



HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY

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Executive Summary:

The purpose of this policy is to demonstrate RBH's moral and legal commitment to Health & Safety practices that protect all persons involved in our activities. Our Policy Statement of Intent provides full details.

Policy Grouping/Directorate	Corporate Services	
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Notes:		

Policy Statement of Intent

Here at RBH we believe in safety first, where the safety of our colleagues, customers and visitors come before anything else we do. Our work is never so urgent or important that we cannot take time to do it safely and with respect to a positive health and safety culture.

RBH aims to promote a safety-first culture that actively encourages positive health & safety practices through engaging with our colleagues, customers and others to whom we have a duty of care.

We seek to implement the highest practical standards of safety, health and welfare throughout in our performance of all activities and services. RBH will endeavour to make and maintain its workplaces as healthy environments in which to work and to avoid accidents in respect of all colleagues, volunteers and customers. The promotion of health and safety at work is a mutual objective for both employer and colleague, and the responsibilities of managers cannot be properly discharged without the active co-operation of all colleagues.

The Executive Leadership Team and I are committed to this Policy and to the implementation and monitoring of the highest standards of health, safety and welfare across RBH. We will ensure that RBH complies with all applicable health and safety legislation and where appropriate go beyond compliance with the minimum requirements of regulatory bodies and customer expectations.

I will ensure every member of RBH will share this commitment and work together to achieve it. Therefore, I encourage all colleagues to adopt a positive attitude towards health and safety requirements, to follow our policies and procedures and to promote a healthy and safe working environment for RBH colleagues, and others affected by the work of RBH.

Signed:



Date: May/2025

Chief Executive, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing

Signed:



Date: May/2025

Chair of the Board, Rochdale Boroughwide Housing

1 Introduction and Aims

- 1.1 This Policy applies to Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) and all colleagues, customers, contractors and visitors attending any of the sites included in the RBH portfolio, as well as other people who may be affected by the way in which we deliver services. This reflects our underlying principle to ensure that, within our available resources and control, a high standard of health, safety and welfare is maintained at all times.
- 1.2 Through the implementation of this policy, we are aiming to achieve continual improvement in health and safety across the whole organisation which will be measured in part in relation to the following outcomes:
- Developing a culture and message of safety-first which colleagues understand and demonstrate through their day-to-day work
 - Meet and, where appropriate, exceed any legal and other requirements that apply,
 - Identify, assess and eliminate, where possible, the health and safety hazards, impacts and risks that arise from our activities and services.
 - Actively encourage the input of colleagues and others and make decisions based on a deep understanding of the work conditions and constraints relating to health, safety and environmental issues and build sustainable solutions.
 - Ensure we adopt a learning culture during our investigation of accidents and incidents and provide assurance that meaningful improvements are being delivered.
 - Develop a suite of measurable outcomes which will be embedded in the annual health and safety improvement plan
- 1.3 The core principles of RBH in relation to health and safety are:
- the provision of adequate resources to ensure the maintenance of a safe working environment. One that it is free from risks to health and has adequate facilities and arrangements to **support** the welfare of its colleagues, service users, contractors, visitors and others who may be affected by the activities of RBH;
 - our activities, premises and equipment meet all current legal requirements, standards and best practices;
 - the acceptance of health and safety being a leading priority within our services and corporate objectives;
 - the employment of competent, qualified and experienced advisers to provide guidance and assistance on health and safety issues as required.
 - the management of risk to health and safety through embedded processes of risk assessment and risk control;
 - ensuring that all work activities are carried out by persons competent to carry out these tasks or by persons under appropriate and competent supervision, thus minimising risk to themselves and others;
 - co-operation and co-ordination with other employers with whom it shares a workplace to manage health and safety risks;

- to consult with the Health & Safety Committee and safety representatives in a meaningful way;
- continually improving performance through inspection, review and audit (internal & external);
- planning for the management of, and recovery from, any major incident that could disrupt normal operations;
- maintaining and making available policies, procedures and guidance relating to health and safety **practices**, for all areas of RBH.
- Encouraging a fair and trusted, proactive reporting of health and safety issues, by applying robust investigation procedures which are used to inform learning and development of our health and safety approach

2 Context

- 2.1 This Policy provides a basis for compliance with all relevant statutory, regulatory and governance requirements and moves beyond the observation of core legal obligations, to a culture of high standards of awareness, positive attitudes and culture and responsibility for health, safety and welfare.
- 2.2 The main regulator standard that this policy helps support the achievement of are as follows:

Economic Standards

[Governance & Financing Viability Standard](#) -Good health and safety management is a key plank of good governance and central to the Governance Standard

[Value for Money Standard](#) – Ensuring we undertake good health and safety practices contributes to VFM by minimising days lost through work related injury and accidents and protects RBH from personal injury expense

Consumer Standards

[Safety & Quality Standard](#) – Whilst health and safety practice touches all the Consumer Standard it has a particular reference to the Safety and Quality Standard with explicit references and it being an underpinning theme of the Standard.

3 Values

- 3.1 The policy fits with the mutual values of RBH:

Putting People First: Our work on health and safety is a person-centred approach aimed at keeping people safe. We ensure we listen to colleagues and customers and learn from their feedback on health and safety issues. We make the reporting process as simple as possible and treat all reports with the urgency they deserve.

Doing What We Say: We actively monitor and report on the performance of RBH in relation to health and safety and ensure we live up to the commitments within this policy. Customers and colleagues need to be confident that we are putting their safety first.

Working As One: The representative body are fully embedded in the health and safety work of the organisation and have a formal role in approving this policy and receiving the performance data on health and safety from across the organisation. We use customer feedback and complaints to feed into the continual improvement of health and safety within RBH.

Delivering Quality: We invest wisely in our health and safety approach and ensure the necessary resources are available to provide the safest possible services. We benchmark our performance and obtain external assurance on key areas of health and safety to ensure our approach continued to improve.

Open & Transparent: We learn from all incidents that happen and ensure that learning is fed back into the development process. We proactively investigate all incidents robustly and report through our governance structures on areas of improvement.

4 Policy Statement

4.1 Strategic Accountability, Executive and Specific Responsibilities

- 4.1.1 All colleagues are legally responsible for acting in a safe manner whilst at work. By understanding their responsibilities and following safety procedures, they will be keeping our colleagues and customers safe, helping to comply with our legal and regulatory duties and contributing to the safe management of our workplaces.
- 4.1.2 As a term of their contract of employment, all colleagues of RBH must comply with the duties placed upon them by the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, section 7, to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and of other persons who may be affected by their acts or omissions at work, and Section 8 relating to their duty to not intentionally or recklessly interfere with or misuse anything provided in the interests of health, safety or welfare and Regulation 14 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999, relating to the use any machinery, equipment, dangerous substance etc and training thereof
- 4.1.3 Failure to comply with Health & Safety duties, legal requirements, training, safe systems of work, on the part of any colleague and/or an attitude of non-co-operation may lead to disciplinary action.

4.2 Board

- 4.2.1 The RBH Board have overall responsibility for Health and Safety across the business, with the Audit and Risk Committee having a role in scrutinising delivery and performance. The RBH Health and Safety Policy is approved by the Board.

The RBH Board is responsible for monitoring compliance with the health and safety Policy and other associated health and safety policies.

In order to achieve this, the Health and Safety Policy will go through the full Policy approval process every three years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

The Board will review health and safety performance through the quarterly People, Health and Safety report and ensure that any issues of significant risk are actioned appropriately.

The Board has a collective role for championing health, safety and welfare standards within RBH.

4.3 **Chief Executive**

4.3.1 The Chief Executive has responsibility for health and safety within RBH.

4.3.2 The duty to implement the requirements and arrangements of the Policy on a day-to-day basis is delegated to Executive Directors / Directors and Heads of Service.

4.3.3 The Chief Executive will provide support to those implementing the Policy, ensuring Executive Directors, Directors and Heads of Service set health and safety specific objectives for their own teams and will ensure that the Board and the Executive Team review health and safety performance regularly.

4.4 **Executive Director with Health & Safety Responsibilities**

4.4.1 The Executive Director with health and safety responsibilities is ultimately responsible for the implementation of RBH's Health and Safety Policy and supporting policies.

4.4.2 The Executive Director of Corporate Services is the nominated person with health and safety responsibilities for RBH, a position with responsibility for planning and implementing the health and safety Policy and chairing the Health and Safety Committee.

4.4.3 The Executive Director of Corporate Services will:

- ensure that adequate resources are devoted to health and safety and that it is ranked with equal importance to other corporate objectives.
- champion safety issues at Executive level.
- ensure that the Chief Executive is advised on any safety matters requiring escalation.
- make recommendations to the Chief Executive and the Board on health and safety policy and ensure an effective Health and Safety Committee takes place leading to improved performance and culture.
- ensure appropriate learning and development is made available to colleagues with significant responsibilities in the management of health and safety.
- work effectively with the Head of Health and Safety in meeting these responsibilities

4.5 **Executive Directors / Directors**

4.5.1 Directors will be responsible for safety measures at directorate level for matters for which they have control. Directors will assume the responsibility for compliance with the RBH Health and Safety Policy and supporting policies, relevant legislation, approved Codes of Practice guidance and regulations.

4.5.2 Each Director has overall responsibility for their service area regarding the implementation of this Policy. The main responsibilities are to:

- lead by example and develop a positive culture in respect of safe working practices, and a safe and healthy working environment and seek continual improvement in this area.
- arrange for the successful implementation of this Policy and, in so doing, support all persons in carrying it out.
- identify and evaluate risks in relation to health and safety and implement appropriate control mechanisms in order to minimise risk to colleagues, customers and other stakeholders.
- monitor and review the performance of managers in respect of the implementation of adopted safety arrangements within their sections in the form of KPIs.
- ensure that suitable and adequate resources are made available to develop and/or maintain systems to meet the requirements of this Policy and supporting policies, procedures and systems.
- where appropriate, delegate their responsibilities to senior and middle managers.

4.6 **Person Responsible for Fire Safety**

4.6.1 The person with fire safety responsibility will provide professional fire safety advice as required to colleagues across RBH. The nominated role with RBH is the CDM & Fire Risk Manager.

4.6.2 Their main responsibilities are:

- to act as the 'competent person' under the Fire Safety (England) Regulations 2022, made under article 24 of the Regulatory (Fire Safety) Order 2005.
- the development, implementation and co-ordination of a rolling programme of fire risk assessments as required by Regulatory (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- the provision of advice to RBH concerning appropriate standards for fire precautions in buildings, and the development and maintenance of effective fire prevention strategies.
- the development of compliance and control strategies as required by the relevant statutory provisions.
- monitoring fire safety arrangements and making recommendations as necessary.
- to maintain positive relationships with the Greater Manchester Fire Service.

4.7 **Head of Health and Safety**

4.7.1 The role of Head of Health and Safety involves expert advisory functions, and reports to the Director of Governance on a day-to-day basis for the execution of his/her duties but will have direct access to the Chief Executive on matters considered appropriate.

4.7.2 The Head of Health and Safety acts as the "competent person" to assist RBH in providing health and safety advice and information on strategic and operational issues. The key activities of the Head of Health and Safety will involve both strategic and operational issues. These will include:

- Co-ordinating the professional health and safety function, ensuring the formulation, development and implementation of corporate plans and strategies, and the monitoring of health and safety performance.
- Embed a HS&E culture across the organisation with support from the Communications function
- Promoting and encouraging excellent standards of health, safety and welfare for all colleagues of RBH.
- Providing an advisory service to directors, managers and colleagues to enable them to comply with their statutory responsibilities under relevant and up-to-date Health and Safety legislation.
- Assisting in auditing and monitoring workplaces and systems to ensure compliance with statutory health and safety requirements.
- Monitoring in conjunction with other Directorates the safety performance of contractors and partners working on RBH premises.
- If of the opinion that there is a risk of serious, imminent danger, damage or prosecution that could arise from any work activity, have the authority to curtail or stop the activity.
- Developing an annual Health and Safety Improvement Plan for RBH and report on this through the governance structure to highlight performance and areas for improvement.
- Advising and assisting, where appropriate, in the investigation of serious accidents.
- Collating accident statistics, to monitor and improve which are reported to Board quarterly and performance highlighted within the annual health and safety report.
- Other health & safety matters about which the Boards, Chief Executive, Directors or Managers should require advice and guidance.
- Lead and develop the H&S team, as an advisory resource to managers and colleagues.

4.7.2 The Head of Health and Safety acts as the appointed Health & Safety Lead as required by the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and will be required to:

- monitor the provider's compliance with health and safety requirements;
- assess risks of failure to comply with health and safety requirements;
- notify the 'responsible body' of risks of, and actual, material failures to comply with health and safety requirements; and
- provide advice to the responsible body as to how the provider should address risks and failures to comply with health and safety requirements.

4.8 **Managers**

4.8.1 Managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of policy, procedures and safety arrangements within their teams.

4.8.2 Their main responsibilities are to:

- be accountable to their director or Head of Service, for the consistent implementation of this Policy, to ensure and improve the safety of colleagues and contractor, for whom they have management responsibility.
- read and understand this policy and take all steps necessary to ensure that all persons for whom they have management responsibility are made aware of it, it's supporting documents and their own responsibilities in law (see 4.9).
- understand the basic requirements of health and safety legislation and applying these to the working practices of their team.
- foster a positive attitude towards safety.
- issue specific verbal and written safety instructions (safe systems of work; risk assessment and method statements, welfare arrangements as appropriate) to colleagues.
- ensure that all colleagues, particularly apprentices and new starters, receive adequate training, instruction, information and supervision in order for them to be able to fulfil their duties safely.
- when finding or being made aware by a colleague, or others, of a condition or practice which may jeopardise the health and safety of persons or a property, stop the work immediately and notify the relevant Director, Head of Service and the H&S Team.
- ensure that unsafe act or unsafe conditions are reported as soon as possible, through the correct channels (may include Connect reporting).
- develop, implement and maintain suitable and adequate local safe working procedures to protect against any risks identified, including maintaining a good standard of housekeeping in the work area.
- ensure that all accidents are reported, recorded and properly investigated in order to identify both immediate and underlying causes and to implement appropriate remedial action to prevent recurrence.
- take appropriate action against colleagues and/or contractors who disregard their safety responsibilities or are negligent to such a degree that their action exposes either themselves or others to a significant risk of injury or ill health.
- ensure that all plant, equipment, articles and substances, provided for use at work, are safe and without risks to colleagues and others, and that all such items are used properly, maintained in a good state of repair and in efficient working order. If not, then they are promptly removed/replaced.
- ensure that all personal protective equipment provided for use at work is suitable and correct for the intended use, that it is used properly and maintained in a good state of repair and in efficient working order.
- subject to the risks inherent to working practices, ensure that there are sufficient numbers of first aid personnel readily available to administer first aid treatment.
- ensure that health and safety arrangements are afforded full consideration in the drafting and implementation of any contract, works specification or order.

- ensure that contractors employed in their service areas are competent to carry out the specified work and that they adhere to relevant statutory provisions and/or terms and conditions of the contract or specification.
- actively discourage colleagues from taking unnecessary risks, adopting unsafe working practices and/or engaging in 'horseplay' or unsafe practical jokes.
- monitor and review the performance of colleagues and/or individual colleagues in respect of the implementation of adopted safety arrangements within their respective service areas.
- consult with, where considered necessary, the Health and Safety team when hiring and/or purchasing new items of plant and equipment and/or proposed alterations to premises.
- lead by personal example.
- apply these responsibilities when temporarily managing another team, during period of cover (absence, holidays etc.).

4.9 **Individual Colleagues**

4.9.1 The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 places duties on all colleagues to:

- Take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by their work.
- Co-operate with RBH in implementing the Health and Safety Policy and complying with legal duties and responsibilities.
- Make themselves familiar with, and observe, the Health and Safety Policy, its procedures, work instructions and risk assessments relevant to their work.
- Report to their line manager any hazards, accidents, incidents and near misses whether injury is sustained or not.
- Report to their line manager any new or uncontrolled risks arising from their work activity, or any faults or defect in the workplace or work equipment.
- Use any safety equipment and/or protective clothing correctly and in accordance with training provided.
- Conduct themselves in an orderly manner in the workplace and refrain from any form of inappropriate or unsafe behaviour.
- Familiarise themselves with the fire evacuation procedures and the location of all emergency exit routes and assembly point relevant to their workplace.

Failure to adhere to any of the responsibilities under this Policy will be dealt with via formal People policies and could lead to disciplinary action.

4.10 **Health and Safety Committee and Safety Representatives**

4.10.1 Health and Safety Committee comprises of Directors, colleagues and Union Safety Representatives.

4.10.2 The purpose of the Committee is to drive improved performance in its strategies, policies, and working practices in relation to health and safety. It will ensure these at least meet or exceed legal obligations, with the objective of

promoting the well-being and safety of RBH's colleagues, its customers and others affected by RBH's activities. The Committee's purpose helps drive RBH's safety objectives and the vision within the Corporate Strategy.

4.10.3 The Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977 applies as we recognise trade unions.

4.10.4 Where colleagues are not represented by a union the Health and Safety (Consultation with Colleagues) Regulations 1996 will apply.

4.11 **Contractors and Sub-Contractors**

4.11.1 RBH will plan, co-ordinate, control and monitor the activities of contract and sub-contract companies to effectively minimise the risks presented to colleagues, other persons on-site and the public.

4.11.2 RBH will only use contractors and sub-contractors who have proved able to discharge their primary responsibility to safeguard their colleagues and other persons who may be affected by their undertakings. This will be achieved by a selection and evaluation procedure to ensure that only competent contractors and sub-contractors are used by RBH.

4.11.3 Site safety rules and procedures will be issued to all contractors and sub-contractors and will be clearly stated in contractual arrangements, together with any special health and safety requirements likely to affect cost or timescales.

4.11.4 Plant and equipment, such as temporary access platforms, ladders, personal protective equipment, lifting equipment, internal transport vehicles and electrical equipment, will not be loaned to contractors or sub-contractors unless exceptional circumstances prevent them from using or hiring their own.

4.12 **Risk Management**

The effective management of health and safety issues is an integral part of risk management and RBH take a proactive approach to the control of risks in accordance with the Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999. Risk Management is a discipline which cuts across all activities, from strategic to operational and applies across all business areas to minimised.

4.13 **Risk Assessments**

4.13.1 In accordance with the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations, health and safety hazards within our services, operations, equipment, and facilities including those that impact on others which includes contractors, sub-contractors, volunteers, and members of the public volunteers, will be identified and risk assessed with appropriate controls implemented to eliminate and manage our risks.

4.13.2 Risk assessments will take into consideration, the individual needs of our customers and colleagues and any individual considerations and reasonable adjustments we may need to make to ensure they can work in a healthy and safe manner.

- 4.13.3 Risk assessments will be conducted by line managers and/or colleagues with support and guidance provided by the Health and Safety team. The risk assessments will be communicated to relevant colleagues for consultation and sign-off. These assessments will be reviewed following serious incidents, changes to legislation and prior to operational changes.
- 4.13.4 Any significant findings in the risk assessment process will be recorded on the appropriate risk assessment forms and the information will be used in the development of safe systems of work that will be issued on a formal basis to those colleagues who need to be aware of the risks identified.
- 4.13.5 If there are new developments in legislation, actions that come out of accident investigations or changes in working practices or procedures, which may suggest that an assessment is no longer valid, the risk assessment will be reviewed.

5 Monitoring

- 5.1 RBH health and safety targets are reviewed and set annually and documented in a health and safety report that is presented for assurance to the Audit and Risk Committee and RBH Board.
- 5.2 RBH Health and Safety performance, is reported quarterly to Senior and Executive Leadership Teams, recommending action for improvement.
- 5.3 Pro-active monitoring undertaken includes regular audits, inspections, and assessments, statutory testing of equipment and preventative maintenance programs.
- 5.4 Reactive monitoring includes evaluation of data relating to injuries, ill health, damage and loss. This will include an Occupational Health Surveillance program for specific colleagues when colleagues remain exposed to health risks even after controls are identified and implemented.
- 5.5 This Policy is owned by the Head of Health and Safety who will monitor and reflect any changes in legislation. This will be overseen on a strategic level by the Director of Governance and Executive Director of Corporate Services.

6 Review

- 6.1 All RBH strategies, policies, service standards and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are 'fit for purpose' and comply with all relevant legislation and statutory regulations.
- 6.2 This policy will go through the full policy approval process every 3 years and will undergo a desktop review annually. This is to ensure that it is fit for purpose and complies with all relevant and statutory regulations.

7 Links with Other RBH Documents

- 7.1 The Health and Safety Policy sits at the front of a suite of health and safety related policies, procedures and guidance. Each of these procedures details the arrangements relating specifically to the subject area to ensure that an effective

health and safety management system is in place. The Health and Safety Policy and associated procedures are located on RBH's colleague intranet.

The policies, procedures and guidance are as follows: (not an exhaustive list)

- Asbestos Policy
- Fleet Management Policy
- Gas Safety & Solid Fuels Policy
- Water Safety Policy
- Electrical Safety Policy
- Work at Height Procedures
- Lone Worker Policy
- Manual Handling Procedures
- Fire Safety Policy
- COSHH Policy and Procedure
- Mobile Phone Use Procedure
- Personal Protective Equipment Policy and Procedure
- First Aid Policy and Procedure

8 Inclusivity statement

- 8.1 We are dedicated to fostering an inclusive and equitable environment for all. We ensure that everyone is valued and respected. Our policies aim to be inclusive, and will comply with UK laws, including the Equality Act 2010, to create a diverse and supportive environment for people to thrive.
- 8.2 We understand not everyone absorbs information the same way. If you have any difficulty understanding or interpreting this document please email people@rbh.org.uk or call Freephone 0800 027 7769. We will work with you to ensure your individual needs are met.

9 Appendices

- 9.1 Appendix 1 – Health and Safety Arrangements
- This can be found under useful links on the [keeping us safe](#) section of the intranet.