

# Annual Engagement Report

## Shaping Better Services Together

April 2024 – March 2025



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## Welcome from Amanda Newton, Chief Executive

Hello,

**I'm proud to share this year's Customer Engagement Report. This is all about you – our customers – and how your voice has helped us change things for the better.**

Whether you spoke to us at a community event, completed a survey, gave feedback online, or joined one of our customer panels – thank you. You've helped shape important policies, improve our services, and strengthen your neighbourhoods.

This report shares the highlights from the year – the actions we took in response to your feedback and the changes we've made. It's also part of our commitment to meeting the expectations set by the Regulator of Social Housing, especially the Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard – which means being open with you, listening, and showing you how your voice leads to action.

There's still work to do, but we've taken some important steps forward – together.

With thanks,

**Amanda Newton**  
Chief Executive, RBH



# Getting Involved

At RBH, there are lots of ways for you to get involved and help shape the services and communities that matter to you. Whether it's taking part in a one-off event or becoming a regular panel member, there's something to suit everyone.

## Ways to Get Involved

### You can

- Become a member of the Representative Body, made up of customers and colleagues.
- Join a group or forum, such as the Building Safety Panel or Complaints Panel.
- Attend one-off workshops or sessions, including Customer Voice Forums or policy reviews.
- Take part in surveys or give feedback digitally, whether online, by phone, or through social media.
- Share your views at local events, neighbourhood walkabouts, and community drop-ins held across the borough.



## Why It Matters

Getting involved gives you, our customers a chance to share what's working and what needs to change. As a mutual society, your involvement is at the centre of what we do. It also helps ensure that we meet the new regulatory standard for **transparency, influence and accountability** – making sure customers are at the centre of decisions.

## What's in it for you?

- A chance to make a difference and improve your community
- Opportunities to meet other customers and share experiences
- Learn new skills and build confidence, and access to training and support
- A greater understanding of how housing services work

Many customers say getting involved has helped them feel more connected and confident – and even led to new work or volunteering opportunities.

## How your voice helps us to improve

Hearing directly from customers means we can:

- Deliver services that reflect what matters most to people
- Spot problems early and find better ways of working
- Build trust and improve accountability
- Work in partnership with communities, not just for them

Customer involvement helps us stay grounded in real experiences and continually improve how things are done. It also means decisions are more informed, fair and effective.



# Meet your Customer Engagement Team



From left to right: Engagement Partners: Jade Petrillo, Abdul Halim, Steve Edwards and Davina Unsworth and Customer Engagement Lead, Jade Toft.

We're here to make sure your voice is heard at every level of RBH. You'll see us at community events, drop-ins, forums, and online. We help run our panels, support scrutiny, and connect your views to the people who make decisions.

## 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** service areas were scrutinised by our Representative Body members



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




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


Who Took Part

We worked hard to ensure engagement reached a wide range of customers:

**Women**  
59%



**Men**  
41%



59% were women, 41% men – closely matching the overall customer base.

**Age**  
55 to 74

Customers from across all age groups got involved, with the highest engagement from those aged 55 to 74.

**12% disability**

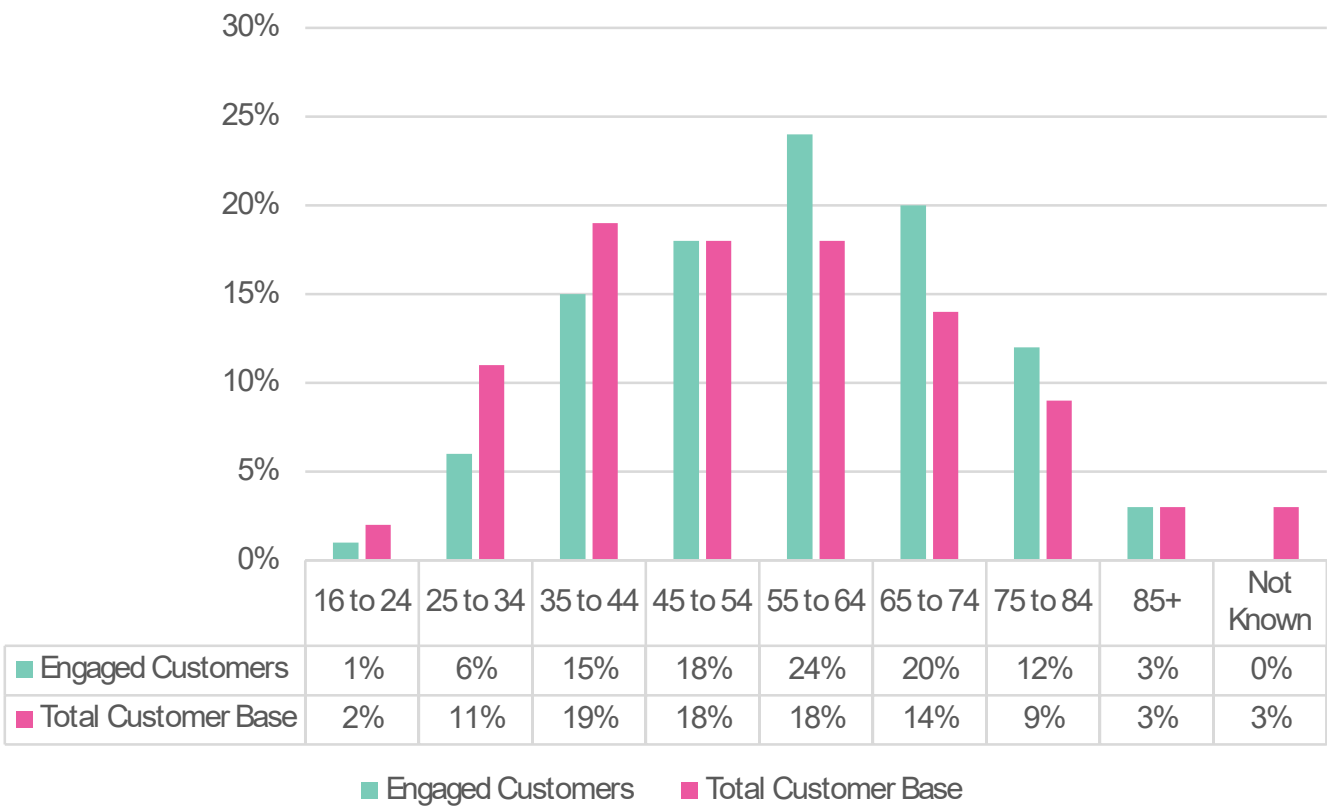
12% of participants had a known or declared disability, slightly above the wider customer average of 10%.

**White British, Black, Asian, Mixed, and Eastern European communities**

People from a range of ethnic backgrounds took part, including White British, Black, Asian, Mixed, and Eastern European communities – broadly reflecting the diversity of RBH customers.

This mix of voices helped to ensure the feedback received was varied, reflective, and inclusive.

Age of Engaged Customers



Overall, customers who have engaged with us broadly reflected our overall customer base, with the exception of age. We know we have more work to do to engage with our younger customers and have plans in place to do this by working in partnership with stakeholders and by using more a more targeted approach, making best use of our digital engagement methods.

We are constantly working to improve the data we hold on our customers, via the customer census, tenancy audits and regular communication with customers. The better our data is, the better we will be able to understand where we have gaps in representation. We will use this data to target our efforts to ensure that all customers can have their voices heard.

# Key Customer Engagement Activities and Outcomes

## Changing Policies and Services

Throughout the year, we asked for your views on important policies that affect your homes and services. Here's what you told us and what we did in response.

### Adaptations Policy Review

**You said** the wording was unclear and some terms, like 'stock', were confusing. You wanted better definitions of 'major' and 'minor' adaptations.

**We responded by** rewriting the policy in clearer language, adding a helpful appendix, and linking it to our Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy.

### Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Policy Review

**You asked** for better definitions and examples, more information about available support, and clearer communication.

**We responded by** rewriting the policy, creating a customer guide, and improving staff training.

### Rent and Service Charges Policy Review

**You said** the policy was clear and easy to understand.

**We made** no further changes, based on this positive feedback.

### Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy

**You said** the original version was too long and complicated.

**We shortened it,** made the language clearer, and created a one-page summary.

# Developing the Corporate Strategy

**This year, we developed a new three-year corporate strategy. After talking to our customers, colleagues, and Representative Body, the Board decided to retain the same five themes. These are:**



**Customers**



**Communities**



**People**



**Homes**



**Governance**

To better understand your priorities in each of these themes, we held a number of sessions, both in person and online. Here's an overview of what we heard and how we're responding.

You told us	We're doing
You want more visible, local colleagues and easier access to support.	We're establishing more local hubs across neighbourhoods so customers can speak with colleagues face-to-face, closer to home. This makes it easier to get help when and where you need it.
You need a simple, easy-to-use app and better ways to report anti-social behaviour.	We're developing a new customer app and improving the ASB reporting process to make it quicker and easier to report issues and get updates.
Communication doesn't always work for everyone, especially for customers who are digitally excluded or don't speak English as a first language.	We're reviewing and improving how we communicate with all customers. This includes clearer, more inclusive newsletters, translated materials where needed, and better use of printed information for those without internet access.
Repairs need to be quicker and better communicated.	We're improving how colleagues keep you updated about your repairs, introducing a call-back service for out-of-hours repairs, and checking work quality more regularly to make sure issues are fixed the first time.
You want a 'right first time' approach to repairs and less reliance on external contractors.	We're focusing on completing repairs correctly the first time, increasing quality checks, and using fewer sub-contractors so colleagues have more ownership of the service.
Communal areas aren't always clean or well maintained.	We're improving the communal cleaning service with clearer schedules and more regular checks to make shared spaces cleaner and safer.
You want RBH to know and respect your preferred ways of contact.	We're carrying out a customer census and regular tenancy audits so we have up-to-date information about how you want us to contact you. This helps us communicate in ways that work best for you.

You told us	We're doing
You want to speak to the right person when you contact us.	We're streamlining our contact centre processes, ensuring better continuity with local teams so your queries are handled by colleagues who know your area and can help first time.
You want more community events, activities and local spaces to meet.	We're working closely with communities and local partners to support more events, activities and access to community spaces that build local pride and connection.
You want to know how your rent is spent.	We're improving how we share information about where your rent goes – making it easier to understand how money is used to fund services and improvements.
You want your voice to be heard in decision-making.	We're embedding the customer voice in our governance structure so your views help shape our decisions and services.





# Listening in Your Neighbourhoods

**We know, from what you told us, that you wanted more direct engagement with RBH teams. As a result, we did the following:**

## Community Drop-In Sessions

We ran 54 drop-ins in Rochdale, Heywood, Middleton, and Pennines.

### You told us:

- You wanted more opportunities to speak face-to-face with different RBH teams, and you wanted issue-specific drop-ins
- It was hard for people who work to attend

### What we did:

- Colleagues from repairs, income, neighbourhoods came along to our drop-in events, and we held specialised drop-in events about Money Matters and our regeneration proposals
- We added evening drop-in sessions in Middleton and Rochdale
- We invited partners like the Council's work and skills advisors



*"The session was wonderful and fair as working 9-5 and preferring a chat in person, I don't usually get the opportunity"*

**Leaseholder, Middleton**

## Neighbourhood Walkabouts

### You told us:

- You wanted to see your Neighbourhood Housing Officer (NHO) in your area more

### We did:

- We now hold regular, public walkabouts
- Dates are shared online and in newsletters
- Walkabouts include RBH teams, police (GMP), and partners

## Summer Roadshows

We visited areas with low engagement to hear from people directly.

### You told us:

- About issues like noisy bikes and untidy communal areas

### We did:

- Arranged clean-up days, leaflet drops, and follow-up meetings with GMP and RBC
- Our Neighbourhood Environment Team acted on grounds maintenance issues
- Skip days held using social value – helping with bulky waste and fly-tipping



*"I really like this type of thing, it makes us feel human. Speaking to someone like this, feeling heard – that is good customer service"*

**Customer, Rhodes**

## Money Matters Roadshows

The direct increase to the income of RBH customers as a result of Money Matters team interventions such as increases to benefits and accessing grant funding totalled £1.48m in 24/25, an increase of £243k from 23/24.

Following government changes to support for pensioners, we ran a successful Benefits for Older People campaign whereby 2257 pension age customers were proactively contacted to offer the service, in addition to 15 Drop-In sessions being run across our ILS schemes. This resulted in 286 pension age customers working with the service achieving financial outcomes totalling £882k.

Specific support has been put in place for customers at College Bank, working with the residents' group to arrange monthly affordable warmth drop ins. This has resulted in 70 customers across the College Bank area receiving support from the service totalling £109k of which £11k is direct funding for energy.

## Local Consultations

We carried out a number of local consultation events across the year, including:

### Lower Falinge Pop-Up Event

This event focused on regeneration plans for Lower Falinge. Residents shared their views on their future aspirations for their area, including the need for new family homes and on how to keep the area safe. We are incorporating these views into our regeneration plans for the area.

### Stoneyvale Consultation

We held three consultation sessions with customers on plans to refurbish Stoneyvale. Feedback led to updates in the car park layout, traffic calming measures, and improved access and safety features.

### Freehold Perception Survey

A survey was conducted to capture customers' perceptions of safety in Freehold. Results showed that 55% felt safe during the day, 32% at night, and 49% were happy overall with living at Freehold. These insights are part of the wider Freehold master plan.

### Freehold Stairwell Upgrade

Following an online survey, an in-person session was held where 95% of customers felt that improvements to stairwell security would make them feel safer. Suggestions included improved lighting, monitored CCTV, better refuge facilities, and additional car parking. An investment programme has been developed with a timeline from 2025 to 2028.

These local consultations have been crucial in understanding and addressing the specific needs and concerns of our communities, ensuring that our neighbourhoods are safe, welcoming, and well-maintained.

# Customer Voice Forums

Customer Voice Forums (CVFs) were introduced to give you the opportunity to have your say on the things that matter most to you. These forums are shaped by your feedback and take place every three months in Rochdale, Heywood, Middleton, and Pennines, with an evening session online for those who can't attend in person.

This year, we discussed a variety of important topics and made significant changes based on your input. Here's an overview of what was discussed each quarter and what we did as a result:

## Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs) - May 24

**In May, we shared the results of our Tenant Satisfaction Measures, after the first full year. We looked at what had gone well and where there were areas for improvement. We also discussed how customers wanted to hear about how we're performing in the future.**

### You told us:

- You wanted clearer performance updates, with key data shared in the newsletter and on our website
- You wanted to see all performance information, not just the good stuff
- You wanted more information and assurance about Viewpoint, who undertake survey calls on behalf of RBH

### We did:

- The feedback helped us to make sure that we displayed our tenant satisfaction measure results in a clear and understandable way.
- Displayed data in a range of formats to make it easy to understand
- Shared the information regularly in our customer newsletter, in line with the preferences of our customers
- Published further information about Viewpoint in our summer 2024 newsletter and on our website



## Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) - September 24

**September's session focussed on anti-social behaviour and how we could work together to tackle it. We looked at the support on offer from RBH and partners and how we could make improvements.**

### You told us:

- You wanted more anti-social behaviour information on our website
- Our contact centre staff need to be kept up to date with the latest training and knowledge
- You would like to see more Neighbourhood Housing Officers (NHOs) in your area

### We did:

- Improved the ASB webpage
- Worked with our contact centre team to make sure they have all the information they need to signpost at the first point of contact
- Worked on improving face-to-face interactions by extending drop-in session hours, offering evening sessions, and conducting more neighbourhood walkabouts





## Communications and Community Investment (CI) Strategy - December 24

**At December's events, we talked about two topics: supporting communities, and how we communicated with you. We looked at how and where we put time, money, and resources into projects and services that helped improve the lives of people in a community. We also discussed the RBH newsletter, social media, and how we could make our communications better.**

### You told us:

- You like the newsletter but would like to see more local stories and community news
- Survey links received don't always work
- You would like our annual members meeting to be more of a community event
- You want more opportunities to meet RBH face-to-face
- Your priorities for our community investment team include mental wellbeing support, community activities, advice on money matters, and low-cost food offers. You also want us to improve housing conditions



### We did:

- Included more community news in the newsletter
- Worked with our teams to make survey links more accessible and explored the possibility of responding via SMS
- We are working to ensure that our 2025 annual members meeting is more of a community event, and we have included customer Representatives on the organising group
- Developed more face-to-face opportunities – drop-ins, estate walkabouts, roadshows etc
- Your feedback will be used as we develop a new Community Investment Strategy

## Neighbourhood Environment Services - March 25

**Customers were joined by members of our NET team to discuss the services provided, the development of a new set of service standards, and how customers wanted to get involved in providing feedback and scrutinising the services.**

### You told us:

- You didn't know what the service standards were
- You wanted to help inspect services
- We should include a "Did You Know" section on the newsletter/website

### We did:

- Created a Customer Inspector group which is launching in summer 2025 - 15 customers have signed up already
- Added information about the service standards to the welcome pack and online
- Included a "Did You Know?" section in the newsletter





# Complaints Panel

**Our Complaints Panel has been an essential part of our customer engagement strategy. Throughout the year, the panel met regularly to review complaints and provide feedback. The panel review three cases each session. They also review performance information and receive team updates.**

Customer enjoyed the sessions but expressed a desire to do more. We will work closely with the panel over the coming months to further develop their role and ensure they are involved in holding us to account on lessons learned from complaints. Watch this space for more info!



## Keeping You Safe at Home

### Building Safety Residents Panel

**Our Building Safety Panel, made up of residents from College Bank, met regularly throughout the year.**

Together, we:

- Developed a new Building Engagement Strategy, with a specific document for each of the seven high rise blocks.
- Arranged for new lockable noticeboards in each of the blocks to improve communication and information sharing.
- Met with different service leads including Repairs, Fire Risk Manager, Caretakers and the Neighbourhood Housing Officer to address and resolve any concerns.



### Damp and Mould Workshop

**During our one-off Damp and Mould Workshop, several issues were raised about damp and mould reporting, particularly for customers with visual impairments who may not be able to see the visible signs of condensation and mould.**

Customers were broadly supportive of the information provided on our website and in our leaflets. They also discussed whether further advice could be provided to help customers help themselves and whether additional life skills information could be included on the RBH website.

We did:

- Shared these concerns with the repairs team and updated the website to include non-visual signs of damp and mould.
- Identified improvements for the next reprint of leaflets and website updates, such as adding causes of penetrating dampness, improving image labels, updating references to the Money Advice Service, and including alternatives to drying clothes outside.
- Included information and advice about DIY repairs in the Winter 2025 newsletter.
- Planned a review of the healthy homes page on the website for Spring 2025.

## System Upgrades at Clough Court

At the Clough Court Tunstall upgrades drop-in session, customers were better informed about the new upgrade system and programme, which involved moving from analogue to digital telecare systems.

*"Brilliant. I love technology. I wouldn't know what to do if I didn't have the internet. The new system will make you feel safe."*

**Resident of Clough Court**

## Meet the Contractor Events

We ran several 'Meet the Contractor' events at Independent Living Schemes (ILS) where fire safety works were to be carried out. These events provided residents with the opportunity to meet the team responsible for the work, ask questions, express concerns, and familiarise themselves with the programme. The events were very well received.



# Inclusion and Belonging

## Diversity Advocates

**Our Community Diversity Advocates play a crucial role in promoting diversity, inclusion, and wellbeing at RBH. They challenge discrimination, share knowledge, and contribute to various initiatives.**

Examples of Involvement:

**Policy Reviews:** Advocates have been instrumental in reviewing policies, such as the NET Policy, suggesting improvements like communicating sections of the policy seasonally and raising awareness of services like bulky item removal.

**Customer Census:** Advocates contributed to the Customer Census survey, ensuring it was effectively communicated and accessible. Their feedback helped shape the approach and execution, making the census easy to complete and inclusive for all customers.

## Diversity Inclusion Refugees Volunteering Project

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

*"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 (Community Diversity Advocate)**

These initiatives highlight our commitment to fostering an inclusive and supportive community where everyone feels valued and empowered. Your participation and feedback are crucial in helping us achieve this goal.

## ILS Get Togethers

**Our Independent Living Schemes (ILS) get-togethers, held monthly at different schemes, have been a vital platform for our older residents to voice their concerns and share their experiences.**

Throughout the year, various issues have been raised, including:

**Service Quality:** Concerns about window cleaning, gardening, and the quality of work by contractors.

**Communication:** Feedback on the format of the ILS newsletter, with suggestions for an audio version to accommodate those who can't read or write.

**Safety and Maintenance:** Requests for improvements in areas such as uneven flags, rubbish removal, and mobility scooter spaces.

**Community Engagement:** Ideas for newsletter content, including sharing activities, competitions, and celebrating residents' achievements.



### Key Actions Taken:

- Improved Communication: The communications team is working on producing an audio version of the ILS newsletter and incorporating customer suggestions.
- Enhanced Safety and Maintenance: Issues raised have been addressed by scheme managers and the NET team, with some already reported and actioned.
- Community Building: Good news stories and past work experiences shared by residents are being included in the ILS newsletter and social media to break down stereotypes and celebrate diversity.

These get-togethers have been instrumental in addressing concerns, fostering a sense of community, and ensuring that our older residents feel valued and supported.

## Reviewing the Independent Living Scheme (ILS) Lettings Policy

**Customers told us:** That they wanted to see improvements with the lettings process.

**We responded by:** Letting responsibilities are now managed by Scheme Managers to streamline the process. Customers also agreed to raise the minimum age from 55 to 60. These changes are reflected in the revised policy to better meet the needs of our ageing population.

## 'Here's the Deal' – Independent Living

**A new document, 'Here's the Deal' was created in partnership with residents. In addition to the tenancy agreement, it highlights key aspects about living in an Independent Living Scheme.**

### Customers told us:

- The document was helpful, informative and easy to read.
- They suggested including the name and contact details of the Independent Living Officer (ILO) on the document.



### We responded by:

- Amendments were made to the design, and additional information about the ILO was added.
- The updated document was rolled out to ILS customers shortly after.

# Supporting Digital Inclusion

## Tech for All Initiative

**Following a device refresh by our IT team, we had a number of laptops and smartphones which had been reset and restored.**

Through our 'Tech for All' initiative, we were able to redistribute these to customers and community groups who could benefit from them. This has helped to bridge the digital divide and enable more customers to get online.

*"It's really kind of RBH to support me with getting online, I am looking forward to attending online engagement opportunities - thank you RBH"*

**Miss Senzini, customer**



## Free wifi rollout in Freehold

**The Mesh is free civic Wi-Fi for residents and is currently operational in College Bank, Lower Falinge and more recently, Freehold.**

In conjunction with the launch in Freehold, we partnered with RBC who ran fortnightly Digital Advice sessions. We also signposted customers to the Digital Library for help accessing devices and data.

## What's Next And How Can You Get Involved?

**This year has shown the power of customer voice. Because of your feedback, we've changed policies, improved services, and listened more closely than ever before.**

But we're just getting started.

### In the year ahead, we will:

- Launch more face-to-face events and neighbourhood walkabouts
- Share performance updates and outcomes of engagement more regularly and clearly
- Build on our scrutiny work with more customer-led reviews
- Keep working with you to improve services

### Want to get involved?

There are lots of ways to have your say – from one-off surveys to joining a panel or forum. We provide support, training, and a friendly team to help you every step of the way.

**Email us at:** [customer.engagement@rbh.org.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@rbh.org.uk)

**Call us on:** 0800 027 7769

**Visit:** [www.rbh.org.uk](http://www.rbh.org.uk)

**Together, we'll keep building homes and communities we're all proud of.**