

RBH Neighbourhood News

Welcome to the third edition of your new RBH Neighbourhood News



What's inside this edition?

- Getting to know you better - our Customer Census
- Keeping you and your family safe
- News from your area



What's inside?

Hello from Amanda	3
Our customer census – what you need to know	4
Investing in your homes	5
Keeping you safe in your home	6
Struggling with your bills? We can help	7
Get in touch	8
Listening to you about anti-social behaviour	9
Community News	10
Update from your Representatives	12
Our promises to you	13
Get involved with RBH	14
Competition!	15
Share your feedback about this newsletter	16

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.

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 بنزید .

Hello from Amanda

Hello and welcome to our third edition of Rochdale Boroughwide Housing's Neighbourhood News.

This is the first newsletter of 2025 and we have a lot to update you on, as well as a lot to look forward to this year, together.

One of the most important things we're going to do in the coming weeks is launch our Customer Census, which aims to find out more about all of our 28,000 customers - so we can ensure we're providing the very best services for you. You can find out more about the Census on page four.

Going out into our neighbourhoods, speaking to you, listening to what you have to say and then using that information to improve our services is essential in helping us to continue to deliver what you need.

That's why I'd like to thank all of you who attended our Customer Voice Forums held just before Christmas, both in-person across the borough and online. It's only by talking to you, our customers, that we can properly understand what you want and need, and make sure we are providing the best services we possibly can, so it's brilliant that so many of you gave up your time to speak with us.

It was really good to hear at those sessions that you're finding these newsletters useful, but we know there's more we can do to keep making them better – so please do keep getting in touch to let us know what you think. All the information and contact details you need are below.

Making sure all our homes are safe, warm, and places you can be proud to live in is something we're working hard on every day, but we need your help too. That's why, on page six, we explain why we need you to let us in to carry out essential safety checks, and also give more information on what to do if you need repairs to be carried out in your home.

On page seven there is advice on the help we can provide with keeping your home warm, as well as a reminder of how to spot the signs of damp and mould and contact us for help whenever you need to.

But this newsletter isn't just about us and the services we have to help you – it's about you, our customers, and your stories from your communities. We've included lots of these stories in this edition, across pages 10 and 11, and if you have stories for the next newsletter, please do let us know.

We also want you to get involved all year round, and there are so many ways in which you could do this – from becoming a member of our Representative Body, to sitting on one of our committees, to engaging with us through a whole range of in-person and online means. We're so proud of our Mutual status and the way our customers play a real and active part in our governance, so we'd like to encourage you all to play as much of a role as you'd like to – more details are on page 14.

With many thanks and my best wishes.

Amanda



Help us to make this newsletter better

Huge thanks to all of you who have told us what you think of your new Neighbourhood News. We're listening to your feedback and are including more of the things you've told us you want, such as good news stories from across the borough, but we still want to hear from you.

To let us know what you'd like to see in your quarterly newsletter, you can:

You can:

- email us on customer@rbh.org.uk or call **0800 027 7769**
- send us your feedback at www.rbh.org.uk/newsletter
- become a Communications Champion by emailing communications@rbh.org.uk

Getting To Know You Better



Getting To Know You Better

We're focused on doing the best we can for all our customers and making decisions based on what you feel is most important.

To help us do this we need to better understand the needs, wants and aspirations of all our customers.

That's why our **Customer Census** is now underway. Over the coming weeks we'll be contacting every customer living in one of our homes across the borough. We may contact you through phone, SMS, email or letter. We've asked the industry experts at a company called TLF Research to help us to do this.

We'll be asking you about what you think about the services we provide and the things you'd like to see us do in your neighbourhood. We will also be asking you questions about you and anyone else who lives in your home, so that we can better understand you and your needs.



We would really appreciate a few minutes of your time so that we can use this information to make our services better. We want you all to have you say and are looking forward to getting to know you even better.

Our team are also visiting some customers in their homes to make sure that the data we hold about you is accurate and to talk about anything we can do to help support you. These are in-person visits that started this year - we aim to visit all customers by summer 2027. You may see these visits referred to as a **"tenancy audit"**.

If you'd like to know more about our Customer Census, please visit www.rbh.org.uk/census or call us on Freephone **0800 027 7769**.

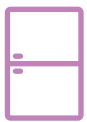
Prize draw entry for 10 sets of £50 shopping vouchers for everyone who completes the census survey!

Investing in your homes



We're fully focused on being a great provider of homes in Rochdale Borough and making sure that you have confidence in us as your landlord. As part of this, we have committed to investing in the houses and flats we own so that we can make sure that they are safe, happy places that you are proud to call home.

In 2024, we spent over £9m on making improvements to your homes. This included:



707 new kitchens,
which cost £4.22m



316 new bathrooms,
which cost £1.53m



383 new central heating systems, which cost £2.17m



197 rewires,
which cost £684k



50 roof replacements,
which cost £230k



61 sets of cavity wall insulation, which cost £141k



448 sets of loft insulation,
which cost £233k

In addition to these day-to-day investments, we've also completed a range of other projects over the past year. These include a refurbishment of our Jack McCann Court independent living scheme, external and communal area painting to 58 blocks of flats across the Borough, environmental works in the Bentgate area, our ongoing regeneration work to retained homes in Lower Falinge, and installing new ventilation systems in almost 300 homes in Freehold.

We've also invested over £750k in fire safety improvements to homes, and we've completed our pilot scheme in Kirkholt to see how we can make our homes more energy-efficient - helping to keep Rochdale green as well as keeping utility bills in check!



"Delighted with the work done, the daily communication was up to the minute and very professional"

Penny

"I am happy with the work, it has made the flat fresher and helped prevent damp and mould"

Maria

"I'm very pleased with the work you have done - thank you"

Iftikhar

"The team got the job done quickly and did a good job - I hardly knew they were there"

Sharon

Help us to keep you and your family safe

Every year we need to carry out safety checks on your boiler and other gas-supplied appliances in your home.

This is a legal requirement, but it's also really important that we do this for your safety and the safety of your friends and family, your neighbours, and our RBH team.

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 the appointment is not convenient, please let us know straight away so that we can rearrange your appointment.

We need you to let us into your home to carry out these essential safety checks, which are there to keep your home safe. In line with the law, if we're not able to gain access to your home, we will need to take additional steps. This could involve asking the court to help us gain access to your home. If this happens, you may have to pay these costs - an average of £940.

For more information, visit www.rbh.org.uk/safetychecks

Last year,
99.2% of our customers allowed us access to their homes to carry out these essential safety checks.

Thank you for helping our team to keep you safe.

Thinking of doing some DIY?

What to do if you are thinking of carrying out DIY or you accidentally damage your home.

We want to make sure that any works to your home are carried out safely. If you are considering carrying out works yourself or by using your own contractor, make sure that you submit a request to us. This is required by your tenancy agreement with us. We'll review your request to make sure the works you are thinking of carrying out are in accordance with your tenancy agreement, and that your home will still be safe after the work.

Most requests, such as flooring, painting, or shed installation, can be considered by us without a visit. Some larger requests (for example - driveway works, new fencing, or widening a doorway) will need an inspection from us. Some requests are not usually permitted unless there are exceptional circumstances, for example to meet a specific customer need - this includes structural work, house extensions, and changes to the heating system.

It's important that this request process is followed so that we can keep you, your family, and your visitors safe. If work is carried out unsafely or to a poor standard, we may need to remove it and you may be charged for the cost of this. We can't take responsibility for work that hasn't been authorised.

If you do end up with damage to your home for any reason, please let us know. Although we may need to recharge you for some repairs, this will be considered on a case by case basis. Our main priority is to make sure that your home is safe for everyone who lives or visits there.

Struggling with your bills? Our team can help!

There's a range of support available to help with money, food, and keeping warm during the colder months.

If you need help to manage your money, or are worried about your bills, or are having problems with your benefits, our Money Matters Team can help.

Last year we helped hundreds of our customers to claim extra money or manage their finances. We can also let you know about extra income that you might be entitled to claim whatever your age or circumstances.

To get in touch with our team:

Call us on Freephone **0800 027 7769**

Enquire online at **www.rbh.org.uk/moneymatters**

Access our free benefits calculator at **rbh.entitledto.co.uk**

Email us on **customer@rbh.org.uk**

Other support available

Rochdale Borough Council

There's a range of help and advice available on the Council website at **www.rochdale.gov.uk/cost-living**.

If you are having financial issues, you may be able to access shopping and fuel vouchers through their Household Fund. Ring their helpline on **01706 923685** to find out more. You can also get information from the Government at **www.gov.uk/cost-of-living**.

Need a hand with energy costs?

As an RBH customer if you're on pre-payment meters for gas or electricity we may be able to help you access up to £294 of funding to help you top up in just one short call. Email our support team at **winter.support@rbh.org.uk** with your contact details and supplier name or call us on Freephone **0800 027 7769**.

Reporting damp and mould

Please report all cases of damp and mould as soon as you can, so that we can identify the causes and take action.

Email: **rbh.repairs@rbh.org.uk**

Freephone: **0800 027 7769**

Online: **www.rbh.org.uk/myrbh**

More information on how we tackle damp and mould is available on our website at **www.rbh.org.uk/dampandmould**.

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



@rbhousing



/rbhousingfilms

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



We're on WhatsApp!

Want to keep up-to-date with the latest RBH news? You can follow our Whatsapp channel!

Search for "Rochdale Boroughwide Housing" on WhatsApp, visit **www.rbh.org.uk/whatsapp** or scan the QR code to find out more.



Listening to your feedback about anti-social behaviour

A huge thank you to everyone who attended our recent Customer Voice Forums. Our autumn Customer Voice Forum focused on anti-social behaviour. We had a great discussion with customers and colleagues about the things we can do to prevent anti-social behaviour, and how we can better respond when we do get reports of anti-social behaviour.

Here are some of the things we discussed, and what we're doing in response to your feedback:

What you told us

Make it easier to report anti-social behaviour via the RBH contact centre and make sure that the contact centre team have the right information available to them.

Increase the amount of information available on the RBH website about anti-social behaviour, and make sure people know where else they can find information from other organisations.

Increase the visibility of RBH teams and provide more opportunities for face-to-face interaction.

What we're doing about it

We've reviewed how our Contact Centre deals with requests about anti-social behaviour – to help our team provide support and information to customers.

We're improving the information available on our website, including information and signposting links. Visit www.rbh.org.uk/asb to find out more.

We've increased the number of RBH drop-ins including extending hours and a trial of evening sessions – we're currently reviewing the evening trial.

How to report anti-social behaviour:

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, always call **999**.

You can report ASB online at www.rbh.org.uk/asb.

You can also call us on Freephone **0800 027 7769** or email customer@rbh.org.uk.

You can make an anonymous report via Crimestoppers on **0800 555 111**.

Community drop-ins

Don't forget our regular drop-in sessions are open to all customers. There's no appointment needed and you can get help and support across a wide variety of topics. Our drop-in sessions are as follows:

- **Heywood:** First Thursday of the month (10am until 12 noon)
at Sandon House Community Centre, Taylor Street, Heywood, OL10 1EF
- **Middleton:** Second Wednesday of the month (10am until 12 noon)
at the Lighthouse Project, Middleton Shopping Centre, M24 4EL
- **Pennines:** Third Friday of the month (10am until 12 noon)
at 9 Stevenson Square, Smallbridge, OL12 9SA
- **Rochdale:** Fourth Thursday of the month (10am until 12 noon)
at Rochdale Housing Solutions, 2 Smith Street, Rochdale, OL16 1TU
- **Freehold:** Last Friday of the month (10am until 4pm)
at the Freehold Annex, Olney, OL11 4LQ



Community News



Jack McCann residents raise £250 for Springhill Hospice

Well done to Colin Chadwick, one of our Independent Living Scheme customers at Jack McCann Court, whose charity evening raised over £250 for Springhill Hospice. A fun evening was had by all, including music from Wardle Community Brass Band. Great job Colin!

We're helping people to get online

Over 100 refurbished laptops and mobile phones have proud new owners after being donated by our IT Team to customers and residents who need a little extra support to get online. Instead of disposing of our IT equipment, we refurbish it and give it to people who need it.

56 refurbished devices were donated to 28 customers in December, with each customer receiving a mobile phone and laptop. In addition, 50 mobile phones have been donated to Army of Kindness to distribute via their Hot Food Kitchen, and further devices donated to Creative Support.

In addition, our Infrastructure Manager Neil Critchlow cycled to Independent Living Schemes across the Borough to deliver laptops to use at our schemes, and raised £250 in donations in the process to support Royal Manchester Children's Hospital.





Working with our contractors to provide low-cost food

A big thank you to our contractors M&Y Maintenance and Construction and Equans UK & Ireland for their kind and generous donations to our pantry projects. Equans provided groceries for the Freehold pantry as well as selection boxes which were handed out to customers over Christmas. The M&Y cash donation will help our Freehold and Smallbridge pantries continue to serve residents over the coming months.

We support volunteers to run four pantry projects across the Borough, in Freehold, Kirkholt (The Strand), Smallbridge, and Heywood (Back o' th' Moss Community Centre). Visit www.rbh.org.uk/pantry to find out more or pop in to one of our locations on a Thursday morning to speak to the team.

RBH Leadership Team join the dinner drivers!

Our Executive Leadership Team spent a day recently with the HMR Circle Dinner Drivers - cooking up a hearty two-course lunch before delivering it to our RBH customers all across the borough.

The Dinner Drivers service, established three years ago, aims to give older people a nutritious meal while helping them stay connected to their communities.

We're really proud to encourage our colleagues to volunteer and give a bit extra back to those communities we work in every day.



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**.

Update from your Representative Body



Did you know our Representatives now have additional powers to provide scrutiny of the work that we do for our customers?

They've completed their first scrutiny exercise, looking at how our repairs team ensure that they gain access to homes to carry out essential safety checks - and what we can do to improve this experience for our customers.

Two further reviews on anti-social behaviour and improving our complaints processes are underway.

What our Representatives did

- Established a scrutiny panel of seven Representative Body members including both customer and colleague members
- Conducted a survey of both RBH gas servicing team colleagues and customers - almost 500 customers gave their views
- Question and answer session with the RBH Head of Repairs
- Shadowed our gas servicing team as they carried out their appointments
- Reviewed four customer case studies from different parts of the Borough
- Looked at our current processes and the information we send out to customers about our appointments

Some of the things we recommended RBH could improve

- Improve how our team members in communities can access data so that they can keep customers up-to-speed
- Provide clearer information in our notification letters, with a clear option to reschedule if the appointment is not suitable
- Use calls and SMS messages more rather than formal letters to keep customers informed, and learn from how other organisations do this
- Take a more proactive approach to how we record information when we're not able to gain access into a home

Get Involved!

Our next Representative Body elections take place this summer - keep an eye out later this year for more details. If you'd like to find out more about what the Representative Body does, or come along to a meeting, email governance@rbh.org.uk or call **0800 027 7769** and ask for the Governance Team.



Our promise to you

In Spring last year, we shared our plan for the next 12 months. This one-year strategy focused on being a great provider of homes in the Borough, and rebuilding confidence in RBH as a great landlord. This plan focused on five key themes - our customers, our communities, our people, our homes, and our governance.

We've been working hard to achieve our goals, making sure that RBH has returned to our core purpose. We want to be a landlord that provides good homes that are safe, warm, and free from hazards. Our Annual Report to Customers sets out some of the things we've achieved, and where we still have more work to do. You can download a full copy at www.rbh.org.uk/annualreport or get in touch with us if you'd like us to send you a printed version.

After listening to you, our customers, as well as colleagues and the Representative Body, our Board members think that we should keep these same five themes as we work on our plan for the next three years. This would help us to build on what we've achieved together over the past year, as well as continue to improve in those areas where we know that we have more to do. This is what focusing on these five areas would mean for you:



Customers

We'll listen to your views to help shape our services and make sure we deliver them to a high standard.



Homes

We'll invest in our homes to ensure they are safe, warm and well maintained places to live that our customers are proud to call home.



Communities

We want to make our communities great places to live that are successful and reflect the diversity of the Borough.



People

We'll develop our culture so that RBH is a great place to work that reflects our communities and where colleagues are focused on doing the best for our customers.



Governance, Finance & Risk

We'll achieve our goals by making sure we are well-run and that we manage our money and risks well.

We'd like to know if you agree that we've got these priorities right. You can:

Visit www.rbh.org.uk/strategy to find out more.

E-mail engagement@rbh.org.uk or call **0800 027 7769** for more details of how to get involved.

Keep an eye out for RBH emails or SMS messages letting you know about upcoming events and opportunities.

Your responses to the customer census (see page 4) will also help us to make sure our priorities are right. A huge thank you to everyone who attended our February workshops on our future priorities.

Get involved with RBH



Could you be one of our new Representatives or would you like to help us to improve how we respond to complaints?

We've got some great opportunities for you to make improvements to our services and make things better for you, your family, and your neighbours - more information is available using our menu of engagement at www.rbh.org.uk/getinvolved. You can also call or email us if you would like a printed copy of our menu of engagement.

Why should I get involved with RBH?

- Shape and improve our services
- Share your feedback - make your voice heard
- Make your area a better place to live
- Help us to better understand the needs of our customers
- Meet new people

Will I be able to gain something in return?

Getting involved with RBH is a great way to gain new skills and experience. It could even help to improve your CV and, depending on the role, you could receive training and support to help you to participate.

Will it take a lot of my time?

That's entirely up to you! We've got a range of opportunities, some of which require no commitment and only a few minutes of your time, and some which require more commitment.

I'm in - what do I do now?

Get in touch with our Engagement Team to register your interest - drop them a line on engagement@rbh.org.uk, by calling Freephone **0800 027 7769**, or visit www.rbh.org.uk/getinvolved.

Competition

**Congratulations to
Mr and Mrs Jackson
of Rochdale who were
the winners of the shopping
voucher prize from the quiz
from the last edition
– congratulations!**

This month we have another wordsearch and we'd like you to find the following ways that we keep in touch with you in the wordsearch below:

WhatsApp
Newsletter
SMS
Email
Telephone
MyRBH

H	D	X	Q	Z	E	Z	E	T	E	T	E
D	G	H	K	K	K	D	E	E	H	E	O
B	E	D	D	L	F	X	E	G	E	L	E
Q	G	V	W	X	C	E	M	C	E	E	D
A	L	I	B	H	S	X	H	T	M	P	D
N	P	T	E	M	A	I	L	D	Y	H	H
N	E	W	S	L	E	T	T	E	R	O	K
Z	M	D	K	Q	E	D	S	N	B	N	C
R	B	R	K	G	T	T	Z	A	H	E	P
F	T	L	T	H	E	W	A	R	P	G	Q
O	T	D	I	A	E	T	X	L	M	P	N
O	A	O	P	H	C	R	S	G	H	E	C

E-mail your completed Wordsearch to customer@rbh.org.uk or send it to RBH, Unique Enterprise Centre, Belfield Road, Rochdale, OL16 2UP. **All completed entries will be entered into a prize draw for a £20 shopping voucher.**

Tell us what you think

We want to know what you think about how we communicate with you. We'd like to thank everyone who has already shared their views with us, and those who came along to our Customer Voice Forums in December. Everyone who responds to our survey will be entered into a prize draw to win a £20 shopping voucher. Congratulations to Mohammad of Middleton who won our autumn prize draw.

Please complete the form below and email to customer@rbh.org.uk. You can also send it by post to RBH, Unique Enterprise Centre, Belfield Road, Rochdale, OL16 2UP. You can also complete an online version of this form at www.rbh.org.uk/newsletter.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email address or contact number: _____

1. How satisfied are you with the overall quality of communications you receive from RBH?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very Dissatisfied

2. How do you currently receive information from RBH? Select all that apply.

- Printed Materials (e.g., newsletters, letters)
- Email
- Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X)
- Website
- Text Messages
- Whatsapp
- Traditional media (eg newspaper, radio)
- Face-to-face / word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

3. Which communication channel do you prefer to use when receiving information from RBH?

- Printed Materials (e.g., newsletters, letters)
- Email
- Social Media (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, X)
- Website
- Text Messages
- Whatsapp
- Traditional media (eg newspaper, radio)
- Face-to-face / word of mouth
- Other (please specify)

4. What improvements, if any, would you suggest for how Rochdale Boroughwide Housing communicates with you? Are there any topics you'd like us to feature in a future edition of this newsletter?

If you'd like to get involved with one of the activities below, tick the box and our Engagement Team will get in touch with more information!

- Customer Services Committee
- Community Drop-In Sessions
- Representative Body
- Community Champions
- Complaints Panel
- Local Community Groups
- Policy and strategy reviews
- Diversity Advocates
- Customer Voice Forums
- Communication Champions