

Building Safety

Resident Engagement Strategy

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing



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Introduction

Rochdale Boroughwide Housing (RBH) is committed to ensuring that all residents living in our high-rise buildings are at the heart of decision making about key safety matters about their homes and the buildings where they live.

This strategy outlines RBH's commitment to engaging residents in building safety, to align with government guidelines. In this strategy, building safety refers to the measures that are in place to protect residents living in our high-rise buildings. Building safety measures prevent, reduce and mitigate risks, such as the spread of fire, structural failures and electric hazards. The building safety measures also aim to reduce the seriousness of an incident if one occurs.

As residents of RBH owned and managed buildings, each has a say in building safety decisions. This strategy sets out how we will involve you in such decisions, and how we will share information about how we keep you safe and how you can help. As these buildings are occupied by RBH tenants and leaseholders and tenants of third parties, we have used the term residents to refer to all those who live in College Bank.

National Context

In response to the tragic Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017, the government introduced the **Building Safety Act 2022** (the Act) and the Fire Safety Act 2021.

These statutory requirements established a new regulatory framework for managing high-rise residential buildings. These are buildings that are either 7 storeys or more,

or over 18 meters high. The Act defines two major risks: the spread of fire and structural failure.

As part of the implementation, the Building Safety Act 2022 created an independent Building Safety Regulator, operating under the Health and Safety Executive, responsible for overseeing safety standards in all high-rise residential buildings.

Local Context

RBH currently owns and manages seven high-rise residential buildings at College Bank, Rochdale. In 2017, RBH announced a significant regeneration plan for homes around Rochdale Town Centre. This included the high-rise flats at College Bank, and the demolition of four of the seven blocks was proposed. Since that time, RBH has worked with residents and non-resident leaseholders to relocate them to alternative accommodation in advance of the demolition, and as a result all of the seven buildings now contain significant numbers of empty flats. Measures are in place to provide enhanced management of the buildings to ensure they are safe and appropriately maintained while they are partially occupied.

During 2023, the new Executive Team at RBH paused the regeneration plans to look at new options; these options include exploring how all the seven College Bank blocks can be retained and refurbished. If the buildings are retained, the refurbishment will include a range of works to bring them to modern day living standards, incorporating additional fire and structural improvements.

Aims

This strategy is part of our work to ensure that residents who live in our high-rise buildings feel safe and remain safe. We will do this with residents through:

- **Safety Awareness:** Ensuring residents know whom to contact regarding their safety.
- **Shared Responsibilities:** Enhancing understanding of responsibilities between RBH and residents.
- **Engagement Opportunities:** Providing various ways for residents to communicate and engage with RBH about decisions that affect the management and safety of their building.
- **Empowerment:** Fostering confidence in holding RBH accountable for building safety concerns.

To ensure this strategy remains effective, it will be reviewed:

- Every 12 months;
- Following any incident that we need to report to the building safety regulator;
- Following any significant material alteration to the high-rise residential building.

Objectives

Any time we communicate with residents about building safety, our objectives are to:

- **Inform:** By providing residents with information that they need to know about their building or any planned work.
- **Educate:** To help residents understand more about safety in their building, the reasons why particular work is happening or why something is not permitted.
- **Reassure:** By providing reminders and reassurances of the safety measures in place that are continually in operation and should there be an emergency.
- **Influence:** To raise awareness of the responsibilities of residents and their neighbours to keep everyone living in the building safe.

Contact

RBH is known as the Accountable Person for our high-rise residential buildings; this is a specific named duty holder role specified in the Act.

The named contact for our high-rise residential buildings is:

Phillip Webster – Strategic Lead for Building Safety

Unique Enterprise Centre
Belfield Road
Rochdale
OL16 2UP

E: buildingsafety@rbh.org.uk

T: 0800 027 7769

The day-to-day contact for any routine or emergency issue about our high-rise residential buildings is:

RBH Customer Contact Centre

Unique Enterprise Centre
Belfield Road
Rochdale
OL16 2UP

E: customer@rbh.org.uk

T: 0800 027 7769

RBH Roles and Responsibilities

We have many teams responsible for different elements of building safety.

RBH Fire Safety Team

Responsible for making sure all high-rise residential buildings feel safe, are safe and remain safe. They are also responsible for putting this strategy into place for each of the seven high-rise residential buildings that RBH own and manage.

Property Services Teams, including Asset Performance & Investment and Repairs

Responsible for repairs and improvements in flats, internal and external communal areas, and the structure of the buildings.

Neighbourhood Housing Team

Responsible for all tenancy related issues including concerns about related matters such as anti-social behaviour.

Community Guardians

Responsible for monitoring and reacting to day-to-day issues on site at College Bank. They carry out regular safety and fire checks, as well as concierge duties, helping with things like deliveries, sorting out parking permits and reporting fly tipping. They also work closely with neighbourhoods' teams and record and report incidents to relevant persons or teams. They also play a role in first response to a potential emergency, by receiving calls from the organisation that monitors the fire alarms within the building and triggering the fire alarm procedure for the building.

Waking Watch

Work on site providing a 24hr service, conducting regular patrols and monitoring in each building and all communal areas. They also provide evacuation assistance to residents who have a Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) in place and work closely with Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS), the Community Guardians and the RBH Fire Safety Team.

Caretakers

Responsible for keeping communal areas clean, tidy and free from any health and safety risks. This includes waste management and removing Fly-tipping where required, in a timely and safe manner.

Residents' Roles and Responsibilities

As a landlord, RBH will ensure our homes and high-rise blocks are safe by meeting all the correct regulations and standards. Residents are also required to support RBH in meeting their obligations by:

- Living safely in their flat and not doing anything that puts other residents at risk, for example, not making alterations to the flat entrance fire door without permission.
- Knowing what to do in the event of a fire in their property or another part of the building.
- Contacting the Fire Safety Team if their living circumstances change meaning resident, they may be not able to self-evacuate in the event of a fire.
- Checking smoke detectors in their home are working at least once a month.
- Being respectful of neighbours and keeping the space outside the flat clear.
- Using the bin chutes safely to dispose of rubbish and contacting the caretaking team if help is needed to dispose of bulky items.
- Reporting any issues to RBH, particularly if they feel it is a fire or structural safety concern.

Understanding our residents' engagement and communication needs

To have meaningful and effective engagement and communication with our residents, we must understand and respect their needs and preferences.

We will work with our residents to understand their needs and preferences so we can avoid creating any barriers that prevent effective engagement and communication.

- **Use existing information:** We will use existing information we have to identify communication and engagement needs and preferences. This includes things like a preferred language or large print documents.
- **Ask residents:** We will conduct tenancy audits, use surveys, workshops, and drop-in sessions to ask residents how they want to communicate with us, and how they want us to communicate with them.
- **Be easy to contact:** We will give residents a named person and their contact details so they can speak to someone directly about building safety matters.
- **Talk to other organisations:** We will work with partners to understand any specific needs our residents may have and how they can support us. This includes local policing teams and GMFRS.
- **Welcome residents to their new homes:** We will meet with new residents when they move into the building to understand their engagement and communication needs and preferences.
- **Get feedback:** We will regularly ask residents for feedback on previous engagement and communication activities.

How we will engage and communicate with residents

We will use lots of different ways to regularly engage with residents on building safety matters. We will target our communication methods to their needs and make sure it is accessible.

1. **Resident engagement strategy for building safety in high-rise residential buildings.** This strategy outlines our approach to engaging and communicating with residents.
2. **Engagement and communication plans for each building.** An individual plan for each of our seven high-rise residential buildings. They will outline to residents upcoming work in their building, past work in their building, the results of recent inspections and planned work happening on high-rise residential buildings in the nearby area.
3. **Building safety booklets.** These will outline specific information about the building, key contacts, details of what to do in the event of a fire, how to raise concerns about building safety and details of how to get more involved in the management and safety of the building.
4. **Building safety notice boards.** A notice board in each high-rise residential building to display relevant and current building safety information.
5. **Building Safety Resident Panel.** Will meet quarterly to review building safety information and any concerns raised by residents.
6. **Other communication methods** A variety of other methods will be used to communicate important building safety messages when necessary. These include but are not limited to:
 - College Bank Newsletter;
 - Monthly building safety drop-in sessions at College Bank;
 - Neighbourhood walk and talk events;
 - Regular building safety workshops/information sessions, covering themes such as fire safety, anti-social behaviour etc. These will be held in collaboration with key partners like GMFRS;
 - RBH website, portal and social media channels;
 - Letters, emails and information provided in preferred languages;
 - Phone calls and text messages.

Building Safety Booklets

RBH will work with residents to co-design a booklet specific to the building in which they live. At a minimum, the booklets will include:

- Specific information about the building, including number of floors, flats etc.
- Details of key contacts including information about roles and responsibilities.
- The ways we will communicate on building safety with residents who live in the building.
- The building safety issues we want to hear residents' views on.
- The type of information we will regularly communicate and how we will do this.
- Specific building safety initiatives including measures inside flats and the buildings communal areas to keep residents safe.

- The information residents need to know to help keep their building safe.
- What residents need to do in the event of a fire.
- What residents need to do if they feel at greater risk from building safety risks or would not be able to leave the building safely in a fire.
- How to raise building safety concerns and/or complaints.
- How to get more involved in how building safety is managed including details of how to join our Building Safety Residents Panel.
- A glossary section.

We will provide information in a format that is easy to understand and will make reasonable adjustments for residents who may have additional needs. This includes things like a preferred language or large print documents.

Residents are entitled to request further and more detailed information about the safety measures in their building, this may include things like the fire risk assessment for the building or outcomes of structural assessments. We will work with residents to share such information where requested.

Consulting about building safety

Where significant work will take place which impacts on building safety, we will always consult residents on:

- Why the work is happening;
- When it will be happening;
- The expected duration of the work;
- Areas of the building which will be affected by the work.

We will be open, honest and transparent when we consult with residents on building safety matters, in a way that is accessible and appropriate to them.

We will consult using a variety of methods including but not limited to:

- Using our Building Safety Resident Panel;
- Speaking to residents about our engagement events/activities such as the monthly drop-in sessions or walk and talk events;
- Holding additional workshops to discuss any proposed changes;
- Conducting online, postal or verbal surveys.

We will consider all feedback we receive during a consultation and consider all views raised. The length of each consultation will vary and be appropriate to the scale and complexity of the work being carried out, at a minimum each consultation will last at least three weeks.

We will be transparent about our consultations and will make reasonable adjustments to any programs of work where we are able to do so. Where

adjustments cannot be made following a consultation, we be clear with our reasons why.

Consultation responses and results will be collected and stored in line with RBH's Data Protection Policy.

Building safety concerns

RBH is committed to the handling of building safety concerns in a structured and timely manner. We will:

- **Assign** - Concerns will be assigned to the appropriate team. We will acknowledge the resident within one working day and ensure it is investigated appropriately.
- **Contact resident** – where required, we will contact residents to clarify or request further information which may help us to thoroughly investigate and address the concern.
- **Respond** – Where a resident raises an urgent concern that may risk the health and safety of themselves, residents in the building or the building itself, we will investigate and act as soon as possible.

Building safety complaints

If a resident is not satisfied with the service being provided in their building, they should first bring this to the attention of the service concerned. Depending on the issue this may be any of the following services:

- Fire Safety team
- Repairs
- Caretaking
- Neighbourhoods
- Community guardians

Contact details of the above will be provided in the residents' building safety handbook or can be directed by calling us on the freephone number below.

If a resident would like to make a formal complaint relating to building safety, they can:

- Call us on 0800 027 7769
- Email us at customer.complaints@rbh.org.uk
- Send us a message via our online customer portal
- Send us a message on our social media channels
- Write to us:

RBH

Unique Enterprise Centre
Belfield Road, Rochdale,
OL16 2UP

We will always try and resolve a complaint in the first instance over the telephone but if this is not possible, our complaints team will thoroughly investigate the complaint. The team will acknowledge and provide a full response to complaints in line with the RBH complaints policy. Timescales and full details of the policy can be found on our website: [Feedback and Complaints | RBH](#)

If a resident does not feel satisfied that RBH has dealt with their building safety concern appropriately, they can also report the matter directly to the Building Safety Regulator via telephone 0300 790 6787 or via the website www.gov.uk/guidance/contact-the-building

Monitoring performance

We will regularly review this strategy to ensure it meets the needs of our residents and remains effective. To do this we will:

- **Listen to and act** on resident feedback;
- **Respond** to challenges or feedback raised by our Building Safety Resident Panel;
- **Review** how we have handled building safety related concerns raised by residents;
- **Measure** participation in engagement activities;
- **Improve** where we find that engagement is less effective, we will request feedback so we can work to improve our approach;
- **Feedback** performance against this strategy to residents periodically and on an annual basis to the RBH Customer Services Committee.