

Partnership newsletter

Welcome to our third edition of our
Partnership Newsletter!

Summer 2026

CHS GROUP 
housing, care, and community services in Cambridgeshire





Through these newsletters, we provide you, our partners and supporters, with news from within Cambridge Housing Society. We also share updates on the support we receive and how organisations across Cambridgeshire can help us in achieving our aim of creating opportunities that help people flourish.

In this addition, we share an update from our Christmas Shoebox Appeal, how our mentoring scheme continues to support the young people living in our services, and a recap on how our Social Impact Partnerships made a tangible difference in our communities last year.

Read on to find out more...

Thank you to everyone who donated to our Christmas 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. For many of our residents, this was the only gift they received at Christmas.

Thanks to your incredible generosity, we received over 400 shoeboxes, food hampers and individual toys for 25 of our families facing financial hardship and some generous financial donations - total value over £10,000! We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the following organisations for their donations and support:



Continued support from our incredible partners

It is through the ongoing support of our partners that we can continue to transform the lives of those living in our services. We are thrilled to share the following updates:

To find out more about our **Cambridge Housing Society Employment Support Fund**, or to donate, [visit our website](#).



HTS
ESTATES

Thank you to HTS Estates for supporting our Employment Support Fund (Cambridge & Wisbech)

The Cambridge Housing Society Employment Support Fund provides financial support to residents in our supported housing services who see a significant cut to their housing benefit when they start working.

We are delighted to share that HTS Estates has donated £4,000 to our Employment Support Fund. Thanks to their generosity, residents in our Cambridge and Wisbech services can continue to be empowered to finding and sustaining meaningful employment whilst still receiving support from our teams.



Thomas Parsons' continued support our young people in Ely:

We would like to thank the Thomas Parsons' Charity for its ongoing support, which has provided £7930.29 to our Cambridge Housing Society Employment Support Fund (Ely) in the past year to help our young residents at Wheatsheaf Close in Ely overcome financial barriers and sustain employment.



Cambscuisine's generous donation

Cambscuisine have donated £10,000 via Cambridgeshire Community Foundation to our Employment Support Fund (Cambridge & Wisbech) over the past 12 months, supporting our young people across the county into work.

To find out more about our Cambridge Housing Society Employment Support Fund, or to donate, visit: <https://www.chsgroup.org.uk/social-impact-partnerships/>



Building meaningful relationships with our Mentoring Scheme

Since May 2025, our Mentoring Scheme has been changing lives by building meaningful, consistent, and supportive relationships for the residents living in our services.

Mentoring is more than just a pairing; it is a collaborative partnership rooted in mutual trust and shared experiences. This is especially vital for our residents, many of whom have previously struggled to trust adults and have had challenging starts in life. To ensure the best outcomes, we have partnered with mentoring specialists Goal 17, who go above and beyond to find the perfect match for every resident. Over the past year, 13 residents have been referred to our mentoring scheme and eight of our residents are currently engaged in a successful match with a mentor.

Here is how Richard (mentee) and Paul's (mentor) mentoring journey has grown into a meaningful connection.

Richard and Paul's mentoring journey:

Since Richard and Paul were first introduced, their relationship has flourished. Richard and Paul enjoy spending time together and regularly participate in activities such as pottery classes at Arthur Rank in Cambridge.

Initially, Richard, who has autism, found it challenging to open up to Paul as he was overwhelmed by the prospect of having a mentor. To put Richard at ease, Paul adapted his communication style so they could talk more openly without any expectations. Paul has been credited by Richard as being empathetic and person-centred. He consistently seeks out new opportunities and makes sure to check in with Richard first to ensure that activities align with Richard's interests and comfort levels. Paul regularly communicates with both Richard and our support team to ensure that he is providing the best possible support and asks for guidance from the team when it is needed.

Richard has shared that he genuinely values his time with Paul and they regularly discuss their interests together. Richard has recently joined a library which is a huge positive step for his development. He and Paul have been talking about their favourite books which has added an additional layer of shared interest and bonding.

Richard and Paul stay in touch between sessions via the secure mentoring app Wowment on WhatsApp, making it easy to arrange meet-ups and maintain a consistent connection. This ongoing communication has helped create a sense of reliability and comfort for Richard.

Speaking about his involvement in the Mentoring Scheme, Paul said:

*"My experience with the Cambridge Housing Society/Goal 17 mentoring programme has been **incredibly positive**. Building a connection with Richard over time has shown me just how powerful a consistent, supportive relationship can be. It's been rewarding to see his confidence grow and to watch him take steps independently, such as attending activities on his own. Mentoring hasn't just benefited Richard, it's also been a meaningful experience for me. It's given me **the opportunity to support someone** in a practical way, share experiences, and see real progress develop over time. I would absolutely encourage others to consider volunteering; even small amounts of time and encouragement can make a genuine difference in someone's life."*



Paul and Richard's mentoring partnership is another great example of how mutual respect, communication, and adaptability can create a supportive and enriching experience for both our residents and their mentors.

To find out more about our Mentoring Scheme, or to enquire about becoming a mentor to a one of our residents, [visit our website](#).

Or contact Kristina Cairns,
kristina.cairns@chsgroup.org.uk

Celebrating a successful year of Social Impact Partnerships

It is thanks to the ongoing support of our partners and supporters that we are continuing to make a tangible difference to the lives of those within our communities. We would like to reflect on what has been an incredible first year of our Social Impact Partnerships programme.

We are thrilled to share that last year, we successfully raised a grand total of £62,065.91, all of which is being used to improve the lives of those living in our services. To strengthen our efforts, the funding that we receive is strategically funnelled into the four key areas.

We also invite businesses and organisations to donate their time and resources to support those living in our services. If your business or organisation would like to volunteer with us, please contact Kristina Cairns, kristina.cairns@chsgroup.org.uk



Employment Support Fund

Support Fund Ely and Cambridge and Wisbech services: Enables 16–25-year-olds to remain living in supported housing receiving the essential support they need whilst taking their first steps into employment.



Mentoring Scheme

Offers one-to-one mentoring to our residents to support them with both personal and professional development.



WIN (When It's Needed) -

Cambridge Housing Society support fund

Provides financial and practical support to give our residents the same opportunities as their peers.



Young Parent Project Nursery Bursary Fund

Provides residents at our Young Parent Project with up to two days of childcare per week once their child is 6 months. This is a lifeline for our young parents allowing them to return to education, employment or volunteering.

Between 2025-2026, we were supported by 30 organisations, these include:



When It's Needed

Thanks to the generous donations made to our WIN (When It's Need) support fund, we were able to provide support to 22 of our residents. Our WIN Fund (When It's Needed) acts as a vital safety net, stepping in to provide the support that many of us would typically receive from family members. However, as many of our residents are estranged from their families, they don't have access to this support.

Throughout the year, **£1,031.89** was 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, bus passes to college, and travel expenses to hospital and the cost of training courses.

With the ongoing support of our partners, our residents can overcome everyday barriers to access life-changing opportunities. If you would like to read more about our Social Impact Partnerships Initiative, or to find out how to donate [visit our website](#).



WIN
When It's Needed



Join us at our next annual Social Impact Partnerships event - Wednesday 9th September

The past year has been truly transformative for our Social Impact Partnerships Initiative. We therefore would like to invite you, our supporters, to our next annual event. which we will be hosting at our Russell Street service in Cambridge on Wednesday 9th September. It will be the perfect opportunity for you to not only celebrate with us the fantastic year we had and find out more about how to get involved with upcoming projects, but you'll also be able to meet some of the residents that your kindness is directly impacting.

We will be sending out invitations shortly, however, if you would like to receive an early invite to our event, please contact Kristina Cairns, kristina.cairns@chsgroup.org.uk