

## Longhurst Group Customer Forum

### Terms of Reference

**Purpose** The Longhurst Group Customer Forum will support the Longhurst Group Board by providing customer based assurance that the consumer standards of the 'Regulatory Regime for Social Housing in England' are being met; that value for money is being achieved in service delivery to all Longhurst Group customers; and is in line with Longhurst Group's vision of 'improving lives'.

**Responsibilities** The Longhurst Group Customer Forum will develop and maintain a strong, meaningful and influential relationship with the Longhurst Group Board to ensure that they and the Longhurst Group Board work together effectively.

The Longhurst Group Customer Forum will ensure that agreed service delivery standards to all customers is being achieved and that Longhurst Group meets the expectations and outcomes of the

- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Home Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard

It will do this by:

- Being involved in the decisions about how services are delivered, including the approval of service standards
- Ensuring that the customer involvement structure delivers on the consultation and review of landlord services
- Monitoring Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) from Longhurst Group's Performance Management Framework along with other information identified through customer feedback and insight.
- Identifying areas of customer assurance and escalating areas of customer non-assurance with the consumer standards to the Longhurst Group Board
- In conjunction with staff agree a programme of service improvement reviews that are linked to business objectives and customers' priorities
- 'Call to scrutiny' service areas they have concerns about which are not subject to an agreed review process.
- Monitor the implementation and outcomes of service reviews and scrutiny reviews
- Produce an annual review, to be reported to the Longhurst Group Board and to all Longhurst Group customers and staff, detailing the impact of its activities.

**Operating protocols** Longhurst Group Customer Forum will produce formal minutes of each meeting, including items for escalation, which will be reviewed at Longhurst Group Board.

In addition, Longhurst Group Customer Forum will follow a documented protocol which will include

- A scheme of understanding with the Longhurst Group Board
- Communication and reporting protocol with the Longhurst Group Board
- Code of Conduct and Confidentiality statement

**Membership**

- The Longhurst Group Customer Forum will consist of a maximum of 12 eligible members.
- Individual members will be appointed for a period of three years.
- Members can voluntarily resign at any time during their tenure.
- If a Longhurst Group Customer Forum member ceases to be Longhurst Group customer they must resign from the Longhurst Group Customer Forum.
- Members will serve no more than two consecutive terms of three years.
- Members can be asked to step down without notice if they are seen to be in breach of the Code of Conduct

**Quorum** At least five or more members must be present at a meeting for it to be quorate

**Meetings** The Longhurst Group Customer Forum will meet at least 6 times per year to mirror the Longhurst Group Board's meeting cycle. There is a requirement for members to be fully prepared for all meetings.

**Attendance** Longhurst Group will monitor attendance at the Longhurst Group Customer Forum through the meeting minutes.

Failure of a Longhurst Group Customer Forum member to attend three consecutive meetings, without providing a reasonable reason, will be investigated by the Longhurst Group Customer Forum Chair in conjunction with Longhurst Group staff. Failure to attend might result in the member being asked to step down from their role.

**Chair and Deputy Chair** The appointment of the Chair will be made following application and interview.  
The appointment of the Deputy Chair will be made following application

and interview.

Both appointments can be for up to a period of three years with succession planning identified after two years of tenure.

**Support and Servicing**

The Longhurst Group Customer Forum will be supported by the Executive Director of Housing Services.

The Longhurst Group Customer Forum will also be supported by the appropriate level of staff and other resources to ensure it can operate effectively.

**Applications and Appointments**

All Longhurst Group tenants, leaseholders and shared owners are eligible to apply for vacancies (Subject to eligibility as detailed in the person specification).

Applicants will be interviewed for vacancies.

**Review of effectiveness**

The Longhurst Group Customer Forum will, on an annual basis, review its effectiveness by reviewing the key achievements and impact of its work and reporting these to the Longhurst Group Board and Longhurst Group customers.

**Training and Development**

Longhurst Group Customer Forum members will be required to attend training to ensure their skills and knowledge enables them to effectively carry out their role.

New appointees will be required to complete induction training.

**Annual Appraisal**

Longhurst Group Customer Forum members will be required to participate in an annual appraisal.

**Equality and Diversity**

Longhurst Group Customer Forum encourage fair and equal treatment for all, regardless of race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion, gender, physical or mental disability, appearance, political affiliation, sexuality, age or class.

Longhurst Group Customer Forum will identify obstacles that may prevent customers from contributing to its work, and find the means to remove those obstacles.

Longhurst Group Customer Forum will annually review membership with the aim of creating a body that is representative of the diverse communities in which Longhurst Group operates.



Longhurst Group Customer Forum members will abide by Longhurst Group's policies on equality and diversity and attend equality and diversity training as part of their induction training; followed by annual update training.

**Confidentiality** Members of the Longhurst Group Customer Forum will have access to information, which will be of a sensitive or confidential nature. Any information shared as part of the Forum's meetings that is of a confidential nature must not be disclosed to anyone outside of the meeting.

Longhurst Group Customer Forum members will be required to sign the Code of Conduct and confidentiality statements as part of their appointment.

**Review of Terms of Reference** Longhurst Group and the Longhurst Group Customer Forum will review these Terms of Reference after one year of operation to ensure they are fit for purpose; and annually thereafter.