



**CHS GROUP**   
housing, care, and community services in Cambridgeshire



# June 2025 Newsletter

---

Welcome to our June newsletter! In each of our monthly newsletters, we share updates from within the CHS community so that you, our tenants and residents, are up to date with the news and changes from within our organisation.

This month, we share insight into why we need to carry out our Stock Condition Surveys, an update on our Customer Complaints Panel, how to get support with a pregnancy, and some lovely news across our services, including a tenant's extra-special 100th birthday!

Read on to find out more...



# Why we need to carry out Stock Condition Surveys

Firstly, at CHS, ensuring your home is safe and well-maintained for you, our tenants, is our top priority. As part of this, we regularly carry out Stock Condition Surveys in our homes which we have commissioned Pennington Choices to undertake. These surveys enable CHS to plan what type of works programmes will be required in your home in the future and when they will be required, as well as identifying any potential hazards.

As a thank you for allowing us access to complete the Stock Condition Survey, you will automatically be entered into a **monthly prize draw** with the chance of winning a **£50 Amazon voucher**, which will be drawn at random.



## What is a Stock Condition Survey?

A Stock Condition Survey is a visual inspection of the inside and outside of your home which takes around **30 minutes**.

Pennington Choices will look at the age and condition of major areas of your home, provide an estimated installation date and an estimated remaining life across aspects such as the kitchen, bathroom, windows and doors. They will also collect information needed to calculate how energy efficient your home is.

The surveyors will also carry out Housing Health and Safety Rating System assessments on your home to check for a variety of hazards, such as electrical and gas safety, trip hazards, fall hazards, etc. Depending on the severity, they may be dealt with immediately.

## FAQs

### Why do we carry out Stock Condition Surveys?

These surveys help us to understand and plan any future works or upgrades your home needs to stay in a safe and well maintained condition in line with the Decent Home Standards.

When a home is well maintained and looked after, we expect:

- Bathrooms to last **at least** 30 years
- Kitchens to last **at least** 20 years
- Windows to last **at least** 30 years
- Pitched roofs to last **at least** 60 years

Planning ahead helps us better manage how we spend our money. The emphasis of the survey results and planned programme is on planned preventative maintenance, which makes it necessary to replace components and key elements of the housing stock before they become defective or obsolete.

Please note that if your property is surveyed this does not mean that any replacement works will be carried out.



**My neighbour has been contacted about a survey but I have not. Am I included?**

Our Stock Condition Surveys are planned on a number of factors. They are usually carried out around every five years, but may be sooner depending on a number of reasons.

**What will the survey involve?**

The survey will involve a visual inspection of all the key areas and components of your home. This includes your windows, roof, doors, kitchen and bathroom. As this is visual only, no items of furniture or any other items need to be moved and no special arrangements need to be made. The full survey should take no more than 30 minutes.

For record purposes, the surveyor will take photos of the property and we kindly ask that you remove any personal possessions or photographs that you do not wish to be captured in these images.

**Who will be visiting my home?**

One of Pennington Choices surveyors will carry an ID badge with a photograph which will be shown to you on arrival.

Please do not let anyone into your home if you have any concerns over their identity, instead call **CHS** on [0300 111 3555](tel:0300 111 3555) to confirm their identity.

**Can I refuse to have the survey?**

These surveys make sure your home remains in a safe and well-maintained condition, so you can enjoy where you live comfortably. That's why it's part of your tenancy agreement to give us access to carry out these surveys and other required works to your home.

**What if I'm out when the surveyor calls?**

Please let us know if you are not available for the arranged appointment so that we can change this to a time that suits you. We will always work with you to try and organise a convenient time and date where we can.

If you're not at home when the surveyor calls, a card will be left with contact details, so you can arrange another date directly with Pennington Choices. If you have received a letter about a Stock Condition Survey, please contact Pennington Choices to arrange an appointment at your earliest opportunity by calling [0800 883 0334](tel:0800 883 0334) or emailing [SCS@pennington.org.uk](mailto:SCS@pennington.org.uk).





## New Customer Complaints Panel to review complaint responses

CHS recently updated its Complaints Policy in partnership with the Tenant Committee, introducing some important changes that aim to strengthen how we handle and learn from complaints.

We're pleased to announce the relaunch of the **Customer Complaints Panel**, made up of fellow tenants committed to improving how complaints are handled by CHS.

This Panel will review responses to tenant complaints to ensure they meet three essential standards:

- **Timeliness** – Responses should come within a prescribed time frame.
- **Fairness** – Decisions and resolutions must be impartial and grounded in policy.
- **Empathy** – Communication should be respectful, considerate, and understanding of residents' needs and concerns.

The group is not a replacement for the complaint process, but an added layer of oversight to build trust and help improve our service. By reviewing how complaints are handled after the fact, the group will identify patterns, recommend improvements, and highlight good practice. In its first review under this new model, the Panel found that CHS met required timescales and provided constructive responses.

### Why does this matter?

Tenants deserve to feel heard and respected. Whether it's a repair issue, a noise complaint, or a concern about community safety, the way responses are handled shapes your experience as residents. This initiative aims to ensure every voice is heard and taken seriously.

### What happens next?

To support their new role, Panel members will receive external training in June on complaint handling best practice and the expectations set out by the Housing Ombudsman. The Panel Chair has also reviewed and signed off on CHS's latest self-assessment against the Ombudsman's code.

The group will meet once every three months to review a sample of complaint responses from the past few months, and will share their feedback with CHS. Over time, their work will help shape training, policies, and practices for staff.

We're excited about this new chapter and look forward to working closely with the Panel to make sure complaints are not just resolved, but used as a tool for real improvement.

If you're interested in learning more or getting involved, contact the Customer Engagement Team: Laura Papanikolaou, [lpap@chsgroup.org](mailto:lpap@chsgroup.org), 07540 122624 or Louise Higgins, [louise.higgins@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:louise.higgins@chsgroup.org.uk), 01223 713540.





# Support with pregnancy: Cornerstone Care

Cornerstone Care in Confidence exists to provide time, space and non-directive information to those experiencing pregnancy, and to support women who are struggling to cope. Cornerstone Care provides free baby supplies through their Baby Boutique, and ongoing support to those who are pregnant in difficult circumstances such as homelessness, domestic violence, debt and poverty, unemployment and mental and physical health problems.

Cornerstone Care aims to support people from maternity up until their baby's first birthday, offering a sense of community and belonging, and equipping them with new confidence and skills.

Director, Camilla Hunt said:

*"No other charity in Cambridgeshire provides this unique range of services. We've been running for over 20 years, serving Huntingdon and more recently expanding further into Cambridgeshire and Fenland. With NHS services more strained than ever, we're offering vital mental and physical support whilst easing the burden on other health services. Fostering good relationships with GP surgeries, social prescribers and other charities allows us to reach women who need help not offered elsewhere. **It's very rewarding.**"*



One individual who was supported by Cornerstone said:

*"A **lovely calming environment** with freedom to talk. It is **not judgmental** and just a reassuring experience."*



To find out more about Cornerstone Care, or to get support, visit:  
<https://www.pregnancyadvice.org.uk/>

## Strengthening relationships at Barnabas Court

Insight gathered through tenant complaints has led to a more hands-on and responsive approach to property maintenance, particularly for tenants in our Housing with Care and sheltered housing schemes.

We recognise that some tenants may benefit more from face-to-face interactions, so our Property Services team launched a new initiative that connects managers directly with tenants in their homes. Through informal coffee mornings and tenant meetings, managers have been able to meet with tenants, listen to their concerns firsthand, and as a result, simplify the process of reporting repairs.

Starting a conversation with our tenants helped us acknowledge that we don't always get it right the first time, but we're committed to doing better.

This more personal, proactive approach played a key role in resolving a longstanding hot water issue at Barnabas Court in Milton where inconsistent hot water service affected both individual homes and communal facilities. Through persistent investigation, cross-team collaboration, and adaptive problem-solving, the issue was fully resolved—restoring comfort and reliability to tenants.

The initiative has not only improved repair response times but has also strengthened relationships between tenants and staff, highlighting the value of open dialogue and continued engagement.

---

## Ukrainian Children's Day

As some of you may know, CHS has community meeting rooms which are available for the local community to independently use for projects and activities. Recently, one of our tenants, Victor Ibanez, reached out to us to use one of the meeting rooms to assemble a flag he had been working on in support of the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign. The flag, (see image below) which was created in partnership with children from a local school, was taken to the March for the Children of Ukraine that took place on June 1st as a part of PCS March for the Children.

Mr. Ibanez said: *"I would like to thank CHS especially on behalf of the Ukrainian community, in allowing us a community space to put together a giant children's flag".*

We were so pleased to provide a space for Mr. Ibanez to assemble the flag and we encourage you to use these spaces for any projects, activities, and community groups. For any inquiries, or if you wish to use the meeting rooms, please contact [info@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@chsgroup.org.uk).





## Ruby's 100th birthday celebrations

Finally, we are delighted to share that earlier this month one of our tenants at Barnabas Court in Milton celebrated their 100th birthday with a party with family and friends.

Ruby, who has been living at Barnabas Court since 2014, received a letter from the King congratulating her on the impressive milestone and was joined by her son and his family who had travelled over from Australia for the special occasion.

On behalf of everyone at CHS, we would like to wish Ruby a **very happy birthday!**

**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](mailto:info@chsgroup.org.uk).**

