

### UPCOMING ENGAGEMENTS

Last month, all households received a 'personal statement'. Personal statements remind you who your Customer Partner or Homeownership Specialist is, give you the opportunity to check your contact details are correct and inform you about improvements we have carried out at a local level. You can see a sample [here](#).

We'll be consulting with customers about personal statements to determine whether this is something we should continue to do.

We'd love to know:

- Which sections were the most/least useful?
- Is there anything else you would like them to include?
- How often would you expect to receive information like this, and how would you expect to receive it?



You'll receive an invitation to take part in a survey in the next few weeks.

### INTRODUCING MYDOCUMENTS

For the first time, where it was possible to do so, we administered personal statements online using a new feature of MyAccount, 'MyDocuments'.

With MyDocuments, customers are able to view and download certain documents like their annual charge notifications and service charge breakdowns. We'll be adding more correspondence to MyDocuments

over the coming months. Later versions of MyDocuments will allow customers to send files, including pictures, to Accent.

You can register for MyAccount and begin using MyDocuments [here](#).

**New:** If you're having trouble creating an account or logging in to your account, this page features a helpful step-by-step video.

# BUILDING BETTER FUTURES

Our Building Better Futures strategy is the result of our largest consultation exercise to date, reflecting the voices of over 2000 people.

We are pleased to report that almost 900 customers took part. You can see the full results [here](#).

As this is a three-year strategy, some of the changes we plan to make may not have an immediate impact. Our priority is to improve our core services such as rent/service charge collection, repairs and estate management. Here are some of the ways in which we plan to do this:

YOU SAID	WE DID
<p>Accent should focus on its core services (rent/service charge collection, repairs and estate management).</p>	<p>We know that our repairs and maintenance service has fallen short of customer expectations in some areas. Over the next three years, we will make it our priority to ensure our repairs and maintenance service consistently meets the high standard customers have the right to expect. This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understanding where working with local contractors would deliver a more flexible repairs service.</li> <li>• Managing our relationships with contractors more effectively.</li> <li>• Involving customers in selecting contractors and monitoring the performance of contractors.</li> </ul>
<p>Accent should partner with local support services to help customers with other aspects of their lives.</p>	<p>We value the skills and expertise of local support services and recognise that they are often better-equipped to support customers with certain needs. We will support activities that enhance our customers' lives, but we will ensure our focus remains on delivering a great housing service.</p>
<p>You would be happy to engage with Accent online, provided you receive the same level of service (or a better level of service). Accent should support customers to get online as it is mutually beneficial.</p>	<p>We will continue to invest in digital technology to enable efficient customer transactions and collaboration between staff and/or contractors.</p> <p>We will support our customers to combat digital inequality and show the opportunities being connected online brings.</p>
<p>You would be happy for Accent staff to work flexibly, as sometimes this is more convenient for you as well.</p>	<p>Our staff have been working largely from home for more than 12 months and have demonstrated that they are able to work flexibly, from anywhere.</p> <p>We will use technology to automate manual processing tasks so that our staff have as much time as possible to answer queries and respond promptly.</p>
<p>Accent should be doing more to help the environment.</p>	<p>By working at home, our staff have already helped Accent to reduce its carbon footprint – but we realise we need to do more.</p> <p>We will look again at the energy efficiency of our homes and invest in them where we can. We will take decisive action to deal with homes which are not sustainable, which might involve replacing them with new homes.</p> <p>We will combat the increasing levels of fuel poverty preventing people living comfortably and affordably in their homes. This might involve changing the type of heating or fuel source for some homes.</p>
<p>Accent needs to listen more to customers' views and act upon them</p>	<p>Our new online forum, 'Your Voice', will be launched very soon offering customers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quicker responses to their comments, ideas and suggestions</li> <li>• The opportunity to compare experiences with other customers across the country</li> <li>• The opportunity to interact with staff through 'live' discussions</li> </ul> <p>We will increase opportunities for customers to meaningfully influence service delivery at a 'grass roots' level. This will involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service charge consultations</li> <li>• Customer involvement in specification design and contract procurement</li> <li>• Developing local offers and estate improvement plans in collaboration with customers</li> </ul>

# LOCAL ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHT

Residents at Pildacre Brow, Ossett, had reported problems with minor repairs and litter.

In response to this feedback, Accent staff and repairs contractor, Ian Williams, held a 'Repairs Day' to blitz those niggling repairs.

On the day, the sun shone and we were able to talk one-to-one with many residents at a social distance in the communal garden.

Ian Williams carried out repairs on many properties sorting out leaking taps, loose door handles, faulty trickle vents, sticking doors and faulty sockets. We also sorted out an external light that wasn't working properly and measured up for some replacement windows as well as resolving the problem of a communal door not closing correctly.

In addition to this were able to help two customers with some minor aids and adaptations making life a little bit easier for them. Information on how we can support on aids and adaptations can be found [here](#).

Residents had complained about a significant increase in rubbish on the scheme, which had accumulated during the lockdown. We discussed a number suggestions to address the issue:

- Putting up notices in the bin area to discourage residents from misusing them.
- Increasing the number of bins and the frequency of bin collections.
- Installing CCTV cameras to deter would-be fly-tippers.



Our partners at Wakefield Council joined our community event to raise awareness about waste management and recycling. They said that:

**'FROM A QUICK LOOK AT THE BINS WE COULD SEE THAT AROUND HALF OF THE MATERIALS IN THEM WOULD BE SUITABLE FOR THE RECYCLING BIN IF THEY HAD BEEN SEPARATED. PAPER, CARD, ANY PLASTIC BOTTLES AND LIDS, TINS, CANS, FOIL AND GLASS CAN ALL BE RECYCLED IN WAKEFIELD. JUST MAKE SURE THEY ARE CLEAN AND DRY. THERE ARE VIDEOS OF HOW WE SORT AND TREAT YOUR WASTE ON OUR FACEBOOK PAGE, RECYCLEFORWAKEFIELD. SEPARATING YOUR RECYCLING WILL NOT ONLY REDUCE THE PROBLEM WITH OVERFLOWING BINS BUT IS ALSO VERY IMPORTANT FOR PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT.'**

# JOURNEY 2 SUCCESS

Accent is working with another housing association, Thirteen Group, to help customers in the North East secure employment, training or education opportunities through the Journey 2 Success programme.

We are pleased to report that 10 customers have been successful in obtaining work, in spite of the challenging job market, and a further 11 customers have improved their employment prospects by engaging with the programme.

Customer Partner for Middlesbrough; Maxine Aveyard, and Scheme Manager for Arlington Court (Stockton-on-Tees); Debbie Kennedy were amongst those who referred the most customers to the programme.

**Case study:** Mr A lives with his mother and registered with Journey 2 Success in July 2020. He was looking for a chef role. However, due to the pandemic, this has been difficult to secure. His caseworker supported him to register with various agencies and he has worked in four different short-term production roles. His recent role has been offered on a 3-month basis with the possibility of a full-time contract at the end. At present he relies on his mother driving him to and collecting him from work. Therefore his caseworker is in the process of sourcing funding to provide a bike to allow him easy access to and from his place of employment. His caseworker maintains regular contact and has supported him whilst he has moved between roles.





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