

November 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to the next edition of our tenant newsletter.

In this edition, we introduce our new Housing and Communities Connector, share useful advice on mutual exchanges through HomeSwapper, and highlight the findings of our recent tenant survey, including the steps we are taking in response to your feedback. We also announce the return of our ninth annual Christmas Shoebox Appeal.

Read on to find out more...

CHS GROUP

housing, care, and community services in Cambridgeshire



Have you met our new Housing & Communities Connector?

It's been a year since we launched our Housing & Communities Connector service. During that time, we've supported 55 tenants to access support, overcome challenges, and maintain successful tenancies.

Over the past 12 months, the service has worked with tenants on a wide range of issues, connecting people with health services, community organisations, local activities, and practical support when they need it most.

Many of you may have met our previous Housing & Communities Connector, Sarah Young. Although we were sad to see Sarah leave CHS, we're pleased to welcome Matt Brooks into the role. Some tenants may already know Matt from his previous position as a Housing Officer. We hope you can join us in making him feel welcome as he settles into his new role.

Matt is now helping tenants who may be facing challenges that are affecting their wellbeing, independence or ability to manage their tenancy, ensuring they can access the right support at the right time.



Matt Brooks

How the service can help

Sometimes a little extra support can make a big difference. The Housing & Communities Connector service is available to tenants who may be experiencing difficulties with their health, wellbeing, or day-to-day circumstances.

Matt can work alongside you to:

- Identify support that's available in your local area
- Access health, care and wellbeing services
- Connect with community groups and activities
- Build confidence and independence
- Address issues before they begin to impact your tenancy

Support is tailored to individual circumstances and may include meeting with tenants in their homes, helping them navigate services, or working with other organisations on their behalf.

A tenant's experience

"Going in, I was apprehensive because of a previous bad experience, but those fears were quickly unfounded. Sarah was welcoming, supportive, and helped me make progress that I don't think I would have achieved on my own."

Who can access the service?

Any CHS tenant can be referred to the Housing & Communities Connector service. If you think this support could help you, please contact your Housing Officer or our Money Matters team.

Housing Officer

Call 0300 111 3555 and ask for your Housing Officer or contact them directly if you have their number.

Money Matters

Call 0300 111 3555 and ask for the Money Matters team, or email moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk with your contact details and a brief description of how we can help.

HomeSwapper is the UK's largest mutual exchange service and database for housing associations, and is aimed at tenants looking to swap their homes locally or nationally. It is free for our tenants to use and is available 24 hours a day, every day of the year. With easy registration and search tools, instant messaging and the unique MultiSwap tool, it will help you find the swap that's right for you.

Here is what a tenant who used HomeSwapper said about the service:

Tony:
"Couldn't have found our ideal property and swap without the HomeSwapper app, so simple to use."

Find out more here.

How to use HomeSwapper

1. Visit www.homeswapper.co.uk and click register. You can register with Facebook, if you like
2. Tell HomeSwapper about the home you want, and the home you've got - make sure you upload photos!
3. HomeSwapper will find matches for you, or you can run your own search to find exactly what you're looking for
4. Contact your matches and chat to the current tenant using the in-system messaging
5. Once you've agreed a swap, ask CHS for the paperwork

If you need help, email tenants@homeswapper.co.uk or find details on Facebook @HomeSwapperOfficial

Adding photos: Why it's important:
90% of successful swaps have at least one photo of the home.

If you're serious about swapping, add a photo. It shows you're keen and it helps screen out people who won't be interested. Try to show your home at its best, make sure it looks clean and tidy.

How to add a photo:

1. Log in to your account to access your dashboard
2. From the options at the top of the screen click 'My details'
3. From the drop-down list that appears, click 'The home I've got'
4. You should see a line of circles, each an option for your advert. The last circle has a camera on it, by clicking that icon, you can take photos of your home and edit them

MultiSwaps:
MultiSwaps are a brilliant way to get the home of your dreams through HomeSwapper. MultiSwaps are a chain of swaps involving more than two homes, where a swapper moves into the home of a person who is moving into the home of another person…and so on, until the chain is completed. This way, everyone gets the home they want!

A MultiSwap Chain: this is a pre-made chain of suggested homes for you to view. You can see up to five properties in each chain, and all are randomly selected based on our 'best matches' for each tenant.

To see this, go to the MultiSwap tab on your matches page. Fill out the things you want in your home and HomeSwapper will do the rest.

For step-by-step tutorials on how to create and manage your MultiSwap, click here.

Tenant Household Survey update: turning your feedback into action

At CHS, your voice matters. Earlier this year, we partnered with Acuity Research and Practice to carry out a large-scale tenant survey, helping us better understand the people who live in our homes and the communities we serve.

We would like to thank everyone who took the time to share their views. The valuable feedback we received is already helping us improve the way we communicate, shape our services and ensure support is accessible and tailored to the needs of our tenants.

What have we done so far?
The response to the survey was fantastic, with **1,192 completed surveys** received, representing **40.82% of all households.**

Using the information provided, we have:

- Updated **5,810 personal records** to ensure our information is accurate and up to date
- Contacted **170 households** to follow up on requests and feedback submitted through the survey
- Received **65 requests for aids and adaptations.** We have spoken with each tenant to gather further information, and all requests have been referred to our Property Services team for assessment and review





Supporting tenants through Money Matters

The survey also highlighted that many tenants would benefit from additional financial support. Following 110 requests for assistance from our Money Matters service, we contacted every tenant who expressed an interest across our general needs, Housing with Care, supported housing, and shared ownership homes. We would like to thank everyone for completing the survey and expressing interest in Money Matters, reassuring those requesting support that we will be in touch as soon as possible

As a result, we have made 31 new referrals. We are still working through the list so further referrals are likely.

Support has included:

- Benefit entitlement checks
- Identifying unclaimed financial support
- Universal Credit advice
- Child Disability Living Allowance applications
- Pension Credit guidance
- Council Tax Support assistance
- Private pension entitlement checks
- Food bank vouchers
- Referrals to the Crisis and Resilience Fund for essential household items
- Referrals to our Property Services team for repairs

Looking ahead
This is only the beginning. The information you shared is helping us build a clearer picture of our communities and identify where additional support may be needed. We will continue to use the survey data to improve our services, strengthen communication and ensure we are delivering the right support to the people who need it most.







Christmas Shoebox Appeal 2026

We are delighted to launch our ninth annual Christmas Shoebox Appeal.

Our Appeal ensures that all young people (16-25 years old) living in our supported housing services have a gift to open at Christmas. In previous years, this was the only gift some of our young residents received.

Over the years, we have received donations from individuals, businesses, schools, churches and community groups in shoeboxes or gift bags filled with a range of Christmas gifts similar to what you may already put in a stocking, such as toiletries, clothing, sweets, savoury treats, stationery and retail gift cards.

Previous supporters have included RxCelerate, PocDoc, Natwest, Barclays, Hill Group, Costello Medical, Arecor, Ramboll, AstraZeneca, BEFA, Aico, Mullen Property Services, Potter Raper, McBains, Fraser Dawbarns, Dodd Group, Conscious Communications, St Faiths School, Sawston Village College, Linton Village College and Cambridge Country Club Ladies Golf Team.

Personal notes or messages from donors are welcomed and as with previous years, in the event of any surplus shoeboxes these will be redistributed to other supported housing services and community groups across Cambridgeshire who also support vulnerable people in need.

To find out more here.



Looking for a new job or training opportunity?

Our contractor **Fortem** is currently recruiting for a variety of roles and training programmes.

Under their agreement with CHS, any tenant or resident with the appropriate qualifications is guaranteed an interview. Just make sure you mention that you are a **CHS tenant or resident** when submitting your application.

Scan the QR code below to view the latest opportunities.



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.

CHS GROUP
housing, care, and community services in Cambridgeshire

Scan this QR code to view the latest **CHS job vacancies**.