Shared Owners newsletter

January 2026

Welcome to the first CHS shared owners newsletter.

In these newsletters, we provide our community of shared owners with news and updates, and answer your most frequently asked questions. As an organisation, we are constantly looking at where we can improve our services, provide transparency and share more about what it means to be a shared owner. We are here to support you as much as we can, and provide useful, relevant information.

Read on to find out more…

CHS GROUP
housing, care, and community services in Cambridgeshire

Service charges as a shared owner

Following feedback from our customers around the transparency of the breakdown of our service charges, we have redesigned our end of year statements sent to all leaseholders in September.

We hope that these new statements are clearer and easier to understand. If you did not receive a statement, please get in touch by calling 0300 111 3555 or emailing info@chsgroup.org.uk.

Why paying your service charge is important

If you stop paying your service charge, CHS will ask your mortgage lender to clear any debt and add it to your mortgage balance. This will cost you more long term as it will incur interest, so please do pay your service charges.

If you have any issues please contact Customer Service team on 0300 111 3555.

Understand your options as a leaseholder

While you own a share of your home, we remain the freeholder of the property, which means that we are responsible for insuring your home. Each year, our insurance brokers complete a price comparison evaluation to ensure that we receive value for money on the buildings insurance that we recharge you, the leaseholder.

Extending your lease term

When you purchase a leasehold property, you sign for a certain number of years before it expires. This is known as the lease term, and is typically for around 125 years from the first issue of the lease.

If this drops below 80 years, it can be harder to sell or buy the property as it's harder to find a mortgage lender who is willing to lend on the property. If the lease term expires, then the property will be returned to the freeholder.

The two routes

To extend the lease term, home owners have two routes. The statutory route, which gives leaseholders the right to extend their lease once conditions are met, or the voluntary route, which is a private agreement between the freeholder and leaseholder. However, as shared owners, the only available option is the voluntary route.

Marriage value

Currently, the law states that the cost of the lease extension is mostly payable by the leaseholder, including the freeholder's legal fees. There is also a 'marriage value' payment once the lease is below 80 years. However, under the Leasehold Reform Act 2024, the cost of extending your lease will be reduced, and 'marriage value' abolished. While this Act has been signed, many parts of this legislation are yet to be implemented.

To help you understand lease extensions, we have created a guide. To view the guide, please visit our website. If you would like to discuss extending your lease, please contact: info@chsgroup.org.uk. For more useful information and advice visit www.lease-advice.org/

Tips to prevent damp and mould in your home

Now that winter has arrived, it is the perfect time to take steps to stop damp and mould from becoming an issue. If left unchecked, damp, mould and condensation can damage your property as well as affect your health. However, with just four simple, easy actions, you can make a world of difference.

Let fresh air in

As the weather becomes colder, it's tempting to keep every window shut. However, without airflow, moisture can build quickly. Try opening your windows for a few minutes every day, especially in bathrooms and kitchens, or use extractor fans to keep air circulating.

Wipe away condensation

Check your windows, sills and tiles every morning for moisture. If you spot any, wipe it before it soaks in. By not letting moisture settle, you can prevent mould.

Keep your home's temperature steady

Sudden changes in temperature can encourage condensation. Instead of short bursts of high heat, you should aim for steady warmth throughout your home. If you're finding it difficult to keep your home warm, our Money Matters Team are here to help.

To see how they can assist you, contact our Money Matters Team: moneyadvice@chsgroup.org.uk.

Fix leaks quickly

Even the smallest drips can cause problems. Keep an eye on sinks, radiators and roofs, and please do not ignore leaks. If you notice any, please contact a plumber immediately. By taking these small yet effective steps, you can protect your home and health, while staying comfortable through the colder months.

Do you feel safe in your home?

Nobody should suffer abuse. You are not alone, and we are here to help.

Domestic abuse can happen to men or women in any household. It is widespread and often under-reported. Abuse can have a negative impact on a person's mental and physical wellbeing, and also affect the emotional and social wellbeing of children in the household. Abuse isn't just physical violence, it can take many forms, including emotional, psychological, financial abuse or controlling behaviour.

At CHS, we are opposed to all forms of abuse and will positively support those who experience it.

In combatting abuse in our communities, we have adopted a person-centred approach.As part of this approach, we aim to:

- Listen, support and take a non-judgemental approach
- Take the action you want if you're experiencing domestic abuse
- Work closely with other agencies to make sure that we make the greatest impact to stop any abuse

If you want to talk to someone, please call 0300 1113555 or visit our website.

www.nationaldahelpline.org.uk

Answering your questions

Why does my rent increase every year?

Nobody likes to see a rent increase. We use a calculation that is set out in your lease which is based on the rate of inflation. Rent increases are applied by a calculation (RPI/CPI) in the Capital Funding Guide which is provided by Homes England www.gov.uk/guidance/capital-funding-guide

When you rent privately, your landlord can choose the increase to your rent. With shared ownership however, all rent starts out at 2.75% of the unowned share. This means that you have the security of owning part of your home and that your rent will only increase in line with the terms of your lease.

Every April, the rent you pay increases by a contractual amount, protecting you from uncontrolled charges. As part of your contract, your rent can only increase by one of the following:

The Retail Price Index (RPI) from the previous September/November plus 0.5% or The Consumer Price Index (CPI) plus 1%.

To find out which one of these increases applies to you, please check your lease.

When will I receive my new annual rent and service charge review?

Your annual rent and service charge review is coming soon. You will receive a letter and an information pack from us at the end of February, which will outline your new costs that will come into effect at the start of April.

Can I make improvements to my home?

If you wish to make structural alterations or any work involving gas or electrics to your home, you must first discuss it with us and obtain written permission for what you want to do. If your request is approved, you will be responsible for all associated costs and local authority building and planning consents.

You can find our alterations request form via our website.

Can I access my account online?

Through the myCHS portal, you can access a range of tools to help you with the day-to-day running of your home, including the ability to report issues and request further information on services available to you.

It's quick, easy and can be accessed on the go. Through myCHS, you can:

- ✓ **View your rent statement and charges and make an online payment via the**
- ✓ **Allpay website**
- ✓ **Update your contact details**
- ✓ **View and update your household details**
- ✓ **Give us your feedback on services**
- ✓ **Request advice about your finances**
- ✓ **Contact us online using our online form**

To register for myCHS, you will need to sign up using basic information, including your CHS tenancy number. If you're not sure what your tenancy number is, get in touch: info@chsgroup.org.uk.

What does my insurance cover include?

We provide your building insurance to keep your home safe, however, this does not cover your belongings. To ensure that your belongings are protected, we recommend that you take out your own contents insurance. For better protection, we have teamed up with Thistle Tenant Risks and Great Lakes Insurance UK Ltd who provide the My Home Contents Insurance Scheme, a specialist Tenants Contents Insurance policy.

The My Home Contents Insurance Scheme offers you insurance for the contents of your home, including cover for items such as furniture, electrical items, jewellery and ornaments. For more information, visit our website.

Can I remortgage my property?

Yes, however, you will need to approach your lender or broker first. Your lender will then need to gain consent from us, which will incur a £60 cost.

Have your say

Did you find this newsletter useful? Did it cover all the topics you would like to know more about?

To give us your feedback, please do get in touch by calling 0300 111 3555 or emailing info@chsgroup.org.uk

Every piece of feedback we receive is entered into our quarterly prize draw and you could be in with a chance of winning £250.

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