



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust

Plain Speaking

Winter 2025



» Our Christmas
opening hours

» Keeping you safe
this winter

» Our Neighbourhoods
Team

» Our Customer Voice &
Experience Strategy

» Connecting you
with support

» Christmas across
the world

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Prefer to receive this newsletter in a different way?

We can send this to you in a digital or printed format - just let us know.



Hello,

Welcome to your winter edition of PlainSpeaking – our customer newsletter that keeps you up to date with everything happening at the Trust.

Last year, you told us that you'd like to see PlainSpeaking available in print. That's why, alongside our digital newsletter (we send this out every three months), we will be creating an annual version available in print.

Now grab a brew (or a box of choccies) and pop your feet up before diving in to read your winter PlainSpeaking. Don't forget, if there's anything in this newsletter that you're unsure of or would like a little more information on - get in touch!

Here's a taster of what you can find in your winter newsletter:

- Our Christmas opening hours and contact details
- An update on our Christmas 2025 event
- The Trust in 2024/25
- The Trust Tenant Charter - and what you can expect from us
- Meet Neighbourhoods

And more..

**From all of us at the Trust,
we wish you a safe and peaceful festive season.**



CLOSED

Christmas closure

We're closing our offices on **Tuesday 23rd December at 4.30pm** and we'll be reopening at **8.30am on Monday 5th 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	JANUARY
23 4.30pm	05 8.30am

Have an emergency?

We're still here for you.
Call us on

 **0800 012 1311**

Do you smell gas?

Call Cadent to arrange an emergency visit

 **0800 111 999**

Not an emergency?

We'll reply within 5 working days from 5th Jan 2026

 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.



Our 2025 Christmas event

Another year spreading festive cheer

On December 9th, 2025, staff from across the Trust brought a little festive cheer to some of our customers – delivering presents and treats to over 50 homes. Think biscuits, selection boxes and a couple of other seasonal treats.

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



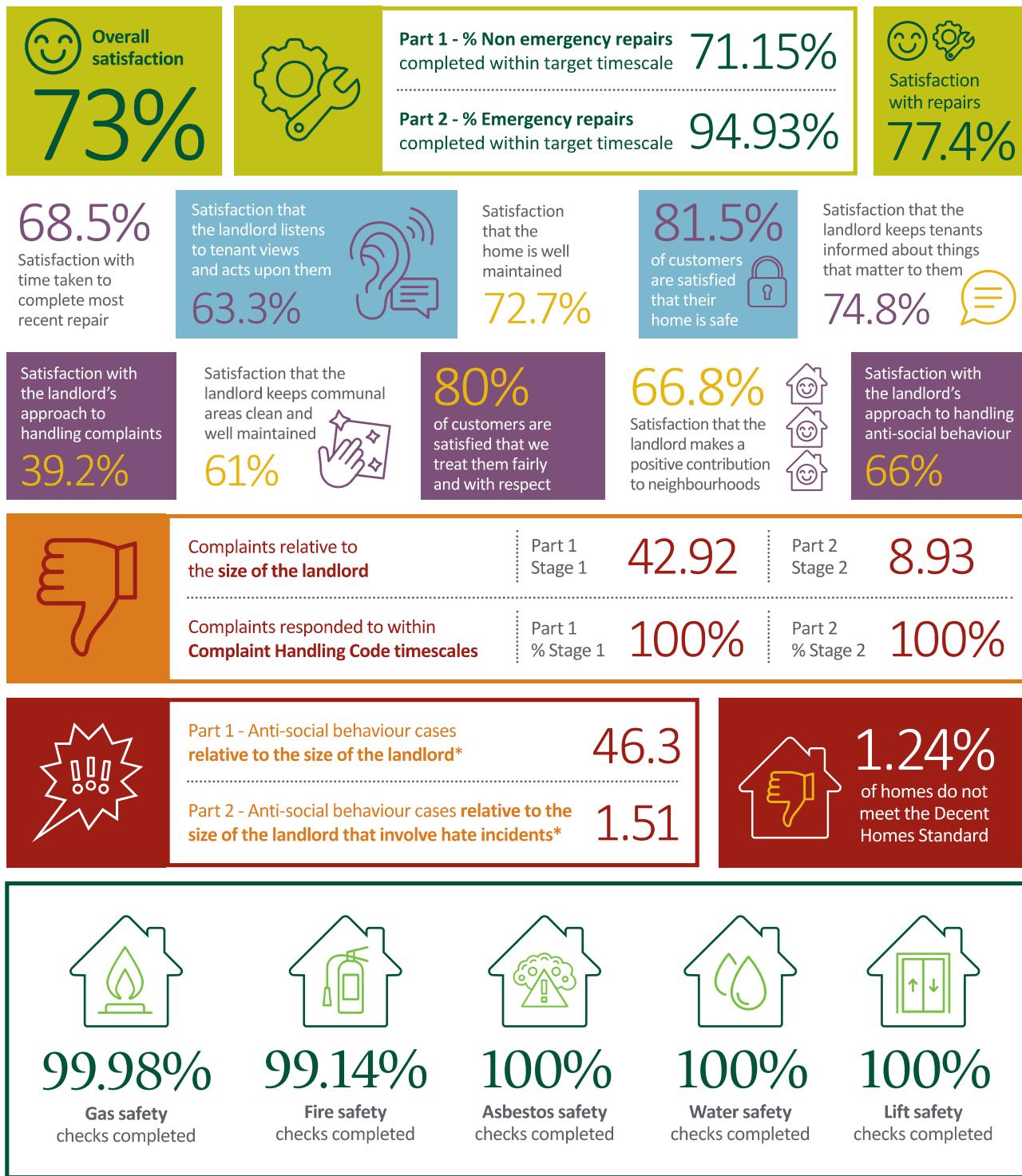


Our 2024/25 Annual Review is now live!

Our Annual Review is all about how we've been doing this last year.

Last year we launched our redesigned Annual Review, that reflects the voices of our customers and staff. It's all about transparency and keeping you informed.

You can read the full review here: peaksplains.org/annualreview



About the Trust in 2024-2025




We own and manage
5,358 homes

We manage
55 homes for others


Our turnover is
£36.78m

Our operating surplus is
£10.72m
This goes back into the Trust to provide homes and services

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

85% 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 **3:07** minutes to answer your calls 

We're proud to have retained our rating from the Regulator of Social housing of **G1/V2**

 **14,355** repairs raised

 **30,052** calls taken from our customers

We completed **1,916** live chats with our customers 

We read and responded to **9,951** emails 



We achieved **99.98%** compliance on gas servicing

 **11,986** repairs completed

On average we made and kept **93.1%** of repair appointments

 We attended **96.7%** of emergencies within 4 hours (including all tenures)



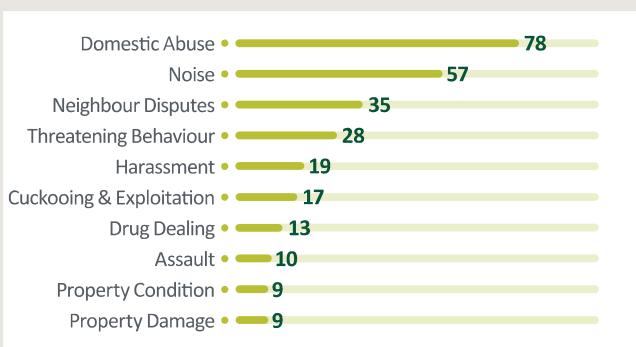
On average **89.7%** of your repairs were completed on the first visit

On average we completed **71.2%** of non-emergency repairs within target

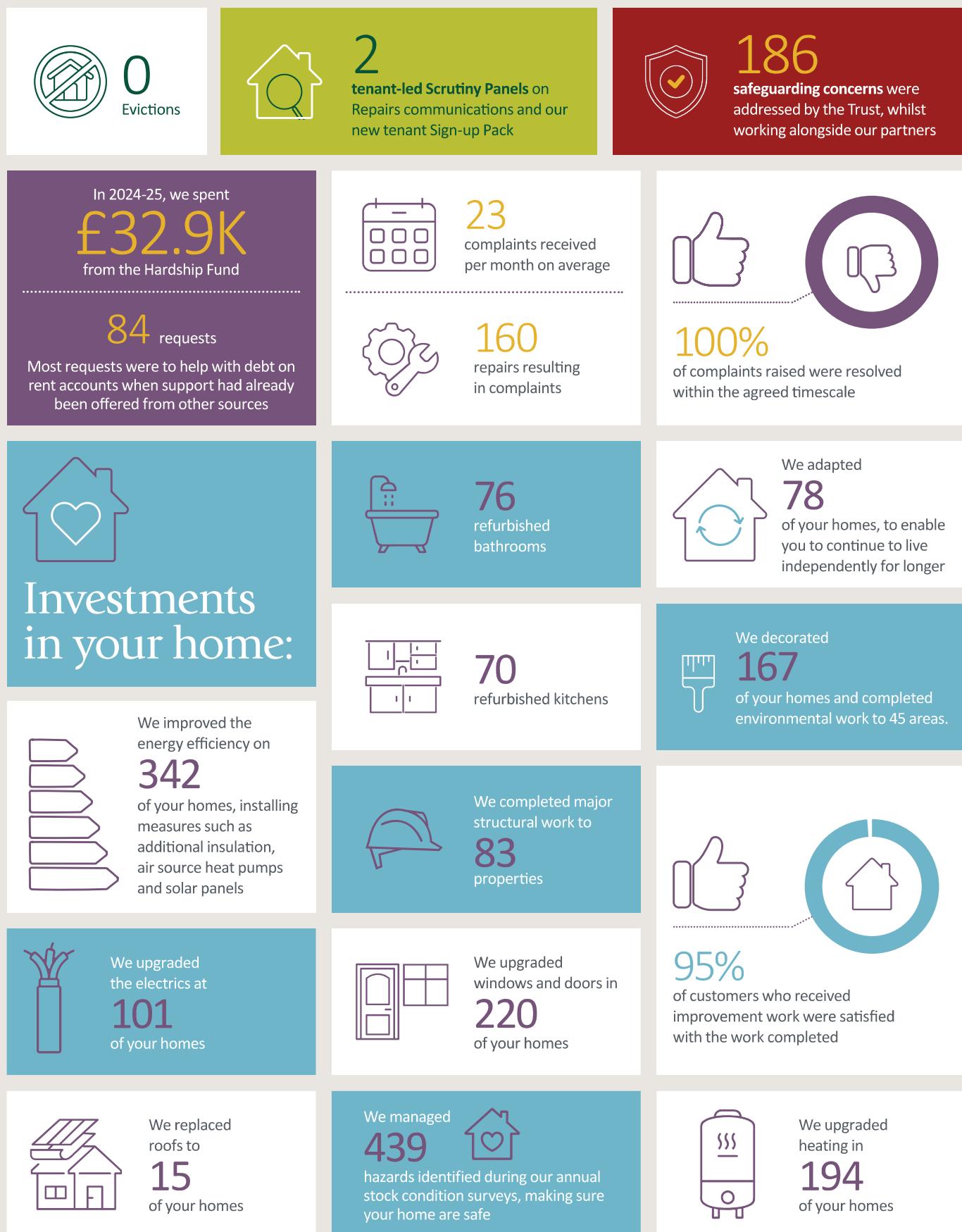
Average days to complete a routine repair **21.26**

On 31st March 2025, **99.98%** of the Trust's properties had an Electrical Installation Condition Report (EICR) less than 5 years old 

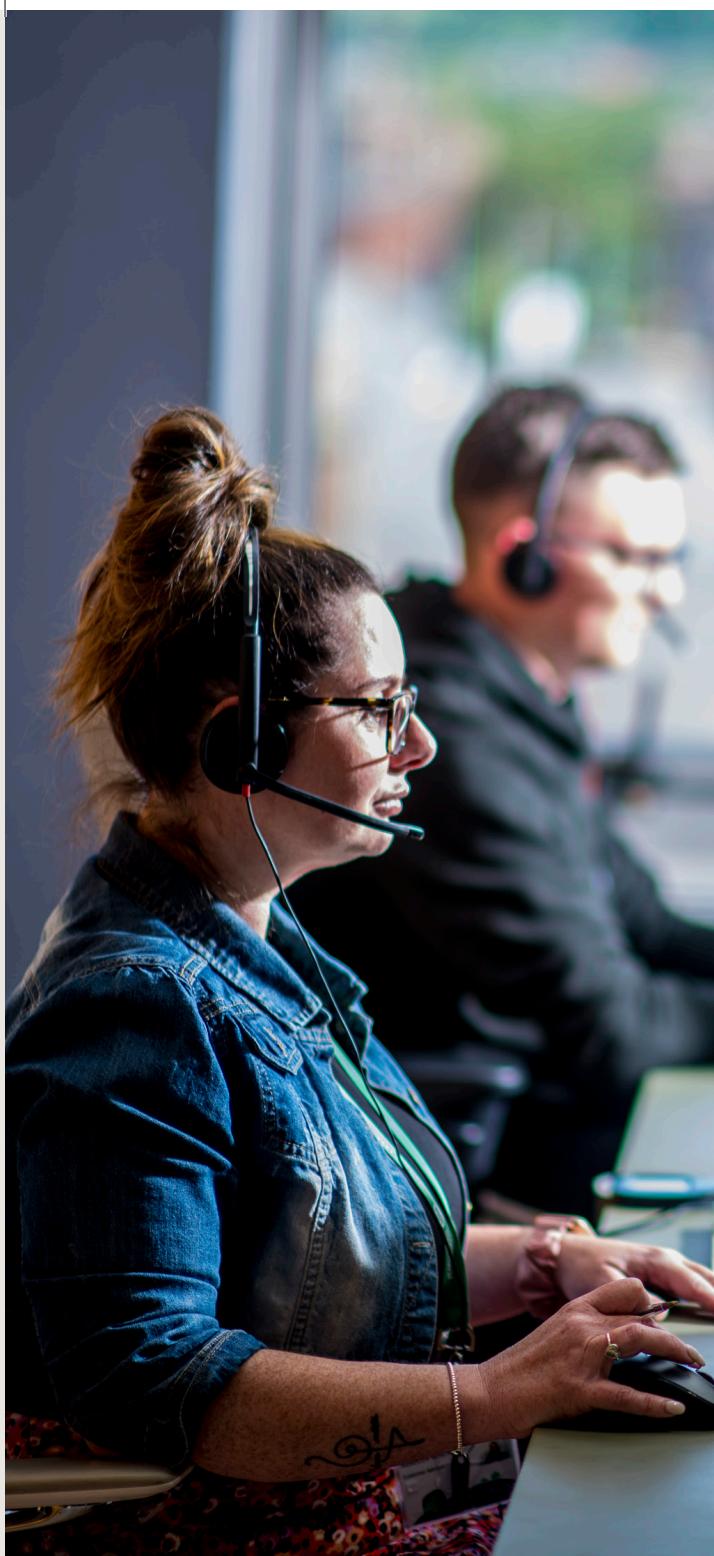
WE RECEIVED 322 REPORTS OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR*



*including hoarding



(These figures change all the time, so we've taken this snapshot from 31 March 2025 and the 12 months up to that point. When we talk about 'average' we are talking about the mean average.)



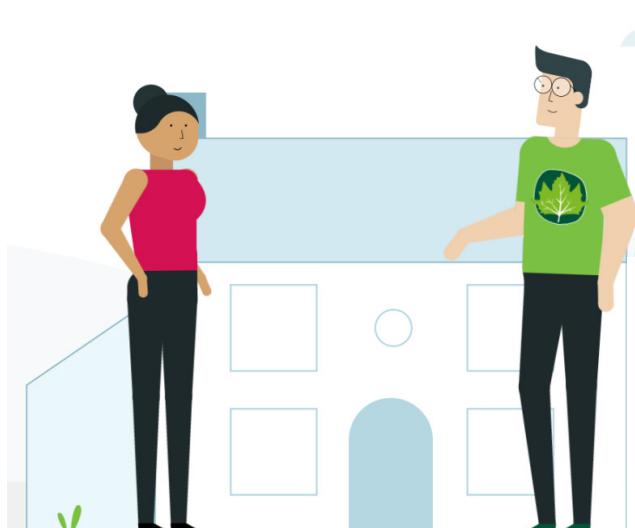
Our responsibilities & what you can expect from us

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

*We can also send this information to you if you'd prefer.

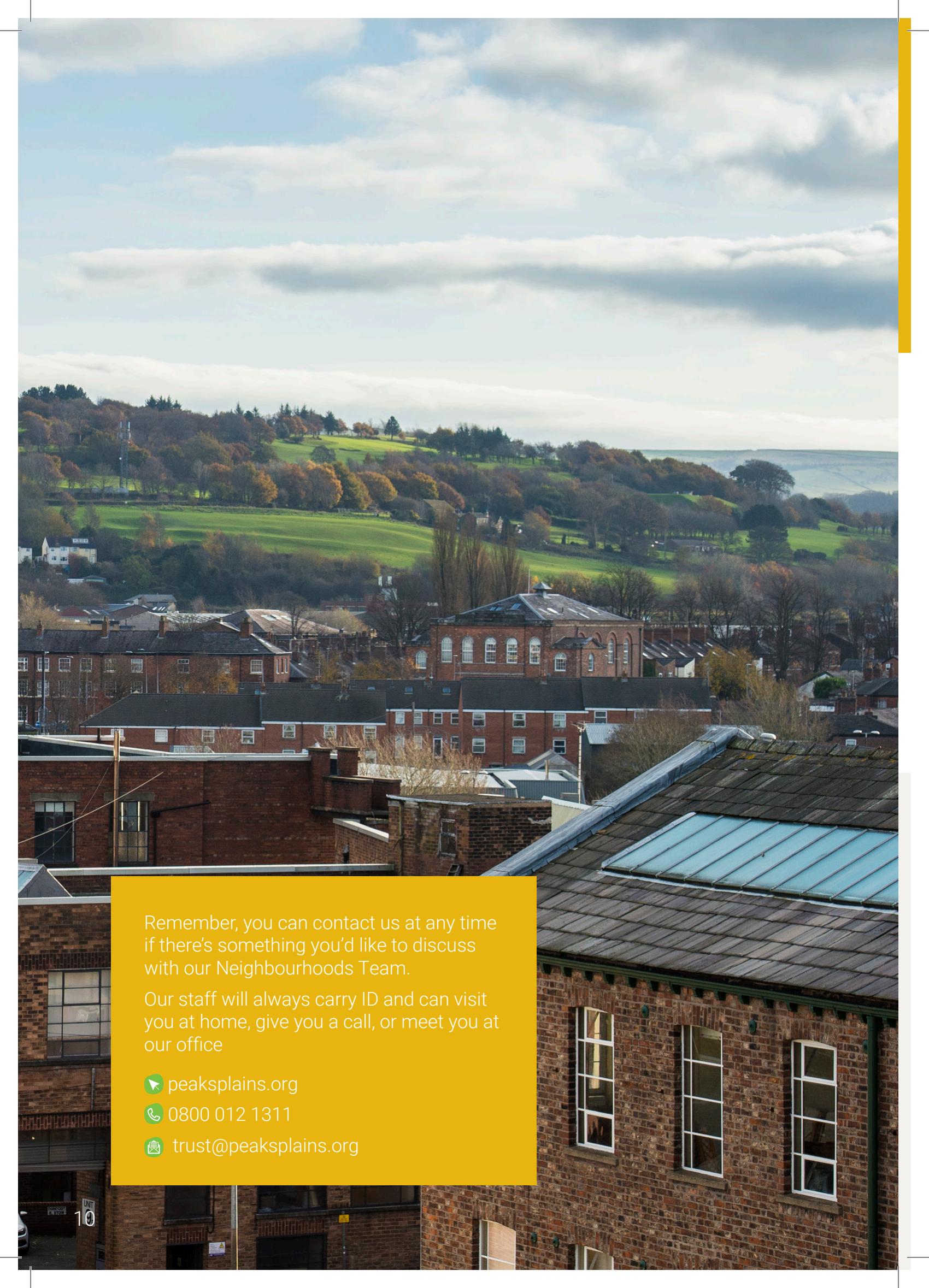


Have you seen our Trust Tenant Charter?

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



Remember, you can contact us at any time if there's something you'd like to discuss with our Neighbourhoods Team.

Our staff will always carry ID and can visit you at home, give you a call, or meet you at our office

-  peaksplains.org
-  0800 012 1311
-  trust@peaksplains.org

Meet Neighbourhoods'

Every day is different for our Neighbourhoods Team - here's a taster of what they get up to.



Meet your Neighbourhood Team

The Neighbourhood Team has eight members who work closely with you - our customers - allocating empty properties and working on all tenancy management cases.

Each Neighbourhood Officer covers a particular area. You can find out who this is by giving us a call directly, or by heading to our Neighbourhood Plans webpage at peaksplains.org/your-community/neighbourhoodplans

What do the Team do?

- Letting empty homes working with Cheshire Homechoice, Home Options and West Cheshire Homes.
- Attend all viewings with new tenants.
- Deal with all housing management tasks such as neighbourhood issues, end of tenancies, abandonments, tenancy fraud, successions, decants, mutual exchanges, managed moves, checking gardens are maintained and downsizing.
- Support other Teams at the Trust.
- Checking our estates regularly to identify any environmental issues and reporting outstanding jobs.
- Work alongside partner agencies such as social workers, community groups, police, and the fire service.
- Host monthly 'housing surgeries' in and around the community.
- Host monthly 'Roadshows' - heading to a different location each month to say hello and check in on how you're doing.

Remember, we're here to support you. Local issues you'd like to chat to us about? Looking to set up a tenant group? Let us know.



Meet your Income Team

Our 'Income Team' is here to help you pay your rent. They're a warm, friendly Team who really know their stuff - and that means they know all the local organisations who can help when you need advice or support with your money.

The Team is made up of five Income Officers, one Rent Accounting Officer, one Former Tenant Debt Officer and an Income Apprentice.



What do the Team do?

No two days are the same for our Income Team. As well as supporting you in paying your rent, they also:

- Signpost customers to sources of help, such as food banks and financial support.
- Work with customers to develop and implement payment plans – understanding budgets and priority debts.
- Supporting previous tenants to clear their debts when they are no longer tenants of the Trust.
- Make face-to-face visits to our customers to see how we can support those facing hardship.

Each Income Officer is responsible for a specific geographical area. You can find out who this is by giving us a call or heading to our Neighbourhood Plans webpage at

 peaksplains.org/your-community/neighbourhoodplans.



Meet your Support & Enforcement Team

The Team is made up of Tenancy Support Officers, Community Resolution Officers and a Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding Officer.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Officers are here to support you in managing your tenancy and preventing homelessness.

They offer practical advice and assistance to help you stay in your home, improve financial stability, and access the right services. Whether you're struggling with rent, need help applying for benefits, or require support with other household challenges, the Team are there to help.

What do the Team do?

The Team provides tailored support in areas such as:

- Financial Support: Benefit checks and access grants or trust funds.
- Housing and Tenancy Advice: Assistance with managing day-to-day tenancy responsibilities, property condition concerns, and referrals for additional support.
- Wellbeing and Social Support: Signposting to mental health services, social care, and local support networks.
- Support at critical times: Help with applying for household support funds, food banks, and energy cost assistance.

 peaksplains.org/sustainment

The Community Resolution Officers have a range of responsibilities that help you maintain your tenancy and keep your neighbourhoods peaceful. The Team deals with anti-social behaviour (also known as ASB), which refers to a wide range of unacceptable behaviour in the community. It can include things like neighbour disputes, arson, noise, assault, hate crime.

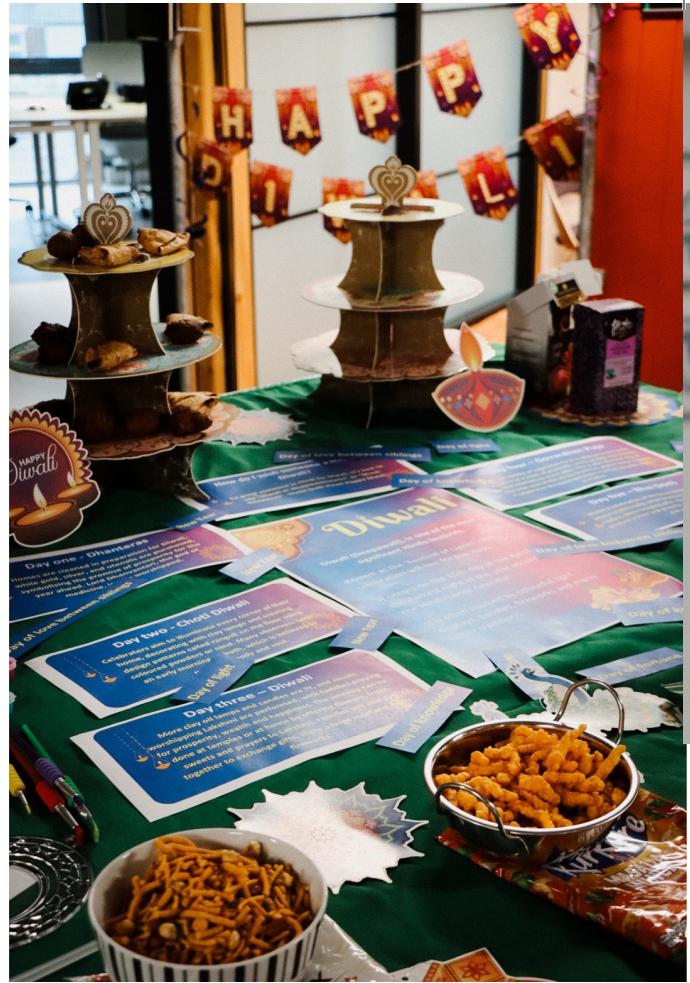
We also have a dedicated Domestic Abuse & Safeguarding Officer whose role is to support adults and children to feel safe in their home - free from abuse or harm.

 peaksplains.org/safeguarding

Our staff are human, just like you.

Please speak politely to our staff – all of us at the Trust are here to help.







5 tips to keep you & your family safe this winter...

Jason, the Team Leader for our talented Gas Team, gives you the lowdown on staying safe from the dangers of gas boilers – which, when faulty or fitted wrong, can kill.

Gas boilers are dangerous. Carbon monoxide is a silent killer that can be released from faulty boilers. Faulty boilers can also leak gas or overheat and cause fires.

Our out-and-about Gas Team are all specially trained gas engineers who service your boiler every year to massively reduce those risks.

- 1** Only use a Gas Safe registered engineer to fit, fix and service your appliances.
All our gas engineers at the Trust are registered as Gas Safe – so don't try to service your boiler yourself. We will do this for you.
- 2** You can always check if the engineer visiting you is registered as Gas Safe by asking to see their Gas Safe Register ID card – check both sides.
You can find and check an engineer at [GasSafeRegister.co.uk](https://www.gassaferegister.co.uk).
If you're worried that the person at your door is a scammer, call us on [0800 012 1311](tel:08000121311) and we'll confirm if we've sent someone round.
- 3** When we book your annual service, make sure you're in for the appointment. We need to service your boiler to make sure it's safe every year.
- 4** Know the six signs of carbon monoxide poisoning: headaches, dizziness, breathlessness, nausea, collapse, and loss of consciousness.
Find out more on the NHS website about what to do if you suspect you have carbon monoxide poisoning symptoms. [nhs.uk/carbonmonoxide](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/carbon-monoxide/)
- 5** Check your gas appliances for warning signs that they're not working properly and get in touch to let us know. Things to look out for:
 - lazy yellow flames instead of crisp blue ones
 - black marks on or around the appliance
 - an unusual amount of condensation in the room

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

nationalgrid



If you smell gas or suspect there is a gas leak, call the National Grid immediately on  **0800 111 999**.

After you have called the national grid, call us on  **0800 012 1311** and we will come to your property.

Make sure you follow all the advice you're given, including:

- Do not smoke or light matches
- Do not turn electrical switches on or off
- Open doors and windows
- Turn off the meter at the control handles unless the meter is in the cellar

If you have a question about your annual gas service or need to rearrange it, give us a call on  **0800 012 1311** or email  **trust@peaksplains.org**.



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.

Complaints

An at-a-glance guide

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

PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust



Service request

If you're telling us about a problem for the first time, we'll treat it as a service request - **not a complaint**. We'll log it, keep track of it, and aim to sort it out within 3 working days.

A 2-stage process



Investigation

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

- We'll log your complaint within **5 working days** and assign a manager to look into it.
- The manager will contact you within **3 working days** of our acknowledgement letter.
- If it's about your home, we may need to visit to understand the issue properly.
- You'll get a full written response within **10 working days** of our acknowledgement. If we need more time, we'll keep you updated.



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 may ask to meet with you to better understand your concerns.
- You'll receive a written response within **20 working days**, explaining our decision and any actions we'll take.
- If we need more time, we'll keep you informed.

Housing
Ombudsman Service

0300 111 3000

housing-ombudsman.org.uk



complaints@peaksplains.org



0800 012 1311



peaksplains.org/complaints

Have a complaint?

Our at-a-glance complaints guide talks you through the process – and lets you know how you can contact us.

Our 2024/25 Complaints Report is now live. The Report highlights the progress we've made and what we need to work on when it comes to complaints.

Head to peaksplains.org/complaints2025

(We can also send you a printed copy - just let us know!)



Alison
Board Champion for Complaints

Every complaint is a powerful opportunity to learn, grow, and improve. Our commitment to complaints performance is rooted in transparency, accountability, and a relentless drive to enhance the customer experience. By listening with empathy and acting with integrity, we turn feedback into meaningful service improvements that build trust and satisfaction at every level.



Connecting you with the help you need



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.

We have introduced a new page on our website where you can find all the support you need: peaksplains.org/supporthubhub

If you don't use our website - don't worry - we have included all the information below. If you're unsure or need pointing in the right direction, always give us a call.

Looking after yourself

Samaritans (24hr)	116 123	samaritans.org
SANEline (4pm - 10pm).....	0300 304 7000	sane.org.uk
Campaign Against Living Miserably (5pm-12am)	0800 58 58 58	thecalmzone.net
Shout (24hr)	txt SHOUT to 85258	giveusashout.org

Keeping your family fed

Cre8 Surplus Food Grocery	01625 503740
Macclesfield	
CORE Food Pantry	pantry.upton@gmail.com
Macclesfield	
The Welcome	01565 750905
Knutsford	
Stockport Credit Union	0161 430 5808
	stockportcu.com

Support in later life

Age UK Cheshire	ageuk.org.uk/cheshire
Age UK Derbyshire	01773 768240

Emergency help

Emergency Assistance	0300 123 5025
Cheshire East Council (8.30am-5pm mon-fri)	(choose 'emergency assistance')
Adult Social Care	0300 123 5022
Cheshire East Council	
Help in Emergencies	0300 123 5022
Cheshire West	

Anti-Social Behaviour Support

Cheshire CARES	01606 366 336	Cheshire.cares@cheshire.police.uk
Victim Support		
Childline	0800 1111	
Derbyshire Domestic Abuse	0800 0198 668	07534 617 252
24 Hour Helpline		
Cheshire East ASB Team	0300 123 5030	ASBTeam@cheshireeast.gov.uk
RSPCA National Cruelty Hotline	0300 123 4999	

Domestic Abuse Support

Cheshire East Domestic Abuse Hub	0808 2000 247
Derbyshire ...	08000 198 668
County Council	derbyshiredahelpline@theelmfoundation.org.uk
Cheshire West and Chester Domestic Abuse Support	cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/domesticabuse
National Domestic Abuse Helpline	0808 2000 247
	nationaldahelpline.org.uk
Cheshire Without Abuse	03333 449 505
Men's Advice Line	0808 801 0327



Remember, if you've been threatened or attacked and require urgent assistance - always dial 999.

Always Listening. Always Improving.



“Our strategy is simple: listen to you and use your feedback to make our services better. This plan shows how we’re putting your voice at the centre, improving how we communicate, solve problems, and build trust every step of the way. Our focus should be on our customers’ experience with us.”



Mark Howden
CEO

Our Customer Voice and Customer Experience Strategy complies with new regulations from the Social Housing Regulation Bill, the Building safety Act (2022), and the Better Social Housing Review (2023).

The Strategy outlines how we'll meet new engagement standards, including Tenant Satisfaction Measures such as:

- Satisfaction that the landlord listens to tenant views and acts upon them.
- Satisfaction that the landlord keeps tenants informed about things that matter to them.
- Agreement that the landlord treats tenants fairly and with respect.

It reflects key legislation such as the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, the Equality Act 2010, and the Housing Ombudsman's Complaints Handling Code, all aimed at improving tenant engagement, fairness, and service quality.

Created for Customers by Customers

We believe the best way to understand your needs is to involve you directly. Over recent months, we've worked closely with customers, stakeholders, and staff to gather insights through surveys, focus groups, and co-creation workshops. At the workshop facilitated by Game of Homes, we asked the question:

How can Peaks & Plains build an open and honest relationship with you, our customers, where your feedback influences our services, you hold us to account, and you feel truly heard and valued every time we interact?

Your feedback has guided this strategy, ensuring it reflects your priorities and experiences. We will continue to consult and collaborate regularly to keep our services aligned with what matters most to you.



We're working hard to make sure when you contact us, your experience is:

- Easy
- Helpful
- Respectful
- Quick
- Accessible



We will

- Listen carefully and respectfully to your feedback.
- Communicate clearly and in ways that suit you best.
- Act promptly to resolve issues and improve services.
- Be open and honest about what we can do and what to expect.
- Involve you in shaping policies and services.

We're doing things like

- Making our website and digital services more user-friendly.
- Being clear that digital is a choice not an expectation.
- Training staff to deliver top-quality customer service.
- Tracking how long it takes us to fix problems – and working to do better.
- Using your communication preferences and needs in all our interactions with you where possible (sometimes we must send things out in writing – this could be due to law or regulation.)

When you get in touch

Getting the Basics Right.

As your landlord, we promise to:

- Provide dependable services that are easy to find and use.
- Always try our best to get things right first time for you.
- Give you a range of ways to contact us.
- Listen to you and use your information to help shape and improve our services.
- Keep our promises and always be honest with you.
- Treat you with respect when you get in touch - and we ask that you do the same for us.

Our Goals

Deliver timely, clear, and personalised communication that matches your preferences and needs.

Make it easy and accessible for you to provide feedback

Use your up-to-date data to improve quality and efficiency of services that get things right the first time.

Make our complaint resolution process more responsive, empathetic and create a culture of learning lessons from our mistakes.

Foster a culture where customer insight drives continuous improvement.

Ensure all communication is appropriate, relevant, and easy to understand.

How we listen to you

Any interaction you have with us including booking a repair or speaking to us about your tenancy.

Join our resident panels or scrutiny groups to shape big decisions.

Take part in quick surveys (online, by phone, paper copies, or text).

Attend local events or community meetings.

Give us feedback via social media, our website, or over the phone.

Share your story - we want to hear your experiences, good or bad.

We'll make sure information is easy to understand and available in different formats and languages if needed. This would include support to help you engage with us for example offering translation services or information in large print.



peaksplains.org/getinvolved



It's Christmas time!

Christmas is the most celebrated holiday in the world, and as you can imagine, every country has different traditions to celebrate the day of light, hope and Christian community.

If you started preparing for Christmas in November, there is a country that will compete with you. The Philippines starts celebrating Christmas in September, winning the award for the world's longest Christmas season. Mexico is catching up with their month-long fiesta - *Navidad*, which is a vibrant blend of indigenous customs and Spanish colonial influence, lasting from 12th December to 6th January!

When the snow doesn't bring joy, we would recommend visiting Australia for a celebration. Many families spend the day at the beach, with Father Christmas sometimes wearing shorts, and instead of roasted turkey, you can enjoy fresh seafood, salads and cold meats.

In Catholic countries like Italy, the nativity scene is one of the most important and enduring traditions. These sometime feature entire miniature villages which are displayed in churches, town squares, and homes across the country. St. Francis of Assisi is credited with popularising the first living nativity scene in 1223.

In Eastern Europe, the idea of Christmas is no different from the Western world, with hope and family being a priority. However, the traditions are slightly different. For example, in Ukraine, instead of a nativity scene, there is a 'Vertep' – a portable nativity puppet theatre. Groups of performers go from house to house singing folklore songs known as caroling (*Koliadky*), sharing good wishes in exchange for treats or money.

During the festive season, various traditions bring joy and happiness to people across the globe.

We wish you a wonderful and restful holiday period - whatever that looks like for you.



ageUK

Let's change how we age

Feeling like you could use a friendly voice or connection?

Age UK have friendship services available for people aged 50 or over, who can match you with a telephone friend for weekly phone calls at a scheduled time.



0800 470 80 90 – lines are open 24/7, 365 days a year.

Age UK Cheshire's Sharing Time Befriending project is a free service, available across the whole of Cheshire - supporting people 50+ who may not have the opportunity for social interaction.

The service aims to reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation by bringing people together to offer companionship, build confidence, improve wellbeing, and help people feel more connected.

Their team of trusted volunteers will support by building a meaningful befriending relationship for an agreed period – this may be short term or indefinite.

To discuss the service or make a referral, contact their team on:



01606 305012



sharingtime@ageukcheshire.org.uk

"My volunteer has helped me through the last couple of years. She has really picked me up when I was feeling a bit down or anxious, they have definitely helped with my mental health & encouraged me to get out, speak to people and try new things".

Get in touch

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

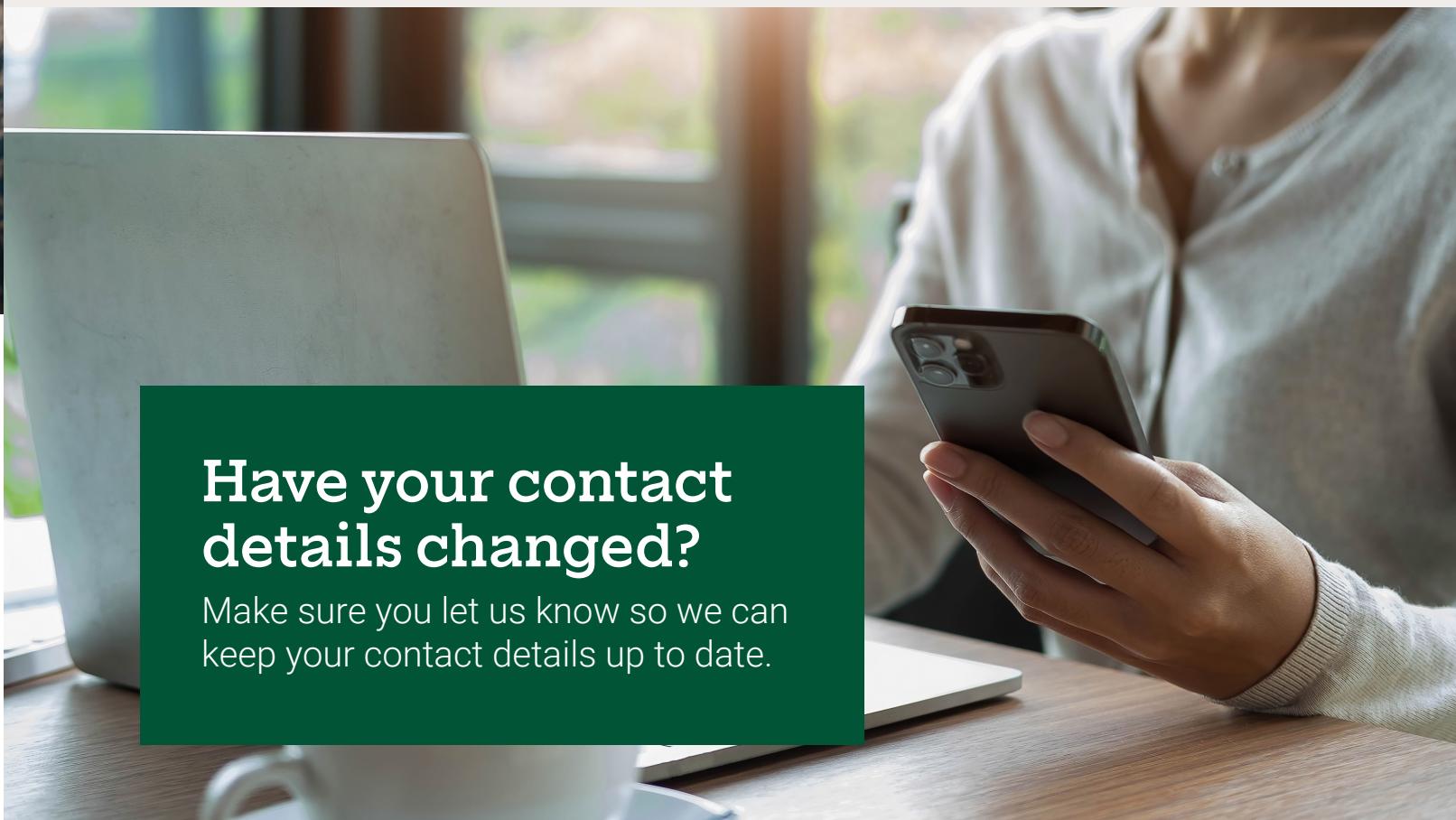
 **0800 012 1311**

 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?

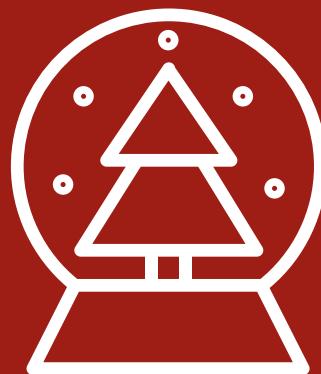
Tell us what you thought of this newsletter.

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

 **0800 012 1311**

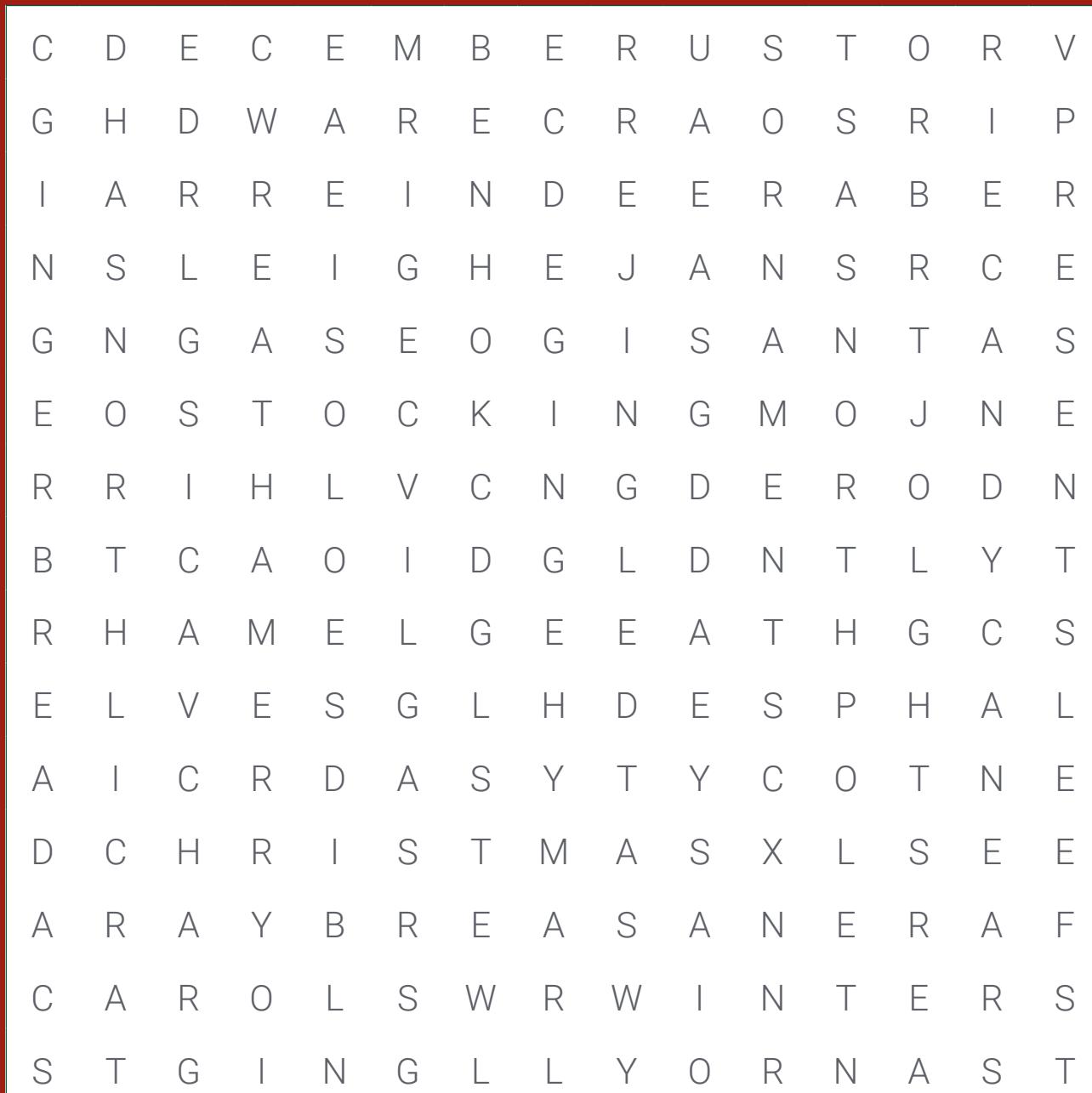
 getinvolved@peaksplains.org





Christmas Wordsearch

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



CANDY CANE

ELVES

LIGHTS

PRESENTS

STOCKING

CAROLS

GINGERBREAD

MERRY

REINDEER

TREE

CHRISTMAS

JINGLE

NORTH POLE

SANTA

WINTER

DECEMBER

HOLLY

ORNAMENTS

SLEIGH

WREATH