



**CHS GROUP**  
housing, care, and community services in Cambridgeshire



# September 2024 Newsletter

Welcome to our tenant newsletter for September! This newsletter gives us the opportunity to share updates from within the CHS Group community every month. In September's edition, we share details of our new prize draw organised by our contractor Aaron Services, tips on how you could save money on your energy bills, an update on Winter Fuel Payment restrictions, and news of our new autism advisory group. **Read on to find out more...**

## Winter Fuel Payment restrictions

As you may have heard in the news, Winter Fuel Payments, a tax-free payment made to all pensioners to help with energy bills during the winter, are set to be restricted to those receiving benefits and Pension Credit.

Until now, Winter Fuel Payments, worth up to £300, have been made available to everyone above State Pension age in the UK – but this won't be the case this winter.

### How Winter Fuel Payments are changing

Starting this winter (2024/25), you'll only be able to get a Winter Fuel Payment if you're over State Pension age AND receiving one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit

If you are over 65 and reached State Pension age before 6 April 2016, you could still qualify for Pension Credit if your weekly income is less than:

- £260.68 if you are single
- £380.55 if you are a couple

## You could be entitled to Pension Credit - check you're not missing out

Over 800,000 people who are eligible for over £2bn worth of Pension Credit don't currently receive it. Throughout Cambridgeshire there are large numbers of pensioners who are missing out:

Area	Pension Credit amount	Nos of missed claims
Cambridge	£2,701,059	909
East Cambridge	£1,818,368	749
Fenland	£3,543,331	1,499
Huntingdonshire	£3,288,827	1,384
South Cambridge	£2,801,690	1,053
<b>Total</b>	<b>£14,153,275</b>	<b>5,594</b>

Could you or a family member be missing out? To find out what you could be entitled to, use the [Money Saving Expert 10-minute benefits check](#).

We don't want people to miss out on what benefits they're entitled to, so if you would prefer to talk to someone, please contact our Money Matters team and see what help is available to you – call [0300 1113555](tel:0300 1113555).

While Winter Fuel Payments are being restricted, the Household Support Fund has been extended to April 2025 and can provide those most in need with help with the cost of daily essentials, including energy bills. Our Money Matters Team can help you access the Household Support Fund.



Total **UNCLAIMED** Pension  
Credit in Cambridgeshire  
**£14,153,275**



# Discover ways to save on your energy bills

**Energy prices are expected to increase by 10% this winter.** With this in mind, we want to share some advice and guidance with you on what you can do to keep your energy bills as low as possible.

## 1. Switch energy and gas supplier

Switching suppliers can be a good way to cut your energy costs. Often, it takes less than five minutes and all you need to do is enter your postcode and your current energy usage, which can be found on your most recent bill.

Price comparison sites can search for the best available deals for you, and all you have to do is decide who you want to switch to; it really is that easy!

The energy regulator Ofgem approve these comparison websites:

- [Quotezone](#)
- [The Energy Shop](#)
- [Simply Switch](#)
- [My Utility Genius](#)
- [Energylinx](#)
- [Money Supermarket](#)
- [USwitch](#)

## 2. Submit regular meter readings to your supplier

If you take monthly meter readings, it will allow you to monitor your usage and keep your bills accurate. If your bill is marked with an 'E', this means that your energy supplier has estimated your usage and may not be charging you the correct amount. If you have several estimated bills, this could lead to a large, unexpected bill if you are being undercharged. If you have a smart meter, you won't need to submit meter readings as your supplier will get automated readings.

## 3. Use heat controls correctly

Using your boiler and heating controls correctly can help you manage your energy usage. To control the temperature in your home, use the room thermostat – ideally, this should be set between 18C and 21C but some tenants may need it higher.

Remember, do not leave electric hot water immersion heaters on for longer than needed as this will waste energy and money.

## 4. Use storage heating correctly

Some of you will have night storage heaters. These build up heat over night when electricity is cheaper, and then released throughout the next day. Homes with storage heaters should be on an Economy 7 or Economic 10 tariff.

For more information, visit: [www.nea.org.uk/advice](http://www.nea.org.uk/advice)

## 5. Sign up to the Priority Services Register

The Priority Services Register is a system that energy companies use to make sure the correct support is given to their most vulnerable customers. You can sign up to it to receive extra help from your energy supplier as well as from the company that operates the local energy distribution network. You're eligible to receive the services available if you're a pensioner, have a long-term medical condition or a disability – this includes hearing or visual impairments, and additional communication needs.

Each energy supplier and network operator maintains its own register and a wide range of support is available including:

- Information provided in accessible formats
- Advance notice of planned power cuts
- Identification scheme
- Password protection and nominee scheme for a family member or carer on behalf of the customer
- Priority support in an emergency
- Arrangements to ensure that it is safe and practical for the customer to use a prepayment meter
- Meter reading services

Contact your gas/electricity supplier and distribution network operator for more information and to register. If you are not sure who your network operator is, you can use the Energy Network Association handy search tool at [www.energynetworks.org/customers/find-my-network-operator](http://www.energynetworks.org/customers/find-my-network-operator).

Source: <https://www.thesureservefoundation.org/advice-and-guidance>

## Sustainable garden care thanks to Foster

Recently, a tenant at our Housing with Care scheme at Moorlands Court in Melbourne, who is a keen gardener, requested some water butts to maintain the gardens more sustainably. Following the request, Foster, our property maintenance contractor, generously donated and installed two water butts at Moorlands Court. After receiving the water butts, we spoke to the tenant, who said:

**“Thank you Foster for providing and fitting two water butts. It will enable me to water the gardens much easier with rainwater, which will be better for the plants and more eco-friendly.”**



## Introducing our new tenant autism advisory group

As part of our Equality, Inclusion and Diversity action plan, we have established an autism advisory group to better understand some of the challenges our autistic tenants and their families face. As part of this group, they will look at how we can improve our services to ensure that they are accessible and suit everyone living in our homes.

The advisory group will look at ways of raising awareness of autism, provide training for staff, assess the impacts of the way we deliver our services, and create a tool kit for staff and contractors that advise how to deliver our services most appropriately for our tenants.

Does anyone in your household have autism? Our advisory group is keen to speak with you for a few minutes every couple of months. You can speak to us via phone, email, post or in person – your feedback will help bring about positive change and improvements to our services.

To find out more please get in touch via email at [info@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@chsgroup.org.uk) or call [0300 1113555](tel:0300 1113555).

Would you like to share your experiences of different NHS health services and work with them to improve the health system? The NHS is looking for autistic people, people with a learning disability and family carers to join their advisory group.

You can find more information on their website <https://www.england.nhs.uk/learning-disabilities/about/get-involved/advisory-group/> and have until 9am on Monday 30 September 2024 to register your interest.

## Your chance to win

At CHS Group, ensuring that our homes are safe and well-maintained for you, our tenants, is our top priority. This is why **we carry out regular gas and electrical checks in all our homes to ensure that they are safe.**

We encourage all tenants to stick to the initial appointments given to them by Aaron Services Ltd. By allowing Aaron Services Ltd to carry out necessary gas and electrical checks on the first attempt, you will automatically be entered into a prize draw with the chance to win a **£75 voucher every three months**, with the winners chosen at random by Aaron Services Ltd. There is one prize draw for gas servicing appointments, and one for electrical checks – if you do not allow access on the first attempt, you will be ineligible for the prize draw. However, as these works are vital for your safety, we encourage you to book an appointment as soon as possible.

We're delighted to announce that the winners of the first prize draw live in Cambourne and Warboys and have been contacted. Congratulations to our two winners, and thank you for allowing Aaron Services Ltd to carry out important gas and electrical checks.

**The winners of our next prize draw, which will cover appointments attended between July and September, will be announced in our October Newsletter – good luck!**

Over the coming weeks, Aaron Services Ltd will be changing its name to Sureserve Group, so you may start to see operatives with new ID badges and works vans carrying this logo.



**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 newsletter. To get in touch, email: [info@chsgroup.org.uk](mailto:info@chsgroup.org.uk).**

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