



RBH WORK AND SKILLS STRATEGY

2019-20 Annual Report



INTRODUCTION.

In 2019, we introduced a new **Work and Skills Strategy** for RBH which set out our bold and ambitious approach to increasing higher level skills and wealth creation in the borough. The strategy strives to be ambitious and refreshing, concentrating on where we can make the most difference. Our approach to delivering this spans **three different tactics**:

1



Direct delivery to drive higher level skills development and access to higher paid employment opportunities for especially RBH tenants and members

2



Work closely with local partners to support people entering the job market to overcome any barriers and gain access to training and voluntary or sustainable employment opportunities

3



Influence partners and suppliers to create stable long term employment opportunities for RBH tenants and members to access

This report showcases our progress over the past year, and highlights some of the amazing achievement of the apprentices, tenants and residents who have accessed programmes. We're really proud of what has been achieved in year 1 of the strategy and look forward to building on the learning for year 2.



OUR APPRENTICE PROGRAMME.

In **summer 2019** we redesigned the recruitment process for our flagship apprentice programme in order to meet the ambition of our new Work and Skills Strategy. We used this as an opportunity to try some new things and test what works, including:

- A focus on higher level apprenticeship roles, ranging from level 2-4.
- Support for RBH tenants and Rochdale residents who were not successful through workshops providing advice, confidence building and links into support programmes.
- Support for RBH tenants to access work experience and to be referred into other vacancies.
- A wider range of channels to advertise vacancies and target RBH members, tenants and neighbourhoods and promote the benefits of an apprenticeship with RBH.

The changes we introduced helped us to learn about what works and where gaps might be and through this we have identified improvements and opportunities for our next recruitment.

635

Apprenticeship applications received

13

People accessed follow up support

9

New apprentices recruited – including one RBH tenant and five residents of Rochdale Borough



RECRUITING
OUR NEW
APPRENTICE
COHORT

RBH APPRENTICES.

We are extremely proud of our team of apprentices and the huge difference that they make within the Society. In the past year eight apprentices successfully completed their qualification, all of whom reported increased confidence and skills as a result of their apprenticeship with RBH.

Of the **five apprentices who completed trade qualifications, four secured permanent roles within our repairs service** ensuring we retain the expertise and the investment already made in these employees. Additionally, **three business trainees completed qualifications** and we're pleased that one moved into a permanent Risk and Insurance Officer role with RBH. The remaining two secured permanent full-time positions with major local employers **Bury Council and Zen Internet** shortly before the end of their apprenticeships.

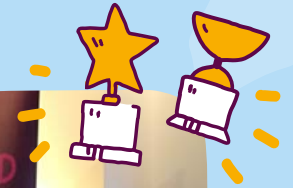
5 apprentices
secured jobs
in RBH

8 apprentices
completed their
qualifications
this year

1 has moved
into a role
with another
Rochdale
business



RBH APPRENTICE AWARDS.



Each year at our **Apprentice Awards** we recognise the hard work, commitment and dedication shown by our apprentices who face the challenge of combining studying with full-time work and family commitments. It was a fantastic opportunity not only to celebrate the academic achievements of our apprentices and their mentors but to share the wonderful feedback from teams and managers about how the programme helped develop skills and grow in confidence.

VOLUNTEERING TIME IN COMMUNITIES.



This year all apprentices from across the Society came together for the first time to deliver a project to benefit the Rochdale community. The project aimed to improve the outdoor garden areas at **three of our independent living schemes** and was designed and delivered by the apprentices and their supervisors. By building new raised planters and seating, the teams helped to make the gardens more attractive and accessible to residents who might have been previously unable to take part in gardening activities. In the evening everyone joined residents to reflect on the day's events and share in a pie and puds supper.



A BIG THANK YOU ! TO OUR MENTORS !

The **RBH Apprenticeship Programme** relies heavily on the expertise, commitment and efforts of our team of mentors. Drawn from across the business, but in particular repairs teams, our mentors make a huge investment of time and knowledge, working closely with our apprentices to ensure they develop the skills they need to perform their roles once qualified.



WORKING WITH PARTNERS TO SUPPORT PEOPLE INTO WORK.

We recognise that by working in partnership with other local organisations we can provide the right expertise to support RBH tenants and members without duplicating provision. We work closely with partner agencies through the Rochdale Work and Skills Forum and through using our position in the marketplace to create other opportunities for local people.



NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH RBC WORK AND SKILLS TEAM.

In 2019 we launched a partnership with Rochdale Council's new Work and Skills service to support RBH tenants into training, volunteering and employment. The Council Team act as a central point for the borough, using their expertise and knowledge of the market to refer clients into the best support programme for their needs and ensuring that provision meets quality standards and is shaped for local demand.

We began by piloting the approach with our **Money Advice Team from January 2020**, who received training on how to open up conversations about employment with tenants they were supporting. We designed a new referral process to safely share details of tenants who want to access specialist support to help them move towards the labour market. We are now looking at rolling this process out across other front lines teams.

- 15** RBH tenants referred into the Work and Skills Team for support
- 9** people engaged with the service to receive support
- 4** have moved into further support on a programme relevant to their needs and aspirations
- 40** additional RBH tenants are being supported through this scheme



CASE STUDY: HELPING JOHN INTO WORK.



John is an RBH tenant who was being supported by Rochdale Council's Work and Skills Team. As an ex-offender looking to rebuild his life, John had been struggling to find work for some time, and it was having a strong negative impact upon his mental health. His ambition was to enter the construction industry but despite efforts he had been unsuccessful.

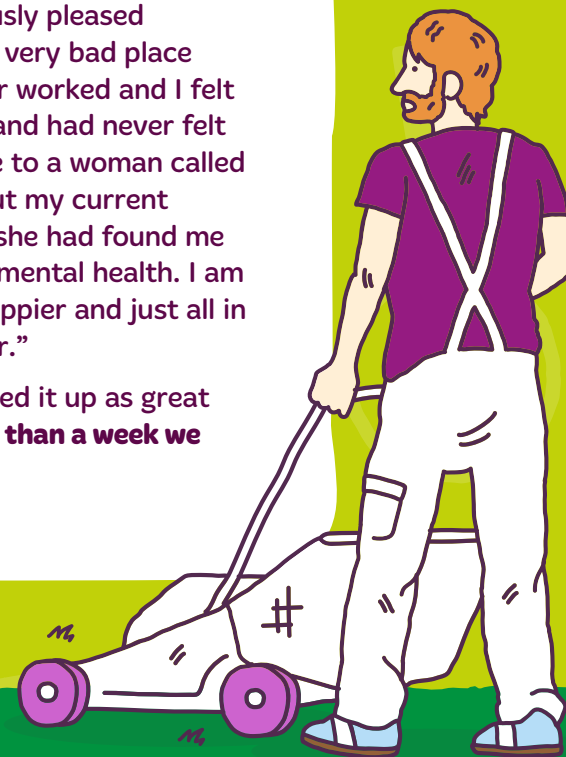
Rochdale Council contacted RBH to discuss John's case and try to broker opportunity through partnership working. An RBH contractor, Groundwork Ltd, had just begun a new contract and were in need of a reliable labourer who could start work straight away. Having worked with Groundwork before, we were confident that they would be able to provide the right support to help John really excel. Following an informal phone interview John was offered the job.

The final piece of the puzzle was to get John kitted out for his new job. By tapping into **RBH Workwear Workshop** and support from Rochdale Probation Service,

we were able to source new work clothes for John that would help him to safely and warmly carry out his new role and DWP provided a weekly bus pass.

Since starting his new job, John has moved from strength to strength. Groundwork's Marc Richardson remarked that he is "extremely reliable, a good worker and very keen to learn" and they are tremendously pleased with his progress. John said "I was in a very bad place emotionally and financially, I had never worked and I felt really depressed. I had lost my family and had never felt so low and stuck, I spoke on the phone to a woman called Amanda (from Rochdale Council) about my current situation and in only a very little time she had found me a job and also offered extra help with mental health. I am now feeling a whole lot better, a lot happier and just all in all a lot better as a person and a father."

Amanda from Rochdale Council summed it up as great partnership working, "**Together in less than a week we changed this young man's life.**"



WORKING WITH OUR SUPPLIERS.

On all of our developments RBH asks our contractors to deliver social value through the way that they operate. In September 2019, we partnered with Vistry Partnership and Antrec Ltd to run a one week Entry to Construction course to support unemployed people gain necessary qualifications and knowledge to kick start their careers in construction linked to our development in Smallbridge. **The course was extremely popular and all 12 places were taken.** At the end of the week all were successful in passing the course and achieving their Construction Skills Certification Scheme cards as well as qualifications in Personal Development for Employability, introduction to Construction and Health & Safety. Upon completion of the course **3 people immediately moved into employment.** The others were offered work experience placements with our local contractors.

3 apprentices employed on our new build programme, gaining 76 weeks of on the job training

6 work placements offered to Rochdale residents by contractors in our asset management supply chain

12 Rochdale residents including 7 RBH tenants completed an Entry to Construction Course and gained their CSCS Card.



CASE STUDY: NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR LIAM.



Liam completed the Construction Skills Certification Scheme course and was successful in gaining a two week work experience placement with RBH contractor Groundwork Landscapes Ltd in Kirkholt. The placement would enable Liam to learn new skills and gain an all important reference for his future job search. Marc Richardson, from Groundwork Landscapes said “At Groundwork we are **committed to providing benefits to local communities** beyond the scope of our onsite works and we are proud of our record of working with charities and community groups to help wherever we can”.

Following the first week it was clear that Liam had a lot to offer and had demonstrated the qualities that Groundwork Landscapes look for in an employee. He was keen to learn, attentive

when given instructions, friendly, polite and above all a very hard worker. Marc said “At the end of the first week, we offered him the position in a paid capacity for the full twenty week contract and he has shown us that we didn’t make a mistake as he has continued in the same vein ever since”.

Liam has taken up the opportunity whole heartedly. “Since starting work for Groundwork I have learned lots of new skills, enjoyed seeing what I do make a difference to the place we are working and made good friends on site also. I am now earning money and this has made a big difference to my life, I am working towards my qualifications as a groundworker thanks to accepting the work experience placement I was offered at the meeting set up by RBH”.



SUPPORTING REAL WORK PLACEMENTS.

RBH recognizes the value that real life work experience can have for someone in exploring their career options and gaining confidence and knowledge about their chosen career path. Over the past year we have been able to offer a wide range of work experience placements to residents.



RBH WORK PLACEMENT SAFARI.

In addition to one week placements, this year RBH piloted a brand new approach to work experience in the form a **Workplace Safari for Year 10 Oulder Hill School pupils** keen to gain hands-on experience of the world of work. The initiative was developed in partnership with Oulder Hill School and local charity Positive Steps.

Before placement week, RBH colleagues visited school to interview pupils interested in taking part and pupils came on an orientation visit to the Strand Community Hub. **During placement week, pupils participated in a wide range of activities including a tour of our main RBH office buildings, a Q&A session with our existing apprentices and an information session on careers in construction delivered by one of our contractors Vistry Partnerships.** Participants also completed individual placements with six teams, getting an understanding of the breadth of RBH's tenant services and support for local communities.

Pupils particularly enjoyed learning more about the work of the Neighbourhood Housing officers who provide ongoing tenancy support. "The Neighbourhood Team get to do such an interesting job. No two days are the same for them. It's great how they go out and visit people when they first move in. They get to know what's really going on all the time."

Reflecting on the outcomes from the programme, a significant number of pupils reported increases in confidence, communication skills, independence or technical skills with many commenting that they believed the placements had helped them make choices about their future careers.

Whilst pupils openly admitted that every role within RBH was not to their liking, **the week had opened their eyes to the breadth of jobs available within the organisation**, given them an understanding of the qualifications and experience needed for these and helped them to understand the realities of working life.

19

work experience
placements offered

965

An equivalent of 965
hours of work experience

REDWOOD SCHOOL INTERNSHIPS.

The Lower Falinge Caretaking Team supported **2 interns from Redwood School on extended placements.** The interns, Isaac and Josh, joined the team every Friday morning and were coached by the full-time caretakers Richard Jackson and Alan Watson. They were able to both shadow caretaking duties and get actively involved where appropriate. The interns forged great friendships with the Lower Falinge Caretaking Team, even celebrating Isaacs 18th birthday with him. Upon completion of the placements **both interns moved into paid employment with local businesses.**



GROUNDWORK GREEN TEAM



RBH provide funding for 5 apprenticeships hosted by Groundwork in Oldham and Rochdale. The apprenticeships focus on horticulture and landscaping and in addition to the qualification the team get hands on experience by completing projects on RBH homes. This ranges from laying new patios at Independent Living Schemes to creating new planting areas on underused plots of land.



- 5 apprentices funded by RBH of which 4 are Rochdale residents and 1 RBH tenant
- ↓
- 3 were recruited from Groundwork programmes and prior to that had been NEET
- ↓
- 4 recruits completed their qualification and the programme (March 2019)
- ↓
- 3 moved into employment and 1 has moved in to a new apprenticeship completing a higher level qualification

DELIVERING IN THE COMMUNITY.

Our Community Partnership Team work to develop new projects in partnership with local residents and groups. A key priority for the team is supporting the delivery of the Work and Skills Strategy.



THE WORKWEAR WORKSHOP

- ☒ Get the Clothes,
- ☒ Get the Confidence,
- ☒ Get the Job

The **Workwear Workshop** launched in **2019** to provide RBH tenants and Rochdale residents with free job coaching and access to good quality workwear. Having appropriate clothes for interview can be a real barrier to many people looking to get a new job, so Workwear Workshop has a wide range of clothing options for every kind of job. In addition to an outfit selected especially for the client, the service also offers interview coaching and confidence building to help people feel their absolute best at the all important interview.

10 people accessed support

3 were RBH tenants

7 were Rochdale residents

4 moved into employment

CASE STUDY: JACK GOT THE CLOTHES AND GOT THE JOB!



When local lad Jack Shaw heard about his dream job he had only one problem – the dog had eaten his suit! Jack had recently completed a 13 week skills and experience course with Groundwork and had stayed on to take a youth worker course when he heard about a full-time position.

The problem for Jack was that he had nothing suitable for an interview after his only suit was destroyed by his pet dog. Groundwork put Jack in touch with Workwear Workshop. This free service provides help when it comes to facing that all-important interview by helping people to look and feel their best when going for a job.

The team put Jack at ease and sorted out a set of smart clothes for the interview,

including a replacement suit. The tips, clothes and confidence helped Jack swing the interview and he was offered the job. Jack said: “I know I owe a large amount to the support from the Workwear Workshop scheme. I felt a different person in my new clothes and that let me show my best in the interview”.

WORKWEAR WORKSHOP

RBH is committed to assisting people into work through job referrals, training and support. Call on **01706 27 4194** or email community.partnership@rbh.org.uk if you would like more details.



COMMUNITY TRAINING.

The Community Partnership Team deliver a range of accredited and non-accredited training designed to support community groups to be more effective and individuals move closer towards their job goals. These courses run regularly from The Strand Community Hub and from other community venues throughout the borough when required.

There is a strong focus on providing individuals, groups and partner organisations with the skills they need to deliver safe, quality services for our tenants and in our communities. **Accredited courses delivered in the year 2019/20 are as follows:**



x22
First Aid,
(including x4
Pediatric)



x18
Defibrillator
Training



x13
Food Safety
and Hygiene
Training



x 5
Manual
Handling
Training

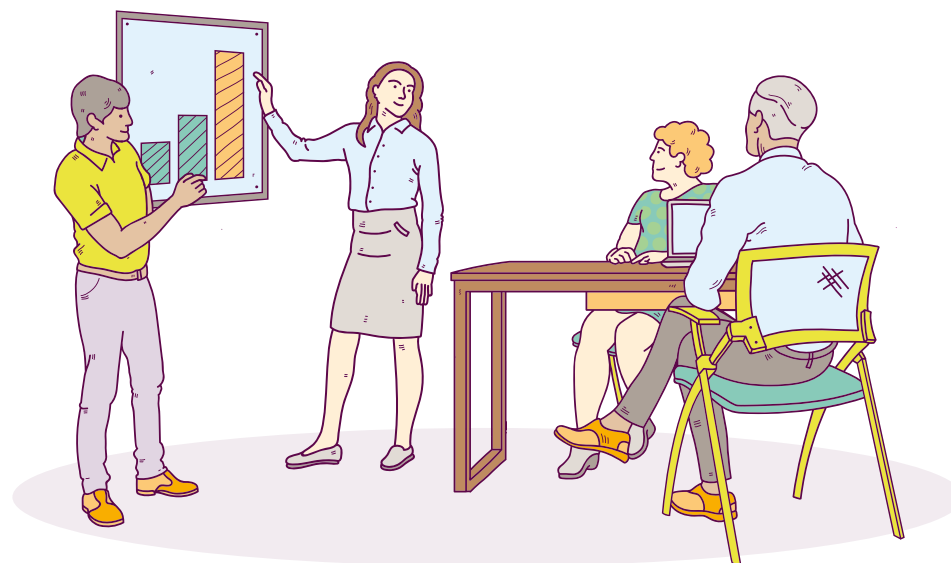
Non-accredited courses are delivered when there has been a need identified and courses can include Accessing External Funding, Book Keeping and Safeguarding. In the year 2019/20 **2x Safeguarding** courses were completed with community groups that had received funding to deliver activities.

397
individuals

accessed accredited
training – of which
39 were RBH
tenants (10%)

16
individuals

accessed non-
accredited training –
of which **2** were RBH
tenants (12.5%)



SUPPORTING OUR COLLEAGUES TO DEVELOP.

In addition to bringing new talent into the Society, we use our Apprentice Levy to support RBH colleagues to advance their career pathways through additional learning and qualifications. Over the past year seven colleagues have benefited from this funding including the first Level 7 qualification RBH has been able to support.

£46,000 of investment into RBH colleagues through this programme

4 colleagues have moved into higher paid work and careers as a result

7 colleagues have accessed RBH Apprentice Levy Funding to support them to complete higher level qualifications



CASE STUDY: HANNAH GETS A PROMOTION!



Hannah had been working as a **Customer Service Advisor in the RBH Contact Centre** for 5 years before applying to complete a qualification through our learning and development scheme. She was considering her career options and particularly wanted insight and skills to help her progress into a team leader role. “I felt I was ready for a change and wanted to develop myself further within RBH.”

Initially Hannah found balancing her day job with studying to be challenging, but with support from her manager she was able to set time in her working week and at home to study and gain extra experience.

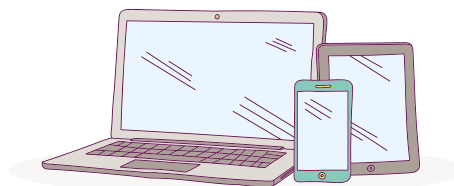
Hannah overcame challenges presented by changing tutors and was

able to adjust to distance learning which she had never done before.

She is now really proud and pleased with her progress as the qualification enabled her to get involved with projects and to take on extra responsibilities: “I am glad I persisted with it as it has increased my confidence and led me to opportunities which I may not have had otherwise”.

Having completed her qualification, Hannah successfully applied for a new role and is now a **Project Support Co-ordinator at RBH**. She is looking forward to a new challenge, working on different projects and using the knowledge and skills she learnt whilst completing her qualification.

WORK AND SKILLS BULLETIN.



We also launched our new look Work and Skills Bulletin which now has over **3,000 subscribers**. The bi-monthly email rounds up the latest job vacancies, training opportunities, events and services to help you make the next step in your career. You can sign up to our Work and Skills Bulletin to receive updates on our website at www.rbh.org.uk/work-with-us/work-and-skills/

