



Women's Pioneer Housing

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Women's Pioneer Housing's (WPH) mission is to provide homes and services which offer a springboard to independent women to achieve their potential. We are committed to supporting our resident's independence and wellbeing through our homes and services.
- 1.2 This Policy outlines our approach to providing additional support to those residents who need it in order to maintain their independence and wellbeing.

2. Regulation and legislation

- 2.1 The Regulator of Social Housing outlines requirements under specific standards. Under the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, registered providers shall demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs.
- 2.2 Under the Neighbourhood and Community Standard, registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.
- 2.3 The Equality Act 2010 protects certain groups from discrimination, which means we must ensure those with protected characteristics are not disadvantaged because of those characteristics. These characteristics include things that may lead to a need for additional support to maintain independence and wellbeing, for example age.

2.4 The Equality Act 2010 also allows voluntarily help for people with a protected characteristic. This is called 'positive action'. Taking positive action is legal if people with a protected characteristic are at a disadvantage, have particular needs or are under-represented in an activity or type of work.

3. Independence and wellbeing statement

3.1 Our corporate plan outlines our commitment to supporting resident's independence and wellbeing; we will engage and learn from our residents, and develop our homes and services to support residents' independence and wellbeing. We will work with external providers and partners to meet our customers' diverse needs. We will enable our residents to provide mutual support and to foster communities.

4. Policy

Identifying support needs

4.1 A resident who needs support could be anyone who needs additional support to meet their obligations under their tenancy. In particular, our approach to independence and wellbeing recognises that support need may not be a permanent state and that people may need support at different times for different reasons.

4.2 We will have multiple opportunities to identify residents who may need extra support to enable their independence and wellbeing. This includes various touchpoints with our services, as well as contact from neighbours and other agencies alerting us to potential support needs. Examples of times when we would identify a need are:

- At sign up – the sign up process we will aim to identify support needs and establish whether the resident is able to live independently in general needs accommodation.
- Induction visit – a home visit is conducted within days of a new resident moving in, showing the resident how to use various aspects of their home.
- The welcome visit – is conducted within six weeks and will identify whether the resident is initially coping in their home, for example if they have furniture, food, fuel and have begun to settle in to their new community for example having registering with a GP.
- Starter tenancy review visit – six months into a new tenancy a visit will occur to discuss the tenancy as well as other aspects mentioned above.
- Annual visit – we will attempt to conduct one visit to every residents each year where support needs can be identified.
- Any other touchpoint – for example phoning the office, during communal area inspections, by our contractors when completing a repair. We may identify fuel poverty for example at the annual gas safety check.

4.3 Often needs identified can be resolved by the Housing Officer, for example through referral to a support partner. Sometimes the Housing Inclusion Manager or Financial Inclusion Officer will need to intervene.

5. How we will meet common areas of support need

- 5.1 There are many areas which WPH can either support directly, to maintain independence and wellbeing, or work with third parties to provide support. We will maintain a database of third party support agencies.
- 5.2 We will facilitate access to relevant services our residents need to maintain their independence and wellbeing, for example by providing opportunity for co-location at Older Women's Housing schemes or funding transport.
- 5.3 Common areas we will identify and support are:

Fuel poverty

- 5.4 We will support residents who are experiencing fuel poverty through referrals to partner agencies, who will support residents to provide fuel saving devices as well as obtain grants. The Financial Inclusion Officer will also support residents who need it to complete grant applications with major energy providers to clear debt.

Furniture poverty

- 5.5 We will work with partner agencies and relevant local authorities to source grants for white goods and household items for those who do not have the means to purchase them themselves.

Food poverty

- 5.6 We will hold food bank vouchers for relevant, local food banks and act as signatories for our residents.

Financial poverty

- 5.7 We will offer benefit advice through our in-house Financial Inclusion Officer for any resident who needs to claim benefits, appeal decisions and manage their Universal Credit claims.
- 5.8 We will work in partnership to offer free and confidential debt advice for our residents.
- 5.9 We will support residents to set up affordable payment plans as per our Rent Arrears Policy.

Employment Support

- 5.10 We will work with partner agencies to support residents who are not working and wish to work into employment.

Mental Health

- 5.11 We will provide training for frontline staff in basic mental health knowledge, enabling them to identify need and understand where to refer a resident.

Physical Health

- 5.12 We will support resident's independence and wellbeing in their existing homes through our Aids and Adaptations Procedure.
- 5.13 We will support some residents with 'small jobs' through a partnered and contracted Handy Person service as per the Repairs and Maintenance Policy.
- 5.14 We will provide for those identified as in need of additional fire safety items, such as battery alarmed smoke detectors, vibrating pillows or light alarms.

Domestic Abuse

- 5.15 We will maintain our Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation.
- 5.16 We will support residents as per our Domestic Abuse Policy.

Extreme Weather

- 5.18 During extreme weather such as temperatures above 30°C or extreme snow and ice we will contact those residents on our 'Vulnerable Resident List' to ensure they are safe.
- 5.19 We will work with relevant local agencies to support residents during extreme weather, for example with Age UK, or through support to claim the Winter Fuel Payment.

Hospital Discharge

- 5.20 We recognise that many residents will be discharged from hospital to their homes and may need additional support during this period to maintain their independence and wellbeing.
- 5.21 We will liaise with the discharging authority to gather information on housing need.
- 5.22 We will liaise with social services to ensure a care package and/or relevant support is in place and raise concerns if we believe this support should be in place and is not.
- 5.23 We will conduct a home visit within two weeks of our knowledge of a resident discharged from hospital.
- 5.24 If we believe the accommodation to no longer be suitable for the resident we will explore options for transfer within our stock if appropriate, or raise concerns to

relevant authorities to facilitate a move to supported accommodation. We may identify that accommodation is no longer suitable for a resident without a hospital discharge; in this case we will also liaise with relevant partners to facilitate a move.

Communications

- 5.25 We will ask for communication preferences from our residents, such as large font and language needs and vary our approach to meet these wherever possible.
- 5.26 We will hold, and regularly update, a list of residents we believe to potentially need additional support, and contact them every 3 weeks as part of a welfare check. We may also conduct home visits for those who do not answer the phone. Any frontline staff can refer someone to join the list and the FIO will decide if they should join.

Wellbeing and community

- 5.27 We will run a welfare fund that will provide grants for community projects pitched by and voted upon by our residents as well as individual items related to housing for residents in financial need. See the Welfare Fund Procedure.

6. Training

- 6.1 Staff will receive a rolling training programme to support them to identify residents who need additional support to maintain their independence and wellbeing, as well as how to decide what action to take and which agencies to work with.

7. Older Women's Housing

- 7.1 WPH is the largest provider of older people's housing in RBKC. Our buildings are highly desirable in sought after areas and we wish to promote our offer of Older Women's Housing. We will do this through social media, our website and our annual, public waiting list.
- 7.2 Older Women's Housing has the added benefits of an on-site Scheme Manager and Community Alarm System.
- 7.3 We will work with RBKC to influence their older person's strategy, as well as other key agencies such as Age UK to support our resident's independence and wellbeing in Older Women's Housing.

8. Governance

- 8.1 The CEO is overall responsible for the corporate strategy and the Independence and Wellbeing Policy.

8.2 Responsibility for corporate objective 2 – maintaining our residents independence and wellbeing and this policy is delegated to the Director of Housing.

8.3 The Housing Inclusion Manager is responsible for day to day implementation of the policy, alongside all frontline managers.

9. Equality and Diversity

9.1 This policy will operate at all times in accordance with our Equality and Diversity Policy.