



# CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

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## Introduction

The Customer Engagement Framework outlines how Longhurst Group aims to meet the consumer standards (CSRs) and deliver positive change for customers and colleagues.

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## Regulatory compliance

We've seen major changes over recent years in the strengthening of consumer regulation. The regulator for social housing (RHS) has published standards that put a strong focus on the core purpose for social landlords to provide safe, decent homes for their tenants, listening to tenants and treating them with fairness and respect, and putting things right promptly when required.

This framework sets out our approach for the new consumer standards and how we use insight to inform our engagement and consultation programme as evidence for a new consumer regulation regime.

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## The Consumer Standards

- Safety and Quality Standard
- Transparency, accountability, and Influence Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Governance and Viability Standard

Under the new standards landlords need to:

- ensure tenants are safe in their homes.
- listen to tenants' complaints and respond promptly to put things right.
- be accountable to tenants and treat them with fairness and respect.
- know more about the condition of every home and the needs of the people who live in them.
- collect and use data effectively across a range of areas, including repairs

As an adopter of the National Housing Federation Together with Tenants Charter, we remain committed to strengthening the relationship between our customers and colleagues. We've used the initiative to assess and improve customer engagement practices with our Scrutiny Team. The Charter has been a guide in collecting valuable feedback, enhancing engagement, and fostering positive change.

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## Our Customer Engagement Framework

The Better Social Housing Review recommends that Housing Associations should work with all tenants to ensure that they have a voice and influence at every level of decision making across the organisation.

The Social Housing Regulation bill introduced the Tenant Satisfaction Measures to demonstrate respectful and helpful engagement of tenants.

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The Customer Engagement Framework is designed to deliver best practice in accordance with current regulation and to deliver on our corporate strategy with the aim of improving the lives of our customers with a focus on our customers and our communities as well as our people and culture.

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### Governance

Customers of all tenures are encouraged to co-create with colleagues at Longhurst Group on matters of policy, strategy, and service delivery. The Customer Forum meet as a virtual group, offering insights and perspectives to policies and performance from a customer-centric viewpoint.

Additionally, the Improving Lives panel, which meets quarterly in person, is made up of both customers and board members, influencing strategic decisions.

Further enhancing this structure, the Customer Scrutiny Team, directed by the Customer Forum, conducts thorough reviews of services and offers recommendations for improvements to benefit all customers.

## Our commitment to governance

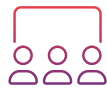
- Provide training and support for all involved customers to strengthen their capacity and influence.
- Adapt engagement methods to capture the views and needs of underrepresented customer groups through a mixture of virtual, telephone and face to face interactions.



### Strategic oversight

#### Improving Lives Panel

- Provides a direct link between the Board and customers to ensure that customers' views influence decisions and contribute to strategic decision making.



### Customer oversight

#### Customer Forum

- Provides customer-based assurance to the Board
- Ensures value for money is being achieved in service delivery
- Works in line with Longhurst Group's vision of 'improving lives'.



### Customer scrutiny

#### Scrutiny Team

- Holds the Group to account to ensure continuous service improvement.



### Customer voice

- Customer engagement platform
- Targeted listening activities
- Transactional survey data
- Complaints and compliments
- Mystery shopping/reality checks
- Resident associations
- Local initiatives
- Procurement evaluation panel.

## Customer feedback

We're committed to actively listening to and acting upon customer feedback. We provide our customers with a variety of channels to provide feedback tailored to their preferences. Whilst face to face engagement remains valuable, given the

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## Our Customer Engagement Framework (continued)

noticeable appetite for customers to connect digitally, we offer a virtual engagement platform and online sessions for customers to provide feedback too.

The introduction of 'The Hub', our online engagement platform enables flexibility for customers wanting to engage and allows us to capture a more diverse and inclusive range of views and opinions.

Additionally, we'll conduct customer satisfaction surveys, delivered by SMS and telephone, following services we provide. We will use this insight to deepen our understanding of customer preferences at crucial touchpoints, and directly assess the customer experience with our services.

By following a group-wide framework, we ensure that strategy, customer-facing policy and procedure development incorporates relevant insights, guaranteeing the active involvement of our customers in shaping our services.

### **Our commitment to customer feedback**

- We will actively listen and act upon customer feedback and strengthen the role that insight plays in shaping local service offers. Where we can't act upon feedback, we will provide clear rationale as to why not and offer alternative solutions.
- We will hold open and transparent discussions through focus groups, telephone interviews and customer workshops in addition to online forums, surveys and polls and use this feedback to tailor our services.

- We will share 'You said, we did' examples and continue to scan feedback to find out if the changes have had a positive impact on customers' experiences.
- If changes haven't worked, we'll be quick to learn and respond.



## Customer insight

Understanding our customers is critical. We gather customer insight through various channels, including complaints feedback, compliments, social media interactions, survey results, customer journey mapping and feedback from colleagues. We use this to identify service improvement.

We'll report and publicise the impact of all our insight and co-creation activities to show we have

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## Our Customer Engagement Framework (continued)

acted on the customer voice and the influence it has had on our decision making.

We aim to create a culture that is centred around the needs and preferences of our customers, while prioritising customer safety and efficient services.

### **Our commitment to customer insight**

- Co-design new and existing services in partnership with customers to help us to understand our customers and communities, their circumstances and their preferences.
- Collaborate with customers and colleagues from across the business as equals, respecting their skills as subject matter experts to make sure our services are driven by customer needs.
- Report and publicise the impact of all our insight and co-creation activities to customers and colleagues, committees and Board quarterly, to show we have acted on the customer voice and to evidence the influence it has had on our decision making in line with the consumer standards.

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### **Service improvement**

We're dedicated to listening to customer feedback and using it to suggest service improvements. If a service is scheduled for an update, is in the process of being procured, or is experiencing an unusually high volume of customer complaints, or if its satisfaction ratings fall below the established targets, we will include customers views to drive and shape services in line with the Regulatory Standards and Corporate Strategy.



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This will include analysing specific areas that need improvement and identifying the root causes of any issues. We will then collaborate closely with relevant colleagues and stakeholders to develop and implement changes aimed at enhancing the service's quality, efficiency, and customer satisfaction.

We'll keep customers informed about any proposed changes to services and gather feedback on how these changes have positively or negatively impacted the customer experience.

### **Our commitment to service improvement**

- To provide customers with an opportunity to influence services, strategy, and policies across a variety of channels including focus groups, digital platforms, and face to face.
- Enable effective customer-led reviews by providing relevant information, access to colleagues, and facilitating customer research.
- Agree to implement changes and regularly report to the formal governance structure and to customers on how we're using customer voice to shape services.

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### **Transparency**

Our goal is to maintain openness and transparency in the information we provide, sharing on platforms such as 'The Hub', our website, digital newsletters, customer communication products and social media to achieve this.

We'll ensure customers have access to reliable information to assess our performance and hold

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## Our Customer Engagement Framework (continued)

us accountable. We'll publish performance against the tenant satisfaction measures in a manner that is timely, clear, and easily accessed by customers.

### **Our commitment to transparency**

- Keep sharing up-to-date performance information on our website.
- Involve customers in the procurement of new services.
- Work with our Communications Team to publish quarterly 'You said, we did' for customers to document the impact that customer insight has had on our services.
- Update our engaged customers monthly with relevant customer engagement news.
- Communicate a clear and simple offer of customer engagement, demonstrating the benefits.
- Summarise customer engagement delivery in our annual report to customers.

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### **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

Within our diverse communities, our aim is to gain a better understanding of our customer base. This understanding will allow us to develop services that better meet the needs and expectations of our customers. We acknowledge that there may be barriers preventing certain groups from participating and having their voices heard, which can limit their influence on the services we provide. To address this, we'll work collaboratively with customers to ensure that our engagement activities are accessible and that our services are inclusive and respectful.

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We are dedicated to promoting equality, diversity and inclusion in both our engagement activities and broader services. As part of this commitment, we recognise our responsibility within the sector to challenge stigma and negative stereotypes associated with social housing.

### **Our commitment to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

- Review diversity of involved customers to understand gaps in representation and take positive action to bolster inclusion.
- We'll use insights to identify barriers to engagement with underrepresented customers, promoting community-based engagement to increase diversity and remove obstacles to involvement.
- We'll provide training and support to those who lack confidence or need help expressing their views.
- We'll work in collaboration with customers to assess accessibility and inclusivity across the Group's working practices.
- Ensure the information we share is clear, easy to understand and relevant. Our involved customers will play an active role in shaping this.

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## Measuring success

The Customer Engagement Team will hold oversight of outputs and actions.

Progress and impact of the framework will be completed by the Customer Forum with assurance of progress provided to the Group Board.

To ensure progress against targets, the Customer Engagement Team will:

- Develop a programme of customer engagement activities tailored to deliver the intended aims.
- Using insight identify areas for customer led scrutiny where we know our performance is affecting the customer experience.
- Provide a progress update to the Customer Forum every quarter highlighting progress against targets and differences.
- Progress against targets will be reported to colleagues with internal updates provided quarterly via Workplace and other appropriate communication channels.

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## How will we know we're getting it right?

- Engagement activities leading to outputs that improve customer satisfaction.
- Improved sense of trust of Longhurst Group measures through a monthly perception survey.
- Reduction in complaints.
- Demonstrable customer influence at a strategic level where Executive Team, Committees and Board are acting on insight.
- A culture that champions an empowering, authentic, and customer-centric way of transforming services and improving customer experience.





Longhurst Group,  
1 Crown Court,  
Crown Way, Rushden,  
Northamptonshire NN10 6BS

 0800 111 4013  
 [longhurst-group.org.uk](https://www.longhurst-group.org.uk)

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