



coronavirus update #3



STAY ALERT ▶ CONTROL THE VIRUS ▶ SAVE LIVES

WE ARE HERE TO SUPPORT YOU!

As restrictions have been eased over the last few weeks and months, we have restarted some of our services that had been put on hold. Our priority is to keep everyone safe, so please be reassured that we will continue to follow the latest government advice 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 or contact our Customer Services Centre at 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

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 home and your rent, resident surveys and local updates...**





YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

At emh group we have started a Transformation programme to review in depth how we operate and deliver our services.

We are delighted that many of our involved residents have volunteered to take part in this programme, along with a further 868 of you who took part in our Covid-19 survey. We are now asking you to help us bring about some positive changes. Your support will help to ensure that the way we work delivers the right services and meets a diverse range of needs.

We are currently reviewing the following service areas and would welcome your views on:

➤ **Property improvements and planned works programmes**

New kitchens, bathrooms, and roofs etc.

➤ **Property repairs and services: compliance and statutory requirements**

Gas safety testing, legionella testing, and Health & Safety etc.

➤ **Responsive repairs and routine maintenance**

Day-to-day repairs and the upkeep of communal gardens and green spaces.

➤ **Your new home**

Moving into your new shared ownership or rental property.

HAVE WE RECENTLY CARRIED OUT AN IMPROVEMENT TO YOUR HOME?

HELP US UNDERSTAND WHAT WORKED FOR YOU.

If you have any views on our procedures for keeping you safe in your home, let us know.

If you have any views about our repairs and maintenance services, we would be pleased to hear from you.

If you have recently moved into one of our rental properties or are a new shared owner, tell us about your experience and what we could have done to make the process better.

Tell us what you feel needs to change and how we can do better.

You can e-mail our Transformation team at oneemh@emhgroup.org.uk



This table shows the current status of our services as at 1 September 2020 whilst following Covid-19 guidelines and protocol's where appropriate.

Services running as normal

Emergency Repairs
Gas Safety
Customer Services
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 ⁽¹⁾
ASB Services

Services running with some changes

Estate inspections
Lettings
Mutual exchanges
Customer/Tenancy services
Sheltered Housing services
Non-urgent repairs (backlog) ⁽²⁾

Services not running just yet

Non-urgent repairs (new)
Public access to our offices
Communal rooms

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

²We are currently working through the non-urgent repair backlog and getting these booked in as soon as we can.



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





COVID-19 RESIDENTS' SURVEY

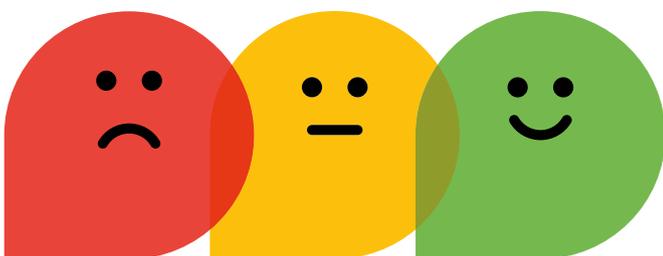
Thank you to everyone who completed the survey. We received 2,078 responses from across 34 local authority areas.

Your three main issues of concern were **mental and physical health, access to shopping and medication, and reduced income and paying bills**. People also commented on other concerns that were worrying them, including **anti-social behaviour and not seeing family or friends**.

Two-thirds of respondents (67%) told us that they preferred more traditional methods of communication (phone call, post, face to face, and home visits), while 16% preferred digital communication methods. Of those that expressed a preference for digital, the most popular forms of contact had been via e-mail, Facebook, and WhatsApp. Almost 90% of respondents said that they had "Got on well" using digital forms of communication.

We will be feeding all your responses and comments into our Transformation project.

Information about how repairs would be done safely, and how and when our services would resume were of most importance to you. We hope that this latest update addresses all your concerns in these areas.



ILKESTON: SUPPORT & INFORMATION CENTRE

The Ilkeston Service & Information Centre was severely damaged by flooding at the end of June and will remain closed until the extensive repair work has been completed and we can safely welcome staff and residents back into the Centre. We will keep you informed of progress and update you in advance of the re-opening. Thank you for your support and patience.

In the meantime, you can also **manage your account, report a repair and change your contact details** online via myhomeonline or contact our Customer Services Centre at enquiries@emhhomes.org.uk or call us on: 0300 123 6000.

Our other offices will remain closed to the public until the end of the year.

COVID-19 IN NORTHAMPTON



At the time of writing the Government had added Northampton as an 'area of intervention'. We would suggest residents keep themselves updated on the local restrictions, which can be found at: www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-restrictions-areas-with-an-outbreak-of-coronavirus-covid-19

COMPETITION WINNERS

1ST prize: Mrs A M Jenkins, Long Eaton

2ND prize: Mr D Powditch, Chesterfield

3RD prize: Mr D Herbert, Ilkeston



RENT ARREARS & COURT ACTION

During the pandemic we have been working with tenants to try and support them in paying their rent and avoid falling into arrears. Despite our best efforts, arrears have increased by around £320,000 since the start of lockdown.

We serve Notices of Seeking Possession (NOSP) only when we have tried and not been able to contact residents, when residents have not contacted us regarding their arrears or have not made enough effort to work with us to reduce their arrears. Latest guidance on NOSPs give residents between 3- and 6-months additional time to work with us to agree a way forward and resolve the arrears issues before court action could be taken.

If you receive a NOSP, are issued with court proceedings or an eviction warrant, it is **vital that you contact us immediately.**

We want to support all residents in these difficult times and will support you in making an affordable agreement to try and prevent you from losing your home.

The courts are due to reopen for rent possession proceedings on at the end of September. We are reviewing cases which need this type of intervention to secure a reduction to serious rent arrears and have started to make applications to the courts.



Our Financial Inclusion Officers continue to support residents to claim benefits, offer support with budgeting, and provide advice on priority debts. Since April they have secured over £713,000 in additional benefits for residents to help pay their rent and other bills.

If you would like to speak to one of our Financial Inclusion officers, please e-mail us at 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 be aware that due to staff working remotely, customers may be contacted by mobile phone.



YOUR FAVOURITE RECIPES: CORONAVIRUS COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

Our **#emh2give project** is seeking your help in creating a community cookbook full of all your favourite recipes that you have been making while in lockdown.

The community cookbook will be a collection of recipes submitted by residents along with short pieces about why these are your favourite recipes and what they mean to you.

We aim to publish a free online version of the cookbook in December and sell hard copies to raise funds for activities for users of our care and support services.

If you would like to contribute one or two of your favourite recipes, please send them - along with a short piece about what memories they evoke, why they are long-standing family favourites, or what they meant to you during the lockdown – to us along with your contact details. A picture of your creations would also make a great addition to the book.

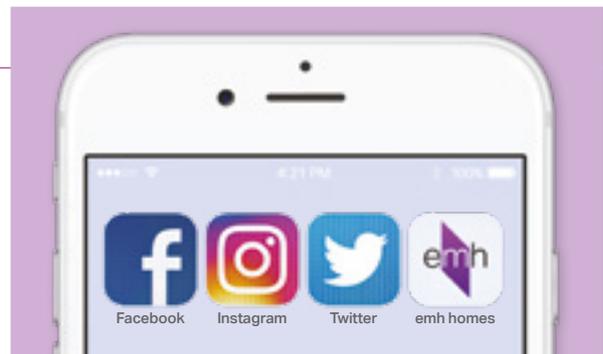
Please email your contributions to helen.prew@emhgroup.org.uk or send them by post to Helen Prew, Communications Team, emh group, Memorial House, Whitwick Business Park, Stenson Road, Coalville, Leicestershire, LE67 4JP.

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/ and follow the simple instructions.



You can email us at:
enquiries@emhhomes.org.uk
or visit **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.