



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



# March 2025 Newsletter

Welcome to our March tenant newsletter! This monthly newsletter allows us to share any updates, news and changes to you, our tenants, so you know what's happening within the CHS community.

This month, we share news about our new repairs and maintenance contractor, advice on how you can check to see you're receiving all the benefits you're entitled to, and details about a new forum that will soon be open to tenants.

Read on to find out more...

## Welcome to our new contractor, Fortem

From 1 April, any repairs in your homes will be carried out by our new contractor, Fortem. To report a repair, please continue to report them as you have done previously.

- Call: [0300 111 3555](tel:03001113555)
- Email: [info@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@chsgroup.org.uk)
- Contact us via our website: [www.chsgroup.org.uk](http://www.chsgroup.org.uk)
- Live chat or online form: <https://www.chsgroup.org.uk/make-an-enquiry/>



Starting in April, **Fortem** will take care of all repairs and maintenance in and around your home. But who are Fortem, and what can you expect from them?

### Who is Fortem?

Part of the Willmott Dixon Group, Fortem has over 20 years' experience in the social housing sector, and its mission is to raise the bar in social housing. The team, like us, believe in making a difference to the communities they serve by ensuring that everyone has a safe, warm and decent home, and this is reflected in the Fortem brand motto: "Every Home Matters".

Founded in 2002, Fortem has become one of the leading experts in social housing, having worked with various social housing organisations, including Longhurst, TCH, Sanctuary, Orbit and Stonewater. The organisation also partner with several local councils, including Sheffield, Birmingham, and Hull City Council.

Learn more about Fortem's values and its dedication to improving social housing [here](#).

### What do Fortem's current customers think?

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*"A Fortem engineer named Chris visited today to repair a leak, I cannot fault his work rate, he worked hard in an area that had limited access and quickly completed the repair, he left no mess and was friendly and polite throughout the visit."*

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*"The team were brilliant and went above and beyond to make sure everything was sorted out. Very happy with the work and Sofia the operative who carried out most of the work was really good, she worked really hard."*

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### Support at your fingertips

To make things easier for you, Fortem has created a series of easy to follow how-to videos. These videos are designed to help you with basic home maintenance, providing step-by-step instructions for common issues around the home. You can find these videos on Fortem's YouTube channel [here](#).

We're excited about our partnership with Fortem, and are confident that it will continue to provide you with a service that exceeds your expectations.

### Tenant visit to Fortem's head office

Recently, members of our Tenant Committee visited Fortem's head office in Hitchin. The visit gave our tenants the chance to meet the Fortem team, and get a first-hand look at how repairs and maintenance will be managed moving forward.

The visit was filled with insightful discussion and demonstrations. Members of our Tenant Committee were introduced to Fortem's supervisors from the call handling team and repair planners, who demonstrated how they manage tenant calls and repair schedules. They also showed tenants the advanced call handling software, which is used to log and track repairs, as well as the new 'On My Way' app, a tool that allows tenants to track their repair operatives in real time.

After lunch, members of our Tenant Committee were treated to a presentation that detailed Fortem's social value commitment. Through this contract, Fortem aim to bring significant benefits to our community, including employment, apprenticeships and work experience opportunities, as well as tenant events. Fortem also plan to implement a legacy initiative, which will look to bring a positive, long-lasting impact.



## Are you getting the support that you're entitled to?

The NHS run a scheme called Healthy Start, which helps households with young children on low incomes by providing healthy food and milk. If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have children under the age of four and receive certain benefits, you could be eligible for the scheme.

Once on the scheme, you'll receive a prepaid card which you can use to buy fruit, vegetables, pulses, milk and infant formula. The card will be topped up every four weeks, and you can use it in most places that sell health foods and accept Mastercard® payments.

Once on the scheme, households will get:

- £4.25 each week of their pregnancy (from the 10th week of the pregnancy)
- £8.50 each week for children from birth to one year old
- £4.25 each week for children between one and four years old
- Access to free Healthy Start vitamins

In 2024, almost £500,000 of unclaimed payments were lost to households in Cambridgeshire. Make sure that you don't miss out. Check if you're eligible by applying online [here](#).

District	Uptake	Missing out	Estimated value of unclaimed payments
Cambridge City	67%	33%	£64,866.88
East Cambs	58%	42%	£50,742.64
South Cambs	62%	38%	£87,884.16
Huntingdonshire	60%	40%	£120,317.60
Fenland	62%	38%	£107,239.60
<b>Total</b>			<b>£431,050.88</b>



### Changes to PIP AR1 review form

The Department for Work and Pensions started sending out new versions of the Personal Independence Payment (PIP) AR1 review in November 2024. This new form is different to the form used before, so if you need help or have questions about filling it out, please get in touch: [moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk)

## Update on Welfare Benefits Changes

We understand that many of you may be concerned about recent government announcements regarding changes to the welfare system, particularly around disability benefits. Rest assured, we are closely monitoring these developments and will provide updates and advice as needed.

In the meantime, if you have any questions or need assistance with your current benefits, please don't hesitate to contact us: [moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk)

## Coming soon: your chance to meet our contractors

We're delighted to announce our new CHS Contractor Forum, a unique space where tenants can connect directly with contractors and ask questions about performance. This is your chance to directly engage with the professionals working on your home.

Stay tuned for more details coming in April's newsletter!



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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).

