

Board Connect November 2023

Directors welcomed the customers who had come to Board Connect. Paul Harris facilitate the session and reminded everyone about the forthcoming Consumer Standards, and invited comments about what they would like to see Curo doing, or doing differently, in response to them.

The second suggested topic for discussion was how Curo can better tailor services to customers' specific needs.

The ensuing discussion surfaced the following points:

- Customers queried what information colleagues are given in order to be able to fix repairs, and to make sure they have the right equipment. Not having the right information creates a waste of time and money, and also leaves customers at risk in the meantime (in one example, an elderly lady was left without a light in her bathroom). Customers would like to see additional effort by colleagues to truly understand the issue at the point of reporting it, and that would also be a good opportunity to ask questions about customers' particular needs.
- The group discussed how customers feel about trades colleagues coming to their homes out of hours. Customers agreed that a big factor is knowing that they are coming, and when. If someone just turned up, particularly out of hours, it would be worrying and they might not let them in. Most of the time customers get told the name of the Curo colleague that's coming, but that doesn't always happen out of hours. The more information about the operative, the better.
- The group discussed 'SightCall' technology, and customers agreed that this would be helpful and that they would be willing to use it.
- Leaseholders often receive confusing messages about who to contact about particular issues. As a result, it was difficult to tell whether new technology would help to resolve issues faster – it would depend on the right Curo colleagues receiving the right information.
- In respect of services which should be more tailored to customers' particular needs, customers felt that ensuring that all customers can exit their homes in the event of a fire should be prioritised.
- The group discussed the fact that Curo will need to know more about our customers in order to be able to support them – the Board queried how customers feel about this?
 - Customers felt that most would be ok with this, as long as it was clearly communicated to them what Curo would use it for. Curo will need to explain why we want it, and how it would benefit the customer providing the information. A lot of it will boil down to trust in Curo.
 - It's not just about telling us the disability, Curo needs to understand the accommodations that customers need.
 - Having suggestions about this, giving people examples about what Curo can do to help, would be really helpful. This would prevent customers feeling like a 'bother'. But needs to be a careful list of questions – and needs to be dynamic.
 - When it comes to self-service, might be helpful to have a drop-down list for this.

- Equally, if customers have gone to the hassle of providing information, it would break their trust for the information they've provided not to be acted upon by Curo.
- Communications from Curo are generally clear and helpful. But to truly build trust, some customers feel they need some element of human interaction. Equally, some just want quiet enjoyment of their home and don't particularly want to speak to Curo.
- In terms of the new Consumer Standards:
- Transparency is something to work on – sometimes it's difficult to access services and it's not always clear where things disappear to once they enter the Curo 'machinery'. Customers would like to be able to track issues, like you can with parcels/deliveries.
- 'Commercial Property Team' is not a particularly customer-friendly name and Curo should consider this.
- The group discussed neighbourhoods - how much should be self-facilitated and how much should Curo lead?
 - Grounds maintenance is still a big issue, some customers are fencing off their gardens to care for their own areas which is having an impact on community. Contractor performance is sometimes getting in the way of community activities.
 - Community in blocks is very dependent on the people living there. Most people smile at each other, but one customer lived in a block which had another resident with significant ASB issues. That had a big impact on the block: drugs and loud parties. The group discussed how difficult it is to evict someone from social housing – it's a very time-consuming process.
 - Some community-building activities feel very Bath-centric. Customers in Bristol feel left out. A Board meeting in Bristol might help bring the Board closer to that community.
 - Community Catch-Ups, SHOP and the Big Curo Get Together were particularly praised.

Customers were thanked for attending – their feedback would be really helpful in future Board discussions and decisions.