



# The Pioneer Way

## Local Offer

# 2013/14

The Pioneer Way is the framework we use to help us keep improving our services. However, it is more than just a framework; It also defines the culture and philosophy for the company and it has helped us to develop our local service offer to our customers.

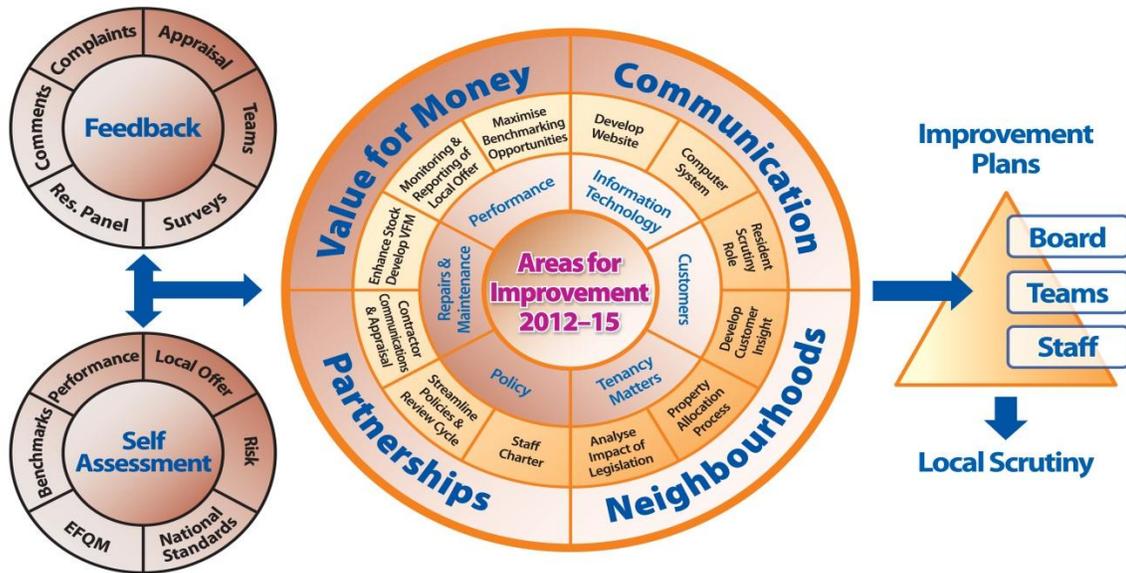
# The Pioneer Way



The principles of the Pioneer Way reflect the corporate objectives of Ashton Pioneer Homes and they are;

- ✓ To improve the quality of life for our residents by understanding your needs, promoting diversity, ensuring high customer satisfaction and maximising involvement opportunities.
- ✓ To be a high quality, agile and efficient organisation that out performs the Business Plan.
- ✓ To continuously improve by managing, developing, communicating and by sustaining our assets to maximise potential.

Working in partnership with our residents on a common goal of “working together towards a better place to live” the Pioneer Way has evolved over recent years. It has become a way we can identify areas for improvement as defined through a combination of feedback and self-assessment. The key priorities can be found in the diagram below.



We rely a great deal on feedback from a variety of sources including resident groups, surveys and even complaints to help us identify areas for improvement. We feel it is important to maximize opportunities to provide feedback so that we can learn lessons and keep improving.

To keep improving it is important that we remain self-aware as a company. To do this



we must regularly review our services and use a variety of methods to self-assess.

It is important for us to manage performance closely so that areas of service that require improvement can be quickly identified.

We will ensure that performance against our service standards and our local offer is reported regularly to customers and stakeholders of the company. We will ensure that performance is reported every quarter with comparable data from other Housing Associations.

As part of our local offer to our customers Ashton Pioneer Homes will not only report on how we perform against locally agreed standards but we will keep you informed about areas for improvement that have been identified through the Pioneer Way. Our Annual Report each October will provide information on our improvement plan for the following year and beyond.

### **Our Local Offer**

Ashton Pioneer Homes will provide all our customers with a local service offer annually. Our customers will receive a new Local Offer each and every year in April. We will also give all customers and stakeholders an Annual Report in October each year.

This report will provide information on the following;

- Our Performance against the Local Offer
- Our Performance against National Standards compared with other Housing Associations
- The Pioneer Way improvement Plan
- How residents can get involved in agreeing the Local Offer

### **HCA Standards for registered providers**

The new HCA regulatory standards follow two main focus areas. These are economic standards and consumer standards.

#### **Economic standards**

These standards apply to all registered providers except for local authorities. Providers' boards are responsible for ensuring their organisation meets the economic standards. The regulator has a proactive role in relation to economic standards and will engage with providers to obtain assurance that they are being met.

#### **Consumer standards**

These standards apply to all registered providers. Providers' boards are responsible for ensuring their organisation meets the consumer standards. The regulator's role is



limited to setting the consumer standards and intervening only where failure of the standard could lead to risk of serious harm to tenants (the ‘serious detriment test’).

The table below explains how the standards are further divided.

<b>Economic Standards</b>	<b>Consumer standards</b>
✓ <b>Governance &amp; Financial Viability</b>	✓ <b>Tenant Involvement and Empowerment</b>
✓ <b>Value for Money</b>	✓ <b>Home</b>
✓ <b>Rent</b>	✓ <b>Tenancy</b>
	✓ <b>Neighbourhood &amp; Community</b>

## **Local Offer 2013/14**

### **Governance & Financial Viability Standard**

APH must manage all resources effectively to ensure the organisations viability is maintained. APH must also ensure effective governance arrangements that deliver our aims, objectives and intended outcomes for tenants in an effective, transparent and accountable manner. Governance arrangements should ensure that APH :

- Adhere to all relevant legislation
- Comply with governing documents and all regulatory requirements
- Is accountable to tenants, the TSA and relevant stakeholders
- Safeguard taxpayers’ interests and the reputation of the sector
- Have an effective risk management framework and internal controls assurance framework

### **What our residents said**

- Tenants do not feel that they have a relationship with the Board and that they do not understand the role of the Board.
- Tenants are elected to the Board and most tenants are aware of this but there is a concern that tenants are elected because of popularity not because they have the necessary skills.



### Our local offer

- ✓ APH will review the way Tenant Directors are recruited to the Board
- ✓ Board Members and Senior Managers will work with tenant groups to plan for the financial implications of Welfare Reform

## Value for Money Standard

The Homes and Communities Agency standards requires APH to:

APH must have a comprehensive approach to managing our resources to provide cost effective, efficient, quality services and homes. This must meet tenants and potential tenants needs and expectations

### What our residents said

- Tenants would like to see APH use their rent money effectively and not waste money unnecessarily

### Our local offer

- ✓ Facilitate more opportunities to communicate digitally & through social media
- ✓ Involve local tenant groups in a VFM self-assessment

## Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

The HCA Tenant and Empowerment Standard requires Housing Associations to apply standards in these areas:

- Customer service, choice and complaints
- Involvement and Empowerment

### What our residents said

- Tenants would like the opportunity to reality check our services without the need to become involved with detailed scrutiny of services



- Tenants groups would like more training opportunities
- Tenants would like APH to provide access to the internet so that tenant groups can support their neighbours with welfare reform issues such as applying for benefits on line to help

### **Our local offer**

- ✓ **Provide opportunities for tenants to be trained in the following:**
  - **Using the internet**
  - **Tenant Scrutiny**
  - **Mystery shopping**
- ✓ **Continue to support the Pioneer panel in their scrutiny role**

## **Home Standard**

### **(Quality of accommodation)**

Registered providers shall:

- ensure that tenants' homes meet the standard set out in section five of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance<sup>14</sup> and continue to maintain their homes to at least this standard
- meet the standards of design and quality that applied when the home was built, and were required as a condition of publicly funded financial assistance<sup>15</sup>, if these standards are higher than the Decent Homes Standard
- in agreeing a local offer, ensure that it is set at a level not less than these standards and have regard to section six of the Government's Decent Homes Guidance

### **(Repairs and maintenance)**

Registered providers shall:

- provide a cost-effective repairs and maintenance service to homes and communal areas that responds to the needs of, and offers choices to, tenants, and has the objective of completing repairs and improvements right first time
- meet all applicable statutory requirements that provide for the health and safety of the occupants in their homes



**What our residents said**

- Tenants would like to see APH support them with energy efficiency measures
- Tenants would like to see more appointments being available for gas servicing and general repairs with contractors and APH staff

**Our Local Offer**

- ✓ **Help residents reduce fuel bills through energy efficiency savings**
- ✓ **Further extend the use of the appointment system for the repairs service**

**Tenancy, Neighbourhood and Community Local Offer**

**(Tenancy Required Outcomes)**

- **Allocations and mutual exchange**

Registered providers shall let their homes in a fair, transparent and efficient way. They shall take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants. Registered providers shall also enable their tenants to gain access to opportunities to exchange their tenancy with that of another tenant, by way of internet-based mutual exchange services.

**Tenure**

Registered providers shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock. They shall also meet all applicable statutory and legal requirements in relation to the form and use of tenancy agreements or terms of occupation.

**(Neighbourhood & Community Required Outcomes)**

**Neighbourhood management**

Registered providers shall keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe. They shall work in partnership with their tenants and other providers and public bodies where it is effective to do so.



### Local area co-operation

Registered providers shall co-operate with relevant partners to help promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing in the areas where they own properties.

### Anti-social behaviour

Registered providers shall work in partnership with other agencies to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour in the neighbourhoods where they own homes.

## What our residents said

- Tenants want to see local people and in particular tenants that put something back in to the community receive recognition when they are applying for an APH tenancy
- Tenants want to see more community based activities including internet based training

### Our local offer

- ✓ Give priority to applicants on the Housing Waiting List that can demonstrate a community contribution
- ✓ Provide free access to the internet to all APH tenants via the Tenants Base

## Local Offer Summary

The APH Local Offer 2013 will be introduced in April 2013. There will be a quarterly update to Board each quarter and LPIs will be reported alongside the Board KPI Reports and benchmarking data.

Pioneer News and the APH Social Media fora will keep tenants and stakeholders informed of the Local Offer performance.

A summary Table of the APH Local Offer can be seen in the table below and this format will be used to report to tenants in the April edition of Pioneer News.



Economic Standards		Consumer standards	
Standard	Local Offer (LPI)	Standard	Local Offer (LPI)
<b>Governance &amp; Financial Viability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Review the way Tenant Directors are recruited to the Board</li> <li>✓ Work with tenant groups to plan for the financial implications of Welfare Reform</li> </ul>	<b>Tenant Involvement &amp; Empowerment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide opportunities for tenants to be trained in the following:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Using the internet</li> <li>○ Tenant Scrutiny</li> <li>○ Mystery shopping</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Continue to support the Pioneer Panel to scrutinise APH services</li> </ul>
<b>Value for Money</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Facilitate more opportunities to communicate digitally &amp; through social media</li> <li>✓ Involve local tenant groups in a VFM self-assessment</li> </ul>	<b>Home</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Help residents reduce fuel bills through energy efficiency savings</li> <li>✓ Further extend the use of the appointment system for the repairs service</li> </ul>
<b>Rent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Enable tenants to check their rent accounts through the internet.</li> <li>✓ Extend the consultation with tenants on service charge setting.</li> </ul>	<b>Tenancy, Neighbourhood &amp; Community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Give priority to applicants on the Housing Waiting List that can demonstrate a community contribution</li> <li>✓ Provide free access to the internet to all APH tenants via the Tenants Base</li> </ul>