

# SpotLight



**James Bassant** - Co-Owner and Design Director at **Astro Lighting**

## **Q: Tell us about Astro Lighting**

**A:** Astro Lighting was founded in 1997, by John Fearon and myself - James Bassant. Our double Queen's Award-winning company creates contemporary lighting designs to elevate everyday living in the home and garden.

Passionate about lighting design, with a vision to create products with distinctive quality, our company, based in Harlow employs over 100 staff at our 86,000 sq ft headquarters in River Way (with 140 worldwide).  
[www.astrolighting.com](http://www.astrolighting.com)

## **Q: Tell us about your company's relationship with Streets2Homes**

**A:** Astro Lighting has been working with Streets2Homes for the past 6 years. It has been a very fruitful relationship for us.

We support the charity in a number of different ways. First and foremost, there is the financial support, as well as operational interactions. I'd say it's a holistic approach (we do what we can manage). We organise charity events and our staff have a lot of fun raising money. Particular favourites are sponsored walks and teambuilding events – all great for staff morale and camaraderie. In the past we've even helped design leaflets. Some staff volunteer in person to lend a hand at Streets2Homes, helping the residents at Bromley Cottages.

Helping with Christmas lunch is one of my personal favourites. Most of us tend to take for granted that we will sit down at home, with loved ones, to Christmas lunch or dinner. Unfortunately, not everyone has that to look forward to. With this in mind, we spread some 'Astro love' at Christmas to make it a special occasion for those who would otherwise miss out on festivities.

**Award-winning Astro Lighting has donated to Streets2Homes since 2016. Choosing a homeless charity to support has resulted in a mutually beneficial relationship for both the company and the charity.**

**Co-founder, James Bassant took the time to tell us about supporting Streets2Homes.**



**Helping those who are homeless**

# SpotLight

**James Bassant** - Co-Owner and Design Director at **Astro Lighting**

## Q: Why choose a homeless charity?

**A:** We chose to support a homeless charity because homelessness is one of those fundamental things that most of us are fortunate enough to avoid. I mean that most of us take having a roof over our head for granted, after all, it is a basic human right. We want to help alleviate this simple human deficit that affects so many people. It was also important for us to support a local charity.

Streets2Homes is based in Harlow – 10 minutes from our offices. We thought “Let’s start at home by supporting our local community”. Even though we are an international company, we are a Harlow employer of many Harlow-based staff. Local is important to us and our team, right across Astro.

## Q: Are there any financial benefits to you as a company?

**A:** Yes – although tax relief is purely a marginal benefit. Limited companies will pay less corporation tax if they donate to charity (and that can be financial donations as well as items/equipment). But there’s more to charitable giving than receiving tax benefits.

- Charitable contributions from businesses to charities and nonprofits can qualify for tax deductions.
- When it comes to the paperwork and tax requirements for charitable contributions, it’s best to speak with your accountant or tax advisor.
- The GOV.UK website has some useful information on charitable giving and tax efficiencies <https://www.gov.uk/tax-limited-company-gives-to-charity>

## Q: What about Corporate Social Responsibility?

**A:** Corporate Social Responsibility is a self-regulatory business model that enables a corporation to be socially accountable to its stakeholders and the general public. As our company grew, and became more successful, we developed a Corporate Social Responsibility strategy. As part of that we identified Streets2Homes for the charity aspect. I’d advise any company to involve the staff in helping to decide which charity to support. The benefits of this are that:

1. Your employees can feel a sense of pride working for a company with strong values.
2. Your customers can feel like their patronage is helping to make the world a better place.
3. Most importantly, your donations can support and advance causes that you care deeply about.



astro

# SpotLight

“Being a small charity, you feel like every penny you give is really appreciated.”



Show your care at  
[www.streets2homes.co.uk](http://www.streets2homes.co.uk)



Helping those who are homeless

**James Bassant** - Co-Owner and Design Director at **Astro Lighting**

**Q: Where have you really made a difference?**

**A:** One of the projects we recently supported was our intervention with the refurbishment of Bromley Cottages in Harlow - two Victorian cottages, which Streets2Homes turned into a centre offering 9 bed spaces. We supplied the lighting at the cottages.

We also provide care packages for the residents that leave the cottages to move-on accommodation. A care package consists of personal items for the resident to use, which will help get them established. They don't have to be expensive items – could be anything from a toothbrush to a dressing gown – we call it a package of love from Astro Lighting.

**Q: What are the benefits to your staff?**

**A:** Staff engagement and motivation! Whether you choose Streets2Homes as your 'charity of the year' or you prefer long-term support, the payoff for our company is the warm glow from our long-term engagement. Kerrie (Eastman – CEO) and her team do so much on so little and we know we can make a big difference. What's more, being a small charity, you feel like every penny you give is really appreciated.

Our staff get a great sense of ownership (and warm glow) from our relationship with Streets2Homes. Many of our employees live within Harlow and can see a direct impact from our support. We can give back to that local community that invests in us as a business. There are also intangible things such as comments from staff (and customers) who recognise what we are doing and are proud of it.