEN

William Morris Gallery, Lloyd Park, Forest Road, E17 4PP, Tuesday to Sunday 10am to 5pm - explores how Morris's contemporaries and subsequent generations of artists have responded to the allure of garden spaces, using them as stages for the magical, menacing and romantic.

Friday 8 February to Sunday 10 February, LONDON BOOKSHOP CRAWL

London, City Wide, WCI, Friday & Saturday 10am to 10pm, Sunday 10am to 8pm - bookshops across central and greater London will be offering discounts, perks and special events for bookshop crawlers. <http://www.bookshopcrawl.co.uk>.

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Emergency out of hours numbers

If you have a genuine emergency when our office is closed, please call the number below (leaving your name, address and phone number for voicemail messages) for the type of repair you need. Please let us know when we reopen if you needed help in an emergency.

Building Maintenance (roofing, windows, carpentry, locksmith, plumbing and electrical):

24 Hour Solutions Ltd - 0845 544 2842.

Confirm when calling that you are a WPH tenant.

Power cut to the whole house:

UK Power Network 0800 056 6341 or 0333 32 32 105

Gas leak: National Grid 0800 111 999

Lift breakdown: Specialist Lift Services: 01732 455 771

Warden Call systems: S.E.A 01322 619 155

Communal heating

S&S Burners 020 8330 7992

Individual boilers, radiators and heating controls: Daynight 01425 623954

Faulty fire alarm in a shared part of your building:

Chameleon systems 01757 244 511 - for all buildings except:

- Browning House and Nightingale House: call Element Fire 0845 299 7005
- Dain Court & 15/16 Bramham Gardens: call Fire Systems 0208 5415 646.

Ordering repairs

Call the team directly Monday to Friday between 9.30am and 5.30pm:

 020 8743 4422.

The emergency numbers to the left are only to be used for a situation that cannot wait until our office reopens.

Contact us

Our Wood Lane office is open from Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5.30pm.

Call in or write to: 227 Wood Lane, London, W12 0EX.

Phone us:  020 8749 7112

Email: info@womenspioneer.co.uk

Feedback: feedback@womenspioneer.co.uk

womenspioneer.co.uk

Twitter: [@womenspioneer](https://twitter.com/womenspioneer)

Interested in joining the Pioneer Press editorial panel?

Email: symone.clark-mcguire@womenspioneer.co.uk