

MEETING GUIDELINES

Independent Living Group (ILG)

These guidelines outline the purpose of the meeting, expected outcomes, membership, time commitments and general ‘housekeeping’ for the meetings.

PURPOSE

1. **Be the voice of the community:** Bring forward the views, ideas, and concerns of your community to help shape better services.
2. **Escalate Regional Issues:** Provide a quarterly summary report to the National Customer Group, highlighting key customer feedback and areas for improvement.
3. **Represent all customers:** Ensure that a wide range of customer perspectives are considered when Accent makes decisions about homes and services.
4. **Raise awareness:** Help promote the group’s work and share updates with the wider customer community to help build trust and transparency.
5. **Track progress:** Stay updated on what actions have been taken in response to the group’s recommendations, with regular updates from the Customer Engagement Manager.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

6. **Driving service improvements:** The group will agree on evidence-based recommendations to improve services, focusing on what benefits communities and the wider customer base - not just individual concerns. The Chair will be responsible for making sure all recommendations are clear, fair and based on evidence before sharing to the Customer Experience Committee.
7. **Evidence of Influence:** The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires clear evidence that customers are actively shaping service delivery. You will play a key role in gathering and sharing this evidence to highlight the real impact of your involvement.
8. **Stronger, thriving communities:** We hope that through your involvement, members of this group will help create stronger, more connected communities—where customers feel heard, valued, and empowered to shape the places they live.

WHO CAN JOIN THE GROUP

9. **Independent Living Customers only:** This group is specifically for customers living in Independent Living Schemes, which are homes supported by a dedicated Specialist Housing Partner.

WHEN AND HOW WE MEET

10. **When the group will meet:** The group will meet at least once every three months (quarterly). Each meeting will last approximately 2.5 hours.
11. **How the group will meet:** To encourage maximum attendance, meetings will primarily be held virtually via Microsoft Teams. However, we encourage the group to meet in person at least once a year to foster stronger working relationships.

EXPECTED TIME COMMITMENT

12. **Monthly commitment:** Members are asked to contribute around 3–4 hours per month, which includes attending meetings, reviewing information, and gathering feedback.
13. **Optional opportunities:** Members can also choose to get more involved – such as joining conferences, workshops, or training, participating in community events, supporting with Accent’s annual ‘Big Conversation’ and attending Accent’s annual colleague conference.
14. **Voluntary resignation:** Members can choose to step down at any time during their term if their circumstances change. Notice should be given to the Customer Engagement Manager.

MANAGING MEMBERSHIP

15. **Group size:** The group includes up to 12 members plus a Chair, with at least 5 members needed for meetings to go ahead (to be quorate).
16. **Recruitment:** The Chair and Customer Engagement Manager will lead recruitment when vacancies become available.
17. **Term length:** Members are encouraged to step down after three years to give new customers a chance to get involved. There is an option to extend by 1 year if needed. To serve a second term, members must speak with the Chair and/or Customer Engagement Manager. After six years of service, members should take a 12-month break before reapplying to join the group again.
18. **Stepping down:** Members may be asked to step down if they do not follow the Working Well Together Guidelines, or if they miss three meetings without a valid reason (unless agreed otherwise).

THE CHAIR

19. **Selection:** The Chair is selected from within the group, and members are welcome to put themselves forward. If more than one person expresses interest, a fair vote will be held, with the option of a secret ballot organised by the Customer Engagement Manager.
20. **Responsibility:** The Chair plays a key role in the success of the group. They help guide discussions, keep the group focused, and ensure everyone’s voice is heard.
21. **Role Profile:** A role profile for the position of RCG Chair will be maintained and the post holder will carry out the role in line with the requirements of the role profile

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

22. **Leading the meeting:** The Chair will set the agenda and lead each meeting. If the Chair is unavailable, another group member will be nominated to lead the meeting.
23. **Support and coordination:** The Customer Engagement Manager will support the group by organising the meetings, supporting with facilitation. All meetings will be documented, with actions recorded and tracked.

MAKING DECISIONS

24. **Reaching agreement:** The group will aim to make decisions by consensus, ensuring everyone’s views are heard. If consensus is not possible, a majority vote will be used to reach a decision.

MONITORING THE GROUPS EFFECTIVENESS

- 25. **Ongoing support and oversight:** The group will receive ongoing support from the Customer Engagement Manager, with oversight from the National Customer Group.
- 26. **Annual review:** An annual review, led by the Chair, will check how well the group is working. If needed, an independent review may be arranged to ensure transparency and accountability.
- 27. **Individual support:** Accent can offer individual support to help members carry out their roles confidently whether this be professionally or personally.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

- 28. **Inclusive Approach:** Members are expected to follow Accent's Equity and Diversity Policy, ensuring all service reviews and recommendations reflect the diverse needs of customers.
- 29. **Reflecting our communities:** The Customer Engagement Manager will review group membership each year to help ensure it reflects the communities Accent serves.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- 30. **Respecting privacy and trust:** Members may have access to sensitive or confidential information. All members are required to follow the confidentiality guidelines outlined in the Working Well Together Guidelines, which they will sign when joining the group.

EXPENSES AND REMUNERATION

- 31. **Claiming expenses:** Members can claim back reasonable costs they incur while carrying out their role, in line with Accent's Involved Customer Expenses Policy.

REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE MEETING GUIDELINES

- 32. **Annual review:** The Chair and Customer Engagement Manager will review the Meeting Guidelines Reference annually to keep them relevant and up to date. Any proposed changes must be agreed by a majority of group members and then approved by the Customer Experience Committee before they take effect.

CLOSING THE GROUP

- 33. **Right to close the group:** Accent may choose to close the group if it's no longer meeting its intended purpose or goals. Should this happen, we'll ensure all members are informed in writing, with a clear explanation of the reasons behind the decision.