



housing, care, and community services in Cambridgeshire

Tenancy Handbook



Tel: 0300 111 3555 (24hrs for emergencies)

Email: info@chsgroup.org.uk

Website: www.chsgroup.org.uk

Endurance House, Chivers Way, Histon, Cambridge, CB24 9ZR

If you need this handbook in Braille, large print, on audio tape or CD, or in a format that you can read on your personal computer, please contact CHS at the address below.



phone **0300 111 3555**



or email us at: help@chsgroup.org.uk

English



This booklet is about your tenancy with CHS. If you need information in your own language, please contact us at our office in Histon, and we will do our best to help.

Vietnamese



Tập sách này nói về hợp đồng thuê nhà của bạn với CHS. Nếu bạn cần thông tin bằng ngôn ngữ riêng của bạn, xin vui lòng liên hệ với chúng tôi tại văn phòng của chúng tôi ở Histon, và chúng tôi sẽ làm tốt nhất của chúng tôi để giúp đỡ.

Polish



Broszura ta jest na temat umowy dzierżawy z CHS. Jeśli potrzebujesz informacji w swoim własnym języku, prosimy o kontakt z naszym biurem w Histon, i dołożymy wszelkich starań, aby pomóc.

Portuguese



Este livreto é sobre o contrato de arrendamento com o CHS. Se precisar de informações na sua própria língua, por favor contacte-nos em nosso escritório em Histon, e faremos o nosso melhor para ajudar.



Phone: **0300 111 3555**
(24 hours for emergencies)



Email: repairs@chsgroup.org.uk



Minicom: **01223 713784**



Fax: **0300 111 3556**

Opening hours:

Monday to Friday:
09:00 to 17:00

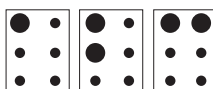
CHS
Endurance House
Chivers Way
Histon
Cambridge
CB24 9ZR
See a map in the 'Contact us' section

Available in:

CD



BRaille



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Welcome

We hope that you will be happy in your home and with the services we provide.

This Handbook contains information about the services we provide and your rights and responsibilities as a tenant of CHS Group. The Handbook is intended as a guide and does not form part of your tenancy agreement. If you have any difficulties or disputes, you should always refer to your tenancy agreement. This will provide full details of all your legal rights and responsibilities, which you originally agreed to.

We aim to cover most issues in this handbook. However, if you cannot find the answer to a question you may have, please contact us. We will be happy to help you.

If the information contained in this book changes at any time, we will let you know, either through our regular newsletters, or by sending you up-to-date sections of the handbook.

CHS Group is the operating name for The Cambridge Housing Society Limited, an exempt charity providing housing, care and support services

Registered Office:
Endurance House
Chivers Way
Histon
Cambridge
CB24 9ZR

Registered Society: 10457R
HMRC Charity: X81275
Regulator of Social Housing: L0992

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Equality and diversity statement

We believe strongly in equal opportunities. This means that in our provision of housing services and our employment of staff we seek to provide equal treatment and equal opportunities for everyone.

Our policy is to provide a good standard of housing for those in need regardless of sex, race, age, colour, national or ethnic origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital status or disability.

We aim to do this by:

- Providing clear information about applying for accommodation
- Providing an interpreter if English is difficult for you
- Filling in forms with you if you need help
- Visiting you at home if you cannot get to our office
- Monitoring all our services to ensure that they are fair
- Following up all complaints of unfair treatment
- Taking action against tenants who are guilty of harassment
- Supporting those who have suffered harassment from neighbours



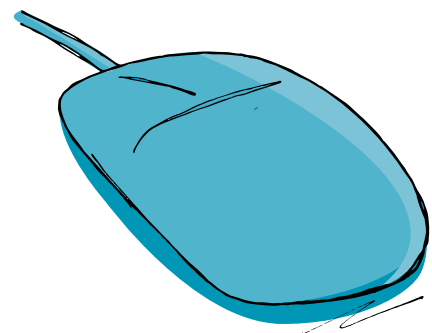
Section 1

Contacting us



In this section


- Opening hours
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- Facilities for disabled people and speakers of other languages
- Our service standard on customer service
- Making comments and complaints
- Data Protection
- Statement on abuse by customers towards CHS Group employees and contractors



Opening hours

Our Histon office is open Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm. You can report emergency repairs when we are closed by phoning us – see 'How to contact us', below.

How to contact us


 **Phone: 0300 111 3555**
 ⓘ (24 hours for emergency repairs)

Phone us on this number and you will get through to our Customer Service Team at our Histon office, or select an option to be transferred to our contractor to make an appointment for a repair.



If you need to speak to someone else, such as your Housing Officer, the Money Matters team - the Customer Service Team will put you through to the right person.

 **Email us**
help@chsgroup.org.uk

We check emails throughout the day when the office is open. If it is an emergency it is best to phone us.

 **Live Chat**
www.chsgroup.org.uk

Go online to chat to our Customer Service team or our contractor during office hours.


 **'myCHS' customer portal**
www.chsgroup.org.uk


Go online to look up your rent account, check the details we hold about you, report a new repair, report other issues or ask us to contact you. Although you can use the portal at any time, we will respond to you in office hours.

Contact your local council for Council Tax and housing benefits, paying council tax, rubbish collection and recycling, pest control, bulky waste(e.g. beds, wardrobes), housing advice and homelessness, and to apply to Homelink if you need to move.

If you contact us online to report a repair, please remember to tell us:

- Your address
- Your name
- A contact phone number
- As much information about the repair as possible – please read the section on 'Repairs and maintenance' in this handbook

 **Minicom: 01223 713784**

If you are hearing impaired and have a Minicom or other text phone, you can contact us on the above number. We will send you a message back to tell you that we have received your message, and we will make sure that your message reaches the person who can deal with your enquiry. If you report a repair by Minicom we will send you a letter in the post telling you the date when the repair will be done by.

If you use Minicom to report something or ask for information, please remember to tell us:

- Your address
- Your name
- As much information as possible to help us deal with your enquiry. We may need to send you a message back if we need more information

Only email us or go online to report something if it is not an emergency; if it is an emergency it is best to phone us.



Where we are

Our address is:

CHS Group
Endurance House
Chivers Way
Histon
Cambridge
CB24 9ZR



Phone: **0300 111 3555**



Fax: **0300 111 3556**

Directions to the CHS GROUP Histon office

By Road

From the M11 North leave at junction 14 signposted for Newmarket (A14). From the A14 East bear left just before the M11 junction no 31 – signposted Newmarket (A14/A10). After about 1 mile turn left at the first exit onto the B1049 for Histon.

Go past the Holiday Inn on your right and through a pedestrian crossing. At the main traffic lights turn left into Chequers Road (signposted Vision Park). Turn left into Station Road and first right into Chivers Way.

Visitor parking is in front of our main entrance, to the right as you enter the car park from Chivers Way. If this is full, continue forward to the main car park; you can park in any of the spaces marked 'Cambridge Housing Society' in the middle section of the car park.

By Rail

From Cambridge station take a taxi or bus to Vision Park, Histon; journey time approximately 15 minutes by taxi, 30 minutes by bus.

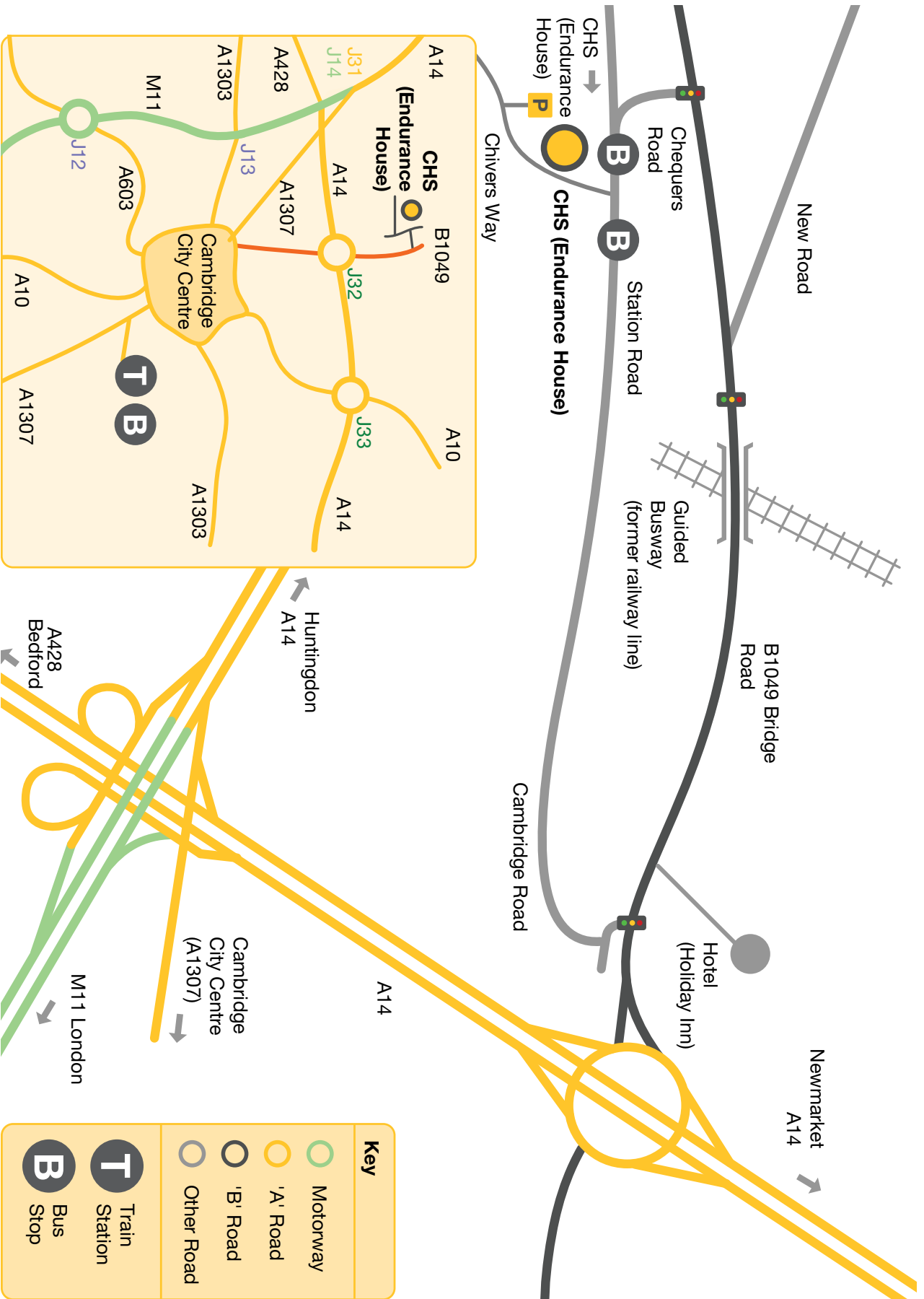
By Bus

Bus route "Citi 8" towards Cottenham (operated by Stagecoach) runs from Emmanuel Street to Histon every 10 minutes during the day, with a journey time of approximately 30 minutes from the City Centre. The bus stops in Histon on Station Road near to Chivers Way. There is a stop for the St.Ives to Cambridge guided bus route in Station Road, Histon, which is a short distance from our office.

A full timetable is available from www.stagecoachbus.com

Accessibility

Our Head Office is fully accessible for wheelchair users and there is a lift between the two floors.



Facilities for disabled people and speakers of other languages

We are committed to making all of our services fully accessible by everyone.

We provide the following facilities, where required:



- Wheelchair accessible office: our Histon office is fully accessible by wheelchair users



- Induction loop system. Our Histon office has an induction loop system to help users of hearing aids to hear more clearly
- Information can be provided in different languages or formats, including Braille, large print, on audio tape or CD, or on a format you can read on your computer
- A face-to-face interpretation and translation service, including British Sign Language and lipspeaking interpreters for deaf people. If you need to use this service, please contact us at our Histon office
- A telephone interpreting service, providing quick access to qualified interpreters in many languages. If you need to use this service, please contact us at our Histon office. (Please note that we will need a little time to arrange any interpreting service with an outside organisation)

- RNID Typetalk – this is a 24-hour national telephone relay service for deaf, hard of hearing, deaf/blind and speech impaired people. It allows the use of a textphone to access any services that are available on standard phone systems. To use this service, just dial 18001 (if you are a textphone user) before the usual phone number and you will be connected to a highly trained RNID Typetalk operator who will provide a discreet and confidential service

Our Service Standard on Customer Service

CHS is committed to providing high quality services. This Standard was drafted and agreed by our Customer Committee.

Our Commitments

All customers have the right to expect a high standard of customer service

- We will treat you with courtesy and respect
- We will be easy to contact, with helpful, knowledgeable staff who aim to resolve your query 'right first time'
- When you phone about a repair during office hours, you can talk to the contractor you need to make an appointment with
- We offer an out-of-hours phone service for emergency repairs affecting your health, safety or security of your home
- We will answer phone calls promptly and reply to all enquiries within 5 working days (or let you know if it will take longer, and keep you well informed of progress)
- We will make it easy to give feedback on our services in a range of ways to suit you, and use your feedback to shape our services. We will communicate what changes are made as a result of your feedback
- We will provide updates on our performance and news you need to know in our twice-yearly newsletter
- We will contact you promptly if there's a problem e.g. with your rent payments, appointments, a change to what we said we'd do
- We will protect your personal data and let you know how we use your data

Please see our full Customer Service Standard, including looking after your home, living in your home, and your responsibilities, at our website www.chsgroup.org.uk

Making comments and complaints

What to do if you are unhappy with the service you get

There are a number of ways you can tell us if we get something wrong:

- **Phone our Customer Services Team on 0300 111 3555.** If they cannot deal with your problem, they will put you in touch with someone who can
- **Email your comments to:**

help@chsgroup.org.uk

Please tell us why you are not happy and what you would like us to do to put things right

- **Write to us at:**
CHS Homes
Endurance House
Chivers Way
Histon
Cambridge
CB24 9R
- **Send a complaint via our website**
www.chsgroup.org.uk

You can complain yourself, or a friend or relative can complain on your behalf with your permission.

We aim to resolve complaints quickly. If you are not happy with the way we handle your complaint, there are two further steps you can take:

- 1 **Make a formal complaint.**
You can do this by telephone, in person at our office, by email or you can download a form from our website. If you would like help with making your complaint, please contact us. You could also ask for help from your friends and relatives, or from an independent agency such as the Citizens Advice Bureau.
- 2 You can ask for the support of our **Customer Complaints Panel** which consists of CHS customers who help to resolve complaints effectively. They can act as your 'advocate' with CHS, or give you advice, or if a formal complaint is not resolved, we may ask them to carry out a Formal Review.

If having completed your formal complaint with CHS you are still not happy, you can contact the Independent Housing Ombudsman. The Ombudsman is independent and provides a service for tenants who have a complaint about their landlord that they have not been able to deal with through their landlord's complaints procedure.

You must use our complaints procedure before the Ombudsman will consider investigating your complaint. Full details are available from our Histon office or from our website.

Data Protection

CHS is committed to protecting your personal data and Data Protection legislation requires us to inform individuals about how we collect and use your personal data. This information is detailed in the 'Privacy Notice' including our purposes for processing your personal data; how long we will keep the data; and who it may be shared with.

'Data' means information 'Processing data' means obtaining, holding, using, disclosing or deleting information.

'You can find our Privacy Notices at www.chsgroup.org.uk

We regularly review, and where necessary update our Privacy Notices to ensure that you are always aware of how we use your personal data. If you have any questions about Data Protection, you can contact our Data Protection Officer at data.protection@chsgroup.org.uk

Statement on abuse by customers towards CHS Group employees and contractors

CHS Group does not expect its employees or contractors to tolerate behaviour which is abusive, insulting or offensive. In such cases, officers will record incidents of this type of behaviour and may end any conversation with you.

Such behaviour is also a breach of your tenancy agreement, so it would put your tenancy at risk.

People may act out of character in times of trouble or distress. However we consider actions that result in unreasonable demands on our services to be unacceptable. A demand becomes unacceptable when it starts to impact substantially on the wider work of CHS. The same would apply to unreasonable levels of contact, for example a high number of calls in a short period. If this happens, we would discuss it and agree a way to work with you e.g. by agreeing specific times to contact us or pre-arranged appointments to meet you.