

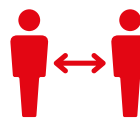
# coronavirus update #5



**HANDS**



**FACE**



**SPACE**

## WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister on 22 February of the roadmap out of the lockdown, we want to let you know that we will be continuing with our current levels of service until June at the earliest. We will let you know if there are any planned changes to this timescale.

Our priority remains keeping everyone safe, so please be reassured that we will continue to follow the latest government guidance if we need to visit you in your home.

All our offices are closed to the public, but you can contact us in the usual ways.

You can manage your account, report a repair, and change your contact details online via [myhomeonline](https://myhomeonline.org.uk) or contact our Customer Service Centre at [enquiries@emhhomes.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@emhhomes.org.uk) or call us on **0300 123 6000**.

If you have any concerns about coronavirus and how it has affected our services, please email [coronavirusinfo@emhgroup.org.uk](mailto:coronavirusinfo@emhgroup.org.uk)

**Thank you for your continuing support and co-operation during this difficult time.**

### WHAT'S INSIDE

Your guide to the latest information about how we are continuing to support you with: our services, your neighbourhoods, the vaccine, heating repairs, money matters and your wellbeing ... 

# This table shows the current status of our services.

## Services running as normal

Emergency repairs
Gas safety
Customer Service Centre
Financial Inclusion Officers
Grounds maintenance
Solid fuel appliance servicing and repairs
Renewable appliance servicing and repairs
Fire safety risk assessments
Alarms and emergency lighting
Asbestos inspections, surveys and sampling
Legionella risk assessment and testing
Lift maintenance
Domestic and communal electrical installation and testing
Planned replacement work <sup>(1)</sup>
Anti-social behaviour services
Non-urgent repairs

## Services running with some changes

Estate inspections
Lettings
Mutual exchanges
Income management
Customer/Tenancy services
Sheltered Housing services

## Services not running just yet

Public access to our offices
Communal rooms

<sup>1</sup> This includes component items such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows/doors, roofs and heating systems.



To keep up to date with changes to our services, please visit our website regularly or follow us on [Twitter](#) or [Facebook](#).



### HEATING REPAIRS

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We are aware that there are currently delays in completing our heating repairs, for which we apologise. In these instances, we are providing temporary heating solutions where possible. This delay is something also experienced by other social housing landlords across the country. As your landlord, we want to do everything we can to address this as quickly as possible. We have recently reviewed arrangements with our contractors in order to improve the quality and responsiveness of our service. We would like to thank you for your patience and support during this time.

If you need to get in touch with us regarding a heating failure previously attended to, we have a dedicated team which can be contacted by calling **0300 123 6000** and then pressing *option 6*. You will be asked to leave a message which should include your name, address, contact number and any details - the team will get back to you by the end of the next working day. If it is a new heating repair, press *option 3* when you call.

### ROUTINE REPAIRS

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The impact of Covid-19 has been far-reaching and has had an impact on services. However, our priority remains the safety and wellbeing of our residents. The early restrictions created challenges in delivering our repairs and maintenance services. Since then we have been working hard and have come some way to returning to our business as usual position. We are continuing to provide support for our most vulnerable residents through regular wellbeing calls. Our emergency daytime and out-of-hours repairs service has continued to be delivered using Covid 19-safe working practices.

### SAFETY CHECKS

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Throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, your safety in your home has remained our utmost priority. We have continued to undertake annual statutory gas and fire safety inspections and have maintained regulatory compliance.





# KEEPING CLEAN...

**With many of our staff continuing to work from home, we want to reassure you that we are doing everything we can to keep you clean and safe.**

Our ability to carry out large-scale estate inspections has been severely impacted by lockdown restrictions, with Housing Officers only being able to carry out essential visits. As a result, we have had to find new ways of hearing about what your neighbourhood concerns are. **Together with the NSIG we have recruited 325 Estate Service Champions to be our eyes and ears on the ground.**

Every two months we send out a survey asking the champions to let us know what they have spotted that needs our attention. The results are then analysed and the resulting actions forwarded to the relevant teams – Housing & Neighbourhoods, Property Services, emh Sharpes, etc. – to respond.

We are still awaiting responses to the third survey, but those we received from the first two were really encouraging. In both cases, over half of the champions responded and we received photos and short video clips illustrating their concerns.

**If you are interested in becoming an Estate Services Champion, please email: [anne.phillips@emhgroup.org.uk](mailto:anne.phillips@emhgroup.org.uk)**

# AND SAFE

We know that anti-social behaviour (ASB) can cause a great deal of distress, particularly during lockdown, which is why we are committed to helping to try and keep our neighbourhoods free from ASB.

We recently received a court injunction following reports of threatening and intimidating behaviour. The order has been made for a year and forbids the tenant from, among other things, entering or attempting to enter his neighbour's property, or using or threatening to use violence against his neighbour or anyone attending the property. The injunction has a power of arrest attached to it.

We use a variety of methods to resolve ASB, and will work with you, your neighbours, and other agencies to try and sort out the problems.





# SAY YES TO THE VACCINE



People having the vaccine is critical to ending the Covid-19 pandemic. However, there is a lot of hesitancy - particularly in Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities – about whether to accept a vaccine or not when it is offered, so we wanted to look at some of the reasons you might be hesitant and explain why we think everyone, whatever their ethnic background, should get the vaccine when it is offered to them.

### Are people from BAME communities more at risk of dying from Covid-19?

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Compared to white British people, the risk of dying from Covid-19 is almost double if you are from a BAME background. There are many reasons for this - the jobs people do and how people are living (some communities have larger households) for example. Some health conditions (including diabetes and high blood pressure) are more common in BAME communities too.

### Could the vaccines affect your DNA or fertility?

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The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are a new type of vaccine based on mRNA. The mRNA element never enters the nucleus of your cells, where the DNA is stored. For the short time it is in your body, the mRNA teaches your immune system to recognise and fight proteins in the Covid-19 virus.

*The Royal College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists* and the *Royal College of Midwives* say there is no cause to worry about your future fertility, as the vaccines cannot affect your DNA.

## WHY WE THINK YOU SHOULD SAY YES IF YOU ARE OFFERED A COVID-19 VACCINATION.

### Are the vaccines safe for people in BAME communities?

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Fewer BAME people took part in the trials than white people because they were hesitant. However, BAME doctors and nurses did take part in the trials and have been among the first to get vaccinated.

### Are the vaccines safe for pregnant women?

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The vaccines were not tested on pregnant women for ethical reasons, so for now pregnant women will not be offered the vaccine routinely. However, pregnant women who are at high risk of catching and dying from Covid-19 may be offered the vaccine because the risks are thought to be low.

### The vaccines were developed very quickly - can we trust them?

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When it usually takes years, getting to a vaccine in 10 months is an extraordinary achievement. However, there are several good reasons why this was possible, including that there was plenty of funding, and that the scientists found safe ways to speed up the usual trials - helped by lots of willing vaccine volunteers.

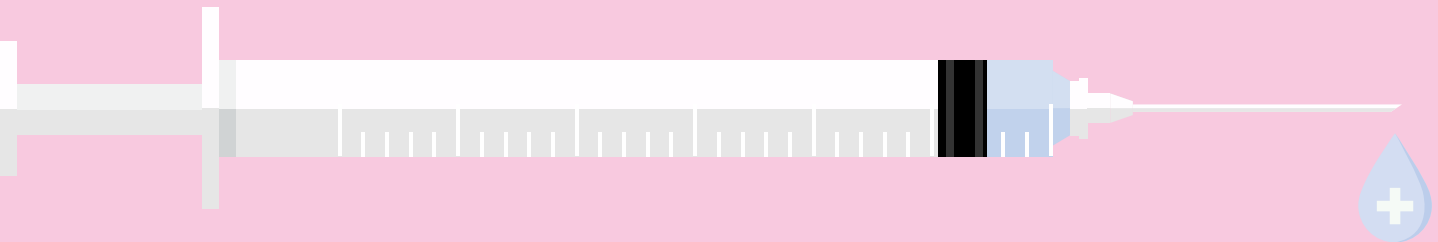
The scale of the pandemic also meant they could quickly see if the vaccines were working. Tens of thousands of volunteers from across the world took part in the trials. Since being approved for use by medical regulators in several countries, millions of people have been safely vaccinated.

## Are the vaccines halal?

Muslims understandably need to be sure that the vaccines are halal. Rumours on social media suggested the vaccines might contain gelatin or other animal products, or tissue from aborted fetuses, but none of these are true. Imams at 100 mosques across the country confirmed this in Friday prayers on 22 January 2021. They encouraged worshippers to accept vaccines. Some have put details online of their own vaccinations.

## Does the vaccine stop your body from protecting itself naturally?

This is another myth that has been circulating on social media and is not true. Eating well and taking care of yourself are good for your general health and taking Vitamin D – which most people living in the UK (particularly people from BAME backgrounds) lack – is recommended for boosting your immune system. However, getting the jab is by far the best way available to protect yourself from Covid-19 – even if you have already had the virus.



## Are the vaccines kosher?

Jewish people have been concerned by rumours that the vaccines might contain pork or cause infertility. Neither is true. An open letter signed by 70 British Jewish doctors in December 2020 confirmed that the vaccines are kosher and that there is no logical reason to fear infertility from them.

## Could a vaccine give you Covid-19?

Although it is correct that traditional vaccines use modified viruses to trigger an immune response, you cannot get Covid-19 from the vaccines.

## After having the vaccine

After your first vaccine, it takes two to three weeks for your immune system to be ready to fight Covid-19. At the end of three weeks, you will have significant protection. Your second vaccination completes the dose and raises your protection further.

Even after getting vaccinated we must all keep wearing masks and socially distancing until enough people have had the vaccine and the rates of transmission are low.



We understand that this may be a difficult time for some of our residents, and our Financial Inclusion Officers will continue to support them to claim benefits, offer support with budgeting, and provide advice on priority debts.



If you would like to speak to a member of the team, please e-mail us at [moneyadvice@emhhomes.org.uk](mailto:moneyadvice@emhhomes.org.uk) or call us on **0300 123 6000**, select *option 4*, and leave your name, contact number, tenancy number and/or address along with brief details and we will respond accordingly.

*Please note that due to staff working remotely, customers may be contacted by mobile phone.*



# Looking for a flat in a sheltered housing scheme?



**We currently have vacancies across the East Midlands.  
If you know of a relative or a friend who may be interested  
please let us know.**

Sheltered housing is aimed at people aged 55 and over who want peace of mind knowing that help is at hand should they need it. Each of our schemes has a dedicated support coordinator who will give you a daily wellbeing call, and can help you live independently.

Many of them have communal facilities – such as a lounge and gardens – where you can socialise with your neighbours when lockdown restrictions are lifted.

For more information and to find out what is currently available, please contact our Allocations team on **0300 123 6000** or email [\*\*allocations@emhhomes.org.uk\*\*](mailto:allocations@emhhomes.org.uk)



**SMOKEFREE**

**Leicestershire  
County Council**

# It's time to go smokefree

**FOR YOUR SAKE, FOR THEIR SAKE**

Want to save money in the short-term, improve your financial position in the long-term, reduce your health risks and work towards stopping smoking for good?

Contact Quit Ready Stop Smoking Service for FREE help, support and advice.

**CALL** 0345 646 66 66

**TEXT** 'ready' to 66777

**VISIT** [www.quitready.co.uk](http://www.quitready.co.uk)

**QuitReady**  
Leicestershire



**Do you have an elderly parent or relative who may need some extra support this winter (they do not have to be an emh homes tenant)?**

Lifeline is a personal alarm service with help available 24 hours a day at the push of a button.

The alarm can help people who:

- ▶ are housebound
- ▶ are vulnerable - whether young, elderly or disabled
- ▶ are living with a long term medical condition
- ▶ have recently been discharged from hospital and require additional support

From as little as £3.32 a week Lifeline gives customers the confidence to live independently, and their loved ones reassurance that their personal safety is being monitored 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

**T.** 0300 123 0701

07827 984 228 / 07792 098 644

**E.** [enquiries@lifelineonline.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@lifelineonline.org.uk)

**www.lifelineonline.org.uk**

Lifeline is a branded product of emh homes.



### **Blaby District Council is offering a free telephone befriending service, providing an opportunity for people to enjoy talking to someone over the phone.**

The scheme is aimed at residents in the district who may be feeling isolated and/or lonely. Befrienders will provide those who would benefit from someone to talk to, someone willing to listen, someone neutral, and someone who will be understanding of their circumstances. It is not intended to be an advocacy/advice service or to be supplementary to any other services that a resident may already be accessing.

Anyone interested needs to have a landline or mobile phone as well as be able to hear and be understood over the phone.

**You can self-refer or make a referral on behalf of someone else (with their permission). For further information, please email [vcshub@blaby.gov.uk](mailto:vcshub@blaby.gov.uk)**



# How are you?





## WELLBEING CALLS #KEEPINGINTOUCH

Since the start of the pandemic we have continued to make thousands of wellbeing calls to our vulnerable residents to make sure they are looking after themselves and are able to access everything they might need.

We can help with referrals for food and medicine deliveries, signpost you to other support in your area, or just be a friendly voice on the end of the line.



If you would like us to receive a #keepingintouch call, please call our Customer Service Centre on 0300 123 6000 and leave a message, and someone will get back to you.

**You can find details of organisations in your area that can provide a range of advice and support on our website: [emhhomes.org.uk/local\\_support](https://emhhomes.org.uk/local_support)**

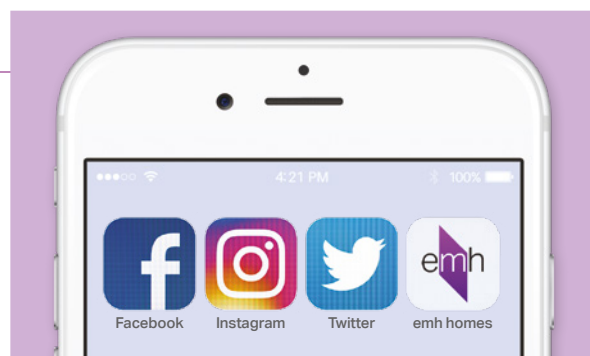


## CONTACTING US

**The easiest way to access our services is online, particularly via myhomeonline.**

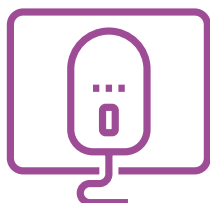
Over the last few weeks our Customer Services team has been contacting customers who have registered for **myhomeonline** but not used it for a while, reminding them of how easy it was to do the following:

- ▶ **Pay your rent**
- ▶ **Set up a Direct Debit**
- ▶ **Report anti-social behaviour**
- ▶ **Send us a direct message**






**You can find myhomeonline on the homepage of our website. It is also available as an app.**

This is simply a handy link to the portal on the home screen of your phone. To install the app go to: [www.emhhomes.org.uk/contact-us/download-app/](https://www.emhhomes.org.uk/contact-us/download-app/) and follow the simple instructions.



You can email us at:  
**[enquiries@emhhomes.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@emhhomes.org.uk)**  
or visit **[www.emhhomes.org.uk](https://www.emhhomes.org.uk)**

Follow us on social media:  
   **@emhhomes**

Text us on: **07860 024 523**

- ▶ Text the word '**Bal**' or '**Balance**' and your account balance will be automatically sent back to you
- ▶ Text the word '**Callback**' and a member of our Customer Services team will ring you back

**You can still call us on 0300 123 6000 but please only try and do so if it is an emergency or if you have been asked to do so via communication from us.**