

North East Performance Report

for the year ended 31 March 2017

The North East is one of Accent's five regions. We operate from an office in Middlesbrough. We provide homes across Teesside, Durham, North Yorkshire and parts of Tyne & Wear.

Performance in our region during 2016/17 was good:

- We reduced the number of empty homes from 148 to 62.
- We let our empty homes in an average of 37 days.
- We cut arrears by over £60,000.
- 95% of customers were satisfied with the way we handled anti-social behaviour.
- 95% of customers were satisfied with our tenancy sustainability service.

We received 150 complaints during the year. We dealt with 114 of these informally. 69% of residents were satisfied with the way we responded to the 36 formal complaints.

We carried out 15 evictions in the region; 13 for rent arrears and two for anti-social behaviour.

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We spent over £1.7 million on replacing 125 bathrooms, 86 kitchens, 133 window and door replacements and 39 heating appliances.

Improving your homes

- Our contractors kept 98% of repair appointments.
- Over 98% of repairs were fixed first time.
- Satisfaction with our repairs service was over 94%.
- We spent £1.6m on day to day repairs.
- We spent £1.3m on our void (long term empty) homes.
- We spent £900,000 on servicing and maintaining homes.
- We spent over £1.7 million on replacing 125 bathrooms, 86 kitchens, 133 window and door replacements and 39 heating appliances.
- Over 97% of customers were satisfied with our planned maintenance.

Letting our Homes

- We let 510 homes to people in housing need.

We decided to withdraw from the CBL (choice based lettings) schemes in Durham (Durham Key Options) and Teesside (Compass). This means we can take more direct control over who we let our homes to. We use different methods to let our homes, including Facebook and Gumtree, and we have set up our own waiting list. We are moving towards a new, digital, self-serve, easy to use system in 2018.

Estate Improvements

We made improvements to many of our communal estate areas including new gates and fencing, new door locks and parking signs. Some of the improvements involved work on a larger scale, like the outside painting of homes in Brotton.

Improving our performance

Our new approach to working with customers involved the set-up of our regional compliance and scrutiny committee, which is made up of local residents and independent experts. Members focus on improving performance, and making sure we provide our services in the best way and at value for money. We also work with a local residents' scrutiny committee and have reviewed a number of services including anti-social behaviour, tenancy agreements and our tenancy sustainability service. If you would like to know more about getting involved give us a call.

We are committed to improving our services. In 2017/18 we intend to:

- Introduce new maintenance, gardening and cleaning contracts.
- Introduce a digital, easy-to-use self-serve system for applying for our homes.
- Encourage customers to communicate with us using the customer portal.
- Enable more of our schemes to benefit from the supporting independence scheme.
- Help customers with advice on welfare reforms.
- Introduce a noise app for anti-social behaviour.
- Improve links with employment agencies to make the most of our customers' chances to find work.

Supporting our customers

We appreciate times are difficult for many of our customers, especially with the Government's welfare reforms. In the next seven months, the full, digital service of Universal Credit will launch. It will mean a big change. To help our customers, we are sending out leaflets, running campaigns on Facebook and door knocking to offer advice and support.

Our tenancy sustainability team has grown this year so we can provide even more support to our customers, particularly those who need help to manage their tenancies. We helped 387 households during the year.

In Bishop Auckland, our 'supporting independence' scheme in Woodhouse Close, offered pre-tenancy training to new customers. We have let 15 homes through this service and everyone is managing their tenancies well.

A young mum and her two young children came to us for a home. Mum was still in her parental home, but she wanted her family to live on their own for the first time. Our pre-tenancy checks showed the house was overcrowded, and our financial checks showed she was entitled to claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support, which we obtained on her behalf. The check also showed she would struggle to furnish her new home, so we applied for a furniture and white goods grant.



The family have settled in nicely and love living on their own. We plan to continue this good work with our vulnerable customers in other areas over the coming year.

We also launched our new health and wellbeing contact service for residents over 60 living in our general needs homes. We have contacted over 600 residents to offer support so they can continue to live independently.

Pictured above:
Some recently completed new homes at Picking Croft Lane, Killinghall

DID YOU KNOW

You can access our services in a number of ways to suit you:

- Our housing and surveying teams are now mobile so we can visit you at your convenience.
- You can access many services electronically via your personal customer portal account. For more information, please visit our website www.accentgroup.org

Our customer contact centre is open six days a week. Our customer service advisors are equipped to answer all types of enquiries and, where possible, will do so at the first point of contact. Call us on **0345 678 0555**.

Your Regional Management Team



Tony Grainger
Regional Housing
Director



Tracey Jackson
Housing Manager



Jan Welsh
Tenancy
Sustainability
Manager



Paul Blackwell
Contract Manager



Katie Jamieson
Independent Living
Co-ordinator

Your Local Housing Team



Robbie Warburton
Housing Officer



Linzie Hough
Housing Officer



Kelly Brooks
Housing Officer



Amanda Grange
Housing Officer



Jill Armstrong
Housing Officer



Donna Matthews
Housing Officer



Jo Caveney
Housing Officer



Hannah MacTaggart
Housing Officer



Helen Dunn
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