



RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024



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Front cover:
A Curo resident enjoys one of the family activities at last year’s Big Get Together annual event.



Introduction

Welcome to our Resident Engagement Annual Report for 2023/24. The past year brought new opportunities as we focused on listening more to our customers. But there were also challenges. Like last year, we faced rising costs for materials, fuel and services, which outpaced the rent increases allowed by the Government.

Balancing funding to meet the expectations of customers and Government was difficult, with increased demand for repairs, and more calls about damp and mould, adding pressure. We struggled to keep up due to high costs and a shortage of skilled workers, leading to delays and complaints. I'm sorry if you were affected.

Despite these challenges, resident engagement has been key. We partnered with residents to shape our service priorities, helping build stronger relationships and services. This focus on resident engagement remains central, supported by our new Resident Engagement Strategy and approach to the Consumer Standards. This report highlights our progress, including improvements to repairs, communication and customer interaction through the Oversight Group and the new Customer Experience Committee.

We've expanded local engagement through Community Catch-up sessions, leading to more community grants, action days and volunteer opportunities. We've heard from more residents than ever, and we encourage you to join these sessions or invite our team to visit your area.

I hope you find this report valuable and consider getting involved. Your participation helps shape a better Curo for everyone. If you've already taken part, thank you. If not, I urge you to give it a try – it will make a difference for you and all our customers.



Victor da Cunha
Chief Executive Officer



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 – 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, either scan the below QR code or visit fill in the form at curo-group.co.uk/getinvolved, or send us an email at: VoiceBox@curo-group.co.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.



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



Hannah Gavin
Resident Engagement
Coordinator



Neil Rogers
Resident Engagement
Coordinator

The year in numbers

The number of customers actively involved with helping to shape our services has increased over the last 12 months.

- ▶ 3,595 customers in 2023/24
- ▶ 3,414 customers in 2022/23

Activity	Frequency	Customers engaged
VoiceBox	All hours, 24/7	▶ 2,555
Curo's Big Get Together	Annually	▶ 428
Community Catch-ups	Weekly	▶ 62 communities ▶ 398 customers
Board Connect	Every six months	▶ 8
Oversight Group	Quarterly	▶ 12
Scrutiny Activity Group	Start every 12 weeks	▶ 30
Complaints Review Forum	Quarterly	▶ 17
Estates Partnership Board	Quarterly	▶ 19
Homeowner Engagement Group	Quarterly	▶ 42
Tenancy Compliance Forum	Quarterly	▶ 18
Disability Action Group	Quarterly	▶ 27
BAME Group	Quarterly	▶ 4
Young Persons Group	Quarterly	▶ 6
SHOP	Every six weeks	▶ 16
BSH Workshops		▶ 15
	TOTAL	▶ 3,595

VoiceBox

VoiceBox is our online community for customers. It continues to grow and provides us with insight and feedback as more customers join and get involved.

We post regular activities on VoiceBox for customers to complete. These cover 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, making it convenient for most of our customers. Through VoiceBox customers are rewarded for their participation through free monthly and quarterly prize draws.



Above: winners of our monthly Voicebox competition

VoiceBox in numbers

The number of Curo customers on VoiceBox has increased year-on-year...

2,555

▶ Active members now taking part

We've rewarded more than...

▶ 20 

prize winners through VoiceBox

Over... 50

different customer activities, including forum threads and quick responses, held since April 2023

In addition...

we've received over

7,400

comments on survey responses through VoiceBox

What VoiceBox members are telling us:

83%

of members are satisfied



with VoiceBox as a way of providing feedback to us

81%



of members find VoiceBox easy to use

81%



of members find VoiceBox engaging or very engaging

Key achievements

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

Feedback has helped shape the content for various groups within our framework, for example our Disability Action Group, Customer 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.

- **Curo's Big Get Together** More than 320 customers helped to come up with ideas for our annual event, including the venue, date, timings and what was on offer to customers. Customers' feedback helped us create a sociable and family-friendly event, while also providing customers with the opportunity to talk to teams from across Curo.
- **Scrutiny Activities – Repairs** More than 300 VoiceBox members shared their thoughts on 'What does good like' when thinking about the repairs service at Curo.

The feedback and experiences shared were explored during the scrutiny activity and supported by Scrutiny Group members, who prioritised their improvement suggestions.

- **Better Social Housing Review** More than 40 customers shared their thoughts on the Better Social Housing Review. We looked to capture the thoughts of our customers on Curo as it is now and in the future, so that we could respond appropriately to the recommendations in the Better Social Housing Review.
- **Consumer Standards** More than 80 customers contributed to our consultation about the new Consumer Regulation Standards proposed by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). Customer feedback included:

- Overall, they were positive about the proposals and felt like they focused on the right areas. Depending on the specific Standard they were commenting on, over 93% of our customers agreed with each of the Standards. We heard comments such as: "It's obvious, of course we want this," and "I'm a bit surprised these are not already in law."
- There were some areas where they'd like the RSH to be more specific, such as defining words like 'fairness' and 'respect'.
- They had concerns that the RSH is expecting housing associations to do things which they don't have the powers and resources to do. We heard comments such as: "[Housing associations] should not be expected to do the work of police and emergency services."
- They felt that the Standards, and the consultation on them, had not been pitched at the right level. We heard comments such as, "Massively disconnected from the audience it was written for," and "How the hell can older tenants understand all this?"

We provided this feedback to the RSH through their formal consultation portal and look forward to the results being published early in 2024/25.

- **Building Safety Engagement Strategy** More than 50 customers helped create our building safety strategy which covers how we'll make sure everyone living in our three tallest buildings are kept informed and able to participate in decision-making about the safety of their building.
- **Scrutiny Activities – Communication at Curo** VoiceBox members provided details of their experiences and ideas for improvements during the Communication scrutiny. These were reviewed by our Scrutiny Group members and considered during the scrutiny activity.

VoiceBox competitions

We run regular customer competitions through VoiceBox, such as Curo in Bloom, and our 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.



Left: Curo in Bloom. An opportunity for customers to show off their glorious garden displays and win prizes.



Left: Curo Community Awards. An opportunity for customers to nominate a fantastic neighbour of community.

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.



Join the conversation in VoiceBox today. Scan QR code or visit 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.



Groups and forums

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

This year we've continued to run a range of groups, completed 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.



Neil and Joanna

Board Connect

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

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 include:
- Relationships with customers
 - Communicating with you
 - Disability
 - Contractors/quality of repairs
 - Personalisation of services
 - Consumer regulation

Oversight Group and Scrutiny

Our customer Oversight Group and Scrutiny activity continued this year.

- Our Repairs team underwent scrutiny during the first half of 2023/24
- The Oversight Group requested a shift of focus to the theme of ‘Communication at Curo’ for the second half of 2023/24

Throughout the year the Oversight Group continued to meet, reviewing our performance, customer satisfaction scores and focusing on areas including complaints, customer feedback and service delivery.

The Oversight Group has also supported creating the new strategy at Curo, providing feedback on strategic priorities, strategic goals and their wording.

And finally, the Oversight Group changed the way they review scrutiny actions.

This process has enabled the group to find quick wins and hold directors to account for improvement suggestions created through scrutiny activities.

At the end of 2023/24

We have 59 open scrutiny actions. Of these, our directors have assessed that 25 have been completed since November 2023. These are reviewed by our Oversight Group and Audit & Assurance Committee.

Repairs Team Scrutiny Activity

The first scrutiny activity completed this year examined our repairs service over a 20-week period with forty-two customer improvement suggestions put forward. Since the completion of the scrutiny activity, 21 actions have been marked as ‘Completed’ by both our Oversight Group and the Audit & Assurance Committee. Here’s just some of the recommendations that were made and updates on the action taken:

You said: Implement inspection appointments for repairs, to make customer expectations more realistic about first repair appointments.

We did: Customers are now informed of these appointments when they are booked. A total of 642 visits were booked as inspections in January and February. Of these, only 196 were not completed during the visit and required an additional appointment.

You said: Review if scaffolding could sit with the repairs team rather than with the specialist repairs team.

We did: We’ve recruited new colleagues into scaffolding management roles which are handled by our repairs team. The appropriate scaffolding is arranged for each job in advance and then dismantled promptly. The result of this change is a significant reduction in rental costs and wastage, leading to a cost saving of around £116,000.

You said: Increase the spot checks on site by Repair Team Leaders.

We did: As a result of this suggestion, two new lead operatives have been assigned to check the work of other operatives. These roles aim to reduce the number of repeat issues and customer visits. They are expected to check around 5% of all jobs carried out. This equates to 1,800 checks. Since November 2023, 568 checks have been completed.

You said: Review automated appointment reminders. All communication should contain the repairs reference number.

We did: We’ve reviewed the automated appointment reminders sent to customers. We provide text notifications when a job is booked, a reminder a week before, a reminder the day before and a call-text on the morning of the job. With this new system, we’ve completed 7,851 jobs in January and February. ‘No access’ has decreased by 3%, now standing at 6.71%.

You said: Customers should be contacted promptly on the day of their repair and it should be rebooked by 10am or 2.30pm that day.

We did: Customers will now be called by 10am for affected morning repairs, or by 2.30pm for affected afternoon repairs. This has had a positive impact on performance, with moved repairs in January at 0.59%. We’ve also employed an administrative colleague to call customers the day before an appointment.

You said: Review how trades can check on customers while in their homes.

We did: Trades colleagues have a series of questions to complete at the end of their job, covering the property, the customers, and any concerns regarding welfare or support needs. To date, 65 properties have been identified through this checking process, then being passed onto the Tenancy Management teams.

What’s next?

With our Oversight Group receiving regular updates from the repairs team on the progress made with scrutiny actions. The improvement suggestions will also contribute to the Repairs Review, which is scheduled to take place between July and November 2024.

Communication Scrutiny Activity

The second scrutiny activity examined communication across Curo with several areas of focus, including:

- Reviewing the promise and delivery culture at Curo
- The perception of Curo colleagues as being scared of customers
- Barriers between teams/internal contact methods
- Communication to customers (increasing this and points of breakdown)
- Increasing customer touch points in service journeys

Through this activity our group of customers spoke to nine different teams at Curo, interviewing them in groups for four-six weeks at a time, while exploring lots of different communication scenarios and techniques used.

Given the quantity of data, themes and colleague sentiment, this scrutiny activity will roll over into 2024/25 and will conclude in June/ July 2025.

For more details on our scrutiny activities and the improvement carried out. Either scan the QR code below or visit - curo-group.co.uk/yousaidwedid



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 2023/24, 90% were given a 'pass' by group members, compared to 100% in 2022/23.
- Members ensured the new complaints process is compliant with the updates to the Housing Ombudsman code.
- Members reviewed the updated letters that are sent at various stages of the complaints process.
- Feedback from CRF discussions included:
 - Highlighting the importance of damp and mould cases.
 - Reviewed the compensation policy and procedure for leaseholders.
 - 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.
 - Adding timeline in complaints notes for a fuller picture.

- Better admin of logging pictures about complaints.
- The complaints process: removal of the holding stages reviewed and monitored to ensure the relevant teams take accountability, ensuring that works are scheduled, customer contacted by preferred method of contact and notes updated.
- Discussed language barriers.
- Discussed major works, why these are not always done when the property is empty.
- Discussed new complaints dashboard that allows all areas to monitor their complaints.
- Discussed how we have ringfenced the Stage 1 process to fall under Customer Resolutions, instead of Customer Contact Team, to ensure consistency with approach.

What's next?

Reviewing customer data and how we can get more customers involved at Curo.

- Ongoing review of the new complaints dashboard.
- Capturing customer vulnerabilities and mental health, so that we can make reasonable adjustments.
- Updated Complaints Policy and Procedure, in line with changes to the Housing Ombudsman Complaint Handling Code.
- Continue to meet with the Complaints Review Forum group every quarter to discuss anonymised complaints and update where any changes have been implemented for feedback.
- Suggest service areas which caused/ facilitated the complaints to attend the meetings linked to the anonymised complaints, so that they can receive feedback on how they performed in resolving the complaint and implement changes where necessary.

Disability Action Group

The Disability Action Group has been in place since 2019. Its primary purpose has been for customers with a disability to help us adapt and design our services, ensuring that they meet everyone's needs. We serve a diverse population of customers, and our data tells us that 18.53% of our customers have a physical or mental disability.

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

- Members reviewed Curo's new 10-year strategic plan.
- Members reviewed and discussed the new colleague training platform, talking about equality training and allyship.
- Members discussed communication and how we are making our services accessible to all.
- Members reviewed the survey conducted by the Customer Accounts team focusing on benefits and help accessing them.

Members talked to the Development team:

- They reviewed how they plan and design new accessible homes and suggested improvements.
- Looked at how a home may be accessible, but the estate isn't (parking spaces, steps etc).
- Looked at accessibility of utilities, boilers windows and worktops.

• Members talked with B&NES about:

- Allocation of properties
- Discussed amendment to the Policy H7 (housing), regarding accessibility standard requirements relating to M4(2) Accessible and M4(3) wheelchair user dwellings.

What's next?

- Investigate ways in which Curo could be more welcoming to residents with disabilities, including through our communication, the information we provide and the services we offer.
- Continue to grow the group and evolve with the needs of the participants.
- Identify what topics customers with disabilities care most about and find ways to improve these within the business.
- Introduce members into other involvement groups such as Scrutiny and Oversight.

Tenancy Compliance Forum

Our Tenancy Compliance Forum has entered its third year and is one of the cornerstones of the resident engagement offering. The group continues to build stronger relationships between 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.

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

- Group members' understanding of the complexity of Tenancy Compliance has continued to grow. They learn new facts every meeting, contributing to a great discussion between customers and colleagues about cases and Curo's code of practice.
- Of the cases reviewed, **87.5%** were given a 'pass' by the group members.
- The group has assessed anonymised fraud, hate crime, ASB and tenancy breach cases, reading each from start to finish and assessing Curo's success in supporting our customers through those cases.
- Customers have provided crucial information based on their own experiences, which has improved leadership's knowledge and been shared with colleagues.
- Analysis of the time cases can take, as well as revising what sort of offences take priority when it comes to our work.
- 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.

What's next?

- Review of Tenancy Compliance patch areas.
- Reviewing support cases, navigator cases and no access cases.
- Explore domestic violence and safeguarding cases, with the possibility of reviewing these.
- Review the actions from the Tenancy Compliance Scrutiny Activity.
- Further develop how we offer victim support at Curo.
- Review the members and expand on participants – speak directly with the team to see if there are customers who want to be involved in the process.
- Team members will start attending alongside managers.
- Review communication with customers when external agencies are involved – look into inviting other agencies to meetings.



Repairs Engagement Group

The Repairs team is one of Curo's most important customer-facing teams. Each day, hundreds of repairs are carried out in our customers' homes, and our customers have the right to know how this team is run, how it is overseen, and what can be done to make it better.

The group had a few areas of focus:

- 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.

In 2023 the repairs team went through our scrutiny process, meaning that instead of four meetings in the year there were 13. This allowed the customers far more access to the repairs team's information, and allowed for in-depth discussions, suggestions and reflections to improve the service.

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

Some of the Repairs Scrutiny ideas listed below:

- Group members now have a much greater understanding of the complexity of repairs due to the in-depth reviews given by heads of service.
- The group made many suggestions on how the repairs service could be improved, focusing on trades colleagues, operating systems and the need for more oversight from managers. Many of these suggestions have been implemented.

- A list of golden rules have been created for each tradesperson to follow when carrying out work in a customer's home, focusing on customer satisfaction and communication.
- A lasting relationship between customers and colleagues with honest feedback and review opportunities.
- Fairer expectations for the repairs team when it comes to multiple visits and uncooperative residents.

What's next?

- Repairs Review 2024/25 focusing on how we deliver repairs and what the future looks like in terms of delivering a quality service.
- A year after we prioritised treating damp and mould, look at how are we doing.
- Looking at the process for our contracted repairs, how we can improve the service, deliver it in a timely manner along with a quality service.
- Linking up the repairs service and the contracted repairs service to deliver a more smooth transition for customers.
- A return to more regular meetings with engaged customers and the repairs leadership team.
- Feedback on the scrutiny process, and an update on what changes have been made.
- Using customers' help and advice to manage the orderbook.



Young Persons Group

The Young Persons Group, focuses on hearing from our younger residents, aged 16-25. They may have their own tenancy or be living in a Curo property.

This group is here to make sure that, if a younger resident wants to have a say in how Curo is run, they can. The group looks at future delivery so that they can help us better understand how our services can be adapted, making them fit for purpose for everyone.

What's been achieved through our work with the Young Persons Engagement Group this year?

- Identification of key areas in Curo where young residents need more support. A key topic is the improvement of the general support offered when moving into a Curo property and the potential for having check-in points throughout the tenancy.
- The creation of a 'new home starter kit' for all residents, which answers many frequently asked questions that new residents may have when moving into a new property.
- Evolving the group to become a digital messaging service, where queries are easily asked and answered.



What's next?

- Explore the option of a helpline for new young residents.
- Continue to grow the group and evolve sessions to meet the needs of the participants.
- Identify which topics young residents care most about and find ways to improve these within the business. We will be linking up with the Workwise team to provide sessions on money management and tenancy management.
- Introducing members to other involvement groups such as Scrutiny and Oversight.

Customer Diversity Group

The Customer Diversity Group was designed to give this under-represented demographic a space focused on the members’ voices and experiences. Approximately 12% of our customers identify as Black, Asian or from minority ethnic communities.

It is important to Curo that all of our services are fit for purpose and meet the needs of all our residents. Our Customer Diversity Group is made up of customers from diverse backgrounds, who want to help us shape our services to be more inclusive to all. They look at policies and procedures, help to plan events for and advise on inclusivity for all religions.

What’s been achieved through our work with the Customer Diversity Group.

- Discussed colleague training and how it should be delivered to be inclusive.
- Discussed what Curo are doing with SHARP (Social Housing Anti Racism Pledge) and its training programme.
- Discussed customers in the group being inspirational speakers at Curo colleague events.
- Discussed the ‘diversity calendar’ and how the group and Curo can bring communities together to celebrate events in the calendar.
- Discussed group members joining Community Catch-ups to advertise the groups and have customer-to-customer conversations.
- Group members reviewed policies and procedures from across Curo teams.

Below: Our Feel at Home messaging which is visible throughout the Maltings.

What’s next?

- Investigate ways in which Curo could be more welcoming to diverse residents, including through our communication and information when discussing our services and their delivery.
- Continue to grow the group and evolve with the needs of the participants.
- Identify what diverse residents care most about and find ways to improve these within the business.
- Introduce members to other involvement groups within our engagement framework.

Feel at Home

Everyone is welcome at Curo, regardless of age, disability, gender, race, sex, religion or belief.

For more on our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion scan the QR code or visit: curo-group.co.uk/edi



Curo's approach to equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is a major part of our plans to build a workplace that better reflects the diverse make-up of the communities we serve.



We do not tolerate hate crime in any form

Homeownership Engagement Group

In December 2020, we launched our Homeownership Engagement Group to build a stronger relationship between leaseholders and Curo colleagues. Members are involved in reviewing homeowner customer feedback and service satisfaction scores with a view to improving our services, communications and processes.

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

- Group members mapped out the customer journey around Section 20 process, improving communication between Curo and our leaseholders. This took place in the early stages of the forum and we are working closely with our asset team to deliver this.
- They’ve helped to shape the future of the Homeownership team and how it communicates with customers, enabling us to build the new Homeownership model.
- We’ve created a Shared Ownership Forum, which has already helped us to improve the letters we send out regarding our rent and service change reconciliation and estimates. We hope to build this relationship and have further forums for our Shared Owners in 2024.
- Future plans for the forum include investigating how we can best communicate with homeowners.
- A change of the team structure to be more accessible to customers.
- More communication and choice between homeowners and Curo when it comes to repairs and renovations in communal areas.
- Opportunities to connect with other aspects of Curo, such as Tenancy Compliance and Estates
- The Homeownership team has seen drastic improvements in customer satisfaction and is working to improve this further from customer feedback.

- We understand the need to review our processes, policies and communications so that they are clearer and easier to understand. We want to work more collaboratively with our homeowners to achieve this.

What’s next?

- Review the language used in correspondence with Homeowners.
- Review the Homeowners’ Handbook and Management Charges Guide.
- Review team efficiency and structure, based on the Homeownership Model, to be introduced from July 2024.
- Review impact of forthcoming legislation and how this will affect our homeowners.
- Continue to grow the group’s diversity to get a more rounded understanding of our homeowners’ needs.
- Following the homeowner survey in March 2024, analyse feedback and implement viable changes to improve the service.



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.

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

- They are a critical part of the review process for the Estates grants funding.
- Members have approved over 30 Communities 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 reviewed the new estates grounds maintenance contractors.
- Members have reviewed the changes in communal area cleaning services.
- Members reviewed changes in how Curo are responding to the energy crisis.
- Members have reviewed the changes to tree maintenance services and the process for procuring a contractor to complete works.
- Members have discussed environmental issues and looked at initiatives such as No Mow May and Nothing for Nature, discussing the positive effects.
- Members have been involved in the More Trees for B&NES initiative and discussed potential sites for planting.

Right: Tippee Toe Park by Selworthy House & Dunster House, Foxhill

What's next?

- Continue to review Communities Grant applications.
- Review the open space policy.
- Review the adverse weather policy.
- Review the tree management policy.



Engaging with our Support service customers

Over the last year we have increased the customer-focus of all teams, so that people living in communities we serve feel listened to and can influence and shape services. Our customer engagement is not, however, only about people living in Curo homes, it's also about working in communities, so we are part of a solution, bringing people together.

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, as well as being consulted on any changes in the way services are delivered. This group provides a vital link between our older residents in communities and the colleagues responsible for ensuring their support, safety and security.

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

- Senior Curo colleagues continue to attend each session – this has included Curo's Chief Executive, the Chair of the Board and Chief Property Officer.
- SHOP members have supported and advocated for customers experiencing parking restrictions at sheltered sites, based on their mobility issues and/ or disability.
- SHOP members have highlighted the increase in confidence tricks and scams, leading to more support to for vulnerable customers.
- SHOP members have been regularly updated on fire and other safety regulations throughout the year.

- Members had the opportunity to speak to several teams in Curo, asking relevant questions about their services to suggest solutions to performance issues.
- Members discussed issues raised due to the cost of living and how communities could reduce costs.
- Members have direct input on:
Shaping projects in sheltered and Extra Care housing as a core part of new service development, including but not restricted to:
 - The upgrade of all care line services from analogue to digital platforms is a proactive approach to keeping people safe at home.
 - The Choice Strategic review, helping Curo understand what services we should develop and grow, or withdraw from, to help us sustain support in the future.
 - Shaping our Empty Homes processes, to reduce the time that valuable homes are being worked on and to speed up customers moving into their new homes.
- Approving letters and other communications sent to customers so they can be tailored to the needs of our customers.
- Discussing our new damp and mould policies and protocols.
- Looking at new and different ways to communicate with non-digital customers.



What's next?

- Working with SHOP members as we develop our new operating model, to shape how support is delivered, around property safety and reducing isolation and loneliness in our communities.
- Working in partnership with other local providers to establish an Over 50s Network, so that Curo customers can shape local community and national service development, not just restricted to Curo properties.
- Supporting Curo to become an Ageing Well organisation, supporting people in communities to transition through life's changes.
- A review of our Sheltered Communal areas, to consider how they are used as community assets, bringing people together around principles of self-care and support.

Older Person's Services (general)

In addition to SHOP we have also undertaken a variety of community-based initiatives to work with local people about what is important to them:

- **Joint Sheltered and Repairs roadshows:** four events based in our four key geographic areas to provide a collaborative space, where sheltered residents shared experiences of the Curo repairs service and sheltered living. Pre-event flyers delivered to all sheltered residents. Averaged 10-12 people per event.
- **Bristol and North Somerset Enhanced Support Trial:** A three-month pilot, talking with customers to understand the positive impact of providing enhanced support in schemes that are not covered under commissioned contracts, centred around signposting, befriending and keeping customers safe and independent in their homes for as long as they wish.
- Our colleagues have completed 'give back' sessions in their communities, so that Curo are not just a landlord and support provider, we're part of the solution going forward. After listening to customers to identify projects, we've worked as a team to redecorate communal areas, which support community engagement.
- Through our general community connections, we've worked with local schools to support young children to come into our sheltered and Extra Care schemes. This inter-generational work is about wider resident and community engagement, where sheltered schemes are considered part of the community.
- Colleagues have supported numerous celebration days in our older persons services, with a particular focus on Christmas, listening to customers' wishes and tackling isolation and loneliness, through connecting people.

Temporary Accommodation
services (Young People)

Foyer Robin Hood Project

This group is funded by the Foyer Federation and Blagrove Trust as part of the Youth Power Fund. The fund was created to provide young people with opportunities to realise their power, influence and leadership potential. The initial funding was granted in April 2022 to Bath Foyer in partnership with the young people living there. The young people took ownership of this project and developed the bid in partnership with the staff team, and have called it the Robin Hood Project.

The theme of the Robin Hood Project is 'voice'. It centres on enabling young people to use their voice, put the young people's voices at the heart of Curo's Young Persons Services and creating space for young people to have their voice heard in places where they can affect real change.

After the success of the first year of the project, it was awarded ongoing funding for 2023-24 and 2024-25.

The group brings the staff and young people together in an asset-based way to focus on positive changes in the Foyer and in the local community.

What the Robin Hood Project has achieved to date:

- Established a residents voice group who meet monthly. This meeting is recorded to ensure effective follow-through on actions.
- Introduced the young people of The Foyer and Pathways to the Young Persons Independent Advisory Group to the Police to improve the relationship with the police and giving voice to issues which are affecting them.
- Inviting young people to be part of the interview panel for new team members.

- Developing peer relationships at the Foyer and building a sense of community.
- Addressing issues arising at The Foyer including building security, quality of services delivered and activity planning.
- Building a peer mentoring programme at The Foyer initially and Pathways in the future.
- Providing opportunities for young people at access training related to power, voice and leadership and skills related to these topics.
- Providing Power Up Youth training to the Young Persons Services team to develop their understanding of how to promote youth power in their settings.
- Implementing a you said/we did board in the service to take accountability for acting upon the young people's feedback.
- Creating opportunities to recognise young people's contributions and work in the service by rewarding them with vouchers.
- Supporting young people to travel to and attend training sessions and workshops at other Foyers, including those in Exeter, London and Milton Keynes.

Below: the group hired a 'rage room' for their away day



Temporary Accommodation services (Young People)

- Young people have taken ownership of two rooms at The Foyer, including a revamped gym room and a Robin Hood Project office to have a space to work on the project within the building.
- Through funding, the young people have acquired: an iPad, a design app to create a monthly newsletter, printer and laptop for the project office, stationary, sundries for meetings, including food and snacks, a phone with a SIM card to be used by the project and a plaque for the building to commemorate the work of the project.
- Curo worked with the Combe Down and Fox Hill communities to develop The Hub as part of our new-build scheme at Mulberry Park. This project has a Board, with community and resident membership, that oversee and scrutinise performance, as part of a partnership and collective approach to working with residents in communities.

Community Hub

What's next for the project?

- Implement a writing workshop at The Foyer with a local poet to give young people a creative medium to explore the issues affecting them.
- Work collaboratively with the Young Persons IAG to introduce young people to build a better relationship with the police moving forward.
- Staff and young people to work collaboratively with the other local youth leadership projects to develop connections and share learning.
- Bring young people on board for service development ideas and bidding for new funding opportunities.

Right: The group members made a piece of art to decorate The Foyer

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.

Below: Tree planting



What's been achieved over the year?

- Almost 1,000 trees have been planted on Curo land this winter.
- We own more than 8,500 stand alone trees.
- Residents' associations and local groups have continued to helped us understand customers' priorities for the improvements they'd most like to see across their estates and shared areas.
- We partnered with More Trees B&NES to plant mini forests and hedgerows at two sites in Bath, using more than 700 small trees this year, all grown at More Trees nursery sites from locally collected seed.
- 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 like tree and wildflower planting, litter picking and rubbish clearances as more customers have looked to improve their neighbourhoods.
- At Oval Park, Bath, a mini forest was created to provide shelter and food for visiting wildlife creating a more varied landscape within the park, and at Stirtingale Park, a 50m hedgerow and central mini forest has been planted.
- We've supported several new community-based gardening groups through our Communities Grants scheme.
- Working in collaboration with key stakeholders, volunteers, Curo colleagues and our designated tree contractors, the Curo Estates team has overseen the planting of 125 trees, more than 70m of mixed hedgerow (including 400 different species of trees), and the creation of two mini forests made up of more than 300 small trees.
- Working with B&NES Council, we also supplied and planted 11 trees at Whiteway Green Park, with each tree dedicated to one of the winners of the B&NES Community Awards 2023/24.

Community Catch-ups



Curo’s Community Catch-ups were launched formally by the Resident Engagement team in April 2023, following a successful trial between Jan 2023 and March 2023. Since April 2023, the Resident Engagement team has expanded their visits and locations, and through Community Catch-ups we have been to 63 different communities and engaged with 398 customers to date.

These customers were previously ‘unheard’, and without these sessions they wouldn’t have engaged with Curo or had their voices heard. So that’s 398 customers who may not have given feedback, ideas, or even spoken to a representative of Curo without a member of the Resident Engagement team visiting them.

The Community Catch-up sessions have also acted as an entry point into our engagement framework for some customers.

We’ve had Community Catch-up customers get involved in the following ways -

- Customers joined us at our Board Connect sessions.
- 63 customers signed up to VoiceBox, sharing their feedback through completing surveys and other activities.
- We had more than 20 customers and their families attend Curo’s Big Get Together.
- We’ve had several customers nominate their neighbours for the Community of the Year award.
- We’ve received more than 30 nominations for our Community Hero award from the communities we visited.
- Customers have shown an interest in our engagement groups and have attended our Estates, Complaints and Tenancy Compliance groups.

From a housing management perspective, Community Catch-up sessions have helped us identify some notable cases where we can make a difference. *(Above: Our Community Catch-up van can be seen out in our communities).*

We’ve identified –

- A customer wanting support to downsize, which resulted in releasing a three-bed family home back into our portfolio from a rural area
- A landownership case – land next to a new-build property was very untidy and run down. We were asked to investigate tidying the area up. Investigations showed the area belonged to the new customer. This was shared directly with the customer and prevented further calls and emails coming into Curo.
- A safeguarding concern – a customer raised concerns for the welfare of her neighbour and children. We’ve made contact with the neighbour and are supporting them.

We’ve also supported communities to receive Communities Grants, with a total of £2,400 handed out to communities we’ve visited so far.

For more details on our Community Catch Up’s visit curo-group.co.uk/communitycatchups

Communities Grants

We offer Curo grants for residents who’d like to apply for money for their neighbourhood or community. Residents can also access the Curo Community Pot which is funded by Travis Perkins Managed Services.

This year we’ve supported 33 community projects through a total of more than £11,837.81 worth of grant funding.

Some of the projects we’ve supported over the year include:	
Possums group – The Green	£500
Southlands RA	£250
Bath Gateway out & about	£500
Bath Children’s Fringe festival	£500
Bath Western Riverside	£500
Odd Down community	£500
Gala day Weston REC	£500
Hinton Close gardening group	£150
Writhlington fun day	£500
First Steps Bath	£400
Toynbee Road	£250
St Johns Close, Peasedown St John	£250
Shakespeare Ave gardening & tea party	£250
St Anne’s Ave community room/garden	£250
Phoenix	£250
Peasedown and Hillcrest	£250
Bath Community Kitchen	£500
The Old Tannery	£250



Above: some of the projects which have benefitted from Communities Grants



Photo: enjoying the family activities at last year's Big Get Together

Curo's Big Get Together Event



Curo's Big Get Together 2023 was held on Saturday 16 September. More than 320 customers helped to come up with ideas for the event, including the venue, date, timings and what would be on offer to customers. These customers liked the previous year's concept of the Big Get Together. They enjoyed the relaxed, sociable and family-friendly event, which also gave them the opportunity to talk to teams from across Curo, share their ideas and hold us to account.

Customers had tickets for either a morning session, running from 10am-1pm, or an afternoon session, from 1.30pm-4.30pm. Curo colleagues from all our services, from Repairs to Recruitment, had stalls at the event. Each Curo team gave customers a snapshot of the services they offer, providing handouts with useful tips. Customers could take time to talk to them and get answers to their questions.

To view these videos,
Scan the QR code or visit
our webpage:
curo-group.co.uk/cbgt23



Below: Victor da Cunha, Chief Executive, was interviewed by customer Sue Hicks.



Below: Jane Tabor, Chair of the Board at Curo, spoke at the event.



It was an impressive turnout, with more than 450 Curo customers and stakeholders joining us at The Hub at Mulberry Park, Bath.

Customers heard directly from Daisy Gaunt, Chair of the Customer Oversight Group, Jane Tabor and Victor da Cunha, who talked about:

- The challenges facing Curo
- What improvements have 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

Below: Daisy Gaunt, Chair of the Oversight Group at Curo.





Customers also heard directly from Victor da Cunha; Paul Harris, Chief Customer Officer; Andrew Snee, Director of Tenancy Compliance & Management; and Lesley Hodges, Director of Customer Contact, who took part in Q&A sessions where they answered questions directly from the live audience.

In total, we answered 22 customer questions during the Q&A sessions, the main topics were:

- Moving home
- Applying for adapted properties
- Adoption of roads
- Section 21 notices
- Site access near developments
- Grounds maintenance
- Delays of repairs
- Service charges
- Contact with non-digital customers
- Increasing timescales for complaints
- Tackling damp and mould
- Plans for villages in North East Somerset
- Consulting with local services when building
- Rent increases
- Data collection and data protection
- Reducing waste

We also held two interactive Customer Consultations on our Repairs service. These were hosted by Luke McCreery, Director of Property Safety & Building Maintenance.

Our teams were joined by colleagues from Avon and Somerset Police, Avon Fire and Rescue Service, Share and Repair, Mulberry Park Residents' Association and our Charity of the Year St Peter's Hospice, which all gave information on their services. Overall, there were more than 20 stalls at the event, and more than 200 customer interactions and queries were dealt with during the event

- More than 40 new customers registered on VoiceBox at the event.
- Eight new customers expressed an interest in getting more involved with Curo through our frontline engagement groups.
- More than 30 customers expressed their thoughts on remuneration for engaged customers.
- More than 40 customers expressed their thoughts on Consumer Standards consultation.
- The employability stall had a successful day:
 - They introduced The Hub team to two customers and supported them to create covering letters and CVs with a view to getting trial shifts at The Hub.
 - One customer was referred for a shift at The Hub café as a cook.
 - Four customers discussed active applications and roles in Curo.
- Four customers at the event signed up to receive support from our Independent Living Service.
- More than 30 customers were given lightbulb kits.
- More than 20 customers were given emergency water-testing kits.
- The Repairs team were able to help with more than 20 customer queries. The team also responded to an issue on the day of the event day, visiting the customer's home to investigate an urgent repair.



There were also lots of fun activities to enjoy. To encourage more families to join us at the event this year, we introduced exciting activities such as inflatables and obstacle courses, 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 at Curo.



We're also very grateful for all of the fantastic customer feedback we've received – here are just a few of the comments:

"Thank you so much for Saturday – we had a great time."

"To those involved with Saturday's event, thank you very much. It was an excellent event."

"It was awesome! A high-end layout and I loved that you had canopies over the team stations, where residents could get questions answered, without getting wet or feeling cold – just healthy fresh air and a relaxed atmosphere."

"A lovely warm ambience, with very good interaction with Curo colleagues. The staff were friendly and helpful. It was lovely to see activities for children who came with their parents."

"Overall, a brilliant team effort. Thank you to everyone I spoke to. All questions answered!"

"I loved the event so much. Clearly a lot of effort, time and planning went into it. It was brilliant and my children had the best time. I love that every age group was catered for. Thank you very much."

Left: Customers and Curo colleagues at the 2023 Big Get Together

What customers are telling us

Every year in February and March, we consult 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.

82.5% 

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:

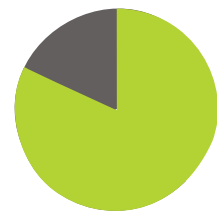
Variety (level of options)

Getting (people together)

Opportunities (lots of them)

Views / problems (chances to share)

94%



of customers found their chosen Resident Engagement activity

easy to join

88%

of customers are

satisfied or very satisfied...



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

More than...

▶ 500

...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.

86% 

of these non-engaged customers are...



...satisfied or very satisfied...

...with the engagement opportunities provided by Curo

 81%

of these non-engaged customers are...

...satisfied or very satisfied... 

VOICEBOX

...with the overall services provided by Curo

▶ 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

1,165

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

426 requests for the four most popular engagement groups:

- ▶ 39 - Home Improvement Forum
- ▶ 106 - Community Catch-ups & resolving issues where you live
- ▶ 105 - Repairs Engagement Group
- ▶ 93 - Disability Action Group

What's Next?

Using customer feedback we'll be looking to deliver the following during 2024-2025:

- **Curo's Big Get Together – (September 2024)**
We will be holding our annual customer event Curo's Big Get Together again in 2024 at Mulberry Park, Bath.
- **Customer training**
Engaged customers with Curo have told us they'd like more training opportunities to develop their skills. We have a formal training programme – if you're interested and want to develop your skills you can find out more here:
curo-group.co.uk/get-involved
- **More opportunities to get involved locally**
We want all our services to be accessible and designed around the needs of all our customers. Alongside our current options we'll be looking to launch customer groups working more closely within our communities through resident associations and local resident groups.
- **Even more Community Catch-up sessions**
We've heard from lots of customers who'd like to receive a Community Catch-up from the Resident Engagement team. This year we're planning to visit at least one community every week.

We will be encouraging local stakeholders and more teams from Curo to join the Resident Engagement team out in communities during 2024-25 and beyond

For more details visit:
curo-group.co.uk/communitycatchups/

- **New Resident Engagement Strategy**
We'll be launching a new Resident Engagement Strategy in 2024-25. This will help set out how we listen to our customers, how we shape services alongside customers and how we feedback/close the loop with our customers.
- **New standards for homes and shared spaces** – The consultation on this topic will commence at the Curo Big Get Together. Customers will be able to influence this from the start.
- **Repairs at Curo / Repairs Review 2024-25**
Scrutiny has already been completed on this topic with wider consultation taking place at the Curo Big Get Together. Customer influence on this topic will be important as it is also linked to the Better Social Housing Review.

What's it like being closely involved with Curo?

What could you get out of becoming more involved? We asked some of our residents:

Ian Carter - customer

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

We received a Curo Communities Grant after a period of anti-social behaviour near us. We worked together as a community to make things better, fitting and fixing lights, distributing personal alarms, with a plan to paint fences in the spring to improve the area. I have also been working on Scrutiny activities with Curo, working towards processes being smoother for all.

Why did you get involved?

During the pandemic lockdown we came together as a community for the first time, as a necessity. We have subsequently come together more as a community, especially with the help from Curo Communities Grants. We had an extremely joyful moment for HRH The Queen's, Jubilee, when we had a BBQ and cake. It was very traditionally British as it also rained! It has felt like my involvement and that of the wider community has found its own momentum, it does not ever feel like a chore!

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

I feel happier, less isolated and more connected to others. Being involved in my community has also given me a sense of purpose. There was recent example of where our community engagement helped a resident feel supported and safer due to an anti-social incident. They really appreciated it and left others feeling like we were helping!

Social and community participation provides a sense of belonging and purpose, reducing feelings of isolation and enhancing overall mental well-being. (Source Gallop)

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

It seems strange that the more you put in, the more you get out, but that has been my experience. In addition Curo offer a lot of support to residents to get involved, which makes it easier. Too start, just dip your toe in, do something small for the community or speak to one of the Curo Resident Engagement Team, they will help you find ways and support to get involved. You might be surprised!

Jackob Minor - customer

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

I have lived in a Curo property for nearly two years now and was invited to join the Curo Young Residents' Group.

Why did you get involved?

I got involved because I feel as a young person we often find ourselves with a feeling of being ignored or not having the strength to voice our opinions. However, I seen this as the perfect opportunity to be heard and be able to help the younger Curo residents who have been in similar situations as me.

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

I have been able to voice my opinions on what would help the local Curo community/ neighbourhood. I definitely believe my voice has been heard and I'm excited to see the positive changes to my community.

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

If you feel like you have a voice/opinion that would to be heard it's definitely worth joining the Young Residents' Group. If you feel like it is not for you then you can always just step out or try again at a later date.

How to Get involved

If you'd like to get more involved with Curo or your community, here are the ways in which you can contact us:

- Email voicebox@curo-group.co.uk
- Fill in the form online at curo-group.co.uk/getinvolved



- Or give us a call and ask for the Resident Engagement team on: **01225 366000**.

*Hannah Gavin &
Neil Rogers, Resident
Engagement
Coordinator*



Book it, pay it, check it - get things done
quicker at MyCuro
curo-group.co.uk/mycuro

Live chat, Facebook, Twitter, email & more
curo-group.co.uk/contact

T: 01225 366000

If you would like this information
in an alternative format please
get in touch.