

RBH Neighbourhood News

Welcome to the Summer 2025 edition of RBH Neighbourhood News



What's inside this edition?

Read about our aims for the next three years on pages 4 and 5.

Hear from the new Chair of the Representative Body, Andrew Johnson, on page 15.

More than 1,300 of our customers got involved this year - find out more on pages 8 and 9.



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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.

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 بنید .

Hello from Amanda

Hello and welcome to our fourth edition of Neighbourhood News.

Since our last newsletter, we made real progress with our recovery and we've had some good news. The Regulator of Social Housing has upgraded RBH and confirmed that we are now meeting the requirements of the regulatory standards. This is great news and recognises the work done to improve things for our customers.

Our customers have very much been part of the work that has been done and we value the contributions that many of you have made in helping us to change our process, policies and the way we deliver services. It has been a joint effort and could not have happened without your input.

Our improvement does not stop here. Our focus remains on delivering great services to you. You're starting to tell us that you can feel the impact of the changes we are making from getting repairs done in your home through to how quickly we answer the phone when you call. We will continue to listen to you on how we can do even better.

We've now set out our plans for the next three years in our new Corporate Strategy. We've called this "Building Foundations For People To Thrive" and it sets out our aims for the coming three years and how we plan to make sure we meet our promises. We couldn't have done this without your feedback - read more on pages 4 and 5.

As I mention above, many of you have contributed to our improvement journey and over the past year, over 1,300 customers have attended our events or sessions to provide us with feedback. We will do more of this and want to involve as many people as possible. We've shared some great examples of how your input has helped us to make changes on pages 8 and 9 and we hope that inspires more people to join in. We know from this feedback that our repairs service is really important to you. On pages 10 and 11 we've shared some important information to help us to make sure we can deal with your repair requests as quickly and efficiently as possible.

RBH is a mutual society and that means that those people who choose to join the membership all own a part. Membership is open to all customers and colleagues and if you aren't a member but would like to join please do this. Part of the way in which we run RBH involves us having a Representative Body which is a group of Members who come forward and are elected to sit on this vital part of our governance structure. The Representative Body works alongside the Board and the Executive to govern RBH.

Mutuality is at the heart of RBH and there are some great opportunities coming up this summer to get involved. I'd love to see as many customers and colleagues as possible stand for election and vote in this year's Representative Body elections. Keep an eye out for more information on this very soon.

Finally, I would like to congratulate our elected customer representative, Andrew Johnson, on his election as the new Chair of our Representative Body. You can read a message from Andrew on page 15.

I hope that you have a great summer and I look forward to seeing you in your community soon.

Kindest regards,

Amanda Newton - RBH Chief Executive



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**

Introducing our new Corporate Strategy



Building foundations for people to thrive – our plans for the next three years

Over the past two years the work done on our recovery has focused on improving the services we deliver to you. At the end of March, the Regulator of Social Housing confirmed that the work done as part of our recovery plan means that we were now meeting the requirements of the standards they set for housing providers. They have confirmed that we are now compliant and awarded us a G2 grading for our Governance.



We now have more work to do over the coming year to take the organisation forward and our aim will be to return to the highest regulatory grading of G1 through continuing to improve the services we provide to the people who live in our homes.

We are proud of this improvement, but we know there is still a lot to do. We want to share our plans for the next three years with you. These were set out in our Corporate Strategy, which was approved by our Board in March.

We talked to you, our customers, as well as RBH colleagues, stakeholders, and Representatives. You told us that you thought the five themes we used in last year's strategy were still the right ones, so we have decided to keep them. These are:



Customers



Communities



People



Homes



Governance

These themes reflect the things that you have told us are important, and we want to set out some of the things we aim to achieve over the next three years. As always, we will only know we have been successful when you - our customers - tell us that we have.

You can find out more about our Corporate Strategy and read the full document at www.rbh.org.uk/strategy. If you'd like a printed copy, please call or email us to ask.

Our aims for the next three years



Customers

We will:

- Talk to you regularly to help improve our services
- Improve our data so we know we're meeting the needs of everyone
- Make sure you are safe in your home and in your community
- Achieve high customer satisfaction and resolve issues efficiently



Communities

We will:

- Play a leading role in regeneration and placemaking in Rochdale
- Invest in communal areas and tackle anti-social behaviour
- Support community development and social inclusion
- Work closely with our partners to deliver regeneration



People

We will:

- Invest in skills and development for colleagues
- Make sure our colleagues are focused on improving things for our customers
- Ensure wellbeing and safety of our colleagues
- Promote diversity, inclusion, and belonging



Homes

We will:

- Prioritise investment in our existing homes
- Improve energy efficiency and sustainability
- Develop plans for new homes and regenerating communities
- Improve our repairs service based on your feedback



Governance

We will:

- Make sure we govern well and use our money wisely
- Make risk-informed decisions
- Use data and insight to improve our services

Make sure that we meet all the Regulator's requirements

What does success look like?

Key achievements by 2028:

- Increased customer engagement and satisfaction
- Successful regeneration projects and new plans for stronger neighbourhoods
- Making sure we are an inclusive and supportive place to work
- Improved quality and sustainability of homes
- Strong governance and financial health

Community News

Friends reunited at our Customer Voice Forum



We were so happy to be able to reunite two old friends at our recent Customer Voice Forum. Olufunke and Adejoke both joined our afternoon session at the Lighthouse Project in Middleton.

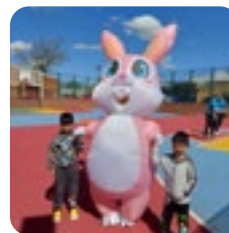
Part way through the session, they realised they went to school together in Nigeria and hadn't seen each other in over 40 years - despite now living just ten minutes away from each other.

We are over the moon that we were able to help our customers rekindle their friendship after being apart for so long!

Celebrating our communities

We want to say a big thank you to all the residents who have joined in with our recent community celebrations in Freehold, Kirkholt, and Smallbridge.

We are extremely grateful to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority for their support for the "A Day To Remember" festivals in Kirkholt and Smallbridge. We would also like to say thank you to Culture Co-op, Theatre In Flow, Rochdale Borough Council, and Greater Manchester Police who joined the community in Freehold at two recent events.



Spring turns into summer at our Independent Living Schemes

Customers at Mountside View raised £333 towards a new defibrillator with their Easter raffle.

St George's Day and VE Day were celebrated at schemes all across the Borough, including at our Extra Care Scheme, Hare Hill in Littleborough.



Community News



Middleton residents' survey

The Middleton Partnership wants to hear your views - click on the QR code to complete their short survey.



Improving our Grounds Maintenance Service in Kirkholt

Working together with Rochdale Borough Council, we've made some changes to the way we deliver grounds maintenance services in Kirkholt.

We've agreed to work more closely together with the Council team to help us to improve the service and provide better value-for-money for the service charges paid by our customers. We have agreed that RBH's Neighbourhood Environment Team will maintain the smaller plots in Kirkholt owned by both the Council and RBH. The Council team will cut the grass at three large green spaces currently maintained by RBH - at Mornington Road, Perth Road, and Gerrard Street. We've agreed to do this for an initial trial period until October 2025.

RBH laptop donations help customers to get involved

Our IT team have been donating refreshed laptops and phones to customers as part of our "Tech For All" scheme.

We were so pleased to learn that our customer Miss Senzini is planning to use her new device to get involved with our online engagement sessions. You can keep an eye on www.rbh.org.uk/events for the latest opportunities to make sure that your voice is heard.



Join our neighbourhood walkabouts

Our Neighbourhood Housing Officers are continuing their regular neighbourhood walkabouts across the Borough - including our Heywood walkabout pictured below - and you are invited! Keep an eye out on our website, social media, and via SMS for more information.



Making your voice heard this year

Over the past year, almost 1,400 of you - our customers - gave your time to get involved with RBH. We want to say thank you for your time, and share with you how your voice has helped us to change things for the better.

Your customer engagement team are here to make sure your voice is heard at every level of RBH. You'll see them at

community events, drop-ins, forums, and online.

They help run our panels, support scrutiny, and connect your views to the people who make decisions.

You can find out more about these activities by reading our full engagement report. This is available online at www.rbh.org.uk/getinvolved. If you're not able to read an online version, you can request a paper copy via engagement@rbh.org.uk or by calling **0800 027 7769**.

There's still work to do, but we have taken some important steps forward together. Thank you.



The Year in Numbers

Between April 2024 and March 2025:



1,391 customers took part in engagement activities



165 events and activities were held across Rochdale, Heywood, Middleton and the Pennines



54 drop-in sessions brought staff directly into your communities



3 scrutiny reviews were carried out



We **received feedback** on key policies, strategies, and neighbourhood services



We supported **digital inclusion** through device giveaways, WiFi rollout, and tech help

How your feedback has made a difference this year

We wanted to share just a few of the many examples of how your feedback has made a difference over the past year. We're just getting started - why not visit www.rbh.org.uk/getinvolved, email engagement@rbh.org.uk, or contact us on 0800 027 7769 for more details about how you can get involved?

Diversity, Inclusion, and Belonging Policy Review

You said our diversity, inclusion, and belonging strategy was too long and complicated. We shortened it, made the language clearer, and created a one-page summary.

Anti-Social Behaviour Policy Review

You asked us for more information about available support and clearer communication. We created a new customer guide and improved our training for colleagues.

Community Drop-In Sessions

You told us you wanted to speak directly to colleagues from different teams. We made sure that colleagues from our Repairs, Income, Neighbourhoods, and Contact Centre Teams came along, and we invited partners like the Council's work and skills team to join us.

Neighbourhood Walkabouts

You said you wanted to see your Neighbourhood Housing Officers more often. All our neighbourhood officers are now holding regular, public walkabouts. Visit www.rbh.org.uk/events to find out about upcoming events.



Summer Roadshows

You told us about issues like noisy bikes and untidy communal areas at our summer roadshows. We've been working with our partners (like Greater Manchester Police) and our Neighbourhood Environment Team to fix these issues.



Customer Voice Forums

You told us that you wanted to help us inspect our caretaking and grounds maintenance. We've created a customer inspector group and 15 customers have signed up already!



You told us you'd like our contact centre to be better trained in responding to anti-social behaviour requests. We've improved our training for colleagues so that they can respond better to any queries.

You told us you'd like to see more community news in this newsletter and you'd like more opportunities to meet our team face-to-face. We've made sure that news from across the Borough is included in this newsletter and we've developed more face-to-face opportunities including drop-ins, walkabouts, and roadshows.

Damp and mould workshop

We asked you to review our information about damp and mould at a workshop, you gave us some areas to improve including updating our Money Matters information and sharing alternatives to drying clothes outside. We've updated our information to reflect this feedback.

Independent Living Service customer review

You told us that you wanted to see improvements in how we let homes in our independent living schemes. We've given more responsibility to our Scheme Officers to make the process easier, and we raised the minimum age from 50 to 55 in line with your feedback.

Reporting your repair to us



Please ensure you report repairs to us, that we are responsible for, as soon as reasonably possible.

You can report a repair online at **www.rbh.org.uk/myrbh** using our MyRBH portal. You can also e-mail **rbh.repairs@rbh.org.uk** or call us on Freephone **0800 027 7769**. Emergency repairs can be reported 24/7 on **0800 027 7769**.

Which repairs are RBH's responsibility?

We are responsible for maintaining and repairing the structure and exterior of your property. This includes chimneys, roofs, and gutters; external pipes and drains; ceilings; windows; walls and skirting boards; doors; floors (but not floor coverings); foundations; and steps and other means of access.

We will also keep all fixtures and fittings supplied by us for sanitation and for the supply of water, gas, electricity in repair and proper working order. This includes boilers and central heating systems. Subject to you paying any service charge, we will maintain and repair any shared and communal areas we own, such as entrances, halls, stairways and lifts.

Which repairs are your responsibility?

We are not responsible for other fixtures and fittings and appliances if you have installed these yourself (such as washing machines and cookers), although we may need to inspect such items periodically to ensure they meet health and safety requirements.

We are not responsible for all repairs. For example, we are not responsible where:

- A repair is necessary because you did not report any damage to us either promptly, or at all.
- Where damage was caused by you, or anyone living with you or visiting you.
- Where damage was caused through neglect, deliberate or careless acts.

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**



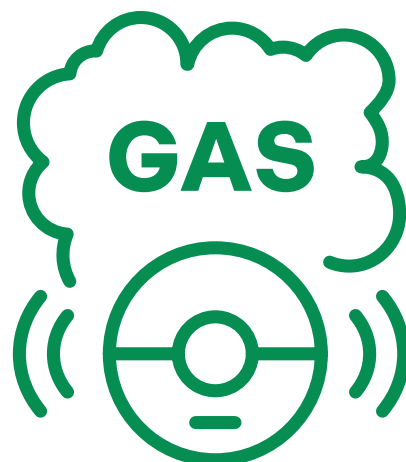
More information on how we tackle damp and mould is available on our website at **www.rbh.org.uk/dampandmould**.

Gas Safety Checks

– help us to keep you safe

Every year we need to carry out safety checks on your boiler and other gas-supplied appliances in your home. This helps us to make sure that you, your family, and your neighbours are safe. The law is very clear that we must do this. 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.

We know some people are worried about letting our gas engineers into their homes. We understand that this can be difficult for some people. If this is you, we've looked at some common things that we've heard so that we can reassure you about the steps we take to make having a safety check as easy and stress-free as possible.



Things we sometimes hear...	...the reality
I only need to have a safety check if my boiler isn't working properly. My boiler is only a year or two old, so I don't need a safety check.	As your landlord, we have a legal requirement to carry out an annual safety check of the gas installation and any appliances within your home. This is required no matter how old your appliances are and whether they are in good working order.
My friend is a gas engineer - they have looked at my boiler and they said it is OK.	We are legally required to carry out this check. You cannot get someone else to do it for you. Only a Gas Safe registered engineer can legally undertake a safety check, and we make sure that all our engineers are registered.
If there was a problem with my boiler, my carbon monoxide alarm would tell me or I'd be able to smell gas.	Our annual safety check is important for identifying any potential risks, such as leaks or damaged connections. You may not notice these otherwise until they become an even bigger risk. Gas leaks may not always create a smell at a level that you can detect it.
I'm not up-to-date with my rent payments, if I let RBH in to do my gas safety check I will get in trouble for this.	Our priority when we do the safety check is to ensure you and your neighbours are not at risk from any defects or issues with your boiler, and the engineer will not speak to you about any rent arrears you may have. If you are worried about paying your rent, our Money Matters team can help – please call them on 0800 027 7769.
I don't have any credit on my gas meter and I'm worried or embarrassed that RBH won't be able to do the safety check	We can help you with this. Please contact us so that we can see what support is best for you. The safety checks we do include making sure your appliances are working efficiently, which might help save you money on your bills.
I'm struggling to keep on top of things in my home, and I'm worried about letting someone in who might judge how I'm living.	We don't judge our customers, and our safety checks are about keeping you, your family, and your neighbours safe. We will always try to help you. We have a range of support available that you may not realise - please speak to us if you think you need this support.

Volunteer as a Community Diversity Advocate

Are you passionate about creating positive change in your community?

We are looking for people from all backgrounds to become champions for change and help make our services more inclusive, welcoming, and accessible for everyone.

We want to hear from customers including those of different genders, ethnicities, age, religions, sexual orientation, abilities, as well as those who are undergoing or have undergone gender reassignment, care leavers, and ex armed forces personnel.



As a Community Diversity Advocate, you'll have the opportunity to join us at local events - we had a fantastic time at Rochdale Pride this year and we'd love to see more of our customers attend. You'll also be able to share your ideas and lived experiences to help us shape more inclusive services.

All you need to get involved is a passion for inclusion and a desire to make a difference.

If you're interested, please contact Rachael Ray at rachael.ray@rbh.org.uk or call **01706 273340**.

Case study: Diversity Inclusion Refugees Volunteering Project

Our volunteer pilot project was created by a community diversity advocate who is a refugee. It aimed to provide volunteering opportunities within RBH and our contractor EQUANS, helping refugees gain valuable skills.

"My experience volunteering at RBH was transformative. It not only gave me a sense of purpose and community but also helped me develop valuable skills that have been essential in securing employment. The support and opportunities provided at RBH made a significant difference in my journey, and I strongly encourage others to get involved. Volunteering here is a powerful step towards building a better future."

Abdulla,
RBH volunteer

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.

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!

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Services Committee | <input type="checkbox"/> Local Community Groups |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Drop-In Sessions | <input type="checkbox"/> Policy and strategy reviews |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Representative Body | <input type="checkbox"/> Diversity Advocates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Community Champions | <input type="checkbox"/> Customer Voice Forums |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Complaints Panel | <input type="checkbox"/> Communication Champions |

Work for us



Everything we achieve is through our people. We'd love to hear from you if you are interested in working for us.

We're proud that the majority of people who work for us live within the Borough of Rochdale. Many of our colleagues are also RBH customers who were tenants in RBH homes long before they started work with us.

We have a huge range of roles and we recruit regularly to teams across our mutual society. Could you be the face of RBH in our communities as part of our Neighbourhoods Team, or the voice of RBH as part of our Customer Contact Team?

We're proud to be an accredited Living Wage employer, and we actively support many flexible working patterns as part of our 36.25 hour working week. All colleagues are entitled to 30 days of holiday every year (pro-rata for part-time employees) with an additional five days after the completion of five years of service. Colleagues can also access our quality pension scheme, run by Royal London.

You can visit www.rbh.org.uk/jobs to view our latest vacancies. You can also find out more about what it is like to work for RBH, and the benefits of working for us. You can also register for job alerts to be the first to find out about future vacancies.



Our gender and ethnicity pay gaps

Every year we produce a report showing the difference in average pay between men and women who work for us. This year, we also reported on the difference in pay between RBH colleagues of different ethnicities.

Our figures show that there is not a lot of difference between how much we pay our male and female colleagues. Using the median figures, female RBH colleagues earn slightly more on average. This is also the case for ethnically diverse colleagues.

We are committed to creating a workforce that reflects the communities we serve. More information is available at www.rbh.org.uk/genderpaygap.



A message from Andrew Johnson, the new Chair of the Representative Body

I feel honoured and privileged that my colleagues on the Representative Body have elected me as their new Chair.

This is a time of great opportunity for RBH. Our positive improvements have been recognised by the Regulator who have returned us to compliance. We want to continue to improve. The Representative Body need to contribute towards making sure that RBH makes great decisions that benefit both residents and employees.

I want to say thank you to Claire Dalton whose contribution to the Representative Body as our interim Chair has been invaluable. I hope that we can continue to strengthen the links we have built with Co-operatives UK.

We have some great opportunities for our Members to get involved this summer, including this year's Representative Body elections followed by our Annual Members' Meeting. I would love to see as many Members as possible take part.

Could you be one of our new Representatives?

Our next Representative Body elections take place this summer - keep an eye out soon 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.



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.

