

ANNUAL REPORT TO RESIDENTS 2019



HOW WE ARE DOING



INTRODUCTION



It has been another year of significant changes at emh homes, and we are pleased to see that your satisfaction levels are reflecting all the hard work that has gone into improving and delivering our services over the past 12 months.

One of the major improvements we made was to change the way we classify and deliver non-urgent repairs, which has had a positive impact on both value-for-money and efficiency. Contact via *myhomeonline* went up 87% last year, demonstrating that we are making more of our services digital at a pace that suits you.

Many of the service improvements we introduced over the year could not have been possible without the dedication and invaluable input of our involved residents. I would like to say a big thank you to them all for playing an important part in addressing the issues that really matter to you.

Chris

CHRIS ASHTON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF HOUSING



CELEBRATING DIVERSITY

Vrudha Nivas, our sheltered scheme for older Asian people in Loughborough, was shortlisted for its multicultural approach at the *24housing Diversity Awards*, which showcase the best work taking place in the housing sector to address inequality and celebrate diversity.

We are especially pleased that the residents are proud of the recognition, as the scheme is a key example of our Equality & Diversity Strategy.



RESIDENT INVOLVEMENT

HOLDING US TO ACCOUNT

Over the last 12 months we have almost doubled the number of involved residents, and we now have over 100 people who are keen to help us improve our services. **We have called our new approach *Let's Engage*.**

Our involved residents have achieved a lot over the last year, including:

- ▶ Reviewing our Repairs and Maintenance Policy
- ▶ Deciding on the type of boiler we use
- ▶ Reviewing anti-social behaviour letters and risk assessments

Plans for the next 12 months include:

- ▶ Developing forward plans for the Service Improvement Groups so that we can promote what each group is working on and celebrate their achievements
- ▶ Using the forward plans to encourage more residents to take part in discussions through our online survey and proof-reading groups



Amount spent on resident involvement*

2017-18	2018-19
£48,910	£54,483

*Does not include staff time



WHY NOT GET INVOLVED?

You do not have to attend meetings to be involved. The online survey and proof-reading groups provide digital opportunities for you to have your say and influence decisions from the comfort of your own home. These activities work alongside our meeting-based groups to help improve our services.

If you would like to find out more about being involved, either online or through attending meetings, please contact our Community & Investment Officers, **Polly Cox** and **Anne Phillips**, at polly.cox@emhgroup.org.uk or anne.phillips@emhgroup.org.uk

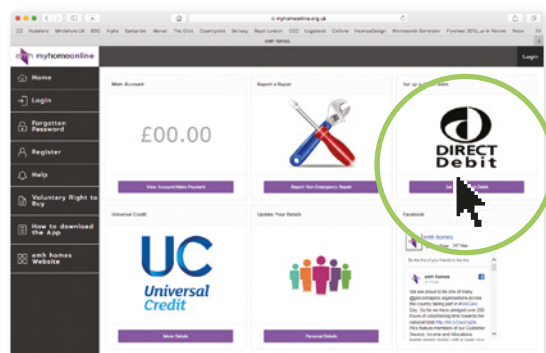


WHERE DOES MY RENT GO?

WHY NOT MAKE PAYING YOUR RENT EASIER?

An increasing number of our residents are paying their rent by Direct Debit. This is by far the easiest way to pay your rent: you can set it up for a day that suits you, and you won't need to worry about missing a payment.

You can set one up via myhomeonline, by downloading a form from our website, or by calling us on 0300 123 6000.



RENTAL INCOME

	2017-18	2018-19
TOTAL RENTAL INCOME COLLECTED	£72.3m	£73.2m
Weekly arrears	2.93%	3.22%
Monthly arrears	2.66%	3.33%
Arrears collected from former tenants	£163,000	£198,000
Number of homes relet	1,041	1,339
Average relet time for general needs properties	29 days	27 days
Average cost of relets	£2,629	£2,242

RENT CHANGES

We are now notifying you earlier of changes to your rent and service charge. Letters will be sent out in January, giving you more time to resolve any queries before the charges are introduced in April.



INCOME SPENT ON HOMES AND SERVICES

	2017-18	2018-19
TOTAL SPENT	£60.06m	£59.20m*
Property management	£15.97m	£16.50m
Maintenance	£14.55m	£15.20m
Interest on loans	£20.16m	£19.00m
Investment on existing properties	£8.48m	£8.50m

*Overall decrease in spending is due to lower loan interest repayments

HOW IS MY SERVICE CHARGE SPENT?

	2017-18	2018-19
TOTAL SPENT	£6.72m	£7.21m
Equipment maintenance	£0.97m	£1.35m
Utilities	£0.65m	£0.70m
Cleaning	£0.91m	£1.12m
Grounds maintenance	£1.53m	£1.56m
Staffing	£1.0m	£1.04m
Other costs	£1.66m	£1.43m

LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME

	2017-18	2018-19
TOTAL SPENT ON PLANNED MAINTENANCE	£7.9m	£8.8m
ON REPLACING:		
Heating systems	240	545
Kitchens with electrical upgrade	510	408
Fascia/soffits	137	103
Roofs	187	147
Bathrooms	12	22

HOME MAKEOVER

Residents of Chapel Court in Narborough were so thrilled with the renovation of their communal areas that they held a celebratory lunch for all the staff and contractors who contributed. The residents were involved at every stage of the project, working on mood boards with an interior designer to choose the right balance of colours, flooring and furniture. They also chose a final colour scheme that was the most user-friendly for anyone with limited eyesight, and mismatched chairs were chosen for the lounge to accommodate people with different mobility needs.

The renovation is part of a long term project to transform our sheltered schemes and make them more suited to changing demographics. Other schemes which have recently been refurbished include Peverel Court, Len Hollis Court, Wakerley Court, and The Grange.



POWERING AHEAD

At the *East Midlands Energy Efficiency Awards 2019* we were delighted to be named *Housing Association of the Year* and be commended in the *Vulnerable Customer Support* category for the installation of energy-efficient air source heat pumps in a number of our properties. We also placed second at the National awards in the *Renewable Heat* category and received a special commendation in the *Vulnerable Customer Support* category.

The pumps absorb heat from the air outside which is then used to heat radiators and provide hot water. We also offer support and advice to residents after installation, including guidance on the right tariff for maximum efficiency.



LOOKING AFTER YOUR HOME

REPAIRS

33,122 repairs completed 
90% on time / 95% customer satisfaction

2017-18: **30,633** repairs completed, **84%** on time with **93%** customer satisfaction

During the year we changed the way we categorise repairs in order to improve our service. For repairs that do not pose an immediate risk to your health and safety or are not materially affecting your comfort or convenience, we now class as less urgent and carry them out when we have a number of other jobs of a similar type or in your area. This will ensure that we are providing you with a value for money service.

We do recognise that personal circumstances and local situations can affect the true priority, so our Customer Service Advisors are trained to identify these differences and are authorised to adjust the status of individual repairs accordingly.

Repairs that are identified as emergencies or of an urgent nature will continue to be undertaken by appointments agreed with the resident.



41



properties had external insulation/environmental works carried out

27

blocks of flats had their door entry systems and communal doors upgraded

2,504

properties painted



2017-18: 2,585

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

We provide a major adaptations service (funding up to 50 per cent) in partnership with local authorities. We also have limited funding available for minor adaptations such as grab rails, shower seats, and temporary ramps.

£344,959

spent on 821 aids and adaptations

2017-18: £258,588 spent

KEEPING YOU SAFE

	2017-18	2018-19
Fire risk assessments performed	316	521
Properties with a valid Gas Safety certificate	99.9%	99.8%*
Surveys for Asbestos Containing Materials carried out on new dwellings	404	185
Surveys for Asbestos Containing Materials carried out on communal areas	54	78
Re-inspection of homes at medium risk of having Asbestos Containing Materials	246	13
Re-inspection of communal areas with Asbestos Containing Materials	49	2
Properties that have had Asbestos Containing Materials removed	531	628

*We are undergoing legal action to gain access to nine properties to carry out the safety checks

FIRE SAFETY IN COMMUNAL AREAS

We have a zero tolerance approach to any actions which may put you or your neighbours in danger. If you live in a scheme or a block with communal areas, it is essential that they are kept clear at all times. If a fire were to break out, any obstruction may block your escape route and prevent the Fire Service from getting in to put out the fire.

For this reason we do not allow the storage of any items in communal areas, including bikes, buggies and mobility scooters. Items left in communal areas will be removed and placed in storage or disposed of.

Communal spaces containing flammable items add fuel to a fire. Even a small bag of rubbish can create enough smoke to fill a stairway. Non-flammable items become a barrier to you getting out of the building or allowing others to get in to help. Stored items add time to you getting out safely.



ESCAPE PLANS

If you live in a block it is particularly important that you know the fire safety arrangements. Smoke makes it almost impossible to see when you are trying to escape, so plan how you would escape if a fire did break out.

Do not prop open fire doors – they are there to stop the spread of a fire. If you notice any damage or faults to a fire door or self-closing door fixings, please let us know immediately.

If you are unsure of the evacuation procedures for your building, please ask us.



HELP AND SUPPORT

CUSTOMER SERVICES

	2017-18	2018-19
Phone calls	149,000	154,000
Emails	28,500	25,300
Contact through myhomeonline	19,258	36,063

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS

The service area receiving the most complaints was repairs and maintenance, but it was also the area receiving the most compliments.

The lessons learned from complaints are used to improve and shape our services. Some improvements are made at once, and others are presented to the Customer Experience SIG for their thoughts and recommendations. The Customer Experience team regularly meets with other areas of the business and contractors to discuss any emerging or ongoing concerns.

	2017-18	2018-19
Formal complaints received	554	484
Concerns*	4,264	4,142
Compliments	N/A	362

*Resolved at the first point of contact without having to go through a formal investigation

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

We are seeing more complex cases being reported, often related to increasing vulnerabilities due to mental health, learning difficulties, and drugs or alcohol misuse. This means we are working more closely with the police and local authorities to support and signpost people suffering from ASB.

	2017-18	2018-19
New cases recorded	243	298
Evictions for ASB	3	2

MONEY MATTERS

	2017-18	2018-19
Households evicted for rent arrears	43	50
Helped to claim in grants and additional benefits	£1.2m**	£1.5m*
Residents offered support by Financial Inclusion Officers	1,339	1,332

*Plus an additional £210k through the Erewash and Northampton Money Advice Universal Credit services

**Plus an additional £131k through the Erewash Money Advice Universal Credit service

HOUSEHOLDS EVICTED FOR RENT ARREARS

We are committed to supporting residents with financial difficulties and eviction is taken as a last resort. The increase in number is due to an organisational need to minimise arrears on these accounts. Compared to our peers we have one of the lowest evictions rates per percentage of stock across the region.



By working with local money advice centres and targeting our resources onto the people we can help most, we have secured over £1.7m in extra benefits and other income for residents via our Financial Inclusion team. Joint working with the Department of Work and Pensions and Job Centre Plus means we are better able to support the more than 2500 residents now receiving Universal Credit.

Despite an increasing number of our tenants transitioning onto UC



(currently 15%), at the year end we were able to report the best performance to date on UC arrears as a percentage of rent due at 8.76%. By comparison, non-UC arrears as a percentage of rent due is at 2.02%.

MEETING THE DEMAND FOR MORE HOMES



Homes England

Back in 2018 emh group was named one of the first strategic partners of Homes England, the government's housebuilding agency, securing £30.5m to provide affordable homes for sale and rent across the East Midlands over four years. Due to the ongoing success of our development programme, last year the partnership was extended and we were awarded a further £12.9m, specifically for homes for social rent.

The total funding we are receiving from Homes England has enabled us to increase our development programme from 300 homes a year to around 600.

VOLUNTARY RIGHT TO BUY

During the year we took part in the Midlands pilot for the government's *Voluntary Right to Buy* scheme aimed at supporting social housing tenants to buy their own home. Following an online national ballot, successful applicants were asked to submit their requests to their landlord. We received around 140 requests, around 70 of which were eligible under the stated criteria, and we are currently supporting these residents to buy their homes.

Properties sold under this scheme will be replaced on a one-for-one basis through Homes England funding. No further announcement has been made from the government as to whether the scheme will be continued.

HELLO HOMES

	2017-18	2018-19
New homes sold	67	57
Resales	62	56



1,069 new homes in the pipeline that will be completed in the next two years.

2017-18: 850



257
rental properties

+

143

low cost home
ownership properties

=

400

new homes built by
emh group

