

Accent



In the Loop 
customer newsletter

Housing for over 55s edition

A Message from Nick – Our CEO

Welcome to our latest customer newsletter.



Nick Apetroaie
Chief Executive Officer

As we approach Christmas and the end of the year, I want to send you my warmest wishes for a joyful and restful festive season. I'm delighted to share the first of our new customer newsletters, which have been refreshed following your feedback. This edition has been written just for our Specialist Housing and Independent Living customers, and I hope you find the news and updates useful.

This edition is packed with updates that reflect the heart of what we do: listening to you, learning from your feedback, and acting to improve the services that matter most.

From thousands of doorstep conversations during our Big Conversation event to the insights you shared in our Tenant Satisfaction Measures survey, your feedback is helping us build a better, more responsive service. In this newsletter, you'll see how we're acting on what matters most to you – from tackling damp and mould, to improving repairs and refreshing our Customer Influence Framework.

We know that being a good landlord means more than just maintaining homes – it's about building trust, responding quickly, and making sure every customer feels heard and supported. From tackling damp and mould, to improving repairs and communication, we're making real changes based on what you've told us.

I'm proud of the progress we've made, and even more excited about what's ahead. We know there are areas we must improve, and are working hard to make sure you see these changes. Thank you for your continued engagement, and for helping us build a service that's truly customer-first.

Warm regards,

Nick

Welcome from Tanya Scott, Head of Specialist Housing

I hope you've all enjoyed a pleasant summer. As we move towards Christmas and the winter months, we understand that colder weather and seasonal changes can bring new challenges.



If you receive any communications regarding winter support or heating, please don't hesitate to contact your Specialist Housing Partner for guidance and assistance.

You may already be aware of the National Independent Living Scheme Customer Group, which some of you are actively involved in. This group has been running since January 2024 and, following recent positive changes to customer engagement and involvement, has now expanded to influence service improvements at the highest level.

We're pleased to announce the appointment of Lyn Nelson as Chair and Chris Lyn as Vice Chair, both residents of Independent Living Schemes. I'd like to congratulate them on their new roles and thank them for their continued dedication and support.

If you'd like to learn more about the National Group or explore opportunities to get involved, please speak with your Specialist Housing Partner.

Best wishes

Tanya



Thousands of chats, one Big Conversation

Did you see us out-and-about on Thursday 4th September, for our third annual Big Conversation event?

The Big Conversation is our national annual engagement event. It's a chance for us to have a short, friendly chat at your doorstep about your home, your neighbourhood and our services. One in three customers say they want a bigger say in housing services, so for us this day was another chance to find out what's important to you.

We knocked on 5,671 doors across the UK; from Middlesbrough to Barrow, Peterborough to Burnley, Bradford to Camberley. We enjoyed 1951 great conversations with customers and recorded your feedback so it can help us shape services.

This year, over 250 staff members were out knocking on doors, hearing feedback directly from customers and delivering our Customer Annual Report. We also gave a fridge magnet to every customer we visited, with our key contact details on. We shared key messages on how to report damp and mould, our new opportunities for customer involvement and our TSM survey results.

We didn't manage to get to every home and speak to every customer, but this year we made changes to which areas we visited and increased the number of colleagues out-and-about. There are lots of other ways you can tell us your views – please contact us or join our Customer Influence Framework.





Chris Lynn, Accent customer and Vice Chair of the Independent Living Scheme (National Group), said:

“The Big Conversation was a great experience. It was overwhelmingly positive, jolly, informative and I felt genuinely heard and treated with compassion. It was good to receive the annual customer report, learn about the updates on damp and mould and hear about new opportunities for customers to get involved.

The Big Conversation isn't just about knocking on doors; it's about opening them. As a customer and vice chair for the Independent Living Group, I've seen first-hand how listening with respect and empathy, then acting with purpose, can rebuild trust. This year's outreach shows Accent is serious about putting customers before process and turning feedback into real change. When customers speak, it's not just noise, but it's the blueprint for better social housing and place to call home.”



Have you seen our Customer Annual Report?

We've been busy sending out copies of our Customer Annual Report over the last few weeks. Maybe you had a copy posted through your door during our Big Conversation event, or land in your email mailbox? If you haven't seen a copy yet, read it here: www.accentgroup.org/media/qovdwlz4/customer-annual-report-2025-20-08-2025-lowres.pdf

Each year we publish this report to show how we're performing against the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing. It gives you a clear and honest view of how we're doing and where we need to improve. Inside our report, you'll find information on how we perform against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures, updates on the service improvements we're working on and news of some important changes.



Shaping better communication around Damp and Mould



We get it - **damp and mould can be a real worry. That's why we're working hard to make sure the way we talk about it is clear, supportive, and helpful.**

Back in August, we held a workshop with customers to dig into how we can do better. The result? Over 20 brilliant suggestions - and we've already put most of them into action!

One standout idea was to create tailored communications for customers in our Independent Living Schemes, offering extra reassurance and support. So, we teamed up with the Independent Living Customer Group and our Comms Team to co-design a helpful info pack just for them.

This is all part of a bigger journey to improve how we connect with you; not just when things go wrong, but every step of the way. We're here to make every conversation count.

A huge *thank you* to everyone who got involved. Your feedback is helping us build a service that's more *open, responsive*, and truly *customer-first*.

Dealing with Damp and Mould

Damp is excess moisture inside your home that can build up from everyday activities (like cooking, showering and drying clothes), leaks or poor ventilation. When damp isn't dealt with, it can lead to mould.

Damp and mould can affect anyone, but they're especially risky for babies and children, older people, and anyone with breathing or skin conditions.

To avoid this, try to keep rooms aired and warm (use extractor fans, open trickle vents, wipe away condensation), avoid drying clothes directly on radiators, and don't cover air vents.

If you spot damp or mould, please tell us straight away so we can investigate. As your housing provider, we are required to investigate and resolve significant and/or emergency damp and mould health-risk hazards in your home within certain timelines. You can find out more on our website: www.accentgroup.org/your-home/repairs-and-maintenance/reporting-damp-and-mould/

If you believe you have damp and mould in your home, call **0345 678 0555** and speak to our **Technical Hub**.

Condensation

- **What it is:** When warm, moist air (from cooking, showers, drying clothes) hits a cold surface like a window or outside wall, it turns into tiny water drops.
- **Where you'll spot it:** On windows in the morning, cold corners, around ceilings, behind furniture or in rooms with poor airflow.
- **Why it matters:** Regular condensation can lead to mould and can worsen breathing problems – so try simple steps like opening trickle vents, using extractor fans, keeping a bit of background heat and wiping away moisture.

Damp

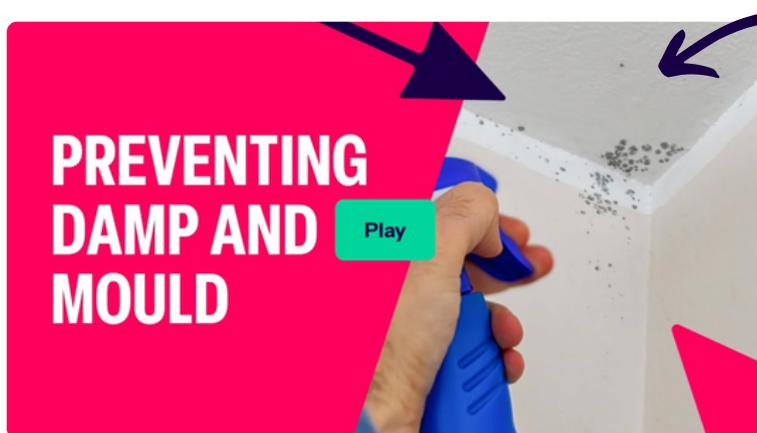
- **What it is:** Moisture getting into the fabric of your home and causing damage (patches on walls, stained paint, crumbly plaster).
- **Where it comes from:** Water can come up from the ground (often called rising damp) or get in from outside through roofs, walls, windows or leaks.
- **Why it matters:** Left alone, damp spreads and can lead to mould.

Mould

- **What it is:** A fungus that grows on damp surfaces – black, green or white spots that can spread if the moisture stays.
- **Why it appears:** It usually follows condensation or leaks, especially in colder rooms or places with little air movement (behind wardrobes, on outside walls).
- **Why it matters:** Mould looks and smells unpleasant and can affect health and belongings.

Our *website* has lots more information, including photos that show the different levels of damp and mould – *minor*, *significant* and *emergency* – and how quickly we will resolve these.

Find out more: www.accentgroup.org/your-home/repairs-and-maintenance/reporting-damp-and-mould/



Check out our video on how to prevent damp and mould here too:

https://youtu.be/f-dviaXV8_U?si=3tXJjig_SevozRZs6

Did you know, we have dedicated Property Services Coordinators that monitor and support individual damp and mould cases? They use trackers to follow each case that show the live status, severity and next actions until your issue is resolved.



New Customer Influence Framework

We're delighted to launch our new Customer Influence Framework, as part of our commitment to listening and responding to your feedback and ideas.

This involves groups of customers from all over the UK joining with us to help steer positive service change.

Over the coming months you will hear more about how customers are shaping change at Accent, but here's a summary of what you can expect from our new approach to customer involvement.

We're strengthening our approach, together

We're putting in place a clear framework which gives customers the opportunity to get involved in a range of ways. This isn't just a process change, it's a commitment to doing better, together.

We've heard you

Through surveys, feedback and conversations, it's clear that listening and acting on what matters to you is essential. This next step is a meaningful move in the right direction. From our Senior Leadership Team and Customer Experience Committee all the way to the Board, we're making space to hear your voices - and to act on what you share.

Diverse voices matter

Having a wide range of customers involved is not just valuable, it's vital. Every perspective and view help us build stronger, more inclusive, and more relevant recommendations for service improvement.

We're raising awareness internally too

We've been working with our team to make sure these new customer groups become part of Accent's DNA, and who we are as a landlord. We want to truly embed a culture of listening, learning, and acting - where customer voices shape our decisions, guide our priorities, and inspire our teams.

These groups are led by you

Every group is customer-led, supported by Accent. We encourage you to get involved, share your thoughts, and help shape what comes next.

To read more about our Customer Influence Framework, and to get involved too, head to our get involved page: www.accentgroup.org/your-community/get-involved/

Meet Stacy Hartley – Chair of the National Customer Group

Championing the Customer Voice:

“ I’m thrilled to take on the role of *Chair* and work alongside our *incredible customers!* ”



As a Customer Champion, Stacy has worked hard to amplify the customer voice, helping to shape key improvements, such as making Accent’s complaints process fairer and more consistent.

Stacy has also completed the CIH Level 2 Certificate in Housing Practice, strengthening her understanding of the housing sector. Alongside her involvement with Accent, she is an experienced Office Manager and owner of an award-winning salon, bringing strong leadership, financial, and customer service skills, as well as a genuine understanding of what great customer care looks like.

“I’ve been an Accent customer for over 20 years, raising my family and creating a home full of memories. For customers, it’s more than just a property - it’s a home where life happens, people matter, and together we can make a real difference to the services we receive through engagement and collaboration.”

Stacy is passionate about bringing customers together, building trust and transparency, and ensuring that every customer feels respected, valued, and empowered to influence the services they receive.

“Being involved has given me a firsthand view of the work happening behind the scenes and the genuine commitment to customer-focused change. I’m a strong supporter of the Customer Engagement Strategy and am excited about all we can achieve together. My passion is inspiring customers to get involved, share their experiences, and feel confident that their views truly matter - so that the customer voice is at the heart of every decision, shaping services and building communities we can all be proud of.”

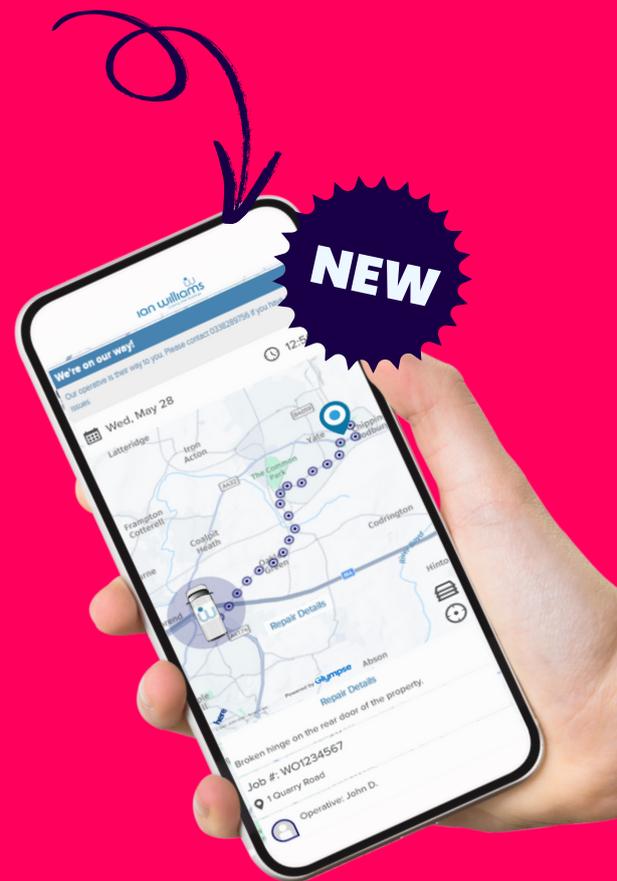


If you’d like to get involved and help shape the services that matter to you, we’d love to hear from you. Visit www.accentgroup.org/yourcommunity/get-involved to find out more.

Track your repairs appointment – in real time

We know that waiting in for a repair can be frustrating, especially when you're unsure exactly when someone will arrive.

Customers have told us that keeping track of appointments isn't always easy, and we're making changes to improve that experience. We've brought in 'final mile tracking' for repairs carried out by our main contractor, Ian Williams.



What's changing?

You'll still receive the appointment confirmations and reminder texts you're used to. But now, when your operative is on the way, you'll also receive a 'final mile' text message containing a live tracking link.

By clicking the link, you'll be able to:

- See a map showing the operative's location in real time
- View basic job details
- Know the first name of the person who will be arriving at your home

This update, much like tracking a parcel delivery, lets you follow the final stage of your appointment journey, right up to the moment your repair operative arrives.

Why are we doing this?

We want to make it easier for you to stay informed. This live tracking means you'll be able to see whether the operative is on the way, how far away they are, or if they haven't yet set off. It replaces our previous system and reflects our ongoing commitment to delivering a more responsive and reliable repairs service.

This is just one of the ways we're acting on your feedback and investing in technology that improves your experience.

New ramp brings back easy access

One of our customers recently moved into a bungalow in Wisbech to have more space for her electric wheelchair.

Unfortunately, the old ramps had to be taken out because of long-term damp problems.

Our team worked with surveyor Anthony and BSG to plan and build new ramps that would be both safe to use and protect the property from damp.

Over two days, the team rebuilt and adapted parts of the old ramps, added new handrails, and improved drainage.

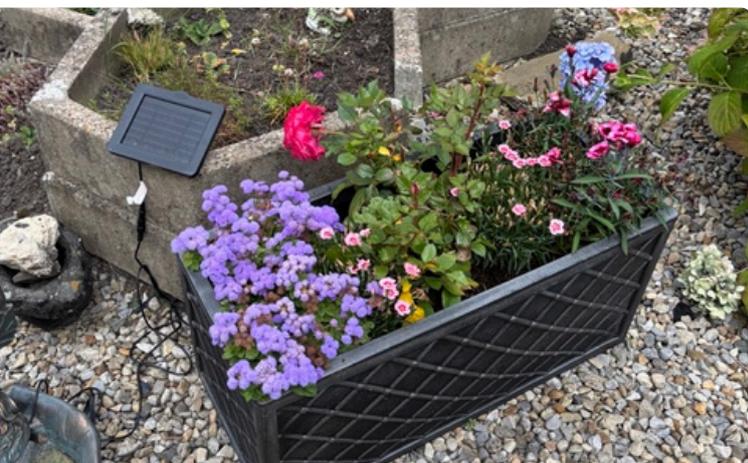
The result is a strong, safe ramp system that makes it easy for the customer to get around her home and garden again.

She's very happy with the result. Thank you to Anthony and BSG for their great work!



Bradford customers celebrate new community garden

Customers at Aprilia Court in Bradford came together to celebrate the completion of a special community garden project, made possible through a partnership with Ian Williams, one of our key contractors.



The project, part of Ian Williams' commitment to giving back to local communities, saw the installation of new raised garden beds in the scheme's communal garden. These beds have been designed with accessibility in mind and will give residents the chance to grow their own flowers, vegetables, herbs, or whatever they choose, right on their doorstep.

To mark the occasion, customers gathered in the sunshine for a celebratory tea party. Laughter, chatter, and plenty of tea and cake set the tone for the day, while the scheme's much-loved mascot, Rita the tortoise, was on hand to give the raised beds her seal of approval.

Specialist Housing Partner, Zehnum Hussain, who has been working closely with customers throughout the project, said: "This has been such a rewarding initiative. It's been wonderful to see residents get involved and take real ownership of the garden. The new raised beds are a fantastic addition, and we now have a team of residents who are keen to keep the project going and make the most of them."

The raised beds now form a vibrant extension to the already beautifully maintained garden outside the communal lounge, creating a welcoming space for residents to relax, grow, and spend time together.

The Aprilia Court initiative is just the start. Accent and Ian Williams are also collaborating on similar projects at Morrell Court in Bradford, with hopes to extend the idea to Saxondale Court in Wakefield in the near future.

Spooktacular success at Astura Court

Our *Halloween* party at *Astura Court* in Bradford on Friday 31st October was a frightfully good time!



Specialist Housing Partner Mo, customers and guests came together for an evening full of fun, laughter, and spooky surprises. Thanks to everyone's generosity through contributions and raffle tickets, we raised an amazing £300 for the Astura Court Residents' Fund! Yorkshire Team Leader Andrew was delighted to hear how well the event went, to see the community spirit and to have raised money for future fun activities.



Customer June said "What a brilliant night that was. Everything you think you needed for the night was there: ghosts, cobwebs, gravestones, spooks, witches, spiders and loads more! We also had pies and peas with different sauces, samosas and chicken bites to cater for the halal eaters, cakes, drinks, and sweeties for the children that came. We managed to raise £300, that went straight into the bank. These funds will go towards our Christmas party and also other day trips we have planned throughout the summer like trips to the seaside."

Take a look at some of the fang-tastic photos from the night – we hope you enjoy them as much as we enjoyed the party!

Stay warm this winter – helpful tips from your Safety Team

As the colder months approach, it's a great time to check that your heating is working properly before the chill sets in.

Accent care about your comfort and wellbeing, and we want to make sure you and your family stay warm and safe this winter.

Quick checks you can do now

- **Test your heating system:** Turn it on for 10–15 minutes to make sure your radiators warm up and your boiler fires correctly.
- **Bleed your radiators:** If they're warm at the bottom but cold at the top, trapped air might be the issue. Bleeding them can improve efficiency.
- **Check the condensate pipe:** Especially in freezing weather, this pipe can become blocked. Make sure it's clear and insulated if needed.
- **Boiler pressure:** Your boiler should usually sit between 1 and 1.5 bar when cold. If it's too low, it may not work properly and you may need to top it up.

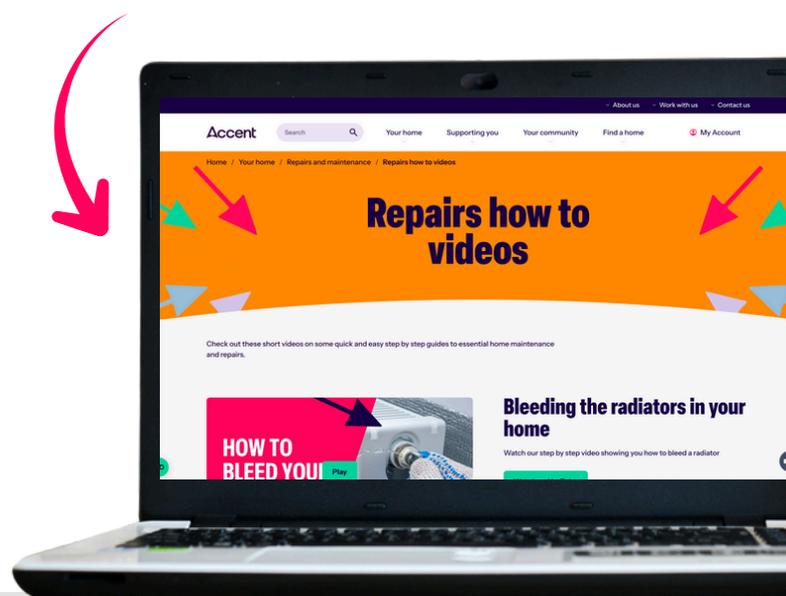
Need a repair?

If you spot a fault or your heating isn't working, please report it through our *Technical Hub* as soon as possible by calling *0345 678 0555*.

The sooner we know, the quicker we can help.

Look at our website for how to guides and videos on how to resolve any quick fixes such as bleeding the radiators or repressuring your boiler.

www.accentgroup.org/your-home/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-how-to-videos/



Keeping warm at home



Layer up: Wearing multiple thin layers traps heat better than one thick layer.



Close curtains at dusk: This helps retain heat and reduce drafts.



Use draught excluders: Block gaps under doors and around windows to keep warm air in.



Keep active indoors: Moving around helps boost circulation and keeps you warmer.



Do not block the radiators: Ensure furniture or clothes are not covering the radiators for better heat circulation and prevent any damp or mould.

We are here to help you stay warm, comfortable and safe in your home this winter. Please check your heating now and let us know if you have any issues. If the faults are minor, but you can't sort them yourself, you can report them online via **MyAccount**. If you have a heating emergency please **contact us** now.

Gas safety checks – please keep your appointment

As your landlord, by law we need to make sure that the appliances we own in your home are gas safe.

We do this with an annual safety check, which is carried out at no cost to you by our Gas Safe registered contractors. When your annual safety check is due, a contractor will get in touch with you to set a time for an appointment. They can work around you to find a good time, but you must allow them access for a safety check. If you obstruct this process, we can legally go to court to gain access to your home.

What you can do to keep yourself, your home and your family safe:

- Allow us access once a year to check your gas appliances
- Keep the appointment for your gas safety check, and don't delay
- Report any concerns or problems with your gas supply, boiler or appliances to us immediately or call the gas emergency services on 0800 111 999 if you smell gas or your carbon monoxide alarm sounds.
- Check that vents or flues are not blocked.
- Check you have a carbon monoxide alarm, and it is working

Fire safety top tips

Every year in the UK, fires start in homes that cause serious harm and severe property damage. Many fires can be prevented.

Here's 5 top tips:

1. Check your smoke alarms work, once a month
2. Don't leave lit candles unattended or near soft furnishings
3. Keep fire doors closed
4. Switch off and unplug electrical appliances, such as TVs and all chargers, when you go to bed
5. Never leave rubbish or any belongings in common stairways or corridors.

Our website has lots of fire safety advice, tips and information too:
www.accentgroup.org/your-home/safety-in-your-home/fire-safety/

If you have any fire concerns or questions, please contact us:

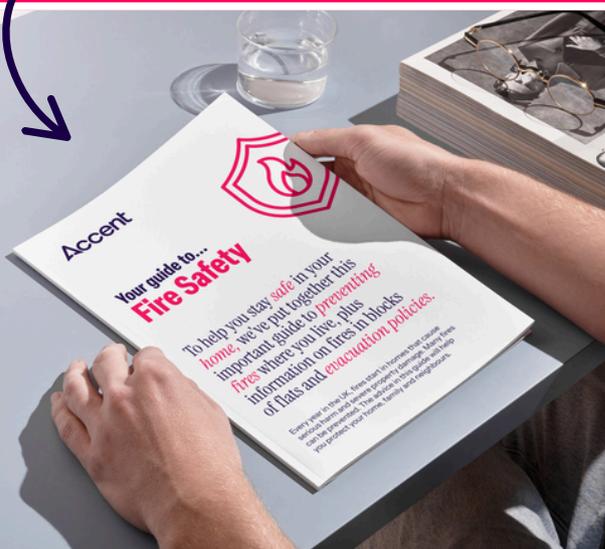
- Speak to your Housing Partner
- Call us on 0345 678 0555
- Email us on fireandsafetyteam@accentgroup.org.



Visit our website

Have you seen your fire safety guide?

Your guide to fire safety should be arriving on your doormat soon, with advice for keeping you and your home safe. It also has information about what you should do in the event of a fire at your home.



Thank you for taking part in our TSM survey

Each year we ask customers to take part in the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM) survey. This has just closed a few weeks ago, and we'd like to say a big thank you to everyone who took the time to share feedback.

Over the coming weeks we will be looking closely at what customers have told us – what we're doing well, and where we can improve – and making steps to keep learning and improving.

What's changed since the last survey?

Your survey responses directly shape our service improvement work.

Because of what you told us last year, we have:

- **Improved repairs:** Last year's results showed more of you were satisfied with repairs, but we know we need to go further. We've introduced a new video call service so you can show us your repair concern, get live advice, and make sure the right contractor is sent first time.
- **Better appointment tracking:** Customers told us it wasn't always easy to keep track of repairs appointments. We've added 'final mile tracking' with our main contractor, Ian Williams, giving you more visibility as your appointment approaches so you know exactly when someone will arrive.
- **Faster action on ASB:** We've introduced a new case management system to log, track and update anti-social behaviour (ASB) cases, speeding up resolutions for you and your neighbours.
- **Customer influence:** We launched our new Customer Influence Framework, with customers from across the UK now shaping services and holding us to account.
- **Quicker complaint handling:** We've changed the way we deal with complaints, introducing a dedicated team to resolve issues faster and improve the experience when things go wrong.

We always welcome feedback – you can tell us how we're doing by speaking to a team member, calling our contact centre, emailing us or filling in our surveys. Get involved here: www.accentgroup.org/your-community/get-involved/

We've published our Complaints Performance and Improvement Report

Improving our complaint handling service is a *key priority* for Accent, and we are committed to *improving* customer experiences.

We continue to listen, learn and act on customer feedback to improve our services.

Every year we are required to publish a self-assessment that looks at complaints, performance and service improvement.

Our customers are very important to us, and when we get something wrong we are working hard to put things right.

Our complaint handling performance is not where we need it to be, but we have put foundations in place to continue improving over the coming 12 months.

This year we will:

- Continue to work with our contractors to streamline our complaints process and drive better outcomes for our customers
- Improve the way we triage so that urgent complaints are prioritised
- Provide our teams with key training
- Launch a new dashboard to help us identify key themes and seek to improve our services based on customer feedback from complaints

You can find the full report here: **[complaints-performance-report-2024-2025.pdf](#)**

For more information on making a complaint, visit our webpage here: **www.accentgroup.org/contact-us/compliments-and-complaints/** or call us on **0345 678 0555**.

Bringing the digital world closer at Chesterton Court

Chesterton Court enjoyed an inspiring **Get Online Week**, with **15** customers joining sessions to explore online services and boost their digital confidence.



Thanks to the wonderful support from AbilityNet and our dedicated volunteer Donna, customers received a range of devices to help them stay connected – including mobile phones, laptops, and tablets with SIM cards. We’ve even added a new laptop to our computer room, which is being transformed into a vibrant digital hub for everyone to enjoy.

The impact was truly touching. One customer, who received a tablet to help her stay connected during chemotherapy, shared tearfully, “This has changed my life at the moment.” Another customer was delighted to be able to video call his terminally ill brother in Spain for the first time.

These heartfelt stories remind us why digital inclusion is so important – helping customers stay informed, entertained, and close to loved ones.

A big thank you to *Donna, AbilityNet* and Specialist Housing Partner *Kerry* for making this event such a success!

National Safeguarding Week

It was National Safeguarding Week from 17th – 21st November, a time to reflect on the vital role we all play in keeping our communities safe.

Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility - whether it's looking out for neighbours, recognising signs of abuse or neglect, or simply offering support to someone who may be vulnerable.

We take safeguarding very seriously at Accent and are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all our customers. If you're ever worried about someone, or need advice or support yourself, please contact our team on **0345 678 0555** or email [**customerservices@accentgroup.org**](mailto:customerservices@accentgroup.org).

Let us know your needs

We want to ensure that *all* customers get a service that is *tailored* to their *needs*.



In order to do that we need to improve the ways we collect data about you that give us a direction to help personalise your services. In the next few months, we'll be using many different methods to try to collect that data, including our new digital portal.

For now, if you have a particular need or vulnerability, you can help us help you by telling our Housing Hub about it. They can be reached on **0345 678 0555** or [**customerservices@accentgroup.org**](mailto:customerservices@accentgroup.org)

A look back...

Here's a selection of *customer* events, involvement and partnership working from across the *Accent community*.

- We hosted our **first National Customer Group**, bringing together customers from across the country for constructive challenge and insightful conversations about performance and complaints data.
- At **Milton Court** tenants enjoyed a helpful session from Age UK on scams and received energy-saving items from the Warm & Wise team.
- Customers at **Whitley Court** shared feedback on new communal floor colours and joined an anti-social behaviour session with local police to improve confidence in reporting safety concerns.
- In **Camberley, Surrey**, a health and wellbeing event at a local church brought together NHS partners to offer health checks and advice.
- At **Eaglethorpe, Peterborough**, the Mindful Motions programme ended on a high with joyful chair-based exercise sessions and positive wellbeing feedback.
- At **Deaconess Court, Peterborough**, customers, staff and contractors came together for an on-site session to discuss parking, planned maintenance, scaffolding and grounds services at this historic building.
- In **Stockton-on-Tees**, our team held a collaborative community event which brought together local partners to deliver activities, support services and family-friendly fun as part of "Reclaim Your Park".
- In **Bradford, at Badsworth and Clervaux**, volunteers joined customers and partner Adecco for a clean-up to tackle fly-tipping and improve shared outdoor spaces.
- At **Primrose Hill, Stockton-on-Tees**, a community day offered crafts, food, activities and support services, with around 20 adults and many children joining in.
- Our team marked Get Online Week with **digital inclusion workshops across the country**. New IT kit and hands-on support were given, helping customers cancel unwanted subscriptions, get connected for the first time and recover lost photos.

What do you think of this newsletter?

We are keen to hear your *feedback* on this customer newsletter, so we can shape them in the future to meet your *needs* and *preferences*.

Please let us know what you like to read about and what is important to you by emailing Engagement@accentgroup.org.

Coming soon!

New online performance hub.

Keep an eye on how we're doing as a landlord with our new web area coming soon.

Customer Voice Reports.

Look out for our new regular updates from our Customer Influence Framework, with details of what customers have told us and how we're listening to and acting on feedback.

Customer feedback about our Housing Hub contact centre staff:

Very understanding. They listened, advised and were respectful.

T: 0345 678 0555
E: customerservices@accentgroup.org

