

Annual Customer Conferences 2023



Creating
better
Living Solutions

Introduction

ateb held the annual customer conferences in May across 3 locations, Narberth, Milford Haven and Haverfordwest. 56 ateb customers attended from a diverse range of ateb homes along with members of the ateb team and Board.

The conferences focused on 5 distinct areas.

- Looking Back
- Looking Forward
- Customer Engagement and Involvement
- Where ateb needs to improve
- How could customers have a bigger say in what ateb does?

Looking Back

We opened the conferences by reminding ourselves of what we had discussed when we met in May 2022, and the issues customers raised at our conferences then which were.

- Affordability
- Change
- Communication
- Decarbonisation
- Service Charges and Repairs

And we reflected on what had happened since we had last met.

- Cost of living crisis
- Supply chain and recruitment challenges
- Renting Homes Wales Act (RHWA) implementation
- Home Safety — Damp and Mould / Fire Safety
- Life after Covid



Looking Forward

We shared and discussed the things that ateb were currently working on.

- Renting Homes Wales Act — not finished yet!
- Reviewing how we deliver repairs.
- Investing in our customers' homes.
- Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation works.
- Building Safety.
- How we better engage our customers in our longer-term plans.

And what we were looking out for.

- Cost of living — impact on customers and the business.
- Increasing costs to build new homes.
- Keeping rents as affordable as we can.
- Recruitment challenges — more “grow our own”.
- Customers access to services — balance of digital and face to face.

Customer Engagement

We shared with customers the many ways customers were engaged during 2022/23, the support provided to communities by the teams, and the advice and support provided through the Community Welfare and Home Energy Support and Advice projects.

We were also able to share with customers the support ateb had provided to customers to help them through the cost-of-living crisis.



We asked our customers what it was like being an ateb customer and this is what they told us.

- Very good
- Feel safe and secure.
- Feel included and can contribute.
- Warm, secure, and affordable
- Feels like home.
- You provide so much support.
- Being part of something.
- Happy with my home but don't feel part of a community.
- I love it.
- Rent has gone up this year.
- Can't fault the service for repairs but it is difficult to report them to ateb.
- Rents are high.
- Pleased the service charge increase was so low.
- Comforting place to live.
- Lovely, great experience and community, rent is value for money compared others.
- ateb are a hundred times better than other landlords.
- Covid has had a massive impact on things.
- West Wales Care and repair are excellent.
- Rent is fair.
- Car parking is frustrating.
- In house ateb repairs team are excellent have taken really good care of me.
- Worried about living in a house that has no public transport.
- The standard of repair from contractors is poor.
- Concerned that standards are slipping with contractors/repairs.
- Feel it's our home with no intrusion from landlord unless you want it.
- Complaints dealt with and nothing is too much trouble.
- Available if required.
- Communication via email is good.
- ateb are lovely to deal with
- We would like to be able to tend our own front gardens instead of it being part of the maintenance of the estate.
- Certain issues are NOT addressed.
- ateb 'tend to bury issues under the carpet'.
- Communal cleaning is poor.



And we asked our customers where they would like to see ateb improve, and this is what they told us.

- Providing information to customers about what they are responsible for repairing and what ateb is responsible for repairing.
- Let tenants know what they are responsible for maintaining.
- Tenants should be able to have more contact with higher management than now. Tenant panel needs to start meeting again.
- Everything with repairs is very slow.
- We need to let people know what we have done and achieved and what is happening and get more people involved.
- Share stories of how ateb has helped and supported people.
- Share the information which comes out of Conference and what ateb has learnt from having this information.
- Make post from ateb identifiable so that people don't junk it.
- Look at all options for energy in ateb homes. Ground source heat pumps.
- Deliver the service we pay for better especially ground maintenance.
- Better policing of parking and contacting those who are causing problems.
- Make sure lights in communal areas are replaced quickly as it is a danger.
- Encourage a wider demographic age, working, not working, families and single people to get involved.
- Length of time for non-essential repairs needs to improve.
- Quality control of maintenance needed.
- Let us know who we need to contact at ateb for issues etc.
- More consultation needed around ground maintenance.
- Need more information about repairs especially if there needs to be ongoing work.
- Ensure that communications from ateb staff does not come across as dismissive.
- Inhouse maintenance would be better/contractors don't care about the work - no pride.
- How much are ateb paying the contractors - do they need to increase the rates of pay offered to recruit.
- Reassurance that the future of ateb is certain, Future of ateb is unsure uncertainty lots of people leaving and why - who can tell the future.
- Using notice boards on housing estates so that advertising can be visible and available to all who live there.
- Better communication re kitchen refits and planned works. Information should be more forthcoming prior to works commencing.
- Needs to be an improved response when a complaint is raised.



- It takes a long time to get through to customer service if you telephone.
- Every new house built should have solar panels.
- Communication on how properties are let.
- We should be greener e.g., planting trees/bushes etc.
- Contacting via telephone service is slow.
- More information on how to report repairs.
- Feedback from conferences to be shared.

We asked our customers if they felt they could shape the future of ateb, and this is what they told us.

- You need to speak our language to enable us to do this — no more jargon!
- If people don't know what ateb offers how can people help shape it.
- I don't feel like my voice is heard.
- Conference is a good opportunity to shape the future but there should be more opportunities than once a year.
- Having a tenant on the board.
- Customer Forum is useful to shape the future.
- We may have a voice now, but the future is a digital one - digital would mean younger people - looking around the room-where are all the young people today.
- We don't know as we don't get told if the things, we have talked about get done.
- Yes, by attending events such as this conference.

We asked our customer what more could we do to ensure they could shape the future?

- Previously there was a design team on the tenants panel to see if there were any design faults on new build properties and it would be good if customers could be involved more.
- Tenants go to the board meetings as a guest.
- Can we have a say on contractors etc. interview new employees and contractors?
- Get tenants involved in discussions about solar panels, air source heat pumps.
- Tenants should be involved at the initial stage of site approval and planning. There used to be tours of new development sites.
- Customers to be able to give information to board especially those who have shared their stories.

- Tenant inspection advisors around voids, handovers...make use of the free manpower hours that customers can offer.
- Working groups led by customers and ateb staff as guests.
- Have a variety of ways for customers to engage...days, evenings, weekends etc.
- Giving opportunities for people in the more rural areas to give feedback.
- Make communication easier.
- More involvement from customers in the decisions on communal spaces.
- ateb staff to go out and knock people's doors to find out what they would like to see the future look like.
- Get all people who come to an event to fill in the most recent survey and not just evaluation of the events.
- Customer involvement in what fossil fuel replacement boilers etc ateb will install.
- Finding other ways to advertise future events and have more of a presence on estates.
- Maybe have the events in the evening or on weekends so that customers who are working in the week can have a chance to come as well.
- Feeling of a disconnect because of the developments that are being made because now everything is on the website and technology is moving so quickly, I worry that others are going to feel disconnected.
- We could work with our partner organisations more.
- Open the meetings to the council, housing local authority, social services, health service, other service providers need to know what's going on. For useful cooperation.
- We can do more to be greener to shape the future and make that more accessible to us, get us more involved in that process.
- A campaign to involve people in a discussion to get our communities greener, planting etc.
- Keep communication flowing.
- ateb to keep up with policy reviews.
- More communication via emails.
- Customers would like to be engaged in contractor reviews and in appointing contractors.
- Customers could monitor the contractors and provide structured feedback – quarterly?

There were many other ideas and suggestions including.

1. Enable everyone to have their own garden instead of sharing, especially in flats.
2. Lamp posts with electric charging points.
3. Use the radio or local press to advertise events.

4. Provide childcare to enable parents to join in.
5. Summer fetes on communal grounds within estates.
6. Using Instagram to suit, something quick and easy to read for young people with links.
7. Better quality products used when replacing items.
8. View to the future housing space for working from home in new builds.

And there were some ideas and suggestions specific to certain schemes and estates that we have shared with the relevant ateb teams to consider and take forward.

What did we learn?

Most customers told us that they were happy with their home and the services they received from ateb.

There were several suggestions put forward for improvements, however a common theme was maintenance and how we communicate with our customers.

There were some great ideas and suggestions of how ateb could better involve its customers in shaping the future of ateb and getting more involved.

Next steps

Improvements identified by our customers will inform our short and long-term improvement plans, a specific focus for the current year being repairs and communication.

We will also explore how we take forward the ideas and suggestions of how to better involve our customers in shaping the future of ateb, and incorporate improvement actions into our improvement plans for the next 2 years.

The following improvement actions have been incorporated into our short and long-term planning in response to the feedback received.

- Review customer communication interfaces for the right tone of voice, timeliness of messaging and platform mixes used to communicate.
- Systems Improvement Project — Reactive Repairs | An association wide sponsored improvement project aimed at creating the right process supported by the right resources, delivered by the right skills and experiences.

- Review customer forum terms of reference.
- We will examine how to firmly establish ways for contract holders to be involved in ateb staff and contractor recruitment processes.
- We will review publicly available Customer Engagement information on our website.
- We will further demonstrate the difference involvement is making at ateb through identifying the range of changes which may have resulted following customer engagement.
- We will implement a new process for monitoring the delivery of grounds maintenance and cleaning contractors, that involves customers.
- Develop customer engagement plans to communicate the need for greater carbon literacy and understanding of new technologies needed to address carbon reduction, including the retrofitting of homes. The plans will need to consider the resources needed to deliver meaningful engagement.

Summary

The annual conferences are always a great way for customers and the ateb team to come together and discuss things that are working well and things that need to be improved.

If you want to learn more about future conferences or how you may be able to get more involved at ateb, please get in touch:

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If it matters to **you**,
It matters to **us**.

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