



ACCENT NORTH PERFORMANCE REPORT

2017-18



ACCENTGROUP.ORG

DEAR RESIDENT

2017/18 WAS A BIG YEAR FOR ACCENT. WE WELCOMED PAUL DOLAN, OUR NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE, LAUNCHED OUR NEW VISION AND VALUES, AND WORKED CLOSELY WITH OVER 500 OF YOU TO DEVELOP THE ACCENT PARTNERSHIP. WE'VE GOT BIG AMBITIONS FOR THE FUTURE, AND THEY INCLUDE WANTING YOU TO BE LIVING WITH THE NUMBER ONE HOUSING ASSOCIATION IN THE COUNTRY. WE KNOW THERE'S LOTS OF WORK FOR US TO DO TO ACHIEVE THIS, BUT WE KNOW WE WILL. WE WANT OUR SERVICES TO BE EXCEPTIONAL AND FOR YOU TO BE PROUD TO LIVE IN AN ACCENT HOME. BUT, MOST IMPORTANTLY, WE WANT YOU, OUR RESIDENTS TO BE HAPPY.

CONTENTS

**LAUNCHING OUR
VISION AND VALUES**

04

**INTRODUCING...
SHAUN FINEGAN**

06

**SUPPORTING
OUR CUSTOMERS**

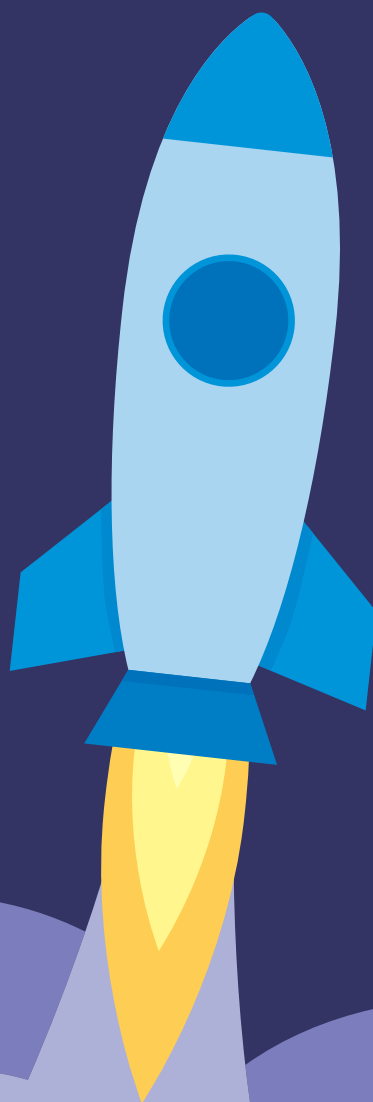
08

**MYACCOUNT
IS HERE**

10

**ACCENT
ON TOUR**

11



LAUNCHING OUR NEW VISION AND VALUES

2018 saw the launch of our new vision and values. Our new service offer, the Accent Partnership, is also on its way and we will be talking to you about that very soon.

With our new vision and values we will provide you with high quality, affordable homes and services and support you throughout your tenancy on your journey with us as our resident.

OUR VISION

WITH YOU FOR YOUR JOURNEY

OUR VALUES

Our new values shape everything we do –
and every home and service we provide for you:



**WE
ARE** **ENERGETIC**

We strive for the **BEST** every time

**WE
ARE** **DRIVEN**

We do whatever it takes to get it **RIGHT**



**WE
ARE** **SMART**

We challenge ourselves to **IMPROVE** every day

**WE
ARE** **CARING**

We are genuine people who **CARE**



INTRODUCING...

...OUR NEW CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE DIRECTOR



Shaun Finegan, as your director, is responsible for making sure you get the very best from your experience of living with us.

Shaun has been with Accent for quite a few years now, so he is no stranger to understanding exactly what it takes to make our services the best they can be, and he will work with his teams to make sure they are.

...THE ACCENT PARTNERSHIP

The way we deliver our services is about to dramatically change for the better, and it's all thanks to your input. We talked to over 500 residents through surveys and focus groups, to help us develop our new service offer, that we're calling the Accent Partnership.

We'll be sending you more information on the Accent Partnership either by email, or in the post over the next few weeks, so watch this space!



In July this year, we took ourselves out on tour. In total we visited 18 different estates across the country, here's the team after we stopped off in Sunderland.



Our office in central Bradford closed in summer 2017, when we began to redevelop the site into 16 new affordable homes. Here's John Place (Customer Experience Manager) welcoming a family into one of the new homes.

...OUR NEW CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE MANAGERS



AMANDA OAKLEY

North East

Amanda joined us on 4 June. She is new to Accent, but certainly not new to customer service as she is an experienced manager, used to delivering great services. Now, Amanda is set to continue her record of delivering great services heading up our team in the North East.



IRENE SOUTHERN

North West

Irene has been with Accent for a number of years. First as a housing officer (so she really knows what life is like for residents). Most recently, Irene was based at our head office in Shipley helping to improve the customer experience digitally with our ICT team. She's now back in Burnley heading up our North West team.



JOHN PLACE

Yorkshire

John has also been with Accent a number of years, improving services across Yorkshire whilst making his way through the ranks. Most recently, he has been housing manager for the region, now he will head up our Yorkshire customer team.

Everyone working for our customer experience teams, and across Accent, is excited about the future and passionate about making sure our services provide you with the best possible customer experience.

SUPPORTING OUR CUSTOMERS

We aim to deliver the best possible customer experience in all the services that are important to you – repairs, complaints, anti-social behaviour etc., but we also provide extra support for some residents when they need it most. Here are a few examples...

NORTH EAST:

1 A resident in Gateshead had fallen into financial difficulties and her Housing Benefit had stopped. We helped this resident apply for a backdated payment of Housing Benefit. £1,400 was paid which helped this resident reduce her arrears and, over time, get her rent account into a credit balance. Our resident had been affected by the bedroom tax and decided to move to a smaller home. We could help with a mutual exchange. This resident has her smaller home and we have been able to help a family in desperate need of a bigger home.

2 A family in York wanted to move to Redcar and Cleveland for a fresh start. We supported the move, and applied to the council for help with rent and Council Tax. We provided decoration vouchers and we carpeted the property as the move was a big financial strain. The family settled well and we kept in close contact for around six weeks. During this time however, our new resident became worried about Housing Benefit. We contacted the council on her behalf and found her payments were not right. We submitted an urgent revision statement and extra evidence. A backdate was eventually granted and payment made. Our resident was very pleased with the outcome and all the help she received from us.

YORKSHIRE:

1 We intervened to support one resident who was unwell, losing money and struggling to cope. An application to the Yorkshire Water Trust Fund resulted in a payment of £600 towards arrears of £1000, and we managed to obtain a backdated Employment Seekers Allowance (ESA) payment of £500. We also requested a 'mandatory reconsideration' in relation to a 'personal independence payment' (PIP), and we managed to obtain back payments totalling £6000 and secure future payments. Before our support, the resident was at real risk of losing their home.



NORTH WEST:

1 In our north west region, we supported 276 customers with things like setting up their first home, debt (payment plans, grants and discretionary housing benefit), budgets and making the most of their money and helping them to claim everything they were entitled to. In total, we secured an extra £142,000 for our customers.

2 We also continued to invest in our independent living schemes. Milnshaw Gardens, Accrington, had new doors and windows fitted, a new warden call system and the communal areas were redecorated and refurbished.

3 Kirk House Extra Care Scheme, also in Accrington, has a new scooter store which is allowing residents who need a mobility scooter to store them safely, and improve their mobility and independence.

4 Three of our independent living scheme managers have undertaken training to provide OOMPH in our independent living schemes. One manager, Kellie Boothman, told us that OOMPH! stands for “our organisation makes people happy!” Along with Debbie Clark and Kelly Shepherd, Kellie has been trained to deliver fun sessions which motivate people to stay active and have a laugh whilst doing so. Games include slipper soccer, armchair hockey and sitting volleyball. They are designed to help those taking part to use every joint in the body and muscles that aren’t generally used day to day. The health benefits are huge as people who would normally struggle with exercise are exercising without really trying. Residents have really enjoyed the sessions and can’t wait for the next ones. It’s all part of our aim to reduce isolation, and encourage engagement and activity.

5 Mr X lived in a three bed house. He had not been there long, having moved in when his ex-partner died to look after their children. One child moved out, which affected the rent and child benefit part of Mr X’s Universal Credit. This meant he did not have enough money to pay his bedroom tax or water rates, and he went into rent arrears. We did a trust fund application to clear his water rates (£338.62), and we looked at what we could do to help Mr X move to a smaller, more affordable home. We also completed a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) for Mr X’s bedroom tax and a one off payment to clear his rent arrears of £945. Everything went through and we moved Mr X to a two-bed house. We also fitted a shower in the family’s new home. Mr X and his children have settled in well and he no longer has any financial issues.



MYACCOUNT IS HERE

After months of design, testing and talking to residents, we are delighted to announce that MyAccount, our new customer portal is here.

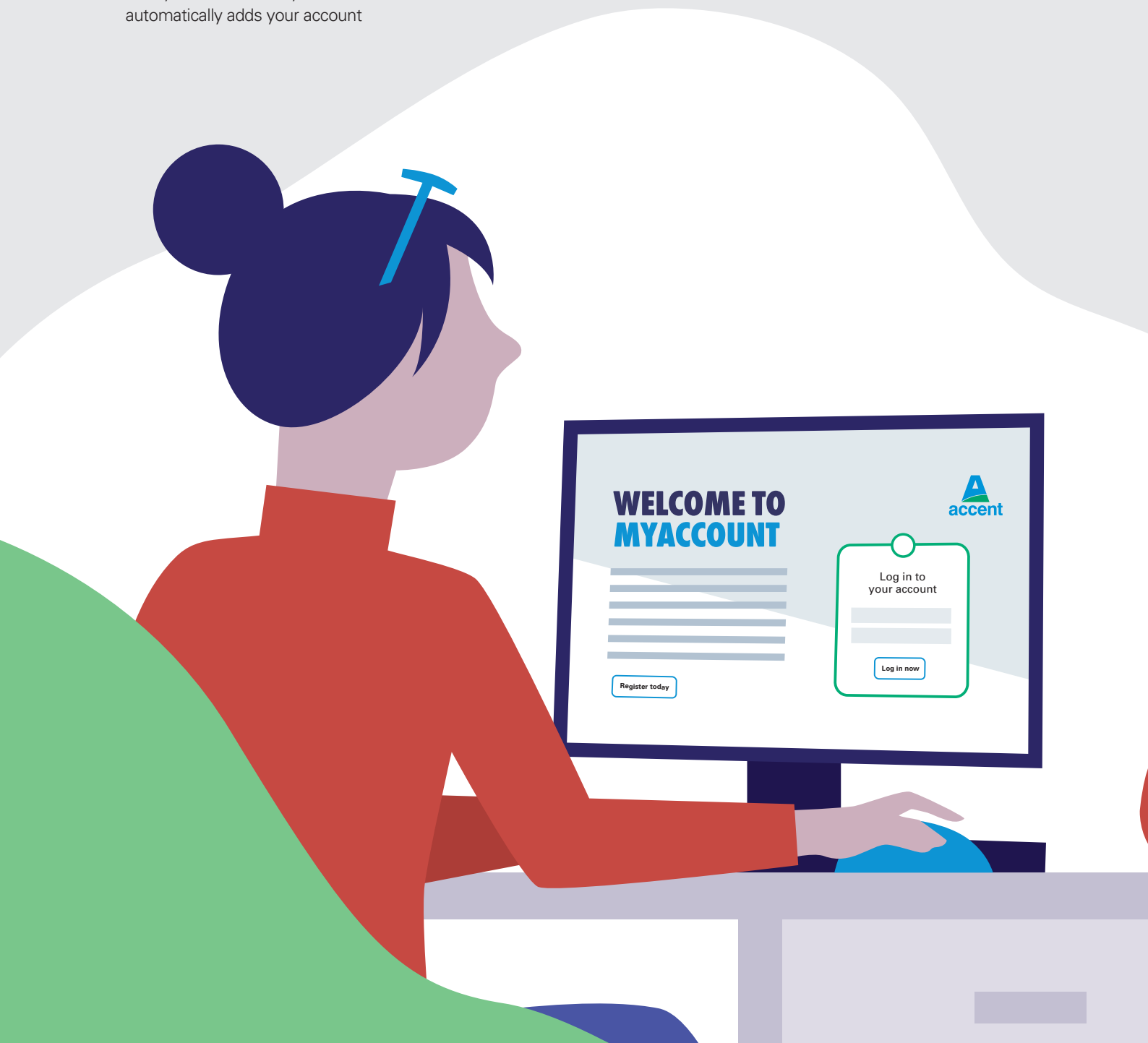
Over 3,200 of you have signed up so far!

The new portal has been re-designed from top to bottom, so reporting a repair, updating your details or contacting us is even more convenient and much simpler than before. It looks and feels different and it doesn't matter what device you use to access it – MyAccount will look equally as good.

Paying your rent on-line is easier too as MyAccount securely stores and automatically adds your account

number, so you won't need to add it manually when you want to make a payment via Allpay.

We're really confident that MyAccount is a huge improvement on our previous system – why not activate your account [here](#) today.



ACCENT ON TOUR

In July 2018, for almost the whole month, we took Accent out on tour!

Covering over 1,500 miles, we visited over 18 estates, and you came out in your hundreds to see us. We didn't quite do Land's End to John-o-Groats, but it was near enough! We started in sunny Ashford in Kent on 2nd July, and finished in Middlesbrough on 26 July, in the likes of a heatwave we haven't seen for a long time.

There were some long, hot days for you and us, but we'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone we met for your honesty and hospitality – and for taking the time to stop and talk. It gave us chance to look into some of those issues you raised.

All the visits were a bit different, but our repairs and maintenance operatives were on site at nearly every one. They fixed fences, delivered skips and pretty much did whatever small jobs you asked them to do while they were with us. On some days, we also had some great fun and learning things for kids. We gave out countless numbers of sweets and treats, and a whopping 136 ice creams!

Local PCSOs and the fire service, also joined us on some visits with useful advice and information.

Thanks again to everyone who joined us, it was great to meet you all.





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