



# Resident Engagement Annual Report

2022-2023



**Front cover:**

VoiceBox is our online customer community – just one of the many resident engagement channels on the menu at Curo.

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# Welcome to our Resident Engagement Annual Report for 2022-23.

The past year has been one of the most challenging we've experienced at Curo. The cost of living crisis has made life hard for everyone, including charitable organisations such as us. The costs of materials, fuel and other contracted services have all soared, well ahead of the rent increases permitted by the government.

As a result, it's been tough to strike the right balance to fund everything which is expected of us by customers and Government. Increased demand for repairs and more calls about damp and mould also put pressure on services, and we struggled to keep on top of it all, not only because of increased costs, but also because of we were unable to recruit enough skilled and experienced colleagues to help us meet demand. This caused delays, which meant we received many more complaints. If you were personally affected by all of this, I'd like to apologise and to say that we really did appreciate your patience and support.

This challenging environment was made a little easier by the excellent resident engagement activity of the past year. It's only by working in partnership with residents that we can agree what our key service priorities should be. This joint approach, sustained over time, will help build stronger relationships. Continuing to place resident involvement at the heart of what we do remains a firm commitment from us going forward.

From this report you'll see that we've been busy with many engagement activities this year, and I'm pleased to say that we've taken several big steps. This has included refreshing our

approach to complaints, looking at how we can improve the way we deal with empty homes and consulting on annual rent increase proposals. We've heard that you'd like more opportunities to get involved in your local area. As a result, our Resident Engagement Team have been rolling out more involvement activities; so please keep your eye out for more information about this.

**I hope you find this report interesting and useful and that you take up one of the many ways to get involved. If you've done so already, I'd like to say a huge thank you for taking the time to engage. It's only by working in partnership that we can improve and focus on the things that matter to you. If you've yet to get involved, I'd ask you to take the plunge and give it a go. It will make a difference to you and to all of our customers if you do.**



A stylized, handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'V. da Cunha'.

**Victor da Cunha**  
Curo Chief Executive

## Getting involved: the choice is yours

We offer many ways for customers to engage with Curo – and by ‘engage’ we mean become really involved! This could be through more formal groups, online or in your neighbourhood.

Each of our engagement options provide a different opportunity to influence decisions made about what we do as a landlord. Many options give you the chance to learn and develop new skills at the same time.

We advertise these options on our website – [www.curo-group.co.uk/getinvolved](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/getinvolved) – through our customer engagement menu, at all our annual residents’ events and through the work of our Resident Engagement team.

If you want to get involved, fill in the form at [www.curo-group.co.uk/getinvolved](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/getinvolved), or drop us an email to [VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk). We look forward to hearing from you.

Download your menu or ask us for a copy:  
[www.curo-group.co.uk/menu](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/menu).

Below: Michelle and Jamie  
from the Resident  
Engagement team



## Our promise



### We will:

- Make being involved accessible.
- Provide lots of ways to be involved, covering our customers’ homes, neighbourhoods, safety, additional needs, specific services and the organisation as a whole.
- Do our best to ensure that the customers involved represent all of our customers.
- Ensure our approach to involving customers is integrated into all our services.
- Provide opportunities for customers to hold us to account when it comes to our performance.
- Ensure that every opportunity to be involved has a clear objective.
- Show the impact that involving customers has had on the design and performance of our services.

# Meet your Resident Engagement team



**Tom Box**  
Resident Engagement  
Manager



**Michelle Sage**  
Resident Engagement  
Coordinator



**Jamie Nicholson-Ruther**  
Resident Engagement  
Coordinator

## The year in numbers

The number of customers actively involved with Curo increased over the last 12 months, with **3,414** customers helping to shape our services, compared with 2,569 the year before.

Activity	Frequency	Customers engaged
VoiceBox	Every day, 24/7	2,396
Curo's Big Get Together Event	Annually	384
Annual Christmas Event	Annually	369
Board Connect	Every 6 months	7
Oversight Group	Bi-monthly	9
Scrutiny Activity Group	2/3 times per year	14
Complaints Review Forum	Quarterly	9
Estates Partnership Board	Quarterly	10
Leaseholder Engagement Group	Quarterly	6
Home Improvement Forum	Quarterly	10
Repairs Engagement Group	Quarterly	6
Tenancy Compliance Forum	Quarterly	10
Disability Action Group	Quarterly	12
Customer Diversity Group	Quarterly	8
Young Resident' Group	Quarterly	8
SHOP	Every 6 weeks	13
Vision workshops	As needed	15
Customer service workshops	As needed	15
Website review workshops	As needed	6
Annual rent increase workshops	Annually	18
National Housing Federation consultations	As needed	26
Community Consultations	As needed	63

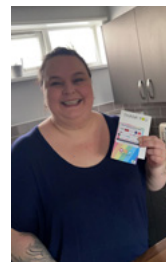


VoiceBox is our online community for customers. It's going from strength to strength as more customers join and get involved.

We post regular activities on VoiceBox for customers to give feedback on a range of topics and services. Activities include SmartBoards where customers can comment on draft leaflets and other publications, discussion forums, QuickPolls for opinion checks, and in-depth surveys.

We run a host of competitions through the year such as our Community Champion Awards, Curo In Bloom and our Easter bonnet and Christmas wreath creative challenges.

VoiceBox can be accessed by smartphone, tablet, laptop or desktop computer, making it convenient for most of our customers. VoiceBox users are rewarded for their participation through monthly and quarterly prize draws.



Above: Some of the lucky winners of our VoiceBox prize draws.

## VoiceBox in numbers:

The number of Curo customers on VoiceBox

increased to...

**2,396** 

► from 2,106 in 2021-2022.

We've rewarded

more than...

► **30** 

prize winners through VoiceBox.

► Since April 2022 we've received comments across

<b>55</b>	<b>425</b>	<b>13,681</b>
forum threads	QuickPoll responses	survey responses through VoiceBox

## What VoiceBox members are telling us:

**73%**

of members are satisfied...

► with VoiceBox as a way of providing feedback to us.



 **82%**

► of members find VoiceBox

easy to use

**86%** 

of members find VoiceBox

engaging or very engaging



## Here's a snapshot of what we've achieved over the past year thanks to our VoiceBox members.

Feedback has helped us launch new groups for customers, for example our Diversity Group and Younger Residents' Group. Members have also helped us understand what improvements we should prioritise for customers during scrutiny activities and other engagement groups.

- **Annual event** - More than 300 customers helped to come up with ideas for our annual event, including the venue, date, timings and what was on offer to customers. We listened to this group of customers and came up with the concept for the BIG Get Together. This would be a more relaxed, sociable and family-friendly event, while also providing customers with the opportunity to talk to teams from across Curo
- **Vision 2034** – Customers have helped shape the future of Curo by providing their thoughts on what we should aspire to be in 2034.
- **Furnished tenancies** – Customers shared their thoughts on us offering furnished tenancies as an option to new Curo customers. From this feedback, we've launched a pilot project, offering 10 tenancies to new customers
- **Greener Homes Survey** – Over 520 customer shared their thoughts on environmental issues and energy-efficiency upgrades to our homes. This feedback has informed how we will invest in our homes moving forward, particularly in terms of energy-efficiency measures. The survey found 52% of surveyed customers would delay their upgrades if it meant they can have energy-saving improvements sooner. It also found 69% of customers surveyed have never calculated their carbon footprint. You can do this on the World Wide Fund for Nature website: [wwf.org.uk/](https://www.wwf.org.uk/)
- **Universal Credit migration** – More than 270 customers helped shape our thinking around benefits migration. They told us that we should prioritise our most vulnerable customers, who may need support in the move to claiming Universal Credit. In a survey, 57% of customers said they'd need support with this move.
- **Mulberry Park** – More than 70 customers shared their thoughts with us on future developments at Mulberry Park. They told us what businesses they'd like to see in the units that will soon be available – 25% of customers would like a pharmacy or Post Office.
- **Customer Commitment** – More than 100 customers have helped to review the latest edition of our Customer Commitment. This helps to shape how we prioritise repairs and communicate with customers.
- **VoiceBox** – Feedback about MyCuro has led to several improvements, including to the password reset process, providing more information on repair status, new functionality to manage Direct Debit payments and the introduction of 'how to' videos.

## VoiceBox competitions

We run regular customer competitions through VoiceBox, such as Curo in Bloom, and annual Easter bonnet and Christmas wreath creative challenges. These competitions provide a bit of fun and an opportunity to interact with other Curo customers. Competitions are held on the VoiceBox forum pages and are easy to enter.



## The VoiceBox App

We launched the VoiceBox App to give customers quicker access to VoiceBox from a smartphone or tablet. Customers only need to log into the app once and can choose to get notifications when new activities are launched.



To join VoiceBox  
scan QR code or visit  
[voicebox.curo-group.co.uk](http://voicebox.curo-group.co.uk)

The only requirement to join is that you're aged over 16 and a Curo customer – that's anyone who lives in or owns a Curo property, or receives a service from Curo. To download the VoiceBox App simply search for 'Curo VoiceBox' in the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.



Left: Olivia taking part in the Easter bonnet competition on VoiceBox  
Right: Danny with his entry for our Christmas wreath competition

## Groups and forums

**Our groups and forums are important ways for customers to get involved and hold us to account.**

Throughout the pandemic and lockdowns, we continued to offer the same engagement groups as before by running them digitally. This past year, our groups and forums became hybrid meetings – offering customers a blend of face-to-face and digital methods to get involved.

This year we've also launched a new Customer Diversity Group, Young Residents Group, completed two scrutiny activities and held several customer workshops examining specific services and looking at our strategies.

We've worked with more than 200 customers across these groups. Each group has been involved with Curo in different ways, learning about what we do, how we operate and seeing what happens behind the scenes.

► **Find out more about each group on the following pages**

### Hearing from our customers **Annie Lammel**



**Q. How have you been involved with Curo over the last 12 months?**

A. I've been fortunate enough to join a few groups: the Estates Partnership Board, Tenancy Compliance Forum and several workshops. I've also taken part in regular activities on VoiceBox.

**Q. Why did you get involved?**

A. I enjoy looking at existing services and seeing how they can be improved. I also enjoy the interaction and stimulation of finding out about subjects that are not part of my daily life.

**Q. What have you (and your neighbourhood) got out of being involved?**

A. We're joining together to make sure our unique site remains cared for, not only for those of us living here now, but for future folks too. It's also good to hear others residents' ideas and learn from their experiences. It's all good growing ground!

**Q. What advice do you have for other residents who want to get involved?**

A. Give it go – you never know what you'll learn and how your life will be touched by others.

## Board Connect

Twice a year we hold Board Connect sessions to build a closer relationship between our residents and the Board. These sessions have the aim of supporting discussion between customers and the Board, and to help ensure that Board decision-making is informed by customers' needs and views.

The hybrid set-up we've established this year has allowed the Board to meet with our residents in different ways. In these sessions residents are given the opportunity to hold conversations and ask questions directly to the Board, with every question given a response.

Themes covered in these sessions included:

- The cost of living crisis
- What Curo should be known for in the future
- What should Curo look like in 2034
- Our priorities for investment
- Rent and Service Charge increases

### Hearing from our customers Qutaybah Ibrahim



**Q. How have you been involved with Curo over the last 12 months?**

A. Having started as an apprentice, I was employed full time at Curo. I've been a resident both growing up with my family and, in the past 12 months, I've just secured my own tenancy.

**Q. Why did you get involved?**

A. I was invited to the Young Resident Group and thought it would be interesting to give my perspective as a new young resident.

**Q. What have you and your neighbourhood got out of being involved?**

A. I've had the chance to get to know others in the group and contributed a few ideas in the meetings. I'm looking forward to seeing how our ideas will now be taken forward by teams at Curo.

**Q. What advice do you have for other residents who want to get involved?**

A. Try a few sessions and see what you think. If you decide it's not for you, then that's fine. But on the flip side, you might find it really constructive and helpful – give it a go!

## Oversight and Scrutiny

Our Oversight and Scrutiny activity went from strength-to-strength this year with two scrutiny activities completed. The Oversight Group continued to meet through hybrid sessions. These groups look at our performance in area including complaints, delving into the feedback that we've received through our customer surveys.

The group has also supported the Exec Team by refreshing the Great Property and Places and Renowned Customer Service strategies. They've given advice and guidance on strategic priorities and their wording.

### Customer Resolution Team scrutiny activity

The first scrutiny activity completed this year examined our Customer Accounts service. The following recommendations were made:

- Reduce the complaints process. Make it quicker for customers and colleagues to use by reducing the workflow actions.
- Allow team responsibility for managing cases. Create a complaints self-assessment form that's visible to customers.
- Prioritise the importance of complaints.

You can view or download our **complaints self-assessment form** [here](#):



### We've listened and taken action:

- Our complaints process has been reduced from three to two stages.
- The number of actions in each case has been reduced from 26 to five. This makes the process shorter and quicker for all our customers and colleagues.
- We've worked in partnership with the Scrutiny group and Ombudsman to ensure the new process is compliant with the new code of conduct.
- Complaint stage letters now contain automated information such as level of complaint, reference number, a link to our policy and a link to the Ombudsman's contact details. This gives colleagues more time to focus on their responses.
- All complaint-related notes are now stored in one place, making it easier to record and find the voice of the customer.
- Teams and business areas are now accountable for the resolution of complaints. Our complaints reporting splits out performance against individual teams and colleagues.
- Complaint owners now monitor complaints all the way through the process, with customer contact and updates from the responsible teams.
- We now have Complaints Champions in each team.

The new complaints process is under a year old but we can already see an improvement in first stage complaints and service satisfaction since implementing the suggestions from the scrutiny activity.



## Empty Homes team scrutiny activity

The second scrutiny activity examined our Empty Homes team. Here are just a few of the recommendations that were made:

- Simplify the customer process.
- Clearly communicate at the start and end of the tenancy the condition we expect the property to be in.
- Remove non-standard light fittings.
- Latex the floors to cover Bitumen.
- Paint all walls the same colour.
- Offer vouchers for a range of suppliers to pay for decoration.
- Upskill carpenters to install fire doors internally.



## We've listened and taken action:



- Simplified customer process. During 2023-24, the team will be looking at how we can improve the information we give to customers who are starting their tenancy in a Curo home.
- Clear communication. In 2023-24, we hope to formalise a process for property condition at the end of tenancy, including a formal recharge process.
- Remove non-standard light fixings. We already do this, but it needs to be added to the Empty Homes Standard, which will be rewritten to include other requested scrutiny changes.
- Latex flooring. The cost of employing two operatives to carry out this work has been added to the budget for 2023-24.
- Painting. We've added extra funding to the budget to ensure walls are painted the same colour.
- Decoration vouchers. We now offer e-vouchers for a range of stores, including B&Q.
- Fire doors. We are reviewing how we carry out remedial fire safety work and hope to bring it in-house in 2023-24.



## Complaints Review Forum

We know customers want to understand more about complaints, for instance how we make decisions and how our process works. The Complaints Review Forum (CRF) was set up to make sure our process for managing complaints is open, transparent, fair and consistent.

At each CRF meeting, a sample of anonymised complaints is reviewed by the group. Members decide whether we've handled each complaint correctly and in line with our policies.



### What's been achieved through our work with the Complaints Review Forum?

- Members continue to review anonymised complaints cases on a quarterly basis.
- Of the cases reviewed in 2022/23, 100% were given a 'pass' by group members.
- Members ensured the new complaints process is compliant with the new updates to the Housing Ombudsman code.
- Members reviewed the scrutiny report on the complaints team and discussed the actions, the biggest being:
  - The complaints process was reduced from three to two stages.
- Feedback from CRF discussions included:
  - Highlighting the importance of damp and mould cases.
  - Highlighting to customers the importance of contents insurance.
  - Quality monitoring Stage 1 complaints to ensure that we can identify whether colleagues require additional training.
  - All complaints escalated to Stage 2 are now quality monitored to ensure that we identify whether any errors have been made at Stage 1 and, as such, are included in the Stage 2 responses.

We also completed an in-depth root cause analysis of damp and mould cases. Our understanding and learning is ongoing.

### What's next... ?

1. Working with the group to identify more areas for further root cause analysis.
2. Reviewing customer data and how we can get more customers involved at Curo.
3. Reviewing Community Grants and how more customers can access these.

## Disability Action Group

We serve a diverse population of customers and our data tells us that 22% of our customers have a physical or mental disability.

The Disability Action Group was formed in 2019 to ensure customers with a disability can help us adapt and design our services to meet all our customers' needs.



### What's been achieved through our work with the Disability Action Group?



- Members reviewed the scrutiny report on our specialist repairs team, reviewing actions and providing insights on the new team structure and how this could work moving forward.
- Members reviewed our housing management system (QL), with a focus on recording data on disabilities and how this data can be used more effectively to tailor services to customer needs.
- Members reviewed the latest edition of our Customer Commitment, offering their insight into repairs timescales and service offers for customers with disabilities.
- Members also reviewed several pilot schemes, including:
  - Our Customer Navigators (who help customers resolve more complex issues or enquiries).
  - Our approach to fire doors in homes that have been adapted.
  - Our 'person-centred approach to fire safety', discussing the impacts of 'stay put' and 'evacuate' policies.
  - Our approach to sharing information with stakeholders, such as the fire and police services.

### What's next... ?

1. Discussion around employability options for disabled customers with the Work Wise team.
2. Review of customer data and how we can get more customers involved at Curo.
3. Review of Community Grants and how more customers can access these.

## Tenancy Compliance Forum

On the back of a successful scrutiny activity, we launched our Tenancy Compliance Forum to build stronger relationships between our customers who've experienced any form of anti-social behaviour and the Curo colleagues who manage these cases.

Members are involved in discussing how we can improve our services, communication and processes, as well as reviewing anonymised cases and providing their recommendations for improvements.



It's a great opportunity for face-to-face question-and-answer sessions with tenancy compliance managers

*Group member*

### What's been achieved through our work with the Tenancy Compliance Forum?



- Of the cases reviewed, 60% were given a 'pass' by the group members.
- Group members' understanding of the complexity of Tenancy Compliance and the reasons behind cases being managed as they are has increased significantly.
- The case reviews and discussions that follow give our Compliance team customer insight into what they do well and ways to improve their case management.
- Feedback from group discussions included:
  - Provide more training to colleagues to ensure a consistent approach to case management.
  - Reduce the number of staff involved with each case to provide clarity to customers.
  - Prioritise resolving cases in a timely manner and continue to provide more communication with customers.
- Provide mental health awareness and allyship training to the team. This has led to workshops with Bath Mind and Stand Against Racism & Inequality: SARI.
- Develop pilot schemes over the coming year, focusing on neighbourhood mediation and victim support.

### What's next... ?

1. Review of Tenancy Compliance patch areas.
2. Review the actions from the Tenancy Compliance Scrutiny Activity.
3. Develop how we offer victim support.



## Home Improvement Forum

In the past year we launched our Home Improvement Forum, bringing together Curo colleagues and customers who are interested in how we deliver home improvements, such as kitchens, bathrooms, windows and heating systems.

The group is still in its early stages but has a clear plan for continuing to engage with customers over the months ahead. Its aim is to improve service delivery and communications with customers.



### What's been achieved through our work with the Home Improvement Forum?

- Members have reviewed the consents form and suggested improvements to make it easier for customers to use.
- Members have reviewed the Disabled Funding Grant (DFG) process and how Curo interact with stakeholders and customers during the process, offering ideas for improvements.
- Members suggested providing a leaflet or pack at the beginning of a tenancy to inform customers of what they need consent for. This is currently being worked on by the Asset Management team and will go live in 2023-24
- Members discussed the possibility of charging customers for asbestos surveys if one is needed when a customer has requested consent to make a change to their homes. We decided to continue to not charge customers for this.
- Members asked if portable hot tubs could be considered for consent as at the moment they are not. We will be reviewing this in 2023-24 .
- Members asked if Curo could work with B&NES to create a separate register for adapted properties to save customers the process of applying for a DFG grant. We are currently investigating whether this is possible.

### What's next... ?

1. Reviewing our consents process.
2. Reviewing how Disability Funding Grant requests are processed and acted on (including timescales).



## Repairs Engagement Group

We started this group when we began looking into new ways our Repairs service could operate. The group have a few areas of focus, which are:

- Review the way the Repairs team works and how it can improve.
- Improve the service we offer on timely repairs.
- Improve the efficiency of communicating with customers.
- Discuss what the future looks like for Curo's Responsive Repairs Service.



### What's been achieved through our work with the Repairs Engagement Group?



- Group members' understanding of the complexity of repairs and the reasons behind jobs being managed has increased significantly.
- The group completed a review of how Curo prioritise repairs, ensuring the most important issues get a tradesperson first.
- A drive to obtain more information when a customer reports a repair to Curo, and then using this when scheduling a job to ensure vulnerable customers get what they need on a first visit.
- Piloting and approving new technology such as HostCom to improve repairs efficiency and effectiveness when visiting properties to carry out maintenance.
- Feedback from group discussions included:
  - Reviewing our Customer Commitment and which repairs fall into P1, P2 and P3.
  - Providing more training to colleagues to ensure a consistency in recording repair information.
  - Consulting on Curo's damp and mould strategies, including expected time frames, solutions and communication with customers.

### What's next... ?

1. Review our changes to how we manage damp and mould.
2. Review communication methods in the Repairs team.
3. Discuss how we can 'get things done right first time'.
4. Complete a resident scrutiny activity focusing on what excellent repairs and maintenance looks like.

## Young Residents' Group

We recently launched our Young Residents' Group, focusing on younger people, aged 16-25, who have their own tenancy or are living in a Curo property.

This group aims to bring together younger customers so that we can consult and collaborate with them on living in a Curo property and our future service delivery, and so that they can help us to better understand how our services can be adapted to be accessible for everyone.



### What's been achieved through our work with the Young Residents' Group



- Successful creation of a space where young residents can feed back to Curo and present ideas to ensure our practices are relevant to all ages.
- Identification of key areas in Curo where young residents need more support.
- We've started developing a helpline for new tenants, to allow young customers to reach out and ask for support if needed.

### What's next... ?

1. Investigate ways in which Curo could be more welcoming to young residents, including through our communication and information when suggesting a place to live.
2. Explore the option of a helpline for new young residents.
3. Continue to grow the group.

## Customer Diversity Group

**The Customer Diversity Group was a new engagement group for 2022. Approximately 14% of our customers identify as Black, Asian or from Minority Ethnic Communities.**

We want all of our customers to have a voice, yet this demographic is under-represented in our groups and forums.

We want to make sure all of our services are designed around the needs of all our customers.

Pictured below: Group member Sumira Syed



### What's been achieved through our work with the Customer Diversity Group?

- Members discussed limited understanding of the anti-social behaviour (ASB) processes at Curo.
- Members discussed additional equipment needed on larger estates to deter ASB, such as CCTV and heavy-duty communal doors.
- Members discussed colleague training at Curo and used their own experiences to help shape future training programmes.



Pictured above:  
Online Customer Diversity Group meeting

### What's next... ?

1. Working with the group to create and review guidelines around ASB process expectations.
2. Group members to hold an event for Eid, aimed at bringing communities together and providing a learning space to find out more about people from different backgrounds.
3. Review colleague training and look at what's changed as a result of the feedback.

## Sheltered Housing Older Persons Group (SHOP)

This group's area of interest focuses on Curo's Older Persons Service. Members are asked to review and approve policies and procedures, and are consulted on changes in the way services are delivered.



### What's been achieved through our work with SHOP members?

- We make sure a senior Curo colleague attends every session – this has included Curo's Chief Executive, Chair of the Board, Director of Planned & Commercial Works and Executive Director of Property Services.
- SHOP members have given valuable insight into community schemes intended to improve the digital skills of the sheltered residents living in our communities.
- Many issues were discussed by members, who provided us with helpful feedback to shape service delivery.
- Members spoke to several teams in Curo, asking relevant questions about their services to suggest solutions to performance issues.
- Members were informed and oversaw the progress of starting to roll out new, more modern alarms for the sheltered and Independent Living service residents.
- Fire safety talks were held with SHOP members to discuss Curo's fire safety standards and recent legal changes.
- Members discussed issues raised due to the cost of living and how communities could reduce costs.
- Members have fed back on several topics including:
  - Shaping future projects in sheltered and Extra Care housing.
  - Approving letters and other communications sent to customers.
  - Discussing our new damp and mould policies and protocols.
  - Reviewing our digital processes and their ease of use.
  - Looking at new and different ways to communicate with non-digital customers.



## Estates Partnership Board

The Estates Partnership Board is made up of customers who take an active interest in our open spaces and services. They advise on what works well, how we can improve and invite guests, including contractors, to discuss service delivery.

Pictured: Members of the Estates Partnership Board discussed the No Mow May initiative

### What's been achieved through our work with the Estates Partnership Board?

- Members have reviewed our new Estates Standard booklet, making it significantly shorter and easier to read - this can now be downloaded directly from the Curo's website: [www.curo-group.co.uk/estates](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/estates)
- They are a critical part of the review process for the Estates grants funding.
- Members have approved 22 Community Grants this year.
- Members have looked at a range of issues over the year, sharing their insights and providing ideas on how to overcome problems with our contractors and our Estates team.
- Members have discussed environmental issues and looked at initiatives such as No Mow May, discussing the positive effects on nature.
- Members have been involved in the More Trees For B&NES initiative and discussed potential sites for planting.
- Members have also looked at our Greener Homes Survey results and discussed the findings.





## Homeownership Engagement Group

In December 2020 we launched our Homeownership Engagement Group to build a stronger relationship between leaseholders and Curo colleagues. The group has come through its early stages and this year became open to all home owners.

Members are regularly involved in reviewing homeowner customer feedback and service satisfaction scores with a view to improving our services, communications and processes.

Members also tackle these important questions:

- How easy is it to deal with Curo?
- How do we listen to homeowners' views and act on them?
- How can we make sure Service Charges represent value for money?



### What's been achieved through our work with the Homeownership Engagement Group?

- Group members mapped out the customer journey around Section 20, improving communication between Curo and our leaseholders.
- They've helped to plan the future of the Commercial Property Team and looked at how it communicates with customers.
- They've helped to identify and correct mistakes in software analysis of properties.
- We've created a Shared Ownership Forum, which is looking at the process for welcoming new customers.
- Future plans for the forum include investigating how we can best communicate with homeowners on Service Charges.

We understand the need to review our processes and communications so that they are clearer and that we work more closely together with our homeowners.

### What's next... ?

1. Review the language used in correspondence with homeowners.
2. Review the Homeowners' Handbook and Management Charges Guide.
3. Review team efficiency and structure.
4. Review impacts of forthcoming legislation and how this will affect our homeowners.

# Workshops and focus groups

Every year we run a series of workshops and focus groups allowing customers to collaborate with us on specific time-sensitive pieces of work. This year we've seen an increase in customers wanting to get involved in these projects, which are often more strategic. Here are some of the ways customers have been involved this year:

- We held a series of customer service workshops in February and March in which our customers helped us to shape our new plan for colleagues' customer service training by focusing on these key questions:

- What does great customer service look like to you?
- What are the signs of bad customer service to look out for?
- What should we start, stop and continue doing?

- Our annual rent increase workshop provided customers with updates on the Government's consultation on rent increases and a briefing on Service Charges. Customers then completed several tasks and discussions aimed at collecting their views and improving the service for all the customers. Some of the items covered included:

- An exercise with colleagues about how Curo prioritise spending on homes and services.
- Customer involvement on management charges and proposals to make them fairer.
- Co-creating our new rent increase letters, making the information more easy to read and understand.
- Customers were also able to get all of their questions and queries answered about the upcoming increase.
- Providing feedback on how we best communicate what we have discussed to all our customers.

The Better Social Housing Review was set up in June this year by the National Housing Federation and Chartered Institute of Housing to look at the issues and quality of social housing in England.

The review brought together an independent and diverse panel of experts, all with direct experience of social housing. Together they have been travelling around the country speaking to tenant groups and customer-facing staff in their communities about their experiences in social housing and ideas on what could help improve it.

In October, Curo hosted the panel at The Hub in Mulberry Park, providing customers with the opportunity to share their experiences directly with the panel members and to help shape the Better Social Housing Review.

You can find out more about the review here: [www.bettersocialhousingreview.org.uk](http://www.bettersocialhousingreview.org.uk)

In November we ran some interactive sessions reviewing the Curo website, which is one of the most important ways we communicate with our customers. We asked customers co-create the latest version of the website, to ensure it works for all our customers. During these sessions, customers were tasked with answering these key questions:

- What key tasks do residents need to do on the Curo website?
- How should we prioritise these?
- How do residents do these tasks now?

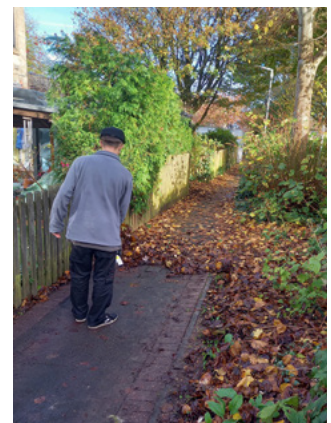
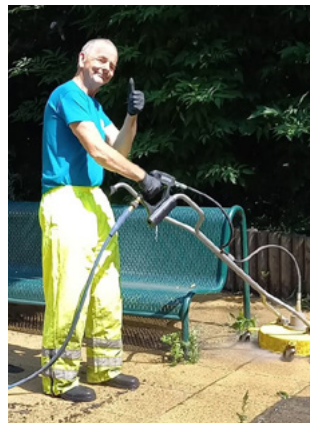
## Getting involved locally

We want to help local communities thrive, grow and become self-sufficient. We've helped residents connect with each other digitally and in face-to-face sessions called Community Consultations. We've helped residents learn new digital skills, providing training on Zoom and Google Meet. We've also worked closely with residents to support and build on the brilliant skills and talents that every community already has.

We take this approach when helping residents set up and grow their own residents' groups providing them with resources, our time and materials to help recruit members.

We offer in-house training and support so that these groups can become self-sufficient and led by the communities they serve.

Pictured below: Our Estates team have worked with local communities to improve shared areas.



## What's been achieved over the year?

- Residents' associations and local groups have continued to help us understand customers' priorities for the improvements they'd most like to see across their estates and shared areas.
- We've kept in touch with local councillors, the police, local authority teams and other stakeholders across our larger estates.
- We've seen a steady increase in initiatives such as tree and wildflower planting, litter picking and rubbish clearances as more customers have looked to improve their neighbourhoods.
- We've planted several small fruit tree orchards in our communities this year.
- The trees were planted with the help of residents, councillors and even a local Brownie group.
- The trees planted were a mixture of apple, pear and cherry, which look beautiful in summer.
- We've supported several new community-based gardening groups through our Community Grants scheme.



# Community Grants

We offer Curo Community Grants for our residents who'd like to apply for money for neighbourhood or community projects.

Residents can also access the Curo Community Pot which is funded by Travis Perkins Managed Services.

This year we've supported 22 community projects through a total of more than £10,000 worth of grant funding.



Pictured above, top: Boys from Bath City Youth Team celebrate at their Football Festival event. Bottom: Customers with Santa at The Hub's annual Christmas event

## Some of the projects we've supported over the year include:

Bath City Youth – football festival	£500
Meadow Court – community garden	£311
Phoenix House – memorial garden	£289
Action for Children	£500
Autumn Brook – bug hotels and nature activity sessions	£450
Toynbee Road – gardening club equipment	£250
Henrietta Street – community garden	£209
St John's Court – singing session	£405
Rosewell Court – balcony garden baskets	£194
Invent IT – Inventor of the Year competition	£500
The Hub – summer petting zoo	£500

# Curo's BIG Get Together

Each year we hold a conference for customers to hear more about the work going on at Curo and to ask questions directly to colleagues from across the many Curo services. While the pandemic prevented us from meeting up in person in previous years, it didn't stop us in 2022. We held our biggest ever event and gave customers the opportunity to get involved.

The turnout at Curo's BIG Get Together event was impressive, with more than 400 Curo customers and stakeholders attending.

The live customer audience heard directly from:

- Daisy Gaunt, Chair of the Customer Oversight Group
- Liz Potter, Chair of the Board
- Victor da Cunha, Chief Executive
- Julie Evans, Executive Director of Property Services
- Paul Harris, Executive Director of Customer Service

They talked about:

- The challenges facing Curo.
- What improvements had been made in the past 12 months.
- How teams are listening to and learning from our customers.
- How we've performed over the past year.
- What the future holds for Curo.

On 10 September 2022 we held our first Curo's BIG Get Together event.

Planning started in April when more than 300 customers helped to come up with ideas for the event, including the venue, date, timings and what should be on offer to customers. We listened to this group of customers and came up with the concept for the BIG Get Together. It would be a more relaxed, sociable and family-friendly event, while also providing customers with the opportunity to talk to teams from across Curo, share their ideas with us and hold us to account.

As part of the presentations on the day, we held a one-minute silence in honour of Her Majesty The Queen, who had recently passed away. The event went ahead as planned after discussions with colleagues and customers. Customers had tickets for either a morning session, running from 10am-12.30pm, or an afternoon session, from 1pm-3.30pm.

Curo colleagues from all our services, from Repairs to Independent Lives, had stalls at the events. Each Curo team gave customers a snapshot of the services they offer, providing handouts with useful tips, and customers could take time to talk to them and get answers to their questions.



Pictured above: Daisy Gaunt, Chair of the Customer Oversight Group, talks to customers at Curo's BIG Get Together in September 2022.



The panel then took part in a Q&A session where they answered questions from the audience live on the day.

The main topics included:

- Governance at Curo
- Communicating with older customers
- Rent caps
- Gutter cleaning
- Service charges
- Cost of living
- Lawn and hedge maintenance
- Reducing the number of empty homes
- Reducing waste
- Lead piping in blocks
- Responding to customer survey feedback
- Rising costs for cleaning
- The difficulties of housing people with addictions
- Retro fitting, including solar panels and insulation

Curo's teams were joined by colleagues from Avon and Somerset Police, B&NES Home Search Team, B&NES Libraries team and the Centre for Sustainable Energy, who gave information on their services. Overall, there were more than 20 stalls at the event. There were also lots of fun activities to enjoy.

To encourage more families to come along, we introduced exciting activities such as donkey rides, face painting, bouncy castles and a petting zone with rabbits and goats. There were also lots of games on the service stalls, inspiring young people to find out more about what we do. Here are some photos from the day:



**Watch** Q&A sessions from last years' BIG Get Together event  
Scan QR code or visit:  
[www.curo-group.co.uk/cbgt2022](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/cbgt2022)



Last years' event was our most ambitious and successful annual residents' event to date and it was the first time we'd moved the event away from our head office at the Maltings, Bath. At the request of residents, we held the event at The Hub. Customers had the chance to enjoy all The Hub has to offer, including its event space and cafe, and were also treated to a tasty BBQ with free burgers, hotdogs and hot and cold drinks. This event really wouldn't have been possible without the hard work of colleagues and the customers who were there on the day.









## What's next?

# Using customer feedback we'll be looking to deliver the following during 2023-2024.

## 2023 annual residents' event

It's become a tradition for us to hold our annual residents' event in September, and this year will be no different. Customers have already told us they want to know more about our plans for the future, how we manage complaints and to hear from a variety of teams across Curo. We're looking to improve on the success of our first BIG Get Together event, with customers helping to shape the 2023 event.

## Community Catch-ups

Following a successful trial in February and March 2023, we launched our Community Catch-ups in April 2023.

**Community Catch-ups make resident engagement even more accessible by bringing the Resident Engagement team to all corners of our communities.**

They provide residents with the opportunity to speak to the Resident Engagement team, focusing on local issues and how to get involved with Curo.

We'll actively seek feedback and comments from residents who live in the communities and share this with teams from across Curo.

We'll encourage resident groups operating in the neighbourhood to attend Community Catch-ups.

We'll also work with stakeholders such as B&NES, Avon & Somerset Constabulary and Bristol City Council, plus many others, to ensure these sessions are well attended on our estates, where we share responsibilities with other agencies.

## More opportunities to get involved

We want our services to be accessible and designed around the needs of all our customers.

**Working alongside our current groups, we'll also be looking to host a series of new workshops in 2023-24**

More opportunities to get involved in resident engagement is at the heart of everything we do. We're confident that the work carried out this year and beyond will link directly to the new wider Curo strategy that will be launched in 2024.

Over the next 12 months our Resident Engagement work will be linked to the creation of our new strategies around ICT, communities and homes strategies. Look out for more ways that you can help shape these during 2023-24.



Pictured above: Community Police at Curo's BIG Get Together at The Hub, Mulberry Park, Bath.

## What are customers are telling us

Every year in February and March we consult with all our customers to review the opportunities provided by the Resident Engagement team. We collect the feedback and opinions from our customers with a view to:

- Improving the engagement options for all our customers.
- Providing topics and content which our customers are interested in.
- Identifying how satisfied engaged customers are with their options.
- Reviewing both the positive and negative perceptions of customers.

# 82%



of engaged customers are  
satisfied or very satisfied...

► ...that Curo gives them the  
opportunity to make their  
views known

The most frequently used  
words to describe the engagement  
framework were:

**Good** (level of options)

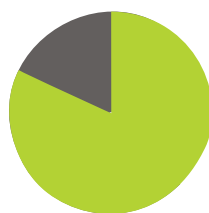
**Always** (knowing what's going on)

**Getting** (people together)

**Opportunities** (lots of them)

**Views / problems** (chances to share)

# 85%



of customers found  
their chosen Resident  
Engagement Activity

easy to join

# 84%

of customers are  
satisfied or very  
satisfied...



► ...with the resident  
engagement activity  
that they attended



More than...

180

...customers who shared their thoughts on resident engagement are customers with no previous experience of the opportunities in Resident Engagement Framework at Curo, classed as 'non-engaged' customers.

81%



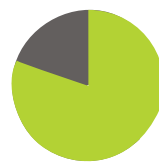
of these non-engaged customers are...



...satisfied or very satisfied...

...that Curo gives them the opportunity to make their views known

79%



of these non-engaged customers are...

...satisfied or very satisfied... 

VOICEBOX

...with VoiceBox as a way of providing feedback to us.



We asked non-engaged customers who took part in the survey if they'd like any information on our engagement opportunities so they could get involved.

We received a total of

405

requests from non-engaged customers for more information about our engagement groups.

120 requests for the three most popular engagement groups:

- ▶ 41: Disability Action Group
- ▶ 40: ad hoc events on your estate
- ▶ 39: Home Improvement Forum

## How to get involved?

If you'd like to get more involved with Curo or your community, you can either:

- email [voicebox@curo-group.co.uk](mailto:voicebox@curo-group.co.uk),
- fill in the form online at [www.curo-group.co.uk/getinvolved](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/getinvolved)
- give us a call on 01225 366000.



To download your menu  
scan QR code or visit:  
[www.curo-group.co.uk/menu](http://www.curo-group.co.uk/menu)





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in an alternative format please  
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