



Customer Forum Annual Report

2024 - 2025

INTRODUCTION

As Chair of the Amplius Customer Forum, I am honoured to present our 2025 Annual Review to the valued customers, dedicated officers, and the Board of Amplius.

The Customer Forum has long been an essential component of the organisation, committed to ensuring that the voice of the customer is both heard and respected. Our work has played a vital role in helping shape services with honesty, accountability, and transparency at the core. At a time when government and regulatory bodies are placing greater emphasis on how landlords engage with customers, the value of such representation has never been more evident.

The introduction of the revised Consumer Standards in 2024 brought significant changes across the housing sector. The Forum quickly responded to these developments, engaging with the new expectations and working diligently to hold the organisation to account. We have consistently acted with professionalism and integrity, asking the difficult questions, seeking clarity where needed and ensuring customers' interests remained at the heart of service delivery.

It is with a sense of pride, but also some regret, that I note this will be the final Annual Review of the Amplius Customer Forum in its current form. While our work as a formal body is coming to a close, the importance of a strong, representative customer voice must not be lost. We sincerely hope that future structures will continue to uphold and build upon the principles we have championed — accountability, openness, and meaningful engagement.

I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to every member of the Customer Forum for their time, commitment, and valuable insight. Together, we have worked to ensure that customers are not only listened to but respected and understood. It has been an honour to serve as Chair, and I am confident that customer representation will remain a priority within the evolving landscape of Amplius.

Jennifer Anderson, Chair

THE CUSTOMER FORUM

As part of a co-regulatory approach, the Customer Forum meets at least four times a year to monitor Group performance, with a particular focus on complaints handling, satisfaction measures and customer involvement.

Throughout 2024 the Customer Forum provided ongoing customer-led assurance to the Longhurst Group Board by submitting summaries of meeting feedback.

Following the merger of Longhurst Group and Grand Union Housing Group in December 2024, the Customer Forum continued its role by monitoring the performance of the legacy Longhurst Group.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS AS A FORUM

Over the past 12 months, the Forum has reflected on its achievements and revisited its aspirations for 2024 to evaluate progress and identify ongoing priorities.

Repairs Work in Progress:

The Forum closely monitored the “5 for 25” repair targets on a fortnightly basis until the performance for repairs work in progress were achieved.

Gas servicing access:

Forum members took part in a session focussed on access issues related to gas servicing. They submitted a series of recommendations aimed at improving the communication of appointment times. As a result, Sureserve has implemented new technology to send customers appointment reminders two days in advance.

In addition, a new line was added to the first letter with **essential** annual gas heating safety check to highlight the importance of the annual gas safety check for customer safety.

To improve accessibility and convenience, customers can now contact Sureserve not only by phone, but also through a two-way text messaging, WhatsApp or live web chat for all service related matters, including changes to appointments, reporting repairs and general enquiries.

During the mobilisation of the new grounds maintenance contractors, there was a visible increase in customer complaints and instances where the new service specification were not being met. The Customer Forum engaged with the Estates Team and Head of Service to challenge how the contractors would be held accountable. Regular updates were shared, and a series of meetings were arranged to address and resolve the issues. This work remains ongoing.

Plans are underway to gain a better understanding of customer needs and the barriers they may face in accessing our services. The Customer Forum has been kept informed of the survey feedback and the future plans to establish an Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) working group, which will address some of the challenges identified by customers.

At the time of the merger, it was agreed that instead of undertaking a full Tpas accreditation, a SMART Review Reality Check would be more beneficial. This assessment provided an independent evaluation of the current customer engagement approach. The feedback gained from the review, along with feedback from a customer survey and colleague workshops have been used in shaping the new Customer Influence Framework for Amplius.

The topics covered in meetings were as follows:

Month	Agenda
June 2024	<p>End of year performance</p> <p>Customer Experience Update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Customer Engagement Activity • Complaints <p>Grounds maintenance mobilisation of new contractors</p>
August 2024	<p>Quarter 1 Performance update</p> <p>Grounds maintenance – new contract mobilisation discussion</p> <p>Group Board and Committee update</p> <p>Customer Experience update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Customer Engagement activity • Complaints <p>Learning from complaints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer voice and influence mechanisms • Void update <p>Customer Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update, including feedback from customer surveys on: • Customer feedback on the condition of homes at handover • Customer insight on ground source heating • Customer scrutiny review of communications <p>Social Tenant Access to Information Standard</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (STAIRS) (new regulatory standard)

Month	Agenda
	<p>Health & safety annual update including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety and quality standard • Communal safety and fire tasks • Feedback on site visits by the fire authority partnership
November 2024	<p>Quarter 2 Performance update</p> <p>Group Board & Committee updates - Merger update</p> <p>Customer Experience update:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Customer Engagement activity • Complaints <p>Environmental Social Governance (ESG) Framework update</p> <p>Update on Ground's Maintenance and Cleaning specification</p> <p>Focus on performance of the Transparency, Influence, and Accountability Standard</p> <p>Recruitment and staff turnover</p> <p>Customer Engagement activity - update including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Engagement activity • Update on the condition of home survey • Fixed service charge policy <p>Scrutiny Team update</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next review is empty homes and re-let standard • Progress on communication review
February 2025	Quarter 3 Performance Update

Month	Agenda
	Customer Experience Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer satisfaction • Customer Engagement Activity • Complaints Condition of homes report

Policy reports are presented to Forum members to provide assurance that customers have been consulted during the policy development process and that their feedback and recommendations have been taken into account.

Policies reports during 2024/25 were:

- Fire Safety
- Electrical Safety
- Starter Tenancy Policy
- Domestic and Commercial Heating
- Estate Management
- Tenancy Management
- Hoarding
- Hoarding Policy

In addition to scheduled performance meetings, the Forum participated in a range of ad-hoc meetings and engagement opportunities, including:

- **Spotlight sessions** on key issues such as access challenges for annual gas appointments (with the Head of Asset Compliance) and the Customer Charter (with the Head of Customer Services).
- A **site visit focussed on retrofit projects** and discussions with the Head of Service for ESG.

- A **customer survey** to gather feedback on noise levels from ground source and air source heat pumps.
- **Regular updates** on the development and implementation of the ESG framework and software.
- **The initiation of working groups** in response to the damp and mould survey, as well as to improve the complaints process.
- **Forum representation** on the evaluation panel for the new cleaning services procurement.

Forum members have the opportunity to escalate areas of concern to the Board, however, no such escalation has been necessary to date.

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Forum members were introduced to a new training module designed to increase their understanding of consumer regulation, GDPR and equality and diversity.

To support ongoing learning and awareness, members also received a subscription to 'Inside Housing' magazine, enabling them to stay informed about housing sector debates, current affairs and legislative developments.

Forum members participated in Tpas involvement Week, with a particular focus on community engagement and strengthening tenant involvement.

OUR ASPIRATIONS FOR 2025

We welcome the introduction of the new Customer Influence Framework, which will provide more meaningful opportunities for customer feedback to drive changes across all levels of the Organisation.

The original Forum members would like to continue their involvement at a formal level of their choosing.

We anticipate an increase in the number of customers participating in the new framework.

It is essential that the positive impact of customer involvement is widely communicated.

Additionally, it is important that Amplius continues on the road map for sustainability, implementing the ESG framework and installation of relevant software.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE CUSTOMER FORUM

Member	Region	Tenure
Jennifer Anderson	South	Tenant
Tina Claridge	East	Tenant
Angela Ryan	West	Tenant
David Peacock	East	Tenant
Francis Hudson	East	Tenant
Valerie Bunting	West	Leaseholder
Alexandria Robertson	South	Tenant
Philippa Boyd	South	Tenant
Peter Peel	South	Shared owner