

Special Edition



PEAKS & PLAINS  
Housing Trust

# PlainSpeaking

Working hard to keep  
you safe during the Covid-19 outbreak

# Welcome to this special edition...

All through the COVID-19 pandemic I've been so impressed with how everyone has worked side-by-side to keep each other safe.

While we're not out of danger yet, I thought this might be a good time to sum up the work that's been happening in our communities and, in particular, what the Trust is continuing to do to keep everyone safe and well in their homes.

Mark Howden  
Chief Executive

## Here are a few of the compliments that came into the Trust since lockdown.

Remember we always welcome compliments, comments and complaints. It's how we improve visit [peaksplains.org/feedback](https://peaksplains.org/feedback)

"I've been a tenant with Peak's & Plains for a long time. When I clapped the NHS I was clapping your front line staff too."



Some of our customers have been worried about our staff visiting their homes, so we were delighted to hear this feedback from a tenant who was shielding.

"Your gas operative put my mind at rest with the way he carried out his job. Baz was absolutely brilliant, he wore a clean mask and gloves, covered his shoes and after he completed his service and wiped every surface he touched really thoroughly."



We put our vulnerable customers first. We telephoned



**800+** of our tenants who we knew were living along and spoke to 539

We helped by arranging food parcels and calls from Age UK for those who were lonely.

**71** new cases of people who needed more support

From help with their benefits or hoarding to food parcels and mental wellbeing support.



**4762** emergency lights tested



**250** requests for food parcels handled



ASB cases reported were related to COVID-19

We worked with the police, solicitors and expert witnesses to keep these incidents in check.



of customers helped with benefit advice

Universal Credit claims rose from 968 to 1165. As people were put on furlough, or had a change in circumstances, we were on hand to help.



**3545** calls to customers to support them with their rent



**75** new homes let since March + restrictions lifted

**1214** emergency, urgent or outside repairs completed



This is **20** repairs every day of lockdown, under normal service we deliver **41** repairs per day. Throughout this period **100%** of emergency repairs have been made safe within 4 hours.

From the start of the pandemic we had to make some changes to the way we work. Find out more about the commitments we have made and your responsibilities on our website [peaksplains.org/coronavirus](https://peaksplains.org/coronavirus)

## How have we helped...

During lockdown we haven't been able to provide all of our usual services. We've changed our focus, based on Government guidelines, to make sure that your homes are safe.

Plus we've done more outside repairs and work on empty homes. Take a look at what changed and how we adapted

Emma Richman  
Director of Operations



Despite completing 100% of our emergency repairs, we were told by the government that we couldn't do your everyday repairs...

...so we moved skilled trades staff on to outdoor work or to work on our empty properties.



We've covered a huge amount of ground in our empty properties since lockdown. In particular, we've worked on some bigger properties fitting new heating, rewiring etc and saved money by not using contractors.

Simon Worthington, Voids Manager

We knew that many elderly and vulnerable tenants were shielding alone at home...

...so we put five members of staff on a priority project to call all our older residents who live alone.

Our calls to over 70s living alone revealed a handful of people who were really struggling. We're so pleased we could help them, but it was also lovely to hear that most of these tenants have a strong network of support around them during these difficult times.

Steph Sickler, Customer Services Manager



## Leading the ...Trust into the future

I am delighted to let you know that the Board has asked Mark Howden, who has been leading the Trust since November 2019 following a period as Deputy Chief Executive, to take up the role of Chief Executive permanently.

Mark's experience and passion for improving communities made him a very strong candidate, but we have also been really impressed with the way that he has handled the impact of Covid-19 on our customers, our neighbourhoods and our staff - a clear sign that he shares the values we need to take the Trust into the future.

Jane McCall  
Chair Peaks & Plains Housing Trust Board

Our electrical safety and gas servicing checks have remained top of our priority list. But not everyone wanted to open their doors to our engineers...

...so we put more staff on the phones to explain the importance of this work and to reassure customers.



Our engineers carry all they need to keep everyone safe, including face masks, gloves and protective suits. On our calls to customers we explain carefully how we will work in their homes.

Jamie Cunningham, Gas Manager

We had to close our offices at very short notice...

...so we made sure that everyone, including the Contact Centre, could work at home. We also provided support and advice online and emailed almost 4000 customers explaining how we could help and what our responsibilities were.

During the early days of lockdown we couldn't relet our homes...

...so we put the effort into getting them ready, matching them to tenants and exploring ways to do viewings safely.



*It's great to see the sign-ups happening again now. In April we could only do a handful, but in May we signed up 24 new tenants and June is looking even better.*

Steff Goalen, New Tenancy & Income Manager

A handful of our staff were shielding...

...so we moved them over to work from home when we could.

We had to close our offices, so we couldn't supply people with emergency food parcels...

...so we filled a van with our supplies and delivered them to Silklife Foodbank in Macclesfield.

*Silklife Foodbank do an amazing job. The COVID-19 outbreak has added extra strain on the foodbank's resources, we were pleased we could offer our donations and help.*



David Squires, Head of Customers

## Getting support with your rent...

Remember, no matter what's going on with the pandemic, you still need to pay your rent. But don't worry, we are here to help.

If you are affected by coronavirus and struggling financially as a result of losing your job or seeing a reduction in your earnings, you may be able to claim certain benefits.

Just email [trust@peaksplains.org](mailto:trust@peaksplains.org) and we will be in touch.

## Servicing and checks

Throughout the pandemic we have been carrying out our gas and electrical servicing and safety checks. Our staff have all the protective equipment they need to keep you, your family and themselves safe.

## Scams and fraud

Citizens Advice research found that almost 1 in 3 people have been contacted by a scammer since the coronavirus outbreak began. Would you recognise a scam?

Visit [citizensadvice.org.uk](https://citizensadvice.org.uk) for help on how to recognise a scam.



## Safety in your home

### ...Here to help

We provided our staff with information so that everyone could easily signpost those in need.

Are you struggling alone through this lockdown? Don't suffer in silence. There are people who are ready to help.

You can find further information about practical help and support on our website: [peaksplains.org/help](https://peaksplains.org/help) or give us a call.

### ...We couldn't have done it without you

We have worked with some great partners. Here are just a few.







## Stay in touch...


**The pandemic has not gone away, but the last few months have shown that we can tackle anything if we work together.**

So stay safe and remember, we are here to help.

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 0800 012 1311

 Chat live on our website

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