

About CHS Group

The Cambridge Housing Society Limited (CHS) is all about people. We're about the 7,000 people living in our affordable homes. We're about the 2,000 people who choose to rely on our care, support and community investment services, and about the CHS team of 400 people listening to our customers who make sure we deliver the high quality services they want.

CHS runs a broad range of high-quality services across Cambridgeshire, offering people more opportunities to achieve what they want and a better quality of life. Our 90 years of experience means we can take both the long-term view and a fresh look at issues which cut across traditional boundaries. We take pride in our capacity to innovate and create new opportunities and choices.

CHS was founded in 1927 in response to a desperate need for affordable homes in Cambridge. Alarmed by the squalid housing conditions many of the town's poorest families lived in and the growing council waiting lists following the First World War, members of the United Council of Christian Witness decided to form a Housing Society. Their rallying cry was to provide 'homes fit to live, within the reach of the lowest wage earner' and throughout its lifetime, CHS has tried to live up to this aim.

We are independent and believe we have value as a locally based and geographically focused service provider. This value lies in:

- Being more accessible to our customers
- Delivering a wide range of appropriate and relevant services to meet local needs and aspirations
- Investing in people and communities
- Providing services which are distinct from other housing and support providers
- Having strong, local and up to date understanding of local needs and markets
- Having the capacity and knowledge to engage with stakeholders
- Being prepared to develop new services to tackle particular local problems
- We have established a test to ensure that any successful partnership proposals improve our ability to meet our objectives.

Our values are:

- **Respect:** We see people as people and treat everyone with fairness, respect and dignity
- **Approach:** We put as much emphasis on the way we do things as on what we do
- **Partnership:** We work hard to develop open communication and equal relationships with our customers, staff and partners which value their contributions and enable us to work together effectively

- Openness: We are open, positive and flexible towards both new ideas and problems and we encourage innovation and creativity that improves the outcomes from our services
- Deliver: We do what we say we will do and hold ourselves accountable for our actions

CHS Group is the trading name of The Cambridge Housing Society Ltd, an exempt charity: HMRC Charity no X81275. CHS is a society registered for the benefit of the community with the FCA under the Co-operative and Community Benefit Societies Act 2014: registered society no 10457R. Homes & Communities Agency: registered no L0992.

CHS wants to work with providers who have similar values and have a track record of providing highly effective and high quality customer focused services. CHS wants this new contract to be flexible and to provide Value For Money for its customers.

CHS manages approximately 2,800 homes in Cambridgeshire, with the majority of the properties being located in Cambridge and Ely, with the remaining stock being dispersed throughout the County. These properties include mainly General Needs and Shared Ownership properties, plus three Older People's Care Homes, three Extra Care Schemes, three Sheltered Schemes, a diverse range of Supported Housing Schemes, and two Early Years Day Nurseries.

CHS proposes to replace its existing contract which is due to expire on 31 October 2021. These services will be provided to a limited number of CHS sites as detailed in the site information sheets. As CHS develops more affordable housing across Cambridgeshire, the extent of this contract made change to cover these new properties.

CHS has a number of other contracts in place covering building fabric repairs and maintenance. These items are excluded from this contract.

CHS's main requirement from this contract is to deliver high quality services that represent Value for Money to its customers, and to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction. CHS believes that this can be achieved by working closely with the Service Provider to develop efficient ways of working, whilst recognising the need for continual improvement through transparent performance measures.

In delivering this contract, CHS places high value on excellent customer service that needs to be demonstrated throughout the process. CHS is therefore looking for a Service Provider that has a proven track record of delivering this type of service in this way.

For more information about CHS, visit our website: www.chsgroup.org.uk

Grounds Maintenance - Project Brief

CHS is responsible for the maintenance of communal landscaped areas across a number of its sites. These sites range from housing estates to Older People's Care Homes garden areas and children's day nurseries. These services are provided by CHS and its contractor to its customers; the cost of providing this service is paid for directly by customers through service charges. It is therefore important that the service provides Value For Money and is delivered to meet the standards set out.

CHS is looking to work with a contractor that can provide a full range of grounds maintenance activities throughout the year that ensure these areas are maintained to a high standard, are visually pleasing and are kept clean and tidy. The contractor must carry out the work adopting best horticultural practice, and maintain rigorous standards of discipline, cleanliness and tidiness whilst on CHS' sites.

Achievement of these standards will be subject to additional scrutiny by customers – it must therefore be recognised that the appearance of the site will be main factor in influencing satisfaction and assessment of Value For Money with this service. CHS wants to work with a Service Provider who has systems in place to provide real-time updates on progress with the delivery of the works and can receive feedback from staff and customers.

The detailed specification covers Landscaping / Grounds Maintenance for communal areas and gardens under the management of CHS. There are a number of gardens that may require higher levels of maintenance, as these gardens provide valuable outside spaces for the residents. These sites are:

1. **Older People's Residential Care Homes** – Langdon House and Alex Wood House;
2. **Older People's Extra Care Schemes** – Dunstan Court, Richard Newcombe Court and Moorlands Court;
2. **Older People's Sheltered Schemes** - Ellis House, Barnabas Court and St Andrew's Glebe;
3. **Sunflower Nurseries** at Cambridge and Cambourne.

The contractor is expected to assess the levels of maintenance required to achieve the required standards for all sites, and price the delivery of these levels of service accordingly. It is also expected that the contractor will provide CHS with the proposed maintenance regimes for all sites during the mobilisation period. Changes to these regimes are also expected during the period of the contract, to be discussed and agreed in advance with CHS.

Required Standards

The main types of maintenance required across all sites are as follows:

- Grassed areas (including some areas of meadow grass)
- Hedge trimming
- Shrub maintenance
- Weed and moss control
- Hard standing areas and pathways
- Litter, leaf and other debris control
- Trees and tree belts

The overall standards expected are as follows (more detailed descriptions are contained within the Specification):

1. Grassed areas

- Grass should not be allowed to grow above 50mm;
- The areas should be cut evenly and cleanly without damage to the existing surface;
- The areas should be free of all litter, fallen leaves and other debris;
- The area is to be kept generally free of weeds;
- Areas of meadow grass are to be maintained in line with the detailed specification.

2. Hedges

- neat and tidy appearance with a straight level surface along tops, sides and ends unless otherwise instructed
- hedge base to be neat and tidy, and generally free from weeds, litter and other debris;
- hedges are not to encroach on pathways, roads, parking spaces, through or over fences and walls

3. Shrub Maintenance

- Shrubs to be maintained to provide neat and tidy appearance
- Shrubs are not to encroach on pathways, roads, through or over fences or walls
- Shrub beds to be generally free from weeds, litter and other debris at all times

4. Weed and moss control

- The site to be kept general free from weeds and moss
- Weed and moss treatments are to be used as necessary – if these are unsuccessful, manual methods of removal are to be used as appropriate

5. Hard standing areas and pathways

- All hard standing areas are to be left free of all litter, weeds, leaves, moss and other debris after each maintenance visit to the site

6. Litter, leaf and other debris control

- The site will be left free of all litter, leaf and other debris and the end of each maintenance visit

7. Trees

- All trees to be maintained to provide a neat and tidy appearance;
- Any Health and Safety issues (such as broken branches) are to be dealt with at the next visit, or reported to CHS to further specialist action;
- Areas of tree belts are to be maintained in line with the detailed specification..

Guidelines are provided within the specification on the frequency and timing of visits to ensure the above overall standards are maintained. The Contractor is responsible for ensuring that their work schedules are developed and planned in order to consistently meet these standards.

The on-going maintenance and improvement of the appearance of these sites is important to CHS and its customers. Feedback and inspection mechanisms have been developed by CHS to provide assurance that these standards are being met – the results of these will be reported to the contractor, and improvement actions put in place where there are failures to meet these standards. Additionally, CHS has developed mechanisms to compensate customers for failure by the contractor to deliver the agreed services. These mechanisms are detailed in the proposed key performance indicators.