

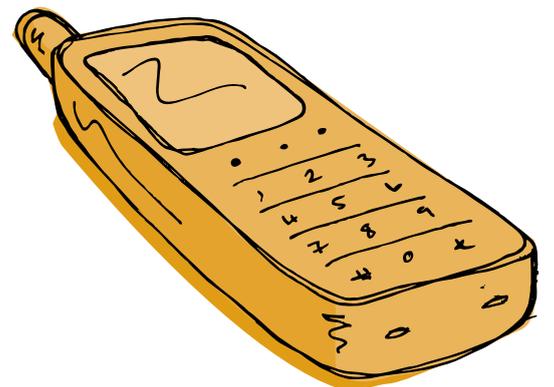
Section 10

Have your say



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Different ways to have your say

We aim to make sure that our services and priorities are driven by what you want.

To do this we have a range of ways for you to let us know your views, whether positive or negative, on what we do.

You can:

- Phone, write or email us with your views at any time. Your views will be treated in confidence and will not affect the services you receive from us
- Join one of our Customer Panels and we will regularly ask your views on what we do
- Join our Customer Committee or one of our focus groups, like the New Horizons Action Group

We will:

- Try to contact you in person once every two years so that you can give us your views
- Organise meetings where you live if you would like to work with us to improve your area
- Invite your comments on specific issues in each edition of the newsletter

To make sure we take your views into account, we will:

- Ask for your views on any changes to services which affect you
- Plan ahead so that you are asked for your views early enough to make a

difference, and not at the last minute

- Every year we will thoroughly check whether we have done what we said we would do, and publish the findings in an annual Customer Report

We will let you know what we have done with what you have told us:

- When we do surveys we will let you know when you can expect the results
- In each edition of the newsletter we will let you know how your comments have helped to improve services

We are always looking for ways of involving customers in shaping our business, so if you have an idea please get in touch. For example, we decided to involve residents in helping us to recruit the right people.

We have a range of ways of getting involved, from sitting on the Board of CHS to joining our Customer Panel.

The Customer Panel

The Customer Panel is a group of customers who have volunteered to take part in 4 surveys a year. They answer questions about our services and possible changes that we are considering making.

You choose whether you want to answer the surveys by phone, email or post. You answer the surveys from your own home.

The Newsletter Panel

The Newsletter Panel is a group of customers who help us to come up with ideas for our Newsletter.

The Customer Committee

The Customer Committee is a group of customers who meet with us 4 times a year at our office in Histon, to give us feedback about the services we provide and tell us how they would like to see our services develop. If you join the Customer Committee you will have access to free training opportunities, learn new skills, meet new people and find out about our plans for the future.

The Board of Management

The Board of Management is the governing body of CHS, and it oversees all of the work we do. The Board is made up of local people and customers who are interested in the work of CHS, and have skills and experience to offer. Once a tenant has been on the Customer Committee for at least 6 months, they can apply to join the Board and we recruit a tenant to the Board every year.

Estate Inspectors and Mystery Shopping

Estate Inspectors

Estate Inspectors volunteer to give us their views on the work our Estate Services contractors have done. There are also occasional meetings at our office in Histon. Estate Inspectors give us useful feedback on the condition of their estate and the quality of the work our contractors do for us. This helps us to keep standards high on our estates.

Mystery shopping

Local housing associations have joined together to try to improve services through 'mystery shopping'. This involves customers making phone calls to a housing association and visiting them once. They ask housing-related questions and give a score to the answers given. This helps the associations to improve their services. We give mystery shoppers free training and shopping vouchers to thank them for their help.

Residents' Groups

Residents' Groups are made up of people who want to put something back into their estate and their local community. Some groups produce a welcome pack for new residents and organise a summer festival. Residents' Groups also work with us, the Police and local councillors to improve their estate. There are various types of Residents' Groups: some meet just a few times for a particular reason, and others can go on for years and deal with a range of issues.

Money, help and advice for Residents' Groups

We can provide the following help for Residents' Groups:

- A starter pack with advice on setting up a group, useful telephone numbers etc.
- A quarterly newsletter with useful information
- If you set up a Residents' Group with an agreed set of rules you can get a yearly grant of £50 plus £2 for every household that is represented on the Group

- Our Customer Involvement Officer can help you set up the Group, and will sit in on your meetings if you wish
- We can do the Group's photocopying, pay for travel expenses to meetings, pay for some phone calls and the cost of hiring rooms

Money for estate improvements

If you have ideas for improving your estate, we may be able to provide money and support to make it happen. We can also put you in touch with successful Residents' Groups so you can learn from them.

Loan of equipment

We can lend Groups:

- A laptop computer, or you can use a computer at our office in Histon
- Flip charts
- Display boards
- Projectors

To help with the running of your Group we can provide:

- The services of the Customer Involvement Officer, who can help with writing letters, making phone calls, taking minutes, photocopying and can give advice on where you can get money from etc.
- Training courses to help the Group

If you are interested in setting up a Residents' Group, or are interested in becoming involved in any other way, please contact our Customer Involvement Officer. **Please phone us on 0300 111 3555** (ask for the Customer Involvement Officer), **email us at help@chsgroup.org.uk** or call in to our Histon office for further details.

The annual gardening competition

Every August, we hold a gardening competition for all our residents.

There are prizes for:

- Best garden – judged on the use of colour, design and the range of features
- Best indoor garden – judged on the range of plants and design
- Best shared garden – judged on the number of people who help out with the garden, the use of colour and the range of features
- Best allotment garden – judged on the range of food that is produced from the garden

The winner in each category will win some gardening vouchers.

If you would like to take part in the competition, please contact your Housing Officer or our Customer Involvement Officer.