

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire
and Oxfordshire | Winter 2024

 Peabody

Home



Keep safe,
warm & well

Spend less
this winter

Resident
Conference

Improving
repairs



...to the winter edition of your Home magazine.

As winter settles in, we're here to help you stay safe, well and warm. In this edition, you'll find tips on saving energy and money (page 3), how to help prevent damp and mould and how we can help over winter (page 4). Plus, discover winter recipe ideas and DIY festive decorations (page 5).



2 In this edition, you'll hear from residents who held a mini-Olympics (page 11) and read about community centres in your area (pages 12 and 13). Find out what help is available (page 14) and get an update on improvements we're making using your feedback (pages 8 and 9).

Whether you're looking for practical advice, community updates, or just a little bit of festive fun, we hope you enjoy this winter edition of Home magazine.

With best wishes,

Kirsty Pepper
Managing Director | North Counties

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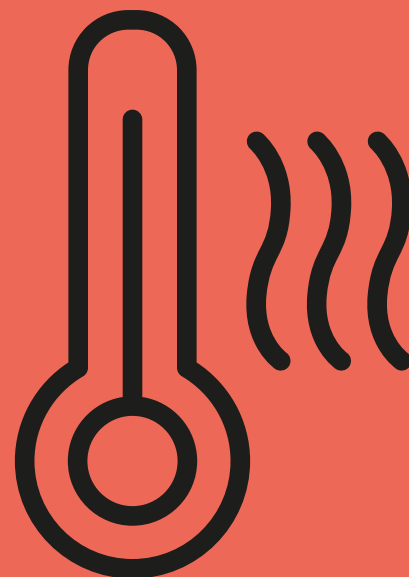
Home magazine aims to keep you up to date with news, events and other useful information and support.

We hope you enjoy reading the magazine, but if you decide you don't want to receive it anymore, just let us know:

Email communications@peabody.org.uk stating 'Magazine opt-out' in the subject line. Please include in the email either your tenancy reference number or your full name and address. We need this information so we can find you in our database to unsubscribe you. You can sign up to receive Home directly to your inbox at peabody.org.uk/peabody-magazine



Spend *less* and keep warm this winter

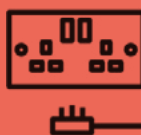


Winter can be tough on energy bills, but there are some things you can do around your home to keep warm and save money.



Switch to LED bulbs

LED bulbs use up to 80% less energy than traditional bulbs, last longer and could save you up to £40 on energy bills.



Unplug electronics when you're not using them

Many devices consume energy even when turned off. Unplugging them can save you on average £30 a year.



Seal gaps and cracks

Proper insulation helps keep your home warm in winter, reducing the need for heating.



Optimise heating

If you can, set your thermostat between 18°C and 20°C, a comfortable, yet efficient temperature.



Use extension leads

Plug electronics into an extension lead and switch it off when you're not using it to prevent standby power usage. To stay safe, don't overload an extension lead by adding extra extensions or adapters to it.



Wash clothes in cooler water

By reducing the temperature setting from 60°C to 30°C, you could save up to 60% on energy consumption per wash.

Book a free session with our money saving specialists

Get help with switching to a cheaper energy supplier, reducing your broadband and phone bills and getting access to discounts! Book your free advice session with our money saving specialists at LEAP and Pocket Power.

During the session they'll ask about your current bills, talk you through your options, and help get your bills down. You could save £200 on your energy and household bills every year!

Book a session

 peabody.org.uk/save-money



We're here to help

If you're finding it hard to keep up with your bills, please get in touch.

Visit peabody.org.uk/contact-us or call **0300 123 3456**.

Tackling

damp, mould and condensation



During the colder months, your home is more at risk of being affected by damp, mould and condensation.

Everyday things like cooking, showering, or drying clothes indoors can create moisture, and if it can't escape, it turns into condensation. This can lead to mould forming on walls, tiles, or windowsills.

To help prevent this, here are our top tips:



Open the windows slightly, even for 10 minutes a day, and make sure the vents are open and not blocked.



When you're cooking, cover pots and pans, put your extractor fan on, and open the window a little to reduce steam.



In the mornings, wipe your windows down, condensation often collects around the edges.



If you're struggling with damp or mould, please give us a call on **0345 123 3456** or let us know via our website **peabody.org.uk/damp-mould-and-condensation**



Leave a small gap between furniture and the wall to let air flow. Avoid overfilling wardrobes and cupboards.



Dehumidifiers can help keep small spaces dry.

Are you ok?

This winter, we're visiting some of our residents to make sure everything's ok.

Someone may have already popped in, otherwise, we'll let you know if and when we're passing by. Please do open the door when we knock and let us know if there's anything we can do to help. We'll show you ID so you know it's us.

If you need anything, please get in touch.

Feeling blue?

Our community centre doors are open and we'd love you to visit and relax in one of our Cosy Corners.

You can pop in for a cuppa and a chat, find out what activities and groups are running or pick up some information about support available. Many of the activities we run are low cost or free and it's a great way to make new friends.



To find your nearest community centre and when it's open, visit **peabody.org.uk/community-centres** or scan the QR code. We hope to see you soon!

Festive fun



This festive season have some fun and DIY your decorations! Not only will making your decorations save you some money, recycling materials and foraging for them will reduce waste and make your decorations unique.



Natural decorations

Gather pinecones from your local park. You can try dipping them in homemade snow (made with salt, water and flour). Then pop them in a bowl or on your Christmas tree.

Make a garland

String together your pinecones to make a garland. Pick up fallen branches of fir, holly, or ivy to create wreaths. You can add dried citrus slices or cinnamon sticks for a lovely festive smell too.

Upcycle

Grab your old jars and tin cans. Wrap them in twine and ribbon and pop in your foraged twigs and leaves inside to make a festive arrangement.

Paper snowflakes, lanterns and stars

Using scrap paper, cut out snowflakes or stars to put on the window. You could also try making lanterns from tissue paper.

Look around your home or local park to repurpose everyday things and celebrate the festive season.

Veggie shepherd's pie recipe

Try this shepherd's pie recipe – a lovely hearty meal. Any extras – freeze them!

You might have some of these ingredients in your cupboards and freezer already. You can always swap any of the veggies out for what you've already got.

Need a few things? Stop by a food bank where you can pick up fresh veggies, frozen foods and other household items.

peabody.org.uk/food-banks

Ingredients

The filling

- 1 punnet of mushrooms
- 1 onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 garlic cloves
- 250g frozen peas
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 300ml stock
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tablespoon oil

The topping

- 1 bag of potatoes
- 2 tablespoon of butter
- Splash of milk

If you fancy, add a splash of Worcestershire sauce and some thyme and rosemary to the sauce for added flavour.

Recipe

1. Chop the potatoes and boil them until soft. Drain them and mash with butter and milk.
2. In oil, fry the onions, carrots, and garlic until soft, then add the mushroom, fry until they brown.
3. Stir in the tomato paste, stock and frozen peas.
4. Simmer for 10 minutes until it's thicker. Add a pinch of salt and pepper.
5. Add the filling, then topping, to a baking dish and cook for 20-25 minutes at 180°C.

Then enjoy!

Resident Conference

This autumn we held our Resident Conference. It was an inspiring day of connection and celebration. The event brought together residents, Tenant and Resident Associations (TRAs), and colleagues to highlight the incredible work happening across our communities.

A standout moment was Kheron Gilpin's keynote address on the power of good resident engagement and the impact of TRAs in communities. Kheron helps people get more involved in their communities. He shared inspiring stories of how residents can, and have improved communities. His words set the tone for a day focused on celebrating the impact you have.

We also heard from Peabody's leadership team, who discussed the importance of acting on your feedback. The Q&A touched on improvements to repairs, including a more local repairs approach and getting your repairs right first time. We also heard about members of the board and what they've been working on, as well as covering specific issues across our estates and ways forward to address them.

One of the most moving parts of the day was celebrating our resident talent. We heard first-hand from the Resident-Led Panel and the North East Regional Forum about their experiences and achievements. We also heard about Williamson Heights' TRA website and the Parkside Resident Collective. Their journeys showcased the power of collaboration and community-led initiatives.

To close the day, we celebrated the contributions of outstanding TRAs in a special awards ceremony, recognising their dedication and hard work. Well done to all our winners and thank you for everything you do!

What really stood out was everyone coming together - to listen, learn, and create a brighter future for our communities.



Find out more and read our 2023-24 Resident Engagement Impact Report peabody.org.uk/resident-conference

If you'd like to get involved in the activities mentioned, join Peabody Voice bit.ly/peabody-voice





An update from our Chair, Caroline Corby

“ We’ve been working to improve things that matter most to you – making sure homes are safe, providing support, and listening to your feedback so we can change things.

Meeting residents and community groups has been a real highlight for me, and I’m always so inspired by the incredible work happening in our communities. I’ve also taken on a new role overseeing how we handle complaints, ensuring we’re learning from your experiences and taking action.

Thank you for being such an important part of our community. We’re committed to making things better together. ”

Caroline Corby, Chair



We’re listening: improving how we handle complaints

From April to June 2024, we received 1,948 complaints. Most (1,593) were resolved at stage one, but 355 needed further action at stage two. The main concerns you raised were delays and poor communication. We’re learning from this to improve our services.

What do the stages mean?

- **Stage one:** this is when we first receive your complaint, and we aim to resolve it within 10 working days.
- **Stage two:** if you’re not happy with our response at stage one, the complaint moves to stage two for a more in-depth review.

The top three areas of complaint from April-June 2024

- **Repairs:** damp and mould, leaks, and delays in completing repairs.
- **Rent and service charges:** issues around how charges are calculated and communication delays.
- **Homeownership:** lack of updates and slow response times regarding service requests and sales packs.



What we’re doing to improve

We’re working to speed up how quickly we get things done and keep you informed. We’ve employed extra staff to help with complaints and worked closely with our repairs team to clear any backlogs. We’ve also set up a resident complaints panel to gather feedback and act on it.

Visit [peabody.org.uk/about-complaints](https://www.peabody.org.uk/about-complaints) to learn more.

Tenant Satisfaction Measures

– how we're doing

Your feedback through the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) helps us track how we're doing and where we need to improve. Here are the latest results:



satisfied with repairs



feel your homes are safe



feel well-informed



feel we listen and act on your concerns



are satisfied with how we maintain communal areas



satisfied with complaints handling



Your feedback helps us to improve. As a result, we're developing regional forums to tailor our activities by neighbourhood. We're reducing the time it takes to get through when you call us. We've also grown our complaints team to clear repair backlogs.



We'll keep you updated on our progress.

For more information on what we're doing, visit [peabody.org.uk/our-performance](https://www.peabody.org.uk/our-performance)

Using your feedback to improve

Resident groups

We work with the Resident-Led Panel who help ensure your voice is heard and we're making the improvements you want. The panel is looking at communication, complaints and local issues.

Safer buildings

We're developing safety plans for 258 high rise buildings, with 30 already completed. These plans are based on your feedback and are designed to make your home and building safer.

Improved magazine

We're making changes in this very magazine. You told us you want to contribute, hear more real life stories and get local updates.

Better services

We're improving 16 playgrounds using your suggestions.

Celebrating diversity

We've celebrated Eid, Pride, and Black History Month, bringing together residents to share their experiences and celebrate inclusivity. Look out for upcoming ways to celebrate Hanukkah and Christmas too.

Want to make your community better? Start or join a Tenant and Resident Association (TRA)

These groups help you connect with neighbours, address local issues, and have a say in decisions.

To set up an association:

1. **Find out** if your neighbours are interested
2. **Hold a meeting** to choose a committee
3. **Create a document** setting out how the group will be run

Read the guide on our website to find out more [peabody.org.uk/tra](https://www.peabody.org.uk/tra)

For advice, email get.involved@peabody.org.uk to get your group officially recognised and get access to help, funding and training.

Improving repairs

We're taking a more local approach, so we can get repairs in your home finished quicker.

Many residents have told us that reporting issues can be frustrating, appointments are sometimes missed and you need us to follow up with you after the work has been completed.

So, we've made changes.

We've always used contractors to complete your repairs, but we've recently reviewed the performance of all our contractors so you get a better experience.

This might mean the contractors you've had visit previously are changing.



United Living will be taking care of your repairs.

The people, vans, and uniforms that you see around your neighbourhood may be different, but the way you report any issues isn't changing.

Report any issues using My Peabody
peabody.org.uk/my-peabody

or call **0300 123 3456**

More information about your new contractors will be displayed on noticeboards.

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Save the date

Saturday 18 January 2025

Oxford

If there's something you'd like to speak with us about, the local Peabody team will be at The Barn in Oxford on Saturday 18 January 2025, 12.30pm to 3.30pm.



Sign up to come along

bit.ly/peabody-january-2025

Not quite feeling yourself?

If you're not feeling yourself there's help available. We can put you in touch with support services offering practical and emotional advice.

You could be lonely or experiencing physical or mental health problems, or maybe you want to find and join a local group or club. You could be struggling to find work or to access services that would improve your life. You may need support to pay your bills.

Whatever it is - we can help.

This could be one-to-one support from our specialist advice team, or we can put you in touch with one of our partners.



Visit our website or scan the QR code to get support. Or call us on **0300 123 3456**

peabody.org.uk/wellbeing



Mini-Olympic games fundraiser

Despite the grey clouds, residents at retirement village The Mount in Simpson, Buckinghamshire, held an Olympics-inspired day. There was archery, beanbag throwing, darts and skittles – podium places were awarded and trophies presented!

Residents combined the games with a raffle and afternoon tea, they had a delicious spread of homemade cakes and scones. The day raised an impressive £250 for charity too!



The Barn Community Centre in Oxford



The Barn, Nightingale Avenue,
Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 7BU

Spacious and versatile, the Barn has a large, timber roofed, natural stone walled hall with separate fully equipped kitchen for catering or refreshments.

The Barn is home to a range of community groups and activities – local dance schools, majorettes and local charities to name a few! Leys CDI, a charity, run programmes for both young people and seniors here too.

What's on offer

- Accessible and spacious room – it holds 60 people seated and 80 standing
- Kitchen with serving hatch
- Accessible toilets

Hire the Barn

For birthdays, family gatherings and weddings!



To arrange a visit or to book, email Darcy on darcy.jouza@peabody.org.uk or thebarn@peabody.org.uk





Dee Space Community Centre in *Reading*



Dee Space Community Centre,
Thurso Close, Reading, RG30 4YH

Looking for a venue?

Whether it's for games, cards, chess club, groups, events, parties or private hire - we can help! Let us know what you'd like to run or set-up. We can help with training, funding and more. Just get in touch.

What's available

Opened last year, Dee Space is bright and modern, it has:

- A large and accessible main hall with storage space for equipment
- Two meeting rooms comfortably seating up to 10 people
- Accessible toilet and baby changing facilities
- A large and well-equipped kitchen with service hatch
- Parking

What's on

There's lots on at Dee Space, including after school and holiday activities, arts and crafts, music, nature walks for all ages, and much more.

Ranikhet Children's Centre also runs from the centre. For more information visit brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Find out more

Pop in to pick up a timetable or take a look on the centre's noticeboard.



For bookings, visits and information, contact Rebecca Thompson, Community Properties Duty Operations Assistant

Email deespacecommunitycentre@peabody.org.uk

Or call **0300 123 3456**

Looking for a new job?

We can help!

Sign up to the Career Compass email to stay updated with the latest jobs, events and top tips for your search.

↘ peabody.org.uk/career-compass

Get in touch for help with your CV, support with interview techniques or even guidance on what skills and training might help.

↘ peabody.org.uk/job-support

Peabody Careers and Volunteer Fair

This autumn we held our Peabody Careers and Volunteer Fair. Hundreds of residents, and those living in our communities came along searching for a new role.

People could speak with employers in industries including construction, environmental services and care and support, about live job roles - some people even secured interviews for the following week! There were also opportunities to get a new headshot, discuss interview techniques and improve your CV. Keep an eye out for next years' fair.



How we can help with antisocial behaviour

Antisocial behaviour (ASB) occurs when someone is causing harm or distress to people outside their home. We know how difficult this is and the impact it may have on you and your family.

If you're currently facing issues with antisocial behaviour, you should first try speaking to the person you believe is behaving unacceptably. In most cases, and where it's safe to do so, you should be able to resolve disputes themselves. In an emergency, always call **999**.



If you need support, or need to report a case of ASB visit peabody.org.uk/personal-safety

ASB presents in many forms:



Dumping rubbish



Graffiti and vandalism



Shouting, swearing & fighting

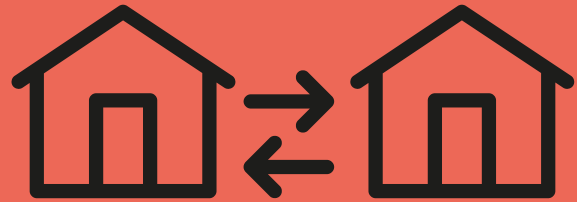


Verbal abuse



Antisocial drinking

Looking to move home?



We know many of you want to move home, and you may be in a really difficult situation.

There are currently not enough homes available compared to the number of people on waiting lists. Local councils have the tough job of deciding who has greatest need and priority for the homes that are built or become available.

This doesn't make it any easier if you need to move. But there are a few options:

Home swaps

Thinking about a mutual exchange? House Exchange and HomeSwapper make it easy to connect with other tenants looking to move.

Seaside and Country Homes

If you're 55 or over, look at the Seaside and Country Homes scheme for homes by the sea or countryside.

Local council

Contact your local council to join their housing list. Each council has its own criteria, so it's a good idea to check what they're looking for.

📄 [gov.uk/find-local-council](https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council)

There's more information in the explainer video and podcast on our website.

Spot a scam

It can be tricky spotting a scam but there are signs you can look out for.

If you're unsure, always ask yourself:

- Was I expecting this person to call?
- Is this too good to be true?
- Why do they need my personal information?

Scammers might pretend to be someone else, they might promise you a quicker repair, they might make promises to get you a lump sum of money.

Scams on the rise

Residents have reported an increase in 'no win, no fee' approaches from companies. They tend to promise quick, easy compensation with no upfront costs, but this can come with risks.

There's also been reports of people pretending to be Peabody asking if they can come in to complete an energy survey. These are fraudulent and not us.

Protect yourself from scammers

If something doesn't feel right, don't share your personal information.



For more information, or to report anything, get in touch [peabody.org.uk/contact-us](https://www.peabody.org.uk/contact-us)

Anyone can experience domestic abuse

If you're worried about your relationship or someone else's, there's always someone you can talk to.

- Contact Refuge 24/7 on **0808 2000 247** or use their online chat
- Use Google to search for domestic abuse services near you
- Download the Bright Sky app for a range of support and guidance

You can also call us on **0300 123 3456** or get in touch online [peabody.org.uk/domestic-abuse](https://www.peabody.org.uk/domestic-abuse) and one of our trained Community Safety Specialists will get in touch with you. In an emergency, always call **999**.

Keeping you *safe*



Keeping you safe is our top priority. It's important you know how to keep safe in the unlikely event of a fire. Please read and share this information with everyone who lives with you.

- If you live in a flat, the **Fire Action Notice** in the entrance of your building explains what the evacuation strategy is. The notice will tell you if you should **stay put** or **evacuate**.
- Whether the strategy is to stay put or to evacuate, the most important thing is that **if you hear an alarm, you should close the doors inside your flat, get out and close the front door behind you.**

Find out more about what the strategy is for your building:

↘ peabody.org.uk/stay-put

↘ peabody.org.uk/full-evacuation

The next steps...

- If you do need to evacuate, once you're safely outside, call 999, ask for the Fire Brigade and give the building address.
- Call us on 0300 123 3456 to let us know about the fire so that we can provide support.
- Don't go back inside until the Fire Brigade says it's safe to do so.
- If the Fire Brigade doesn't allow you back in, we or your local council can arrange temporary accommodation if you don't have friends or family you can stay with.



Find out more about keeping safe by visiting our website or scanning the QR code peabody.org.uk/fire-safety



My Peabody

Service made simple

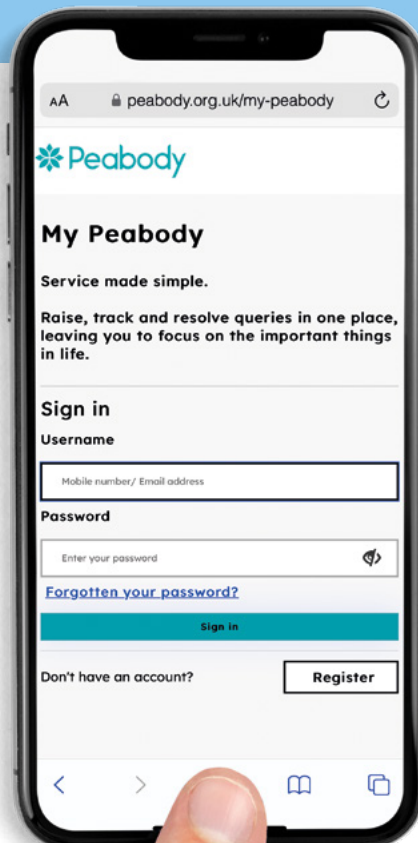
My Peabody is your easy way to access our services and information about your home, online, when it's convenient for you.

You can:

- Manage your home
- Raise and track repairs
- Access essential information and services
- Pay your rent
- Update your personal details



Register for My Peabody
peabody.org.uk/my-peabody



Getting in touch

Our phone lines are open Monday to Friday, 8am-6pm.

You can call us on **0300 123 3456**

You can also use My Peabody.