



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust



2023/24
Environmental, Social,
Governance (ESG) Report



PEAKS & PLAINS
Housing Trust



This report is intended for our customers, funders, and partners, providing insight into how we plan to address the environmental and social challenges ahead. We recognise the urgent need for more homes that offer security and decent living conditions for individuals and families on low incomes.

We face the critical task of refurbishing our existing social housing stock to meet regulatory standards and the government's 2050 net zero carbon target.

We are actively working to enhance the energy efficiency of all our homes.

We owe it to our customers, partners, and funders to provide a transparent overview of our efforts to meet these standards and prepare for the future.

This is our fourth ESG report, and each year we aim to refine its content to accurately reflect our progress in managing evolving challenges, mitigating risks, and exploring new opportunities. As we deepen our understanding, improve our data, and develop operational plans, we are committed to embedding continuous improvement in our practices.

I hope you find this document informative and transparent, enhancing your understanding of our social purpose and impact.

Peaks & Plains Housing Trust is proud to be a social housing provider dedicated to serving communities across Cheshire and the High Peak.

Based in Macclesfield, our reach extends from Alderley Edge and Poynton to Buxton and Nantwich.

We own and manage approximately 5,200 homes and operate with an annual turnover of £32.01 million, supported by a dedicated team of around 200 staff.

Our Purpose:

"Working together to provide safe homes and thriving communities."

We strive to meet local housing needs in collaboration with trusted partners, ensuring safe and affordable homes for singles, couples, and families alike.

As a general needs housing provider, we offer a range of services that align with our strategic priorities—from repairs and estate management to assets and new developments. Our commitment is to be a great landlord, create great places to live, and be a resilient organisation. As a profit-for-purpose entity, any surpluses (profits) we generate are reinvested into our services; we operate without owners or shareholders.

Find out more online  peaksplains.org/about-us

Mark Howden
Chief Executive Officer



Summary of criteria themes

Our ESG report is broken into the following themes, and these are further broken down into detailed criteria - C1-C46.

Environmental	T1 Climate change	How are we rising to the challenge of climate change both now and in the future?
	T2 Ecology	How well are we protecting the local environment and ecology? In particular, this explores how to reduce the degradation of natural habitats and stop the loss of biodiversity.
	T3 Resource Management	How are we managing natural resources sustainably? This includes how we plan to reduce waste and how we will encourage other companies to adopt sustainable practices.
Social	T4 Affordability & Security	How affordable are our homes to those on low incomes? The criteria include the tenure mix of our homes and the security of our tenancies and our plans to reduce inequality.
	T5 Building safety & Quality	How well are we meeting our legal responsibilities to protect residents and to keep their homes safe? The theme is made up of two criteria, disclosing gas safety checks and fire risk assessments.
	T6 Resident voice	How successful are we at listening to and empowering residents? We look at board scrutiny, complaint handling and resident satisfaction.
	T7 Resident support	What do we do to support our residents? Criteria cover what support we offer and how successful it is.
	T8 Placemaking	How successful are we at creating well-designed homes and providing great places to live with a mix of tenure types to support inclusive communities?
Governance	T9 Structure & Governance	How do we make sure that the trust is effective, accountable and transparent at all levels?
	T10 Board & Trustees	How well equipped is our Board to govern the Trust effectively? We look at ownership, experience and independence.
	T11 Staff wellbeing	What kind of employer is the Trust and how do we support our people and treat them fairly?
	T12 Supply Chain	How do we promote sustainable public procurement practices, and make sure they match with national policies and priorities?

This document follows the structure of The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing. In time we aim to adopt the standard and build on this framework.



Environmental...



Climate Change

C1. Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year)

Measurement: % of homes rated	31st Mar 2024
(92-100) A	0.14%
(81-91) B	11.42%
(69-80) C	47.64%
(55-68) D	39.29%
(1-54) E+	1.47%
Homes without an EPC rating	0.04%

C2. Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year)

Measurement: number of homes rated	31st Mar 2024
(92-100) A	0
(81-91) B	11
(69-80) C	7
(55-68) D	0
(1-54) E+	0
Homes without an EPC rating	0

C3. Does Peaks & Plains have a Net Zero target and strategy? If so, what is it and when does Peaks & Plains intend to be Net Zero by?

The Trust's Environmental Strategy is a commitment to achieve net zero carbon by 2050. This will cost circa £180m, of which the Trust has already committed £50m in the current business plan. This gap in funding will be addressed through a mix of external grant funding and re-financing.

C4. What retrofit activities has Peaks & Plains undertaken in the last 12 months in relation to its housing stock? How do these activities align with, and contribute towards, performance against Peaks & Plains' Net Zero strategy and target?

The Trust have been delivering energy efficiency works through the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (Wave 2), which focuses on improving a property's energy efficiency rating whilst also reducing the amount of Carbon the property produces.

The Trust has carried out retrofit assessments to a number of domestic properties that need energy improvement works, so that we can start 'modelling' the measure package needed to improve the home. We have also completed surveys on our commercial units to improve our understanding on their energy efficiency and make sure we meet legislative requirements.

The Trust has also been replacing older boilers with modern condensing combination boilers which again will see our customers have more efficient heating systems installed, resulting in lower energy costs.

C5. Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions per home

Measurement:	12th Jun 2024
Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions	16029000 kg CO ₂ e
Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 Green House Gas emissions per home	3150kg CO ₂ e

C6. How has Peaks & Plains mapped and assessed the climate risks to its homes and supply chain, such as increased flood, drought and overheating risks? How is Peaks & Plains mitigating these risks?

The Trust worked with **SHIFT** and has recently reviewed and updated its flood risk assessment. Work is ongoing in relation to drought and overheating and this will be included in the revised Environmental Strategy.



Ecology

C7. Does Peaks & Plains have a strategy to enhance green space and promote biodiversity on or near homes? If yes, please describe with reference to targets in this area. If no, are you planning on producing one in the next 12 months?

There are no plans for a specific strategy as it is covered broadly in our new Environmental Strategy – we are developing a Peak & Plains Standard which will include what we intend to do for existing stock.

C8. Does Peaks & Plains have a strategy to identify, manage and reduce pollutants that could cause material harm? If so, how does Peaks & Plains target and measure performance?

The Trust is in the process of revising its Environmental Strategy which will include how it intends to address issues relating to reduce pollutants.

Resource Management

C9. Does Peaks & Plains have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building works?

This is included in the revised Environmental Strategy. It will also be included as part of the Trust's approach to procuring development contracts.

C10. Does Peaks & Plains have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials? If so, how does Peaks & Plains target and measure performance?

The Trust has recently procured a waste management contract for our in-house maintenance team. As a result of our SHIFT assessment and our revised Environmental Strategy, we will broaden our in-house waste management commitments to include external contractors and our own office management arrangements.

C11. Does Peaks & Plains have a strategy for water management? If so, how does Peaks & Plains target and measure performance?

The Trust's approach to water management is outlined in our Environmental Strategy.

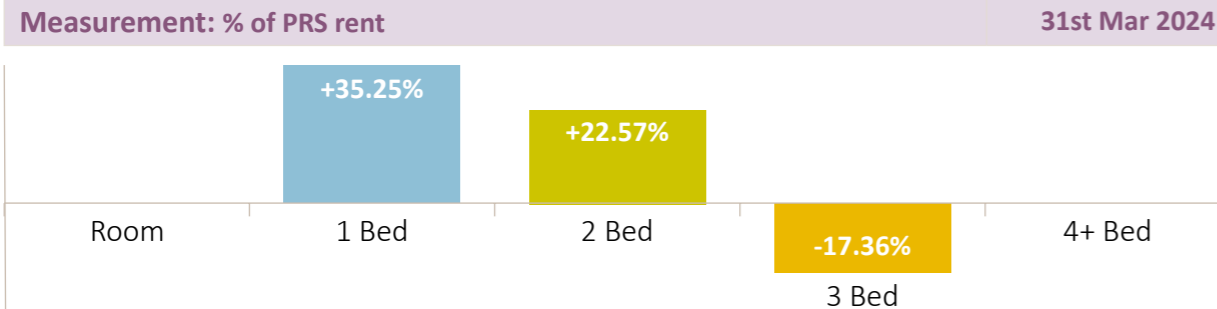


Social...

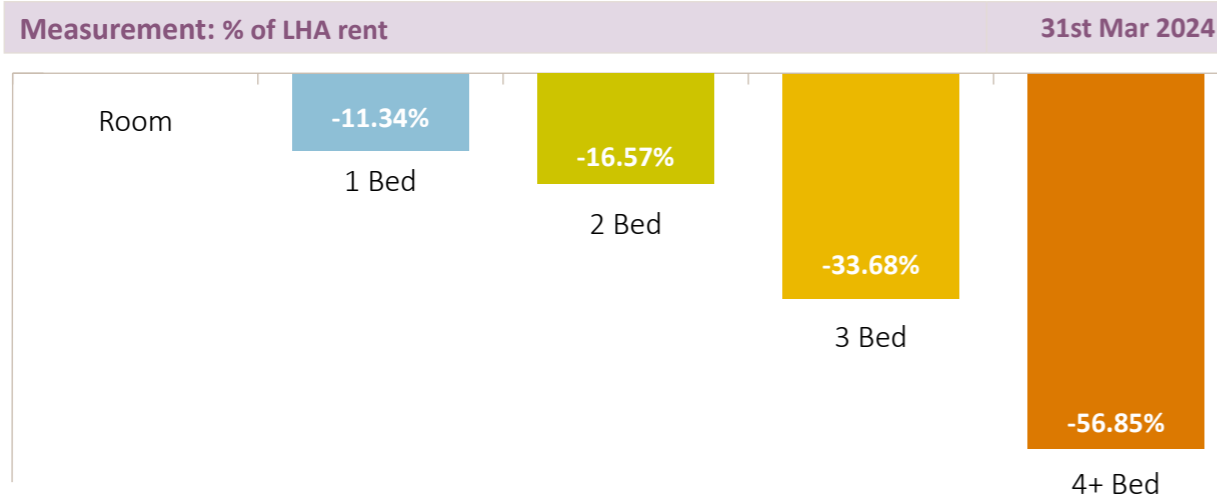
Affordability & Security

C12. For properties that are subject to the rent regulation regime, report against one or more Affordability Metric:

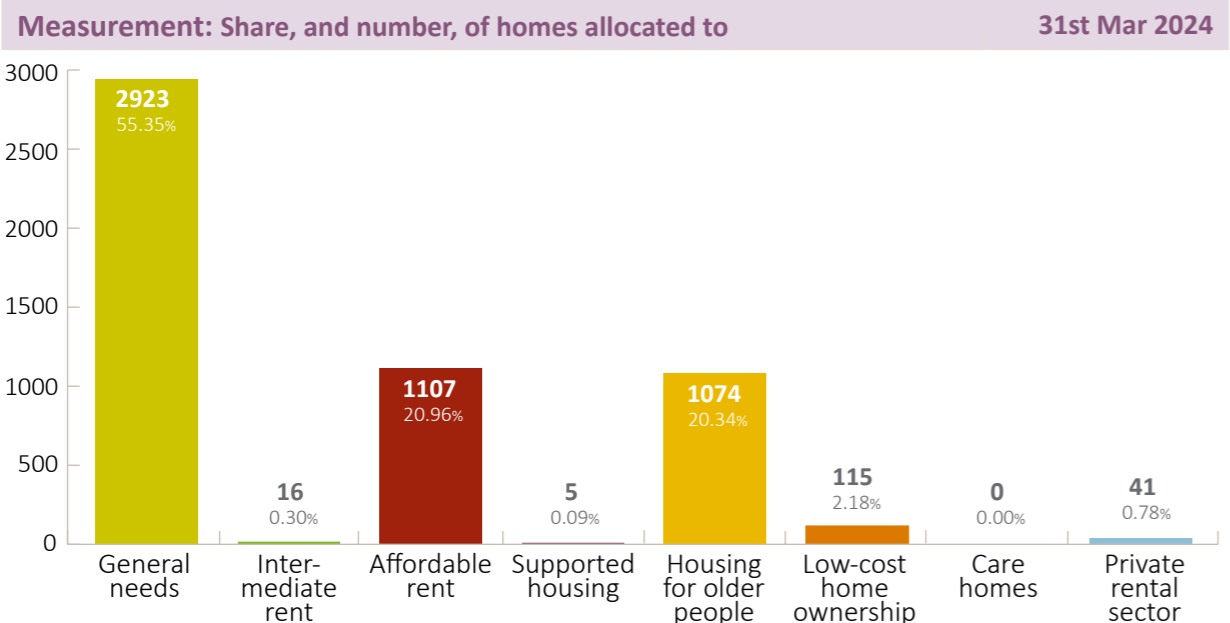
Rent compared to median Private Rental Section relevant to LA. Issued by local government.



Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

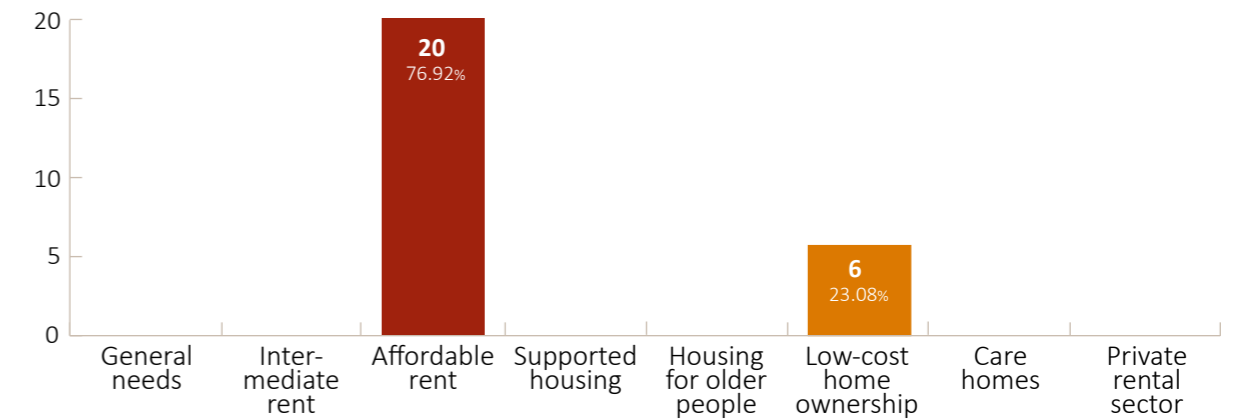


C13. Share, and number, of existing homes (homes completed before the start of the previous financial year) allocated to: General needs (social rent), Intermediate rent, Affordable rent, Supported Housing, Housing for older people, Low-cost home ownership, Care homes, Private Rental Sector:



C14. Share, and number, of new homes (homes that were completed in the last financial year), allocated to: General needs (social rent), Intermediate rent, Affordable rent, Supported Housing, Housing for older people, Low-cost home ownership, Care homes, Private Rental Sector:

Measurement: Share, and number, of new homes allocated to 31st Mar 2024



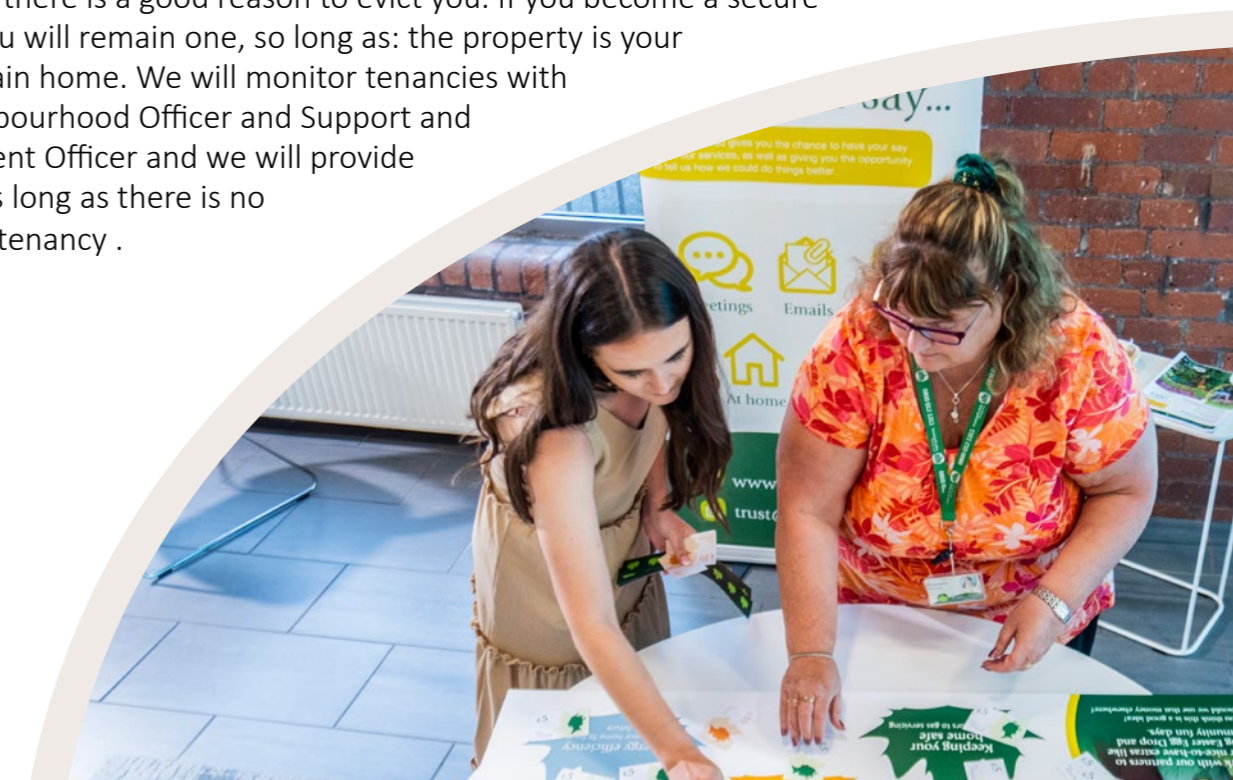
C15. How is Peaks & Plains trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?

Retrofitting plays a crucial role in improving energy efficiency, sustainability, and liveability within social housing communities. By prioritising strategic retrofitting solutions, we can unlock cost savings, reduce carbon emissions, and improve quality of life for residents.

The Trust has three Tenancy Sustainment Officers who can help reduce the effects of fuel poverty on residents by giving support and guidance such as on grants or benefits. They can refer to energy efficiency support services such as LEAP. They may be able to help advocate on behalf of residents with utility companies to ensure fair pricing and support for those struggling to pay bills.

C16. How does Peaks & Plains provide security of tenure for residents?

Tenants have 'security of tenure' when they become a 'secure tenant'. This means that your tenancy can only be ended with a court order, providing that it is proven to the court that there is a good reason to evict you. If you become a secure tenant, you will remain one, so long as: the property is your only or main home. We will monitor tenancies with the Neighbourhood Officer and Support and Enforcement Officer and we will provide security as long as there is no breach of tenancy.





Building Safety & Quality

C17. Describe the condition of Peaks & Plains’s portfolio, with reference to:

Measurement:	31st Mar 2024
% of homes have an in date gas safety check in line with the policy.	100%
% of required fire risk assesments in place.	100%
% of homes have received an electrical safety check in the past 5 years.	100%

All properties, which we refer to as ‘housing stock’, goes through a 20% annual stock condition survey. This means that the Trust has circa 96% of annual stock data which is less than 5 years old as of 31 March 2024

The Trust’s board reviews an investment report (which highlights development, investment, repair position) and a compliance report at every meeting.

There is also a monthly performance meeting for managers which highlights the financial, performance and risk of the Trust’s development and investment programme, as well as the Trust’s current position on delivered and ongoing repairs

C18. What % of homes meet the national housing quality standard? Of those which fail, what is Peaks & Plains doing to address these failings?

Measurement:	31st Mar 2024
% of homes	0.66%

C19. How do you manage and mitigate the risk of damp and mould for your residents?

We have a robust method of capturing damp and mould through customer enquiries, colleague inspections, stock condition surveys and Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). After we have a report of damp or mould, we carry out an inspection and carry out work based on the severity of the issue. Staff have gone through damp and mould training, with targeted training for different roles within the business. The Board, Challenge Group (the Trust’s most involved panel of customers) and colleagues in asset.

The majority of these properties will be included in the 2024/5 investment programme and work will be completed which will enable them to meet the Decent Homes Standard.

A small number will be subject to a detailed options appraisal in order to identify the most appropriate course of action, which could include investment, disposal or redevelopment.

Resident Voice

C20. What are the results of Peaks & Plains’s most recent tenant satisfaction survey? How has Peaks & Plains acted on these results?

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

71.6% of customers stated they were satisfied overall with our service*

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

We use this information to improve and shape the services that we offer. It highlights area of improvement and lets us know what you think.

Here are a few examples:

- Customers told us there was 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.
- Customers told us that they don’t see us out and about where they live.

In 2021, we reintroduced our Neighbourhood Team.

From 2023, we host monthly ‘Roadshows’ across our communities to say hello and check-in on how you’re doing. Read about what our Roadshows are.

➤ You can find out when we will next be on our Neighbourhood Plans webpage peaksplains.org/your-community/neighbourhood-plans

➤ See more information about the measures here: peaksplains.org/about-us/how-we-are-doing/tenant-satisfaction-measures

*All figures are out of 1045 customers that were surveyed through our partners, Acuity.



C21. What arrangements are in place to enable residents to hold management to account for the provision of services?

The Trust has a Customer Voice and Communications team that encourages and supports customers to influence decisions and challenge the work of the Trust. The Customer Voice and Communications team works to deliver the Trust’s Customer Voice Strategy, which was co-produced with residents and approved by our Board. It is important to create opportunities that are inclusive and diverse therefore we have created several different ways for customers to provide feedback and influence decision making. We have different levels of involvement requiring a variety of levels of commitment.

The Trust has an active Challenge Group, the most involved panel of customers at the Trust that meets regularly to scrutinise performance and report to the Trust’s Board.

peaksplains.org/your-voice

C22. In the last 12 months, in how many complaints has the national Ombudsman determined that maladministration took place? How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within Peaks & Plains?

There were four cases determined by the Ombudsman. Three out of the four cases received service failure or maladministration determinations. There were two service failures and two maladministrations.

In 2023/24, the Trust held at 38% maladministration rate.

The national maladministration rate is: **73%**

The Housing Ombudsman Service advised ‘the landlord performed **WELL** when compared to similar landlords by size and type’.

Following this, two training sessions were rolled out- one session covered fact checking and the other reinforced how to be clear on complaints outcomes. There was also a change in process relating to how staff should handle reports of a fire at a property, including arranging temporary accommodation and insurance.

Resident Support

C23. What are the key support services that Peaks & Plains offers to its residents? How successful are these services in improving outcomes?
















The Trust employs a Tenancy Sustainment Team, with three full time Tenancy Sustainment Officers. The team provides tenancy support for customers who either self-refer themselves to the service or are referred through other teams. They provide a holistic tenancy sustainment support service, addressing all aspects of a customer’s circumstances to improve tenancy outcomes. This includes money and benefits advice, access to third party support and grants, help with access to mental health and wellbeing services and support with hoarding.

[Find out more online](#)



Placemaking

C24. Describe Peaks & Plains’s community investment activities, and how Peaks & Plains is contributing to positive neighbourhood outcomes for the communities in which its homes are located. Provide examples or case studies of where Peaks & Plains has been engaged in placemaking or placeshaping activities.

 Food / fuel vouchers	 Volunteering time	 Work Experience
 School mentoring	 Local jobs created	 Training opportunities/ improved skills
 6 properties provided for community use	 Social Value delivered in house	 16hrs supporting local schools and colleges
 204hrs provided to support local communities	 Donations - money, materials, equipment or other items	 2 weeks dedicated to providing work placements/experience (repairs)
 Easter event - 1600 easter eggs were delivered to 300 customers and multiple local community groups	 Christmas Cheer- visited 140 homes with goodies donated from our supply chain	 Total value commitments in supply chain contracts = £52k+

Over the past 12 months, The Trust has been out and about in Neighbourhoods giving resident's the opportunity to talk to us about what matters most to them. We took staff from a range of teams- repairs, neighbourhoods, anti-social behaviour, customer voice and our Executive Team - meaning we could log what was said and give feedback there and then. Sometimes, we turned these into clean-up days.

Our Neighbourhoods Team hold regular drop in sessions in community spots such as:

- Weston Community Hub, Weston
- Gawsworth Hub, Gawsworth
- The CORE, Upton Priory

The Trust went along to some of our partners and local community group fun days and events including Hope Central, Space for Autism, The Welcome, Macc Pride Picnic in the Park and the MaccPride parade.

The Trust also used our main office at Ropewalks to hold events with local organisations and groups:

- We hosted MaccPride's art and photography exhibition for the second year.
- We hosted Macclesfield College who put on free courses for our customers

The Trust understand that space is important to put on community events and support services that's why we offer several community groups premises at a peppercorn rent. This just means that it costs a lot less than market rental.



Read more online at peaksplains.org/your-community/neighbourhood-plans



Following a resident's meeting at Astle Court, residents told us that the communal garden was looking tired. So, alongside residents, Jewson's and Idverde, we worked to spruce it up. It involved painting, sanding, gardening and lots of tea.

"A big thank you to everyone involved with the clean-up at Crabtree Court. Lots of positive comments from residents and Crabtree Court looks so much better"
Councillor Adams,
Disley Parish Council



Governance...



Structure and governance

C25. Is Peaks & Plains registered with a regulator of social housing?

Yes

C26. What is the housing provider's most recent regulatory grading/status?

G1/V2

C27. Which Code of Governance does Peaks & Plains follow, if any?

National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020

C28. Is Peaks & Plains Not-For-Profit?

Yes. Any surplus that we make goes back into providing services, improving our homes and building new ones.

C29. Explain how Peaks & Plains' board manages organisational risks?

Our Board uses a Risk Management Framework.

This requires them to look at policy, risk appetite, risk registers (strategic and operational) and the assurance plan.

Detailed scrutiny and review of risks is delegated to the Audit Committee (including 'deep dives' on an individual risk at each meeting).

The Board receives a summary of the strategic risk register at each meeting to consider if any changes are needed. They can comment and challenge on its contents.

The Board reviews the register in more detail once a year and also has annual discussions about the risk appetite. All reports to the Board include a risk section in which risks relevant to the report are clearly flagged.

C30. Has Peaks & Plains been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (e.g. data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches etc.) - that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?

No.

Board and Trustees

C31. How does Peaks & Plains ensure it gets input from a diverse range of people, into the governance processes? Does Peaks & Plains consider resident voice at the board and senior management level? Does Peaks & Plains have policies that incorporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into the recruitment and selection of board members and senior management?

We hold diversity information on all ten of our Board and Committee members covering gender, marital status, ethnicity, age, disability, sexual orientation, caring responsibilities and religion.

The data is not necessarily based on the same questions (e.g. for disability) which makes some meaningful comparisons difficult.

In terms of gender, the Board and Committee member profile is fairly similar to that of our tenants 60/40 female/male.

Board and Committee members are more ethnically diverse (20% BAME) than our tenants and a smaller proportion report having some kind of disability (20% compared to 31% of tenants).

A higher proportion of our Board and Committee members are over 55 (90%) than the overall tenant population and there are no Board or Committee members under 40 whereas around 31% of our tenants are.

Within all Board reports, there is a dedicated section on Customer Voice and EDI.

All policies require an EDI impact assessment form to be completed including our recruitment and Board selection policies.

All Board members have EDI objectives set alongside the expectation to attend Challenge Group meetings.



**C32. What % of the board AND management team have turned over in the last two years?
What % of the Senior Management Team have turned over in the last two years?**

Measurement:	31st Mar 2024
% of board and management	20%
% of Senior Management Team	10%

C33. Number of board members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.

Measurement:	31st Mar 2024
% of audit committee	80%

C34. What % of the housing provider's board are non-executive directors?

Measurement:	31st Mar 2024
% of board members	100%

C35. Has a succession plan been provided to Peaks & Plains' board in the last 12 months?

No. Reports to the Board on individual vacancies have always considered skills being lost and targeting skills for the replacement and have shown forthcoming retirements etc. so the Board is aware of succession needs.

C36. How many years has Peaks & Plains' current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

Measurement:	31st Mar 2024
Number of years	1

C37. When was the last independently-run, board-effectiveness review?

May/June 2021 (Altair). We have since had another independent review in March 2024.

C38. How does Peaks & Plains handle conflicts of interest at the board?

- Annual declarations of interest forms have to be made for Board and Committee members, there is a declarations of interest item on the agenda for each meeting.
- Where appropriate, a 'conflicted' member, will either not take part in the discussion or decision, or may leave the meeting for that item.
- Our Code of Conduct for Board and Committee members covers conduct expected regarding declaring interests; the Trust's Rules also cover this.
- Declarations made throughout the year are reported to the Audit Committee annually.



Staff Wellbeing

C39. Does Peaks & Plains pay the Real Living Wage?

Yes - we are accredited.

C40. What is the median gender pay gap?

Measurement:	31st Mar 2024
Median gender pay gap	+8.26%

You can read our gender pay gap report at peaksplains.org/genderpaygap

C41. What is the CEO:median-worker pay ratio?

Our Chief Executive to staff ratio is 4.4:1

C42. How is Peaks & Plains ensuring equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is promoted across its staff?

The Trust has an EDI forum with representativeness from across the business. The forum meet on a bi-monthly basis to discuss EDI data, policies, topics and discuss how our processes could be improved.

The Forum arranges EDI awareness days on a range of topics for all staff to be involved and celebrate throughout the year.

There are also training sessions arranged on EDI topics such as Trans Awareness and Dementia training.

C43. How is Peaks & Plains support the physical and mental health of its staff?

Mental Health First Aiders are promoted across the Trust. Health & Wellbeing group who meet and discuss physical and mental health matters.

- Awareness days for Mental and Physical health topics are shared across the trust throughout the year to raise awareness. An example of this would be that Trust employees are required to complete drugs and alcohol awareness training on an annual basis.
- Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) service available and health cash back plan for all employees from day 1 of employment.
- Occupational health referrals in absence cases or complex health cases for support and advice.
- Ergonomic support for staff and specialist equipment provided where necessary.

C44. How does Peaks & Plains support the professional development of its staff?

Training can be bid for per year by managers for external training staff may need. The Trust also makes use of the levy to fund professional qualifications through apprenticeships. Internal training also provided towards CPD of staff and ILM training ran each year with co-horts results in levels 2,3 and 5 qualifications.

Supply Chain

C45. How is social value creation considered when procuring goods and services? What measures are in place to monitor the delivery of this Social Value?

The Trust's Social Value Strategy sets out the Trusts aims to deliver against the social priorities in line with the National Procurement Policy Statement (NPPS), and continue to engage with our tenants and local social enterprises to gain feedback on how we can further support our community through the creation of local priorities. The strategy sets out a social value minimum weighting of 10% to be applied to all tenders over £50,000.

C46. How is sustainability considered when procuring goods and services? What measures are in place to monitor the sustainability of Peaks & Plains supply chain when procuring goods and services?

The Trust has an Environmental Strategy in place that is included in all procurement activities. We are looking at how we can fully embed the recording of environmental impacts as part of the Strategy Action Plan.



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www.peaksplains.org