



December Newsletter

A very warm welcome to our December newsletter and we hope all our tenants and customers have a lovely festive period and a happy New Year.

This time of year can often put extra pressure on us, and, as a result, affects our mental health in lots of different ways. If you're struggling to cope, or want to support others who might be struggling themselves, there's help and advice on the [Mind website here](#).



Our Christmas opening hours

Over the festive period, our head office in Histon will close on **Friday 22nd December** at 5pm until **Tuesday 2nd January** at 9am. More specific timings can be found below:

Friday 22 December – open until 5pm

Monday 25 December – Closed

Tuesday 26 December – Closed

Wednesday 27 December – Closed

Thursday 28 December – Closed

Friday 29 December – Closed

Tuesday 2 January – open at 9am

If you need to get in touch with us during this time, you can email us with a query using our [online enquiry form](#). However, please note this will not be responded to until **after 2nd January**.



Emergency repairs

In the unlikely event that you need an emergency repair, we'll still be here for you. Please call our usual number (**0300 111 3555**) and you will be transferred to our out-of-hours service. Please note that during this period, we will normally ensure the problem is made safe for you and your home and then we will complete the repair in full during normal working hours in the New Year.

What is an emergency repair?

Emergency repairs are repairs that have an immediate and severe health, safety, or security risk and/or where severe damage is taking place to the property. This could include for example:

- Severe water leaking through a ceiling
- Burst pipes
- Blocked main drains
- Unsafe electrical fault likely to cause injury or fire
- Complete loss of electrical power or light
- Complete loss of heating in cold weather
- Complete loss of hot water
- Insecure external door or ground floor window
- Blocked soil pipe (where the toilet is found to be blocked, you will be charged for the cost of the work, plus an administration charge)
- Offensive graffiti

If you use this service when it is not necessary, you may be charged the extra cost of carrying out the repair out of hours.

For tenants living in our Supported Housing service and Extra Care schemes, staff will be available on site for the duration of the festive period.



Our brand-new affordable housing development in Newton

At CHS, we invest in our local communities and are pleased to reveal that our latest affordable homes housing development has been built in partnership with Dean & Dean Construction. The homes are located

in a quiet location on the edge of the sought after Cambridgeshire village of Newton.

The development includes six affordable rented homes and two shared ownership properties. All homes also benefit from an Energy Performance rating of A due to installation of solar panels, air source heat pumps and excellent full-house insulation.

The homes also offer generous gardens with views over open fields; we hope that our customers are enjoying living in their new homes.



New members join our board

We're so pleased to announce that we have welcomed two new members to our board – Cara Jackson and Anita Mobberley.

Cara was appointed to our board last month, and currently works at Accent Housing as Head of Leasehold and Homeownership. Thanks to many years of holding senior roles within the housing sector, Cara brings a significant level of expertise to our organisation, particularly in asset and leasehold management.

Alongside Cara, Anita was also appointed to the board in November 2023. Anita is a solicitor and Chartered Company Secretary in the housing sector, where she has worked since 2004. Currently the Head of Governance and Regulation at Platform Group, Anita brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to CHS. The board's role is integral to delivering our mission of providing high quality and good value affordable housing together with support, care and community services.

Staying safe by learning to identify and avoid scams

During this time of year, we often see a surge in impersonation scams so it is important that you're able to identify and avoid them.

An impersonation scam is when a scammer (criminal) reaches out to you pretending to be someone you trust in order to gain sensitive information. This could include national insurance numbers, bank information, or online account details. Scammers then use this information to steal money from your accounts or to fraudulently place orders. Scammers also regularly change their tactics which can make it very hard to detect and catch them. Here are two of the most common scams and how they work.

Email attachment scams

Scammers often send fraudulent emails pretending to be an online retailer or supplier stating that there is an issue with your account. For example, it could be suspended or a payment hasn't been processed. Scammers will then encourage you to click on a fraudulent link or attached PDF document so that you can verify your identity and account details. By clicking on the link or opening the attachment, you will end up providing important personal details such as payment information or account login credentials to the scammers which they can then use to commit fraud.

Remember, **NEVER** click on any links or attachments in an email or provide your information without authenticating the email or verifying the link. Always go through the online retailer's website or mobile app when seeking customer service, tech support, check messages or when looking to make changes to your account.

Membership scams

This is a very common scam where you might receive a call, text or email from a scammer suggesting that there is an issue with your membership or asking you to confirm your membership details in order to avoid incurring an expensive renewal charge. These scammers will try to convince you to provide payment or bank account information in order to reinstate your membership.

Amazon Prime membership is commonly targeted by scammers and Amazon has confirmed that it will never ask you to provide payment information for products or services over the phone. If you receive this type of scam and are unsure whether it is legitimate or not, just log into your Amazon account and visit the membership section on your profile. You can then check whether there are any issues with your membership.



Here are five simple but important ways you can identify scams and keep your account and personal information safe:

- 1.** Never click on links in emails, texts or messages – always visit the website and directly log on to your account.
- 2.** Be wary any time someone tries to convince you that you must act **now**.
- 3.** Never pay for anything over the phone.
- 4.** Check for misspellings or repeated characters in website links – scammers will try and make a link look similar to a legitimate website, so you are more likely to click on the link.
- 5.** Check the email sender – The name appearing as the sender in an email may look legitimate but if you hover over the display name under 'From', you will see a full sender address so look for misspellings or added or substituted characters.

Friends Against Scams

Friends Against Scams is a National Trading Standards Scams Team initiative which aims to protect and prevent individuals from becoming victims of scams by empowering people to take a stand against fraudulent activity. By attending a Friends Against Scams awareness session or completing the online learning, anyone can learn about the different types of scams and how to spot and support a victim. Learn more at www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk

The winners of our 2023 customer feedback prize draw are...

At CHS, we prioritise listening to our tenants to understand their needs as it helps us continuously improve our services.

We are so pleased to announce that the following individuals **each won £250** after being randomly selected in our quarterly customer feedback prize draws in 2023.

- Miss Melanie Jakes, from Witchford
- Mrs Karolina Kaya, from Huntingdon
- Miss Deborah Jones, from Cambridge

Every piece of feedback received by CHS, whether it's an email survey or a response to an automated phone call, is entered into the draw. If you give two pieces of feedback you will be entered twice, so please keep replying to our surveys and next time, it could be you.



A huge congratulations to our winners!

For more help and guidance, 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 new newsletter. To get in touch, email: info@chsgroup.org.uk.



CHS GROUP 
housing, care, and community services in Cambridgeshire