



April 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to the next edition of our tenant newsletter.

Regular readers of this newsletter will know that each month we share information and updates from across our communities.

This month, we remind tenants that subletting your whole home is tenancy fraud and outline the steps we take to prevent it. We also share practical advice on managing rising fuel costs, alongside an update on the two child benefit cap.

In addition, we include helpful seasonal tips from our grounds maintenance contractor, Mark Walker, on preparing your garden for spring and invite you to our upcoming contractor forum with Sureserve. Finally, we highlight the positive impact of our Social Impact Partnerships Initiative, sharing how it continues to transform the lives of people living in our homes.

Read on to find out more...



Sub-letting your home – why it’s wrong

At CHS, providing homes to those who need them is our top priority. As many of you may know, as a CHS tenant, you are not allowed to sub-let your home to someone else when you have moved out yourself. If you do move out permanently, you must tell us and end your tenancy.

CHS rented homes are there to provide safe, affordable homes for people who genuinely need them. When someone moves out and sub-lets their home, they’re preventing another family or household in need from having a secure home. We recently had a case where some tenants were making money illegally from charging market rents for short-term lets when they themselves were living abroad. We know circumstances can change, so if you need to be away from home for a short period of time for work, to be with family, or for health reasons, please reach out to us. So long as you genuinely intend to return to your home, we do not consider this a breach of your tenancy.

Equally, renting a room to a lodger while you’re still living there is permitted as long as your home doesn’t become overcrowded – you just need to let us know. However, sub-letting to someone else when you no longer live there is tenancy fraud, which is a criminal offence and can lead to eviction, prosecution, and other legal action to recover the fraudulent income.

If you’re not sure whether someone staying in your home counts as a lodger or a sub-tenant, please contact us on [0300 111 3555](tel:03001113555) or email info@chsgroup.org.uk.

Additionally, if you think someone else might be sub-letting their home, please get in touch even if you’re not sure - we’ll investigate and we won’t share your details with them.

Managing rising fuel costs

With oil prices continuing to rise, many of us are feeling the impact, especially in households that rely on oil to heat their homes. However, these increases have also impacted petrol and diesel prices.

If you are looking for small, practical ways to manage the rising costs, here are some tips on how you can reduce or change your fuel consumption.

Heating oil saving tips:

- Compare suppliers – aim for at least three quotes
- If you can, buy oil in the summer when prices are usually lower
- Avoid emergency deliveries by ordering early
- Turn the thermostat down slightly – small changes can save around 10%
- Join an oil-buying club with neighbours to secure discounts
- Allow us access to your home to service your boiler yearly to keep it efficient
- Bleed your radiators
- Ask suppliers about payment plans to spread costs



We've recently been able to support some tenants who depend on oil heating during a challenging time.

Although we're not always able to provide direct financial support, if you're struggling with your bills or finding it difficult to manage, please get in touch. We may be able to offer advice, budgeting support, or explore what help might be available.

Email: moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk, or call [0300 111 3555](tel:03001113555) and ask to be referred to the Money Matters team.

The Government has also announced new funding to help households struggling with the cost of heating oil. From Monday 30th March, low-income households who rely on oil for heating and hot water will be able to access support via the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation which will be administering the Government scheme on behalf of the Cambridgeshire County Council.

Petrol and diesel saving tips

Make your car more efficient:

- Keep tyres properly inflated to reduce fuel use
- Remove unnecessary weight from the car
- Take off roof racks when not needed
- Use aircon only when necessary (open windows at low speeds)
- Avoid driving with a full tank all the time - fuel adds weight

Drive smarter:

- Accelerate gently - heavy acceleration wastes fuel
- Change up gears sooner and drive in the highest gear you can
- Plan ahead to drive smoothly and reduce braking/acceleration

Save when filling up

- Shop around - petrol prices vary a lot
- Use loyalty schemes at stations you visit often
- Cashback cards can reduce costs if the balance is paid in full monthly
- Lift share or combine trips to reduce mileage

You can find more information here
[Crisis payment | Cambridgeshire County Council](#)

You might also find this free online budgeting tool helpful: <https://www.budget.entitledto.co.uk/default/start>

It's simple to use and can give you a clear picture of your income and outgoings.

If you're worried about rising costs, please contact us - we're here to support you where we can.

Changes to benefits - what you need to know

At CHS, we feel it is important to keep you updated on the changes to the two-child benefit cap and how this may affect you and your family.



What is new:

As of April 6, 2026, the two-child benefit cap has been removed. This means that households will be able to receive support for more than two children as part of their Universal Credit or Child Tax Credit claim.

This change should be applied automatically in most cases. However, it's important to make sure that all children living with you are included on your Universal Credit claim. If you have not previously added younger children because you were not able to claim for them, you will now need to update your claim to receive the correct payments.

Benefit cap

The benefit cap limits the total amount of benefit a household can receive. For couples and single parents, this is currently £1,835 per month. The cap includes benefits such as Universal Credit and Child Benefit. If your total benefit income goes over this amount, your Universal Credit housing element is usually reduced.

The benefit cap does not apply if:

- You/your partner earn over £846/month combined (after tax/NI)
- You/your partner or a child in the household receives a disability benefit
- You receive Carer's Allowance

If you are affected by the benefit cap, you may be able to apply for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) to help with your rent. You may also be able to reduce or remove the cap by increasing the number of hours you work or checking your eligibility for other benefits.

If you are worried about how these changes may affect you, please get in touch as we can help you review your situation and access support where possible.

Email: moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk

Or call [0300 111 3555](tel:03001113555) and ask to be referred to the Money Matters team.



Thank you for your cooperation during our Stock Condition Surveys!

We would like to thank all our tenants who have already provided access to FFT to carry out their Stock Condition Surveys (SCS) on our homes. Your cooperation is helping us build an accurate picture of the current condition of all our homes so we can better plan for future improvements and investment. Our access rates are improving, and we appreciate the support you have given us in achieving this.

Why these surveys matter

Stock Condition Surveys are a **regulatory requirement** and form an essential part of our responsibilities as your landlord. They help us:

- Ensure our homes are maintained to the required standard
- Plan future works and investment
- Identify any issues before they become problems

To meet these obligations, it is vital that we are able to access every home when an appointment is arranged.

Next steps for homes we haven't been able to access

We still have a number of homes where we haven't gained access yet. Over the coming weeks, we will be contacting these households individually to arrange a convenient appointment to carry out the Stock Condition Survey.



If you receive a letter, text, or call from us or FFT, please respond as soon as possible so we can complete your survey. Allowing

access to your home is essential for us to meet our regulatory obligation and ensures your home is properly maintained.

We will continue to contact you until the survey has been completed.

Thank you again for your cooperation and support.



Sureserve Forum – Join us on 21st May

How you can refresh your garden this spring

With spring now underway, our maintenance contractor Mark Walker will be busy preparing the communal gardens for the months ahead. As the grass begins to grow again, our main focus over the coming weeks and months will be regular cutting to keep lawns neat, tidy, and safe for everyone to enjoy.

Most sites will now return to the fortnightly visit schedule, ensuring outdoor areas are maintained consistently as growth increases. Alongside grass cutting, our teams will continue with spot weeding, litter picking, and checking planted areas to keep everything looking its best.

If you are looking to refresh your own garden, balcony, or patio this spring, here are some simple tips to get you started:

Give your garden a tidy-up

Say goodbye to the winter debris! Clear away fallen leaves, prune dead stems, and refresh pots with new compost can help new plants to thrive. Avoid cutting your grass too short at the start of the season. Keeping it slightly longer helps protect the roots, strengthens the lawn, and reduces the spread of weeds.

Plan ahead for summer colour

Now is a great time to plant hardy perennials or sowing seeds such as sunflowers, sweet peas or marigolds to add some much-loved colour to your gardens and outdoor spaces.

Check pots and containers

Ensure good drainage in pots and containers, and top up with fresh compost to give plants a strong start.

Encourage wildlife and pollinators

Bee-friendly to wildlife! Planting bee-friendly plants like lavender, heather, and alliums adds colour to your garden and supports local biodiversity.

If you have any questions about your grounds maintenance work or would like any gardening tips or advice, please do not hesitate to approach one of the Mark Walker team. Wishing you a bright and enjoyable Spring!

We are pleased to invite you to the upcoming SureServe Forum, an engaging evening dedicated to bringing together contractors, tenants, and members of our wider community to share updates, insights, and future plans.

Taking place on **21st May at 7:00pm**, the forum will provide an open space to discuss key topics relating to Sureserve services, customer experience, and ongoing improvements within our communities. It's also a valuable opportunity to hear directly from the Sureserve team and have your questions answered. [Click here](#) to join online via Zoom.

Whether you are a long-standing or new tenant, your input is important, and we encourage you to take part in the conversation.

How to register your interest

If you would like to attend, please contact a member of our Customer Engagement Team:

Laura Papanikolaou – laura.papanikolaou@chsgroup.org.uk

Louise Higgins – louise.higgins@chsgroup.org.uk

They will be happy to register your interest and provide further details.

We look forward to welcoming you to what promises to be an informative and collaborative evening.



Our Social Impact Partnerships Initiative – one year on

Here at CHS, we aspire to make a genuine and sustained difference to the lives of those living in our communities. That is why, last April we launched our Social Impact Partnerships Initiative, with the aim of partnering with the local business community to provide additional services and support to our tenants and residents. We are pleased to share the following updates on what has been a successful first year of partnership, collaboration, and meaningful change.

Over the past 12 months, we have worked with over 29 different businesses and organisations who have provided support in a variety of ways including volunteering activities and various forms of donations.

We have raised a total of £62,065.91 which will help deliver our four key campaigns:



Employment Support Fund

The Employment Support Fund provides financial support to our supported housing residents who see their housing benefit cut significantly when they begin working.

Over the past 12 months, 13 young people have been supported into work with the help from:



Mentoring Scheme

Last May, we secured sufficient donations from Assura, Landaid, and Hopkins Homes to launch a mentoring scheme for those living in our supported housing services. Thirteen residents have been referred to the scheme and we currently have eight residents actively engaged in positive mentoring relationships.

Over the past 12 months, 13 young people have been supported into work with the help from:



WIN (When It's Needed)

Over £1,000 has been distributed to 22 residents to provide emergency financial support for essential items such as (but not limited to) footwear and clothing for residents starting new jobs, identification

documents so that a resident could apply for benefits, travel expenses for hospital appointments, bus pass to allow a young person to attend college, a winter coat for a new resident and specialist shoes for a resident with a medical condition.



Shoebox Appeal

Last autumn, we launched our seventh annual Christmas Shoebox Appeal, asking local businesses, organisations, and individuals to donate gifts and essentials

for the young people living in our supported housing services. Thanks to their generosity, we received 400 shoeboxes, hampers and individual toys for 25 families facing financial hardship and numerous donations - total donations valued at over £10,000!

Donations made from:





Volunteering activities

We would like to extend a heartfelt thankyou to all our partners and supporters who donated their time and services to our communities over the past year.



- 'Skip Day' at River Lane community



- Easter donation and Shoe Box donations
- Gardening and decoration activities at our Russell Street and Pauline Burnett House services



- Shrubs replaced at Primrose Lane in Histon



- 'Tech Tea Party' to offer advice on how to stay safe online held at our Housing with Care Scheme Richard Newcombe Court

We would like to thank everyone who has supported Cambridge Housing Society so far! During 2026 we hope to increase and strengthen our relationships with our existing partners and supporters as well as attract new organisations to our initiative so that we can continue to provide much needed and meaningful support for those within our communities.

For more help and guidance or to check your rent account and raise repairs, don't forget to log into [myCHS](#).

We'd also love to hear your thoughts on our newsletter.

To get in touch, email: info@chsgroup.org.uk.