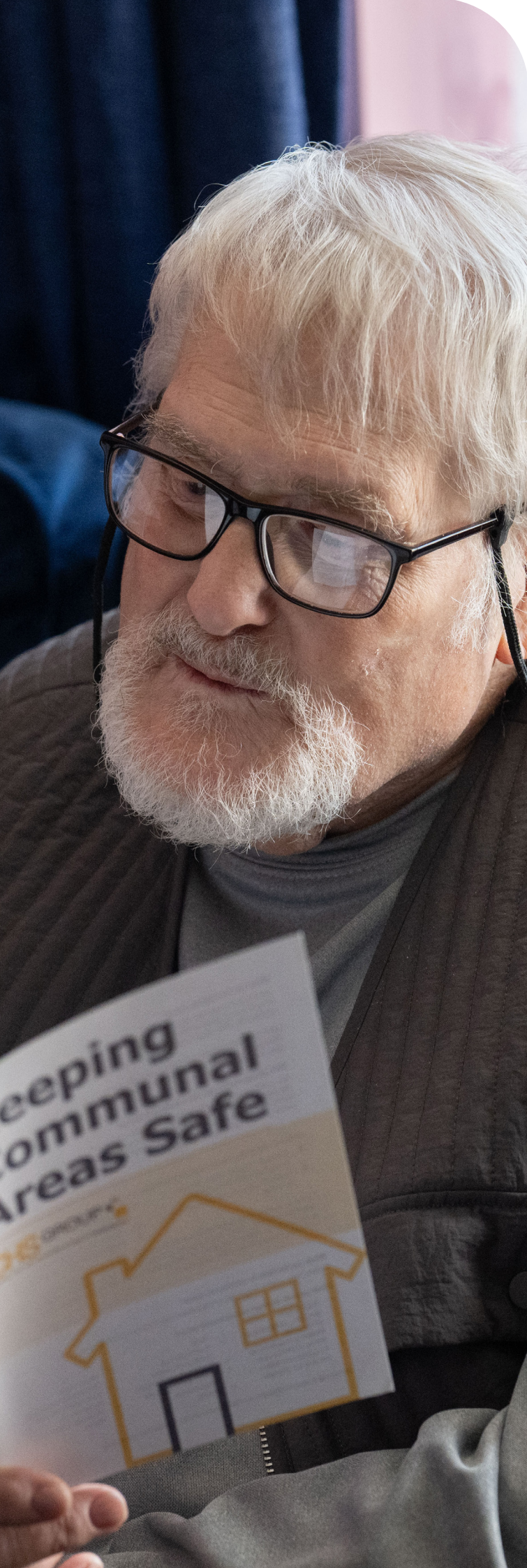




August 2026 Newsletter

Welcome to the latest edition of our tenant newsletter.

In this issue, you'll find information on how we handle complaints, a case study exploring how QR codes improved reporting repairs and hazards, and guidance on how you can apply for a CHS neighbourhood grant. We also share a calendar of upcoming tenant engagement opportunities if you'd like to get involved, provide an update on changes to Free School Meals eligibility, and announce our new Executive Director, Customer Services, Alice Purchase.

Read on to find out more...

Working together to improve the complaints process

At CHS we always aim to provide a good service, but also recognise that for our tenants, being able to raise concerns is crucial, especially if things go wrong. If or when this occurs, we will do all we can to put it right as quickly and efficiently as possible.

A part of this learning from complaints and feedback provides valuable insight into how we can improve our services. We are pleased to work with our Customer Complaints Panel, made up of tenants who help us stay accountable and continually improve the way we handle complaints and the services that may give rise to them.

We will take any problem you raise seriously and aim to resolve it when you first contact us. However, if your initial contact with us doesn't resolve the issue, or if requested, we will open a stage 1 complaint. Your complaint will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days (one week) and a full response will be sent within a further 10 working days (two weeks), or we will let you know if we need further time to gather additional information.

If you are not satisfied, you can make a stage 2 complaint, which will be handled by a Senior Manager or Director. The stage 2 complaint will take up to 20 working days (four weeks) or if it will take longer, we'll let you know why and keep you updated. This is the final stage of our complaints process, and should you wish to take it further you can refer your complaint to The Housing Ombudsman (www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk or 0300 111 3000).

You can contact the Housing Ombudsman at any stage of your complaint. They can provide independent advice on how they would expect Cambridge Housing Society to handle your complaint and may also offer support to help to reach a resolution.

Please be assured that raising a complaint will not put your home at risk. Your tenancy will not be affected if you make a complaint, ask a question, or share your experience with us. We always welcome your feedback, as it helps us improve the services we provide.



You can read our Complaints Policy [here](#).

We also have a Compensation Policy which sets out how we calculate compensation when things have gone wrong and we have not met our service standards. You can read our Compensation Policy [here](#).

How QR Codes provide quick access to building safety information

We are pleased to share our recent Building Safety Forum case study which explored how QR codes helped tenants to access important building safety information more easily. Led by our Property Services team, the trial looked at how QR codes could provide a quicker way for tenants to find safety updates, guidance, and resources.

By scanning a QR code with a smartphone, tenants can access information directly rather than searching online or waiting for printed communications.

Posters with QR codes were put up in the communal areas of several of our sites. When scanned, the QR code directed tenants to the CHS website, where they could submit a repair enquiry as well as access advice on identifying and reporting potential fire safety hazards such as poor lighting or blocked escape routes. The idea came directly from tenant feedback, as tenants shared that they wanted a quicker and more convenient way to report repairs and hazards without making phone calls.

The trial demonstrated how QR codes can be an effective way to share important information, making building safety messages more visible, accessible and easier for tenants to find.



Using a dynamic QR code system, we recorded a total of 11 scans during the trial. The highest number of scans took place in February 2026, with most activity occurring on weekdays between 9am and 3pm. These insights have helped us better understand how tenants engage with digital communications.

We also received positive feedback from tenants. One tenant commented that the QR code posters displayed around the building helped raise awareness and made important information easier to access.

Following the success of the trial, we will continue exploring ways to improve how we share building safety information, ensuring our communications remain clear, accessible and easy for everyone to use.

Thank you to everyone who took part and shared their feedback. Your views played a key role in helping us improve the way we communicate with those living in our communities.

Bring your community event to life with a CHS neighbourhood grant

Are you thinking of running an event or activity in your local community that would benefit fellow Cambridge Housing Society tenants? We are offering neighbourhood grants between £50 - £200 to be used for activities such as street parties, planting pots, or anything you think would make your community a better place to live in!

To find out more or to apply for a grant, please contact Laura Papanikolaou on lpap@chsgroup.org.uk or call [07540 122624](tel:07540122624).

Across our communities we are using grants to run activities. Recently, residents of Little Paxton enjoyed free face painting at Paxfest 2026, their local summer fete, thanks to a Cambridge Housing Society neighbourhood grant.





We also provided a grant to P3 charity to help improve the garden at one of our supported housing services at Ribston Way in Cambridge, which supports adults with mental health needs.

With this grant, the residents created a fruit and vegetable patch planting strawberries, raspberries, tomatoes, and blueberry plants. They have also bought lots of vegetable seeds to start planting in January and some lights for the gazebo when it is finished.

Have your say: upcoming tenant group meetings for your diary

We have many ways for you to have your say and help us to improve our services for you and your local community. We value your feedback and encourage all our tenants to share their thoughts to help us understand what matters most to you.

Over the coming months, we have a number of opportunities for you to get involved. These meetings are run by our involved tenants, and all tenants are welcome to join.

Minutes from the July 2026 Tenant Committee Meeting can be viewed [here](#)



Tenant Committee

Wednesday 28 October, 6.30pm
Meadows Centre (Cambridge) and online

Complaints Panel

Friday 9 October, 10.30am
CHS head office (Histon) and online

If you would like to attend any of these meetings please contact our Customer Engagement Officer, Laura Papanikolaou, email lpap@chsgroup.org.uk or telephone [07540 122624](tel:07540122624).

Tenant Scrutiny Team

Thursday 3 September, 1.30pm
CHS head office (Histon) and online

Tuesday 29 September, 6.30pm
Online

Thursday 22 October, 11.30am
CHS head office (Histon) and online

Tuesday 3 November, 6.30pm
Online

Thursday 26 November, 10.30am
CHS head office (Histon) and online

Tuesday 1 December, 6.30pm
Online

An important update on Free School Meals eligibility

From September 2026, all children in England whose households receive Universal Credit will be entitled to Free School Meals, regardless of household income. This is a change from the previous £7,400 income cap, meaning that more children will now be eligible.

If you think your child is eligible, you should apply as soon as possible. There is no deadline to apply, and you can submit your application at any time if your circumstances change. If your child is eligible at the start of the school year, we encourage you to apply by **1 October 2026** to help ensure schools receive the funding they are entitled to.

You can apply online [here](#)

Some children currently receive Free School Meals under transitional protection. This means that they were able to keep receiving Free School Meals even if their family's income increased above the previous eligibility limit.

If your child receives Free School Meals under transitional protection, it is worth checking with the Cambridgeshire Education and Welfare Benefits team to see whether they qualify under the new eligibility rules coming in from September 2026.

You can contact them via email:
ewb.fsm@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Transitional protection will end on the **31 August 2026**. From then on, your child will need to meet the new eligibility criteria to continue receiving Free School Meals.

Announcing our new Executive Director, Customer Services, Alice Purchase



We are pleased to announce that Alice Purchase has been appointed as our new Executive Director, Customer Services. She will be replacing Helen Tonks, who is retiring after 34 years of working at CHS.

Alice, who will join us on Monday 7th September, brings with her 16 years' experience in the social housing sector, most recently at Delta Housing where she led customer service improvements, partnership working and organisation-wide programmes to support service development.

Alice has held a range of leadership roles spanning customer services, housing management, partnerships and organisational improvement, with a strong focus on improving services and delivering better outcomes for customers.

Her responsive approach to service delivery and passion for supporting tenants makes her a fantastic addition to the team, and we are looking forward to her joining us soon.

We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to Helen Tonks for her remarkable 34 years of service at CHS. Throughout her time with us, Helen has made an invaluable contribution to improving the lives of our tenants and supporting our communities.

We hope you will join us in wishing Helen every happiness for the future.



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 to view the latest opportunities.

Scan the QR code 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.