



ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS.

From your Representative Body
July 2019 to June 2020



CONTENTS

Members' Community Fund	3
COVID-19	4-5
Membership Update	6-7
Our Mutual Year	8-9
Board and Representatives working together	10
Together	11-13
Democracy and AMM	14
Representative Body	15
Contacts and Information	16

Hello!

The Annual Report to Members is our overview of the work that we, as your Representatives, have completed on your behalf over the past 12 months.

The coronavirus pandemic has made this an extremely difficult year for many in our communities. Our thoughts are with everyone affected by COVID-19 and especially those who have lost loved ones to the virus.

Yet in the most challenging of circumstances, we also see the great value in how our employees and tenants work together as part of our mutual society. The community response has been extraordinary. We want to say thank you to all RBH Members, tenants,

and employees for the part that they have played in supported those who needed additional help during the pandemic.

We will continue to work on behalf of our Members to give them a strong and direct voice on how we deliver RBH services together. Now more than ever, we can see the benefits of working together in a mutual manner.

We hope that you enjoy the report and find it informative. Our contact details are on the back page – do get in touch if you have any comments or feedback!

The Representative Body



MEMBERS' COMMUNITY FUNDING.

Each year RBH allocates money to a community fund to be invested in our communities and neighbourhoods. Members decide how this funding is allocated through either a panel consisting of both Tenant and Employee Members or by a vote of Members in the neighborhoods likely to benefit from the project.

In 2019/20, Members authorised **£75,057** of funding to **27 community groups** and organisations through the Members' Community Fund and Decide Together.

Here are two examples of recently funded community projects.

VETERANS FOOD CO

The Veterans Food Co support veterans in Rochdale by giving them the opportunity to train as chefs. This 10 week training course not only reduces social isolation but by learning a new skill, participants and their fellow veterans say it gives them a sense of purpose again. The social enterprise has worked with veterans in Kirkholt and in RBH hostels, not only increasing the wellbeing of those who attend but also providing employable skills and the chance of further qualifications with Hopwood Hall College.

There are a number of veterans who have completed the course that now form 'The Veteran Chefs Brigade' – a group of volunteer chefs that have made over 1100 meals for those who were isolated during lockdown. The Veteran Chefs Brigade were themselves delivering a cooking course with volunteers at The Lighthouse Project in Middleton before lockdown and hope to continue these sessions when safe to do so.

CRAY JUNIOR ACTIVITY CLUB

The community funding panel supported Cray Junior Activity Club in Milnrow with £2,284 in funding, helping the group to put on additional activities for young people not just from the Cray neighbourhood but across Milnrow, Newhey, Firgrove, and Smallbridge. Community groups and activities like those providing by the club help us to achieve our ambition to make Rochdale Borough a great place to grow up.



CONTINUING TO SHARE THE VOICE OF MEMBERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Like RBH employees and like many of our tenant members in their day-to-day lives, as a Representative Body we have had to adapt to new ways of working. We were determined to make sure that the voices of our tenants and employees continued to be heard regardless of the circumstances.



RBH teams provided afternoon teas to our independent living scheme residents



Our pantry projects provided support to hundreds of residents

We have been able to continue to hold meetings of the Representative Body remotely using video conferencing software. Our customer involvement groups have also continued to meet remotely. This has been a challenge for some Representatives but it has enabled us to continue with our roles even at the height of the pandemic restrictions.

At the start of lockdown, we requested a full update from the Chief Executive about the measures being taken by RBH to support tenants, employees, and communities – and how we were ensuring that the health, safety, and wellbeing of RBH tenants and employees were being protected. More information on RBH's response to coronavirus is on the page opposite.

As a result of the pandemic, we did have to change our plans in a number of areas:

- we had planned to participate in the Co-operatives UK 150th anniversary celebrations, which were due to take place here in Rochdale in June 2020. Instead we developed an online celebration which incorporated our participation in Co-operatives Fortnight, Employee Ownership Day, and our own RBH birthday celebrations
- our plans for the 2020 Annual Members' Meeting were revised to enable Members to participate remotely and in line with social distancing guidance
- along with the Board, we took the decision to postpone the start of consultation on our new Corporate Strategy. More information on this is available on page 11.

WORKING TOGETHER THROUGH THE PANDEMIC



RBH's overriding priority throughout the coronavirus pandemic was, and continues to be, the health, safety, and wellbeing of our tenants and employees.

As Representatives, we are immensely proud of how RBH employees and tenants came together to help those in our communities who needed help the most. The steps taken by RBH included:

- maintaining an emergency repairs service and RBH's programme of essential safety checks through the pandemic period, whilst adopting new guidelines to keep tenants and employees safe
- maintaining good hygiene in our shared spaces – the Neighbourhood Environment Team delivered additional cleaning in communal areas
- working together across the Borough with residents, Rochdale Council, and community organisations to provide support to those who needed it
- the IT team built over 200 laptops in just two days to enable RBH employees to continue to provide services to our communities while working from home
- keeping tenants up-to-date with regular updates from the Chief Executive on which services were open and any changes we had made
- additional support for local suppliers was provided by changing payment terms
- to protect the wellbeing of employees, a range of support and information was available to all teams, especially those who continued to work in our communities at the height of the pandemic
- lettings continued to be provided for those in urgent need of rehousing, including those at risk of homelessness and those seeking shelter from domestic violence
- a recognition that many tenants were struggling financially as a result of the pandemic restrictions. The Income Accounts Team produced a Money Advice FAQ for the RBH website and additional resources were provided to the Money Advice Team to enable them to cope with the additional demand on their services. Over 3,300 tenants received financial advice or support from RBH in the month of May
- to make sure that no-one who needed extra help was missed, tens of thousands of proactive welfare calls were made to tenants, with over 17,500 calls in the month of May alone

OUR MEMBERSHIP STRATEGY

As Representatives, under the rules of RBH we have a responsibility to establish, maintain, and monitor progress of the Membership Strategy. We have continually checked our progress against the Membership Strategy, which expired in June 2020. At that time



Tenant Membership
5755 out of 14,366

40.1%

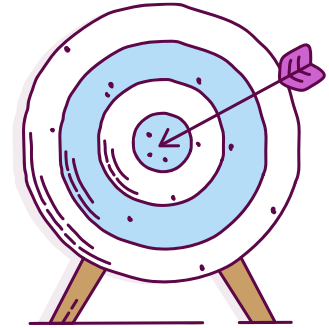


Employee Membership
437 out of 579

75.5%

as at 31/03/2020

WE HAVE
HIT OUR
TARGET!



This means that we have now hit our target for **40% of tenants opting to become members**. Thank you to our Neighbourhood Housing Team who have led our member recruitment efforts over the year. We have not achieved our employee target of 90% membership and we have set out a path in our new Membership Strategy to help us to encourage our remaining employees to become Members.

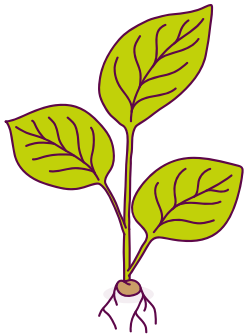
MONITORING OUR MEMBERSHIP

We continue to monitor our membership to ensure that it reflects the diversity of our tenants and employees, and continue to create an inclusive RBH.

Currently 45.1% of BME tenants are members compared to 38.6% of tenants who identify as white British. The average age of members is 51 years. Half of our tenant candidates in the 2019 Representative Body elections were from BME backgrounds, and four out of 11 were under 45 years of age.

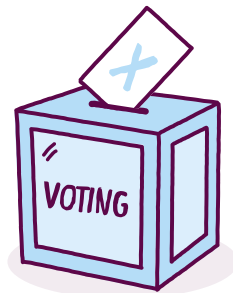
Over the last three years we have worked to understand the difference that mutuality brings to being a social housing provider - what gives us that sense of belonging that goes above and beyond that of a regular place-based housing provider?

This work started with the Mutuality Matters Conference we hosted in July 2018 and continued with the Employee Ownership Enquiry and some research work for the Confederation of Cooperative Housing. Our learning from this has helped us to form and deliver the next Membership Strategy, which we approved in July 2020. The full document is available on our website at www.rbh.org.uk/membership and we wanted to share with you some of the key points which will provide a focus for us over the next three years. These are:



Growing and informing our membership base

We want to encourage more tenants and employees to join our mutual RBH, and also ensure that Members are informed and fully understand the opportunities that our mutuality provides.



Strengthening our Representative Body

We will build a pathway of support to seek out and encourage Members who are passionate and energised to run for election to the Representative Body.



Championing and understanding our mutuality

We're proud of our mutual and we will continue to share our story, including making sure that Members are better informed about the work we do as Representatives.



Reviewing our values

RBH is now seven years old and we want to look at our values and make sure that they are still relevant and meaningful.

OUR MUTUAL YEAR



We oversaw a comprehensive discussion with our tenants as part of our **"Together with Tenants"** consultation.



Representative Body Chair Lynne Brosnan and RBH Together With Tenants Co-ordinator Andrew Johnson continued with their roles on the national **"See The Person"** campaign, and Lynne was appointed to the National Housing Federation's Together with Tenants steering group on behalf of "See The Person".



Tenant and employee members worked together on a comprehensive review of our complaints process. We have overseen the implementation of the recommendations of this review to deliver a fair, effective, and transparent process that also enables us to learn from the feedback we receive.



Following a thorough recruitment process, the Representative Body appointed **Mike Nuttall to join the RBH Board** as our new Non-executive Director.



Alzheimer's Research UK

Make breakthroughs possible



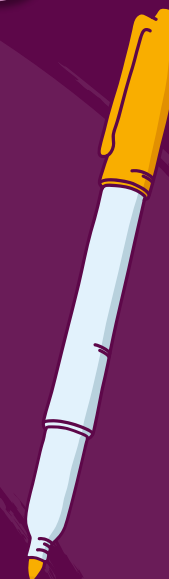
RBH Members have continued to raise money for our members' charity, **Alzheimer's Research UK**, and we've approved a new process for supporting local charities from **September 2020**.



We oversaw a comprehensive consultation and engagement process on the future of **RBH's arrangements on water charges with United Utilities**, including the spending priorities for any surplus.



We appointed **Sharon Worsley** as our **new Vice-Chair**. Congratulations Sharon!



BOARD AND REPRESENTATIVES WORKING TOGETHER

One of our most important tasks as Representatives is to appoint the six Non-executive Directors to the RBH Board – and then to work closely with those Directors to make sure that RBH delivers great services and makes Rochdale Borough a great place to grow up, grow a career, and grow older.

Every three years, we review how we work as a Representative Body, how our Board works, and how well we work together. The latest of these reviews was conducted this year, and we asked the experts at the Centre for Modern Governance to support the Board members and Representatives during the review period. In June, we accepted the recommendations of this review, and we've made a number of changes to help us to work effectively:

- we are arranging a joint development session between the Board and Representative Body to further embed our mutuality in our decision-making processes
- we are strengthening our induction process for new members of the Representative Body and the Board
- we are taking new steps to ensure that our governance structures reflect the diversity of our communities
- we are changing the agendas of our meetings so that we continue to use our time effectively



REPRESENTATIVE BODY CHAMPIONS

This year we have appointed Representative Body champions for our Corporate Strategy themes and a number of other key areas. These champions work closely with Board Member champions and RBH teams to help us to deliver our priorities. Our “improving together” champion Donna Chadwick worked closely with the RBH Transformation Team to provide feedback from elected Representatives throughout the delivery of the new website and portal.

Theme	Representative Body Champion
Growing Together	Andy Littlewood & Sue O'Donovan
Thriving Together	Sue O'Donovan & Phill Worthington
Improving Together	Donna Chadwick and Shamroz Gull
Value for Money	Sharon Worsley & Frank Altham
Together with Tenants	Lynne Brosnan
Building Rochdale's Economy	Phill Worthington and Donna Chadwick
Diversity	Stephen Edwards and Haroon Mirza

INTRODUCTION TO TOGETHER

As Representatives, we are responsible for approving and monitoring the performance of the Board and the Society against delivery of our Corporate Strategy. Our Corporate Strategy.

Together, was due to run for three years from 2018 until 2021. However, due to the impact of coronavirus, we decided to postpone consultation on the next corporate strategy, and to extend the scope of the current strategy, while we assess the impact of the pandemic on RBH. We also want to make sure that we are able to run a comprehensive consultation process with Members to help us to decide on our new corporate strategy priorities.

Meanwhile, we continue to perform our crucial role of monitoring the delivery of Together to ensure that our mutual delivers what has been promised! Over the next two pages, we'll take a look at some of RBH's achievements over the past year and how we've been making sure that these achievements continue to be delivered. Here's a recap of our priorities:

GROWING TOGETHER

Delivering the right mix and quality of homes to make RBH communities strong and successful.



THRIVING TOGETHER

We will make the Borough a great place to live and age. We will support people through life changes by offering new and tailored services.



IMPROVING TOGETHER

We will change and improve the way we work with a clear focus on value for money to deliver services that our customers value whilst ensuring that RBH is a strong financially successful Society resilient to future challenges.



BUILDING ROCHDALE'S ECONOMY

As one of the Borough's anchor institutions we have a key role in helping to directly build the local economy through delivering our strategy.

Rochdale - birthplace of co-operation



THRIVING TOGETHER

In last year's report, we reported back on how RBH was working with tenants in our Independent Living Schemes about how we provide services in the future. Following this review, these changes have now been implemented. We are particularly pleased that (outside of pandemics) scheme managers are now spending more time on their schemes.

We were pleased to learn of RBH's involvement in the designation of Kirkholt as an "age friendly neighbourhood" and we continue to use our influence to ensure that RBH neighbourhoods are great places to grow old.

The pandemic has reemphasised the importance of health and wellbeing in our communities.

RBH teams have undertaken a range of activities to promote wellbeing during the lockdown period, including distributing art packs and VE Day celebration packs to residents in our independent living schemes and in our communities.



IMPROVING TOGETHER

April 2020 saw the launch of RBH's brand new website and new customer portal, **MyRBH**.



This launch follows extensive consultation with tenants and with their neighbourhoods in mind. It incorporates feedback from tenants, including an additional focus on local news and neighbourhoods, as well as clear signposting for RBH services.

The **MyRBH** portal makes it much easier to access RBH services online, as well as freeing up resources for those who might need a little extra support. As Representatives, we provided our own feedback on the site, including the provision of support for those who need help to get online, and making sure that those who are not able to get onto the internet are not left behind and can still access RBH services.

GROWING TOGETHER

We were delighted to learn that **the Strand Hub was awarded the top prize in the 2019 Rochdale Borough Design Awards**, and to see the huge benefit that the Hub has created for the community in Kirkholt and beyond.



The RBH corporate strategy sets out our intention to deliver a range of affordable housing options across the Borough, and the new shared ownership schemes in Hollin and Smallbridge have been extremely well received by local residents.

Young police officer Connor said:

“When I saw Hopwood Green advertised it was the perfect opportunity for me.”

The regeneration proposals in Rochdale town centre continue to progress, with work underway to deliver the next phase of **55 brand new homes** for genuinely affordable rent, together with brand new green space at the heart of Lower Falinge.

RBH plans to build further homes for affordable rent in Heywood and Kirkholt have been well received by residents, and we are looking forward to starting on site as soon as we can.

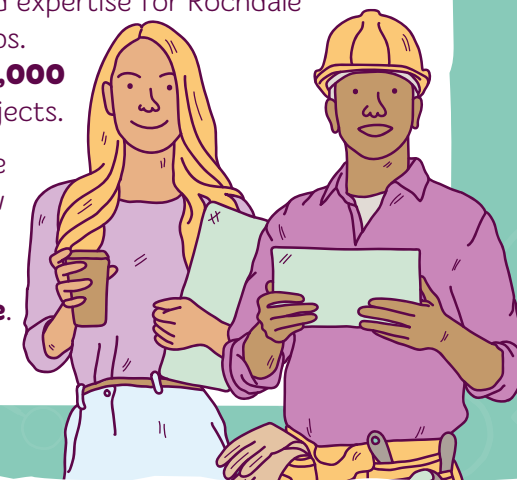
BUILDING ROCHDALE'S ECONOMY

This year saw the launch of RBH's **brand new Work and Skills Bulletin**, and over 3,000 tenants and residents are signed up to receive updates on the latest job and training opportunities.

The Asset Management team work hard to improve the condition of RBH Homes whilst also supporting the local economy. Last year over **60%** of the team's contracted spend went to Rochdale based companies and **94%** stayed within the Greater Manchester economy.

RBH teams have worked with our supply chain to obtain additional funding, resource and expertise for Rochdale voluntary and community groups. Last year this included over **£4,000** in donations to community projects.

RBH continue to work alongside Rochdale Council to deliver new opportunities for tenants in the town centre area through our **New Pioneers' Programme**.



DEMOCRACY AND AMM

We tried something a little different for our Annual Members' Meeting in September - and holding it in conjunction with a Let's Get Together event went down a real treat!

We held our event at the Lighthouse Project in Middleton Shopping Centre, and it was great to see so many tenants share the afternoon with us. Here's a taste of what went on!



Right foot forward as High Crompton Morris Troupe entertained visitors



Visitors discussed the RBH Together with Tenants and Members project



People were keen to find out about RBH community achievements



Visitors were able to chat about anything on their mind



Visitors were able to scrutinise information about RBH finance and spending plans



Visitors were able to pick up or order bargain discount paint through the RBH Paint Shop



The Representative Body Annual Report to Tenants was produced as a guided walkthrough

DEMOCRACY IN ACTION

Our membership plan aims to have a contested election each year for new Representatives, and we want to increase voter turnout each year. The 2019 Representative Body election achieved:



901 out of **5,737** tenant members voted

8

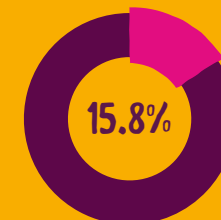
tenant representative candidates

5

positions



As the number of employee candidates did not exceed the number of vacancies, in 2019 the employee candidates were elected unopposed



Total turnout (based on tenant votes only)

The results of the ballot were announced at the 2019 Annual Members' Meeting.

YOUR REPRESENTATIVE BODY. JULY 2020



Lynne Brosnan
Chair
Turf Hill Estate
Management Board



Sharon Worsley
Vice Chair
Tenant Representative

TENANT REPRESENTATIVES



Frank Altham



Andrew Brown



Andrew Butterworth



Donna Chadwick



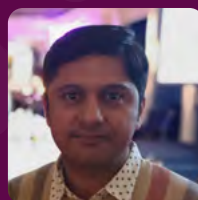
Shamroz Gull



Gemma Keogh



Andy Littlewood



Haroon Mirza



Sue O'Donovan



Jane Taylor



Mary Tomlinson



ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES

Please note, vacant positions
are currently not displayed

EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVES



Stephen Edwards



Phillip Worthington

COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES



**Councillor
Sultan Ali**



**Councillor
Wendy Cocks**



**Councillor
Linda Robinson**



**Councillor
Carol Wardle**

FIND OUT MORE



YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

Find out more about us: Log on to www.rbh.org.uk/membership.

Get in touch with us:



Email representatives@rbh.org.uk.
If you want to contact a particular Representative please include their name in your email.



Contact the Governance Team on Freephone **0800 027 7769** and they can put you in touch with us.



We would love to see you at our meetings, but only when it is safe for you to do so. We will keep members informed of meeting arrangements as the coronavirus advice changes.



HELPFUL LINKS

Together

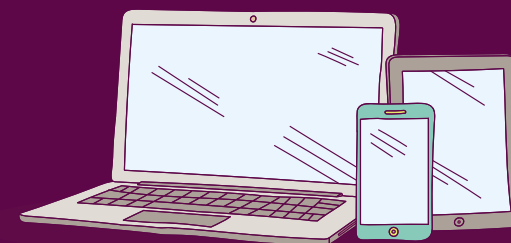
Visit our website to find out more:
www.rbh.org.uk/together

Community Funding

Find out more at:
www.rbh.org.uk/communityfunding

Membership

To find out more about RBH membership, or to sign up to become a member, visit www.rbh.org.uk/membership or call us on **0800 027 7769**



If you need this report in a different format or language, please contact us to ask how we can help.

✉ communications@rbh.org.uk

☎ **(01706) 273774**



HOW WE'RE DOING

We want to share information about our performance in a number of important areas over the past year, along with some of the ways we've improved our services.

This includes areas that were identified as part of our corporate strategy but also other service areas that affect our customers and their homes. This document should be read together with the Representative Body's Annual Report To Members.

Please note, performance figures are measured over the financial year from **April 2019 to March 2020**.

LISTENING TOGETHER

We want to say **thank you** to everyone who has given us feedback over the past year. Your feedback has helped us to improve our services, including:

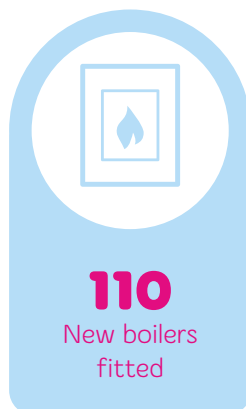
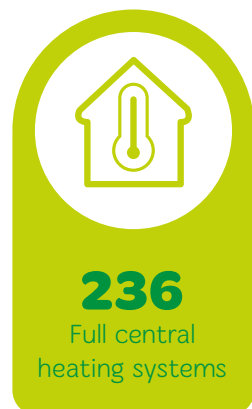


- shaping the future of the independent living service
- developing our Together With Tenants Charter, launching later this year
- deciding how to spend the surplus on our arrangement with United Utilities to collect water charges
- creating a brand new complaints process to make sure that we continue to learn from your feedback



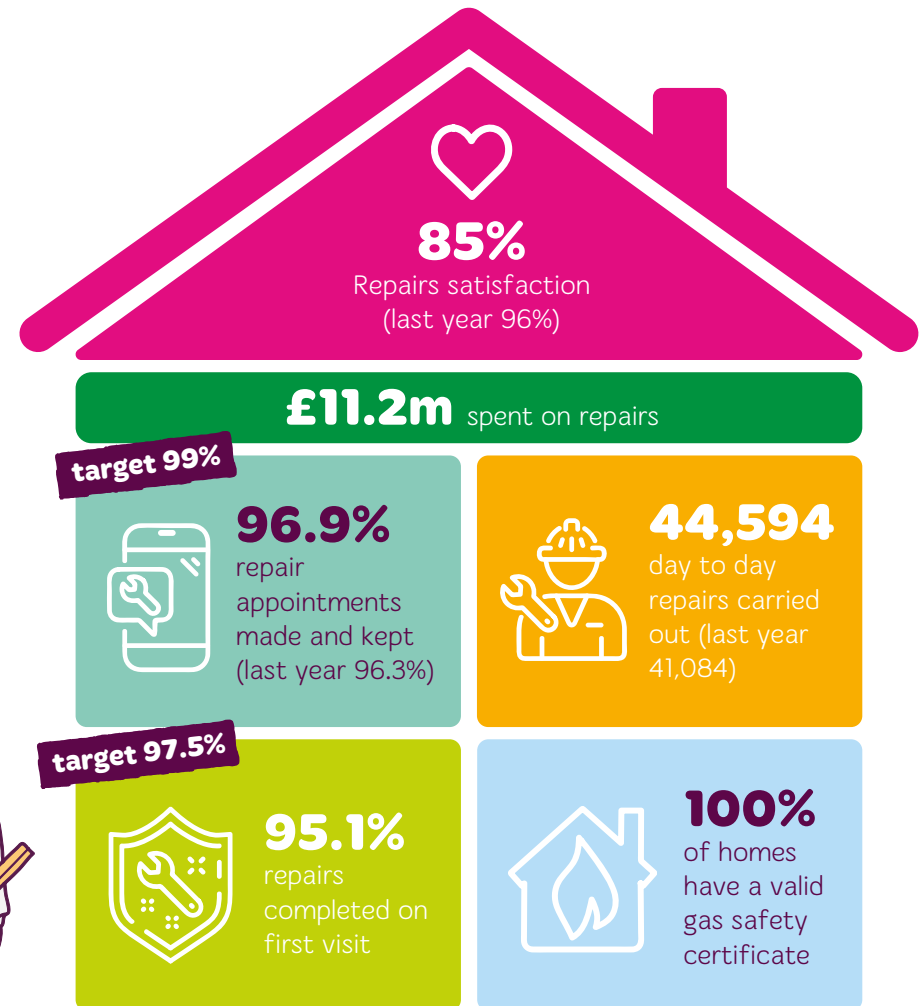
INVESTING IN OUR HOMES

In 2019-20, we spent **£7.97m on improving homes**. This included replacing kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, and installing new windows and doors. We also carried out a range of environmental improvements, which included boundary schemes and work to improve neighbourhoods for our customers and our communities.



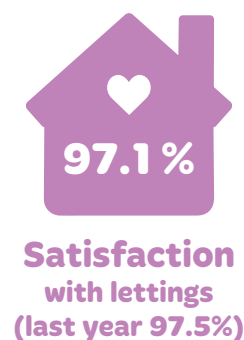
REPAIRS

We are responsible for carrying out a range of repairs in your homes to ensure they are kept in a good condition. Following the launch of our **new website and portal** in April 2020, we aim to make the process of reporting a repair and arranging an appointment even more straightforward in future!



LETTINGS

Our HomeChoice team help to make the process of finding a new home with RBH as straightforward as possible. We also provide a range of additional support to help residents to maintain their tenancies, and we deliver Rochdale's Homelessness Service on behalf of Rochdale Council.



RENTS

Our rent and payments team help customers who may be struggling financially and are in need of support or advice - helping them to access benefits or other incomes sources that they are entitled to, and **providing advice** on how to manage their money.

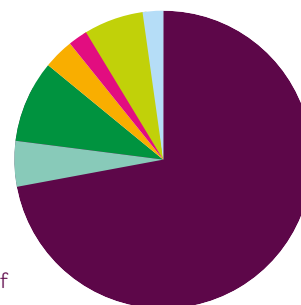


FINANCES

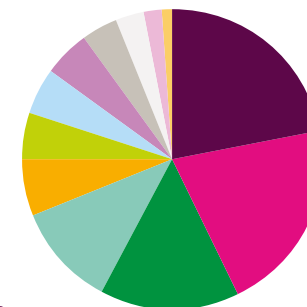
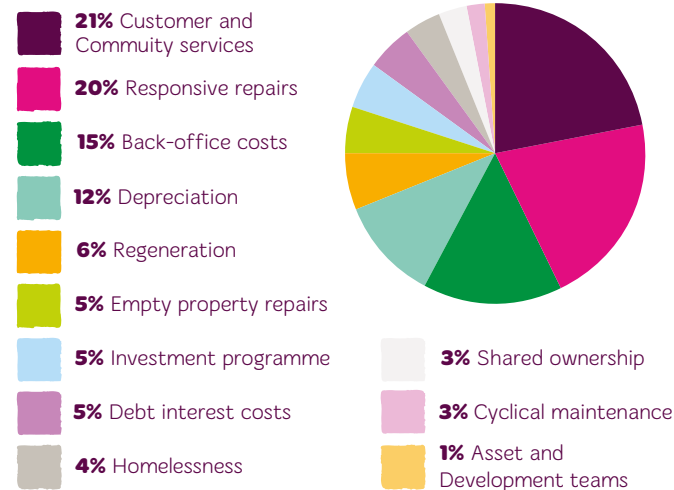
Our total income last year was **£62.4M**, and we spent **£49.1M**. The pie charts show where we got our income from, and how we spent it. This left us with a difference (surplus) of **£13.3M**.

As a mutual owned by our members, we don't make a profit, and we reinvest this money into RBH and our communities. Last year, we invested an additional £5.8m in upgrades to our existing homes, we spent £5.3m on building new homes, and we invested £900k in our IT systems to enable us to provide a better service for our customers. This left £1.3m which we have carried over into our investment programme for 2020/21.

RBH Group Income £62.4M (2018 £59.6M)



RBH Group expenditure £49.1m (2018 £44.6M)



COMMUNITY IMPACT AND SOCIAL VALUE

As a mutual housing society, we're at the **heart of our communities** - and we know that our impact and influence goes far beyond the core services we provide.



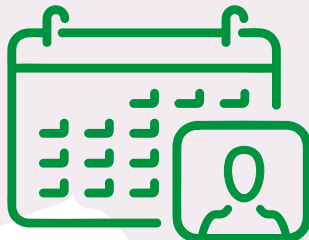
Our pantries redistributed
20 tonnes of food
and saved our pantry members
over **£48,000**

Over £90,000
of grants to 36
community groups



of goods and services
bought from **Rochdale**
based companies

11,056 weeks of work
delivered by apprentices - 912 directly
employed by RBH and 44 more
delivered by partner organisations
working on RBH contracts



Paint shop diverted of
8,383 litres of paint
from landfill - Paint Shop and
Pass It On saved our customers
over **£125,000**

OVERALL SATISFACTION

The level of satisfaction among customers gives us a good indication of the effectiveness of the services we provide and also where we need to make improvements. We continue to listen carefully to what customers tell us.

