

Peak Performance

May I wish you and your loved ones a very
**Merry Christmas and a
 happy and healthy
 New Year**



As another year draws to a close I sit back and reflect on the improvements we have already made to our services and those to come in 2024.

The safety of our residents is a top priority and this newsletter contains information to help keep you and your family safe within your home.

The Council is continuing to add to its housing stock and offer a swift and cost effective means of re-purchasing your home should you choose to sell it – and avoids costly agents costs or delays caused by property chains.

Our work with resident engagement continues apace and we would encourage involvement from our leaseholder community to ensure our services meet your needs.

Winter can be a challenging time for everyone and we have included advice for those of you who may need a little extra help – be that financial or emotional.


Above all – may I wish you and your loved ones a very Merry Christmas and a Happy and Healthy New Year.



Very best wishes,
Fiona Sloman,
 Executive Portfolio Holder
 for Housing.


Contact us during Christmas

 www.highpeak.gov.uk

 Text 07800 00 22 62

 @highpeakbc

 Pay for services tel:
0300 456 0625

 Report a Repair
0800 030 8666
Closes 4.30pm Fri 22
Dec. Emergencies only
till Tues 2 January.

Visit us

**We are closed Wednesday
 27 to Friday 29 December.**

Buxton Town Hall
 Monday - Friday
 9.30am - 1pm

Winstar Mews, Gamesley
 Thursday 9.30am - 4pm
 (closed 12.30 - 1pm)

Glossop Municipal Buildings
 Monday, Wednesday and
 Friday 9.30am - 1pm



High Peak Borough Council
working for our community



Council Tax reduction scheme

From the 1st April 2023 High Peak Borough Council moved to a banding scheme for working age applicants only. This change has simplified the process to apply for Council Tax Reduction and provides targeted support to those households on the lowest of incomes. It has also helped to reduce the administrative burden placed on the Council by the introduction of Universal Credit.

For Universal Credit applicants, any Universal Credit data received from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will be treated as a claim for Council Tax Reduction, removing the requirement to complete a further application for Council Tax Reduction. For information and to apply if you are not in receipt of Universal Credit visit:

www.highpeak.gov.uk/benefits



Carelink is an alarm installed in your home which gives you contact with a trained member of staff 24 hours a day, every day of the year at the touch of a button.

A pendant that you can wear enables you to make a call to our control centre should you need to. We aim to answer all calls within 60 seconds and trained members of staff can give advice and assistance.

There are two levels of service and we will assist you to select the service that meets your needs:

1) Monitoring and response service

When you press your alarm button our operators will speak to you and offer advice and reassurance. If you need further help, we will be your emergency contact and our Carelink support assistants attend if you need help.

2) Monitoring only

The monitoring only service is the same as the monitoring and response service, but your emergency con-

tacts are family, friends and neighbours. They must have given consent for us to contact them 24 hours a day in an emergency.

All you need is a telephone socket and an electric power point close by. We will provide, install and maintain the equipment. If your equipment becomes faulty we will replace it.

The service is less expensive than you might expect for peace of mind 24 hours a day

- Installation fee: £30.00
- Silver Service (monitoring only): £5.30 per week
- Gold Service (monitoring and emergency response): £9.00 per week
- Depending on your personal circumstances we may be able to assist you to apply for funding towards the cost of the service.

Domestic abuse

If you are worried that a friend, neighbour or loved one is a victim of domestic abuse, you can call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline for free and confidential advice, 24 hours a day on 0808 2000 247. Seeking help for someone you know can be challenging but #YouAreNotAlone. Domestic abuse advisers will offer confidential, non-judgemental information and advice on the options available to you. If you believe there is an immediate risk of harm to someone, or it is an emergency, you should always call 999. If you are experiencing domestic abuse and need immediate help, ask for ANI (Action Needed Immediately) in any pharmacy or Job-centre displaying this logo:



When you ask for ANI, you will be offered a private space, provided with a phone and asked if you need support from the police or other domestic abuse support services.

Get involved!

We'd like to hear your views about the newsletter. If you are interested, email Engagement@highpeak.gov.uk or call 07583 695 572.



How to access our services

Set up an online account

Our customer portals make it easier than ever to keep in touch! Use your computer, laptop, tablet or smart phone to access our services 24/7 without having to pay for a phone call.

By signing up for a My Council Tax/Benefits online account you'll be able to download your benefit letters and Council Tax bill, you can also sign up for electronic billing and no-

tifications which helps the Council reduce its use of paper, become more carbon friendly and save money.



Keep safe this Christmas

During December the monthly average number of fires, injuries and fatalities more than doubles.

For more information go to:
www.derbyshire-fire.gov.uk/safety/occasions/christmas

Photo: Ismail Atalar

Gas safety

How often should I service my boiler?

Gas boilers and other gas appliances should be serviced once a year. This annual service is an opportunity for a qualified heating engineer to look over the unit and make sure it's running as well as possible. This will give you the peace of mind that your heating system is safe and efficient.

A boiler must be serviced by a fully-qualified heating engineer, the qualification they should hold will depend on the type of boiler that needs a service. A Gas Safe Registered Engineer is the only person qualified to service a gas boiler.

Help with the cost of living – energy assistance

The Council's website has a cost-of-living hub to help those struggling to pay for essentials due to the cost of groceries, fuel and bills:

www.highpeak.gov.uk/CostOfLivingHub

It details how to contact the Council's benefits team, energy efficiency advice, money saving tips and links to other support such as the Derbyshire Healthy Homes programme. Help is also available via the Citizens Advice helpline:

0808 278 7954.

Waste collection

There are no collections on 25 and 26 December and 1 January, these collections will take place on alternative days. Calendars are available at

www.highpeak.gov.uk



Cost of living support

Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) Discretionary Fund offers help to Derbyshire residents facing financial hardship. Households can apply for help towards their food, and energy costs and can access up to 3 awards in a 12-month period. Payments are £64 per household plus an extra £20 will be provided for a partner or spouse, and each dependent child aged under 19.

To receive support from the Derbyshire Discretionary Fund by phone, tel:

01629 533399.

For information on the Government's additional cost of living payments:
www.gov.uk/guidance/cost-of-living-payment



In order to increase houses available for new tenants and tenants wishing to transfer, we have started to repurchase properties previously sold under the right to buy.

Here is Hannah, our Housing Officer taking the keys to our latest purchase in Gamesley.



Seventyfour - stock.adobe.com

Thinking of selling your leasehold property?

The Council runs a “buy back” scheme enabling anyone in an ex-Council house to sell back to us direct, saving thousands of pounds in agents fees. Our in-house surveyor will visit and assess your property, saving time and we move swiftly financially – making us a perfect buyer. Please note that if you have purchased your property in the last ten years you have to offer it to us for re-sale in the first instance, and if you bought less than 5 years ago then some discount will be repayable – this will be deducted from the payment due at the point the sale completes. Go to:

“We would definitely recommend the buy back scheme to others who are looking to sell their ex-Council property.”

[www.highpeak.gov.uk/
Buying-Back-Properties](http://www.highpeak.gov.uk/Buying-Back-Properties)

“My husband and I sold our house back to High Peak Borough Council under the buy back scheme earlier this year. We would recommend the scheme as it’s quick and easy; without the stress and expense of estate agents and their fees and without the inconvenience of viewers looking around your home. Prior to applying on the Council website we had a couple of free valuations carried out by local estate agents. Whilst this gave us an idea of how much our property was worth, we discovered that the council valuation was fair and reasonable and we happily accepted. From receiving our Council offer and completing on our new property was just under two months so we were able to move much quicker than anticipated.”

High Peak Community Lottery

In July, the council launched the High Peak Community Lottery; a weekly, Saturday night draw, that gives residents a chance to win fantastic prizes and support local good causes through its Good Cause Scheme. Tickets cost £1, with 60p going towards supporting local good causes that are registered on the scheme.

Winners have won free tickets for future draws, cash prizes of £25,00, an iPad and £1500 of Ikea vouchers. Players have a 1 in 50 chance of

winning a prize with the top prize being £25,000.

60 Good Causes are registered and lottery players are able to choose which scheme they want to support. Eligible, not-for-profit groups or organisations, in the High Peak, such as charities, sports clubs, arts groups, schools and PTAs and social enterprises can register via the High Peak Community Lottery website or by emailing kim.gilmore@highpeak.gov.uk

Tickets can be purchased by visiting www.highpeakcommunitylottery.co.uk

Conduct towards staff

We are here to help and will treat you with dignity and respect. We ask that, even if you are frustrated or angry, you do the same.

If you are abusive, aggressive or intimidating to us on the telephone, face-to-face or on social media we may take action against you. We will send you a letter explaining why your behaviour was unacceptable and may take further steps by.

- Asking you not to attend our offices
- Asking that you only contact a named person or specific email address
- Limiting contact with you to email only
- Visiting you in pairs

In very serious circumstances, or if you continue to behave in an inappropriate way, we will consider taking further action such as issuing a Community Protection Warning, suspending any application for rehousing, taking action under the terms of our Tenancy Agreement or reporting the matter to the police.



Helping residents cope with Mental Health problems



We have developed resources for residents of High Peak around seeking local mental health support and help around finances. There is also lots of support and information, that anyone can access, including a Countywide website.

Derby & Derbyshire - Emotional Health & Wellbeing derbyandderbyshireemotionalhealthandwellbeing.uk

Welcoming Spaces



If you would like to register as a Welcoming Space or require any further information please email welcomingspaces@highpeak.gov.uk

Our Welcoming Spaces website page shows spaces, where people can go to stay warm this winter. Our list of registered venues details where, when and what additional activities or services will be available and whether refreshments are provided. High Peak Borough Council is not responsible for the provision of or the facilitation of warm spaces at these venues.

Choose the most convenient way to pay your service charge

By Direct Debit

Make monthly payments directly from your bank. Payments are taken on the 1st, 8th or 15th of each month and you don't need to worry about contacting your bank each time your service charge changes. Visit highpeak.gov.uk, 'Housing', to download a Direct Debit mandate.

By Telephone

Making a payment over the phone by debit or credit card is simple! Ring the 24 hour automated payment line on **0300 456 062** and follow the instructions.

Online at

www.highpeak.gov.uk

You can make a payment by debit or credit card, by logging on to our website and clicking on 'Pay' quick link icon, and following the links.

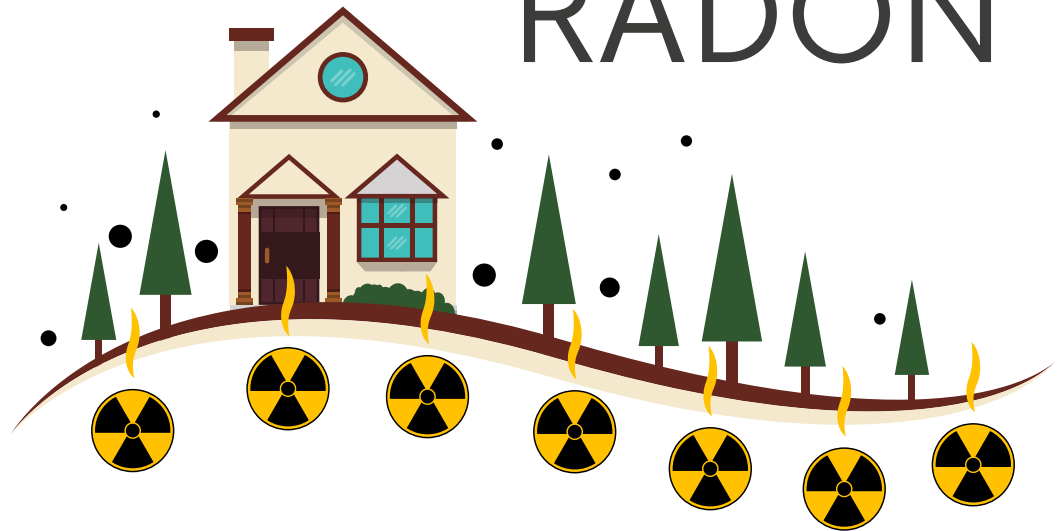
By Allpay Card

Pay at any Post Office or shop displaying the Paypoint sign using your Allpay card. If you need a replacement Allpay card, or want to find out where your nearest Allpay outlet is visit: www.highpeak.gov.uk.

By Standing Order

You can pay weekly, fortnightly or monthly through your bank using the Council's bank details: High Peak Borough Council Nat West Account no: 10567828 Sort code: 60-04-18.

RADON



Your questions answered

What is radon?

Radon is a naturally occurring, colourless, odourless, radio-active gas which is formed in the ground. It seeps to the surface and can build up inside properties. Health studies have linked prolonged exposure to radon gas with lung cancer.

How do I know if my property is affected?

The only way to be sure is to have a test. If you go to ukradon.org and perform an

online search you can find out if your property is likely to be affected.

What can be done to reduce radon levels?

There are a number of ways to reduce radon levels, such as the installation of a sump pump, introducing positive ventilation, which is similar to an extractor fan, or by installing ventilation under the floor of the property if it has a suspended floor.

An active radon sump, fitted with a fan, is the best way to reduce indoor radon levels. Sumps can be constructed from outside. A small hole, big enough for a 110mm pipe, is made in an exterior wall just below ground level and a bucketful of material is removed to create space for the sump. A pipe goes from this space through the wall and up the outside of the house to roof level. The system is powered continuously by an electric fan.

Read more



Public Health England

www.gov.uk/government/collections/radon

Merry
Christmas

— AND —
HAPPY NEW YEAR





NEW
UPDATE

Leaseholder engagement



Welcome to the winter edition of our leaseholder engagement update; we've been working hard since the last newsletter was sent to you and I am delighted to share that we now have 6 tenants on board so our exciting engagement journey has well and truly started.

As I mentioned in my last update, we consider leaseholders as part of our housing family and are committed to be fair and transparent to ensure that you do not receive a poor service from us when it comes to the maintenance and upkeep of your property.

We also feel it is important that we support and empower you to have a greater influence over the services you receive and pay for. With this in mind, I'd like to remind you that we'd love to have the leaseholder community represented on our engagement team to bring a different perspective so please do get in touch if you're interested or would like to find out more.

As a social housing provider,

It's not too late to get involved!

It is important that we are a diverse group representing different demographics with a wide range of issues and challenges. If you are interested or would simply like to find out more about leaseholder engagement,

email
**Engagement@
highpeak.gov.uk**
or call 07583 695 572.

we are now required, by Law to gather and publish Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) by conducting surveys with our tenants; this activity is currently underway and runs until 16th December. In the coming weeks

a number of telephone surveys will take place asking a sample of our tenants questions about High Peak social housing and their neighbourhood.

As a leaseholder, you will not receive one of these calls, however I'd still welcome your views, so if you'd like to talk about any issues you're currently experiencing as a leaseholder or any suggestions for improvements then please do get in touch.

Here are a few examples of the things we could look at as part of leaseholder engagement:

- improving communication and providing clarity around repairs
- Producing helpful guides and information

to support potential leaseholders understand what their responsibilities will be so they can make an informed decision about if it's the right decision for them

- Looking at how you can get involved with improving our wider council services

Our work in this area is still at an early stage so now is a great time to get involved! We are currently in the process of developing and agreeing our engagement ways of working, how often we will meet and how we will all stay in touch. As part of this, we will be working through how ideas and feedback will be captured and how we will turn these into recommendations for improvement.



Many thanks, Kim, Tenant Engagement Officer

To reduce the risk of fire spreading, the walls, doors and floors are all sturdily built and designed to stop fire and smoke spreading.

This is known as compartmentation and each dwelling becomes its own fire-resistant box.

Given the age of some of our properties, the Council is also planning to carry out intrusive compartmentation surveys to confirm compartmentation standards in the older general needs blocks, and in those general needs blocks that are not purpose-built flats.

The Council undertake annual fire risk assessments and monthly fire safety checks of communal areas.



They introduced a requirement that all materials in new high-rise buildings must achieve an A1 or A2 rating under European classifications. High Peak Borough Council does not have any housing accommodation over 11 metres high and our housing properties do

not have any cladding of concern as part of their construction.

The Council is engaging specialist assessors to undertake what is termed a fire risk appraisal of the external wall construction and balconies in accord-

ance with Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 9980. Inspections will take place late 2023/early 2024 and thereafter every three years unless there is a fire or change to the building.

Further to the information in the summer newsletter we have been progressing a regime of fire door inspections. We will provide a full update in the next Newsletter detailing the actions being taken to address these findings.

For up-to-date information on health, safety and security go to: www.highpeak.gov.uk/article/589/Information-about-your-tenancy



Keeping your home free from condensation and mould

In winter, your home can be affected by condensation. It is caused by water vapour or moisture meeting a colder surface, like a window or wall, and soaking into wallpaper, paintwork, or plasterwork. Over time, black mould grows in the affected areas. Mould appears mostly in corners of rooms, on external walls and around windows and in areas with poor air circulation, usually behind furniture pushed up against external walls. Regularly wipe mould growth with a shop-bought

mould killer spray, or diluted household bleach and make the following changes to your cleaning routine:

- Wipe down windows and sills each day to remove condensation.
- Keep your home between 18 - 21 degrees.
- Close internal doors so that heat and moisture can't escape.
- Open windows and doors slightly and often. Use trickle vents.
- Don't block airbricks or vents.
- When bathing or

cooking, use your extractor fan or open the window. Keep the door closed until the room cools down.

- Dry clothes outdoors, or use a clothes airer in the bathroom with the door closed.

If you're worried that damp or mould in your home is a bigger issue than any of the things mentioned, please inform us. The sooner you report it, the quicker we can address the issue.



Photo: Visit Peak District and Derbyshire