



March 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to the next edition of our tenant newsletter.

For those of you who read this newsletter regularly, you will know that each month, we provide you with information and updates from within our communities. This month, we share an invite to our upcoming Tenant Committee Meeting, a call to join the Tenant Scrutiny Committee, an introduction to our Housing and Communities Connector Service, and an FAQ on our Stock Conditions Survey. We also provide guidance on installing aids and adaptations in your home, information on our Building Safety forum, and finally, a reminder of how you could win up to £500 by completing our customer data survey.

Read on to find out more...

Have your say at our Tenant Committee Meeting in April

At CHS, your voice is important to us.

We have lots of ways for you to have your say and help improve our services for you and your community. Our main tenant group, the Tenant Committee, meet quarterly to hear updates from CHS, discuss policies and strategies, and review tenant satisfaction figures to ensure tenants are happy with our services. Meetings are open to all tenants, and everyone is welcome to come along to share their thoughts and suggestions.

Our next Tenant Committee meeting is on **Wednesday 29th April at 10.30 am at Meadows Community Centre, 299 Arbury Road, Arbury, Cambridge CB4 2JL.**

You can view the minutes from the previous Tenant Committee meeting in January [here](#).

To find out more about all the different ways you can get involved and have your say [click here](#).



Come and join the Tenant Scrutiny Team

Our Tenant Scrutiny Team is another opportunity for tenants to provide feedback and have their say at CHS. Here's our Tenant Scrutiny Team Chair to tell you more...

Hi my name is Louise Downham and I am a tenant volunteer at Cambridge Housing Society (CHS) and am currently the Chair of the CHS Tenant Scrutiny Team. I love volunteering and this is very different to any other volunteering I have done in the past. I enjoy being part of a team and have made some great friends with other CHS tenants.

Due to having a hidden disability myself and caring for my elderly father and son with ADHD, I have struggled to hold a full time job, so volunteering became my happy place.

What is the Tenant Scrutiny Team?

The Tenant Scrutiny Team is where a group of CHS tenants come together and independently choose a specific project that scrutinises a particular area of the organisation, and make recommendations for improvements to benefit tenants and CHS.

How do we scrutinise?

We choose projects based on a review of all forms of data from CHS that has been gathered throughout the year. This includes the annual tenant surveys as well as general feedback from tenants surveys, complaints and tenant committee meetings.

We then decide what objectives we want to achieve and who we need to talk to including CHS staff, tenants and service contractors.

What happens next?

The Tenant Scrutiny Team then write up a detailed report of their findings and include their recommendations for improvements.

We then present our report to members of the CHS Board who discuss the recommendations and implement agreed

actions. Those agreed recommendations are then reviewed 6 months later.

Making a difference

Over the years, the work of the Tenant Scrutiny Team has led to improvements to the damp and mould procedures, responsive repairs service and the rent payment methods.



Meetings:

We have three general meetings a year and our next meeting is an online only on **Thursday 16th April 2026 at 6.30-8.30pm.**

We also hold project meetings where we work on our chosen project, and our next meeting is on **Thursday 14th May 2026 at 10.30am-12.30pm at CHS office in Histon** near Cambridge and you can also join us online.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Tenant Scrutiny Team, why not come along as a guest – there's no obligation to join.

CHS will provide free transport or pay mileage to anyone who wants to attend our meetings.

If you would like to contact me directly, you can email me at Louise.Downham@chsgroup.org.uk

Kind regards,



Louise
Tenant Scrutiny Team Chair

The Housing and Communities Connector Service is here to help

We know that life can sometimes feel overwhelming, and having the right support when you need it can make a huge difference. Our Housing and Communities Connector service is here to help our tenants stay well, feel more confident, and keep their tenancy stable.

What we do:

This service supports CHS tenants with their health, wellbeing, and independence. We can help you stay connected to the services and support that matter most, including:

- Health services
- Social care
- Community groups
- Local activities that boost wellbeing

We offer one-to-one support, including home visits and practical help when needed. Our approach focuses on your strengths - building confidence, developing life skills, and finding solutions that work for your situation.

We work closely with other CHS teams and external organisations to make sure you get the right help at the right time, preventing problems from growing, and reducing the risk of your tenancy being affected.

A tenant's experience:

"Thank you for your kindness and encouraging words. You go out of your way to help because you genuinely care. You are making differences to people's lives. Your small acts of kindness, even with me, have made such a difference."

Who can use this service?

Any CHS tenant can access the Housing and Communities Connector service. You just need a referral from your Housing Officer or the Money Matters team. If you feel this support could help you, please get in touch:

- Call [0300 111 3555](tel:03001113555) and ask for your Housing Officer - or contact them on their direct number if you have it.
- Money Matters: Call [0300 111 3555](tel:03001113555) and ask for the Money Matters team or email moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk with your contact details and a brief description of your situation and one of our advisers will get in touch.

Improving your homes with our Stock Condition Survey

Ensuring your home is safe and well-maintained is our top priority. This is why we regularly carry out surveys of our homes, and we have commissioned FFT to undertake these.

These surveys will 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. We're committed to delivering a fair deal for tenants and pride ourselves on providing good quality, maintained homes.

Once every five years, you will receive a Stock Condition Survey to make sure your home is safe, maintained, and in a good condition. We'll use the findings to plan any works or upgrades needed.



FAQs

What is a Stock Condition Survey?

A Stock Condition Survey is a visual inspection of the inside and outside of your home and takes around 30-45 minutes to complete. Our consultants, FFT will look at the age and condition of major elements and provide both an estimated installation date and an estimated remaining life for areas such as the kitchen, bathroom, windows, and doors. They will also collect information needed to calculate how energy efficient your home is.

We will take photographs of all elements, so we kindly ask that any personal items are moved that you do not want captured.

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

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 its parts to last. For example:

- 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, on both our five-year improvement programme and the 30-year business plan.

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 home 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 based on several 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 30-45 minutes.

Who will be visiting my home?

One of FFT's surveyors will carry an ID badge with a photograph. These will be shown to you on arrival.

Please do not let anyone into your property if you have any concerns over their identity, instead call CHS on [0300 111 3555](tel:03001113555) to confirm their identity.

Can I refuse to have the survey?

These surveys make sure your home stays 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 and where we can, we'll give you a more specific time slot (for example, avoid school run). These appointments are important to make sure we have up to date information about the components in your home which helps us plan for improvements and make sure your home is safe and well maintained.

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 FFT. If you have received a letter about a Stock Condition Survey, please can you contact FFT to arrange an appointment at your earliest opportunity by calling Freephone number [0800 652 7031](tel:08006527031) or emailing survey@efftee.co.uk to book an appointment, as soon as possible.

Installing Aids and Adaptations in your home

At CHS, we believe that everyone should feel safe, comfortable and independent in their home. Our Aids and Adaptations Policy is designed to support tenants whose needs change due to disability, illness, or reduced mobility.

Whether you need a small adjustment or a larger alteration, we are committed to helping you remain comfortable and confident in your home.

What support is available?

We fund minor adaptations costing up to £1,000. Requests for minor adaptations can be made by you, a relative, or a friend. The following are examples of what we class as a minor works adaptation:

- Fitting lever handles to doors
- Fitting lever taps
- Installation of grab rails and stair rails
- Fixed toilet frames
- Key safe installation

For major adaptations, we will ask you to apply to your local authority for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). In addition to this, we contribute £5,000 per year towards major adaptations. All major adaptations must be supported by an OT assessment to ensure the work is safe, suitable, and tailored to your needs. We also carefully consider the long-term impact of any changes to your home.

Examples of major adaptations include:

- Stairlifts
- New accessible kitchen, bathroom, shower room, WC or bedroom facilities
- Widened or resurfaced access paths for wheelchair use
- Mobility scooter storage with charging facilities
- Fixed ramps with handrails
- Door entry systems with camera or remote access
- Widened or rehung doors to support wheelchair access

If you require specialist equipment or mobility aids, you will need to contact your local authority.

How to apply:

If you think you may need an adaptation, speak to your GP, Occupational Therapist, social worker or other healthcare professional. You can then contact CHS to discuss your needs and we will guide you through the process and keep you informed at every stage.

Our approach reflects our responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, ensuring we make reasonable adjustments and support tenants to continue living independently wherever possible.

You can now read the full Aids and Adaptations Policy on our website [here](#).

Join us at the Building Safety Forum

We will be hosting an online Building Safety Forum where we will be discussing how to report hazards fire evacuation and PEEPs (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans), e-bikes and mobility scooters, and personal security. All of our tenants are invited to attend and can join on Tuesday 14 April 7pm on [Zoom here](#).

Join the conversation

If you have concerns, ideas, or suggestions on how we can improve safety in your building, we want to hear from you. We all want to live in a safe, secure, and well-maintained home, and by working together, we can make that happen.

Please RSVP to Laura Papanikolaou, Customer Engagement Officer, lpap@chsgroup.org.uk, [07540 122624](tel:07540122624).



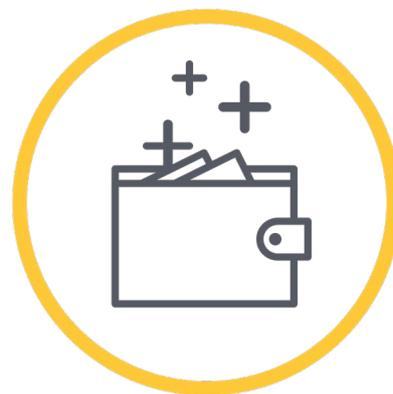
Customer Data reminder: your chance to win £500!

Quick reminder: Our Customer Data Survey launches this week!

As we mentioned in our previous newsletter, this week we have launched our customer data survey. The survey is run by **Acuity Research and Practice**, an independent research organisation, who will get in touch to ask you to confirm who lives in your home so we can keep our records up to date and improve our services. It's also a good chance to tell us about any support or adjustments you might need.

You'll soon receive an invitation either via an email or text to complete the survey and everyone who completes the survey will be entered into a prize draw to win a £500 shopping voucher or one of five £100 vouchers.

We encourage you to take part and complete the survey in full.



Acuity 
intelligence. insight. improvement.

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.