



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust

Plain Speaking

Winter 2024



- » Our Christmas opening hours
- » Spreading Christmas joy
- » 7 tips for saving on your energy
- » Our advice for a worry-free winter
- » Support for if you're struggling
- » Our satisfaction survey results

In this edition

Our Christmas opening hours	4
Spreading Christmas joy	5
It's a 53-week year	6
Annual Review	7
Appointments	10
Customer satisfaction	12
Our advice for a worry-free winter	14
Damp, mould and condensation	15
Energy saving tips	16
Support for when you're struggling	18
Fire safety this festive season	19
Our domestic abuse response	20
Anti-social behaviour	21
Understanding Social Housing fraud	22
Complaints process	23
Ivy House updates	24
Lyme Green Settlement	25
Neurodiversity in Business	26
It's not just Christmas	27
Getting involved	28
Get in touch	31

Hello,

You spoke, and we acted!

You said that you'd like to see PlainSpeaking available in print. That's why alongside our digital newsletter which we send out every three months, we will be creating an annual version available in print.

In this edition, you can find:

- Our Christmas opening hours and contact details
- How we're spreading Christmas cheer this season
- A recap of our performance in 2023/24
- Our advice for a safe and worry-free winter
- Our efforts with the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance
- Information about how to make a complaint
- Details about our mediation services
- Opportunities to influence what we do at the Trust
- Support services available to you

Now, grab a cup of tea with a biscuit and take five minutes to read our Winter Edition of PlainSpeaking.

Wishing you a safe and peaceful festive season from

Mark, Emma & Jules





Christmas closure

We're closing our offices on **Tuesday 24th December at 12pm** and we'll be reopening at **8.30am on Thursday 2nd January**.

The busiest time of the year is always the morning after we reopen. So, if it's not urgent then you can always call back later for a shorter call queue.

DECEMBER

24
12.00pm

JANUARY

02
08.30am

Have an emergency?

We're still here for you.
Call us on

 **0800 012 1311**

Smell gas?

Call Cadent to arrange an emergency visit

 **0800 111 999**

Not an emergency?

We'll reply within 5 working days from 2nd Jan

 **trust@peaksplains.org**

What is an emergency?

- A security risk to your home (e.g. a smashed window, external door not locking, or you are locked out).
- The only toilet in your home is blocked.
- You've got unsafe electrical sockets or fittings (including sparking).
- You've got an uncontrollable leak (if you can contain it using buckets, towels, bowls etc – then that's not an emergency).
- If, during the months of 1st November to 31st March, you have no heating or hot water.





Spreading Christmas joy

It's December. The nights are dark, and the days are cold. The winter holidays are here, and, thanks to our contractors and suppliers, we've had the opportunity to spread some cheer.

On 5th December 2024, staff from across the Trust headed out into our communities to spread some festive spirit and drop off gifts.

Staff packed goodies for some of our customers - chocolate, children's books, and a couple other seasonal treats. We really hope this brought a smile to our customers' faces.

We would have loved to do this for all 5,000 of our customer's homes - but we made it to those homes where staff thought the customer could do with a little pick me up.

All donations came from our generous suppliers and contractors. A huge thank you to the companies below for helping us make this day possible.



It's a 53-week year - so what does this mean for your rent?

This year, it's what we call a '53-week year'. This means that in this financial year, there are 53 Mondays, and you need to set up payment for this '53rd week'.

In April, we let you know that there are 53 Mondays in this financial year. Universal Credit is paid monthly, but we charge your rent weekly. Universal Credit do not pay the extra week of rent (the '53rd' rent week). This means you need to prepare for an extra payment.

Also remember that if you pay your rent monthly you may need to amend your monthly payments to ensure you have accounted for the 53rd week. Your income officer can support you to work out the increased monthly amount you need to pay if you are unsure.

Did you tell Universal Credit about your rent change in April?

You needed to tell Universal Credit that your rent changed on 1st April 2024.

If you haven't told Universal Credit of your increased rent, you must do it now. You can do this by updating your details on your journal or by calling the Universal Credit helpline:

 **0800 328 5644**

Concerned? Get in touch with us.

We know that not everyone will find it easy to find this extra week of rent.

Don't hesitate to get in touch with us. Your Income Officer can offer advice to help you prepare for this extra week.

 **income@peaksplains.org**

 **0800 012 1311**

(If you are already speaking to us about this payment, you do not need to do anything)

Our Income Team aren't just here to take your rent payments - they can direct you towards other charities and local organisations who can help you manage your money or get you back on your feet.

Local Energy Advice Partnership:

0800 060 7567

applyforleap.org.uk

Help through Hardship helpline - The Trussell Trust:

0808 208 2138

bit.ly/HelpThroughHardship

Universal Credit Helpline:

0800 328 5644

gov.uk/universal-credit

Citizens Advice National Helpline:

0800 144 8848

citizensadvice.org.uk

National Debtline:

0808 808 4000

nationaldebtline.org

StepChange:

0800 138 1111

stepchange.org

Annual Review

We are excited to announce the launch of our redesigned Annual Review, that reflects the voices of our customers and staff.

This year's Annual Review has been based on the valuable feedback we gathered during our consultation in March, where we engaged with our customers, stakeholders and staff to understand what they'd like to see and how they'd like to see it. So, we've created a site dedicated to the Annual Review and a printable graphic with all our key performance information.

It's all about transparency and keeping you informed.



Listening to you

Back in March, we issued a survey, held workshops and feedback sessions, inviting both customers and staff to share their views on the current review and what they'd like to see.

Their input was instrumental in shaping the content and design of the Annual Review. The feedback included clearer information, more visual elements, available online and offline, and a layout that is easier to navigate. We listened and acted upon the feedback.

We've focused on making the information accessible and engaging, using concise language and more at a glance graphics. Hopefully, making it easier for readers to find the information that matters most to them.

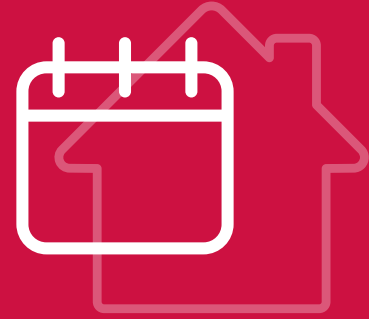
To maximise reach and accessibility, the Annual Review will be available online. We'll also be sharing highlights on our social media platforms, inviting feedback to continue to improve the review and our services.

For those who appreciate a physical copy, please see the key information on the next pages.

You can read the full review here:

 peaksplainsannualreview.org

About the Trust in 2023-2024



We own
and manage
5,307
homes

We manage
23
homes
for others



Our turnover is
£32.01m

Our operating surplus is
£9.25m
This goes back into the Trust
to provide homes and services

We are a **profit-for-purpose**
organisation

90%
of our staff told us that they
are proud to work for the Trust

We pay the **real living wage**

On average
it took us
1:48
minutes
to answer
your calls



We are proud that
we've achieved
a inspection
rating of
G1/V2

We carried out a total of
20,315
repairs and gas jobs

On average we made and kept:
93% of routine repair
appointments
90% of planned repair
appointments



We achieved
100%
compliance on gas
servicing, completing all
gas safety checks on time



12,433
repairs



7,882
gas jobs

We also attended
97%
of emergencies
within 4 hours



On average
87%
of your repairs were
completed on the first visit

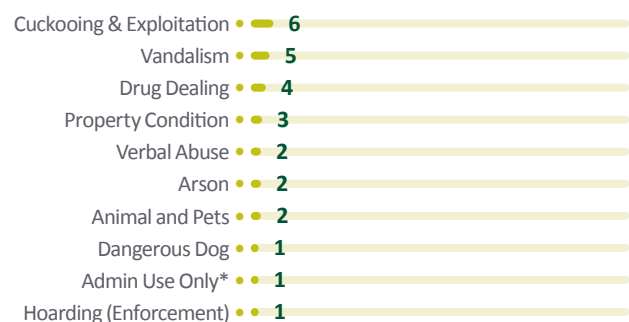
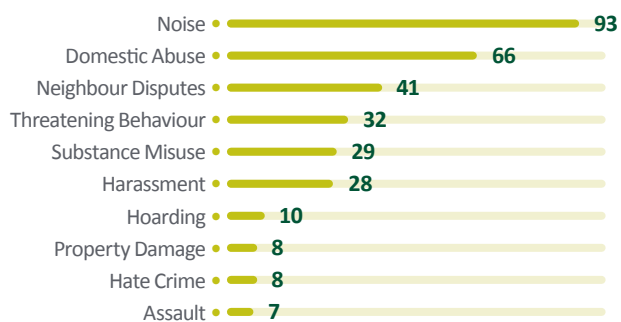
On average we
completed
60%
of non-emergency
repairs within target

Average days
to complete a
routine repair
32.1



On 31st March 2024,
99.96% of the
Trust's 1,268 properties had
an EICR less than 5 years old

WE RECEIVED **349** REPORTS OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR*



*including hoarding



6
Cases referred to mediation



4
Injunctions



6
Possession applications



6
Evictions
4 Arrears | 2 ASB



2
tenant-led Scrutiny Panels on reporting anti-social behaviour and the end of tenancy process



210
safeguarding concerns were addressed by the Trust working alongside our partners

In 2023-24, we spent

£15,645

from the Hardship Fund

39
requests

Average spend
£401.15

Most payments were made to reduce rent arrears on rent accounts, but it was also used for a skip hire and for an insurance excess payment



39
complaints received per month on average



1.8%
repairs resulting in complaints



99.79%
of complaints raised were resolved within the agreed timescale – this was one complaint at the beginning of the year, all other complaints were resolved within time



Investments in your home:



56
new bathrooms



97
adaptations



56
new kitchens



Cyclical decoration carried out at
310
properties



176
Energy efficiency works (including heating systems and work property improvements)



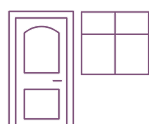
Structural work/improvements carried out on
58
properties



99%
satisfaction with improvement works



58
rewires



122
new windows and doors installed in properties

(These figures change all the time, so we've taken this snapshot from 31 March 2024 and the 12 months up to that point. When we talk about 'average' we are talking about the mean average.)



Have an appointment?

Here's what to expect when an operative arrives at your home - they will:

- Park with consideration to you and your neighbours.
- Introduce themselves, let you know what they have come to work on and how long it should take.
- Wear a Peaks & Plains uniform and photo ID – don't be afraid to ask to see this!
- Check you have no other repair issues.
- Provide dust sheets, wear over shoes, and clean up properly after they have finished the job.
- Keep disruption to an absolute minimum.
- Take pictures of their work before and after to show that the work was completed correctly and that they have cleaned up properly.

Not going to be home?

If you aren't home, we will leave a 'sorry we missed you' card. This lets you know that we attended and gives you details on how to get in touch.

You will need to contact us to log the repair again. We do monitor 'no access' repairs and if there is more than one missed appointment, and you have not contacted us to cancel or re-arrange, we may charge you.

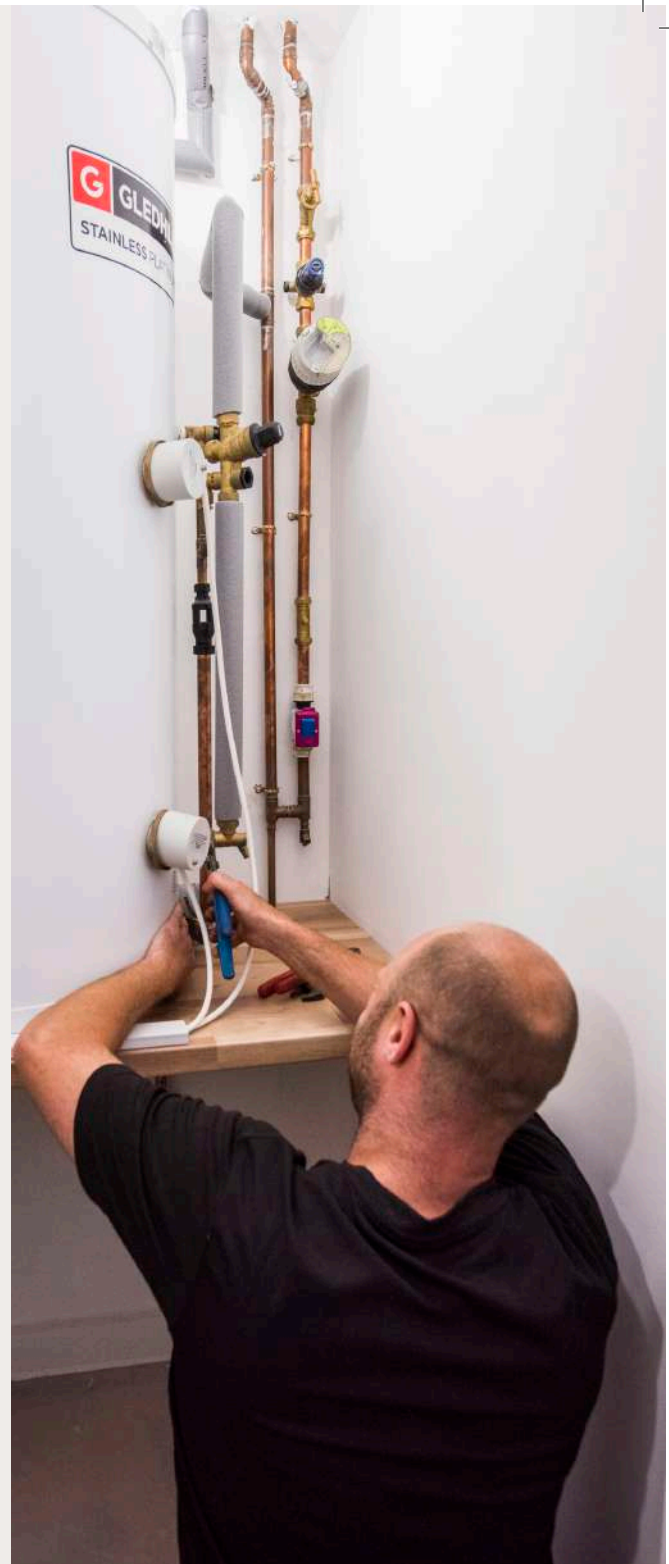
Our responsibilities and what you can expect from us

We will provide a safe, affordable, well-maintained quality home that complies with all building safety requirements.

- **Routine repairs** will be offered in **28 working days.**
- **Planned repairs** will be offered in **90 working days.**
- **Emergency repairs** on site **within four hours** - 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

For more information about what to expect from our repairs service including timescales, recharges and what is classed as an emergency, head over to our website at

 peaksplains.org/ourservicestandard



Have you seen our Trust Tenant Charter?

It's our promise to you. The Charter makes it clear what you can expect from us, and in return, what we can expect from you.

We're in this together:

 peaksplains.org/tenantcharter

How satisfied are you?

In 2023 Peaks & Plains completed our first tenant satisfaction survey in line with the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM).

We ask Acuity to contact customers on our behalf, so that you feel you can talk freely and honestly about our services.

This information is used to improve and shape the services that we offer. It highlights areas of improvement and lets us know what you think.

Here are a few examples:

- Customers told us there were too many options on the phonenumber, so we've shortened the options from 10 to 3.
- Customers wanted to know more about our kitchen and bathroom programme. So, we've updated the website with more information about how we work out the programme. We've also provided our contact centre with this information for those customers who aren't online.
- You told us that you don't see us out and about in your area. So, from 2023, we host monthly 'Roadshows' across our communities to say hello and check-in on how you're doing. Keep an eye out to see when your area is coming up (or let us know if you haven't seen us for a while!)



This year, we visited:

Hunters Gate
Upton Priory
Moss Rose
Somerton Road

Weston
Marsh Way
Lacey Green
Juniper Close

Ivy Court
Gilchrist Avenue
Earlsway
Buckfast Close

Westminster Road
Ryles House

*of 1045 customers surveyed by  Acuity
intelligence insight improvement

You can find out when we will next be knocking on in your Neighbourhood, by heading over to:

 [peaksplains.org/
your-community/
neighbourhood-plans](https://peaksplains.org/your-community/neighbourhood-plans)

See more information about the tenant satisfaction measures here:

 [peaksplains.org/about-us/
how-we-are-doing/
tenant-satisfaction-measures](https://peaksplains.org/about-us/how-we-are-doing/tenant-satisfaction-measures)



Our advice for a safe and worry-free winter



Keep your boiler running all winter. Cold weather can stop a boiler working, but don't worry – this is often caused by a frozen condensate pipe. We have an easy way to get your hot water working again.

A quick fix:



1. Find the blockage.
2. Thaw the frozen pipe. Try pouring hot (but not boiling!) water over the pipe or tying a hot water bottle to the pipe.
3. Reset or restart your boiler

Protect your Christmas from the unexpected

It's not too late to insure your belongings. Make sure that if the worst happens, you're protected. There are different options available, including Thistle - who specialise in contents insurance for customers just like you:

 peaksplains.org/contentsinsurance





Damp, mould and condensation

If you have damp, mould or condensation in your home, you should contact us as soon as you notice it.

DO

- ✓ Try to keep the temperature in your home at a consistent temperature (between 18-21°C).
- ✓ Wipe away water droplets (condensation) from the windows, tiles and other surfaces before mould grows.
- ✓ Keep your internal doors closed, particularly when cooking and bathing, and leave a window open until the moisture in the air and on the surfaces evaporates.
- ✓ Keep your home well-ventilated by keeping extractor fans turned on, opening trickle vents to the windows and opening windows – especially when cooking, after bathing and when drying clothes inside.
- ✓ We don't recommend drying clothes on maidens or radiators, but if you need to, ensure you ventilate the room properly to allow the moisture from the clothes to escape.

DON'T

- ⊘ Leave the kettle or a pan boiling longer than necessary.
- ⊘ Leave the kitchen and bathroom doors open when cooking or bathing.
- ⊘ Dry clothes on a radiator without ventilating the room or use a front vented tumble dryer without a venting tube discharging outside.
- ⊘ Have furniture rested against walls, this prevents air circulation to that area.
- ⊘ Put the heating on in short bursts at a high temperature.
- ⊘ Block wall vents, trickle vents or extractor fans, especially where any form of gas heating is in use.
- ⊘ Leave condensation to run down windows, causing puddles on the sill.
- ⊘ Allow mould to build up on any surface.

Jamie's top tips for saving on your energy bills this winter

The main way to save on your electricity and gas bills is to use less.

But this doesn't just mean switching everything off, especially if you're elderly or have young children.

How can I keep on top of what I'm using?

If you can, get a smart meter for your gas and electricity. You'll need to contact your supplier for this, but it's normally free.

With a smart meter:

- You don't need to manually take meter readings.
- Data is automatically sent to your energy supplier.
- You'll receive accurate bills rather than estimated bills.
- It's easier to see what you're spending since it's displayed on a screen.



Jamie Cunningham,
Peaks + Plains Gas Manager



I know what you're thinking: do these tips actually work? In short, yes!! These are some tips I use myself to save money on my energy bills.

Depending on the size of your home, you might not see big changes - but I promise these things will help.

7 tips for saving energy

1. Turn down your room thermostat

An 18°C room temperature is suitable for healthy adults, with slightly higher temperatures of 21-22°C needed for the young and elderly. Every degree that you reduce your temperature by can save around £142 per year for a typical home.

If you have a thermostat that tells you the room temperature, it will probably be in your hallway. Don't worry if you don't have one. Some systems work differently, and we can tell you about yours during your annual gas safety check.

2. Turn down your radiator

Turn off your radiators in rooms that you don't use and keep the doors closed. In the rooms you use, reduce your radiator's setting.

Most radiators have settings numbered from 0 to 5. Each number represents a temperature setting (0 being off). Using setting 2 or 3 instead of 5 could save you up to 30% of your energy costs.

3. Let us in for your Annual Gas Safety Check

Our gas team work extremely hard all year round, making sure your home and gas appliances are safe and working efficiently.

When you have your annual gas safety check, you are:

- Keeping your home, family and neighbours safe.
- Improving your boiler's efficiency, which reduces fuel usage. This helps you to keep energy costs low.
- Helping us identify any faults so we can replace parts.
- Reducing your environmental impact.



You'll also receive advice from our gas-safe engineers to make sure you know how to use your boiler most efficiently.

4. Think about how you do laundry

The most energy efficient way to do your washing is by making sure you do a full load. You can also try to use cooler temperatures, like 30°C washes.

5. Turn off standby appliances

Turn your TV off at the socket rather than leaving it on standby. It's not a big saver, but it all adds up!

6. Think about how you cook

It's normal to use your oven when you're cooking. But, if already own any of these - it could be more energy efficient to use your slow cooker, air fryer or microwave.

7. Never use these

The appliances below are all unsafe if you use them inside. You could cause carbon monoxide poisoning or cause a fire.

- Patio heater
- Portable BBQ
- Calor gas heater
- Camping stove

It's really important that you never use these appliances inside your home!

Support for when you're struggling



There are charities and community organisations across our patch who can help you with whatever you're struggling with.

If you live in one of our homes, you can also talk to our Tenancy Sustainment Team, who can offer you relevant advice and support.

Looking after yourself

Samaritans (24hr)

☎ 116 123

👉 [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)

SANEline (4pm - 10pm)

☎ 0300 304 7000

👉 [sane.org.uk](https://www.sane.org.uk)

Campaign Against Living Miserably (5pm - 12pm)

☎ 0800 58 58 58

👉 [thecalmzone.net](https://www.thecalmzone.net)

Shout (24hr)

💬 Text SHOUT to 85258

👉 [giveusashout.org](https://www.giveusashout.org)

Support in later life

Age UK Cheshire East

☎ 01625 612958

👉 [ageuk.org.uk/cheshireeast](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cheshireeast)

Age UK Cheshire

Central and Cheshire West

☎ 01606 881660

👉 [ageuk.org.uk/cheshire](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/cheshire)

Age UK Derbyshire

☎ 01773 766922

👉 [ageuk.org.uk/derbyandderbyshire](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/derbyandderbyshire)

Keeping your family fed

Cre8 Surplus Food Grocery

Macclesfield

👉 [facebook.com/Cre8Grocery](https://www.facebook.com/Cre8Grocery)

CORE Food Pantry

Macclesfield

👉 [church-of-the-resurrection.org.uk/pantry](https://www.church-of-the-resurrection.org.uk/pantry)

The Welcome

Knutsford

👉 [thewelcome.org.uk](https://www.thewelcome.org.uk)

Stockport Credit Union

☎ 0161 430 5808

👉 [stockportcu.com](https://www.stockportcu.com)

Emergency help

Emergency Assistance

Cheshire East Council

(8.30am-5pm mon-fri)

☎ 0300 123 501

choose 'emergency assistance'

👉 bit.ly/EmergencyAssistanceCE

Adult Social Care

Cheshire East Council

☎ 0300 123 5013

👉 bit.ly/AdultSocialCareCE

Help in Emergencies

Cheshire West

👉 bit.ly/HelpCheshireWest

Do you receive the state pension?

You could also be entitled to pension credit. It's a means-tested government benefit for older people and it gives you extra money to help with your living costs.

There's nothing to lose by applying but you could gain a lot:

- Pension Credit has the potential to lift 400,000 pensioners out of poverty across the UK.
- 3 in 10 pensioners are not claiming all the benefits that they are entitled to.



Apply online
[gov.uk/pension-credit](https://www.gov.uk/pension-credit)



Apply by phone
0800 99 1234



12 top tips to avoid fire during the festive season

Our partners, Cheshire Fire & Rescue, have 12 top tips to keep your home safe from fire.



Check out the 12 days of Christmas fire safety tips:

- **Day 1:** Check your Christmas tree lights conform to the British Standard.
- **Day 2:** Never place candles near your Christmas tree or furnishings and don't leave them burning unattended.
- **Day 3:** Make a fire escape plan – just in case you have an emergency during the festive period.
- **Day 4:** Decorations can burn easily - don't attach them to lights or heaters.
- **Day 5:** Always switch Christmas lights off and unplug them before you go to bed.
- **Day 6:** Remember! After drinking alcohol, the risk of accidents in the kitchen is greater.
- **Day 7:** Most fires start in the kitchen, so don't leave cooking unattended.
- **Day 8:** Drive safely this Christmas.
- **Day 9:** If you smoke, make sure that your smoking material is extinguished before you go to bed.
- **Day 10:** Use Christmas as a reminder to clean your smoke alarm to remove dust.
- **Day 11:** Don't overload plug sockets.
- **Day 12:** Check on elderly relatives and neighbours - make sure they are fire safe.



Trigger warning – this post discusses domestic abuse, and may be something that you do not wish to read



Quick, efficient, and accredited – our domestic abuse response

We want families to be safe and secure in their homes - and we want the culture of our organisation to promote that. That's why the Trust is working towards the DAHA accreditation for its response to domestic abuse.

Domestic abuse is frightening. But we're here for our customers. Our teams are equipped to intervene early and improve the lives of customers facing domestic abuse. This framework is proven to help us do just that.



Donna Bradley,
Community Support and
Enforcement Manager

The DAHA Accreditation – what is it?

DAHA (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) is a framework - a series of 'good practice' processes that have been proven to improve outcomes for people facing domestic abuse.

It means that we've upskilled relevant staff to:

- know the signs of domestic abuse and spot when it might be happening.
- signpost survivors to effective support near them.
- reduce the amount of time that survivors face domestic abuse.
- strengthen the ability of survivors to stay in their homes safely - so children can stay at their schools and survivors aren't moving away from friends and family.

Find out more on our website – and hear from our Chief Executive, Mark & Community Support and Enforcement Manager, Donna.

 peaksplains.org/domesticabuse



National Domestic Abuse Helpline
Cheshire Without Abuse
Women's Aid
Men's Advice Line
LGBT Foundation

nationaldahelpline.org.uk
mycwa.org.uk
omensaid.org.uk
mensadviceline.org.uk
lgbt.foundation/women/domestic-abuse



Anti-social behaviour – what can we do?

Did you know that we offer free mediation for you and your neighbours?

'Mediation' is one of the ways you can sort out a problem between you and a neighbour without having to go to court and involving the law. Read a real-life example on how we've used mediation to help customers like you.

Miss X and Miss Y are neighbours. They live very different lifestyles with very different personalities.

Miss X has been living there for a while - she works and is happy with her quiet life. Miss Y had just moved in. She's a young care leaver, living in her first home and independent for the first time.

Miss X complained that Miss Y was having lots of late-night parties with lots of young people in her home until the early hours, playing music and shouting - causing Miss X's dog to bark all night. Miss X was becoming increasingly frustrated - she felt she was getting no sleep, and it was affecting her work.

Miss X tried to have a chat with Miss Y.

Talk to your neighbours

We always recommend talking to your neighbours first - they might not even know that they're causing an issue.

When you report anti-social behaviour to the Trust before talking to your neighbours (when it's safe to do so!), it can frustrate your neighbours and make the problem worse. Miss X did the right thing.

However, in some cases, talking to your neighbour doesn't help. This is what happened with Miss X and Miss Y.

Not everyone can communicate their thoughts and feelings very well and being frustrated or angry can make you even less able to talk through an emotional problem. This can sometimes cause a 'tit for tat' situation between neighbours - intentionally aggravating each other. This makes the anti-social behaviour get worse and worse in a vicious cycle, which is exactly what happened with these ladies.

How mediation helped

Both women agreed to mediation, and this gave them both the opportunity to have their voices heard by their neighbour.

The goal was to come to an agreement on how they could both still live their different lifestyles, but at the same time, be respectful and considerate to their neighbours.

I'm very pleased to say the mediation sessions were successful. Both women have signed a document which outlines how they're going to move forward.

This was a positive outcome for Miss X and Miss Y. It helped Miss X understand that sometimes you can cause anti-social behavior without realising. It also helped Miss Y with life skills - this was her first tenancy, as a care leaver, and she didn't want to lose it.

Understanding and combating Social Housing fraud



We want to raise awareness about social housing fraud and its implications, especially in light of the rise of platforms like AirBnB.

What is Social Housing fraud?

Social Housing fraud occurs when individuals abuse the system designed to support those in housing need. This can include subletting properties, providing false information during the application process, or using social housing as a secondary income source through platforms like AirBnB. These actions not only undermine the system but also deprive those genuinely in need of safe and affordable housing.

Impact of platforms like Airbnb

The popularity of short-term rental services like AirBnB has made it easier for some to rent out their social housing properties for profit. This not only takes valuable housing stock off the market but also creates unfair competition for legitimate landlords and tenants. As demand for affordable housing continues to rise, every fraudulent action has a ripple effect that harms our communities.

How to spot and report fraud

We all play a crucial role in identifying and reporting Social Housing fraud. Here are some key indicators to watch for:

- 1. Inconsistent information:** If a tenant's information doesn't match what is on the system or if they seem to frequently change their living situation, it could be a red flag.
- 2. Subletting signs:** Look for signs of unauthorised subletting, such as people coming and going or short-term rentals being advertised online.
- 3. Unusual behaviour:** If a tenant is frequently absent or is not maintaining their property or are evasive when in their property or when making appointments, it may warrant further investigation.
- 4. Community observations:** You are our eyes and ears; neighbours may notice unusual activity that can help identify fraud.

Reporting suspected fraud

If you suspect social housing fraud, please report your concerns to us.

All reports will be treated confidentially, and we take every allegation seriously. Your vigilance is crucial in helping us uphold the standards of our housing programs.



trust@peaksplains.org



0800 012 1311

Complaints

An at-a-glance guide

When something goes wrong with our service - we want to know.

PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust



Service request

This is a request from a customer to the landlord requiring action to be taken to put something right. Service requests are not complaints, but will be recorded, monitored and reviewed regularly. If this is the first time you have told us about a problem, we will ask if we can deal with your issue as a service request. We aim to resolve issues within 3 working days.

A 2-stage process



1 Investigation

Your complaint will be logged by our Complaints Co-Ordinator and investigated by the manager of the appropriate department.

- We will record your complaint within 5 working days of receiving it, and assign a manager to investigate your case.
- The Investigator will contact you within 3 working days of the acknowledgement letter.
- If there is a problem with your home, we will always ask to visit you to see the problem.
- You will receive a full written response to your complaint within 10 working days of us sending you the acknowledgement letter. If we need longer - we will let you know.



2 Review

If you aren't happy with our response, you can ask for a review within 28 working days of the stage 1 letter.

- If you feel comfortable, let us know why you are unhappy with the response to your complaint.
- A senior manager will re-investigate your complaint.
- We will ask to meet with you to discuss your case further.
- The senior manager will respond within 20 working days, writing to you to outline our decision and any actions that we'll take.
- If we need any longer to do this, we will let you know.

0300 111 3000 **Housing** Ombudsman Service
housing-ombudsman.org.uk

@complaints@peaksplains.org



0800 012 1311



peaksplains.org/complaints



We are working to upgrade the energy efficiency of our homes, targeting homes with the 'worst' energy efficiency ratings first.

Our aim is to make sure all our homes on this estate have an energy efficiency 'band C'. Improvements might include things like cavity wall, loft and underfloor insulation - and, where additional measures are required, solar panels. We are using grant funding to support this work to ensure you get value for money. Don't worry if you haven't been contacted – your home might not need the work.




Find out more online:
peaksplains.org/energyworks

Ivy House

We are excited to announce that construction has officially begun on Ivy Road and Countess Road, formally known as Ivy House. This development aims to improve local housing needs by building homes for social rent and affordable homeownership.

We have appointed Caseys Ltd as our contractors on this site. The development will feature **29 new homes – 16 for social rent and 13 for Shared Ownership**. The homes are a mixture of 1,2,3 and 4 bedrooms.

Construction is set to progress over the next 14 months, with completion anticipated by February 2026. Regular updates will be shared with the community to keep everyone informed of progress and milestones on our website  peaksplains.org

We appreciate the community's support as we embark on this exciting journey and look forward to the positive impact it will bring.

For more information about our...

social rent properties  development@peaksplains.org

Shared Ownership properties  sales@peaksplains.org

This development marks a significant step forward for our community and addressing the local housing need... we are committed to providing safe and well-maintained homes for our customers and are excited to see this project come to life.





Lyme Green Settlement

Earlier this year, we took over the ownership and management of Lyme Green Settlement (known as Lyme Green CIO) off London Road, Macclesfield.

The site is made up of 29 bungalows, all fully adapted for wheelchair users, four workshops, a standalone house, and a nursery.

The bungalows provide independent living for people with disability and mobility challenges and play a key role in this vibrant and peaceful community.

Lyme Green Settlement has historically been a place of refuge for those in housing need who have mobility problems.

The current residents will be able to stay in their homes on the same rent and any vacant homes that come available will be advertised on Cheshire Home Choice based on a need for level access accommodation. This would include both over 55s and families with children.

Our purpose is to work together to provide safe homes and thriving communities. The Lyme Green Settlement includes much-needed accessible homes, some beautiful landscaping, and a fantastic community too. We look forward to meeting our new customers and working with them to build an even brighter future for Lyme Green.

Mark Howden – Chief Executive
Peaks & Plains Housing Trust

The Trustees of Lyme Green Settlement CIO share P+P's purpose to provide safe, comfortable and affordable homes to those who need them. And that is why we have made the bold decision to safeguard the future of our residents and charity by working closely with P+P transferring our homes knowing that they will be in good hands.

Lyme Green
Settlement Trustees

Neurodiversity in Business

Here at the Trust, we celebrate differences and embrace diversity. That's why we are becoming a member of Neurodiversity in Business.

What do we mean by neurodiversity?

Neurodiversity is the wide variety of ways we think, learn, feel and process information. We all have different interests and motivations, and are naturally better at some things and not so good at others. Most people are known as 'neurotypical', which means their brain generally functions and processes information in the way society expects. Neurodivergent refers to when a person's brain processes information differently to the neurotypical.

Neurodivergent conditions can include ADHD, Autism Spectrum Condition, Aspergers, Tourette, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia (to name just a few).

What is Neurodiversity in Business?

Neurodiversity in Business is a forum that helps to ensure greater workplace inclusion of the neurodivergent community. It's all about recognising and celebrating neurodivergent colleagues - making sure that they feel supported and empowered.

We are respectful and celebrate differences - one of our core values here at the Trust.

"We need to recognise the value that our neurodiverse colleagues bring to the Trust, and we need to make sure that they feel valued and embraced."

Mark Howden, Chief Executive.

Read more online at peaksplains.org/news/neurodiversity-in-business/





It's not just Christmas!

Whilst Christmas might be the top of your agenda – it's important (and interesting!) to remember that there are plenty of other festivities taking place around this time.

Here are six popular cultural and religious holidays happening between December and January:

- 1. Hannukah:** Hanukkah, also called the 'festival of lights', is a holiday commonly celebrated in the Hebrew calendar.
- 2. Yule:** Celebrated on the winter solstice – the shortest day of the year, 21st/22nd December – Yule is one of the oldest known festivals observed at this time of year. Yule was originally celebrated by the Pagan and Norse people of Northern Europe and is still celebrated by Pagan and Wiccan communities today.
- 3. Kwanzaa:** Beginning on 26th December and ending on 1st January, Kwanzaa is a cultural festival celebrating African culture and community.
- 4. Bodhi Day:** Bodhi Day is celebrated annually on 8th December and is a Buddhist holiday celebrating the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha.
- 5. Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti:** In January, Sikhs across the world celebrate the birth of the 10th guru of the Sikh faith, Guru Gobind Singh Ji - a significant figure in Sikhism.
- 6. Shōgatsu:** New Year (Shōgatsu) is the most important holiday in the Japanese calendar. In the UK, the first few days of the new year can feel a bit like a post-Christmas afterthought, but for those who celebrate in Japan, New Year's celebrations involve family get-togethers as businesses close from the 1st -3rd Jan.

Get involved

Thoughts, opinions, or feedback? We have plenty of ways in which you can have your say here at the Trust. From customer groups to online surveys and polls – we have a method to suit everyone.

Did you know that we cover the cost of transport like taxis or carer costs if you come along to our meetings?



Challenge Group:

Our highest level of involvement; Challenge Group is made up of eleven of our most involved customers who meet every six weeks to challenge and question the way we do things.

Our next meeting
Thur 30th Jan 2025, 10am-1pm

Resident Panels:

We host ad-hoc resident meetings across different areas. Regularly, we have the Range & Pennine Residents Forum (Hurdsfield, Macclesfield) which mostly covers building safety but also answers questions on neighbourhood issues in the area. If you would like us to arrange one on your street or block – let us know.

Commentator Panel:

We have over 700 customers signed up to have their say on our services through things like surveys. Customers on our Commentator Panel can have their say whilst working full-time, looking after children, and everything else that makes it difficult to dedicate time to come to meetings. The best part is – you don't have to be online or have a computer to join!

Grounds Maintenance Resident Group (GMRG):

GMRG is where we talk about all things green. It's an opportunity to talk to our Estates Manager and hear the updates. It also gives you the chance to feedback on the grounds where you live.

Our next meeting
Tues 21st Jan 2025, 10-11.30am

Asset Management Monitoring Group (AMMG):

This group meets every six months. Here, we talk about what we require from builders when we take on new homes, our sustainability strategy and home improvements. If you have an interest in building – this might be for you!

**Our next meeting
Tues 25th Feb 2025**

Scrutiny:

We hold Scrutiny Panels twice a year. This means that you pick a service area to investigate – and suggest how we can improve.

Our next Scrutiny will be starting in the Spring – join our Commentator Panel to make sure you don't miss any updates!

Damp & Mould Panel:

The clue is in the name. We meet every other month to talk about how we are tackling damp and mould in our properties – and to hear your feedback. You hold us to account and make sure we're doing what we say we will. This group usually has pizza too!

Mystery Customer:

Perfect for those who want a quick and easy way to get involved from the comfort of their home. All you need to do is pick up the phone with a scenario that we give you and let us know how your call was handled. Do this three times a month and we'll send you a £20 retail voucher. You can become a Mystery Customer at any time.

Interested in joining or simply want to find out more?

Remember, you don't have to be the tenancy holder to join these groups. If you live in one of our properties, we want you to join!

Speak to our Customer Voice & Communications Team

 getinvolved@peaksplains.org

 0800 012 1311



Be **SCAM** Aware

Had an unexpected email, call or text?

Or an urgent request for money or personal details?

What about that unexpected work on your property?

Or have you seen an offer that's too good to be true?



They could all be a **SCAM**!

If you have been a victim of a scam, report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.

For advice on scams, call Citizens Advice on 0808 250 5050.

To find out how Age UK Cheshire East Scams Awareness & Aftercare could help you be more scam aware call 01625 612958.

This information is brought to you via the Older Persons Scams Awareness & Aftercare project, run by Age UK Cheshire East in partnership with Cheshire East Council Trading Standards.

Get in touch

Whether you prefer email, phone or online – we have different ways that you can get in touch.

 **0800 012 1311**

 **trust@peaksplains.org**

 live chat on **peaksplains.org** (10am-4pm, Mon-Fri)



Have your contact details changed?

Make sure you let us know so we can keep your contact details up to date.

Are we missing something?

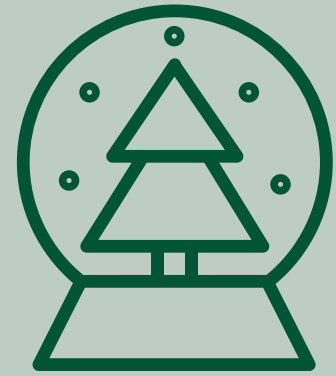
Tell us what you thought of this newsletter.

We always want your feedback, we'd love to hear from you!

 **0800 012 1311**

 **getinvolved@peaksplains.org**





Christmas Wordsearch

See if you can find all the words in this puzzle...



- | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------------|
| SANTA | PRESENTS | CANDY | GINGERBREAD |
| REINDEER | MERRY | SLEIGH | CHRISTMAS |
| SNOWMAN | ELF | JINGLE | RUDOLPH |