

# Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) Report

For the year ended 31 March 2023



*Resident-led  
in everything  
we do*



Eastlight resident  
Michaela Thomas  
with her son.

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# CEO and Chair Foreword



*EPalmer*

**Emma Palmer**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Eastlight Community Homes

**Welcome to Eastlight’s 2022–23 ESG Report. We are pleased to say it shows Eastlight’s environmental, social and governance credentials all continue to move in the right direction.**

As a resident-led and ambitious organisation, we are always looking for the best ways we can continually make a positive difference to the residents living in our homes and communities.

And that requires building and acting on the range of concerns raised by our customers, including the destruction of local flora and fauna, drought and flooding, waste and pollution, as well as addressing critical social issues, which we’re tackling through community empowerment, funding and support for local initiatives and services.

In a year of high inflation, a crippling cost-of-living crisis and turbulent economic and geopolitical environment, we have successfully delivered our sector leading All In programme, with incubator teams across Braintree, Colchester, Halstead and Witham in Essex, combatting everything from social isolation to money troubles.

Our training and development Resident Academy programme was also highly oversubscribed, with more than 130 applications for only 20 places. We have even been able to provide grant funding for local businesses and charities through our Braintree District and Eastlight Community Fund, which recently awarded £100,000 in support for life-changing charities.

During 2022–23, we have delivered 324 new homes, available for social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership. All of these homes were delivered to an EPC rating of B and above, and we have dedicated £7.6m to improving our existing residents’ homes.

We are proud to have produced and published our new Sustainability Strategy and Design Guide during the past 12 months, both of which are consistently shaping our activities. These include improvements to the way we tend, fix and build homes for people across the East of England, with nature and conservation front of mind.



Improvements can and will be made moving forward. We are looking into more regular and consistent reporting, leaning on more accurate data through new systems and software. We have also created an Eastlight team of Sustainability Champions, colleagues within the business who are meeting regularly to combat some of the sustainability challenges prevalent in our sector, and specific to us.

Eastlight has a strong position in the wider sector too, with the best regulatory grading as judged by the Regulator of Social Housing – a G1/V1 status. In the midst of a difficult and complex economic environment, the Regulator’s grade recognises our organisation’s good governance and sound financial management.

Last year, the Regulator of Social Housing published its plan for implementing a new approach to consumer regulation, in line with the Social Housing Regulation Bill. The plan contains recommendations that outline how housing associations, like us, should work with residents to ensure they have a voice that actively influences decision-making across the organisation.

For us, our residents remain at the heart of everything we do, and we are empowering them to help drive positive changes in a variety of ways. An increasing number are getting involved in our organisation – whether that’s helping spruce up their neighbourhoods during our community clear-ups or in setting the strategic direction by becoming members of our Board and Customer Influence Committee (CIC).

And, of course, our people are central to the achievements set out in this report. Their work ethic and determination mean that we can confidently deliver a positive ESG Report for 2022–23.



*H Llewelyn-Davies.*

**Hattie Llewelyn-Davies**  
Chair of Board  
Eastlight Community Homes



# Overview

## Eastlight Community Homes' Board is pleased to present our third Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) Report.

In this document, we report on our quantitative and qualitative performance against the requirements set out in the Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS). This report follows our previous ESG Report for 2021–22, where we conducted our first full, enhanced disclosure of the SRS criteria.

### Who we are

Eastlight is a vibrant, forward-thinking resident-led housing association for the East of England. Together with our residents and communities, we create safe, affordable homes and neighbourhoods that people are proud to live in.

We own and look after 12,450 homes in the East of England and have ambitious plans to build many more. People who live in our homes pay rents and charges that are less than the market rate. We reinvest every pound back into the organisation to help us pay for new homes and make our existing homes, services and communities better.

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

We are proud of our trailblazing approach to involving our customers in the day-to-day running of Eastlight. We work side-by-side with our residents, listening to what matters to them, as well as to our communities and our people, and we use this feedback to influence our services and priorities.

We share our expertise and innovations to inspire and enable others to solve similar challenges. People who work at Eastlight put residents first. They are committed to our communities and doing the right thing to make a positive difference.

**12,450**

homes owned and managed in the East of England

## ESG at Eastlight

As a resident-led housing association, ESG is and always will be at the forefront of our decision-making. We focus on improving the safety and the empowerment of our residents and local communities, setting ambitious and tangible environmental targets, and building a governance framework that is robust, diverse and focused on ensuring the future development and success of Eastlight Community Homes.

Although the practice of ESG reporting responds to investors' appetite for ethical and sustainable investment, its focus also aligns with Eastlight's values and is fundamental to our future plans, as set out in our Corporate Strategy 2021–26. We consider ESG in all our decisions about managing risk and delivering impact.

In the past year, we have made significant improvements to the way we work, so we can create a stronger business over the long-term and generate sustainable value for all stakeholders, including our residents, communities, partners, suppliers and investors. We measure our performance so we can benchmark and assess our progress.

Our new Sustainability Strategy 2022–27 sets out how we aim to build new homes and invest in our existing stock in a way that is ethical and sustainable. We are also helping our partners and customers to reduce their carbon footprint, enabling them to run their homes, businesses and lives more efficiently.

We have also published our Design Guide, which aims to instil 'good design' as a guiding principle for all aspects of a housing development scheme's inception, design, use and maintenance. Our Design Guide prioritises resident experience and sets good design specifications which balance four key viewpoints: the Resident, the Organisation, the Community and the Environment.

In line with our values and good governance principles, we are **Ambitious** in setting and seeking to achieve our ESG targets, we strongly believe in **Inclusive** sustainability, and we are **Accountable** for our social and ecological impacts.



“  
We share our expertise  
and innovations to  
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challenges”



# Environmental

**We make environmental targets central to Eastlight’s aims and ambitions. These enable us to provide homes, services and offers to our residents that are kind to the environment and sustainable over the long term. We want to be a green organisation that creates synergy between housing, nature, people and communities.**

We are already midway through our Corporate Strategy 2021–26, and we are more determined than ever to inspire our communities to shine. We aim to do this by delivering easy-to-use, efficient services and providing high-quality sustainable and affordable homes that meet the needs of our existing residents and future generations.

Our New Homes Strategy 2021–26 sets out our ambition to build more new homes for a mix of social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership, helping to unlock potential in the East of England. But these homes have to be delivered in an environmentally sustainable way.

In 2021–22, we established a Sustainability Steering Group, which was responsible for beginning our journey to becoming a greener, more sustainable business by developing our Sustainability Strategy 2022–27.

The Group comprises a Board Sustainability Sponsor, representatives from our Development & Asset Management (DAM) and Customer Influence Committees (CIC), the Executive Director of Development & Asset Management, Development Director, Property Services Director and a Finance representative.

We commissioned the consulting firm Turner & Townsend to conduct a comprehensive carbon audit report, which helped inform our sustainability objectives, particularly in helping us ensure that all properties achieve an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C rating by 2030, and in developing a clear plan to achieve Net Zero Carbon by 2050. Based on the insights from Turner & Townsend’s report, we are happy to confirm that this year, for the first time, we have included a provision in our Board-approved Business Plan for the investment we believe we need to make for Eastlight’s housing stock to comply with Net Zero Carbon standards by 2050.



Today, our new Sustainability Strategy and Design Guide both support our wider strategies by setting out our challenges and intentions for decarbonising and building better more clearly. This will involve increasing the way we use modern methods of construction for new homes and improving the fabric of our existing ones, so that we can provide sustainable homes for our residents that are economical to run. Our plans include minimising energy consumption and emissions, as well as reducing waste.

We continue to explore what potential electric vehicles might have for our fleet. We carried out a trial of two electric vehicles, which concluded in 2022–23. This provided us with useful learning about the potential benefits and limitations of these vehicles. We are building on this learning by tracking data around how we use our existing vehicles in our repairs and maintenance fleet, so that we can assess where switching to electric vehicles might work best in future.

In addition, we have created a Sustainability Champions Group composed of Eastlight employees who champion sustainability across the organisation. We constantly seek new ways to improve our environmental efforts at our Head Office (Eastlight House) and within our customers' homes and communities.

“  
Our plans include minimising energy consumption and emissions, as well as reducing waste”

Eastlight Development Team and Stonebond at our Mount Hill estate, Halstead.





# Social

**Embracing social responsibility is central to our corporate values, from providing affordable homes to those on low incomes, to supporting our residents and communities in ways that matter to them, both individually and collectively.**

As the country’s largest resident-led housing association, we have developed a trailblazing approach to community empowerment. In 2022, we launched our Community Investment programme, All In. The first of its kind, the programme enables the potential and experiences of passionate local people, who are best placed to drive the changes needed in their communities and make their towns better places to live.

Eastlight’s All In programme was launched in three phases:

**Incubators** – Launched in May 2022, this 12-month paid incubator programme brought together four teams of five local people who aimed to develop innovative solutions to shared social challenges identified by their wider community. Over the year, the teams successfully turned these ideas into sustainable services or social businesses that have since started their journey as private enterprises, with grant funding and further support provided by Eastlight.

**Kinder  
Minds**

**GROW  
with the  
FLOW**

**popcorn**

**Trusted**

**All In Alliances** – In July 2022, Eastlight launched four alliance groups across Braintree, Colchester, Halstead and Witham, which meet quarterly to develop their neighbourhoods and grant monetary funding for charities and causes that positively impact on the lives of local residents. The way we are bringing together different people and local organisations who do not usually meet is fostering stronger placemaking across these areas of Essex. The Alliances now form the backbone of Eastlight’s wider community participation.





**Resident Academy** – Eastlight recently launched a learning and development programme for dedicated and passionate residents, centred around social innovation, and equips individuals with the knowledge, skills and tools needed to tackle social issues. It also creates a pipeline of engaged residents interested in seeking to work with Eastlight in various ways, such as on our Customer Influence Committee (CIC) and other groups within our organisation.



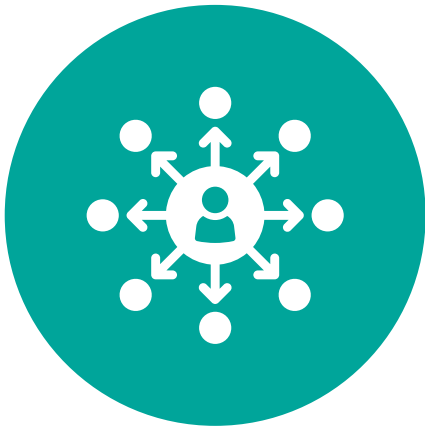
Halstead’s Community Team share Grow with the Flow at 10 Downing Street (left) and Eastlight’s All In Ideas Festival at Firstsite, Colchester (right).

## The Resident Academy

We continue to offer traineeships through our **Succeed at Eastlight** programme. This is an ongoing programme and is not restricted to any single area of the business. Applicants are selected through a values-based process, are offered on-the-job experience and undergo a professional qualification. We are committed to continuing employment post traineeship and offer our Succeed at Eastlight employees permanent contracts from the outset of their career with Eastlight.

“We have developed a trailblazing approach to community empowerment”

**SUCCEED@EASTLIGHT**



# Governance

**Strong governance underpins Eastlight’s strategic direction. The depth and breadth of our Board Members’ experiences ensure that we develop clearly defined objectives, maintain focus and deliver against our corporate commitments.**

We have adopted the National Housing Federation’s 2020 Code of Governance to ensure transparency and accountability in how we communicate with our residents and manage the organisation. We comply with the Regulator of Social Housing’s Regulatory Standards, and we retain a G1/V1 rating, the highest rating available for governance and financial viability.

In 2021, we established our Customer Influence Committee (CIC), which includes eight Eastlight residents and is chaired by a resident Board Member. This committee has the authority to oversee and support customer influence in decision-making, as well as the development and delivery of all customer-focused strategies and policies.

The CIC has been instrumental in improving Eastlight’s customer services, addressing impacts on customers from the cost-of-living crisis, shaping our Complaints and Resolutions Policy and developing our new Resident Engagement Strategy. Three CIC members now serve on our Board, including a Trainee Board Member.

The CIC provides resident oversight for key operational areas like safeguarding, communications, estate services and repairs. One CIC member specifically focuses on how we prioritise sustainability across our services and how we engage residents effectively in our environmental decision-making.

Having residents hold us to account, particularly around sustainability, ensures that we prioritise the views and voices of those who live in our homes and communities, and prepares us for the changes in consumer regulation and governance as set out in the Social Housing Regulation Bill.



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Our CIC provides  
resident oversight  
for key operational  
areas”



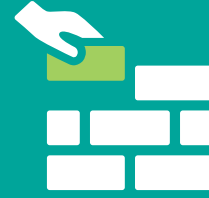
Eastlight’s Board meet and learn from colleagues across the organisation.

# Eastlight in Numbers



**12,450**

The total number of homes Eastlight owns and manages



**324**

new homes built:  
15 for social rent,  
193 for affordable rent  
and 116 for shared  
ownership



**923**

homes in contract or on-site:  
852 from developer-led  
projects and 71 from  
Eastlight-led projects



**257**

new homes in the pipeline:  
34 from developer-led projects  
and 223 from Eastlight-led  
projects



**13,000**

customer survey  
responses annually



**4.43**

Our average customer satisfaction score (out of 5)



**G1/V1**

Our regulatory grading



**68%**

The percentage of our existing homes that are EPC C or higher



**60%**

The percentage of our Board Members who are women



**100%**

The percentage of our homes that meet the Decent Homes Standard

# The Sustainability Reporting Standard

**The Sustainability Reporting Standard for Social Housing (SRS) was published in November 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 matters.

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

## Sustainable Development Goals

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

In 2022, Eastlight implemented an ambitious approach to ESG practices. This approach was developed based on the findings of the carbon audit conducted by Turner & Townsend, a consultancy business. During 2022–23, we made further progress towards aligning our activities with the UN's sustainable development goals in nine key areas shown on page 15.



# United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)



# Reporting Structure

The remainder of this report is structured to provide answers to the 48 questions that sit within the SRS. This is further split into themes and ESG areas, as illustrated in the table below:

ESG Area	Theme	Criteria
<b>Social</b>		
	Affordability & Security	C1 – C5
	Building Safety & Quality	C6 – C8
	Resident Voice	C9 – C11
	Resident Support	C12
	Placemaking	C13
<b>Environmental</b>		
	Climate Change	C14 – C19
	Ecology	C20 – C21
	Resource Management	C22 – C24
<b>Governance</b>		
	Structure & Governance	C25 – C30
	Board & Trustees	C31 – C41
	Staff Wellbeing	C42 – C46
	Supply Chain	C47 – C48



# Social

## Affordability & Security

C1

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; or
- 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 (April 2022 to March 2023).

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 2022–23, Eastlight charged rents that were on average 49% of market rents and 62% of the LHA. Over the full year, this equated to an effective discount of nearly £68m compared to market rent levels, or around £5,800 per home per year.

C2

Share and number of existing homes (owned and 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.

This table shows the breakdown of Eastlight's existing homes by housing type (i.e. homes that were already complete before the start of the financial years shown). Eastlight started 2022–23 with 263 (2.2%) more homes than it had a year earlier.

Classification	2022–23		2021–22	
	Count	%	Count	%
Social rent	8,505	70.0%	8,504	71.6%
Affordable rent	2,147	17.7%	1,934	16.3%
Intermediate rent	84	0.7%	105	0.9%
Housing for older people	637	5.2%	637	5.4%
Low-cost home ownership	620	5.1%	547	4.6%
Supported housing	116	1.0%	119	1.0%
Other	39	0.3%	39	0.3%
<b>Total homes owned and managed</b>	<b>12,148</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>11,885</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**C3 Share, and number, of new homes (owned and 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 324 new homes in 2022–23, a 9% increase on the 298 we delivered in 2021–22. The table below shows the breakdown of the new homes we delivered during the year.

Classification	2022–23	
	Count	%
Social rent	15	4.6%
Affordable rent	193	59.6%
Shared ownership	116	35.8%
<b>Total new homes delivered</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**C4 How is the housing provider trying to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on its residents?**

Eastlight’s Asset Management Strategy 2021–27 works hand-in-hand with our Sustainability Strategy 2022–27 to reduce the effect of fuel poverty on our residents, particularly during the worst cost-of-living crisis this generation has experienced.

Our two strategies make it clear that we work on a fabric-first approach. This means we ensure that Eastlight’s 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 improving our EPC C and Net Zero Carbon plans, as well as specification target energy efficient models, i.e. A-rated Windows, A-rated boilers, etc. To support this, Eastlight managed to secure funding via the Government’s Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 1 to help pay for the improvements we made to our homes in 2022–23.

Eastlight’s approach to making energy efficiency improvements aims to benefit customers by reducing their running costs as well as increasing the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) points of our homes.

Furthermore, our new Design Guide, published in 2022, 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 our residents.

Throughout 2022–23, there was an increase in low-income and vulnerable residents requiring assistance in claiming benefits and needing extra support around paying their energy bills. Our Tenancy Sustainment Team introduced an improved £100,000 Tenancy Support Fund, in addition to a further £55,000 which supported struggling customers with fuel vouchers, depending on eligibility.



C5

**What % of rental homes have at least a three-year tenancy agreement?**

99.7% of our rented homes have at least a three-year tenancy agreement. This is up from 99.0% last year. Most of our tenancies are lifetime tenancies.

Just 39 tenancies, or 0.3% of the total, have tenancy agreements for less than three years. This is 91 homes fewer than we reported last year.

**Building Safety & Quality**

C6

**What % of homes with a gas appliance have an in-date, accredited gas safety check?**

As of 31 March 2023, 99.01% of our homes with a gas appliance had an in-date and accredited gas safety check. Failure to gain entry to our customers' homes has resulted in a below 100% gas safety check compliance rating. However, we remain fully compliant with our policy and are frequently contacting customers to conduct gas safety checks in the remainder of our properties (92).

C7

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

100% of our homes have met the Decent Homes Standard.

C8

**What % of buildings have an in-date and compliant Fire Risk Assessment?**

As of 31 March 2023, 100% of Eastlight's buildings that require a Fire Risk Assessment (FRA) have had an in-date and compliant assessment carried out. FRAs are carried out annually in our higher risk buildings, which include housing for older people and supported housing, and every three years in all other buildings. We do not have any high-rise buildings in our portfolio.

**100%**

of homes meet  
the Decent Homes  
Standard

## Resident Voice

### C9 What arrangements are in place to enable residents to hold management to account for provision of services?

Eastlight is committed to ensuring its residents influence decision-making throughout the organisation and that they are empowered to hold the organisation to account for the homes, services and overall experience that Eastlight offers. Accountability is one of Eastlight’s organisational values. This is a key focus for the Board and the Executive Management Team and was one of our guiding principles when we created Eastlight through a merger in 2020.

As the biggest resident-led housing association in the country, Eastlight currently offers the following routes to residents to influence our decision-making and hold management to account:

- As part of its merger commitment, Eastlight formed a Customer Influence Committee (CIC). The CIC is part of our governance structure and is accountable to our Board. It consists of eight residents who oversee, scrutinise and help us co-create our services and customer-focused strategies. Our residents and staff work together to identify what’s working well and where we can improve
- In 2023, we launched a recruitment campaign to add two new residents to Eastlight’s CIC. Three members of our CIC also currently sit on our Board, including one Trainee Board Member. We also changed the composition of each of our Board Committees in 2023 so that there will be a CIC representative on each of the other Committees by the end of 2024
- Our Community Empowerment Strategy 2021–23 sets out how we empower our residents and our communities. It includes our All In programme and Resident Academy. Our All In incubator programme successfully concluded in April 2023, and final initiatives will continue to receive funding and support from Eastlight
- Eastlight residents can become shareholders, which entitles them to vote at our Annual General Meeting (AGM). Shareholder votes are required for Eastlight to make changes to its Rules, and to ratify the appointment of Board Members and auditors
- Eastlight’s constitution also obliges the organisation to act in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. This means that performance, and other key information, is accessible to the public.

“Residents can become shareholders and vote in our Annual General Meeting”

C10

### How does the housing provider measure Resident Satisfaction and how has Resident Satisfaction changed over the last three years?

Eastlight currently sends surveys to customers following five key service interactions:

- Following contact with our customer service centre
- Following a responsive repair
- Following contact with our income teams
- Following contact with our neighbourhood teams
- Two weeks after the customer has moved into a new home.

We send surveys by SMS and email. We introduced this approach in September 2019 and it generates around 13,000 customer responses per year.

We also survey a random sample of our resident base each year to understand general sentiment towards Eastlight. This includes areas such as complaint handling, anti-social behaviour (ASB) reporting and estate services. The survey is carried out at four points throughout the year and enables us to gather data for the Regulator of Social Housing's Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM).

By combining the results of these surveys, alongside feedback we gain from complaints and additional customer research, we build an understanding of how customers perceive our services and where they would like to see investments and improvements being made.

C11

### In the last 12 months, how many complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman. How have these complaints (or others) resulted in change of practice within the housing provider?

The Housing Ombudsman did not uphold any complaints between April 2022 and March 2023. For transparency, three investigations are ongoing at the time of producing this report – one of these was raised in November 2022 and is currently under review.

“

Zero complaints upheld by the Housing Ombudsman”

## Resident Support

### C12 What support services does the housing provider offer 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 we have supported customers through another turbulent year. In the year ending March 2023:

- 1,075 residents gained £814,579 following advice around benefits, debt or employment
- 456 welfare calls were made to vulnerable residents to help them maintain their independence, self-esteem, quality of life and wellbeing
- 94 individuals, who were most affected by or experienced domestic abuse first-hand, received specialist help
- 45 winter warm packs were supplied to tenants during one of the most significant and prolonged spells of severe cold, snow and icy weather since 2010. The packs included hats, gloves, thermal flasks, soup and hand warmers
- £63,164 was given to residents who were experiencing significant financial hardship during the cost-of-living crisis, as part of Eastlight’s Tenancy Support Fund
- Eastlight funded a free and confidential 24/7 Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service to guide residents who needed advice and support around anything from relationship difficulties and debt advice to bereavement and alcohol and drug issues. The helpline formed part of Eastlight’s Tenancy Support Fund
- Funding was also provided through a mental health and life enrichment mobile app, MyMindPal, offering Eastlight residents free sign up and access to use the app. The app formed part of Eastlight’s Tenancy Support Fund
- Our Tenancy Sustainment Team worked in partnership with the drug, alcohol and homelessness charity, Open Road, as part of its SOS Bus Outreach Project. The team targeted key areas across Essex to provide essential services to those without access
- In 2022, key support services and partners (including social services, Essex Police, Peabody and Community 360) signed a service-level agreement committing to the ongoing use of our Community Common Room, located at Eastlight’s Head Office in Braintree. They use the space to collaborate and co-ordinate swift and effective services for our customers. Launched in 2021, we now have 21 partners who have been fundamental in offering support to our residents during the cost-of-living crisis.

**£815,000**  
dedicated to supporting residents with benefits, debt and employment



## Placemaking

### **C13** Provide examples or case studies of where the housing provider has been engaged in placemaking or place shaping activities.

Eastlight is proud of its truly trailblazing community empowerment programme, All In. It encompasses a wide range of social factors and evaluates the management of relationships with a wide range of stakeholders, including employees, customers, communities and society at large. The programme made it possible to examine interaction with local communities, provide support for initiatives to address social challenges, and promote education, healthcare and infrastructure development, in line with the UN SDGs.

As such, Eastlight has significantly contributed to sustainable social development under the following three activities:

#### 1. All In Incubators

In June 2022, we offered a unique opportunity to Essex residents – the chance to receive a full-time salary in exchange for dedicating a whole year of their lives to work with other local people as part of our All In community incubator programme. This was an ambitious call to arms, aimed at unleashing the ideas, passion and talent we know exists in our communities, and enabling them to identify and tackle the social challenges that mean the most to them.

We created four teams for the different areas that we operate in. Eastlight supported the teams every step of the way by providing funding, training and mentoring. By March 2023, the participating teams had developed and prepared their ideas, which they presented themselves to their communities and potential supporters:

**Kinder Minds** – the Braintree Team’s idea improves local people’s mental health and wellbeing. 73% of participants saw improvements to their mental wellbeing after just four weeks.

**Trusted** – the Colchester Team’s initiative uses peer-to-peer advice and support to help those affected by the cost-of-living crisis. On average, participants of the pilot programme saved £3,000.

**Popcorn** – the Witham Team’s initiative helps young people to build confidence and make meaningful connections within their communities. All participants reported a doubling of confidence throughout their participation.

**Grow with the Flow** – the Halstead Team’s idea tackles the stigma around menstruation and empowers young girls to openly discuss their periods. All participants reported the pilot helped them tackle menstrual stigma and taboo. The Halstead Team have since been asked to repeat Grow with the Flow by the Essex Football Association (FA) and Essex Active.

“

Four community teams tackle social challenges that mean the most to them”

We're delighted that 2,530 members of our communities engaged personally with these teams during 2022–23. These interactions included one-to-one meetings and organised events. A further 3,186 people engaged with the teams through surveys, in joining the mailing list or by participating via social media.

In April 2023, the four teams made their pitch to several hundred members of the local community at the All In Ideas Festival, held at Firstsite in Colchester. They were also required to submit detailed funding proposals to Eastlight to unlock grant funding and turn their ideas into new independent organisations that could go on to have impact once the programme had come to an end.

These proposals were rigorously assessed by a strong panel comprised of senior Eastlight staff, Eastlight residents and an experienced local social entrepreneur. All four teams were awarded £25,000 funding based on completing key governance milestones and a further £25,000 based on securing equivalent match funding.

## 2. All In Community Alliances

We also ran our All In Community Alliances in Braintree, Colchester, Halstead and Witham. The Alliances are open to anyone who wants to make a difference in their community, helping people connect with their neighbours, create lasting networks and identify ways of changing their communities for the better, covering issues ranging from homelessness to local parking. Eastlight provides support with venues, organisation, funding and refreshments for the quarterly Alliance meetings.

Those who have attended the Alliance meetings have formed strong local networks and voted on disbursement of available grant monies to eligible local organisations – all to make their communities better places to live.

During 2022–23, 332 members of our communities attended these Alliance Forums to share ideas and experiences, and 12 diverse organisations received community grants to help fund their ongoing work as a result. These included the Helen Rollason Cancer Charity, Halstead Community Fridge, Edith Borthwick School and Braintree Basketball Club.

## 3. Resident Academy

Eastlight developed the Resident Academy to provide focused support so that our residents can hold us to account. The Resident Academy offers residents an opportunity to attend a free boot camp funded by Eastlight, giving them access to high-quality training materials, tools and guest speakers. The content and support have been designed to help residents play a more active role in our governance and community initiatives.

In February 2023, 18 residents graduated from the first in-person Resident Academy at Wivenhoe House in Colchester, Essex. Additionally, more than 400 people engaged with the Academy virtually, accessing the online training film titled, 'The History of Social Housing'. Eastlight has received plaudits and interest from peers in the sector for the quality of this film.



## More social value for Eastlight's communities

The Braintree District and Eastlight Community Fund provided four community organisations with grants adding up to £97,250 over three years, while another five organisations were awarded one-year grants totalling £10,350:

- £27,000 was given to the Centre for Action on Rape and Abuse (CARA) to continue vital counselling sessions to people of all ages affected by sexual violence
- Essex Boys' and Girls' Clubs were funded £24,000 to provide activities to pupils from three schools in Braintree who are disengaged and struggling
- Soul Food, a church project started during the pandemic to get hot meals to those who need them, received £20,750 to continue to provide a weekly takeaway service, as well as sit-down community meals to anyone in need in Halstead
- Abberton Rural Training was given £25,700 for its work to help vulnerable people gain confidence, hope, qualifications and employment in the great outdoors.

All Eastlight teams view creating social value for our communities as an integral part of their work. For example, during 2022–23, our teams have:

- Ensured the Mount Hill development in Halstead, Essex, included a play area, amenity space and environmental considerations, such as a hedgehog highway between gardens, bat and bird boxes, and a hibernaculum, for lizards and reptiles
- Helped a local church near our Longacre development in Cressing, Essex, by providing new fencing and a double shed for the church and a play group
- Conducted community check-in events to help provide residents with financial advice and support to tackle a range of complex issues, from anti-social behaviour to the cost-of-living, with repairs and grounds maintenance works carried out across the local areas
- Involved Eastlight residents in community cleaning, landscaping improvements and vegetation clear ups to spruce up homes and neighbourhoods, including creating block paving, renovating raised bedding and general environmental enhancements.

12

diverse organisations  
awarded community  
grants



Eastlight residents cleaning and sprucing up their estates in Braintree and Witham.



# Environmental

## Climate change

### C14 Distribution of EPC ratings of existing homes (those completed before the last financial year).

Around 68% (8,013) of our existing homes (already completed before the last financial year) are rated EPC C or higher. This is up from 63% last year. The table below shows the distribution of EPC ratings across these existing homes.

EPC Band	Count 2021-22	%
A	9	0%
B	438	4%
C	7,566	64%
D	2,923	25%
E	297	3%
F	15	0%
No data	502	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,750</b>	<b>100%</b>

### C15 Distribution of EPC ratings of new homes (those completed in the last financial year).

We completed 324 new homes in the last financial year. All were rated EPC A or B. The table below shows the distribution.

EPC Band	Count 2022-23	%
A	13	4%
B	311	96%
<b>Total</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>100%</b>

N.B. There is an industry-wide issue in gaining accurate EPC data for our homes from some information systems. We are working to resolve this by acquiring a more accurate data pool for our entire housing stock.

**C16** Please report Scope 1, Scope 2 and Scope 3 greenhouse gas emissions.

We commissioned consultants Turner & Townsend to produce a carbon audit for Eastlight in 2021–22\*. They calculated that Eastlight’s carbon for the year 2021–22 was 43,175 tCO2e. The breakdown by emissions area and scope is presented below, indicating that 98% of emissions came from housing.

Scope	Existing homes	New homes	Offices	Transport	Waste	Total
Scope 1	–	–	–	310	–	310
Scope 2	–	–	51.5	–	–	51
Scope 3	22,183	20,220	0.1	151	259	42,813
<b>Total</b>	<b>22,183</b>	<b>20,220</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>461</b>	<b>259</b>	<b>43,175</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>51%</b>	<b>47%</b>	<b>&lt;1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*There has been no updated Turner & Townsend audit reported in 2022–23, and thus, the figures are reflective of our 2021–22 findings.

**Sava scores:**

Number of homes assessed:	<b>11,828 of 13,043</b>
Average SAP (EPC):	<b>70.7 (EPC C)</b>
Average CO2e per home:	<b>2.52 tonnes (2524kg CO2/year)</b>
Average fuel bill (£ per year):	<b>£1,275.20*</b>
Average heating demand (thermally efficient property):	<b>55.33 kWh/m2 per year**</b>
Average heating demand:	<b>73.64 kWh/m2 per year***</b>

\* This is due to high inflation and increased fuel costs.

\*\* This is based on initial space heating demand for any home built in 2012 onwards.

\*\*\* This is the average initial spaced heating demand for any home built before and after 2012



### Eastlight House current energy use:

Electricity Consumption:	<b>214,291kWh*</b>
Fossil Fuel Consumption:	<b>0kWh</b>
Annual Cost:	<b>£35,056.87</b>
Annual Emissions:	<b>[No data]</b>
Solar PV Generation:	<b>13,668kWh</b>

\*Data from January to December 2022.

**Current Energy Use of Eastlight House** – Located in Braintree, Eastlight House is our main office. The site’s most recent energy audit indicated that Eastlight House 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 13,668kWh in 2022–23 – 100% of which is used on site
- **Heating, ventilation and cooling** – heating and hot water is provided by an 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 work spaces 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.

### C17 What energy efficiency actions has the housing provider undertaken in the last 12 months?

<b>218</b>	new kitchens installed
<b>182</b>	new bathrooms installed
<b>144</b>	new windows in our properties
<b>153</b>	new fire doors installed
<b>40</b>	new roofs, including seven large roof projects on blocks of flats
<b>478</b>	new boilers and other heating devices
<b>80</b>	homes with new insulation
<b>£7.6m</b>	overall spend on improving Eastlight’s existing homes

**£7.6m**

overall spend on improving Eastlight’s existing homes

**C18** How is the housing provider mitigating the following climate risks:

- a) Increased flood risk**
- b) Increased risk of homes overheating**

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

**a)** Our Design Guide focuses on landscape design that should integrate sustainable urban drainage to help mitigate the risk of surface water flooding from increasingly frequent storm events.

Sites should take an innovative and sustainable approach to managing water for the maintenance of landscape proposals, to enhance the experience of the landscape and have as minimal an impact on surrounding infrastructure as possible. Rainwater can be used for a number of purposes; for resident amenity, as part of a natural landscape strategy, and contributing to landscape maintenance, such as rain gardens. All drainage should be sustainable urban drainage (SUDS) wherever site conditions permit.

**b)** Changes to parts of Building Regulations (Part O) approved in June 2022 cover thermal performance, ventilation and an introduction of a new part addressing overheating, reducing overall carbon in use by 31%.

Our Design Guide particularly focuses on the resident perspective, considering their comfort, natural light to circulation areas, preventing overheating in the summer with good ventilation, and air quality. Layouts in design optimise passive 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, and windows should be on opposite or adjacent elevations of a room and well-spaced out.

Reducing East and, in particular, West-facing elevations will 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. To address overheating, external shading coupled with natural cross ventilation is effective, alongside shading devices that mitigate overheating.

Eastlight is committed to achieving at least a minimum of 25% improvement over and above building regulations requirements for all its projects, and an ambition for Net Zero Carbon is in operation for all projects.





C19

**Does the housing provider give residents information about correct ventilation, heating, recycling etc? Please describe how this is done.**

Eastlight provides information via print (such as leaflets, postcards or letters), social media and, most prominently, our website. Through these communications, we inform residents about the importance of heating and ventilation to tackle damp and mould, as well as other best practices for looking after themselves and their homes.

We have a Health & Safety leaflet for all our residents, which outlines our responsibilities as a landlord, the tenant's responsibilities and essential tips and information to avoid issues and hazards.

After the unfortunate death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, Eastlight is taking further precautions and actions in response to the findings in the Housing Ombudsman's Special Report on Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, including a proactive communications strategy that fits the needs of our residents, especially when it comes to damp and mould.

A damp and mould action plan has been launched and is being carried out ahead of the 2023–24 winter period. Amongst other critical topics, the action plan discusses an improved service whereby Eastlight will be proactively contacting residents who we have not visited in the past year, or have not contacted us for whatever reason, alongside those who we think could be experiencing damp, mould or increased condensation in their home.

“

Damp and mould  
action plan  
launched in 2023”

## Ecology

### C20 How is the housing provider increasing Green Space and promoting Biodiversity on or near homes?

Our Sustainability Strategy 2022–27 demands more focus on biodiversity and the natural environment across our new and existing homes, operations, customers and communities. We aim to protect and enhance natural habitats through the design and construction process of our new homes and creating communities that support local wildlife in our open, green spaces.

We are also maximising sustainable heating at our facilities and seek to protect local wildlife from the impact of our operations, while creating more awareness for colleagues and customers on ways to support local flora and fauna, and the positive effect biodiversity and nature has on all wellbeing.

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. For our new homes, we are seeking to optimise opportunities for tree planting and greenery to significantly improve local natural habitats and wildlife. New projects should carry out an ecological survey to identify early-stage wildlife, and habitat assets landscape proposals should conserve and improve nature and biodiversity opportunities.

Our Mount Hill development is a perfect example of us putting this into practice, with hedgehog highways considered between gardens, bat and bird boxes installed, and a hibernaculum for lizards and reptiles added to the conservation of nearby wildlife.

“

Sustainability Strategy and Design Guide places focus on enhancing natural habitats and local wildlife”

C21

### Does the housing provider have a strategy to actively manage and reduce all pollutants? 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.

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 constitutes a pathway to achieving Net Zero Carbon by 2050.

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

- Reducing CO<sub>2</sub>, reusing and recycling throughout the overall lifecycle of our homes, when developing, maintaining and improving them, through retrofitting and a fabric-first approach
- Using trialled and tested renewable technologies to reduce the cost-of-living in our homes
- Reducing 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).

We are currently measuring our performance against these targets in line with our strategies, Design Guide, the Future Homes Standard and Building Regulations.

“

Increased focus on reducing our carbon footprint in our workplaces”

## Resource Management

**C22 Does the housing provider have a strategy to use or increase the use of responsibly sourced materials for all building 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 throughout the lifespan of the building, with easily recyclable content. 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 now consider the material hierarchy: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Construction materials, systems and internal finishes of our new homes should be from sustainable sources with low volatile organic compounds (VOC), and either should be recycled themselves or easily recyclable in future, which may require close collaboration with our main contractors.

**C23 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 outlines the ways in which Eastlight aims to reduce, reuse and/or recycle throughout the construction process, use more sustainable materials and work with partners who are equally committed to ethical building practices and use sustainable procurement principles. We now take the same approach when maintaining and improving our existing homes.

Our new homes encourage and facilitate resident recycling generally and make provision within the kitchen design, with external bin provisions 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 acting when it comes to recycling larger waste items, garden waste and for building materials through local recycling networks.

We ensure that we are reducing and reusing waste as a valuable resource. Therefore, our developments must in some way contribute to the circular economy through reuse, material selection, recycling and the reduction of waste.



C24

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

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

As such, the design of our new developments aims to reduce potable water usage, as far as is reasonably practicable, using certified low-water fixtures, fittings and appliances. 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 good-quality water through water use-reducing technologies. We acknowledge our water impact throughout our offices and operations, and share approaches to minimising water usage with our colleagues, customers and communities.

“

New-build designs optimise water quality and accessibility through new technology”



# Governance

## Structure & Governance

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**C25** Is the housing provider registered with the national Regulator of Social Housing?

Yes, registration number L4499.

**C26** What is the most recent regulatory grading/status?

Eastlight has maintained a G1/V1 rating, the highest rating available by the Regulator of Social Housing.

**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 that this Code is the most appropriate for the Association, considering its size, corporate structure, community gateway principles and the nature of its activities. The Board has assessed itself against the 2020 Code and is fully compliant with it in all material respects.

The Board has also now adopted the recent NHF Code of Conduct, which was revised in 2022.

**C28** Is the housing provider Not-For-Profit? If not, who is the largest shareholder, what is their % of economic ownership and what % of voting rights do they control?

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

**C29 Explain how the housing provider’s Board manages operational risks.**

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 Board when the risks exceed their tolerances. The organisation’s Audit and Risk Committee (ARC) and Board review the Strategic Risk Register quarterly.

Our internal audit programme assesses operational controls and reports the findings to the ARC. Audits in the year 2022–23 included: Development, Anti-Fraud, Lettings, Capital Accounting, Business Planning and Stress Testing, Statutory Compliance and Performance Indicators.

**C30 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?**

No.

## Board & Trustees

**C31 What are the demographics of the Board? And how does this compare to the demographics of the housing providers’ residents?**

Board makeup	March 2023	March 2022	Eastlight Residents
Women	60%	50%	64%
BAME	10%	13%	3%
Disability	30%	13%	47%
Average age (years)	59	58	–
Average tenure (months)	41	–	–

N.B. The data does not include the Trainee Board Member.



**C32 What % of the Board and management team have turned over in the last two years?**

Between the end of March 2021 and 2023, two Board Members have resigned and four have been appointed. We have also appointed one Trainee Board Member.

During the same period, one Executive Director has left our Senior Leadership Team, and one has joined.

**C33 Is there a maximum tenure for a Board Member? If so, what is it?**

Yes. While we work to the NHF Code of Governance 2020, which suggests a maximum tenure of six years, in 2022 the Board agreed that we could extend to a maximum of nine years. The intention behind this is to aid succession planning and strengthen customer involvement in our governance structures. We were advised that this remains compliant, so long as such extensions are discussed and agreed by the Board and that they are in the best interests of the organisation. The decisions must be recorded.

**C34 What % of the Board are Non-Executive Directors?**

100% of Eastlight’s Board are Non-Executive Directors.

**C35 Number of Board Members on the Audit Committee with recent and relevant financial experience.**

Five members on our Audit & Risk Committee (ARC) have recent and relevant financial experience. Two members are finance specialists.

**C36 Are there any current executives on the Remuneration Committee?**

No.

“  
Nine-year tenure for Board Members, upon agreement and in the organisation’s best interests”



### **C37** Has a succession plan been provided to the Board in the last 12 months?

A succession plan was reviewed by our Governance & People Committee (G&PC) and was approved by the Board in November 2022. The plan will have ongoing reviews to ensure the forward skills, knowledge and experience of the Board enable its members to carry out their fiduciary responsibilities.

### **C38** For how many years has the housing provider's current external audit partner been responsible for auditing the accounts?

Our current audit partner has signed off the accounts for Eastlight and one of its predecessor entities – Greenfields Community Housing – for the past six years but has only been Eastlight's current lead audit partner for the past four years.

As part of the EU audit legislation, Eastlight's current external audit partner can serve as lead partner for the housing association for a further four years.

### **C39** When was the 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. In 2021, a review was supported by Savills, which informed a plan to implement recommendations.

Eastlight's next independent review of governance and Board effectiveness is due in 2024.

### **C40** Are the roles of the Chair of the Board and CEO held by two different people?

Yes, as follows:

- Chair of the Board: Hattie Llewelyn-Davies
- Chief Executive Officer: Emma Palmer

### C41 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 the Governance Framework and Probity Policy.

All Board Members make a declaration of interest during the recruitment and selection process and on appointment. The declarations are refreshed on an annual basis and are held in a register which is open to inspection. Board Members are required to inform us of any changes throughout the course of the year. Interests are monitored by the G&PC, and an assurance report is produced for the Board which outlines any areas of concerns. Declarations are also made verbally at the beginning of every Board and Committee meeting of any 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.

## Staff Wellbeing

### C42 Does the housing provider pay the Real Living Wage?

The Real Living Wage for 2023 (applicable as of April 2023) is £10.90 per hour outside London. We introduced our Total Rewards Package in April 2022 to improve the salaries and benefits of all our employees across Eastlight, and we are always actively looking at ways that we can continue to increase our employee offer.

Comparable to year 2022–23, we have now:

- Increased Levels 6 & 7 salaries (Cleaners and Facilities Assistants) to account for rises in the National Minimum Wage (NMW) and National Living Wage (NLW). Our new rates of pay for these levels are now just below the Real Living Wage – at £10.74 and £10.79 per hour respectively.
- Our Succeed at Eastlight Trainees are paid the NMW/NLW as set by the Government and based on age, until such time they have passed their qualification relevant to their role.

The pay of all other roles in the organisation exceeds the Real Living Wage.





### C43 What is the median gender pay gap?

The gender pay gap is the percentage difference between the average pay of men and women across the workforce. Based on Eastlight's latest Gender Pay Gap Report 2021–22:

- As a median average, women earned 3.06% more than men at Eastlight, compared to the National UK average April 2021, whereby men earned 7.04% more than women.

In 2021–22, 297 employees received a formal bonus, paid at a ratio of (men) 8:7 (women). Average bonus for women (142) was £267.19 and £584.74 for men (155).

Of those 297 staff members, 85 employees (29%) in our predominantly male Repairs & Maintenance Team received a retention bonus based on a percentage of salary.

No retention bonuses were paid in 2022–23.



**Succeed at Eastlight  
Trainees (left)  
Stores and Logistics  
Team (right).**

### C44 What is the CEO:median-worker pay ratio?

For the year 2022-23, our CEO-to-employee pay ratio was:

- 6.1 times the 50th percentile (median pay), or 6.1:1

Further comparables show that the CEO pay was:

- 7.3 times the 25th percentile of pay
- 4.9 times the 75th percentile of pay.

In June 2023, the SRS published its second annual report collating the ESG performance of 64 housing providers. Of these providers, the average CEO:median-worker pay ratio was 7.8:1, so our ratio of 6.1:1 compares favourably.

The Single Total Figure of Remuneration (STFR) as suggested by The Companies (Miscellaneous Reporting) Regulations 2018 has been derived from: Basic Salary, 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 8%. For new members of the pension scheme, Eastlight doubles the employee contribution to a maximum of 8% and has a few legacy pension schemes.

### C45 How does the housing provider support the physical and mental health of their staff?

We have a dedicated Engagement, Diversity & Inclusion Manager whose strategic and functional responsibility includes overseeing the wellbeing of our staff. We partner externally with a Health & Safety (H&S) specialist organisation to ensure that we meet our H&S obligations to keep our workforce and customers safe, and we are recruiting a dedicated H&S Manager.

We have a comprehensive Total Reward Package that supports physical and mental wellbeing. Eastlight’s average benefits include our annual wellbeing grant, generous annual leave allowance, BUPA healthcare cashback plan and access to private medical care, a cycle-to-work scheme, career break opportunities, generous family leave (maternity, paternity and adoption), 24/7 access to an employee assistance programme, access to menopause support through BUPA, access to our own fully-trained first aiders as well as 12 mental health first aiders, who had 230 conversations with customers and colleagues to support their wellbeing. Both first aiders and mental health first aiders are paid for their work and time.



We also conduct regular wellbeing and educational sessions at times to suit our people to maximise participation, both virtually and in person. We support full inclusion through our practices, policies, procedures, values and culture, which support good health. We also have access to occupational health and operate an occupational sick pay scheme.

We have facilities at our offices 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, flexible and agile working, reduced gym membership costs and flu/ Covid vaccinations free of charge where not already eligible.

In 2022–23, we provided permanent staff members up to and including Heads of Service, who were employed by the end of December 2022 and not under notice, a gross payment of £500 (pro rata for part-time staff) to help the financial squeeze caused by the cost-of-living. We also made sure that the payment wouldn't interfere with any benefits individuals receive, with advice and support available.

Wellbeing and H&S are discussed between staff and their line managers, with training provided to all new starters when they join the organisation. For all employees, we also launched our 'Lone Worker Guidance', including a device and app to safeguard our people when working alone in the community, in the homes of our customers, or when in our offices or other establishments.

#### **C46** What is the average number of sick days taken per employee?

- Between 2021–22, average number of sickness days taken per employee was 2.81
- Between 2022–23, average number of sickness days taken per employee was 4.70.

The year-on-year increase was driven by various factors, the biggest of which was an uptick in Covid-related cases.

**4.70**

average sickness days  
taken per employee  
in 2022–23

## Supply Chain

### **C47** How is Social Value creation considered when procuring goods and services?

We are always striving to ensure we consider social value and sustainability in our specifications and requirements for all our tendering activity. Our procurement activities are conducted in a way that requires consideration of wider social economic and environmental benefits in procuring goods and services. We achieve this in a number of ways, including:

- Predominantly selecting local small-to-medium enterprise (SMEs) for quotes/tenders
- Including appropriate quality questions to score, including asking about a supplier's previous social value projects
- Inclusion of requirements for apprentices on larger value contracts
- Only working with contractors who offer the living wage and comply with our Modern Slavery Policy.

All the Public Frameworks we use to procure good and services for the business provide the same social value and environmental initiatives to ensure continuity in all our procurement activity.

### **C48** How is environmental impact considered when procuring goods and services?

As part of our procurement planning, we ensure we define the sustainability requirements and set these out within our project specification or contract clauses. This includes things like:

- Stipulating our requirement, for example, for all timber to be FSC-certified
- Appropriate quality questions to score
- Tender specification/requirements, for example, process for managing waste.

Eastlight requires and expects our contractors to carry out their service and/or works in an ethical and sustainable manner.





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