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### **CEO Foreword**



Emma Palmer

Chief Executive Officer

Eastlight Community Homes

It is a pleasure to present Eastlight Community Homes' fifth Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Report. It reflects the responsibility we hold to provide safe, high-quality and sustainable homes for thousands of households across the East of England.

Over the past year, we have continued to grow – building hundreds of new homes, acquiring more stock in Essex and Suffolk, and now owning and managing more than 14,600 homes.

ESG principles are embedded in all that we do. They guide our decisions, help us manage risk, and ensure we act in line with our vision and values. For us, ESG is not just a reporting tool – it is about being a responsible housing association that listens, responds and delivers for people and the planet.

In April 2024, we launched our new Corporate Strategy; within which sustainability is one of seven core principles that help to shape our future. It commits us to reducing the environmental impact of building, maintaining and living in our homes, while creating places where residents can thrive.

Our Sustainability Strategy underpins this work. It charts our path to achieving Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) of C for all homes by 2030 and becoming a Net Zero Carbon organisation by 2050. This year, we commissioned our second carbon and environmental performance audit with Turner & Townsend so that we can better understand how our impacts are evolving and plan our next steps.

We invested £12m in major works this year, completing energy-efficiency upgrades to 842 homes. As a result, 80% of our homes now meet EPC-C or higher – a 7% increase on last year. All 328 new homes we built, for social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership, achieved EPC-C, with 97% of these homes reaching EPC-B and above.

Through the efforts of our teams, we secured £1.2m from the Government's Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3), with matched funding from Eastlight. This £2.4m investment will improve a further 275 homes, reducing carbon emissions and helping residents to stay warm, while lowering their bills.

Sustainability
is a core principle
within our
Corporate Strategy"

We remain committed to going beyond the bricks and mortar. This year, more than 160 residents got involved through our Active Residents Network. Similarly, our first Resident Conference in March 2025 opened up new ways for residents to shape services and influence our strategic direction.

Resident satisfaction remains a key priority. This year, 73% of residents told us they are satisfied with the service we provide – a 3% rise on last year. While progress is welcome, we know there is more work to be done, especially around communication, complaints and providing effective neighbourhood services. We are investing resources and focus to drive improvement in these areas.

Strong governance underpins our performance. Two Eastlight residents and one individual with lived experience of social housing served on our Board in 2024–25, alongside our Customer Influence Committee. Their voices help ensure that Eastlight stays resident-led, resilient and responsive.

In 2024–25, we also launched a proposal for place-based working. This new model brings us closer to residents and neighbourhoods, enabling teams to respond to local needs with tailored support. It will take time and care to build trust and adapt our ways of working, but we believe it will lead to stronger relationships and better services.

Our people are central to our success. They continue to deliver more sustainable services, strive for personal development and support each other in building a positive and inclusive workplace. More than 50 colleagues gained a qualification this year, while our inclusion and advocacy networks, alongside our Sustainability Champions, helped embed social impact and climate awareness into everyday work.

We are proud of what we have achieved so far – but we are not standing still. The world around us continues to change, and expectations from residents, partners and regulators evolve with it. We welcome scrutiny as an opportunity to learn and improve, placing resident need, colleague wellbeing and stakeholder trust at the heart of every decision we make.



### Overview

Eastlight Community Homes Limited (hereafter 'Eastlight') is pleased to present its Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Report for 2024–25.

This report covers our performance based on the latest Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS).

Learn more about the SRS here: sustainabilityforhousing.org.uk/

#### Who we are

Eastlight is an ambitious, forward-thinking and resident-led housing association for the East of England. Together with residents and communities, we create safe, affordable homes and great neighbourhoods that people can feel proud to live in.

We own and look after more than 14,600 homes, and we have bold plans to build new sustainable homes that meet local housing need. Residents pay rents and charges that are below market rates, and every £1 we receive is reinvested back into our homes, services and communities – supporting our growth ambition and long-term value.

We care about our planet. That is why we invest in our existing homes to improve their environmental performance and ensure the new homes and communities we build are designed to be environmentally friendly.

We involve residents in the day-to-day running of Eastlight, using their feedback to influence our services and priorities. By sharing our expertise and innovations, we aim to lead positive change across the sector.

People who work at Eastlight put residents first. They are driven to do the right thing to make a lasting difference, for residents today and for future generations.

14,625
homes owned and managed

### **ESG** at Eastlight

On 1 April 2024, Eastlight launched its new Corporate Strategy 2024–27, which superseded our previous Corporate Strategy 2021–26.

The complex economic environment coupled with regulatory pressure, including the Social Housing (Regulation) Act and the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards, meant that we needed to set out renewed strategic priorities to meet the evolving needs of our residents, people and partners.

Shaped and approved by residents, our Corporate Strategy is built around seven key principles; one of which is to become a more sustainable business by reducing the environmental impact of our homes and operations. In doing so, we set ambitious environmental targets backed by strong governance.

ESG is central to our decision-making. It aligns with our values and helps us manage risks and impacts. We aim to improve the safety and quality of our homes, while empowering residents to drive real change.

This year, we developed and implemented new ideas for sustainability to strengthen our business and create value for all stakeholders. We measure our performance and track progress annually to refine our approaches.

Our Sustainability Strategy 2022–27 outlines our plans to build and invest in homes ethically and sustainably. We focus on affordability, cutting energy costs and tackling fuel poverty – helping residents and partners to reduce their carbon footprint and support national Net Zero goals.

Meanwhile, our Design Guide emphasises good design for housing development, rooted in the resident experience, community engagement and the local environment.

We apply our good governance principles and organisational values throughout our ESG work: we are **Ambitious** in setting and achieving our ESG targets, **Inclusive** in our sustainability efforts, and **Accountable** for our social and ecological impacts.





### **Environmental**

The environment is central to Eastlight's aims and ambitions. We strive to provide homes and services that are environmentally friendly and sustainable in the long-term.

Our Sustainability Steering Group – a sub-committee of our Board – previously guided our journey to becoming a greener, more sustainable business; it comprised a Board Sustainability Sponsor, representatives from our Development & Asset Management and Customer Influence Committees, Executive leadership and a Finance representative. The Steering Group commissioned our first carbon audit and developed our Sustainability Strategy in 2022, which has ambitious objectives, including achieving EPC–C across all homes by 2030 and Net Zero Carbon by 2050. The Steering Group was retired following the strategy's publication.

Eastlight commissioned a second carbon audit in April 2025 to better understand the ways in which our environmental impacts are changing, informing tangible actions to help reduce our carbon footprint in future. Completed in July 2025, these findings will influence our priorities as we renew our Sustainability Strategy in the years ahead.

Through our New Homes Strategy 2021–26, we continue to build high-quality homes for social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership. This year, we delivered a further 328 affordable homes, totalling 1,535 new homes since Eastlight formed in 2020. All were delivered as sustainably as possible and to high environmental standards.

This year, we published a new Asset Management Strategy 2024–27. It reflects our ambitions to meet changing sector expectations and the evolving needs of residents, while delivering on the requirements as set within the Regulator's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), Awaab's Law and Decent Homes 2. This includes greater investment in modern infrastructure, smart procurement, safety compliance and asset optimisation.

Our strategies and Development Design Guide promote decarbonising homes through a fabric-first approach and modern methods of construction. Our plans always aim to minimise energy consumption, carbon emissions and waste, wherever possible, to preserve and maintain value in our homes.

To help us meet our goals, Eastlight secured funding through the Government's Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3) in March 2025. This will support energy efficiency improvements to 275 households, making homes warmer, greener and cheaper to heat, and move Eastlight closer to achieving our EPC–C targets at pace.

We continue to work with SHIELD (Smart Heat & Intelligent Energy in Low-income Districts) to test new technologies that reduce energy consumption in residents' homes. We plan to build on this partnership, alongside our work through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) scheme, to accelerate our progress towards Net Zero.

Our Home Solutions Team, which provides repairs and maintenance services to Eastlight residents, work across four, local patch-based areas in the East of England. In the last year, we reduced fleet travel by 18,139 miles and saved 6,751.54 kgCO2e in carbon emissions. We are actively investigating our commercial van allocation, returning four diesel vans in 2024–25 and purchasing four electrical vehicles in the coming financial year.

Our team of Sustainability Champions are driving meaningful change across Eastlight and our communities. The group – which includes 14 staff members, an Executive sponsor and an Eastlight resident and Customer Influence Committee Member – continue to shape what sustainability means for our organisation and the people we serve.

We are also identifying new ways to reduce the environmental impact of our workplaces, including Eastlight House in Braintree and our Home Solutions hub in Marks Tey. We remain focused on improving energy efficiency in our homes and supporting more sustainable communities.





# Social

Social responsibility is central to our values – from providing affordable homes to supporting residents and communities in ways that matter to them.

This year, we launched our new Resident Engagement & Community Empowerment Strategy 2024–27. Building on our previous successes, the strategy focuses on activities that directly benefit Eastlight residents. Aligning to our Corporate Strategy and the Consumer Standards, the strategy places greater emphasis on increased resident feedback and participation, stakeholder partnerships, training and development, and community funding.

A key part of this work was replacing our existing shareholding offer with a new Resident Members Charter, which was co-designed with engaged resident shareholders. This charter aimed to bring together all the resident engagement activities that exist at Eastlight, including the Customer Influence Committee, Active Residents Network and other scrutiny groups.

Following a favourable consultation, a Special General Meeting was held in June 2025 to put the proposed charter to a formal vote; at which resident shareholders voted in favour of the change, with an overwhelming majority of 92%. The formal change will take place in July 2025.

Under our Resident Engagement & Community Empowerment Strategy, Eastlight residents got involved in the following customer voice groups this year:

**Active Residents Network (ARN)** – More than 160 residents shared their expertise and passion to improve their homes, services and neighbourhoods. Members received regular invitations to take part in activities, including scrutinising strategies, policies and services, played an active role in their neighbourhoods and took part in events to influence Eastlight's future.

**Eastlight Residents Group (ERG)** – Residents in the Braintree, Halstead and Witham led local change by organising community clean-ups, advocating for neighbourhood improvements and supporting local charities and organisations through group spending.

**Resident Academy** – Our online learning platform helped residents build their knowledge and confidence to tackle social issues, understand the social housing sector, and play an active role in shaping Eastlight for the better. The Resident Academy Bootcamp also provided a face-to-face learning experience to upskill residents for the Committee and Boardroom.

In March 2025, Eastlight residents were invited to Witham Public Hall for our first Resident Conference. It brought more than 30 residents together with Eastlight colleagues to explore our future direction. This included sessions on our bold ambition to deliver place-based services, the new Resident Members Charter, and a Resident Academy course on anti-social behaviour, domestic abuse and the external housing landscape.

To honour longstanding Board Member Dale Butcher, who retired in the year, we launched the Residents Work Experience Programme. The initiative gave residents an opportunity to gain hands-on experience in asset management and housing development from specialist team members and achieve a Chartered Institute of Housing qualification.





### Governance

Strong governance underpins Eastlight's strategic direction. The depth and breadth of our Board Members' experience helps us define objectives, stay focused and deliver on our long-term ambitions.

Our Board has adopted the National Housing Federation's (NHF) Code of Governance 2020 and complies with the Regulator of Social Housing's Regulatory Standards, including the Consumer Standards.

Following an inspection in April 2025, the Regulator of Social Housing confirmed Eastlight's G1 and V1 gradings, verifying our good governance and sound financial management. The inspection included an assessment against our ability to deliver for residents and meet our requirements under the new Consumer Standards. The Regulator awarded Eastlight C2, recognising our focus on compliance and delivering positive outcomes, with some areas in need of further improvement.

Governance is shaped by both professional insight and lived experience. Our Board and Committees include individuals with sustainability expertise and one Executive Director has completed a Master's degree in Sustainability. This helps ensure our long-term environmental goals are embedded at the highest level.

Residents play a direct role in holding Eastlight to account. In the year, two residents served on our Board – one of which was a Trainee Board Member – with an additional Board Member bringing their lived experience of social housing. All three individuals sit on our Customer Influence Committee (CIC), which is chaired by a resident Board Member.

The CIC ensures the resident voice influences strategic decision-making. It includes eight Eastlight residents, and one with lived experience, who oversee the delivery of our customer-facing strategies, policies and services. One member has a specific remit to scrutinise our environmental activity and ensure residents can shape our sustainability work.

We recognise the importance of placing resident insight at the heart of governance. This approach helps us meet our legal and regulatory obligations, and ensures our decisions reflect the needs and views of the communities we serve.

In the year, we published our second set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). While satisfaction remains a challenge across the sector, we are already seeing improvements on the previous year – reflecting our people's commitment to work with residents and deliver safe, quality homes and reliable services together.



# Eastlight in Numbers



total number of homes Eastlight owns and manages



new homes built: 194 for affordable rent (59%), 130 for shared ownership (40%) and four for social rent (1%)



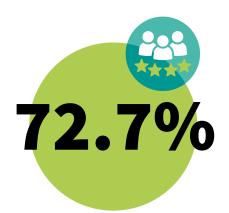
homes in contract or on-site



new homes in the pipeline



residents supported with damp and mould



of residents satisfied with Eastlight overall (TP01)



percentage of existing homes that are EPC-C or higher



percentage of Board Members who are women



percentage of homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard



our regulatory grading

# The Sustainability Reporting Standard

The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS) was first published in 2020 after extensive consultation and engagement with the housing and financial sectors.

Its purpose is to provide investors and stakeholders with clear and consistent information about the activities and outcomes of housing providers like Eastlight, as these groups are increasingly interested in ESG-related matters.

By adopting the SRS, we can track our progress, benchmark against other housing providers and drive service improvements. It also allows stakeholders, such as suppliers, contractors and lenders, to better understand our commitment to ESG practices, providing assurance that we are a credible partner to support their own ambitions for ethical and sustainable value.

We also acknowledge the SRS Annual Review each year to consider how we are performing within each criterion compared to other adopters in our sector. The latest SRS Annual Review (May 2025) can be found here: sustainabilityforhousing.org.uk/sfhs-impact/

# Sustainable Development Goals

As set out in the SRS, social housing has positive social and environmental impacts. It is recognised as a universal social good within the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were adopted by all United Nations (UN) member states in 2015.

In 2022, Eastlight implemented an ambitious approach to ESG practices in the form of our Sustainability Strategy, which is underpinned by the SDGs in all material aspects. It was developed based on the findings of the carbon and environmental performance audit conducted by Turner & Townsend, a consultancy business.

A further carbon audit by Turner & Townsend was commissioned in April 2025, with key findings detailed throughout this report. Completed in July 2025, the carbon audit forms our new carbon baseline and will be used to determine our sustainability objectives in the years ahead.

All Eastlight strategies aim to contribute to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in nine key areas, as noted on page 18.

While the other eight goals remain vitally important for the ongoing development and sustainability of people, communities and businesses across the globe, they do not directly influence or impact on our decision-making, or directly support Eastlight in achieving its strategic vision and purpose:







Having residents involved in strategic decisionmaking keeps Eastlight grounded in reality and focused on what really matters – providing excellent homes and services.

"Over the years, I've gone from an involved Eastlight resident to an employee and now a Customer Influence Committee (CIC) Member. In each role, I've been the organisation's eyes and ears on the ground – sharing my lived experience and helping to drive real change from the bottom up.

"Whether its raising concerns about hate crime or improving communal cleaning and repairs, I've made sure our voices are heard. Consulting on new facilities – like the new bin stall in my neighbourhood – has brought people together and restored a real sense of community.

"As active residents, we have the power to hold Eastlight to account and steer conversations so that key decisions are made with customer impact and experience at the forefront. I feel heard, valued and proud to be part of a housing association that truly puts residents at the heart of everything they do."

Rue Garande, Eastlight resident and Customer Influence Committee Member.



# United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)



# Reporting Structure

The remainder of this report is structured to provide answers to the 46 questions that sit within the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS) 2.0 framework, the latest reporting framework available.

This is further split into themes and ESG areas, as illustrated in the table below:

| ESG Area   | Theme                     | Criteria  |
|------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Environmen | tal                       |           |
|            | Climate Change            | C1 - C6   |
|            | Ecology                   | C7 - C8   |
|            | Resource Management       | C9 - C11  |
| Social     |                           |           |
| 300:00     |                           |           |
|            | Affordability & Security  | C12 - C16 |
|            | Building Safety & Quality | C17 - C19 |
| 6          | Resident Voice            | C20 - C22 |
|            | Resident Support          | C23       |
|            | Placemaking               | C24       |
|            |                           |           |
| Governance |                           |           |
|            | Structure & Governance    | C25 - C30 |
|            | Board & Trustees          | C31 - C38 |
|            | Staff Wellbeing           | C39 - C44 |
|            | Supply Chain Management   | C45 - C46 |
|            |                           |           |



### **Environmental**

### **Climate Change**



Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year).

Around 80% (9,349) of our existing homes at financial year end, and for which an EPC score has been calculated, were rated EPC–C or higher. This is up from 73% last year.

The table below shows the EPC ratings\* across our existing homes:

| EPC Band      | Count<br>2024-25 | %    | Count<br>2023-24 | %    |
|---------------|------------------|------|------------------|------|
| A             | 16               | 0%   | 16               | 0%   |
| В             | 784              | 7%   | 604              | 6%   |
| С             | 8,549            | 73%  | 7,887            | 68%  |
| D             | 2,141            | 18%  | 2,867            | 24%  |
| Е             | 189              | 2%   | 190              | 2%   |
| F (and below) | 12               | 0%   | 15               | 0%   |
| (No data)     | (617)            | -    | (282)            | -    |
| Total         | 11,691           | 100% | 11,579           | 100% |

<sup>\*</sup>The number and percentage of homes EPC-C and above for the year have been calculated based on all homes that have received a full Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) certification.

\*'No data', which has not been included in the total figure, refers to homes that do not have a full SAP certification and therefore an EPC rating has not been calculated. It includes new-build homes and those acquired through stock transfers in the year, for which SAP and EPC scores are either yet to be determined or are included in other criteria in this report (see C2 and C13).

Every five years, all Eastlight homes are assessed using the Reduced Data Standard Assessment Procedure (RdSAP) – the national method for measuring the energy performance of existing homes, resulting in updated EPCs. In June 2025, this process led to a small drop in our overall EPC figure, from 79.97% (as reported) to 79.71%.

On 15 June 2025, the Building Research Establishment (BRE), on behalf of the Department for Energy Security & Net Zero, introduced the updated RdSAP 10 methodology. As a result, we expect EPC gradings across our existing homes to fall slightly in the months ahead.

Despite this, Eastlight is committed to delivering a balanced and targeted energy efficiency and retrofit programme. This will help more homes reach EPC–C, making them greener, warmer and more affordable for residents to live in. The Eastlight Business Plan is fully funded to ensure the organisation achieves and delivers EPC–C for all homes by 2030.



# Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year).

All the new Eastlight homes we built in 2024–25 (328) achieved a minimum EPC rating of C, with around 97% of all new homes receiving a grade of EPC–B and above. The breakdown is as follows:

| EPC Band | Count<br>2024-25 | %    |
|----------|------------------|------|
| A        | 33               | 10%  |
| В        | 284              | 87%  |
| С        | 11               | 3%   |
| Total    | 328              | 100% |

As per our Sustainability Strategy and Design Guide, all our new homes on land-led sites are designed to meet a minimum specification of EPC-C.





Does the housing provider have a Net Zero target and strategy? If so, what is it and when does the housing provider intend to be Net Zero by?

Yes. Eastlight launched its three-year Corporate Strategy in April 2024, within which sustainability is a core principle. It outlines our desire to operate in an increasingly sustainable way, taking positive action to reduce the environmental impact of building, maintaining and living in an Eastlight home.

In line with this, our Sustainability Strategy describes in detail our commitment and journey towards achieving EPC–C for all homes by 2030 and Net Zero Carbon by 2050. It also explains that we play an increasingly significant role in addressing the climate emergency, from meeting our legislative obligations to improving our homes and local environments – for example, limiting the destruction of local flora and fauna, addressing drought and flooding, and reducing our impact on waste and pollution.

The Sustainability Strategy was developed with Eastlight residents to ensure we continue to raise energy efficiency standards, reduce fuel poverty and living costs, improve health and wellbeing, and deliver value for money.

Our main aims are to:

- Build new homes and invest in our existing ones in ways that are kind to the environment and improve energy efficiency
- Change how we work so that we minimise the impact of our operations on the environment
- Support residents to reduce their own environmental impact and to run their homes at a lower cost.

The strategy has set targets to secure emission reductions over time and a timeline against which Eastlight will achieve Net Zero Carbon. This includes:

- By 2025: The adoption and use of the Eastlight Development Design Guide; building all new homes to meet the Future Homes Standard; measuring employee commuting; and developing strategies for supply chain sustainability and vehicle electrification
- By 2030: Reviewing planned and retrofit strategies; progressing and complete energy efficiency upgrades on homes that do not meet the EPC-C standard; developing its disposals strategy; and deploying an electrical fleet in operations. During this, Eastlight will investigate low-carbon heating installation programmes and an electricity generation strategy for future implementation
- 2035–2050: Begin offsetting to fully achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2050.

Our Sustainability Strategy works hand-in-hand with our New Homes Strategy and Asset Management Strategy.

Our Sustainability
Strategy sets a clear
path to achieve
Net Zero Carbon
by 2050"

The Asset Management Strategy makes it clear that we will invest in our homes by using a 'fabric-first approach' to reduce heating demand and costs for residents, including researching, trialling and embedding proven technology in our day-to-day asset programme to help us achieve our ambitions at a faster rate.

To meet evolving needs, our homes and communities will include new facilities supported by modern methods of construction and infrastructure. We will invest in the green skills and education of our people, while also equipping residents with the technology and knowledge needed to live sustainably, co-creating environmentally-sound decisions together. Wherever possible, we will optimise grant funding opportunities to help us achieve these objectives.

The long-term viability of our assets is increasingly important to us; where we cannot guarantee this, we will put resident health and safety above all else – particularly where sustainability, damp and mould, and overall compliance is concerned – and consider other methods of management, including remodelling, regeneration, disposal or exit.

The New Homes Strategy identifies the need to build homes that are environmentally sustainable and in ways that meet forthcoming legislation (for example, the Future Homes Standard). It is our ambition to move towards a more balanced development programme between developer-led and Eastlight-led schemes; this would enable us to take greater control over quality and programme, creating more accessible, affordable and sustainable homes and communities.

Our Design Guide aims to instil 'good design' for all aspects of a development scheme's inception, design, use and maintenance. At its core, it prioritises the resident experience and outlines the positive impact well-designed homes can have on physical and mental health, reducing anti-social behaviour and improving a sense of community.

The Guide is used by the Eastlight team, as well as our consultants and contractors, and referred to during the inception of new homes through to their handover and subsequent occupation, management, maintenance and possible adaptation.

We will revise our Sustainability Strategy and New Homes Strategy in the years ahead to align with any future changes to Government legislation, in addition to the UK's longer-term carbon budgets and net zero targets.

**'Fabric-first'** prioritised when investing and retrofitting existing homes"



What retrofit activities has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months in relation to its housing stock?

How do these activities align with, and contribute towards, performance against its Net Zero strategy and target?

In 2024–25, we completed a range of retrofitting activities which align with Eastlight's EPC–C 2030 and Net Zero 2050 target. The works were delivered to our goals as identified within our Sustainability and supporting strategies.

#### These efforts included:

- Carrying out 628 heating upgrades for more efficient boilers and systems
- Replacing windows on 179 homes, positively contributing to energy performance and EPC ratings
- Completing 127 roof replacements, which included better loft insulation and ventilation measures to ensure air permeability. Two flat blocks also received new roof improvements
- Sixty-nine homes receiving solar photovoltaics (PV) systems, significantly reducing residents' energy bills. This included 49 in-roof systems, 18 on-roof systems, and solar panels installed on two homes under our partnership with SHIELD
- Twenty-nine homes receiving new cavity wall insulation (CWI) as part of our ongoing programme under the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS)
- Air-source heat pumps (ASHP) being replaced or renewed in 13 homes, reducing residents' living costs and carbon footprint
- Fitting new Mechanical Ventilation with Heat Recovery (MVHR) systems in 13 homes to help keep these warm and well-ventilated, without wasting heat
- Completing CWI and external wall insulation (EWI) on four bungalows, forming part of our damp and mould response to these homes. A further five homes also received EWI in the year.

Roof replacements, loft insulation and solar PV panel installations have been delivered in tandem, where possible, to further ensure operational efficiency and cost reductions.

In the last 12 months, we increased the energy efficiency of 842 homes that have all now achieved EPC-C, 7% more homes than the year before (2023: 73% of homes EPC-C and above). This means that 80% of our homes are now EPC-C or higher.

The remaining total number of homes that require revised EPC scores or retrofitting activities to achieve EPC–C and above is around 2,400 (20% of all Eastlight homes).

This year, Eastlight continued its partnership with Smart Heat & Intelligent Energy in Low-income Districts (SHIELD), a partnership of organisations – including Essex County Council, Citizens Advice Essex and UK Power Networks, and supported by Ofgem and Innovate UK – that is piloting established and new energy technologies in some Eastlight homes to reduce energy costs and carbon emissions. This initiative ensures that residents can better afford to heat their homes amid cost-of-living challenges, and that we mitigate the risk of damp, mould and fuel poverty.

As part of the SHIELD project in 2023–24, we retrofitted and installed new technologies in two semi-detached homes in Twinstead, Essex, reducing overall fuel consumption and costs, whilst providing warmer, more sustainable dwellings.

In the homes, existing oil heating systems were replaced with ASHP, increasing efficiency by over 200%. In addition, solar PV panels and hybrid invertors were added to both properties, alongside roof replacements and renewed loft insulation; two electric storage batteries; and smart hot water cylinders with smart mobile device applications, saving up to 60% of hot water costs per year.

Today, one property produces 1.4 tonnes of CO2 (down from 4.9 tonnes), achieving EPC-B from D, and the other produces 2.0 tonnes of CO2 (down from 4.4 tonnes), achieving EPC-C from D.



In 2024–25, we replaced the gas heating system in one resident's home in Cressing with a Thermify HeatHub, which captures heat generated during the compute process and transfers it to the central heating system (also known as 'heat recovery'). We also added solar panels and electric battery storage to the property.

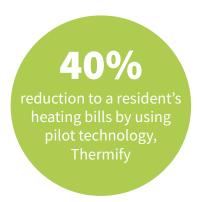
By monitoring performance through the Cressing resident's smart Switchee thermostat, we have achieved positive heat gain and a significant reduction in carbon emissions, with heating bills dropping by 40%.

Through continuous monitoring of these activities and regular communication with residents, these learnings will go on to inform our future approach to adopting similar technologies for more Eastlight homes as part of our ongoing efforts with SHIELD. Following the successful trial with the Thermify Heat Hub in the year ahead, we aim to implement similar works across a further 50–100 homes funded by the SHIELD partnership, which secured a grant of more than £9m from Ofgem's Strategic Innovation Fund (SIF) in 2024–25.

In addition to this, our partnership with the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) scheme provides a range of energy-saving solutions, including insulation improvements, green heating systems and boiler repairs. This scheme has enabled us to improve more than 80 properties with CWI. This successful approach allows us to enhance the energy efficiency of homes at scale, completing CWI on rounds of 40 homes at any one time.

With delivery management, customer engagement and property identification completed at zero cost to Eastlight, the ECO4 programme has saved Eastlight circa. £2,000–£4,000 per property and enabled us to bring our existing homes up to our target of EPC-C at a faster rate.

In the year, we were also awarded £1.2m in Government funding via the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3), for which Eastlight has matched to increase overall investment to £2.4m over the next three years. Residents living in 275 homes should see their energy bills and carbon footprint significantly reduce as a result, as we look to install new solar panels and ASHPs, remove outdated gas and oil systems, and increase loft insulation.



## **C5**

## Please report the housing provider's Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions total, and per home.

In April 2025, we commissioned business consultants Turner & Townsend to produce a carbon and environmental performance audit for the 2024–25 year. They calculated that Eastlight's overall carbon footprint, including annual energy use and embodied carbon for new-build homes, was 2,121,416.11 tCO2e.

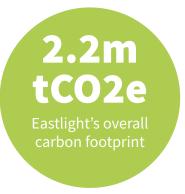
Compared to our previous carbon audit in 2021–22 (43,175 tCO2e), our greenhouse gas emissions have increased primarily due to Eastlight's housing portfolio expanding by 23.4% (11,851 homes in 2021–22, to 14,625 homes in 2024–25). In addition, adopting more granular, refined data collection methodologies and capturing previously unreported emission sources (such as Eastlight-controlled utilities, home working and water consumption) have also contributed to these higher emissions.

This latest audit, completed in July 2025, and its findings now form a far more comprehensive picture of Eastlight's actual emissions and will be used to inform a review of the organisation's existing Sustainability Strategy in 2025–26.

The breakdown by emissions area and scope is presented below:

|                       | Description                              | tCO2e                  |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------|
| Scope 1               | Direct emissions                         | 1,413.75               |
| Scope 2               | Indirect emissions                       | 1,330.67               |
| Scope 3 (Category 1)  | Purchased goods and services             | 2,153,491.50           |
| Scope 3 (Category 2)  | Capital goods                            | Calculated within S3C1 |
| Scope 3 (Category 3)  | Fuel and energy-related activities       | 290.85                 |
| Scope 3 (Category 4)  | Upstream transportation and distribution | Calculated within S3C1 |
| Scope 3 (Category 5)  | Waste generated in operations            | 1,688.80               |
| Scope 3 (Category 6)  | Business travel                          | 91.48                  |
| Scope 3 (Category 7)  | Employee commuting                       | 594.33                 |
| Scope 3 (Category 8)  | Upstream leased assets                   | N/A                    |
| Scope 3 (Category 9)  | Downstream transportation and dist       | ribution N/A           |
| Scope 3 (Category 10) | Processing of sold products              | N/A                    |
| Scope 3 (Category 11) | Use of sold products                     | 44,083.50              |
| Scope 3 (Category 12) | End-of-life treatment of sold product    | ts N/A                 |
| Scope 3 (Category 13) | Downstream leased assets                 | Calculated within S2   |
| Scope 3 (Category 14) | Franchises                               | N/A                    |
| Scope 3 (Category 15) | Investments                              | N/A                    |

Eastlight's Scope 1 and 2 emissions totalled 2,744.42 tCO2e in the year to 31 March 2025, while Scope 3 emissions accounted for 2,200,240.46 tCO2e.



### **Environmental Performance Report 2025**

A detailed comparison of Eastlight's greenhouse gas emissions between 2021–22 and 2024–25 was completed by Turner & Townsend, revealing significant shifts in both the scale and distribution of emissions sources due to richer data and an increase in categories assessed. Because of this, the year-on-year change is not directly comparable.

The Environmental Performance Report July 2025 and its findings will therefore form our future carbon baseline.

### **Key Findings**

Emissions from fleet gas under Scope 1 were reported for the first time. Alongside landlord gas, this amounted to 1,413.75 tCO2e, representing 0.02% of our total emissions. This category was not reported in 2021–22, but it demonstrates our commitment to expanding the scope and accuracy of our emissions inventory.

Scope 2 emissions also saw a notable increase in reporting coverage, reflecting a more comprehensive approach to emissions accounting. Landlord electricity, which was not previously reported, contributed 346.02 tCO2e and represented approximately 0.02% of our total emissions. Operational electricity emissions decreased slightly from 51.47 tCO2e in 2021–22 to 51.00 tCO2e in 2024–25 – a modest year-on-year decrease of 0.90%.

Finally, Scope 3 emissions experienced a substantial increase between 2021–22 and 2024–25, largely due to previously unreported categories and more detailed data collection included in our latest audit. The most significant change was observed in new-build embodied carbon, which rose from 20,220.30 tCO2e to 2,121,416.11 tCO2e; this marks an increase of more than 10,251.14% and now accounts for nearly 93.26% of our total emissions, following more accurate, refined data reported.

Existing stock emissions also increased from 22,183.32 tCO2e to 44,083.54 tCO2e, reflecting improved asset-level reporting. New categories, such as home working, purchased goods and services, and fuel and energy-related activities were introduced, contributing additional emissions that were previously unaccounted for. While some sources, such as grey fleet and business travel, saw reductions or were excluded altogether due to limited or zero data, other included data sources, like commuting and water consumption, showed notable increases.

Environmental
Performance Report
2025 forms our new
carbon baseline"

Generally, the expansion and refinement of Scope 3 reporting underscore our commitment to capturing a more complete and transparent emissions profile.

### Carbon emissions per home\*

| Scope   | Existing homes (total tCO2e) | Communal areas<br>(total tCO2e) | Total<br>(tCO2e) |
|---------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| Scope 1 | 10,222.00                    | 346.00                          | 10,568.00        |
| Scope 2 | 33,861.50                    | 933.70                          | 34,795.20        |
| Scope 3 | N/A                          | N/A                             | N/A              |
| Total   | 44,083.50                    | 1,279.70                        | 45,363.20        |

<sup>\*</sup>This table does not include emissions from several categories, including (but not limited to) natural resources, water, homeworking and biodiversity.

#### Sava Intelligent Energy

The Sava Intelligent Energy scheme is a software and consultancy service that helps housing providers understand, manage and reduce energy use and carbon emissions across their homes. It also uses data from asset management systems to offer insights into potential improvement measures.

Through Sava, we gain a comprehensive understanding of our property performance to better deliver programme works that enable our less efficient homes to achieve EPC–C by our target of 2030. Our Sava findings are as follows:

### 1. Sava Scores (including new-build homes and recently acquired properties)

- Number of homes assessed: 14,625
- Average SAP (EPC): 59.09 (EPC-D)
- Average CO2e per home: 2.94 tonnes (2,914 kgCO2e per year).

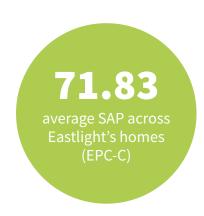
#### 2. Sava Scores (excluding new-build homes and recently acquired properties)

- Number of homes assessed: 11,708 (A–G)
- Average SAP (EPC): 71.83 (EPC-C)
- Average CO2e per home: 2.43 tonnes (2,434.96 kgCO2e per year).

The average Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) score **including** new-build homes and recently acquired properties is relatively low (59.09). This is due to a number of properties with current unknown EPC ratings – for example, homes that Eastlight owns which do not require us calculating an EPC, like leasehold, shared ownership, homes for market and intermediate rent, and supported housing.

Please note that this is an 'average' score across Eastlight's whole housing stock; it is not intended to infer actual figures. Our Sava Scores 2 above (**excluding** new-build homes and recently acquired properties) gives us a more accurate reflection of our average SAP and CO2e per home to-date based on those actually assessed.

For clarity, calculated average SAP scores are based solely on available EPC ratings at the time. It relates to the average assessment of each property. Our 80% EPC-C score reported elsewhere in this document relates to the average percentage of all homes assessed that have achieved EPC-C and above.



#### **Our offices**

The cost and energy consumption of our two offices, Eastlight House (our Head Office in Braintree) and Marks Tey Hub (our repairs and maintenance office), are found below.

### Eastlight House energy use:

- Electricity Consumption: 214,710 kWh (2024: 209,813 kWh)
- Fossil Fuel Consumption: 50,058 kgCO2e (2024: 48,916 kgCO2e)
- Annual Cost: £75,706.82 (2024: £133,073.23)
- Solar PV Generation: 13,780.07 kWh (2024: 12,734.02 kWh).

### Marks Tey Hub energy use:

- Electricity Consumption: 45,376 kWh (2024: 41,214 kWh)
- Fossil Fuel Consumption: 10,579 kgCO2e (2024: 9,609 kgCO2e)
- Annual Cost: £19,284.29 (2024: £26,487.87).

In 2023–24, we moved towards 'green' renewable energy and away from 'brown' fossil fuel energy sources. While our overall consumption has slightly increased year-on-year due to higher demand at our offices, our annual costs have decreased dramatically (£64,569.99 saved). Green energy enables us to enhance energy performance and reinvest cost savings back into providing more sustainable homes, services and operations.

Soaring energy costs since the Covid-19 pandemic and due to geopolitical tensions has resulted in significantly higher prices than that in 2022–23 (Eastlight House, 2023: £35,056.87).

At the end of August 2024, we leased a previous community space at Eastlight House to one community partner, Provide CIC – a not-for-profit organisation offering health and social care services. The organisation's energy consumption and associated costs have been included in the above calculations. Our future ESG Reports will calculate Eastlight's actual energy consumption to share a true reflection of our carbon emissions and costs.

**Current Energy Use of Eastlight House** – Located in Braintree, Eastlight House is our main office and is aligned with best practice for:

- Building fabric the building was built to 2010 Building Regulations and is well insulated, with double/triple glazed windows. There are options to reduce heat loss and thermal gain
- Lighting 95% of the lighting is LED and most is controlled by presence sensors
- On-site generation the roof houses 84 solar PV panels, and produced 13,780.07 kWh in 2024–25 100% of which was used on site
- Heating, ventilation and cooling heating and hot water is provided by efficient on-demand system zip boilers. We have three air-source heat pumps (ASHP), which run the ceiling units in the ground-floor café area, first-floor workspaces and top-floor kitchen space of the office; and three ground-source heat pumps (GSHP), which provide heating and cooling to the rest of the building.



Eastlight made continued progress securing credits via the Carbon Credit scheme to offset our greenhouse gas emissions. We are currently implementing a new asset management system to report on the data against our carbon emissions more frequently and accurately, and we expect to do this effectively in 2026.



How has the housing provider mapped and assessed the climate risks to its homes and supply chain, such as increased flood, drought and overheating risks? How is the housing provider mitigating these risks?

We recognise that our new homes should be designed to respond to the various ways in which our climate is changing due to global warming. During the design life of a building, temperature increases coupled with improved thermal performance of buildings will naturally lead to a heightened risk of overheating. The increased frequency and intensity of storms caused by global warming also brings the risk of surface water flooding and changes the availability of water generally.

Our Design Guide focuses on landscape design and integrating sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) to help mitigate the risk of surface water flooding from more regular and harsher storm events.

All our land-led schemes take an innovative, sustainable approach to managing water, for the maintenance of landscape proposals, to enhance site experience and have as minimal an impact on surrounding infrastructure as possible. Rainwater can be used for several purposes: for resident amenity, as part of a natural landscape strategy, and to support landscape maintenance, such as rain gardens. Under our Design Guide, all drainage will be SUDS, wherever site conditions permit.

Our carbon audit (completed July 2025) by Turner & Townsend found that some of Eastlight's homes may be possibly situated in low-risk flood areas, as defined by the Environmental Agency and following a flood risk assessment provided on a public-use license.

Eastlight's Insurance and Data teams identify what homes are at such risk to ensure these are appropriately categorised and monitored over time. We also receive early warning flood service communications from the Environmental Agency to support and protect any residents affected. We aim to increase our data accuracy and flood approach moving forward, including adding all new homes delivered or acquired to our EA early warning flood service.

Since 2022, Building Regulations (Part O) has addressed overheating in new residential buildings. Alongside other parts, like Parts L and F, the regulations aim to improve thermal performance, ventilation and reduce overall carbon use by more than 30%.



Our Design Guide addresses each of these parts with particular focus on the resident perspective, considering their comfort, natural light to circulation areas and preventing overheating in the summer, with good ventilation and air quality.

Efficiency of layout and passive heating, cooling and lighting is essential and underpins the fabric-first approach we take for the overall building design and development.

All our land-led designs will enhance daylight and sunlight distribution internally, limit heat loss and facilitate easy ventilation. The building fabric is designed to be as air-tight and thermally efficient as possible to help regulate internal thermal comfort, limit unwanted heat loss and exclude cold air, whilst controlling unwanted excessive solar gains.

Home layouts in our designs optimise heat gains during the day to reduce heating load requirements at night. Living spaces and bedrooms will be ideally located to minimise overheating and direct sunlight, while optimising usability and ventilation.

Reducing east and, in particular, west-facing elevations also helps to reduce the risk of overheating. The position of buildings on-site should also consider overshadowing from adjacent buildings and other objects, such as trees, which can provide seasonal shade. This external shading paired with natural crossventilation is effective (a 'passive approach'), alongside shading devices that can mitigate overheating.

Windows are prioritised on opposite or adjacent elevations of a room and well-spaced out, optimising efficiency and limiting an overreliance on mechanical cooling wherever possible. The proportion of glazing facing north, east, south, and west are carefully considered to balance the need to retain effective heating with appropriate ventilation, cooling, air quality, privacy and the view from the home.

An overreliance on technology rather than 'passive' shading will lead to increased future maintenance and operational costs for both the resident and Eastlight, and it will therefore be avoided as much as possible.

It was recommended by Turner & Townsend in our carbon audit 2025 to consider what assessment tools are necessary to determine the actual heating risk for new builds, and to further complete Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) assessments to understand heating risk to existing homes. In collecting better data, coupled with feedback from residents, we can increasingly baseline

and understand risk in relation to retrofit inventions.

Eastlight is committed to achieving at least a 25% minimum improvement over and above building regulation requirements for all future land-led projects, and an ambition for Net Zero Carbon is in operation for all projects.

25% improvement on uilding regulations for all land-led

Within Eastlight's existing homes, we are ever more focused on using tried-and-tested technologies to limit the impact of overheating within our properties. By installing energy efficient thermostats like Switchee smart devices, we can identify when a specific property may be at risk of overheating, or where residents may be susceptible to heat stroke, and intervene to support the resident.

Our ability to monitor the heat in our residents' homes via an asset management dashboard enables Eastlight to ensure that residents can live safely and comfortably in their homes amid the adverse change in our climate.

Eastlight's Head of Development and Executive Director of Business Growth, Data & Change have responsibility for ensuring the organisation's development activities, particularly on land-led schemes, make provision to mitigate climate risks through its strategic documents and contractor requirements, such as the Design Guide. Similarly, the Eastlight Head of Asset & Investment and Executive Director of Property ensure our asset plans are keenly focused on achieving Net Zero Carbon, mitigating identified climate impacts.

Climate change and sustainability form part of our Strategic Risk Register, with oversight from our Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) and Board. The register is reviewed on a quarterly basis.



### **Ecology**



Does the housing provider have a strategy to enhance green space and promote biodiversity on or near homes?

Our Sustainability Strategy focuses on the need for biodiversity and increasing the natural environment across our new homes programme, neighbourhoods and Eastlight establishments, for the health and wellbeing of our people, residents and communities.

We maximise sustainable heating at our facilities and seek to protect local wildlife from the impact of our operations. In addition, the Eastlight team and our in-house Sustainability Champions create more awareness for colleagues and residents on ways to support local flora and fauna, and the positive effect biodiversity and nature has on overall health and wellbeing.

We aim to protect and enhance natural habitats through the design and construction of new homes to support local wildlife in our open, green spaces.

Underpinning the core design principles in our Design Guide is our focus on the Environment, including protecting ecology and providing a net increase in biodiversity on land-led sites. We recognise that the design quality of the landscape and outdoor spaces within and surrounding the scheme are just as important as the buildings themselves; green space and biodiversity encourages community cohesion, supports health and wellbeing and delivers a range of sustainable benefits – such as improved air quality, seasonal shading, noise reduction, carbon sequestration, urban greening, security and better rainwater management.

We seek to optimise opportunities for tree planting and greenery on all land-led schemes to significantly improve local natural habitats and wildlife, while reducing hard landscaping. For new projects, Eastlight carries out an ecological survey to identify early-stage wildlife, and habitat landscape proposals help to conserve and improve nature and biodiversity.

All our homes should be designed to take advantage of aspect and views to facilitate an awareness of nature and green space. This enables residents to benefit from biophilia and provides opportunities for exercise, play and communal activities, which leads to residents living healthier lifestyles and cohabiting in harmony.

Our Mount Hill development in Halstead, Essex, is a perfect example of us putting this into practice. At which, hedgehog highways have been installed between gardens, bat and bird boxes were fitted, and our team added hibernacula for lizards and reptiles for the conservation of nearby wildlife. The development also engaged the local community to spruce up the area with planting and flowers, in addition to delivering the 'Bumble Bee Park' playground – named by young resident, Lilly (aged seven at the time) – to support outdoor activities for children and families. Eastlight completed this site in 2024–25.

Furthermore, our Eastlight-led Whatfield Road development in Elmsett, Ipswich, is the first to fully meet the specifications as set within our Design Guide. Upon acquiring the site in 2023-24, the Eastlight Development Team and contractors located great-crested newts, the largest but rarest in the UK. To contribute towards their protection, our team liaised with Natural England to have them rehomed to a more suitable, sheltered habitat, ensuring that local, endangered species can otherwise thrive if not on-site. Whatfield Road will be completed in 2025.

Eastlight commits to meeting the 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirement for new housing on land-led schemes, or higher where local planning authorities have increased these requirements through local strategy or planning conditions. Development partners and contractors are otherwise responsible for meeting the BNG obligation on the new homes Eastlight acquires through Section 106 agreements.

Our most recent tree survey identified around 4,164 trees across our estates, representing 36 different species. In addition, we cover a range of grounds maintenance services, such as grass cutting, hedge trimming and seasonal upkeep to communal areas.

No biodiversity data was collected for our previous carbon audit in 2021–22, therefore data acquired through our most recent carbon audit (July 2025) will serve as a baseline for future measurement and evaluation. However, the audit provided recommendations for Eastlight to develop our existing database of habitats (known as 'habitat banking') which are currently located on our development sites; this should include tree survey data, known habitats, and known planning conditions that will enable us to monitor changes over time and understand our impact, leading to informed future strategies that focus on enhanced biodiversity, new build development, grounds maintenance and overall sustainability.





Does the housing provider have a strategy to identify, manage and reduce pollutants that could cause material harm? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

Eastlight commissioned Turner & Townsend to conduct a carbon audit in 2021–22, which established the carbon baseline across all areas of our existing homes, new homes and pipeline, providing essential information against which our ongoing and future performance can be measured to manage and reduce pollutants causing harm.

It also identified the various retrofit approaches Eastlight could take to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions across its operations, achieve higher energy efficiency standards and ensure such measures constitute a pathway to achieving Net Zero by 2050.

The outcome of the audit informed our Sustainability Strategy, which has ambitious objectives, including:

- Reducing CO2 by reusing and recycling materials throughout the lifecycle of our homes (development, maintenance, investment and improvement), using a retrofit and fabric-first approach
- Using trialled and tested renewable technologies to reduce the cost of living in one of Eastlight's homes
- Minimising our carbon footprint in the running of our workplaces, including what we buy and how we travel (such as our fleet, business travel and employee commute).

Our Sustainability Strategy also recognises the impact of climate change on health and housing. Between 80% and 90% of people spend their lives indoors and much of that time at home (POSTbrief 54: Indoor Air Quality 2023, UK Parliament). As such, the strategy notes that energy efficiency interventions and minimising the use of pollutants in our homes and operations can improve general respiratory outcomes, promoting a healthier, fulfilling lifestyle for colleagues, residents and the general public.

Renewed
Sustainability
Strategy planned
for 2025–26"

Eastlight commissioned Turner & Townsend to complete a second carbon audit in April 2025 to determine where our environmental impacts have changed and to provide recommendations the organisation should take into account to further develop its sustainability ambitions. The audit (completed July 2025) and its findings now form our new carbon baseline, against which progress will measured.

The recommendations for managing pollutants causing risk of harm were as follows:

- Broaden data to include all Eastlight's main contractors, including mileage data and an ongoing assessment of their nitrogen dioxide (NO2) emissions
- Continual improvements to data quality and performance, through metering and monitoring both new and retrofitted homes
- Transition to clean heat sources such as heat pumps to limit harmful NO2, which is the greatest environmental threat to health in the UK (Public Health England)
- Collect boiler data from leaseholders where information is unknown to track NO2 emitted by gas boilers. In Eastlight's homes, gas, oil and other fuel boilers make up around 97% of our NO2 emissions, contributing to an estimate of 128,093,500 kWh use and 18.35 tonnes of CO2e
- Consider implementing an environmental management system and undertaking a full ISO141001-compliant environmental audit to further understand and monitor risks pertaining to business operations, including, but not limited to, phosphate-based pesticide use; asbestos removal; diesel and oil storage; and overall pollution control.

While it was also noted that Eastlight's Sustainability Strategy demonstrated commendable commitment to environmental stewardship through qualitative summaries, it was recommended that we should increasingly adopt a range of quantitative metrics into our performance reporting, such as carbon emissions per home, water consumption and waste reduction figures.

These recommendations will shape the review of Eastlight's Sustainability Strategy in 2025–26.

In 2024, we launched local patches for our multi-skilled Home Solutions Team. Working in one of four geographical areas across the East of England (Colchester and the East; Witham and the South; Braintree; and Halstead and the North), this place-based approach came as a direct result of resident feedback.

Not only do the patches aim to improve our visibility and communication with residents, but it also enables our team to reduce their travel time and air pollution. The effort also decreased fleet travel by 18,139 miles and saved 6,751.54 kgCO2e in carbon emissions.

In 2025, we look to shift our operations to a place-based working model to not only improve customer satisfaction, but to work in a more sustainable way, including reducing our carbon footprint. We will measure positive impacts achieved through further carbon audits and customer satisfaction scores, like the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs), particularly where related to neighbourhood and community contributions. Proposals for place-based working began at the beginning of 2025, with plans to launch such an operating model by November 2025.

6.8kg
CO2e saved in carbon emissions through patch-based repairs service

We frequently measure our performance against targets in line with our strategies, Design Guide, the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations, making changes to operations where necessary.

We analyse our data annually and publish findings transparently through the Sustainability for Housing: Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS) framework. Through which, we can understand where we are performing well, in line with other housing associations of a similar size and structure. We investigate where gaps persist in our organisation following these internal and external insights and put action plans in place to address them.

Our Sustainability Champions also play an essential role in identifying and responding to areas where Eastlight could enhance its environmental performance, proposing opportunities to the Executive Team. Eastlight's Executive Director of Property is the executive sponsor for the Sustainability Champions group, supporting a two-way dialogue between sustainability-passionate colleagues and the Leadership Team and Board.

Internally, we continue to offer our staff a range of benefits that limit greenhouse gasses emitted into the atmosphere, such as encouraging car sharing, agile working arrangements and a cycle-to-work scheme for local commuters. Our People Services & Organisational Development Team, and other employee groups like EastVoice – which contains colleague representatives across the business that help to shape Eastlight's workplace – frequently measure such impacts and advocate for new innovations, ways of working and colleague benefits to boost sustainability.



### **Resource Management**



Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building and repair works? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

We recognise that materials are a finite resource. Therefore, all our materials must be robust, fit-for-purpose and with low maintenance (i.e. easily repairable or replaceable) throughout the lifespan of the building or repair works, with easily recyclable contents.

We are committed to development projects that contribute to the circular economy, whereby the role of materials is well considered and responsibly sourced. As noted in our Design Guide, all specifications should consider the material hierarchy: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle.

Construction materials, systems, internal fittings and finishes used in the development of our new homes should come from sustainable sources with low volatile organic compounds (VOC) and should either be recycled themselves or easily recyclable in future, which may require close collaboration with our main contractors. All our materials should be fit-for-purpose and support overall building efficiency with a low-carbon footprint that is easily documented and can be demonstrated to have a positive impact. Where possible, we re-use buildings and installations to have a far smaller impact on the environment than building 'from scratch'.

Within our operations, our Home Solutions Team frequently partners with sustainable suppliers to source the best materials for their work. Our team ensure that all our Planed Square Edge (PSE) timber, plywood and internal doors come from a minimum of 70% Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) products, and that all our roofing insulation is made from 100% recycled polyester.

All our vinyl flooring installation waste and offcuts are returned to the manufacturer for closed-loop recycling; in 2024–25, 456kg of product was returned to our manufacturers, creating a 1.6 tonne reduction in CO2e (CO2 equivalent).

At our repairs and maintenance office in Marks Tey, our Home Solutions Team ensures uniforms and clothing items purchased are increasingly made from organic cotton and recycled materials, partnering with suppliers that offer a clothing and personal protective equipment (PPE) recycling service. In the year, our team recycled eleven 8kg uniform sacks with local Chelmsford Safety Supplies PPE, generating an estimated 37 kgCO2e in carbon savings with emissions attributed to electricity generation or recycled material production.

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle material hierarchy for all building and repair materials" For all painting and decoration works, our teams partnered with Crown Decorating Centre, purchasing and returning 100% of their empty paint cans to the supplier to further reduce waste, and save time and money.

Passionate to help Eastlight to reduce its carbon footprint and support sustainability in our offices, including our Head Office in Braintree, team members have also continued to switch cleaning and other products for more sustainable and ecofriendly options. In the year, our Facilities Team has:

- Implemented recycled bags for all bin and waste disposal
- Purchased toilet roll, hand towels and napkins, all made from recycled materials. The dispensers for these items are recycled themselves from beverage cartons, for which all have, on average, saved 17 trees and reduced CO2 by 1,114.20kg
- Procured a cleaning company that focuses on products and materials that are sustainable and reusable, including cloths used for general cleaning
- Ensured all cleaning products use raw materials derived from plant-based extracts. They are now all vegan-certified, probiotic and non-toxic, nor tested on animals
- Through Jangro's NTRL\* environmental cleaning product line, purchased bottles made from 100% post-consumer recycled plastic (PCR), reducing carbon emissions by 85% compared to virgin plastic, with all packaging recycled or recyclable
- Used refillable containers for all building hand soap, dishwasher powder, dishwasher salt, washing powder and washing liquid to reduce single-use plastics, and subscribed to additional materials through a refill business to limit further impacts
- Reduced water-use and transporting impacts by purchasing soap pods as opposed to 'off-the-shelf' products and containers, which often produce high carbon emissions through production and delivery
- Sourced 100% recycled paper and notepads for colleague use
- Supplied certified organic cotton-covered sanitary pads and tampons, which
  are all plastic, genetically modified organism (GMO) and chlorine-free. These
  also have no perfumes or dyes, and are biodegradable and compostable,
  with components grown without toxic pesticides.

\*NTRL hold ISO14001 environmental certification and are accredited to Carbon PAS2060 for carbon neutrality.







Does the housing provider have a strategy for waste management incorporating building materials? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

Our Sustainability Strategy and Design Guide outlines the ways in which Eastlight aims to reduce, reuse and recycle (our waste hierarchy) throughout the construction process, by using better building materials and working with partners who are equally committed to ethical building practices and who use sustainable procurement principles.

Significant focus is placed on designing efficient buildings which use less material and create less waste. Buildings should require low energy and fewer resources to maintain, which will also minimise construction costs. We measure efficiency by the ratio of net usable area to gross area, but consider other factors, including standardisation of plot types, construction detailing, components, fixtures and fittings.

We see our materials as a valuable resource. Wherever possible, our development schemes will contribute to the circular economy through reuse, material selection, recycling and the overall reduction of waste and pollution.

Our teams similarly consider the benefits that modern methods of construction (MMC) and regeneration can bring to such reductions, in terms of resources, waste and construction time.

Our new homes on land-led schemes will encourage and facilitate resident recycling generally and make provisions for this within the kitchen design, while containing external bins or storage where appropriate. We continue to encourage residents to reduce their own personal waste, as we do with our colleagues within our office buildings. We are also committed to taking action when it comes to recycling larger waste items, garden waste and building materials through local recycling networks, sometimes in collaboration with local authorities and external organisations.

Following our carbon audit in 2025, it was recommended by business consultants Turner & Townsend that we work closer with our contractors to collect greater building material data to ensure accuracy and robust monitoring of sourcing sustainable materials, calculating embodied emissions and responsibly disposing of waste. A Waste Policy may also support us in determining how we deal with waste across our offices, maintenance contractors, existing homes and new developments. We will use this feedback as we review our Sustainability Strategy in 2025–26.

We follow the waste hierarchy at both our Eastlight House in Braintree and our Repairs & Maintenance hub at Marks Tey.

Modern methods
of construction and
regeneration increases
overall efficiency"

Our contractor – CSH Environmental – who prioritises waste segregation and zero waste to landfill, provides an annual breakdown of waste recycled from our operations and our joint performance with other organisations. In the year:

- 55,210.52 tonnes of waste was recycled
- 35,755.77 tonnes of waste was converted into energy
- 205.04 tonnes of waste went to landfill
- Total: 90,966.29 tonnes of waste was converted from 91,171.33 tonnes (99.78% landfill avoidance)\*.

\*These figures are reflective of all CSH Environmental partner organisations, not Eastlight's individual performance.

We continually work towards zero waste to landfill at our Marks Tey office, with teams segregating a range of items before collection or sending onto a waste recycling centre, including lamps, batteries, plasterboard, oils, paints, wood and general waste. We are currently trialling waste collections for our Planned Works Team, reducing our contractors' collections to provide a more auditable trace of where our waste lands, delivering better waste management in the coming years.



Does the housing provider have a strategy for water management? If so, how does the housing provider target and measure performance?

Eastlight strongly believes that water should be prioritised as a valuable resource in the same way as energy and materials.

As described in our Sustainability Strategy and Design Guide, the design of our new developments aims to reduce potable water usage by using certified low-water fixtures, fittings and appliances, as far as is reasonably practicable. Consideration is given to recycling rainwater and grey water wherever possible, from watering gardens and flushing toilets to recycling heat from pre-heated water.

Not only do we seek to reduce water usage, but our designs attempt to optimise water quality and promote the accessibility of water through water use-reducing technologies.

We frequently conduct site visits and keep in regular conversation with residents to determine how happy, safe and secure they are in their new homes, including where our efforts regarding sustainability and environmental features, including water management, prove successful.

Where possible, we will endeavour to build homes with water-use reducing technologies and provide water recycling measures, offsetting healthy water waste to local ponds or similar, to contribute to the wider environment.

99.78%

landfill avoidance from our waste contractor

In our homes, water consumption data is recorded monthly. Per year, water consumption is assumed to be 1,830,011 m3 per year. However, it was recommended by Turner & Townsend in our carbon audit 2025 that we should attain more detailed data on residents' water usage; we look to do this more accurately in future to provide a clearer basis for setting performance targets and measuring progress.

Of all water consumption, around 97% (3,120,339.60 m3) of all Eastlight's water consumption (3,208,304.40 m3) for the year, came from resident use.

Within our operations, our offices aim to minimise the use of water and maximise reusable water where possible. Each office has installed senor taps for reducing water overuse for handwashing, added zip taps to our kitchen and facility areas, and utilised a rainwater harvesting system for our dual-flush toilets.

As such, our total water use at Eastlight House in the year was as follows:

- Water Consumption: 592 m3 (2024: 557 m3)
- Fossil Fuel Consumption: 600 kgCO2e (2024: 559 kgCO2e)
- Total Cost: £1,162.58 (2024: £1,394.54).

While our water and CO2 consumption has increased year-on-year, our costs have decreased by approximately 17% (£231.96 saved). All cost savings are reinvested into Eastlight business.

Our usage at our Marks Tey office was assumed rather than directly measured in 2024-25. In the years ahead, we aim to report more accurately through our recent installation of new, smart water meters.

We acknowledge our positive water impact throughout our offices and operations, and we share approaches to minimising water usage with our colleagues, residents and communities. This may include increasing metering to encourage reductions in water demand and implementing bulk water metering across estates to improve visibility of resident water usage. We may seek to develop an approach in partnership with water providers to support more accurate data collection and long-term water efficiency in future.





The Thermify Heat Hub has made a real difference to our comfort and energy costs. We're now spending just £50 to £70 per month on electricity rather than the £375 we were spending previously, even with it running 24/7 in winter.

Our home feels warm throughout – especially in the bedroom, which was always hardest to heat. The Switchee thermostat is simple to use, and we'd absolutely recommend Thermify to anyone. It's been a great addition to our home."

Terrence Bridges, Eastlight resident





## Social

## **Affordability & Security**

C12

For properties that are subject to the rent regulation regime, report against one or more Affordability Metric:

- 1) Rent compared to median Private Rental Sector (PRS) rent across the Local Authority
- 2) Rent compared to Local Housing Allowance (LHA).

For each local authority we operate in, we compare the median monthly rent that we charge against the median monthly private rents across all homes in that area. The figures we use for Eastlight's rents reflect our Statistical Data Return to the Regulator of Social Housing. We obtain the figures for private rents from the Valuation Office Agency's Private Rental Market Summary Statistics (reported for September 2024).

We also compare our average weekly rents within each local authority area against the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for the same area.

Based on these comparisons, in 2024–25, Eastlight charged rents that were on average 52% of private market rents and 62% of the LHA.

Over the full year, this equated to an effective discount of nearly £81m compared to private market rent levels, or around £6,300 per home per year.



Number and share of existing homes (owned and/or managed) that were completed before the last financial year, allocated to general needs (social rent), intermediate rent, affordable rent, supported housing, housing for older people, low-cost home ownership, care homes, private-rented sector or other.

This table shows the breakdown of Eastlight's existing homes by housing type (homes that were already complete before the last financial year). Eastlight started with 1,141 homes (8.9%) more than it had a year earlier.

|                               | 2024-25 |        | 2023–24 |        |
|-------------------------------|---------|--------|---------|--------|
| Classification                | Count   | %      | Count   | %      |
| Social Rent                   | 8,948   | 64.0%  | 8,502   | 66.1%  |
| Affordable Rent               | 2,930   | 20.9%  | 2,620   | 20.4%  |
| Intermediate Rent             | 94      | 0.7%   | 77      | 0.6%   |
| Housing for Older People      | 649     | 4.6%   | 637     | 5.0%   |
| Low-cost Home Ownership       | 1,193   | 8.5%   | 863     | 6.7%   |
| Supported Housing             | 126     | 0.9%   | 116     | 0.9%   |
| Other                         | 55      | 0.4%   | 39      | 0.3%   |
| Total homes owned and managed | 13,995  | 100.0% | 12,854  | 100.0% |

Eastlight manages further stock, including leasehold (freehold owned and managed for others), ground leases and commercial properties. This equates to 630 units, bringing our entire housing stock to 14,625 as at 31 March 2025.

In the year, Eastlight also acquired 860 homes from other social housing landlords. These figures have been included in the table on page 48. As per SRS guidance (May 2025), these units are not classified as 'new' homes, as it is the date of construction – not the date that the home entered into our portfolio – that is considered.

However, for transparency, the homes acquired in the year included:

- 703 homes in Essex and Suffolk from Clarion Housing Group
- 128 homes in Tendring from L&Q
- 29 homes in Halstead from Estuary Housing Association.

The acquisition of homes formed part of what is commonly known as 'stock rationalisation', whereby housing providers sell a number of homes that are situated outside of their core operating areas to landlords that have a higher concentration of stock within those locations and are therefore more equipped to provide residents with key housing services.

In addition to providing better services to local residents, absorbing these homes also strengthened Eastlight's long-term financial position, and increased efficiency by closing geographical gaps in our housing stock.

As such, Eastlight acquired the following homes assigned to general needs (social rent), intermediate rent, affordable rent, supported housing, housing for older people, low-cost home ownership or other, as follows:

|                          |       | 2024-25 |  |
|--------------------------|-------|---------|--|
| Classification           | Count | %       |  |
| Social Rent              | 440   | 51.2%   |  |
| Affordable Rent          | 115   | 13.4%   |  |
| Intermediate Rent        | 17    | 2.0%    |  |
| Housing for Older People | 21    | 2.4%    |  |
| Low-cost Home Ownership  | 207   | 24.1%   |  |
| Supported Housing        | 10    | 1.1%    |  |
| Other                    | 50    | 5.8%    |  |
| Total homes acquired     | 860   | 100.0%  |  |

860
homes acquired from other social housing providers



Number and share of **new homes** (owned and/or managed) that were completed in the last financial year, allocated to general needs (social rent), intermediate rent, affordable rent, supported housing, housing for older people, low-cost home ownership, care homes, private-rented sector or other.

Eastlight completed 328 new homes in 2024–25, a 21% decrease on the 417 homes delivered last year.

The table below shows the breakdown of the new homes we delivered during the year under review:

|                           | 2024-25* |        | 2023–24 |        |
|---------------------------|----------|--------|---------|--------|
| Classification            | Count    | %      | Count   | %      |
| Social Rent               | 4        | 1.2%   | 0       | 0.0%   |
| Affordable Rent           | 194      | 59.2%  | 275     | 65.9%  |
| Shared Ownership          | 130      | 39.6%  | 142     | 34.1%  |
| Total new homes delivered | 328      | 100.0% | 417     | 100.0% |

\*Unfortunately, higher interest rates have markedly slowed down our affordable housing development output, particularly for social rent. However, like other housing associations, Eastlight remains committed to doing all we can to meet local housing need. Encouragingly, our social rent output has increased slightly on last year. In June 2025, the Government announced a ten-year, £39bn investment in the Affordable Homes Programme, alongside confirmation of a rent settlement of CPI+1%, from 2026. This provides greater certainty for the sector and will enable Eastlight to confidently plan and build more genuinely affordable homes in the years ahead.

In May 2025, the SRS published its fourth Annual Review, collating the ESG performance of 91 housing providers and SRS adopters in the UK, which together own and manage nearly 1.9m homes. Of these providers, an average of 55% of all new homes built were for social (25%) and affordable rent (30%).

60%
of all new homes built
were for affordable
and social rent

Whilst we cannot draw conclusions about the social housing sector as a whole, our delivery of social and affordable rented homes (60%) in the year compares favourably to the findings from the SRS Annual Review 2025. However, we recognise the continued challenges for housing associations, like Eastlight, to deliver new homes, particularly for social rent, in the midst of a complex economic environment.





# How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?

Eastlight's Asset Management Strategy works hand-in-hand with our Sustainability Strategy to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on residents, particularly amid the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and increased energy bills.

Fuel poverty is a growing, national challenge which affects a sizable proportion of customers. As of 2023, approximately 3.17m households in England were living in fuel poverty, representing 13% of all households (Low Income Low Energy Efficiency Indicator).

Those that live in poorly insulated homes often rely on inefficient heating systems that allow heat to escape and fuel costs to soar. This is often compounded by low household incomes, irregular work and access to Universal Credit. Those who find themselves in this situation may feel forced to prioritise buying food or other essentials over energy.

Our two strategies make it clear that we work on a fabric-first approach. This means we ensure that our homes are properly insulated, and that the money spent by our customers on heating goes further by retaining heat within the home for as long as possible.

We are also improving our EPC–C 2030 and Net Zero Carbon 2050 plans, as well as specification target energy efficient models, i.e. A-rated Windows, A-rated boilers, etc. To help us achieve this, Eastlight partnered with Smart Heat & Intelligent Energy in Low-income Districts (SHIELD) to trial new energy technologies and attain funding to insulate and reduce energy consumption for residents so they can better afford to heat their homes.

As part of the SHIELD project in 2023–24, we trialled new technologies in two residents' homes, which included air-source heat pumps (ASHP), solar photovoltaics (PV) panels, roof replacements and electric storage batteries. This resulted in EPC ratings jumping from D to B in one resident's home, and D to C in the other. It has also increased the overall energy efficiency in each home by over 200%. Following this trial, we are assessing the changes and techniques needed to deploy these technologies into other existing homes, bringing our remaining housing stock up to EPC–C and above.

£2.4m
three-year investment to make residents' homes more energy efficient

This year (2024–25) with SHIELD, we also trialled new innovative heating solutions in one resident's home in Cressing by installing a Thermify HeatHub to capture and retain heating, while also adding solar panels and electric battery storage. These efforts enabled the residents' costs to go further and their energy consumption to reduce overall, with heating bills dropping by 40%.

In addition to this, our partnership with the Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) scheme provided a range of energy-saving solutions to benefit residents, such as insulation improvements, green heating systems and boiler repairs.

Through which, we have completed cavity wall insulation (CWI) on more than 80 homes so far, and we aim to continue this progress in rounds of 40 homes at a time. The programme is delivered at zero cost to Eastlight, with savings estimated at between £2,000 to £4,000 per home.

Eastlight secured £1.2m in funding from the UK Government's Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund (Wave 3) in March 2025. By matching this funding to bring our total commitment to £2.4m over the next three years, we are able to make crucial energy efficiency upgrades to 275 residents' homes, such as installing solar panels to generate renewable energy, air source heat pumps (ASHP) for low carbon heating solutions and improving heat retention through loft insultation.

Our focus on installing greater solar panel systems should see resident energy bill savings ranging from £160 to £565, depending on electricity cost, the size of the property, time and scale of energy consumption, the number of panels installed, and roof elevation.

Where possible and as necessary, we will encourage residents to change tariffs to achieve more favourable prices and install smart meters to export electricity back to the grid, which can both help to reduce costs.

Under our sustainability programme and trials with our partners, we prioritise insulating properties with external wall and cavity wall insulation (EWI/CWI) to support the retention of heat, alongside new heating systems such as ASHP, which can be up to 300% more efficient than fossil-fuel heating appliances, as seen in our recent SHIELD trials at Twinstead.

Furthermore, our Design Guide sets out the innovation, technology and new on-site energy storage measures assessed and considered when designing and delivering our new homes programme, which seeks to address and tackle fuel poverty amongst residents. It also highlights our commitment to address fuel poverty by no longer specifying gas for heating or cooking in our homes, irrespective of building regulations.

Throughout 2024–25, many low-income households and residents required assistance in claiming the benefits they were entitled to and needed extra support around paying their energy bills.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team injected £90,000 into our Tenancy Support Fund, which covers the costs of household items and supporting residents to sustain their tenancy. This included paying for new floorings, carpets and the purchasing of white goods, like cookers and washing machines, in addition to home cleaning and skips.

Overall, more than 400 residents benefitted from this fund, in which we allocated £22,000 for our Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service - a confidential 24/7 helpline and online portal that allows residents to receive completely free advice around anything from relationship difficulties and debt advice to be reavement and alcohol and drug issues.



In addition, our £80,000 Fuel Fund provided 435 eligible and struggling customers with fuel vouchers so they could afford to heat their homes, particularly during the winter months.

Eastlight team members also gave specialist advice to more than 2,100 customers, securing around £2,000,606 for those who needed guidance around claiming a range of benefits including Universal Credit, helping to offset the cost-of-living pressure and, with it, rising energy bills.

To further help residents who may be financially insecure or in need of an income boost, we publish a range of advice, tips, and internal and external support via the Eastlight website, with dedicated pages signposting people to cost-of-living assistance, welfare benefits and our tenancy sustainment service. These initiatives are frequently communicated through resident channels, including social media and our quarterly Shine magazine.

See more on the Eastlight website: www.eastlighthomes.co.uk

Some of our services may change as we look to implement a place-based way of working in 2025-26. This approach aims to deliver more visible, local contacts that can better support residents through greater expertise and by working more closely with our partners.



# **C16**

## How does the housing provider provide security of tenure for residents?

Eastlight's Allocations & Lettings Team works in line with our resident-approved policies and procedures when creating a new tenancy or managing a tenancy assignment. When creating new tenancies, pre-tenure checks are completed to ensure we know as much as possible about the individual circumstances of each resident, so that we can appropriately advise and provide support where required.

During our assured and starter tenancies, a Tenancy Co-ordinator will meet and speak directly with the resident to determine whether any additional support is needed for them to sustain their tenancy. Similarly, we interact with all residents during the use and occupation of the property, including licencing and rehousing them temporarily as and when appropriate.

If a long-term tenancy or licence cannot legally be granted (for example, if there are significant repairs needed to a home that prevents the resident from living there while these are carried out, or following a death of a tenant where a discretionary agreement has been offered while a new home is found), then we will meet and speak with the resident to resolve the matter, wherever possible.

Of all Eastlight homes that are tenanted (13,626), just 0.8% (112) of homes had a tenancy agreement of less than three years. This relates to homes for intermediate rent (92) and market rent (20).

In the year, sales of 150 shared ownership homes were completed, with all shared owners on a 990-year lease. All Eastlight shared ownership homes (1,193) and managed leasehold homes (602) make up 12.6% of all Eastlight tenancies.

\*Figure includes general needs, intermediate and market rented homes, housing for older people schemes, supporting housing, leasehold and shared ownership. It excludes empty homes ('voids') and shared ownership units unsold.

99.2%

households have a tenancy agreement of three years or more

### **Building Safety & Quality**



Describe the condition of the housing provider's portfolio, with reference to:

- a) % of homes for which all required gas safety checks have been carried out
- **b)** % of homes for which all required fire risk assessments have been carried out
- c) % of homes for which all required electrical safety checks have been carried out.

#### a) Gas Safety

As at 31 March 2025, we achieved a **99.5%** gas safety compliance rating. Issues with gaining access to homes in the year due to higher servicing demands resulted in 45 overdue gas inspections – 41 of which were less than three months overdue, three were less than six months overdue, and one was more than six months overdue.

In April 2025, 11 of the 45 overdue gas inspections had already been completed.

To ensure we maintain residents' safety, our gas access process starts ten weeks before services are due. At least three access attempts are made for all inspections. Each of those overdue are now progressing through the legal process; this enables Eastlight to gain access to the home so we can carry out the necessary checks.

We are working to smooth the servicing programme during winter months. We seek lifetime injunctions to prevent repeat issues, and we communicate with residents through a variety of channels, both of which are supporting the access management process.

#### b) Fire Safety

**99.9%** of our fire risk assessments (FRA) were in-date. One FRA was overdue in a supported housing, three-bedroom property, which was being relet at the time of inspection.

In April 2025, the overdue FRA was complete, meaning 100% would have been achieved for the year.

No High-Risk (P1) FRAs were overdue at the end of March 2025.



#### c) Electrical Safety

**99.9%** of our electrical inspections were complete in the year. One decennial electrical inspection was left overdue in one home as our contractors were unable to access the fuseboard following multiple access attempts.

In May 2025, we temporarily rehoused the resident, who required extensive support from us for hoarding and mental health issues. THINK Business Support Ltd. were hired to clear the property so that our electrical contractor could complete the final electrical inspection.

#### Our overall statutory compliance rating for the year 2024-25 was 99.5%.

Other safety checks and risk assessments carried out in the year to the end of March 2025 are as follows:

- Asbestos 100%. Of those that required one, all homes had at least one asbestos survey in the year
- Water Safety 100%. All homes that have shared water supplies had a valid water hygiene risk assessment
- Communal Lifts 98.8%. One passenger lift was non-compliant at the end of financial year as a thorough examination was yet to be completed. Following extensive communication, no resident in the building was dependent on the lift. It was therefore isolated. Works to the lift pit tank was completed in February 2025, and the lift refurbishment, including all final snagging, was completed in April 2025.

There were no High-Risk LOLER (Lifting Operations & Lifting Equipment Regulations) follow-on-actions overdue at the end of March 2025.

Our teams communicate with residents effectively to ensure checks are completed on time and to a high standard

# **C18**

# What % of homes meet the national housing quality standard?

Eastlight achieved a 99.98% compliance rating with the Decent Homes Standard in 2024–25. The failing 0.02% was due to two properties that failed compliance against the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS), with works left outstanding at the end of the year.

However, by May 2025, all failing components and works were rectified, which would have seen Eastlight achieve 100% compliance with the Decent Homes Standard.

# **C19**

# How do you manage and mitigate the risk of damp and mould for your residents?

At a time of high inflation and a cost-of-living crisis, many Eastlight residents are struggling to heat their homes efficiently and are in need of energy efficiency improvement works. These issues combined have left many residents experiencing damp and mould in their home.

Due to this – and following the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale (2020) – we have received an increase in calls from concerned residents about damp and mould.

We proactively support residents by implementing new ways of working. This includes a Healthy Homes Team and Damp & Mould Policy, which already complies with response and repair timescales in line with Awaab's Law, which formally takes effect from October 2025.

Our Healthy Homes Team proactively supports residents where evidence of damp and mould has been identified. Depending on priority, our team will visit homes within 14 calendar days to complete and resolve works – checking moisture and humidity levels, washing down mould, checking appropriate ventilation in bathrooms and kitchens, and completing minor repairs.

99.98%

compliance with the Decent Homes Standard

Where work cannot be completed the same day, the team will schedule any follow-on work – liaising with other teams and contractors to manage damp and mould in future, preventing its return. We will also write to residents within two working days with a summary of our visit and advise on any next steps to ensure the issue is resolved.

Furthermore, a dedicated Resident Liaison Officer will keep in contact with the resident throughout any ongoing jobs or follow-on works to ensure they get the continued help they need, whether it be to their property or other support like financial aid or wellbeing advice through external services or our Tenancy Sustainment Team. This is particularly a priority if the resident is at increased risk due to health or age.

By the end of March 2025, our teams received 1,813 new cases of damp and mould, an 11% increase when compared to last year (2024: 1,630 cases). Of these, just 3% (56 cases) were overdue by the end of the year, of which only 0.7% (12 cases) were attended outside of the 14-day target range. Of these 12 cases, residents either declined Eastlight's support and resolved the matter themselves, or the cases were left open for follow-on works.

We have plans in place to maintain our target as per Awaab's Law, reducing the number of no-access issues or rescheduled appointments that occurred frequently in the year, through further staff training and resident engagement exercises.

We continue to use the data we have on our homes and residents to address systemic issues relating to specific property types, estates or resident groups. For example, we proactively reach out to residents who have not been in contact in over two years and may not, for whatever reason, have had the opportunity to raise damp and mould concerns to us.

In addition to service-level improvements, all employees within Eastlight – regardless of their role – have completed mandatory e-learning training on recognising the signs and causes, and colleagues can now effectively resolve or report damp and mould issues to responsible team members.

Eastlight has taken further precautions and actions in response to the findings in the Housing Ombudsman's Special Report on Rochdale Boroughwide Housing in the form of a proactive communications strategy that meets residents' needs, where related to damp and mould.

Eastlight provides information in print (such as leaflets, postcards and letters), social media and, most prominently, through our website, which includes a dedicated area for damp and mould issues.

Through these communications, we inform residents about the importance of heating and ventilation to tackle damp and mould. We also detail our damp and mould service offer – including our Healthy Homes Team – and our responsibilities as their landlord, as well as other best practice for managing instances of penetrating damp, plumbing issues and condensation, and how to tackle it.



Our damp and mould website page also enables concerned or worried residents to report damp and mould instantly with detailed descriptions through our online form, or they can report issues in other ways, such as by telephone, email and social media.

Other areas of the website explain our Tenancy Sustainment Service, our 24/7 Tenant Support & Wellbeing helpline and online portal, and information to contact us if they are struggling to pay their rent, buy enough food or heat their homes.

We also have a Health & Safety leaflet for all residents available on the Safety Checks page on our website, which greater outlines our responsibilities as their landlord, the residents' responsibilities and essential tips and information to avoid issues and hazards.

See more on the Eastlight website here: www.eastlighthomes.co.uk



#### **Resident Voice**



What are the results of the housing provider's most recent tenant satisfaction survey? How has the housing provider acted on these results?

On 1 April 2024, the Regulator of Social Housing published its Consumer Standards, and with it, a set of Tenant Satisfaction Measures (or TSMs) that registered social housing providers must report against. These measures provide a baseline for how Eastlight residents feel about the ways in which we communicate and provide homes and services.

While satisfaction remains a challenge across the sector, we are already seeing improvements on the previous year – reflecting our people's commitment to 'thinking customer', delivering safe, high-quality homes and communities, and reliable services.

A total of 1,084 tenants, 291 shared owners and 144 leaseholders were surveyed across 2024-25 to understand their views on Eastlight's ability to meet their needs, upkeep their homes and neighbourhoods, and provide adequate, responsive customer service.

Every month, on our behalf, TFL Research contacts a sample of Eastlight residents living in towns and villages across our operational areas to ask them to complete a survey about our services and the way we communicate. Most surveys were completed over the phone, but web and postal surveys were also used.

Our key findings\* in April 2025 were as follows:

|      | Satisfaction with                                    | Eastlight<br>2025<br>(year-end) | <b>Eastlight</b><br><b>2024</b><br>(year-end) | Sector<br>average<br>(median) |
|------|--|---------------------------------|---|-------------------------------|
| TP01 | Overall service                                      | 72.7%                           | 69.6%   | 72.5%                         |
| TP02 | Repairs reported in the last 12 months               | 77.0%                           | 72.1%   | 74.0%                         |
| TP03 | Time taken to complete repairs in the last 12 months | 69.8%                           | 66.1%   | 69.9%                         |
| TP04 | Home is well maintained                              | 74.2%                           | 71.6%   | 72.8%                         |
| TP05 | Home is safe   | 80.4%                           | 80.0%   | 79.1%                         |
| TP06 | Listens to tenants' views and acts upon them         | 63.8%                           | 60.9%   | 61.9%                         |
| TP07 | Being kept informed                                  | 69.3%                           | 70.4%   | 73.0%                         |
| TP08 | Being treated fairly and with respect                | 77.5%                           | 77.7%   | 78.1%                         |
| TP09 | Approach to complaints in the last 12 months         | 33.0%                           | 35.1%   | 35.3%                         |
| TP10 | Communal areas                                       | 58.9%                           | 58.9%   | 67.3%                         |
| TP11 | Positive contribution to the neighbourhood           | 59.6%                           | 58.9%   | 66.3%                         |
| TP12 | Approach to anti-social behaviour (ASB)              | 58.4%                           | 54.6%   | 60.1%                         |

<sup>\*</sup>Findings are as found at year-end. Results of all surveys carried out each quarter were totalled and divided by four. TP01 score relates only to 'tenants' surveyed.

Our findings continue to follow a sector trend whereby social housing residents generally feel that their social landlord offers good or 'average' services. Many residents, including those living in an Eastlight home, feel that their landlord can perform better particularly in areas relating to complaints, anti-social behaviour and in making their neighbourhoods better places to live.

In addition, many social housing residents do not believe their landlord considers their views or uses their insights to improve the services they offer. This trend remains unchanged from 2023–24.

While more Eastlight residents are satisfied with the homes and services we provide than last year, our aim is to continue improvement so that our resident satisfaction is amongst the top 25% of social housing providers by March 2027.

We recognise the differing experiences of those living in an Eastlight home, and we have implemented plans to improve the satisfaction of those who are least content with our services. We aim to show people that we are listening and acting on their feedback.

Our TSM survey results are reviewed monthly by Eastlight's Executive Management Team and shared quarterly at all-staff forums.



Following our final TSM scores in April 2025, our findings and actions for the year include:



### **Improved Communication**

Despite residents noting our helpful and polite manner – whether it be through in-person visits and repairs, or phone calls answered by our customer service colleagues – truly effective communication between Eastlight team members and residents remains a top priority for us.

In response to this, we launched an internal 'Think Customer' campaign in September 2024, requiring all team members to ask themselves five crucial questions during their workday, focusing on: their short and long-term impacts; whether the resident's individual needs and preferences have been considered; if their communication is clear, respectful and appropriate; past insights and experiences to aid their decision-making; and whether they would be happy with the service they are providing.

Throughout the year, our Communications & External Affairs Team published clear examples of where these principles were put into practice and delivered effective resolutions. Where appropriate, these were also shared with residents to demonstrate the impact of them holding us to account and to provide evidence of Eastlight listening and responding to their needs.

'Think Customer' takes precedence in all discussions in our organisation and is used as a framework by which all business leaders can ensure team members achieve resident satisfaction in their service areas.

In the year, many teams received bespoke communications training, which outlined what is expected of them when communicating with residents. This involved conversations around how each colleague should address customer queries through our many channels. It also included how to triage cases effectively with other departments and reviewing a series of letters that we send to residents, providing clear, empathetic and appropriate responses, especially when related to changes to our service or following a complaint.

The importance of 'Think Customer' is now an objective for all staff in their annual appraisals and development plans.





### **Complaints Handling**

There have been significant improvements in the timeliness of complaint responses.

Eastlight received 43% fewer complaints this year, compared to 2023–24. Of the 576 complaints that were received and responded to, only 65 were escalated to Stage Two, meaning that around 89% of all cases were fully resolved before further investigation or escalation was required. This follows improved team structures and training in the year that has enabled colleagues to better listen to residents and resolve concerns at a faster rate.

We see complaints as a critical form of insight, and we use these findings to learn and improve the overall customer experience, as evidenced in our Complaint Performance & Service Improvement Report on our website.

In the year, Eastlight received just 16 Housing Ombudsman determinations; no determinations were considered 'severe'. This is below average for maladministration found by the Housing Ombudsman for the social housing sector.

Eastlight published two policies – an updated Complaints & Resolutions Policy and new Managing Behaviours Policy – to ensure colleagues can address issues and complaints fairly, transparently and respectfully. Changes to the Complaints & Resolutions Policy made processes clearer and easier to follow, requiring colleagues to provide proactive updates to residents, wherever possible. In line with Housing Ombudsman best practice, our Managing Behaviours Policy allows us to set clear boundaries in those rare and exceptional circumstances where customer behaviour is considered extreme, irregular or unreasonable.

We also use timely data from our complaints Customer Journey surveys to identify where specific improvements can be made to our complaints handling. Through these learnings, we have improved satisfaction and reduced the number of complaints requiring escalation.

89% all complaints resolved at Stage One



Positive feedback on repairs has steadily increased over the course of the year. Residents acknowledged our prompt response to emergency and urgent repairs, in addition to high-quality customer service from our operatives. However, they also recognised that some repairs, carried out by either Eastlight team members or one of our contractors, were poor in quality, significantly delayed and appointments were not communicated effectively.

To address these issues, not only have we sourced greater contractor support and boosted our in-house capacity, but we have also appointed a new Operations Manager to oversee performance, offered a 'repairs incentive scheme' to operatives, and improved communication with colleagues. All of this combined has already enhanced response timescales and team productivity.

By moving to a place-based approach, we aim to develop our operatives' local knowledge, reduce journey times to better manage appointments, and advance the speed of repairs generally.





We are working towards becoming a place-based organisation, which means that all residents living in a community will have a point of contact who can help them with a range of housing and neighbourhood issues. As well as helping to increase our presence in residents' neighbourhoods, we believe this will help address issues around our quality and speed of service and improve our TSM scores, where related to neighbourhood impact and communication.

In addition, a place-based approach will enable Eastlight to build better connections between residents and team members, enabling us to resolve certain complaints faster. This includes reoccurring repairs, persistent damp and mould issues, and supporting residents with safety and wellbeing concerns – all of which were real-life complaints made to Eastlight this year, where we believe a place-based operating model would have made a positive difference.

We began reviewing place-based operations in early 2025. We look to implement our approach in November 2025, securing engagement and feedback from Eastlight team members, residents, partners and stakeholders.

Increasing resident satisfaction is ongoing work for Eastlight. However, we hope to see major improvements to our TSM scores over 2025–26, following these changes.

New Neighbourhood
Teams will increase
visibility and
accountability
in 2025–26"

In addition to surveys required for tracking the TSMs, Eastlight also measures satisfaction in other ways, including following services delivered for repairs, lettings, anti-social behaviour and complaints.

We send surveys by phone and email. We introduced our 'Customer Journey Surveys' in July 2024, which superseded the previous 'Rant & Rave' approach. This new survey offers us far greater detail to help us understand and tailor our services more accurately. In 2024–25, the Customer Journey Surveys generated around 1,300 richer customer responses per year.



# What arrangements are in place to enable residents to hold management to account for the provision of services?

Eastlight is committed to ensuring residents can influence decision-making at various levels of the organisation. They are empowered to hold Eastlight to account for the homes, services and overall experience they receive from us.

As the biggest resident-led housing association in the country, Eastlight ensures the following:

### **Shareholding:**

Eastlight residents can become shareholders and are entitled to vote at our Annual General Meeting (AGM) and any Special General Meetings (SGM). Shareholder voting is required for rule changes and the appointment of Board Members and auditors.

During the year, Eastlight reviewed its shareholding framework to ensure it remained effective for the ongoing activities of the organisation and its residents. A consultation was launched in March 2025 to replace the existing shareholding offer with a Resident Members Charter, which offers greater opportunities for residents to influence and shape service delivery at Eastlight.

The consultation was favourable, and it was agreed that the change should be put to a formal vote of the shareholders. Accordingly, an SGM was held on 25 June 2025; at which, shareholders voted strongly in favour of the Resident Members Charter – with 92% votes for the change, and 8% against.

Moving forward, Eastlight will have a closed shareholding. This means that Board Members will be the only shareholders, and the previous resident shareholders would be invited to become Resident Members instead. The Resident Members Charter will become enshrined in Eastlight's Rules as part of our ongoing commitment to being resident-led. This formal change will take place in July 2025.

Resident
Members Charter
voted in by
92% of resident
shareholders"

#### **Customer Influence Committee & Resident Board Members**

We formed a Customer Influence Committee (CIC) in 2021. The CIC is part of our governance structure and is accountable to our Board.

As at 31 March 2025, the CIC comprised eight Eastlight residents and one individual with lived experience in social housing. Each Committee Member has a specialist area of oversight – ranging from complaints handling and health and safety to reactive repairs and new home development – and frequently reviews all resident-facing strategies, policies and procedures.

In 2024, a recruitment campaign was launched to add a new member with lived experience to our Board and CIC, whether an Eastlight resident or otherwise, who was appointed in the year. A further recruitment campaign is planned for 2025–26, which aims to attract two new CIC members and one resident Trainee Board Member to replace the outgoing Trainee.

Three members of our CIC sat on our Board, which included one Trainee Board Member.

### **Resident Engagement & Community Empowerment Strategy**

Launched in 2024, our three-year Resident Engagement & Community Empowerment Strategy reinforces our past resident engagement and community empowerment activities. It focuses on creating opportunities for resident participation and feedback, building knowledge and skills, and enhancing partnerships with local stakeholders.

The strategy also emphasises our ambition to deliver trusted, local place-based services as well as a three-year investment programme for communal areas and neighbourhoods, both of which we aim to measure progress against using the Regulator's Tenant Satisfaction Measures and overall increase in efficiency.

Underpinning this strategy are a range of resident feedback and influence mechanisms which will be evolved and developed over time as opportunities are strengthened. Customers can inform strategic decision-making and enhance services through the following customer voice groups:

- Active Residents Network (ARN) A network of residents who share their expertise and passion to improve their homes, services and neighbourhoods. Members receive regular invitations to take part in activities, including scrutinising strategies, policies and services, playing an active role in their neighbourhoods and taking part in events to shape Eastlight's future
- Eastlight Resident Groups (ERG) local volunteer groups across Braintree, Halstead and Witham that come together to fix estate-based issues and make decisions on resident group spending
- Resident Academy Bootcamp a face-to-face learning experience to identify and upskill residents for the Committee and Boardroom, alongside wider community-based opportunities.

Our strategy
ensures the customer
voice enhances
our services"

Under this strategy, we also support residents to attain a greater understanding on the housing sector and Eastlight, through our Online Resident Academy, while providing resident design opportunities to gain deeper insight to develop a raft of service improvements.

#### **Freedom of Information**

Eastlight's constitution also obliges the organisation to act in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This means that performance and key information is accessible to the public.

Other information requested will be processed and determined on a case-bycase basis.



In the last 12 months, how many complaints has the national Ombudsman determined that maladministration took place? How have these complaints resulted in a change of practice?

In 2024–25, we received 16 Housing Ombudsman determinations, which carried 30 total findings: 12 maladministration; nine service failure; and five redress. The other four findings determined carried no maladministration.

By the end of the year, Eastlight had four further cases referred and under investigation from the Ombudsman – one determination has been received and three are still awaiting an outcome. Only one case was raised in 2023–24, with the further three cases raised in 2024–25.

While the rate at which our complaints have been escalated to the Ombudsman has increased to 2.8% (2024: 0.6%), we are proactively addressing and learning from its findings: we have ensured Customer Influence Committee oversight to address common themes and tackle route causes; delivered service area improvements to respond directly to failures found; terminated and retendered new contracts where services were previously promised and not received, resulting in such complaints; and reviewed policies and staff performance to ensure resident focus and satisfaction. This also included completing all orders and recommendations following these determinations, including awarding more than £7,000 in compensation.

The increased volume in complaints reviewed by the Ombudsman follows a complaint trend within the social housing sector and is comparable with similar organisations of our size and position.

In the year, we also reviewed our compensation amounts awarded in line with Housing Ombudsman guidance, alongside our internal 'Think Customer' campaign and in agreement with engaged Eastlight residents. Providing redress allows Eastlight to restore a person to the position they would have been in had the service failure not occurred; minus awards following determinations, Eastlight offers compensation at either Stage One or Stage Two of our complaints process.



This resulted in 385 cases awarded a total of around £135,000. Seven cases were granted compensation through Housing Ombudsman investigations, 59 were for heating issues, 22 for damp and mould, and 22 for poor communication. Eastlight has robust plans in place to address each of these issues and is actively resolving problems through its ongoing improvement activities.

### **Resident Support**



What are the key support services that the housing provider offers to its residents? How successful are these services in improving outcomes?

In putting residents at the forefront of our actions, we are proud of the way our team members have supported residents through another turbulent year. In the year ending March 2025, we have completed the following:

#### Secured £2m for 2,100 residents who needed benefits advice

Our Welfare Benefits service listened and communicated empathetically with residents to better understand their individual circumstances, determining the best possible outcomes. This led to securing £2,000,606 for 2,129 residents requiring financial gains in the year, like Universal Credit, Personal Independent Payments (PIP) and other claims.

Not only did team members identify a residents' rights to benefits and the support options available to them, but they worked with partners to ensure residents feel safe and could sustain their tenancies. In addition, the team supported other areas of the housing service by delivering team training, completing welfare visits to residents, and delivering food parcels to households that may be suffering financially.

#### Helped 185 residents experiencing domestic abuse

Residents most affected by or experiencing domestic abuse first-hand received dedicated support by our Tenancy Sustainment, Safeguarding and Intervention, Enforcement & Partnerships teams. In the year, this meant supporting 185 residents who raised or reported domestic abuse to us, resolving 122 cases.

We worked with Essex Police to reduce the risk of harm for domestic abuse victims and ensured the perpetrator was effectively reprimanded. We also partnered with Children's Social Care to ensure any dependants in the home were adequately cared for, alongside the relevant local authority and domestic abuse organisations, like Next Chapter and Essex Compass.

cases of domestic abuse supported

By liaising effectively with external partners and other Eastlight teams, we completed a range of works to the victims' homes to improve security measures, including additional locks and security cameras. We also supported residents with a managed move to help them feel safe in one of our homes and in their new community.

At Eastlight, we have a group of Domestic Abuse Champions and a strategic Domestic Abuse Steering Group that come together to investigate complex cases, develop process improvements and raise internal awareness on domestic abuse matters, ultimately providing increased support to residents. Through this work, we aim to achieve our Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation in 2025–26.

A Domestic Abuse case study can be found on page 75.

### Handled 1,150 instances of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) with care

We recognise the significant impact that ASB can have on residents' lives and the importance of addressing it effectively. We delivered a high standard of housing management this year that enabled residents to enjoy their homes without causing disruption to others – or being disrupted themselves.

Through a strong emphasis on the prevention, intervention and diversion of serious ASB, we took a variety of approaches to positively engage with residents and community members, while taking reasonable and proportionate action when necessary to address unacceptable behaviour.

In the year, we actively investigated and resolved 1,152 ASB incidents, including:

- 265 cases of domestic abuse, hate crime, cuckooing, drug-dealing and related activity, and severe violence or threats to kill (CAT A)
- 158 cases of verbal abuse, harassment, intimidation or threating behaviour (CAT B). This category also included frequent, serious disturbances; vandalism; damage to property; prostitution; and ASB fuelled by alcohol
- 176 cases of nuisance caused by vehicles, parking, youth, pets and animals (CAT C). This category also included unlawful substances and other disturbances, albeit infrequent
- 553 noise-related issues (CAT X).

#### Awarded £90k to 400 residents to help them sustain their homes

Our team of dedicated Tenancy Sustainment Co-ordinators provided help and support on a range of complex needs. Team members referred to our Tenancy Safeguarding & Sustainment service to help residents live independently, access health services, manage debt, access benefits and budgeting advice, and gain other support as necessary, such as concerns around hoarding, downsizing or moving home, for example.

The team also identified households that required assistance due to financial hardship – particularly amid a time of higher inflation and cost-of-living challenges – from general household support, furniture and appliance donations to winter fuel support and food vouchers.

Our Tenancy Support Fund financially supported 401 residents, which included our Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service (see more information below); tenancy sustainment assistance to 80 residents, including home cleaning, clearing and skip hires; and household support to 69 residents, such as new flooring, carpets and the purchasing of white goods, like cookers and washing machines.



# Maintained our Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service (TSWS) to support 250 residents

Our £22k TSWS helpline and online portal offered free and confidential advice and support to struggling residents, from relationship difficulties and debt advice to be reavement and alcohol and drug issues.

In the year, 252 residents used this service: 189 confidential telephone calls were made to a clinically qualified professional; 59 participated in chat sessions; three attended online consultations; and one private email was sent to the clinical team. The TSWS portal also received 420 views from Eastlight residents, with the most searched topics pertaining to money, debt and budgeting advice, and financial wellbeing.

The service also offered a mental health and life enrichment mobile app, MyMindPal, giving Eastlight residents free sign up and access. Both the application and TSWS formed part of Eastlight's Tenancy Support Fund.

## Safeguarded 760 customers with abuse and neglect

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team prevented homelessness amongst Eastlight residents by providing a range of support, alongside our debt and welfare benefits advice service. They also rectified poor property conditions, helping to reduce hoarding by completing affordability assessments, and identified where other support is required, such as garden maintenance.

Our Tenancy Sustainment Co-ordinators provided an intervention, case management and liaison role between Eastlight, residents and partner organisations to ensure issues identified were managed effectively and enabled residents to maintain living in positive places.

The team supported 759 residents in the year with actual or potential safeguarding concerns, following referrals made. This included 69 adult and 50 child safeguarding reports, each of which were worked through with the relevant authorities. A further 429 adult and 211 child safeguarding referrals were investigated and supported through our Tenancy Sustainment service, or by signposting to relevant external agencies.

Our most common referrals were for self-neglect, financial abuse and child neglect.

Of the 119 open cases deemed actual safeguarding concerns, team members were able to resolve or close a total of 97 cases in the year.

Eastlight's Safeguarding Panel is made up of Heads of Service and area managers who fulfil the role of Designated Safeguarding Leads. In addition to their day jobs, they are responsible for not only driving and promoting the Eastlight principles of safeguarding, but agreeing key organisational messages, developing and implementing recommendations, conducting trend analyses, and reviewing training, policies and procedures to improve our people's

A Safeguarding case study can be found on page 76.

awareness and ability to spot safeguarding issues and concerns.

759
safeguarding
cases addressed by
Eastlight teams,
local authorities and
external services

# Injected £80k into local organisations and charities through a joint fund with Braintree District Council

The Braintree District & Eastlight Community Fund awarded a total of £79,500 to charities and community groups in the Braintree district, supporting residents affected by the cost-of-living, social isolation, mental ill-health and wellbeing, and creating opportunities for young people.

These latest grants built on more than £1m already awarded through the fund to a host of local causes. This not only directly supported the communities in which we work, but it also offered a range of health and wellbeing services to local residents and their families, including Eastlight residents. See a full breakdown on page 82.

## Helped to heat more than 400 homes with £80k in fuel vouchers

Our Tenancy Sustainment Team supported 435 residents experiencing financial hardship and struggling to heat their homes by working with the Trussel Trust organisation to offer fuel bank vouchers worth up to £80,000.

## Gifted goodwill during Christmas

In winter 2024–25, a range of Eastlight team members banded together to support those struggling during the Christmas period, which we know can be a difficult time for many residents. This included:

- Delivering food vouchers and Christmas cards to 34 households in financial hardship
- Donating food and personal hygiene products to Braintree Area Foodbank to support the charity in stocking up on essential items during a period of high demand
- Contributing toys and gifts for local children with Essex Police as part of the Salvation Army initiative, which aimed to ensure fewer children missed out on the magic of Christmas
- Partnering with Next Chapter on gift aid, which included significant contributions by our contractor Gas Call, and contractors Axis and Pilon donating more than £1,000.



## Collaborated closely with key support agencies and partners

Our Intervention, Enforcement & Partnerships Team maintained close working relationships with local stakeholders to focus on how best we could jointly support residents. This included effective relationship and case management with Police Forces across Essex, Suffolk and Norfolk; local authorities through the Community Safety Partnerships; Domestic Abuse services for both victims and perpetrators, like Next Chapter, Essex Compass, Refuge and the Change Project; Social Services and Social Care for both adults and children; Peabody community outreach services; Mental Health and NHS services; Schools and educational institutions; Restorative Justice (mediation) councils; and public protection and offender management services – such as MARAC (Multi, Agency, Risk, Assessment, Conference), MAPPA (Multi, Agency, Public, Protection, Arrangements) and MOSOVO (Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders).

Our previous Community Common Room, located at our Head Office in Braintree, provided a dedicated space for government agencies and support networks to carry out their work and communicate closely with Eastlight team members. In 2024, we leased out this space to one valued community partner, Provide CIC – a not-for-profit organisation that offers vital health and social care services to local communities and residents, including those living in an Eastlight home. Our working relationships with other community partners have continued to work effectively, despite the changes to this space.

The services listed above may change as we look to implement a place-based way of working in 2025–26. However, our new approach aims to deliver more visible, local contacts that can better support residents and their diverse needs through greater colleague expertise and by working more closely with our partners. We aim to launch this way of working in winter 2025.





## Case Study #1: Domestic Abuse support

An Eastlight resident ended a relationship after their partner was imprisoned for abuse. They (the 'victim') accepted a managed move to stay safe, but after their partner's release, the victim believed their behaviour had changed and the relationship resumed.

Following the birth of their child, the abuse restarted. When the victim tried to leave again, the risk escalated.

The Police assessed the resident as high risk. Eastlight's Out-of-Hours Team secured the home, while the victim and children moved into temporary accommodation. But the resident wanted to return home.

An Intervention & Enforcement (I&E) Co-ordinator contacted the victim to understand the situation and explain all the support available. While most options were declined, they agreed to added security. This included a request to the Police for a Sanctuary Measures Assessment, with the recommendations later installed.

Eastlight's I&E, Customer Services and Repairs teams worked together to keep the home safe, with a secure contact method which helped maintain regular communication and safety planning.

Referrals were made to Children's Social Care and MARAC to ensure a joined-up response. The I&E Co-ordinator attended the MARAC meeting and helped develop further safety plans. When no further action was taken for the children, the I&E Co-ordinator challenged the decision and made another referral. This led to a renewed risk assessment and support being offered.

Eastlight worked closely with Next Chapter, the Local Authority, Police, Children's Social Care and Compass. But, after the perpetrator returned to the home, the resident fled again. The I&E Co-ordinator stayed in daily contact, keeping the Police informed and offering ongoing support.

Despite rent arrears, the Co-ordinator supported a potential mutual exchange and further safety planning. The victim once again chose to stay, feeling confident the home was now safe.

The perpetrator was later remanded. As court dates changed, the I&E Co-ordinator kept in touch to offer continued support should the perpetrator be released. Following our teams' and partners' diligent actions, the case was subsequently closed.

The Co-ordinator challenged the decision, leading to a renewed risk assessment and support"

# Case Study #2: Safeguarding concerns following financial abuse

An Eastlight Tenancy Sustainment Co-ordinator visited a resident living alone, after a member of our Home Solutions Team raised concerns about the property's condition.

The resident struggled with mobility and used a stick, walker and electric scooter. However, they rarely left the house due to social anxiety and a lack of support. The resident had no family nearby and had fallen out with their friends.

The resident's mental health support worker was present during the visit. When concerns were raised about the state of the home, the support worker became defensive, saying they had arranged a cleaner for £60 an hour. The Tenancy Sustainment Co-ordinator was concerned – the home was not clean, and the cost was unusually high. The worker also said they cut the resident's grass and responded to calls in the middle of the night.

When our Co-ordinator offered to refer the resident for befriending support, a cheaper cleaner and help with shopping, the support worker answered on the resident's behalf, saying they would handle any referrals if needed.

The Co-ordinator then learned that the worker advised the resident to spend most of their savings – bringing their balance down to just £2,000 – to remain below the benefits threshold. The resident was also sleeping on the sofa and, due to isolation, referred to the support worker as a "carer".

Realising something was wrong, our Co-ordinator contacted the support worker's supervisor, who confirmed that their worker's actions were not part of their role, and it appeared to be financial abuse. The supervisor admitted they already had concerns about this individual, and thanked the Eastlight team member for speaking up.

The Co-ordinator immediately made a safeguarding referral to the local authority. As a result, the resident was assigned a new support worker, and a full Care Needs Assessment was carried out.

Since then, the resident has had grab rails fitted, a reasonably priced cleaner, and support to go shopping and access money safely. The resident no longer feels isolated; they are now sleeping in a bed and receiving the right level of care.

The resident no longer feels isolated and is receiving the right level of care"

## **Placemaking**



Describe the housing provider's community investment activities, and how the housing provider is contributing to positive neighbourhood outcomes for the communities in which its homes are located.

As a resident-led, community gateway housing organisation, Eastlight continues to contribute positively to the communities in which it serves.

Our previous All In community incubator programme was the first of its kind in the UK, reflecting our ongoing commitment to strengthening relationships with residents and supporting communities across Essex and the East. The programme focused on key social challenges aligned with the UN Sustainable Development Goals, including education, health and wellbeing.

As a result, Eastlight offered 20 residents a full-time, paid opportunity to spend a year developing solutions to issues affecting their local area, with four scalable initiatives emerging as a result. These initiatives, now standalone businesses across Braintree, Colchester, Halstead and Witham, have since tackled a range of challenges, including financial hardship, stigma around menstruation, and mental health support. Two businesses, A Place to Be You – a community wellbeing hub in Braintree – and Trusted – a money confidence programme in Colchester – were both shortlisted in 2024 for the Small Business Awards in Essex, celebrating innovation and community impact.

An independent evaluation by Essex Business School showed that for every £1 invested, the programme generated a social return of £6.26 in its first year – demonstrating the value of investing in resident-led change.

Our Resident Engagement & Community Empowerment Strategy follows the work undertaken during the previous three years, including our doorstep conversations report and customer segmentation work in 2022. It is formally owned by Eastlight's Customer Influence Committee and was shaped by the Active Residents Network. Within which, it details our work to neighbourhood investment and creating cohesion in our communities. It also provides residents with more meaningful opportunities to help shape and influence our decision-making, particularly in the ways we deliver homes and services.



More details about Eastlight's contribution to sustainable social development can be found under the following activities:

#### **Active Residents Network**

The Active Residents Network (ARN) ensures effective resident consultation and feedback on key projects, ranging from strategies and policies to service reviews and community initiatives. They act as a sounding board for things that affect residents.

One hundred and sixty-two residents have joined our ARN, including 33 that signed up in the past year. Each member had the opportunity to participate in up to 76 activities in the past year, with 80% of projects (61) promoted through the ARN digital e-newsletter, which achieved a 62% average engagement rate.

Our active residents clocked more than 680 hours volunteering in such activities, including designing and informing our Annual Report for Customers, sharing their lived experiences directly with Board and Committee Members during a Board Away Day, and attending our internal Staff Forum 'Shine a Light' in autumn 2024 – an opportunity for residents to share experiences of their services, engage with Eastlight team members, and learn more about the work we do.

The group consulted and offered their views on four strategies, 13 policies and six key projects. They also participated in 21 different workshops, notably on:

- Shareholding at these workshops, engaged residents told us that our existing shareholding offer did not give them the opportunities to influence the services that matter most to them; this led to the group co-designing a proposed Resident Members Charter and Eastlight Community Gateway Circle, delivering a blend of existing and new ways to ensure the resident voice is heard by Eastlight. Following a favourable consultation, resident shareholders approved the Charter in June 2025 at a Special General Meeting; it will formalised in July 2025
- Customer Portal in the year, 15 ARN members helped to shape our new, online Customer Portal, which aims to offer residents easy access to information about their homes, tenancies, appointments and support services. Residents focused on overall functionality, accessible design and specific features, and opted to test the portal when the first phase launched in June 2025.

hours spent by our active residents on 76 activities in 2024–25



## **Eastlight Resident Groups**

The Eastlight Resident Groups (ERG) consist of local-based volunteers across Braintree, Halstead and Witham that come together to fix estate and community-based issues. They also have access to resident group spending, funding local community businesses, charities and initiatives, to reduce antisocial behaviour, social isolation and promote community cohesion.

In the year, 55 members attended the ERG meetings, with some joining Eastlight team members on estate walkabouts, helping to improve communal areas by offering feedback and spotting fly-tipping issues.

They also approved funding for a range of organisations, charities and groups across each district, totalling nearly £9,000:

- Colchester-based landscape gardening business, Greenfingers Garden Services, installed new flowerbeds across estates in Witham, following the ERGs granting £2,835 to replace previous fly tipping hotspots, which will now be looked after by local residents
- Communal improvements in the year saw the ERG grant £2,330 for new benches, planters and flowers at Godric Place in Braintree, alongside Colne Valley Close and Conies Road in Halstead
- Black Notley Scout & Guides Group was awarded £1,452 for camping equipment, and Silver End Scout & Guides was also given £676 for gas ovens and personalised group clothing
- Around £667 was used to support the Silver Tots Baby & Toddler group with the purchase of play equipment, like tunnels, gym mats, highchairs, Little Tikes bikes and hot water flasks
- Coggeshall Christmas Committee was granted £600 to support their Christmas market activities, including the cost of Santa Grotto presents for local children
- Silver End's Brownies also received £431 for new neckerchiefs and outdoor sports equipment.

The ERGs have played a vital role in other initiatives across the year. For example, the group paired up with a Parish Council to fund an additional £5,000 for a new playground in Panfield, Braintree, boosting the wellbeing of local families and creating a sense of community.

£9,000

awarded to local charities and initiatives by our Eastlight Resident Groups

#### **Residents Conference**

On Wednesday, 5 March 2025, Eastlight hosted a Resident Conference at Witham Public Hall. More than 30 engaged residents attended the event and were given a deep dive into Eastlight's past, the external housing landscape and economic environment, and our bold ambition for the future.

Facilitating a two-way conversation between landlord and resident, all attendees – including Eastlight staff – discussed the proposed Resident Members Charter, general resident engagement at Eastlight and how it informs our decision-making, and our joint desire to shift towards a place-based working model, which aims to deliver trusted, local services through more visible and contactable team members in our core operating areas.

The day also saw the relaunch of the in-person Resident Academy, with a focus on the history of social housing, anti-social behaviour handling and how we support residents experiencing domestic abuse.

Following the day's events, attendees rated the event as 'good' or 'very good', with 96% saying that they believe Eastlight listens and acts on their views.



### **Resident Academy**

Our in-person and online Resident Academy courses provide focused support so that residents can hold us accountable effectively and develop the skills required to achieve new opportunities at Eastlight.

The in-person Resident Academy invites Eastlight residents to attend a free bootcamp funded by Eastlight and gives them access to high-quality training materials, tools and guest speakers. The content has been designed to help residents play a more active role in our governance and community initiatives.

This year, we published two new online courses titled 'Housing in the UK Today' and 'How a Housing Association Works', following the success of previous editions between 2022–24, which received plaudits and interests from peers in the sector, including partners and residents. All courses were published on the Eastlight website to residents, staff and our wider stakeholders.

Around 1,700 people engaged with all virtual courses published in the year. The educational films feature our Board, Committees and Executive Management Team, alongside a range of housing association and political leaders, housing consultants and sector influencers.

This is more than a 600% increase in views from sector peers and customers than in the previous year (2024: 240 engagements).

### **Braintree District & Eastlight Community Fund**

The Braintree District & Eastlight Community Fund provided eight community organisations with grants adding up to almost £80,000, which will go on to support hundreds of local residents.

Following the panel meeting in October 2024:

- Action for Family Carers received £20,000 to keep their Young Carers Club based in Witham running
- CARA Centre for Action on Rape & Abuse was awarded £20,000 to aid the employment of councillors so CARA can continue providing specialist sexual violence and child sexual abuse support for around 170 adults and young people over the next two years
- A charity and social club, Happy Hill Essex CIO, which provides activities
  and sessions focused on emotional and social growth for children with
  special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), received £14,047 to meet
  the increased demand on their services
- Dance Network Association was granted £10,000 to support the continued delivery of dance and group sessions for those with dementia and their caregivers across Halstead and Braintree
- To support those struggling with their mental health, Braintree Rethink Art
   & Social Group secured £8,000 to cover their core operational running costs
- A £2,750 boost will help Friends of Cressing Temple to recruit a part-time Volunteer Support Officer to join their growing volunteer base at Cressing Temple

- Popcorn a previous Eastlight community incubator supports young children and adults experiencing isolation and aims to improve confidence and social skills. A £2,500 donation will offset their operating costs
- Halstead-based, Sunnydays Baby & Toddler Group CIC, created and run by an Eastlight resident, received £2,250 to ensure its support groups can continue at a high standard, despite growing demand and financial pressure.

## **Residents Work Experience Programme**

Eastlight launched a Residents Work Experience Programme in early 2025 – an opportunity for residents to gain practical experience in asset management and housing development. Designed to be flexible and work around their lives, the programme provided meaningful hands-on learning and the opportunity to gain a recognised entry-level qualification, paid for by Eastlight.

The programme honours the retirement of Eastlight Board Member, Dale Butcher, who played an integral role in Eastlight's merger and future direction since its formation in 2020.

One resident joined the Work Experience Programme in the year, and for one day a week, spent time with our Asset Management and Development teams to gain a deeper understanding into how we ensure our existing homes are safe, comfortable and energy efficient places to live, and how we build new, high-quality homes for the thousands of people in our local communities that are in need of viable, affordable housing.

The Work Experience Programme began on 6 January and ended on 6 July 2025.

Wendy Harris
with past Board Member,
Dale Butcher, during
work experience



# Our three-year communal area and neighbourhood investment programme

In 2024–25, 59% of residents were satisfied that Eastlight keeps their communal areas clean and well-maintained (TP10), and around 60% believed Eastlight makes a positive contribution to their neighbourhood (TP11), the same or slightly higher scores than reported in the previous year (see C20 for year-on-year results).

Communal areas and neighbourhoods are not only extensions of our residents' homes, but form part of our wider community. Through this lens, we want residents and community members to feel proud to live on our estates and in their neighbourhoods.

Our investment programme aims to increase resident satisfaction, and with it, our resident perception results, by making significant improvements to these areas. We will inspect and maintain areas with a focus on safety and cleanliness through our day-to-day activities; complete a range of environmental improvement works, such as playparks, scooter pods and bin stores; and deliver a raft of comprehensive programmed works, improving the look, feel and long-term safety and sustainability of our communal areas. All of which will be planned and delivered through consultation with residents, ensuring their feedback is incorporated into each project.

While Eastlight is investing £2.6m into residents' communal areas and a further £600,000 in environmental improvement projects in 2025–26 (up from £900k in 2024–25), works were already well underway by the end of March 2025.

In one example, we replaced a derelict, unsafe playground at Steeple Bumpstead in Braintree with a new playpark, with designs and colours, accessible pathways and facilities chosen and supported by more than 50 residents in the area. On Tweed Close in Halstead, team members liaised with residents to enhance bin and recycling facilities in their neighbourhood, which also included an outside drying area, new fencing, improved road markings and CCTV cameras.

For our major works programme, Eastlight's Asset Team launched improvements at Queens Road in Braintree and Parker Way in Halstead, both of which will soon benefit from a range of decoration and structural refurbishments – from new entrance canopies, brickwork, roofing and fire doors to window upgrades, bin stores and new door entry systems. Residents at these buildings have and will continue to be consulted through these works to shape the interior and exterior design, selecting preferred flooring and choosing new door colours.

In the year ahead, we aim to create a resident group via the Active Residents Network that is focused on this programme, alongside frequent consultation and feedback surveys.

£3.2m
investment in residents' communal areas and neighbourhoods in 2025–26

# All Eastlight teams believe that creating social value for our communities is an integral part of their work. For example, during 2024–25, our teams have:

- Built 1,535 new homes since Eastlight was formed in 2020, providing muchneeded affordable housing solutions to areas across the East that need them most
- Acquired 860 homes from other housing associations, including Clarion
  Housing Group (703), L&Q (128) and Estuary (29), that are situated in
  Eastlight's core operating areas and where we are better equipped to provide
  these residents with quality services and support as their new landlord
- Completed Eastlight's flagship, land-led development scheme at Mount Hill, Halstead, bringing 71 new affordable homes to the local area. The scheme includes an amenity space and environmental considerations, such as a hedgehog highway between gardens, bat and bird boxes, and a hibernaculum for lizards and reptiles
- Unveiled a playpark at Mount Hill, with residents pitching names for their new facility. Following the successful entry by young resident Lilly (aged seven at the time), the playground was named 'Bumble Bee Park'
- Invited Eastlight development partners and stakeholders to attend a
  Bricklaying Event at our land-led, fully affordable scheme at Whatfield Road,
  Elmsett (Ipswich), which will provide nine high-quality homes for social rent
  and nine for shared ownership. Pupils at Elmsett Church of England Primary
  School also received a hands-on tour to educate them on the need for
  affordable housing
- Consulted with residents living in Housing for Older People (HFOP) schemes
  on the possible regeneration of their homes to ensure they have a say in how
  they feel about the scheme and what they want to see from us
- Launching 'Community Amnesty Days' with local community associations, which invited staff, residents and local partners to give their estates a spring clean and declutter homes. The initiatives on one estate in Witham cleared out more than 4.5 tonnes of waste. Residents could also raise concerns about anti-social behaviour and gain practical advice on recycling from Eastlight, Braintree District Council and other community partners
- Worked with Braintree District Council on a Recycling Information & Waste Collection Day in Halstead to keep streets clean, share practical advice on waste reduction and recycling, and reduce residents' impact on the environment

1,535
new homes built since Eastlight formed in 2020

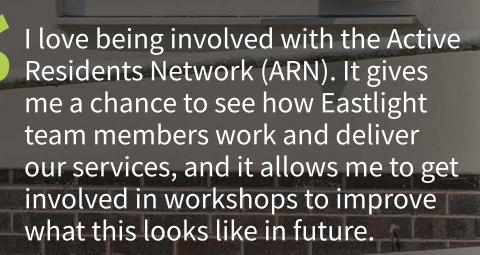


- Supported a residents' association in Witham to organise events, tree
  planting and explore rewilding areas on their estate. Alongside our
  contractors, Essex Wildlife Trust and Witham Town Council, six areas
  were identified for future rewilding to reduce the drastic decline in insect
  populations and to bring the community together
- Hosted an event with IntoUniversity for 30 Clacton-on-Sea students from Tendring Technology College so they could access a safe, open space for learning and development
- Sponsored a range of Eastlight residents in their drive to support local communities in our key areas, including the Rayne Youth U15s football team
- Re-homed seven puppies rescued by a resident, with four settling with Eastlight staff members
- Participated in a range of charitable activities, from marathons to hikes, with staff raising money that supports people in need, both locally and nationally
- Allocated funding to support the supply of food and equipment at HFOP scheme John King Court in Brightlingsea. A barbeque was hosted and spearheaded by the scheme's residents to celebrate their small community and to stave off loneliness
- Revamped facilities and transformed allotments at Stisted Primary school, enabling pupils to learn and develop green skills, while offering a welcome boost to their mental wellbeing, outside in nature
- Offered skips to local estates to tackle the increase in fly tipping, offsetting
  the cost placed on residents to remove the items themselves. These
  initiatives also included speaking to residents on concerns that matter most
  to them, such as pest control, repairs, street lighting and service charges
- Raised £370 through bake sales and raffles for the Witham Community Hub

   an organisation in Witham that aims to support social inclusion. It provides
   advice and assistance to local residents regarding unemployment, financial
   hardship, physical and mental ill health, substance misuse and dependency,
   discrimination and poor education skills for both youth and elderly groups.







"Being part of the ARN gives me the power to shape Eastlight's decision-making and ensure my voice is heard. From supporting Eastlight's Repairs Pledge to designing the new Resident Members Charter, I've thoroughly enjoyed getting to know the organisation's hard-working staff and seeing real results."

Tammy Collins, Eastlight resident and member of the Active Residents Network.





# Governance

## **Structure & Governance**



Is the housing provider registered with the national regulator of social housing?

Yes. Registration number: L4499.



# What is the housing provider's most recent regulatory grading/status?

Following an inspection by the Regulator in April 2025, Eastlight achieved its G1 (Governance) and V1 (Viability) gradings – the highest ratings available.

The inspection also awarded Eastlight its first Consumer 'C' grade: C2, confirming our ability to deliver on the Regulator's Consumer Standards. Where weaknesses have been identified, Eastlight will develop a plan to drive relevant improvements and positive outcomes for residents and share these transparently.

# C27

# Which Code of Governance does the housing provider follow, if any?

Under the Regulatory Framework, the Board is required to select and comply with a published Code of Governance. The Board has chosen to adopt the Code of Governance published by the National Housing Federation (NHF) in 2020 from 1 April 2021, which sets out a clear framework that organisations use to achieve a baseline for excellent governance.

The Board considers this Code to be the most appropriate for Eastlight, taking into account its size, corporate structure, community gateway principles and the nature of its activities. The Board assessed itself against the 2020 Code in July 2025 and is fully compliant with it in all material respects.

The Board has also adopted the NHF Code of Conduct 2022 and is equally complaint. In 2025-26, Eastlight plans to further strengthen its Code of Conduct with regard to its approach to working with residents and other customers.



## Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit?

Yes. Eastlight Community Homes is a not-for-profit housing association.



# Explain how the housing provider's Board manages ESG risks. Are ESG risks incorporated into the housing provider's risk register?

Eastlight has Risk Registers, a Risk Appetite Statement and Risk Management Framework.

Each operational area has its own Risk Register, and individual risks are escalated to senior leaders and the Board when the risks exceed their tolerances. The organisation's Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) and Board review the Strategic Risk Register quarterly. Our internal audit programme also assesses operational controls and reports findings to ARC.

Climate change and sustainability, including Net Zero Carbon, are considered within our Strategic Risk Register. We have mitigations in place to ensure we plan effectively, engage customers and can appropriately fund projects, to ensure we meet our legislative obligations, remain financially viable and succeed over the long term.

Amongst these mitigations are embedding Net Zero Carbon into our Business Plan, Asset Development Plan, annual budget-setting activities and new scheme appraisals. We also trial carbon reduction technologies, complete detailed evaluations of investment needs for each home, and we leverage expertise internally through our Executive Director of Property, who holds a Master's degree in Sustainability, and externally through business consultants, Turner & Townsend.

The importance of becoming more sustainable, with a goal to achieve Net Zero by 2050, is set out within our Sustainability Strategy, with risks considered at Board and Executive level to ensure appropriate mitigations are employed.

Using this as a framework, we are assessing our EPC-C 2030 projections and completing scenario-planning and stress-testing activities to improve our resilience and reduce future regulatory risk and extreme weather impacts. This will inform the review of our Sustainability Strategy which will be completed in 2025-26 with the support of our in-house team of Sustainability Champions.

The Strategic Risk Register also demonstrates mitigations regarding social and governance risks to our operations, including customer and corporate health and safety, the development of affordable homes and fraudulent activity, as well as the ability to recruit and retain the right people, and develop a robust organisational culture that reinforces our purpose, mission and organisational values.

Net Zero Carbon, climate change and sustainability form part of Eastlight's Strategic Risk Register" Legal and regulatory compliance, alongside data and governance, are also heavily considered in our Strategic Risk Register.

As a housing association, Eastlight is not required to report against the now disbanded (2023) Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) or other sustainability frameworks, such as the International Sustainability Standards Board (ISSB) IFRS S2 standard. However, we remain committed to transparent environmental reporting across the sector for our key stakeholders. We demonstrate this commitment by reporting against the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing and in the form of this ESG Report.

We ensure we comply with any reporting requirements of our sustainability-linked loan agreements with our lenders, such as EPC–C ratings and gender pay gap statistics.



Has the housing provider been subject to any adverse regulatory findings in the last 12 months (data protection breaches, bribery, money laundering, HSE breaches etc.) that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action?

Eastlight has not received any regulatory findings or judgments in the past 12 months that resulted in enforcement or other equivalent action.

We employ a Risk Management and Governance Framework with a comprehensive Internal Audit programme to encourage compliance throughout the business, with an Executive Lead who oversees that regular engagement, training and awareness is undertaken.

### **Board & Trustees**



Please answer the following:

- a) How does the housing provider ensure it gets input from a diverse range of people into its governance processes?
- **b)** Does the housing provider consider resident voice at the Board and senior management level?
- c) Does the housing provider have policies that incorporate Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) into the recruitment and selection of Board Members and senior management?

Eastlight has a diverse Board makeup; at all times, it comprises a maximum of 12 members and can include Board Co-optees and Trainees.



Appointments to the Board are made based on careful assessment of skills, knowledge and experience to match the profile of our future business and commercial objectives.

Board Members are drawn from a wide background, bringing together professional, commercial, local and other relevant experience. The Board undertakes an annual review of its skills and experience, and it continually aims to strengthen and enrich this when seeking new members.

We may recruit up to two Trainee Board Members in a non-voting capacity, and it is intended that these Trainee positions are for the appointment of Eastlight residents.

The Board has also agreed to ensure that at least one Board position is held by an appropriately skilled tenant with 'lived experience'. In the year, Eastlight recruited for such a Board Member and appointed Amandeep Singh Kalra to the Board.

We encourage residents to be active in our governance structure. On our Board are two Eastlight residents who live in our homes – Board Member, Catherine Turner and Trainee Board Member, Steve Bentall.

Eastlight resident Michelle Baker, who was Chair of our Customer Influence Committee and Senior Independent Director of the Association, stepped down from the Board and all other roles in June 2024. She joined Eastlight in 2020 as a Trainee Committee Member and left the organisation to take a welcome opportunity at the Regulator of Social Housing.

Catherine Turner became Chair of the Customer Influence Committee in June 2024, and Board Member, Kay Vowles, took over as Senior Independent Director of the Association.

Attributed to our Board are five Committees, each with eclectic expertise and knowledge held by its varied members. This includes the Customer Influence Committee, a group of nine Eastlight residents who continually champion the customer voice and influence the strategic and operational running of the organisation. They also provide assurance to the Board on the appropriateness of decisions that affect the lived experience of residents and its communities.

Each CIC Member has been assigned strategic oversight across various operational functions to ensure resident influence across Eastlight's key services, including estate services, development and regeneration, and health and safety.

In the year 2024–25, we welcomed new Board Member Amandeep Singh Kalra to our resident-led Customer Influence Committee. While not a resident with Eastlight, Amandeep brings his lived experience as a social housing resident to the Board and Committee, in addition to housing development, regeneration, asset management and architectural design expertise.



There are no residents on the organisation's Executive Team.

Before reporting to Executive, Committee or Board, all staff members are required to consider the impacts of their service areas – including any changes or matters arising that require escalation – from the resident perspective. Each report should clearly state how they have considered and anticipated resident need, concerns and experiences before presenting to Executive, Committee and/or Board.

A similar approach is carried for all Eastlight strategies and policies. Each customer-facing document will seek resident insight prior to seeking formal approval. This will most likely include feedback from the Active Residents Network (ARN), but it may include other groups where a select audience is most likely to be impacted. Any amendments following resident review will be made prior to processing the approval route, and the overall feedback will be summarised and included in future reports.

Our Board, Committees and Executive Management Team make provision for resident involvement and engagement at every opportunity. Not only have we previously invited residents to Board meetings and strategic off-site 'Away Days', but Board and Committee Members have also visited communities where Eastlight residents live to receive customer feedback in environments beyond the Boardroom.

In 2024–25, our Board, Committees and Executive Team attended an 'Out & About Day' across a handful of local estates, meeting and hearing directly from residents about their experiences. Door-knocking and home visits enabled meaningful conversations and insights into how residents felt about their homes, communities and the services we offer. Initiatives like these also allow Eastlight team members to share their expertise with leaders and demonstrate their activities to improve neighbourhood safety and wellbeing.

Eastlight's Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy explains our dedication to fostering an inclusive and diverse community in which difference is respected and celebrated. It highlights our commitment to creating workplaces and communities that reflect and promote equity on behalf of residents.

As per our Board & Committee Member Recruitment, Induction & Succession Policy, published in 2024–25, all recruitment will be conducted openly and transparently. We will always select a diverse recruitment panel and make all reasonable efforts to remove systemic barriers to ensure residents from diverse backgrounds have an equitable and fair route to employment and development opportunities.

Out & About'
days bring the
Board and residents
together"

All vacant positions will be advertised locally, including through engagement with the ARN, recruitment agent or in the relevant professional media, including social media. We will use specialised or bespoke job boards if there are particular gaps within our Governance Framework and when we determine a broader range of background, expertise and experience is required for the organisation's future success.

Where it relates to Board tenure, succession and diversity, our Board adopts a policy governing its processes for renewal in line with the Eastlight Rules. Non-Executive Board Members will serve for a fixed term-of-office of three years expiring at an Annual General Meeting (AGM), but they will normally serve for six years which is extendable to a maximum of nine years.

Extending tenure beyond six years will be based upon succession planning purposes, where the appropriate representation to achieve diversity in the Boardroom cannot otherwise be fulfilled.

No Non-Executive Board Member may serve on the Board for more than nine consecutive years in total, and no fixed terms may be set which exceed this requirement (Rule D10).

Eastlight's Board and Governance & People Committee monitor the diversity of the Board to ensure, so far as reasonably practicable, that it reflects the residents and communities in which it serves, including its workforce.

Similarly, our Board & Committee Member Effectiveness & Appraisal Policy, published in 2024–25, also outlines the responsibility of our Board and Committees to regularly review the skills, experience and diversity in the Boardroom, and how these support the contribution of the Board's business and overall progress of Eastlight's Corporate Strategy.

Eastlight's Board also partakes in the National Housing Federation's (NHF) Chairs' Challenge, a public commitment in which organisations recognise the importance of diversity and inclusion, and it commits to developing a more equal, representative and robust Board.

We continually analyse the makeup of our workforce (including staff, Executive and Board and Committee Members) through the NHF's EDI Data Tool, and we implement a Succession Plan focused on diversity that is reviewed on a frequent basis.

New policy
ensures Board and
Committee recruitment
is diverse, transparent
and fair"

We recruit and reward staff based on merit and without discrimination, and we deliver and promote awareness and inclusion training across our entire organisation, including on unconscious bias, inclusive recruitment and recognising discrimination. This applies to our Board, Committee Members and Leadership Team.

Each staff member responsible for writing strategies, policies and procedures for review and approval are required to consider an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) to inform the contents of these documents. Authors should outline clear mitigation measures for impacts against each protected characteristic.

An EIA must be both summarised and attached as an appendix to each report to Executive, Committee and Board to ensure challenge can be offered at these levels, providing assurance that such documents are robust in how we apply equality, diversity and inclusion within our organisation.

In our bid to ensure our Board is also reflective of the communities in which we serve, a breakdown of our Board makeup\* can be found below:

This table does not include Trainee Board Members.

| Board makeup            | March<br>2025 | March<br>2024 | Eastlight Residents<br>(March 2025) |
|-------------------------|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Women                   | 50%           | 60%           | 65%                                 |
| Ethnic Minority Group** | 20%           | 10%           | 7%                                  |
| Disability              | 30%           | 30%           | 29%                                 |
| Residents               | 10%           | 20%           | -                                   |
| Average age (years)     | 58            | 59            | -                                   |
| Average tenure (months) | 53            | 53            | -                                   |

\*All data in the table above excludes those either 'unknown' or who have chosen not to disclose their ethnicity.



We avoid using terms such as BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) or BME (Black and Minority Ethnic) because they can exclude other ethnic minority groups and produce misleading interpretations of data. We also do not use the term 'non-white'.





# What % of the housing provider's Board and senior management team have turned over in the last two years?

Between April 2023 and March 2025, two Board Members left the organisation, and two Board Members were appointed – resulting in a Board turnover of 20%.

During the same period, a restructure to our Executive Management Team saw the number of Executive Directors change from five members in 2023 to seven members in 2024. These figures include the Chief Executive.

Two of five Executive Directors left the organisation in 2023, and four new Executive Directors joined through a series of internal promotions in 2024.

In March 2025, the recently promoted Executive Director (Operations) left the organisation. The Operations directorate was then absorbed into other business areas, overseen by the remaining Executive Directors.

Therefore, following three Executive Directors leaving in the last two years with all but one replacement, this resulted in a turnover of around 52% in the Executive Management Team.



What is the number of Board Members on the housing provider's Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience?

Five members on our Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) have recent and relevant financial experience, and three of the five have high-level expertise in that area.



What % of the housing provider's Board are Non-Executive Directors?

One hundred percent of Eastlight's Board are Non-Executive Directors.





# Has a succession plan been provided to the Board in the last 12 months?

Yes. An external governance review in June 2024 advised us to remove Eastlight's Independent Committee framework. It was subsequently retired in November 2024. As part of the same governance review, the Committee compositions were altered, and resident Committee Members were appointed to each Committee where resident voice was not already in place.

In November 2024, the Board reflected on the breadth and depth of skills in year appointments and upcoming retirements. The Board approved the Succession Plan following recommendation from the Governance & People Committee (G&P).

Further exercises carried out in the year to support the Succession Plan ensured the forward skills, knowledge and experience were acquired to enable Board and Committee Members to carry out their fiduciary responsibilities.

Board and Committee recruitment in 2025–26 aims to strengthen the skillsets on the Board, particularly to replace two upcoming retirements in September 2025.



# For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

Our current auditors – Beever & Struthers – has signed off the accounts for Eastlight and one of its predecessor entities – Greenfields Community Housing – since 2017-18. We have had two changes to our lead partner who is responsible for auditing and signing our annual accounts.

Our current lead partner has audited and signed our accounts for the first time with Beever & Struthers in 2024-25. The partner has previously signed our accounts on two separate occasions with Mazars (now Forvis Mazars) for the 2007–08 financial year and the 2016-17 financial year.

According to EU audit legislation, Beever & Struthers can serve as lead partner for the housing association for a further two years, completing the permitted ten-year term. Our current lead partner may serve for up to five years.

Independent Committee framework retired in 2024–25"



# When was the housing provider's last independently-run, Board effectiveness review?

An individual annual appraisal is undertaken of all Board and Committee Members and the Chair. An independent review of governance and Board effectiveness is undertaken every three years.

Eastlight's independent, external review of governance and Board effectiveness was completed in June 2024 by multidisciplinary management and recruitment consultants, Campbell Tickell, which informed a plan to implement recommendations.

The next Board Effectiveness Review will take place in 2027.



# How does the housing provider handle conflicts of interest at the Board?

Eastlight has adopted the NHF Code of Conduct and follows the principles for the identification, declaration and management of potential conflicts of interest. The process for managing such conflicts and related matters is included within Eastlight's Governance Framework, Probity Policy and Board Membership policies.

All Board Members make a declaration of interest during the recruitment and selection process and on appointment. The declarations are refreshed annually and held in a register open to inspection. Board Members must advise on any changes to conflicts of interests that may arise throughout the year, even if outside the annual review.

Declarations are also made verbally at the beginning of every Board and Committee meeting of any other interests relevant to the business being considered. Where personal interests arise, members are not permitted to vote on the matter being considered and may be required to withdraw from any discussion. In the case that a persistent, significant conflict of interest arises, the member will be required to resign their position.

Interests are monitored by the Governance & People Committee (G&P) and an assurance report is produced for the Board which outlines areas of concern. G&P must also have due regard to avoid and minimise potential conflicts of interest when considering experience, skills, behaviours and values of Non-Executive Directors, and in particular, when considering the current and future makeup of the Board and its delegated Committees.

The Company Secretary maintains a General Register of Declarations of Interests that is made available at all reasonable times to any shareholder or Board Member. They also maintain a Private Register of Declarations & Interests.

The Eastlight Gifts & Hospitality Policy sets out the rules for Board Members and colleagues regarding the giving and receiving of gifts and hospitality, including limitations applied.

The declarations of interest for Board Members are published transparently on the Eastlight website: www.eastlighthomes.co.uk/Board



# **Staff Wellbeing**

# **C39**

## Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

The Real Living Wage in October 2024 was £12.60 per hour outside of London where Eastlight operates (£13.85 per hour inside London). This rate is calculated independently by the Living Wage Foundation. It is a voluntary pay framework.

At Eastlight, the pay for 99.4% of all job roles exceeds the Real Living Wage, with our biennial benchmarking process assessing pay levels against the market. One role in the organisation receives market-related pay below the Real Living Wage.

# **C40**

## What is the housing provider's median gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the percentage of difference between the average pay of men and women across the workforce. Eastlight's latest Gender Pay Gap Report 2023–24, published in April 2025, revealed that:

As a median average, the pay gap between male and female colleagues is
 0% (2023: male colleagues earned 4.3% more than women at Eastlight)

This compares favourably to the average National UK median (Office for National Statistics, April 2024), whereby male employees earn **7.0% more** than female colleagues.

 As a mean average, male colleagues earn 5.4% more than women at Eastlight (2023: male colleagues earned 4.6% more than women at Eastlight)

While this has increased 0.8% year-on-year, these results are still far lower than the average National UK mean, whereby male employees earn **13.1% more** than female colleagues.

0% median gender pay gap (2023–24)

These findings also compare positively to the SRS Annual Review (May 2025), whereby the average gender pay gap of SRS adopters is 9% in favour of male staff. Despite housing providers placing more efforts to narrow the disparity of pay between colleagues, changes to housing associations' staffing and structures have resulted in fluctuating results over the past three years.

Of a 461-strong workforce, the gender balance at Eastlight is 50:50 (231 female colleagues: 230 male colleagues). This was unchanged from the year prior.

In 2023–24, 398 (or 91%) of our people received a formal bonus, consisting of cost-of-living payments – which were available for team members at Manager-level and below – and in some cases, retention payments. As a result:

• Female colleagues received **60.2% more bonus pay** than male colleagues in the year, a 91.3% increase than the year before (2023: male colleagues received 31.1% more bonus pay). The average bonus pay for women stood at around £930, whereas the average bonus pay for men was around £580.

## **Other Pay Gaps**

In April 2025, Eastlight published its annual Disability and Ethnicity Pay Gap Reports for the year 2023–24. The results were as follows:

## **Ethnicity**

- As a median average, Ethnic Minority colleagues at Eastlight (33) earn 0.2% more than White British employees (394), a 0.1% rise on 2022–23.
- As a mean average, White British colleagues at Eastlight earn 3.0% more than Ethnic Minority colleagues, a 11.1% rise on 2022–23 when Ethnic Minority colleagues earned 8.1% more than White British colleagues.

## **Disability**

- As a median average, the pay gap between disabled and non-disabled colleagues is 0% (2023: disabled colleagues earned 8.2% more than nondisabled colleagues).
- As a mean average, disabled colleagues at Eastlight (43) earn **11.9% more** than non-disabled colleagues (386), a 3.8% rise on 2022–23.

Our disability pay gaps demonstrate a step in the right direction, especially when compared to the National UK average, whereby non-disabled colleagues earned **12.7% more** than disabled colleagues (Office for National Statistics).

Figures above do not include those that have chosen not to disclose their gender identity, ethnicity or disability.

Partial differences in pay and bonuses across our Pay Gap Reports resulted from the Chief Executive receiving a one-off bonus relating to a three-year period linked to merger commitments.

Read our pay gap reports for 2023–24 on our website: www.eastlighthomes.co.uk/publications





# What is the housing provider's CEO: median-worker pay ratio?

For the year 2024-25, the CEO-to-employee pay ratio was:

• 6.4 times the 50th percentile (median pay), or 6.4:1.

Further comparisons show that the CEO pay was:

- 6.9 times the 25th percentile of pay
- 5.4 times the 75th percentile of pay.

On average, the 91 housing landlord adopters in the SRS Annual Review reported their CEO:median-worker pay ratio was 5.9:1, compared to Eastlight's ratio at 6.4:1. While our Chief Executive salary is higher than this average, we are pleased to maintain a fair pay process in our organisation, and we review this regularly to ensure all our people are paid fairly for the work they do.

Below is a year-on-year breakdown of the remuneration\* payable to the highest paid Director (the Chief Executive), excluding National Insurance and pension contributions, relative to the number of homes owned and managed:

|   | 2024-25 | 2023-24 |
|---|---------|---------|
| Total homes owned and managed                             | 13,995  | 12,854  |
| Chief Executive pay, excluding all bonus pay received (£) | 221,000 | 195,000 |
| Pay per unit (£)  | 15.79   | 15.17   |

\*The remuneration for the Chief Executive is set by the terms of reference of the Governance & People Committee and is recommended by the Committee to the Board for approval. The Association's policy is to pay close attention to remuneration levels in the sector in determining salaries of the Executive Team, including the Chief Executive, which align with executive responsibilities and pay levels. The Chief Executive salary was reviewed in October 2024, and the Board approved that this was appropriate for the current time. The next review is due in October 2026.



The Single Total Figure of Remuneration (STFR) as suggested by The Companies (Miscellaneous Reporting) Regulations 2018 has been derived from: Basic Salary (including overtime payments), Bonus and Employer's Pension Contribution.

The pension value is based on an average of 6% of employee salaries across the board, although the CEO has opted for maximum company contribution of 10%. For new members of the pension scheme, Eastlight doubles the employee contribution to a maximum of 10% and has few legacy pension schemes for which only two colleagues are a part.



# How is the housing provider ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is promoted across its staff?

At Eastlight, we celebrate differences. We give everyone the opportunity to play an active role in shaping inclusive services and contributing to the development of our business and communities.

Our corporate values are **Ambitious**, **Inclusive** and **Accountable**, and all our people, including their individual and collective performance, are measured against their alignment with these values, in addition to corporate objectives, directorate plans and Eastlight's direction of travel.

Eastlight's goal is to be an attractive employer of choice amongst our peers, and we take essential steps to frequently demonstrate our organisation's purpose, which is by all means people and resident-led, innovative, inclusive and fair.

Eastlight has an Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) Policy that outlines our commitment to promoting equity, respecting diversity, and ensuring inclusivity in our employment practices, access to services and in our homes and communities. It shares how we provide a workplace free from discrimination by analysing workforce data; provide development opportunities to all on an equal basis; raise the profile of underrepresented groups; and ensure training and awareness is delivered to all staff, including Eastlight's Board, Committees and Leadership Team.

Through our actions and communications, we frequently showcase our focus on EDI. We make sure that accessibility is the red thread across our homes, services and operations, and create a culture of diversity in our workforce to make a lasting difference in our communities. Importantly, we hold ourselves and each other accountable for where equity has not been achieved, and we develop strict plans to improve our culture, leveraging people's experiences when working with us or living in one of our homes.

Every colleague, manager and team leader are responsible for ensuring staff engagement, diversity and inclusion, alongside promoting equity within their service functions. Consideration is always given at recruitment panels to ensure diversity in experience, background and expertise, enabling teams to deliver robust operations and structures that enable the organisation to thrive and better deliver for its residents.

All colleagues use customer data to inform their actions. They are heavily encouraged to seek insights from our Active Residents Network or other customer groups, such as our Resident Communications Panel or Customer Influence Committee, when completing work that may directly impact on residents or require their insight.











We also deliver mandatory and enhanced EDI training modules across our entire organisation, including on unconscious bias, inclusive recruitment and recognising discrimination, and our people are entitled to enrol onto a range of external training courses through reputable providers, such as the Housing Quality Network (HQN), Housing Diversity Network (HDN) or similar organisations.

Our People Services & Organisational Development Team hold overall responsibility for reporting against employee engagement and organisational culture to both Executive and Board, which highlights themes across EDI that may or may not require improvement over time. Both the People and Communications & External Affairs teams support ongoing stakeholder relationship management with EDI partner organisations, seeking new opportunities for service area development or campaigning across our business and the wider social housing sector.

We also publish our pay gap reports annually, which outline the pay disparity between different groups within our organisation and the ways in which we aim to address negative impacts.

# Findings on Eastlight's pay gaps can be found under Staff Wellbeing C40 or in the respective reports on our website.

Eastlight is a Disability Confident Leader (Level 3) – the highest level in the government's Disability Confident Employer scheme – for its commitment to accessibility and creating more disability inclusive environments and communities.

In July 2023, Eastlight was named Founding Partner of national disability organisation, Purple. The organisation had more than 7,000 organisations participating in their annual Purple Tuesday celebrations in 2024, each of which – including Eastlight – have together implemented more than 8,000 accessibility improvements.

Online, positive sentiment for the Purple Tuesday movement reached a high of 99% in the year, with a spike in engagements and reach of 36m impressions.

Close collaboration with our partners, including Chelmsford-based care service provider Essex Cares Limited (ECL) – who support us in increasing neurodiversity within our workforce – continue to inform our approaches and advance our disability inclusion journey with greater speed, with staff awareness and resident insight right at the centre.

Furthermore, by harnessing our partners' experiences, expertise and data, Eastlight has actively driven disability inclusion and equality for residents and colleagues, both at Eastlight and across the wider sector.

For example, Eastlight is one member of BuildEast – a partner of housing associations in the East of England, for which Eastlight's Chief Executive, Emma Palmer, is the Chair. In February 2025, BuildEast welcomed Purple CEO, Mike Adams, to provide practical tips for member organisations on how they can be more accessible for people with disabilities, alongside the return on investment for disability inclusion.

In the year, we also launched our new British Sign Language (BSL) interpretation service with SignVideo for deaf and hard-of-hearing residents. SignVideo is a Video Relay Service that allows BSL users to communicate with hearing individuals over the phone. The service connects users with a qualified interpreter who will relay the conversation to our Customer Services Team, providing in-the-moment support and streamlining Eastlight's ability to provide a more responsive service to residents' needs.

A number of networking groups within the organisation have also flourished throughout the year, each created to help and support Eastlight colleagues to shape a more diverse workplace.

EastPride brings together colleagues and allies of the LGBTQIA+ community to build more inclusive communications and initiatives both within and outside the organisation. They lead on our approach to local and regional events across the East of England, such as Essex and Braintree Pride, and they look for greater opportunities to enhance the resident experience by scrutinising and improving services.



We conduct an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) on all Eastlight policies, ensuring any negative impacts on protected characteristics are identified and mitigated before the policy seeks approval, enabling team members to identify gaps at the earliest opportunity. EIAs are also completed on any significant change programme or project that may have direct positive or otherwise negative impacts on residents, staff or community members.

We also recognise that staff members may require certain adjustments to their schedule or working pattern to ensure they feel supported, comfortable and able to do their best work, which also includes colleagues' access to equipment, tools and software.

Our people – where their roles allow it and stated within their contract – are able to work flexibly and consider reduced or varied working hours and days, so long as it meets business needs and that of residents, as well as other colleagues and stakeholders. Many of our people also work in an 'agile way', with a mixture of working from home and from our offices or other Eastlight establishments.

Furthermore, our HR systems are set up in such a way that colleagues are able to share confidential and sensitive information on a voluntary basis, including any changes to their gender identity, sexual orientation, disability or caring responsibilities. Our People Team will support each colleague following any changes to confidential information, or where reasonable adjustments may be required for them to carry out their work effectively.

We have a range of tools and resources that colleagues can access easily via our staff intranet platform. Past training webinars and EDI information is available to all colleagues, such as on disability, EIAs and access to sunflower lanyards (which identifies hidden and non-visible disabilities, including mental health and cognitive disorders), for example. Other benefits and support where related to EDI can also be found on the staff intranet.





# How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?

Health, safety and wellbeing are at the heart of everything we do.

Our Health & Safety (H&S) Policy describes our proactive approach to developing and maintaining a positive health and safety culture, keeping our people, residents and communities safe in environments that, so far as is reasonably practicable, minimises risks under these conditions. Each person employed, contracted or associated with Eastlight, who is responsible for carrying out works or directions on our behalf and by our instructions, have a role to play in upkeeping health, safety and wellbeing standards for the organisation, from the Board, Executive and Leadership Team to employees, contractors and other third parties.

Eastlight has two Health & Safety Committees:

## **Health & Safety Strategic Committee**

This group leads a positive H&S culture across Eastlight, providing oversight on behalf of the business and assurance to the Board, satisfying our duties in respect of the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. Part of the Committee's role is to review the outcomes of the Operational Committee and oversee its progress, actions and effectiveness. It is also responsible for better preparing the organisation for any changes in regulation, legislation or the external operating environment that could or indeed directly impacts on Eastlight's health, safety, safeguarding and wellbeing practices.

Members on this Strategic Committee ensure our Health & Safety Policy is fit for purpose and embedded throughout the business. They meet quarterly, and it is chaired by our Chief Executive.

#### **Health & Safety Operational Committee**

Similarly, this group provides oversight of activity and assurance to the Health & Safety Strategic Committee. Not only does the Operational Committee facilitate and promote employee feedback – reviewing performance, completing trend analyses and overseeing overall staff communications – but it also holds responsibility for monitoring compliance, flagging internal and external risks, managing performance and deploying employee training.

Members on this Operational Committee meet quarterly, and it is chaired by our Executive Director of People & Business Services.



Eastlight's Health & Safety Manager's strategic and functional responsibilities are to oversee the complete wellbeing of our staff, from workplace accidents, near misses and hazards to employee stress and burnout. In detail, they are the responsible and competent person within the organisation that leads on carrying out inspections and investigations, submitting relevant reports on improvement and non-compliance, providing adequate awareness training for all staff, and advising on any operations that could breach personal injury or the organisation's statutory and regulatory obligations.

The Health & Safety Manager also hosts quarterly H&S all-staff forums detailing our performance, key areas for improvement and development opportunities for the attention of the whole organisation. All staff members are expected to attend these in-person and virtual forums.

The managerial position at Eastlight ultimately ensures that we meet our legal H&S requirements to keep our workforce and residents safe, and that we partner with like-minded organisations (such as contractors and suppliers) that are equally committed to H&S before completing any work with them.

All colleagues can access the Eastlight staff intranet to discover all H&S information, which includes definitions, reporting mechanisms, Risk Assessment templates and more.

We have a comprehensive Total Reward Package that supports the physical and mental wellbeing of staff. Eastlight's benefits include our annual £200 wellbeing grant, generous annual leave allowance, BUPA healthcare cashback plan and access to private medical care. In addition, colleagues can join a cycle-to-work scheme, take career break opportunities and receive trailblazing family leave (maternity, paternity and adoption). Complete 24/7 access to an employee assistance programme is also available, as well as menopause support through BUPA. All employees can gain advice and support from our fully-trained first aiders and mental health first aiders.

On 1 April 2025, Eastlight switched provider and partnered with BHSF to replace the previous Medical Cashplan offered to colleagues under the BUPA scheme. The BHSF plan was chosen to continue to reduce the cost of financial burden on routine medical costs and expenses, making it easier and more affordable for team members to take care of their health and wellbeing.

We support full inclusion of people's physical and mental health and safety through our practices, policies, procedures, values and culture, which all support good health. Colleagues also have access to occupational health, and Eastlight operates an occupational sick pay scheme.

Employee networking and wellbeing group, EastMind, empowers staff members to engage openly with their mental health and aims to foster a supportive and inclusive working environment. Colleagues can take part in training, access resources and connect with fellow team members in ways that nurture their mental and emotional wellbeing, such as attending webinars, wellness walks or coming together for meditation sessions during off-peak hours.

Staff networking groups promote security and openness with our Leadership Team"

We have facilities at our offices at Braintree and Marks Tey to promote a positive and stimulating work environment, which includes a reflection room for all-faith praying, meditation and mindfulness. We also have recreation areas and facilities to support good nutrition, and we frequently promote our flexible and agile working arrangements, reduced gym membership costs, and issue flu/Covid vaccinations free of charge, for those who are not already eligible.

Physical and mental health, safety and wellbeing are regular discussion items between staff and their line managers during monthly one-to-ones and annual appraisals, with training provided to all new starters when they join the organisation.

For all employees, our 'Lone Worker Guidance' offers a personal safety device (PSD) and mobile app to safeguard people when working alone in the community, in residents' homes, or in our offices and other establishments.

To ensure our people can carry out their work safely, we provide the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) and give staff members instant access to completing relevant risk assessments, for which all activities and events must be co-ordinated and completed with the support of a line manager and the H&S Manager, as appropriate.

Our employee focus group, EastVoice, allows our people to raise issues affecting or concerning colleagues at the top of the organisation. EastVoice members constructively challenge our Leadership Team and positively contribute to Eastlight's future plans, with colleague representatives leading on different areas, including health and safety, mental health and colleague wellbeing.

Eastlight also conducts annual Culture Surveys to determine general staff sentiment towards each of the following:

- Eastlight's values and our people's ability to live up to them
- The level of internal communication from leadership, fellow team members and other departments
- Trust and respect across leadership, from Manager-level to the Executive Team
- A sense of belonging, empowerment, creativity and innovation
- The ability to express thoughts and views, including concerns, freely and transparently.

Close internal relationships between Eastlight's Leadership Team, EastVoice and colleagues from across the business have supported an enhanced working culture this year. Our latest culture survey in October 2024 received a 75% response rate, compared to 54% in November 2023, with key highlights revealing a stronger sense of belonging, greater inclusivity in the workplace, and positive role models identified in the Eastlight Leadership Team.

Areas in need of improvement have action plans in place to ensure our people feel positive and engaged. We revisit these scores on an annual basis and hold each team leader accountable for making sure their colleagues have the continued support they need to make a lasting difference in their role.

75%
response rate to
Eastlight's Culture
Survey, highlighting
greater inclusivity



# How does the housing provider support the professional development of its staff?

Eastlight's People Services & Organisational Development Team equip both people and the organisation in delivering better homes and services for residents through training, learning and development.

Managed by the team, our training and e-learning platform increases the knowledge and technical skills of our staff. Colleagues are required to complete a range of mandatory learning spanning health and safety, compliance, data and IT security. There, they are also able complete a range of additional free, online courses, one-off training sessions, or apply to an in-person workshop held at our Head Office in Braintree, hosted by both internal and external professionals.

All employees have mandatory e-learning training on safeguarding, damp and mould, and asbestos awareness specifically, with more in-depth external training mandated to those in select roles to expand their knowledge and specialties.

In-house professional coaches (usually a member of the Leadership Team) also support managers and colleagues to develop their professional capabilities so they can succeed, with insights and experiences shared openly and confidentially.

Colleagues can access a range of apprenticeships with full funding from Eastlight, alongside a study support programme that offers a tailored route for individuals to pursue professional growth opportunities. The programme provides access to financial, resource and time support so team members can confidently achieve their goals.

Job shadowing is heavily encouraged at Eastlight, where colleagues can watch and learn from someone in their job to inspire new ideas, share work understanding and improve internal communication. Bespoke shadowing sessions for each service area have been developed and can be tailored to individual needs and preferences.

54
colleagues gained qualifications in

2024-25

Through our focus on professional career development, 54 colleagues (near 12% of the organisation) gained a qualification that was relevant to their professional development in the year:

- Four colleagues (or 1%) from our Assets (2), Finance (1) and Home Solutions teams (1) received a qualification through our study support programme
- Fifty colleagues (or 11%) from our Assets (13), Compliance (18) and Homes Solutions teams (19) received qualifications through the Institution of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH), following a Health & Safety review. The Eastlight Executive Team also completed IOSH Safety training for Executives & Directors.

Of the fourteen further colleagues undertaking apprenticeships this year, four completed their courses across our Housing, Home Solutions and Governance teams. These apprenticeships regarded housing and property management, data technology, painting and decorating, and business administration.

Eastlight also carried out an in-house development programme for aspiring managers for 30 employees in the year, supporting talent retention and our people's ability to progress into more senior roles in the organisation.

These approaches combined aim to enable us to meet developing sector requirements, such as the Regulator of Social Housing's Competence & Conduct Standard.



# **Supply Chain Management**



How is social value creation considered when procuring goods and services? What measures are in place to monitor the delivery of this social value?

At Eastlight, social value is a core principle embedded in our procurement practices. We recognise that every purchasing decision can generate positive outcomes for our communities, local economy and wider society. Social value considerations are integrated throughout the procurement lifecycle, from planning and tendering to contract delivery and supplier performance management.

## How social value creation is considered

We take a structured and proactive approach to embedding social value in our procurement activities. This includes:

- Supporting local economies: We prioritise local SMEs for lower-value requirements. This strengthens our supplier base, supports job creation and builds long-term community relationships
- Evaluating social value in tenders: Where appropriate, we include scored
  quality questions in tender documents to assess a supplier's track record
  and approach to delivering social value. These typically carry a weighting of
  5 to 10%, depending on the contract
- Promoting employment and skills: For higher-value contracts, we include requirements for apprenticeships or training opportunities. This supports workforce development and creates employment pathways for local residents
- Upholding ethical standards: We engage only with suppliers who demonstrate fair and ethical practices, including payment of the Real Living Wage and compliance with modern slavery legislation
- Selecting aligned frameworks: When using external frameworks, we choose those that reflect our principles and can deliver both social and environmental benefits.

### Measures in place to monitor delivery

To ensure social value commitments are delivered, we have robust monitoring and accountability mechanisms. These are:

- Contractual obligations: Social value requirements are embedded in contract terms and conditions, making delivery a formal obligation
- Ongoing contract oversight: Contract owners are responsible for monitoring delivery through regular reviews, reporting and supplier engagement
- Enforcement and compliance: Where suppliers fail to meet commitments, we take appropriate action. This may include improvement plans or, if necessary, contract termination
- Reinvesting in communities: Where rebates are negotiated, often based on total supplier spend, funds are reinvested into our community empowerment budget to support resident-focused programmes
- Supplier visibility: We maintain transparency across our supplier base to ensure social value is delivered by both primary contractors and subcontractors.

Social value
is integrated
throughout our
procurement
lifecycle"



How is sustainability considered when procuring goods and services? What measures are in place to monitor the sustainability of the supply chain when procuring goods and services?

At Eastlight, sustainability is a key consideration in our procurement activities. We understand that the goods and services we procure have environmental and ethical impacts throughout their lifecycle. We therefore aim to reduce our environmental footprint and promote responsible practices across our supply chain.

## How sustainability is considered

We integrate environmental and ethical considerations into procurement planning and decision-making in the following ways:

- Sustainable specifications: We define sustainability requirements within project specifications and contract clauses
- Environmental evaluation criteria: We include scored quality questions in tenders to assess a supplier's approach to sustainability. These typically carry a weighting of 10 to 20%, depending on the contract's environmental impact
- Compliance with legislation and standards: Suppliers must comply with relevant environmental legislation and ethical standards relating to people and the planet
- Waste and resource management: We require suppliers to outline how they manage waste, reduce emissions and minimise resource use throughout the contract lifecycle
- Framework alignment: We select procurement frameworks that demonstrate strong environmental credentials and align with our ESG objectives. This ensures consistent sustainability standards across all procurement routes.

## Measures in place to monitor sustainability in the supply chain

We have established monitoring and oversight mechanisms to ensure sustainability commitments are upheld. These are:

- Contractual obligations: Environmental sustainability requirements are embedded in contract terms, making them enforceable for all suppliers and subcontractors
- Supplier due diligence: We use tools such as Dun & Bradstreet to monitor
  the financial stability of suppliers. While we do not currently assess
  environmental risk through this platform, it supports our efforts to ensure
  supplier capability
- Ongoing compliance checks: The Procurement Team initially collects and records key compliance documents in a central register. Once a contract is awarded, responsibility for maintaining up-to-date documentation passes to the contract owner
- Continuous learning and improvement: The Procurement Team regularly attends webinars, completes training and engages with best practice to stay informed on sustainable procurement
- Collaboration and alignment: We work with other housing associations to share knowledge and align procurement practices with sector standards for environmental responsibility.





As a member of the Customer Influence Committee (CIC), I've focused on championing resident wellbeing – not just by ensuring prompt repairs and reducing anti-social behaviour, but by considering people's overall happiness. For me, it's about understanding people's lives as a whole to inform our decisions.

"Eastlight has shown a real commitment to customer voice by giving us meaningful influence to drive positive change. The CIC is ever-evolving, but every member works hard to ensure the Committee stays relevant, effective and forward-thinking – helping deliver great homes and excellent services for all Eastlight residents."

Paul Hocker, Eastlight resident and Customer Influence Committee Member.





## **Eastlight Community Homes**

Eastlight House, Charter Way Braintree Essex CM77 8FG

0330 128 0330 www.eastlighthomes.co.uk customer.services@ eastlighthomes.co.uk

- **f** eastlighthomes
- @ eastlighthomes
- X @eastlighthomes
- in eastlight-community-homes-

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