

# Keeping Connected

With our residents and communities



## Your repairs service

**To ensure everyone's safety, we're only carrying out emergency and urgent repairs.**

Vital safety inspections – like gas checks – also continue because they're legal requirements that help to keep you and your home safe.

Before a visit, we'll call you to confirm you don't have any coronavirus symptoms. Please let us know the best phone number to reach you on. We'll also require you to social distance, either by:

1. **Leaving the room during the repair or**
2. **Staying at least three metres away and wearing a face covering**

Work outside your homes – such as in gardens – is continuing.

We are also safely restarting some planned works, such as roof renewals.

These restrictions are likely to be in place until the Government begins lifting the national lockdown.

We'll provide further updates when this happens.



## Keeping up-to-date

**Government rules and restrictions which affect your services continue to change regularly. For the most up-to-date information, please visit our websites.**

**Former Colne residents:**

[www.colnehousing.co.uk/covid-19](http://www.colnehousing.co.uk/covid-19)

**Former Greenfields residents:**

[www.greenfieldsch.org.uk/coronavirus-advice](http://www.greenfieldsch.org.uk/coronavirus-advice)

### Great news for former Colne Housing customers!

Eastlight's in-house repairs service will be coming to you soon! Over time, this will allow us to ensure you can book and receive repairs at a time that suits you. Look out for more information in April.

### Thanks to everyone who applied to join our Customer Influence Committee!

We have begun interviewing candidates for the committee, which will have their first formal meeting in May. Members will ensure your views are taken on board, oversee the plans for your homes, services and community work, and sign off key policies like repairs and anti-social behaviour.



## Staying safe

We continue to offer advice and support over the phone and online. If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic abuse, serious anti-social behaviour or what you believe is a safeguarding issue, please contact us.



## Advice and support

Our Customer Services Team is available to respond to your calls, emails and social media messages.

Our support service can help you with everything from applying for Universal Credit to accessing services to help you remain independent in your home.

## Need a little extra support?

**The coronavirus pandemic has led to increased financial worries and left many of us feeling isolated.**



*“We’re here to help you.”*

### Feeling alone?

#### **We can help with:**

- Connecting you with like-minded people
- Getting you online
- Volunteering opportunities



### Money worries?

#### **We can help with:**

- Debt management
- Finding work
- Budgeting
- Funding for essential items



### Looking for work?

#### **We can help with:**

- Job-searching
- CV-writing
- Applying for Universal Credit



**Just get in touch - see details on back page.**

## Join the exercise revolution!

**Attend our FREE exercise classes without leaving your home!**

The hour-long weekly online sessions aim to improve:

★ **balance** ★ **strength**  
★ **confidence**

and to lower the risk of falls, as well as decrease feelings of isolation. Choose between gentle, moderate and advanced levels.

Our health and wellbeing co-ordinator, James Taylor, leads the ‘gentle’ chair-based class while movement expert, Ben Dunks, heads the ‘moderate’ and ‘advanced’ classes, which require more balance. Classes are open to anyone aged over 18 but are particularly suited to people over 65.

**There’s no need for any specialist equipment and we can help if you aren’t confident getting online.**

**Interested? Contact James on 07964 128979 or [james.taylor@eastlighthomes.co.uk](mailto:james.taylor@eastlighthomes.co.uk).**



## Beware of bogus callers!

If you’re not sure that someone is who they say are, you can ask to see a form of identification and call the company to check.  
**If in doubt, keep them out, and call the Police.**



**If in doubt,  
keep them  
out**



## Changes to your rent from April

**If you're an Eastlight tenant, your rent will increase by 1.5% from Monday, 5 April 2021.**

Eastlight Shared Ownership rents will increase by 1.7% from 5 April for customers with an April renewal date.

You don't need to do anything now – you will receive your rent letter with full details from early March. If you receive Housing Benefit or Universal Credit, your payments will be reassessed based on your new rent.

Following consultation with the resident-led Community Gateway Group, we're increasing rent partly because inflation means the cost of operating services has increased.

The increase will also help fund our investment plans for your homes and communities, such as the installation of home improvements like kitchens and bathrooms, and the construction of new homes for those who need them.

**If you're worried about paying your rent, we may be able to help you with advice on benefits and finances.**

**Please email [enquiries@eastlighthomes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@eastlighthomes.co.uk) or call us on 01376 535400 or 01206 244700.**



We're working with Allpay to manage all **Rent** Direct Debit payments for former Greenfields customers from April 2021.

If you're a former Greenfields customer paying by Direct Debit we will contact you with more information.



Your forthcoming rent letter will split your rent into 52 weekly payments. This applies to all home tenancies and the renting of garages and parking spaces. This is a change for former Greenfields customers, whose rent was split into 48 payments.



## 700 Eastlight customers agree lifetime tenancies

**More than 700 Eastlight customers have signed new tenancies which will last for their lifetimes.**

Since September, we've been contacting the minority of Eastlight customers who have "Fixed-Term Tenancies". When these end after five years, they must either renew it or find a new home. These are being replaced with "Assured Tenancies", which allow you to remain a tenant for as long as you like, even if you need to move to a different Eastlight home.

**There are still some customers on Fixed-Term Tenancies who we've been unable to contact. If you think you're one of them, please get in touch!**





## Drug operation shut down in Braintree

Nobody should have their lives blighted by anti-social behaviour, which is why our housing team worked tirelessly alongside residents, police and the council to shut down a drug operation.

For more than a year, people living in Church Lane, Braintree, raised concerns about noise and suspicious visitors to a home rented out by Eastlight. Our anti-social behaviour co-ordinator, Sue Colyer, spearheaded the operation to address the issue.

It is believed a county line – where dealers move out of cities into other areas to sell drugs – had been running from the property. A police raid saw several arrests made for drug offences.

**If you are having problems with anti-social behaviour, we want to hear about it. Call us or report it online.**

## Committed to your communities



Air ambulance flying high with our £1,500 donation



NHS nurses gifted hundreds of headbands from Eastlight scheme's knitting group



Football teams in Witham and Felsted to kick-start new season in Eastlight-funded kits



We fund & support Essex Police's Christmas gift-gifting initiative for vulnerable children



Staff member leads mass donation of clothes and essential items to women's refugee in Colchester

**Visit:** [www.eastlighthomes.co.uk](http://www.eastlighthomes.co.uk)



facebook.com/eastlighthomes



instagram.com/eastlighthomes



twitter.com/eastlighthomes



linkedin.com/company/eastlight-community-homes-

## Get in touch

**Call:** 01376 535400 or 01206 244700

**Email:** [enquiries@eastlighthomes.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@eastlighthomes.co.uk)

**Write to:** Eastlight House, Charter Way,  
Braintree, Essex, CM77 8FG

We really value your comments, compliments and complaints, as they help us to shape the services we provide to you. Please get in touch, any time.

**Eastlight**  
Community Homes