# Acton tower to become UK’s first women-only social housing block for abuse survivors



A groundbreaking new tower block in Acton, west London, is set to become the UK’s first residential building exclusively for women, aiming to provide a vital refuge for survivors of domestic abuse and other women facing housing disadvantages. The redevelopment of Brook House, which has served the area for over 90 years, will replace its previous 39 flats with 102 “genuinely affordable” social rented homes, all reserved for women. This initiative is a collaborative effort between Ealing Council, housing association Women’s Pioneer Housing, and developer L&Q, with occupancy expected to begin following completion next summer.

The council and housing association have described the project as a “lifeline” for women disproportionately affected by housing insecurity and domestic violence. The flats will be offered at rents significantly below market rates—less than a quarter of the average private sector cost for similarly sized homes—addressing the acute affordability crisis that especially impacts women who, on average, earn less than men due to the persistent gender pay gap. Ealing Council’s leader, Peter Mason, highlighted the pressing need for specialist women-only accommodation, noting the 3,500 recorded domestic abuse cases in the borough over the past year alone.

Women’s Pioneer Housing, a pioneering association founded by suffragists in 1920, manages nearly 1,000 properties across west London and has focused on providing safe, secure homes for single women for over a century. The new Brook House tower addresses modern housing needs by featuring design elements that consider women’s comfort and safety, including deeper balconies and specifications to support menopausal women. This approach reflects the association’s longstanding mission to empower women and confront the inequalities they face in accessing affordable housing.

The project has spurred a mix of public responses on social media. Many have praised the development as a positive and much-needed initiative for women, with some expressing a wish to see similar schemes extended across the country. However, others have raised concerns about publicly associating the building with survivors of domestic abuse, arguing it might inadvertently signal vulnerability and attract unwanted attention from predators. Questions were also posed about the accommodation of children in the building and the future housing needs of male children growing up in this women-only environment.

Aside from social considerations, the project experienced some resistance during planning, including objections over the tower’s 15-storey height and its visual and environmental impact on the local area. These concerns reflect broader tensions around urban development and density in London, where the urgent need for affordable housing often conflicts with community resistance to taller structures. Nonetheless, planning permission was granted, underscoring the critical demand for specialist housing for women.

The initiative also raises questions about wider housing support frameworks for vulnerable groups, including men who have experienced abuse or homelessness. Critics have pointed out that while women face significant barriers in the housing market, there is also a need for provision tailored to men in crisis. Women’s Pioneer Housing, however, remains focused on its mission to provide safe and stable homes for women, a demographic often overlooked in housing policy despite facing unique challenges.

In summary, the Brook House redevelopment represents a landmark in social housing, combining modern design with a targeted mission to support women escaping abuse and inequality. It highlights the ongoing housing crisis driven by economic disparities and the need for innovative responses that prioritise vulnerable groups. While the project has sparked debate, it stands as a testament to evolving approaches in creating inclusive, specialised housing solutions across London.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819893/London-tower-block-UK-women-domestic-abuse-ealing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/28/plans-approved-for-britains-first-womens-only-tower-block), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-65456335), [[4]](https://womenspioneer.co.uk/green-light-for-womens-only-social-housing-block-in-ealing-west-london/)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819893/London-tower-block-UK-women-domestic-abuse-ealing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-65456335)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819893/London-tower-block-UK-women-domestic-abuse-ealing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/28/plans-approved-for-britains-first-womens-only-tower-block), [[4]](https://womenspioneer.co.uk/green-light-for-womens-only-social-housing-block-in-ealing-west-london/), [[6]](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/living-independently/living-independently-service-directory/womens-pioneer-housing)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819893/London-tower-block-UK-women-domestic-abuse-ealing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-65456335)
* Paragraph 5 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819893/London-tower-block-UK-women-domestic-abuse-ealing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 6 – [[3]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-65456335), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-64381453)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819893/London-tower-block-UK-women-domestic-abuse-ealing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819893/London-tower-block-UK-women-domestic-abuse-ealing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/living-independently/living-independently-service-directory/womens-pioneer-housing)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14819893/London-tower-block-UK-women-domestic-abuse-ealing.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/apr/28/plans-approved-for-britains-first-womens-only-tower-block> - The Guardian reports that plans for a 15-storey women's-only tower block in Ealing, London, have been approved. The development aims to provide 102 flats for single women, particularly those facing inequality and abuse. The design includes features tailored for women's comfort, such as deeper balconies and considerations for menopausal women. The project is being developed by Women's Pioneer Housing, a housing association founded in 1920 as part of the suffragette movement, in partnership with L&Q, one of London's largest housing associations.
3. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-65456335> - BBC News reports that Ealing Council has approved plans for a 15-storey women's-only tower block in west London. The development, proposed by Women's Pioneer Housing, will replace existing low-rise blocks with 102 new flats exclusively for women. The project aims to provide affordable housing for single women, particularly those facing domestic abuse and other disadvantages. The plans received 56 objections and eight expressions of support, with concerns raised about the building's height and potential impact on the environment.
4. <https://womenspioneer.co.uk/green-light-for-womens-only-social-housing-block-in-ealing-west-london/> - Women's Pioneer Housing announces that their proposal for a 15-storey women's-only social housing block in Ealing, London, has received planning permission from Ealing Council. The new development will replace existing buildings with 102 affordable flats for single women, particularly those facing inequality, abuse, and disadvantages in the housing market. The project is supported by L&Q through their Build London Partnership programme, aiming to address the significant housing need for women in the area.
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-64381453> - BBC News reports on local concerns regarding a proposed 15-storey women's-only tower block in Acton, London. Residents have expressed fears that the development could transform the area into a 'concrete jungle.' The project, proposed by Women's Pioneer Housing, aims to provide 102 affordable flats exclusively for women, replacing existing low-rise blocks. The housing association emphasizes the critical need for good-quality, affordable homes for women, especially during the current cost-of-living and energy crisis.
6. <https://www.lbhf.gov.uk/living-independently/living-independently-service-directory/womens-pioneer-housing> - The London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham provides information about Women's Pioneer Housing, a housing provider and charity with a mission to empower women and challenge inequality. They support women through affordable housing, help women and children escaping domestic abuse, survivors of trafficking, women leaving prison, and older women. Women's Pioneer Housing owns almost 1,000 properties in eight boroughs in west and north-west London, offering a range of housing options for single women and families.
7. <https://www.hfw.org.uk/our-services/general-needs-housing> - Housing for Women is a housing provider and charity with a mission to empower women and challenge inequality. They support women through affordable housing, help women and children escaping domestic abuse, survivors of trafficking, women leaving prison, and older women. Housing for Women owns and manages over 920 homes across 11 London boroughs, providing social rent homes to women and their families. They believe that housing is a women's issue and aim to create a more equal society by providing quality, affordable homes for women.