

Autumn 2024

Your Home



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**The latest news
from CHP**


Welcome

to the autumn edition of Your Home.



In this edition, you can find out how we've been supporting customers and communities over the summer, read about our performance against the regulator's Tenant Satisfaction Measures, find tips on preparing for the cold weather, and more.

If you'd like a copy of this magazine in a different format, such as a paper copy or CD, please contact us.

 0300 555 0500
(text relay: 18001 0300 555 0500)


 communications@chp.org.uk

Rent statements moving online

This is a reminder that paper rent statements are moving online. If your statements haven't already been moved or you haven't opted out, you'll shortly be able to view your statements in your online account. You'll get a notification on your last paper statement to let you know when this is happening. Thanks for helping us go green!

If you want to opt in sooner or have any questions, give us a call. Or you can change your communication preferences yourself on the 'Personal details' page in your online account.

Haven't got an online account? Register for one on our website.

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 login.chp.org.uk/portal

Benefits are changing

Did you know that some benefits are ending, and most people will need to apply for Universal Credit?

If you get a Migration Notice from the DWP, please don't ignore it. If you don't apply, your income could change.

We have a friendly team of Welfare Benefit Advisors available to help you and answer any questions. Please call us if you need help switching to Universal Credit or would like support with any other benefits.

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Summer of support

What we've been up to lately

It's been a busy few months of events and initiatives supporting customers and local communities. Check out our video to find out more.

Get crafty this autumn with our Wednesday workshops

Painting tote bags: 11 September, 9.30am-12.30pm

Candle making: 18 September, 9.30am-12.30pm

Dreamcatchers: 25 September, 9.30am-12.30pm

Making and painting clay incense holders: 9 and 16 October, 1.30-4.30pm (two-part session)

Call or email to book. Spaces are limited.



0300 555 0500



community@chp.org



Parkside Community Hub (CM1 2DX)

How we're performing

The Regulator of Social Housing recently introduced Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) which are aimed at giving a clearer picture of how effectively landlords are delivering quality homes and services. These measures are a key step in raising standards across social housing, holding landlords accountable, and making sure that customers get the level of service they deserve.

We've been working with a market research company, IFF Research, to survey customers over the past year. We've also been collecting and monitoring performance data too.



Head of Neighbourhoods, Lee, at an ASB feedback session

The measures focus on six key themes:

- overall satisfaction
- keeping properties in good repair
- maintaining building safety
- respectful and helpful engagement
- effective handling of complaints
- responsible neighbourhood management

Our results

TSMs generated from customer surveys*

Taking everything into account, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the service provided by CHP?

LCRA:

79%

LCHO: 42%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the overall repairs service from CHP over the last 12 months?

LCRA:

82%

LCHO: N/A

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the time taken to complete your most recent repair after you reported it?

LCRA:

80%

LCHO: N/A

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that CHP provides a home that is well-maintained?

LCRA:

78%

LCHO: N/A

Thinking about the condition of the property or building you live in, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you that CHP provides a home that is safe?

LCRA:

82%

LCHO: 71%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that CHP listens to your views and acts upon them?

LCRA:

65%

LCHO: 31%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that CHP keeps you informed about things that matter to you?

LCRA:

73%

LCHO: 59%

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: "CHP treats me fairly and with respect"?

LCRA:

82%

LCHO: 55%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with CHP's approach to complaints handling?

LCRA:

39%

LCHO: 32%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that CHP keeps communal areas clean and well-maintained?

LCRA:

69%

LCHO: 37%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that CHP makes a positive contribution to your neighbourhood?

LCRA:

62%

LCHO: 33%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with CHP's approach to handling anti-social behaviour?

LCRA:

52%

LCHO: 32%

Key

Low Cost Rental Accommodation (LCRA) - This includes, for example, general needs, supported housing, intermediate rent, and temporary social housing.

Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) - This includes, for example, shared ownership properties (which have not been fully staircased).

*Percentage indicates level of satisfaction

What do we do with the results?

We use this feedback to improve our services, make better decisions, and keep customers informed about how we're doing. We've already started using the feedback and performance measures to make positive changes in how we work. We're also combining these results with what we've learned from complaints and other feedback to focus on the most important areas for improvement.

One of these areas is how we handle anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Improving our approach to managing ASB

We've reviewed our policies for handling ASB and neighbourhood concerns, listening to customers and their feedback. You told us that clear and regular communication is crucial, as well as understanding the impact a situation can have on a person. Our new policy prioritises these, explains different steps that we take when working with our partners, and outlines response times based on your feedback.

We've introduced a triage system to prioritise customer contact and launched our ASB improvement plan. We've also trained our employees on the requirements of our new policy, including agreeing next steps and action with customers who report ASB issues to us.

We're prioritising the delivery of these improvements to make sure we're providing prompt and appropriate action in all cases.

Winter prep: How to get ready for the cold



As we head into the colder months it's a good idea to get your home ready before the chill really kicks in. Here are some simple tips to get you started.

- 1. Check your heating early**
Turn your heating on to make sure it's functioning properly. Run it for 30-40 minutes and check that your radiators are heating evenly. Listen for gurgling noises or banging. If they're not warming up as expected, or if they're cold at the top but warm at the bottom, or you're unsure if there's a problem, please contact us for help.
- 2. Keep draughts out**
Check all your external doors and windows for draughts. If you feel cold air coming through, consider using a draught excluder. You can find low-cost draught excluder tape at discount stores. If you notice a lot of cold air coming in, please let us know.
- 3. Test your detectors**
It's important to check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors every month, especially as autumn arrives and we start using the heating more and opening windows less. If they're not working, report it to us right away.

- 4. Let us in for your home safety checks**
If you rent your home from us, we carry out gas safety checks in your home every year. If your appointment is coming up, please make sure you're available. These checks are legally required and crucial for your safety and the safety of others.
- 5. Check outside lights**
Test your outdoor lights before the evenings get dark. If any of them aren't working, call us to find out who is responsible, as some lights may be managed by local authorities.
- 6. Clean out your gullies**
To help prevent any flooding caused by blockages, use protective gloves and a bucket to remove any debris from around the outside of the gully and on top of the grill. If it's not too heavy, you can take the grill out and tip the debris into your bucket.
- 7. Get your chimney cleaned**
If you have a chimney, get it swept at least once a year. Also, clean the tray above the fireplace every month to keep the ventilation working well.
- 8. Reduce condensation and report damp and mould**
Condensation builds up more easily when it's cold and this can make damp and mould more common during the winter months. See what you know and can learn about managing condensation in your home by checking out our quiz on the next page. If you see damp spots or mould in your home, get in touch with us right away so we can help fix the problem.



Quiz: How to reduce condensation in your home

1. How should you use your heating to help prevent condensation during colder months?

- A) Leave heating off and open lots of windows
- B) Regulate heating to maintain a constant temperature of between 18-22 degrees
- C) Leave heating off until it's time to get up or come home

2. Why is it important to make sure air vents aren't blocked or closed?

- A) To save energy
- B) To keep the house warm
- C) To help air circulate and reduce moisture

3. How far should you place furniture or other items from the walls to help prevent mould?

- A) Right against the wall
- B) A few inches away from the wall
- C) It doesn't matter

4. What should you do after bathing or cooking to get rid of moist air?

- A) Open the window slightly
- B) Close the window tightly
- C) Turn on the heater

5. How does using an extractor fan in the bathroom and kitchen help with moisture?

- A) It adds moisture to the air
- B) It removes moist air and uses less energy than a standard light bulb
- C) It makes the room warmer

Need help?

If you're struggling to pay your heating bills, or you just can't do these things yourself, please contact us to talk about how we can help. For example, we may be able to provide you with a fuel voucher.



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enquiries@chp.org.uk

6. What should you do with kitchen and bathroom doors to stop moisture from spreading?

- A) Leave them open
- B) Keep them shut
- C) Only shut them at night

7. Where is the best place to dry clothes to reduce indoor moisture?

- A) Indoors with the doors open
- B) In the living room
- C) Outdoors, or indoors with a window open and the door shut

8. How can covering cooking pans with lids help reduce moisture?

- A) It saves energy and reduces the amount of moisture
- B) It makes food cook faster
- C) It keeps the kitchen warm

9. What is a moisture trap and why should you use one?

- A) It adds moisture to the air
- B) It helps get rid of moisture and neutralizes bad smells
- C) It keeps insects away

Looking for a warm friendly space this winter?
The Hub is open Monday to Thursday, 9am-4.30pm. Pop in for a hot drink and a chat.



Parkside Community Hub,
Melbourne Avenue, Chelmsford,
CM1 2DX

We can help you manage your heating. Find out about Switchee smart thermostats on [page 11](#).

Answers: 1. B, 2. C, 3. B, 4. A, 5. B, 6. B, 7. C, 8. A, 9. B

Re-letting homes when customers move out

We never want homes to be empty for too long between someone leaving and the next customer moving in. Sometimes we only need to do minor work and safety checks after a customer has left. Other times, more major work is needed before a home can be re-let.

On average our multi-skilled Empty Homes Team can be working on up to 50 empty homes at any time. An empty home that requires a lot of work to get it habitable for a new family can take around 30 days to turn around, which is about double that of the homes which need less work.

The reasons why some homes need so much work varies but is often linked to customers struggling with the upkeep of their home and garden and not feeling able to let us into their home or engage with us for support. Our teams work year-round to support customers with any issues they have in their home, to help them keep their tenancies, and prevent legal action, but this is only possible when the customer agrees to work with us.

Earlier this year, the team had to do a lot of work on a home in Chelmsford to improve it to a lettable standard. The house needed a new kitchen and bathroom and full redecoration. The garden, which was overrun with brambles that had spread into a neighbour's garden, also needed clearing and new fencing had to be put up. We worked with a local company, Newms Landscapes, to get the job done. See the transformation in our before and after pictures.


Before



After



If you notice issues like damp, mould, or any repairs that need attention, or you're having trouble maintaining your home or garden, please let us know right away. We're here to help and will work with you to resolve the problem as quickly as possible.

 0300 555 0500
(text relay: 18001 0300 555 0500)

 repairs@chp.org.uk

 chp.org.uk/contact-us

Pest control: spotlight on rodents and bedbugs

Insects and rodents can pose a serious health and infection risk to your home. Rodents can also cause extensive damage to your property. It's your responsibility to sort out any pest problems you have.



Rodents

Mice and rats are active at night, so you might not see them during the day. Some of the most common signs are droppings near food sources and nibbled food. You may also find nests or track marks. Besides causing damage to your home, they can spread diseases. They contaminate their surroundings with their urine, droppings, and fur.

Tips for preventing rodents

- Use bins with tight lids and keep the bins clean
- Put all food waste in bins
- Store food securely
- Clean up any spillages or food waste straight away
- Regularly clean food crumbs from beneath cookers or fridges
- Report any holes in the brickwork, roof, or skirting board in your home to us
- Don't leave pet food or too much bird food outside
- Don't let your garden become overgrown as this provides a good home for pests

Bedbugs

Bedbugs are active at night and are drawn to body heat. While their bites don't usually hurt, they can cause itchy skin. If you have a serious bedbug problem, you might notice dark stains on your mattress and a bad smell. If you live in a block of apartments or terraced house, it's important to deal with the infestation quickly because bedbugs can spread to neighbouring homes through walls and floors.

Tips for preventing bedbugs

- Regularly wash your bedding in hot water to kill any potential bedbugs or eggs
- Put a protective cover on your mattress and box spring
- Keep bedrooms clean and clear of clutter
- Vacuum often, including upholstered furniture
- Check second hand furniture, beds, and sofas for any sign of bedbug infestation before bringing them home

If you're experiencing repeat infestations or believe the pests are coming from a communal area such as a binstore or communal cupboard, please contact us. You can also get support with pest control from the Environmental Services Department at your Local Authority.



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What is an air source heat pump (ASHP)?

It's an eco-friendly, low-carbon way to heat your home and hot water. It offers a sustainable alternative to fossil fuels like gas or oil and can significantly reduce your household's carbon footprint. ASHPs are common in Europe and are great for cold climates. In fact, about half of all homes in Norway have heat pumps and alongside Finland, Sweden, Estonia, and Denmark they have the most ASHPs installed across Europe.

What are the benefits of an ASHP system?

It's a modern and reliable heating system that:

- keeps your home warmer;
- uses less energy than traditional systems by being between two and four times more efficient;
- is better for the environment by not using fossil fuels;
- is easy to control and adjust to your preferences.

How do they work?

The ASHP works like the reverse of a fridge, taking heat from the outside using a compressor and a coolant liquid. The heat is absorbed into the coolant in the system, which in turn transfers the heat to the water in your radiators, or underfloor heating at a higher temperature. Any remaining heat is stored in the hot water cylinder, which can be used for showers, baths, and taps.

How do I make sure my heat pump is running as efficiently as possible and reduce my energy usage?

- Keep your heat pump on all the time. Turning it off won't save energy because it has to work harder to heat your home back up. Instead, leave it on and just lower the temperature by a few degrees as you need, for example overnight or while you're out at work.

- Keep all your radiators on. Your heating system is designed to work best when all your radiators are turned on.
- Set your hot water temperature to 40–50°C. To keep it safe and free from bacteria, make sure it's heated to over 60°C once a week.



An ASHP on a new home

Save on your bills with a smart thermostat

We're offering free 'Switchee' smart thermostats to customers to help you control how much you spend on heating and hot water.

Why I highly recommend having a Switchee

- Helps reduce your bills and the carbon footprint of your home by letting you set schedules for your heating to only the times you want.
- Manage your heating and hot water more easily, even from your smartphone.
- Easy installation in just two hours by our team.
- Spots issues like potential damp and mould early so we can fix them before they worsen.

Interested? Contact us for more information or to register your interest. Please note, not all homes will currently be suitable to have a Switchee installed, but we're working with Switchee to develop solutions for all homes.



0300 555 0500
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enquiries@chp.org.uk

Grass cutting goes green

You might see our new fully electric stand-on lawnmower out and about maintaining communal grounds that we're responsible for. It doesn't produce any emissions, costs less to run and maintain than traditional mowers, and can cut grass for up to seven hours on a single charge. It's also smaller, safer, and about 50 percent quieter, so we won't disturb customers and local residents while we're mowing near their homes.



A Switchee smart thermostat



Our new electric mower in action

Community Voices:

Quick fire round-up

This is where you can find the latest updates from our recently formed Community Voices engagement group. We've gathered your questions and provided answers to keep you in the loop!

Q: What have the Community Voices volunteers been up to?

A: Some of our Community Voices volunteers attended our recent family fun day in Chelmsford, which was a free event with entertainment, activities, and support service stalls. They met with members of the local community and spoke to customers about our engagement groups and how to get involved in shaping our services.

Q: How have they been helping to shape services?

A: One of our Customer Review Panels recently supported the process of procuring a new contractor to deliver servicing and breakdown repairs for our gas and other heating systems. Our customer volunteer had the opportunity to meet with some of the shortlisted contractors to hear more about how they would deliver the service and ask their own questions.

Q: What about the other Community Voices subgroups?

A: Some of the Community and Communications group and the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion group have worked with our Customer Service Team to review the letters that we send to customers. The group are looking at the language we use to make sure that our letters are clear, easy to understand, and informative.

We've also been working with some of our customer volunteers to ask them how they would like to see information presented about how we're performing as a landlord. We talked about the use of graphs, the language we use, colour, and easy to read descriptions.



Working with Community Voices to improve our customer letters.

Q: How do I get involved in becoming a Community Voice?

A: The easiest way to get involved is to visit our website where you can complete a registration form or send us an email. We'll be in touch to tell you more about our recruitment process and what you can get out of being a Community Voice.



community@chp.org.uk



chp.org.uk/chp-community-voices



You said, we're doing

We're always looking for ways to improve our services and want to hear your views. It helps us to learn and improve.

Below you can read some of the positive comments we've received recently, as well as some of the negative feedback and what we're doing about it.

A customer in Galleywood called in to express her happiness and gratitude for the work carried out by two members of our Grounds Maintenance Team. She said she felt like they went above and beyond for her. She was very impressed with their work ethic and could see that they enjoy the work they're doing.

"The repairman was polite and explained what he was going to do. He did a good job in removing the damp and mould and told me it was due to condensation. He was helpful in telling me how to prevent the problem returning."

"The man was very polite and explained every step he was doing and was very quick and respectful of my home."

"The CHP team work hard and reliable to keep our grass verges and pathways clear so that people like myself with disabilities can enjoy going out and not worrying that we are going to trip which I appreciated and plus they are very nice people who are genuinely keeping our estate clean and always have a smile on when they are working."

A customer told us that we had shared their personal information/data with a contractor without their permission.

We completed training with our team on General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and emphasised the importance of being careful with personal data in all situations.

A customer told us that a letter they received from our heating contractor, Aaron Services, didn't provide a specific enough appointment time.

We updated the letter to make the appointment time clearer.


We received feedback from customers about the length of time it was taking to escalate their complaint through the second stage of our complaint process.

We reviewed our Stage Two process and amended our policy to involve more employees in the appeal process. This change makes it easier to arrange an appeal panel and then progress the complaint more quickly.

Tell us what you think.

 chp.org.uk/compliments-complaints

 feedback@chp.org.uk

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Essex Housing Awards finalists 2024

We're delighted to have been shortlisted four times for the Essex Housing Awards 2024. These awards celebrate the very best in the housing industry from all across Essex.

Our shortlisted entries are:

Vikki Barnes – Housing and Development Professional of the Year

Rosie O'Neill – The Mo Slade Rising Star Award

Brierely Paddocks, Mersea Island – Medium Housing Schemes

CHP – Meeting Housing Need



The winners will be announced in November. Wish us luck!

Shaping our policies

We've recently reviewed and updated our policy about [Mutual Exchange](#). The policy tells you what to expect if you want to swap homes with another social housing tenant.

To make sure the policy meets your needs, we reviewed feedback from complaints and surveys and spoke with customers who've recently exchanged homes. Based on what you told us, we've added an extra inspection step to check the property's condition before you move in. We've also made clear who is responsible for repairs and simplified our communication about the support we offer. Thank you to everyone who helped shape this policy.



Revamping repairs

We're taking a fresh look at how we approach repairs to make sure we offer the best possible service. Our aim is to make the repair process smooth and hassle-free for you. To do this, we need your feedback. Your opinions and experiences will help us understand what we can do better. **Please scan the QR code** to complete our survey. We'll update you on the changes we make in a future edition of Your Home.



We're also reviewing other policies including maintenance and vulnerability. If you'd like to share your views on these topics and help influence the policies, please get in touch. We'll combine your feedback with customer survey results to make sure your opinions count.

 consultation@chp.org.uk

Case study

Lisa and Kate's story

We met three years ago when I was living with my parents after my previous relationship had broken down. Kate was living in a flat and wanted to get back on the property ladder.

We're both in our 50s and we didn't want a 25-year full mortgage hanging over our heads like a dark cloud. Shared ownership seemed like the best option to find a home together for our circumstances.

The process with CHP initially had some challenges but later we worked with Nikki, one of the sales executives, and she was amazing. It was plain sailing from then. She understood our situation, was always available to answer our questions, and was a pleasure to deal with. She even recommended a solicitor, and we were able to get a discount which we really appreciated.

We now have a beautiful home in Burnham-on-Crouch, with a lovely south-facing garden. We love that it's a new build, with a fully equipped kitchen and carpet, so we could just move straight in.

Whilst the shared ownership process can feel quite long and drawn out at the time, on reflection it's actually simple and CHP is there to help each step of the way. Shared ownership can really open up a bigger market for many people. We've got to know our neighbours and they vary; from a family, to a young couple, and an older couple. It's a mix of people who can benefit from this type of home ownership. We've found it more affordable than renting and we love the security it gives us, and that you can paint the walls your own colour! We've definitely found our forever home.



Lisa and Kate enjoying life in Burnham-on-Crouch

Shared ownership is a part buy / part rent home ownership scheme, backed by the Government. To find out more about shared ownership or to find a home, visit our website or contact our Sales Team.

 sales@chp.org.uk

 chp.org.uk/shared-ownership



Finding Dementia support

Engaging events and vital local support services are available for people who are living with dementia and their carers. Here are a few recommendations for upcoming events and some regular support opportunities.

We're accredited as working towards being a dementia friendly organisation and are working to help customers live well with dementia.



World Alzheimer's Awareness Event

Thursday 19 September, 2-4pm

A welcoming and informal event with information, cuppa, and a cake.

 Tile Kiln Church, Robin Way, Chelmsford, CM2 8AU


 tilekilnchurch.org.uk



Chelmsford Memory Walk

Sunday 6 October from 10am

Join the Alzheimer's Society at Hylands Park, Chelmsford and share an incredible day with others who understand how it feels to be affected by dementia. You can sign up to take part in the Memory Walk or register to be a volunteer.

 Hylands Park, Writtle Gate entrance, Chelmsford, CM2 8FS

 alzheimers.org.uk

There are also regular events including **Fundangles Thingamijigs Memory Cafe, Walk and Talk, Singing for the Brain, and Every Day Counts** which support people with dementia and their carers in various ways. Find out more about these events and what's on in your local area by visiting the Alzheimer's Society website.

 alzheimers.org.uk/find-support-near-you


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Your Home

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