

How to write good board papers

Longhurst Group is a housing group and developer, providing homes and support services across the Midlands and the East of England.

Objective

Having recently introduced a new board/committee paper template and guidelines, Longhurst was keen to have external expertise to work through these with key report authors in the organisation.

The workshops therefore centred around the Longhurst templates, but incorporated other key elements of good report writing, such as:

- Purpose of reports
- Knowing your audience
- Making your case and ‘getting what you want’
- Presentation, use of colour, visuals etc.
- Plain English and clarity of language
- Appendices and attachments

Attendees also looked at examples of good reports (anonymised) from other providers, and discussed how they would change the way they write reports looking ahead.

What we did

Delivered two workshops for board report authors (see above for detail)

What we achieved

At the end of the workshop, participants understood:

- Purpose of and reason for board reports
- The Longhurst report writing guidelines and template
- The audience, and how to address their needs
- Elements of a good report
- Importance of plain English, clarity, etc.
- How to make a report interesting
- How to frame options and recommendations
- The importance of consistency
- The paramount importance of the process, interdependencies and team work
- A number of personal ‘take aways’ they can apply to their own report writing going forward.

Longhurst also benefitted from a significant amount of feedback from report authors which may otherwise not have been forthcoming, which it is now using to improve its process and template.



Sam brought significant expertise and knowledge from her extensive work with boards and on governance in the sector. She imparted best practice alongside working through the Longhurst approach with attendees in an interesting and lively way. I would recommend similar workshops to any organisation struggling to achieve the quality it desires in its board reports.

Rachel Challinor, Director of Governance, Performance and Compliance