

RBH Neighbourhood News

Welcome to the first edition of your new RBH Neighbourhood News



What's inside this edition?

Find out more about our plans for the next 12 months

News from your community

How we're making sure we get things right for you

Your opportunities to get involved

What's inside?

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We want to make sure that the information in this newsletter is available to all our customers. Large print, plain text, and audio versions can be downloaded from our website at www.rbh.org.uk/newsletter. You can also request these by calling us on **Freephone 0800 027 7769**, emailing us at newsletter@rbh.org.uk, or making a request through the MyRBH portal.

We're looking for RBH customers to work with us to help create this newsletter. We also want to make sure that whenever we write to you, we are doing so in a way that is understandable and helpful. If you'd like to join our Communications Champions group, email engagement@rbh.org.uk, or call us on Freephone **0800 027 7769** and ask for the engagement team. You can find out more about this on page 15.

This information is available in Braille, audio and community languages.

Please phone: Freephone **0800 027 7769** or email: customer@rbh.org.uk.

Para traduzir estas informações, ligue para o número **0800 027 7769** ou envie um email para customer@rbh.org.uk

اس معلومات کا ترجمہ کرنے کے لیے، براہ کرم **0800 027 7769** پر کال کریں یا customer@rbh.org.uk پر ای میل کریں۔

Aby przetłumaczyć tę informację, prosimy o kontakt na **0800 027 7769** lub poprzez e-mail customer@rbh.org.uk

برای ترجمہ این اطلاعات، لطفاً با شماره **0800 027 7769** تماس بگیرید یا به customer@rbh.org.uk ایمیل بزنید .

Hello from Amanda!



A big hello to everyone and welcome to this first edition of your new newsletter, which we'll produce quarterly. I'm Amanda Newton, the Chief Executive of RBH and I've now been here for eight months. I've been busy working with the teams from across the business to make improvements through focusing on you, the people who live in our homes.

Over the past year, lots has changed at RBH, and we are working very hard to deliver improvements to our services. We want to make it much easier to contact us and get the services you need to stay safe and warm in your home. We're putting our customers first and listening to you about the things that are important.

One of the areas where we've really appreciated your feedback is around the development of our new Corporate Strategy. A huge thanks goes to all those customers who took part in our workshops and told us the things you think are important for us to improve. We are listening, and if there's something that's not right in your home then please contact us and let us know. We will put it right! The improvements we're making are based on your feedback and no issue is too small.

There will be more opportunities to talk to us across the year and if you are interested in getting involved then please let us know by contacting our Engagement Team – you can read more about this on page 15. As we move forward we'll be looking at new ways for you to engage with us which will ensure that everyone who want to can contribute in some way.

Later this year we will also be inviting all our customers to complete a survey about your home, where you live and what you'd like to see in the future.

In the past months I've been spending time out and about in our communities meeting customers and hearing what's important to you. It's been great to talk to so many lovely people from across the Borough of Rochdale. For now, we are moving forward with a new set of priorities that are focused on being a great landlord and delivering homes that our customers are proud to live in. With your feedback, we'll get there.

I hope you enjoy your newsletter, which is one of the things you told us was missing – we'd love to hear what you think and what you'd like to be included in future editions.

Amanda

Help us to make this newsletter better

We'd love your feedback on this newsletter so we can make the next one even better. Let us know what you think, or let us know about a story you'd like us to include!

- email us on **customer@rbh.org.uk** or call **0800 027 7769** to let us know what you think
- send us your feedback at **www.rbh.org.uk/newsletter**
- contact the Engagement Team on **engagement@rbh.org.uk** or **0800 027 7769** to become one of our communications champions!
- everyone who **sends feedback or suggests an article** to us will be entered into a **prize draw for a £20 shopping voucher!**

Our plan for improvement



We want to share our plans for the next 12 months with you. We've set these out in what we call our Corporate Strategy. We are fully focused on our role of being a great provider of homes in the Borough and rebuilding confidence in RBH as a great landlord.

We've listened to the feedback we received from you, our customers, on where our priorities should be. We have worked with our Board, Representative Body, and colleagues to create a plan for the next 12 months that will see us build on the work of the last year. We will continue to focus on our core role of providing homes that people are proud to live in. Our vision is for RBH to always provide great services to the people who live in our homes and communities.

We've made great progress on our Recovery Plan over the past year and know we need to improve further. But we will only know we've got there when you, our customers, tell us we have. We want to ensure that we can focus on those things that will make the biggest difference to the people living in our homes.

Our plan focuses on five key themes:



Customers

Our services will be shaped with our customers with their voices heard in our business every day.



Communities

We'll support the building of thriving, inclusive communities where embracing diversity makes our communities great places to live.



People

Our focus will be on building a great place to work with a supportive and inclusive culture.



Homes

We'll continue to invest in our homes to ensure they are safe, warm places to live.



Governance

We'll strengthen our foundations through good governance, and managing our money and risk well.

What does this mean we'll do?

You can read about our plans at www.rbh.org.uk/strategy - here's a summary of some of the things we'll do in the coming year.

Customers



- There will be more opportunities to talk to us about the services you want.
- We'll do what we say we'll do, and if we get things wrong, we'll put it right quickly and learn.
- Contacting us will be made easier to enable you to access the services you need.

Homes



- We're improving our repairs services to deliver a better experience for you.
- We'll ask all customers to complete a survey to tell us about you and the things you want to see delivered.
- Our focus on addressing damp and mould will continue with a focus on preventing it happening but dealing with it efficiently if it does.

Communities



- Supporting people suffering from anti-social behaviour and working with partners to find solutions.
- Investing more in shared spaces and communal areas.
- We'll be getting out in the communities and volunteering to deliver projects that matter to the people that live there.

People



- Wellbeing of our colleagues will be a priority.
- People who deliver services to customers will have access to training and development, which will help us improve the services we provide to you.

Governance



- We'll run our business with the customer always in mind.
- We are a Mutual Society which means you have a say in how we are run, and we want to hear more from our Members to understand how this makes a difference to you.
- We are continuing to work hard on returning to compliance with the standards set out by the Regulator of Social Housing.

What's going on in your neighbourhood?

If you've got a story you'd like to see in a future edition of Neighbourhood News, please let us know. Email customer@rbh.org.uk or call us on Freephone 0800 027 7769.

Donation boost for pantry projects

Our pantry projects across Rochdale borough have received a huge boost after receiving an £800 donation from Connolly Ltd. Connolly are currently on-site in Lower Falinge helping us to deliver the latest phase of refurbishment and investment works.

Your Local Pantry is a network of food clubs aimed at tackling food poverty. We support volunteer groups to run four clubs - two in Rochdale, one in Smallbridge, and one in Heywood.

The Heywood pantry at Back o' th' Moss recently celebrated one year of providing their service to the community - happy birthday!



Thank you Paul!

We want to say a big thank you to our customer Paul Bridge whose weekly efforts to keep his Smallbridge neighbourhood tidy through litter picking are noticed and appreciated by residents. Thank you Paul!

Paul also joined our community clean-up day organised by our Age Friendly Project and supporting by RBH teams and colleagues from Rochdale Council.



Help us be HouseProud

We work with two great organisations to help us to support LGBTQ+ colleagues and customers. HouseProud is the network for LGBTQ+ people working in social housing, and Rainbow Roofs provides a voice for LGBTQ+ customers across the North West.

We're delighted and excited to be working with HouseProud towards completing their pledge. We'd love for more colleagues and customers to get involved, including helping us to plan our presence at Rochdale in Rainbows in July and Manchester Pride. Find out more by speaking to our Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategic Lead, Rachael Ray, on rachael.ray@rbh.org.uk



Freehold residents celebrate together

We're working with residents and other organisations like Greater Manchester Police to improve security and safety in Freehold.

In April, we held two events to look at improvements to the stairwells – thank you to everyone who came along or completed our online survey. We are looking at this feedback with our architects before we start work.

We were also able to collect the views of customers at our event on Easter Sunday, bringing Freehold residents together at Castlemere Banqueting Hall.

Dozens of people came along to the event, which we organised jointly with Greater Manchester Police. We are also very grateful to our friends at Rochdale Council, Rochdale Youth Service, and Living Well for their support.

We were entertained on the day by fantastic dancers from the Nigeria Community Association and a buffet was served at the break of fast. This was a great opportunity to come together to celebrate both Easter and Ramadan.



New Café Opening at Harehill

We were delighted to attend the opening of Gladwins Café based in our Independent Living Scheme at Harehill on Inglis Street in Littleborough.

Serving Bistro style food, breakfast till 11.30am and a variety of cakes there is something for everyone. To wash this down you can choose from a selection of drinks including barista style coffee and a selection of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks.

The café is open from 9am – 4pm Monday to Sunday.



Great turnout at Customer Voice Forums

A big thank you to everyone who came along to our Customer Voice Forum meetings in Middleton, Heywood, Rochdale, and Smallbridge. We had some fantastic feedback about how you would like us to communicate with you - and we're putting this feedback into practice right now with this newsletter!



Making sure we get things right for you

Everyone deserves a safe and secure home and for any issues to be resolved quickly. If you have an issue with your home, no matter how small, please get in touch with us so we can make things right and learn from what went wrong to make sure it doesn't happen again.

There are lots of ways you can share feedback with us, which are all listed below:



Send us a message via our online Help Centre at www.rbh.org.uk/myrbh



Email us at **customer.complaints@rbh.org.uk** for complaints and **customer.feedback@rbh.org.uk** if you would like to leave a compliment.



Call us on **Freephone 0800 027 7769**



Send us a private message on our **social media channels**, making sure that your privacy settings allow us to view your message and respond.



Write to us at **Unique Enterprise Centre, Belfield Road, Rochdale, OL16 2UP** (this is a postal address only).



Tell your **Neighbourhood Housing Officer** or any member of the team and we'll ensure it's logged and dealt with.

More information is available at www.rbh.org.uk/neighbourhoods



You can also now log a complaint using our brand new **webchat service**.

The Government is also encouraging landlords to make it easy to find out how to complain.

We want you to come to us first so that we can fix things quickly. You can also find out more about your rights and options via the Government's "make things right" campaign. More information is available at www.gov.uk/social-housing or by using the QR code below.



Reporting a repair to us

Our teams are working hard to improve our homes and deliver the standard our customers need and deserve. There are a number of ways you can report a repair quickly and easily to us.

- Visit www.rbh.org.uk/myrbh to log a repair on the MyRBH portal
- Email us at rbh.repairs@rbh.org.uk
- Call us on Freephone **0800 027 7769**
- Use our brand-new webchat at www.rbh.org.uk - look for the pink button!
- Attend one of our customer drop-ins - full details on page 15



To help us make sure that we can meet these standards, we're carrying out a higher number of inspections and surveys than we did before. This has meant that we have experienced high demand for some types of repair. In some cases this has meant customers waiting longer than expected for work to be completed, and we apologise to customers who have been affected by this.

We are now delivering a plan to address this higher demand. We have increased the capacity of our repairs teams, and we are also working with trusted subcontractors to help us to complete overdue repairs. We have also put resources in place to meet likely upcoming demand, so we can deliver a better service in the future.

If you have an existing outstanding repair, we'll be in touch with you directly to let you know more. We are very sorry for the delay. If you have an issue which has got worse since you first reported it, please get in touch with us straight away.

Has someone knocked on your door to ask about disrepair?

We know that Claims Management Teams – also known as "claims farmers" - are calling on residents to encourage tenants to make disrepair claims.

We know that some of these organisations hope that you will assume that they are from RBH and let them into your home. They aren't! All RBH team members carry identification with them. If in any doubt, please ask, and don't sign any paperwork on your doorstep.

Claims farmers aim to sign tenants up to a legal process. Your details are likely to be passed to solicitors who will ask you to sign a Conditional Fee Agreement. You may have heard these called "no win, no fee" agreements. These agreements are not risk-free for you - you may still need to pay costs. We have been contacted by customers who are now facing legal bills into the thousands for cases they thought were no win, no fee.

Many fees (known as "disbursements") are not covered by these agreements, and you would have to pay for them. The agreements also may not cover costs if your claim is not successful. You could end up having to pay thousands of pounds.

We want to be the best landlord we can be. If there's something you need us to sort, please get in touch so that we can work with you to fix it.



Keeping your home safe



If you have any concerns about damp or mould in your home, please contact us so we can work together to find ways to resolve the issues you are experiencing.

Please report any and all cases of damp and mould in your home, as soon as you notice them. This will help us to identify the cause and take action sooner.

- Email: rbh.repairs@rbh.org.uk
- Call us: Freephone **0800 027 7769**
- Online: www.rbh.org.uk/myrbh

We'll always take action to help and we want to hear from you if there is mould present in your home. We will:

- Listen to you and take your report seriously
- Come out to inspect your home to find out what the cause is and what work might be required
- If there are significant risks to you or your family's health we will seek to act within 24 hours. If this is not possible, we may need to arrange with you a temporary move to another property whilst the work is carried out
- If needed, complete repair work to fix any structural or plumbing issues
- If needed, make improvements to the ventilation in your home (for example, installing extractor fans in your kitchen and bathroom)
- If needed, undertake mould treatment
- Contact you after 6, 12 and 18 months to confirm that the damp or mould has not returned

We'll always take action to help and we want to hear from you if there is mould present in your home. Find out more at www.rbh.org.uk/dampandmould.

Help us to carry out essential safety checks



Every year we need to carry out safety checks on your boiler and other gas-supplied appliances in your home. It is really important that we do this for your safety and it is also a legal requirement for us to do this.

We also need to carry out a check of the electrical installation within your home at least every five years.

We'll contact you in advance to let you know when our engineers will visit your home. If you have a pre-payment or pay-as-you-go meter, you'll need to have at least £10 of credit to enable us to carry out the check. Remember that your gas supplier will usually charge you a daily amount (known as a "standing charge") which can lead to a debt on your meter.

Please make sure you allow us access to carry out these essential safety checks. These are to keep your home safe. If the proposed time is not convenient, let us know straight away. If we need to ask the court to help us gain access to your home, you may have to pay these costs - an average of £940.

If you have any concerns about topping up your meter, or are facing any other financial difficulties, please contact us on **0800 027 7769** and ask for our Money Matters team. You can also visit our website: www.rbh.org.uk/moneymatters.

Find the RBH priorities and win a £20 shopping voucher!

Can you find the five RBH priorities hidden in this wordsearch? If you can, send us your completed wordsearch and we'll enter every correct entry into a prize draw to win a £20 shopping voucher.



Find the following words in the puzzle.

COMMUNITIES

CUSTOMERS

HOMES

GOVERNANCE

PEOPLE

To enter, scan or take a photograph of your completed puzzle and send to customer@rbh.org.uk. You can also hand your completed puzzle in at one of our drop-in sessions (see page 15), or you can post or hand your puzzle in at the Strand Hub, Kirkholt, Rochdale, OI11 2JG.

One for the kids draw your community and win!

If you are 16 or under and live in an RBH home, you can enter our drawing competition! Send us a drawing of something in your community that's important to you. This could be your home, your school, or an activity you like to do! Send it in to us and we'll display your drawing on our website and enter you into a special prize draw.



To enter, get a parent or guardian to scan or take a photograph of your picture and send to customer@rbh.org.uk with your name and age. You can also ask them to hand it in at one of our drop-in sessions (see page 14), or you can post or hand your drawing in at the Strand Hub, Kirkholt, Rochdale, OI11 2JG.

An update on our Recovery Plan

May 2024

We continue to make good progress with our Recovery Plan, and we expect to complete all actions within the plan by the end of July 2024. This isn't the end of the journey – our new Corporate Plan will build on what we have already done and help us to deliver better homes and services to you, now and in the future.



Home

- As part of our commitment to investment in our IT systems, we have a big upgrade scheduled for July 2024 which will help us to deliver our services better.
- We're putting in place a new "quality assurance" process for all work to our homes. This will help us to make sure that we carry out work to the standard that you, our customers, expect.
- We've now completed condition surveys on over 90% of our homes. We're now working with the remaining 10% where we were not able to gain access. It's important that we are able to do this so we can confirm the likely dates when we will need to renew things like kitchens and bathrooms, and so we can check there are no urgent health and safety repairs required.



Tenant Involvement and Empowerment

- We've now completed all the actions for this part of the plan. All colleagues have now completed our independently provided Customer Service training, and new colleagues will receive the same training in-house.
- We held our third round of Customer Voice Forums in May 2024 - thank you to everyone who took the time to attend and provide feedback.
- We would love your feedback on this newsletter to help us make it even better! Find out more on page 2.



Governance

- We have now completed our recruitment of three customer members to our new Customer Services Committee. These customers will make sure that the voice of our customers is always heard at our Board.
- We're implementing the recommendations of a recent review on how we can improve our data.



Building Trust and Confidence

- We continue to meet regularly with key stakeholders, including Rochdale Council and Councillors. We know we have a lot of shared goals where we can continue to work together for the benefit of our communities.



Lessons Learnt

- A summary of our "lessons learnt" review was published on our website in autumn 2023. We will deliver these recommendations in full and expect all actions to be completed by July 2024.
- We are currently comparing our complaints and repairs data with the stock condition survey data to look at any connections or trends.

Your views on our services

We know a lot of customers are interested in how we conduct our customer surveys. You may have been called by someone conducting a survey on behalf of RBH. Some customers have asked us whether these calls are from RBH and why they have been called.

We have always been keen to hear what you think about our services. We've now running a new survey which will collect data on the Tenant Satisfaction Measures which are set by the Government - we are legally required to publish this.

We want to make sure that our data is as accurate as possible and that our survey results are representative of all our customers. To do this, we undertake a survey by telephone. We think this is the best way to reach all the different types of customers, including those who might not regularly use a computer or other digital services.

We have appointed a company called Viewpoint Research to complete this work for us. They are based in Sheffield and are a social enterprise - we feel that they share similar values with RBH and our communities. You can find out more about them at www.viewpoint-research.co.uk.

Viewpoint are currently speaking to 400 RBH customers every month, on our behalf. If they call you, it is entirely up to you whether you decide to complete the survey or not - you don't have to do so. However, we would encourage you to take the survey and share your views so that we can listen to your feedback and help us to improve our services.



If you have any queries or concerns about our survey process, please e-mail us on rbh.surveys@rbh.org.uk or call Freephone **0800 027 7769**. You can also find out more about how we use the data we collect at www.rbh.org.uk/data-protection

Stop Press Performance figures for last year

Our performance figures for 2023/24 arrived just before we sent this newsletter to print. We'll share more information about this in the next newsletter, including the changes we're making to help us improve. You can also find more information online at www.rbh.org.uk/performance. We wanted to share the key figures with you straight away.



72.3% of customers are satisfied with the overall service



76.9% of customers who used our repairs service last year were satisfied with this service



82.4% of customers agree that we treat you fairly and with respect



66.8% of customers are satisfied that we listen to your views and act upon them - we know we need to do better on this. This newsletter is one of the changes we've already made



36.2% of customers who made a complaint were satisfied with how we handled the complaint. Our team have already made some big changes to help us improve this figure - see page 8 for details of how to feed back to us

What does it mean to be a mutual housing society?

We're proud to be a co-owned mutual housing society, jointly owned by our tenant and employee members.

Our Representative Body represents our members and the wider interests of the community in our governance structure. They act as guardians of RBH's mutuality, ensuring that RBH is focused on the needs of our customers and colleagues and works for the benefit of the wider community.

Following last year's rule changes, our Representative Body now have an additional scrutiny role. They've identified three topics to scrutinise in-depth over the coming year - not being able to gain access to homes, communications about repairs, and how RBH allocates our resources. We'll keep you up to speed with this work in future editions.

We'll shortly be looking for new members to join the Representative Body in our 2024 elections. Nominations will open in early summer with voting taking place in August.



If you'd like to know more about being a Representative, drop an email to rep.body@rbh.org.uk or governance@rbh.org.uk, or call Freephone **0800 027 7769** and ask for the Governance Team.



A message from the Representative Body

We are committed to a strong partnership with customers and colleagues. The Representative Body has a membership made up of RBH customers and colleagues. This combined voice shapes our present and future, and helps us to ensure we meet the needs of our communities.

The Representative Body also has a powerful scrutiny function. We can identify areas for improvement and ensure RBH is operating at its best. This Representative-led evaluation can lead to more efficient operations, improved service delivery, and ultimately, a more satisfied employee and tenant base.

We'd love to hear from you! Should you wish to contact a Representative please email rep.body@rbh.org.uk and include the name of the Representative or Representatives you wish to contact in the subject header to ensure it reaches the correct person. You can also call **0800 027 7769** and ask to leave a message.

The next Representative Body elections take place this summer. If you'd like to take part, keep an eye out for more information in July.

Drop-in to see us!

Our community drop-in sessions are an opportunity to meet with members of your RBH Neighbourhood Team in person. There's no appointment needed, and you can get help and support with a variety of things, including reporting repairs, paying your rent, dealing with damp and mould, tackling anti-social behaviour, and much more!

At every drop-in you will be able to talk to a member of our team including a Neighbourhood Housing Officer. We'll also have support for paying your rent and other bills from our Money Matters team. No appointment or booking is required, just drop in and say hello.



Our drop-in sessions are scheduled until August 2024 and then we'll review the times, dates, and locations to make sure they are convenient for you. They are:

- **Heywood:** First Thursday of the month (10am until 12 noon)
at Back O' Th' Moss Community Centre, Peel Lane, OL10 4TU
- **Middleton:** Second Wednesday of the month (10am until 12 noon)
at the Hollin Hub, 48 Nowell Road, M24 6FL
- **Pennines:** Third Friday of the month (10am until 12 noon)
at 9 Stevenson Square, Smallbridge, OL12 9SA
- **Rochdale (Kirkholt):** Fourth Thursday of the month (9.30am until 12 noon)
at the Strand Community Hub, OL11 2JG
- **Rochdale (Freehold):** Last Friday of the month (10am until 4pm)
at the Freehold Annex, Olney, OL11 4LQ

You can also find out more about our drop-in sessions at www.rbh.org.uk/dropin. Our Engagement Team run frequent events to help you get involved. You can find out more at www.rbh.org.uk/events or by contacting the team on engagement@rbh.org.uk or **0800 027 7769**.



Join our diversity advocates

We've got a great group of advocates who are helping to check our communications to make sure that they are accessible for everyone. If you'd like to get involved with this, email engagement@rbh.org.uk or call us on Freephone 0800 027 7769 and ask for the Engagement Team.

Recently the group have helped us to improve the information about damp and mould on the RBH website, provided feedback on our new Income Policy, and helped us to make letters sent out by our income team easier to read!

Get in touch!

We want to make it as easy as possible to get in touch with us.



Call us on Freephone **0800 027 7769** – you can call this 24/7 to report an emergency repair



Access services online at MyRBH – **www.rbh.org.uk/myrbh**



Visit our website at **www.rbh.org.uk**



Information about your Neighbourhood Housing Team is available at **www.rbh.org.uk/neighbourhoods**



Email us at **customer@rbh.org.uk** and report a repair by email at **rbh.repairs@rbh.org.uk**



Access cost-of-living advice at **www.rbh.org.uk/costofliving**



/rbhousing



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Useful contacts

Rochdale Housing Solutions – housing applications

Rochdale Housing Solutions look after all social housing applications in the Borough, including for RBH homes.

- **Website:** www.rochdalehousingolutions.co.uk
- **E-mail:** housingsolutions@rochdale.gov.uk
- **Telephone:** 0300 303 8874

Rochdale Council

- **Website:** www.rochdale.gov.uk
- **Switchboard:** 01706 647474
- **Out-of-hours:** 0300 303 8875

Other advice

- **Citizens Advice:** citizensadvice.org.uk
- **Debt helpline:** 0800 240 4420
- **Advice line:** 0800 144 8848

Work for us



We're looking for people like you!

We have a number of exciting vacancies to come and work with us and we're always keen to hear from our customers. Visit **www.rbh.org.uk/jobs** now to find out more about working for RBH and to view our latest vacancies.