

**Resident
influence**
in 2024/25



How residents have
shaped Eastlight
and their services

Introducing the Customer Influence Committee

We are the Customer Influence Committee (CIC). We are a group of Eastlight residents and those with lived experience of social housing who champion the customer voice, influence the strategic and operational running of Eastlight, and provide assurance to the Board on issues affecting residents like us.

We meet formally four times a year to discuss what is usually an action packed agenda, and we have occasional ad hoc meetings for key decisions. We also have an annual away day and join the Board for one of their strategy days.

Who we are and our primary focus



Catherine Turner
(Chair) Complaints
Handling



Cedric Selvadorai
Reactive Repairs



Paul Hocker
Safeguarding



Craig Clackett
Customer Voice



Magenta Lavey
Development



Rue Garande
Estates



Michael Ryan
Health & Safety



Steve Bentall
Community
Engagement &
Communications



**Amandeep
Singh Kalra**
Committee Member

Does Eastlight meet the Consumer Standards?

In 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) introduced updated Consumer Standards. These are rules that all housing associations must follow to make sure residents are treated fairly, homes are safe and well-managed, and residents have a voice in how services are delivered.

The Customer Influence Committee plays a key role in making sure we meet these standards by reviewing an annual self-assessment, identifying how well we're doing and where we can improve.

In June 2024, the Committee assessed the previous version of the Consumer Standards, which included:

- Tenancy Standard
- Tenant Involvement & Empowerment Standard
- Neighbourhood & Community Standard
- Home Standard
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures Standard

Summary of 2023/24 findings

Our self-assessment identified we met all five standards, with no areas of non-compliance. However, some areas were rated amber, meaning improvements were needed:

| Standard | Key Areas for Improvement |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Tenancy | Improve partnerships, review lettings and empty homes processes to reduce waiting times |
| Tenant Involvement & Empowerment | Improved repairs communication, reintroduce in-person viewings and exit visits |
| Neighbourhood & Community | Develop a Neighbourhood Policy, promote our community role, improve anti-social behaviour service |
| Home | Review Aids & Adaptations Policy |
| Tenant Satisfaction Measures | No issues identified. |

Inspection and what's next

The Regulator of Social Housing attended a Customer Influence Committee meeting in April 2025 to observe resident engagement in action. In 2025, the Committee are reviewing whether Eastlight meets the revised Consumer Standards for the first time.

Introducing the Active Residents Network



76

Number of
ARN activities

We are the Active Residents Network (ARN). We are a group of around 160 Eastlight residents who volunteer to shape Eastlight for the better. We share our expertise and passion to improve residents' homes, services and neighbourhoods.

Every month, we receive a newsletter inviting us to take part in a range of activities, including completing surveys about policies and strategies, attending workshops where we can share what it's like to experience Eastlight's services, and taking part in events like the Resident Conference.

Any Eastlight resident can join us. All you need to do is to fill out the simple form by [clicking here](#).



681

Number of hours
residents have
volunteered in ARN
activities



Eastlight Resident
and Braintree
group member,
Rob Yates



Introducing the Eastlight Residents Groups

We are the Eastlight Residents Groups. We are passionate about making a positive neighbourhood in our local towns, villages and neighbourhoods.

Every three months, we'll join Eastlight staff for a walkabout in a local community where we identify areas in need of some TLC. We then meet a few weeks later to discuss local issues, hear from Eastlight teams about service delivery and use our budgets to fund local improvements that make a difference in our neighbourhoods.



55

Number of residents who attended resident group meetings and walkabouts



Eastlight Resident Groups supporting their neighbourhoods and communities



Performance and scrutiny

The Customer Influence Committee has overall responsibility for scrutinising Eastlight to ensure we provide the services and experiences residents want with us.

During their meetings, members receive regular updates and quiz leaders about Eastlight's performance, including Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), and what residents are saying about Eastlight in their feedback.

Customer Voice reports bring that feedback together, including TSMs, customer journey surveys and complaints, before setting out the steps Eastlight is taking to build on the positives and make improvements where required. These reports are published on Eastlight's website.

The Committee commissions deep dives, including one into hate crime to understand how widespread the issue is in local communities and Eastlight's understanding of and approach to tackling incidents.

Residents scrutinise strategies and policies at meetings, workshops and by completing surveys, as detailed on the previous pages.

In late 2025, Eastlight will launch a new programme of scrutiny task and finish groups. These groups will be made up of Eastlight residents, with support from one Customer Influence Committee Member.

These groups will have the freedom to organise and carry out their scrutiny in a way they feel works best, before reporting their findings back to the Committee, which will then oversee any recommendations made.

This approach ensures fresh perspectives and greater independence in shaping improvements to services and resident experience at Eastlight.

Residents meet at Eastlight House to review the shareholding offer





The Resident Members Charter

In 2024/25, active residents and staff worked together to create a charter which would commit Eastlight to listen to and involve residents when making decisions about their homes, services and neighbourhoods.

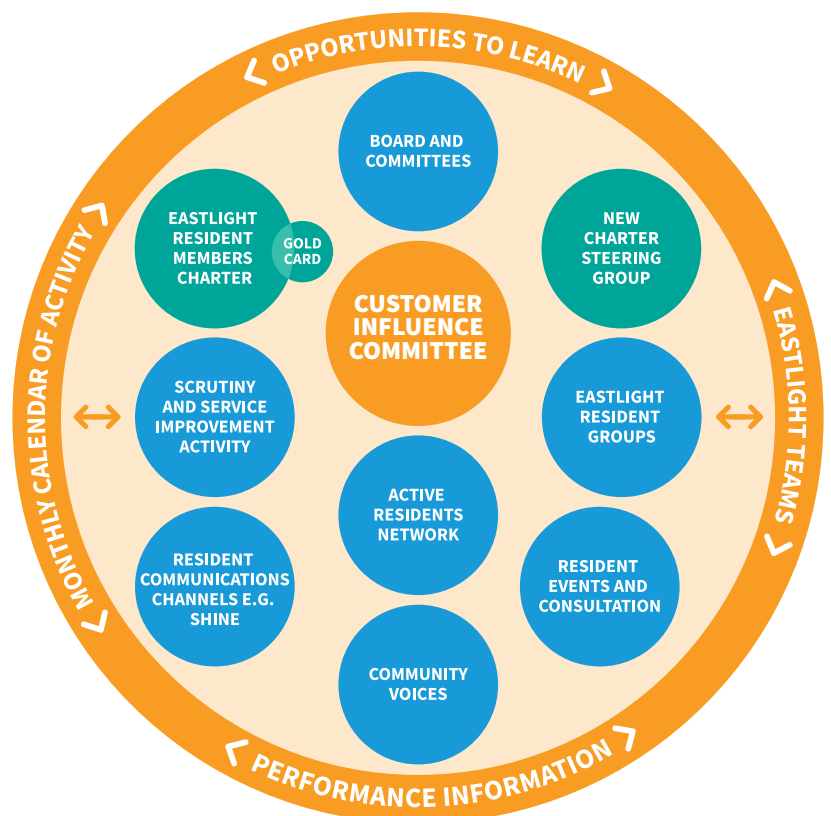
This work began with a review of Eastlight's open shareholding offer. Eastlight had around 4,500 shareholders but at the 2024 Annual General Meeting, only 67 chose to vote on the administrative resolutions.

Over a series of workshops and conversations, engaged residents from the CIC and ARN were united in telling us shareholding did not give them the opportunities to influence the services that matter to them. The group created a proposed replacement, namely a Resident Members Charter and the Eastlight Community Gateway Circle, bringing together a range of new and existing ways to ensure residents' voice is heard by Eastlight.

A formal consultation, held in March and April 2025, found that 67% of residents supported the proposal, while only 5% opposed it. The remaining 28% remained neutral.

With the support of Eastlight's CIC and Board, Shareholders were invited to vote on a proposal to replace open shareholding with the Resident Members Charter in June 2025 at a Special General Meeting. At the meeting, Shareholders voted overwhelmingly in favour, making the Charter a core part of our ongoing commitment to being resident-led.

[Find out more about the Charter here.](#)

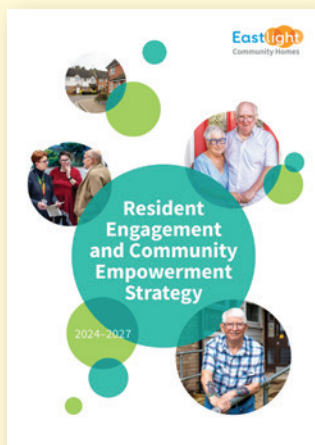


Policies and strategies

The Customer Influence Committee approves or reviews all policies and strategies that have an impact on residents. Members quiz the senior leaders at Eastlight responsible for delivering these policies and strategies and work with them to ensure they meet the needs of residents.

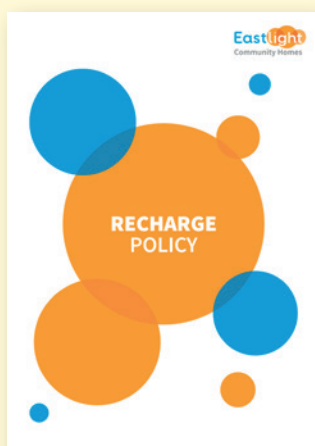
The Active Resident Network supports the Customer Influence Committee by taking part in workshops and completing surveys focusing on these policies and strategies, which help them understand a wider range of views about what Eastlight is getting right and where it needs to improve.

In 2024/25, residents reviewed the following strategies and policies.



Strategies

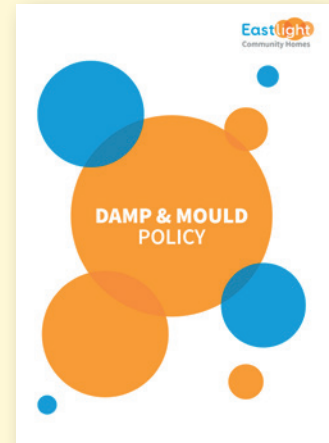
- Resident Engagement & Community Empowerment Strategy
- Asset Management Strategy
- Customer Service Delivery Strategy
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Strategy (updated Action Plan)
- Sustainability Strategy (update).



Policies

- Recharge Policy
- Aids & Adaptations Policy
- Complaints & Resolutions Policy
- Tenure Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Anti-Social Behaviour & Hate Crime Policy
- Compensation Policy

- Empty Homes & Allocations Policy
- Shared Ownership Affordability Policy
- Leasehold Management Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Damp & Mould Policy
- Service Charge Policy.



Damp & Mould Policy

An updated Damp & Mould Policy was rigorously reviewed by 20 Active Resident Network members during a workshop in November 2024 before being reviewed by the Customer Influence Committee.

The policy has been adjusted in line with the forthcoming introduction of Awaab's Law and now reflects our Think Customer approach.

Following resident involvement, extra support and priority will be given to residents at greater risk due to health, age, or other individual concerns. The policy also now includes proactive outreach using data to identify and assist residents who may struggle to report issues, such as those whose first language is not English.



Communication

Active residents regularly challenge Eastlight to use plain English and avoid jargon when communicating. Often this involves providing examples to help explain what Eastlight will and will not do in certain situations. For example, the Compensation Policy now includes examples of compensation offered other than money – such as gift vouchers or flowers.

Supporting our neighbourhoods and communities

Our Tenant Satisfaction Measure results tell us that many residents do not think we make a positive enough contribution to their neighbourhoods. Our Eastlight Residents Groups are empowered to identify and fund neighbourhood improvements that help create pride in local communities. Funding approved in 2024/25 includes:

Eastlight Residents Group North: A picnic bench in the communal area of Colne Valley Close, Halstead, plus two picnic benches, a garden bench, and the replanting of raised flower beds behind the flats on Conies Road, Halstead.

Eastlight Residents Group Mid: The group approved a consultation with residents at Paycocke Way, Coggeshall, to fund a bench for the communal garden. After consultation, they also agreed to fund two benches and two planters for Godric Place in Braintree to enhance the communal space. Finally, the group agreed to fund Santa's Grotto presents at Coggeshall's Christmas event and support Black Notley Guides.

Eastlight Residents Group South: The group agreed to invest in a new flower bed on Alan Road, Witham, and a raised flower bed on Honeysuckle Way, Witham. They also voted to support guides, scouts and a baby and toddler group in Silver End.

Eastlight Resident Group South members inspect new flowerbeds they funded in Witham



Community funding

The Braintree District and Eastlight Community Fund is a joint fund we run with Braintree District Council with the support of Essex Community Foundation.

Every year, a panel, including two Eastlight residents, meets to review applications and award grants to charities and community groups in the district who support residents affected by the cost of living, social isolation, mental health and wellbeing, and to create opportunities for young people.



The Braintree District and Eastlight Community Fund panel met in October 2024 and agreed to support:

- 1** **£2,500** to Popcorn, which supports young adults to improve confidence and mental wellbeing
- 2** **£2,750** to Friends of Cressing Temple, to recruit a part time Volunteer Support Officer
- 3** **£2,250** to Sunnydays Baby and Toddler Group CIC for their support groups
- 4** **£20,000** to Action for Family Carers for their Young Carers club based in Witham
- 5** **£20,000** to CARA (Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse), to support the employment of counsellors helping survivors of sexual violence and child sexual abuse
- 6** **£10,000** to Dance Network Association for dance sessions for those with dementia and their caregivers in Halstead and Braintree
- 7** **£14,047** to Happy Hill Essex CIO, for a Key Worker to meet the increased need for support for children with special educational needs and disabilities
- 8** **£8,000** to Braintree Rethink Art & Social Group, which supports those struggling with their mental health.

Further engagement opportunities

Regular workshops

Active Resident Network members are invited to regular online and in-person workshops which help shape the future direction of Eastlight's services.

For example, residents are helping to shape a new online Customer Portal that Eastlight is introducing in 2025.

This work included a workshop with 15 members which focused on overall functionality, accessible design and specific features to include. The team delivering the portal then worked to include their feedback in their list of requirements when tendering for a supplier.

Network members have been kept updated on progress, and participants have agreed to become testers before the portal launches later this year.

Shine a Light LIVE

13 members of our Active Resident Network took part in our four Shine a Light LIVE events in autumn 2024.

The events launched Eastlight's Think Customer campaign, which aims to improve the experiences and communication residents receive from us.

Residents took to the stage and shared their experiences of receiving services from Eastlight before answering questions from staff about what would improve those experiences.

Afterwards, residents had the chance to meet team members they might not usually encounter and learn more about the work they do.



Eastlight resident
Tammy Collins
speaking to staff
at a Shine a Light
LIVE event

The Resident Conference

On Wednesday, 5 March, more than 30 active residents joined us at Witham Public Hall for a Resident Conference.

The agenda included a workshop on what residents would prioritise when we introduce a place-based approach, the introduction of the Resident Members Charter ahead of the consultation, a celebration of the impact that residents' involvement has at Eastlight, the re-launch of the Resident Academy with a focus on ASB and domestic abuse, and an informative session on the history of social housing and external environment today.

The day ended with a meet and greet session, where residents got to meet colleagues from across the business.



Eastlight residents and staff getting to know each other at the Resident Conference

Resident Academy

Our online Resident Academy courses offer a special insight into how housing associations like Eastlight work, the history of our sector and the world we operate in.

In 2024/25, we published two new courses – 'Housing in the UK Today' and 'How a Housing Association Works'. All of our bite-sized video courses are available on Eastlight's website.



www.eastlighthomes.co.uk/my-community/resident-academy/

In March 2025, we held an in-person Resident Academy session at our Resident Conference, which discussed the support Eastlight and its partners offer when residents experience anti-social behaviour or domestic abuse.



Communications Committee

A big focus of 2024/25 at Eastlight was to improve communication with residents.

Part of this involved a Communications Committee of residents reviewing letter and email templates used by Eastlight teams.

Their work included improving a letter sent following the death of a tenant to a relative by making it more empathetic and informative. The revised letter includes more personalisation and a link to NHS information on grief.

Eastlight Community Homes

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