



# Fire Safety Survey

May 2021

# Background



## Commissioned by:

National Scrutiny Group

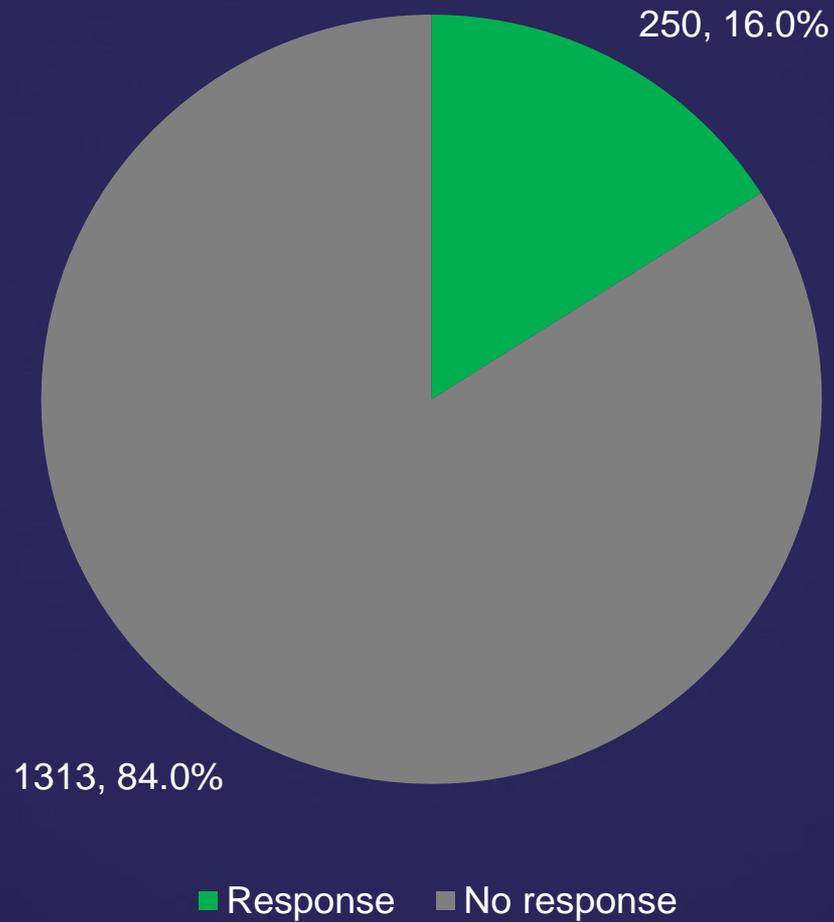
## Rationale:

The National Scrutiny Group investigated the way Accent communicates with customers about fire safety. You can read their report [here](#). They found that, in some areas, customers are confused about the recommended course of action to take in the event of a fire. We have taken some measures to address this. We consulted with customers to find out whether they have been successful or not.

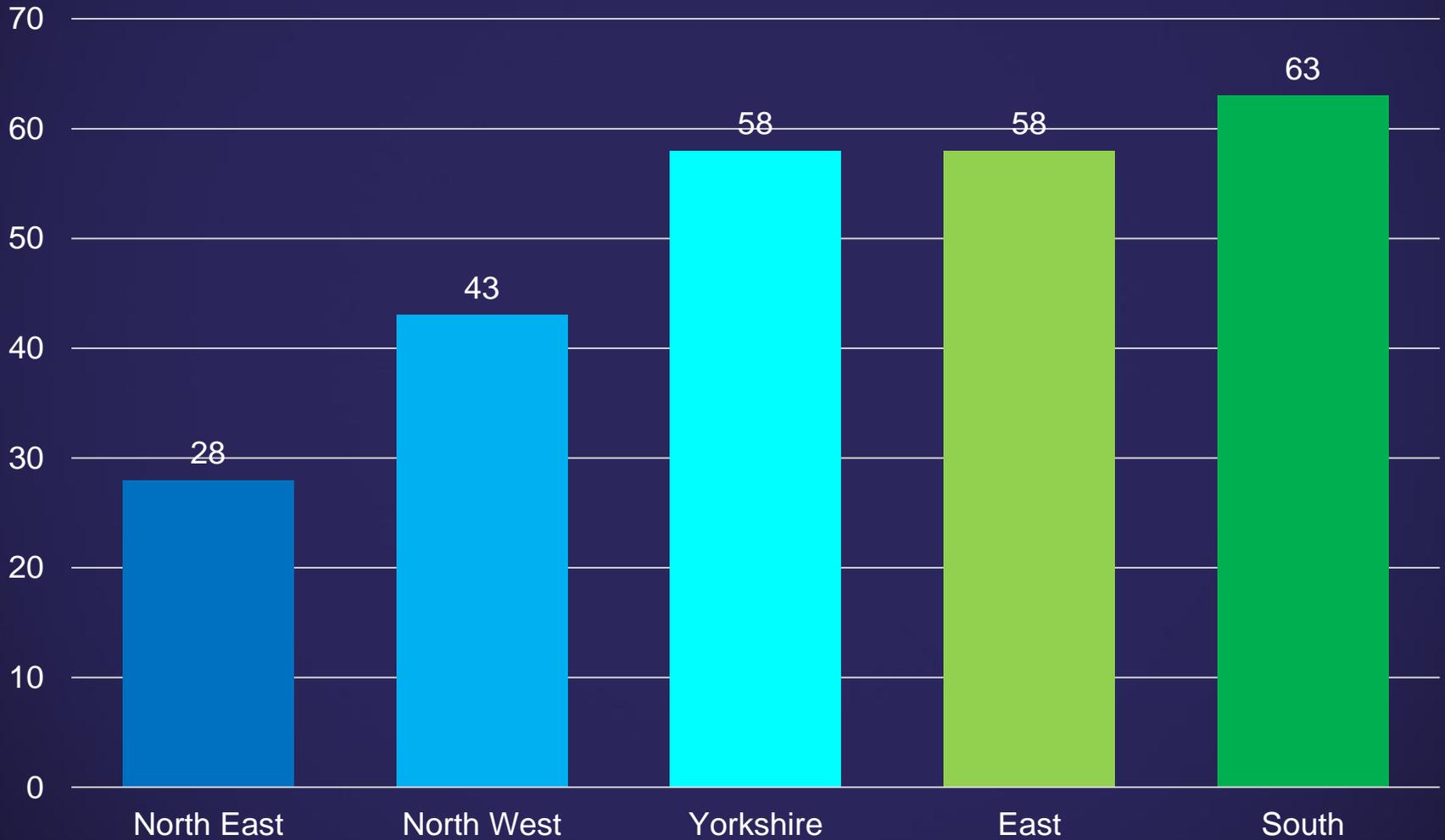
## Sample size:

This survey was aimed at a representative sample of customers who use a communal door to enter and exit their flat, including all members of the Accent 500 where applicable. Two attempts were made to contact participants, by email. The survey yielded 250/1,563 (16.0%) responses with a margin of error of  $\pm 6.1\%$ .

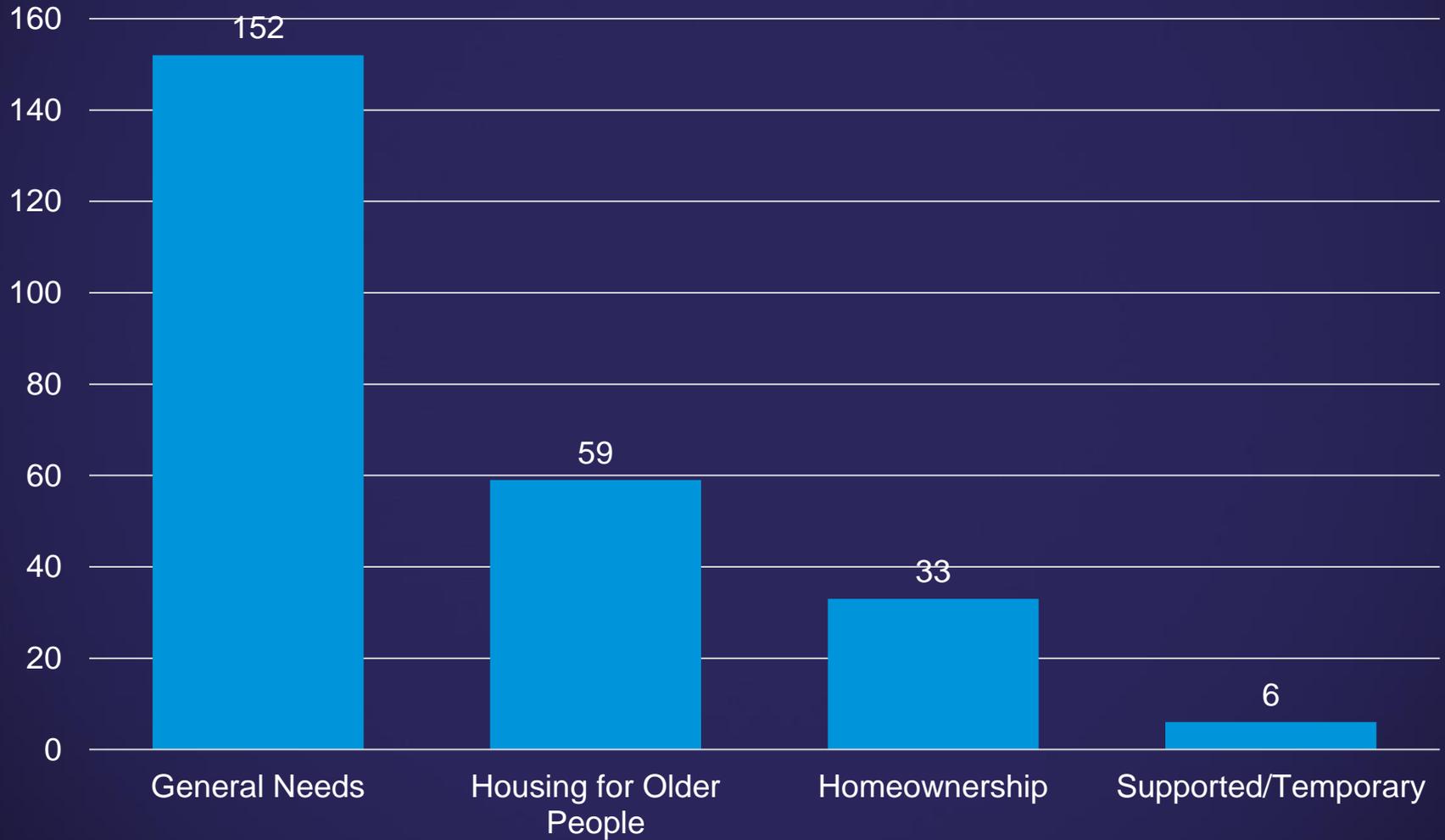
# Responses



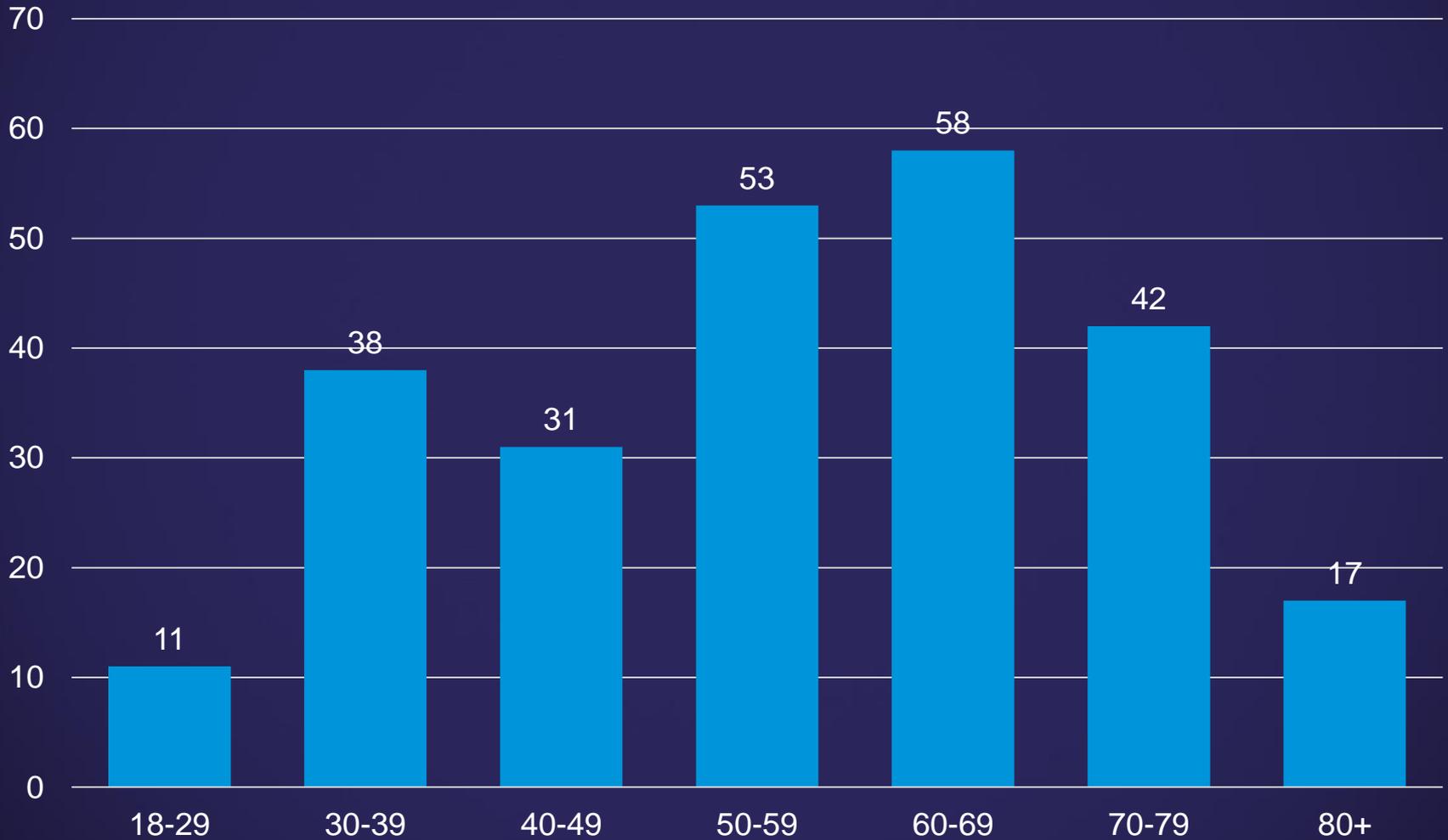
# Responses by Region



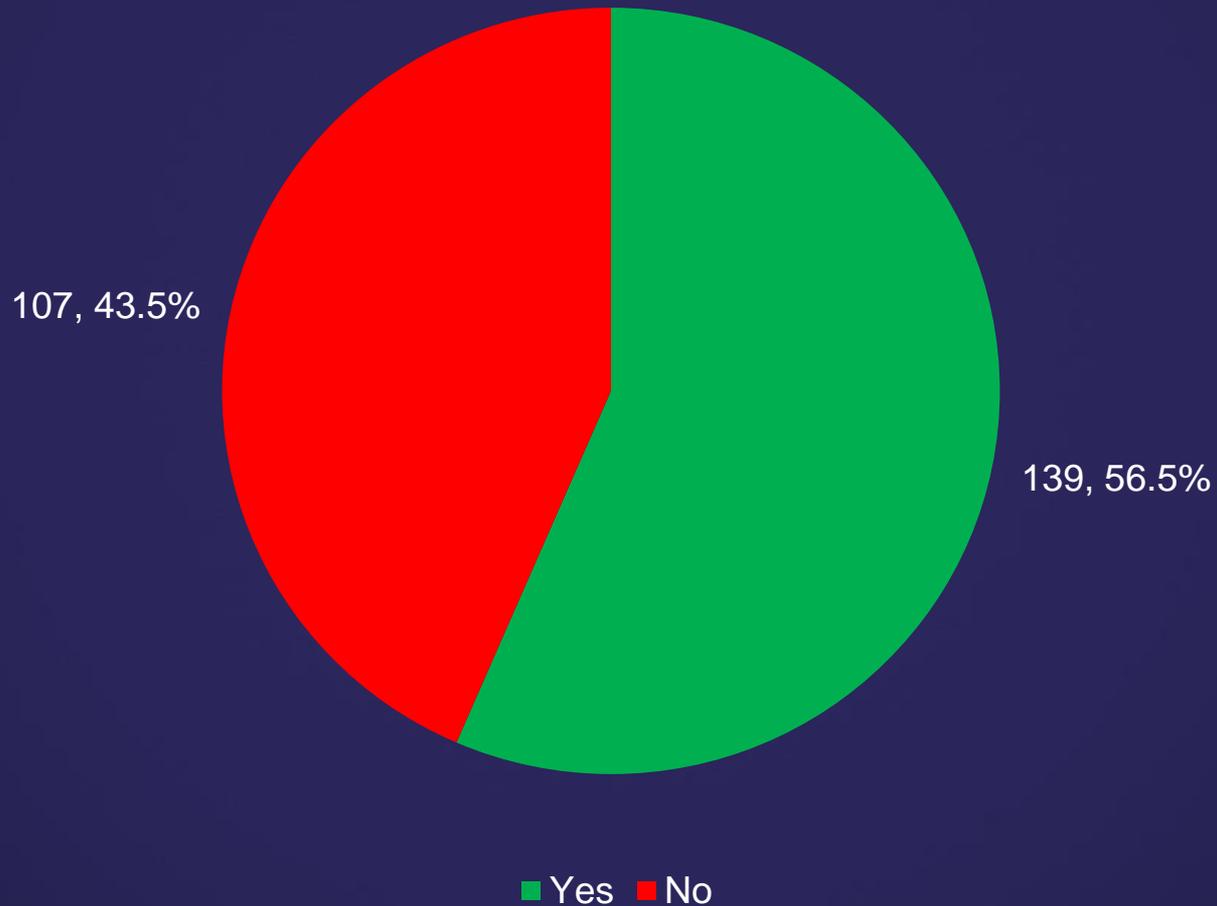
# Responses by Tenure Type



# Responses by Age Band



# Have you received a leaflet about fire safety from Accent in the last 12 months?



# Please describe the purpose of the leaflet and any actions you had to take upon receiving it, if you can remember:



Explained what type of doormats were appropriate, so I disposed of it as mine was worn out and didn't meet current safety standards. Difficult to ascertain exactly which type of doormats did. **Miss S, Bradford**

Describing what to do in event of a fire, either in your own property or in the block.

**Mr D, Camberley**

Actions to take in the event of a fire. Call emergency services or alert using red box in communal areas. If in own flat to vacate and if in other part of building to stay in own flat. **Ms B, Ossett**

I learnt that we are in a 'stay put' flat for the first 60 minutes and only leave if the fire is in the flat where you live or told to by the fire service.

**Mr L, Peterborough**

It said that if there was a fire in someone else's flat below then to stay in your own flat as our doors are fire resistant for so many hours and to just wait for the fire service.

**Mr A, Barrow-in-Furness**

Stay in my flat on hearing the fire alarm until told to leave. If the fire is in my flat, get out and sound the alarm.

**Mrs R, Leeds**

The purpose is a guide in the event of a fire. No action was taken apart from noticing where the alarms are located and equipment.

**Mrs K, Middlesbrough**

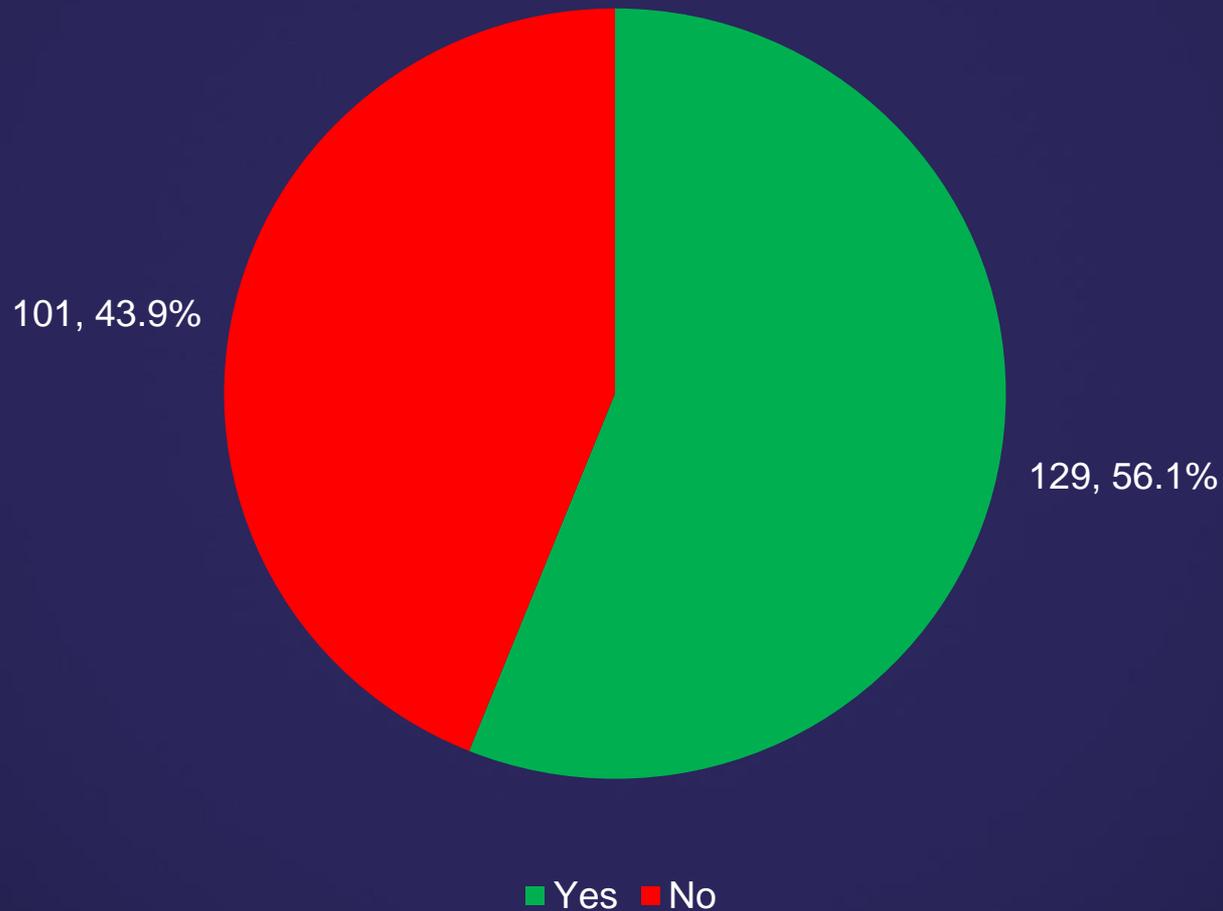
The purpose of the leaflet was to inform residents the fire evacuation policy had changed from 'stay put' to full evacuation upon hearing the fire alarm.

**Miss Q, Aldershot**

To ensure residents know the correct fire procedures. Stay in flat unless fire is on premises. If flat is on fire, exit to assembly point via correct route. Ensure fire brigade is called.

**Mr S, Chorley**

Having seen the image of the leaflet, do you now remember receiving a leaflet of this type?



# How could this advice have been made clearer, more engaging or more memorable?



A large poster detailing the current evacuation policy should be displayed in the communal foyer on the ground floor.

**Miss Q, Aldershot**

A letter would have been better as people read letters. Leaflets they just put to one side.

**Mrs C, Middlesbrough**

Actually have a dedicated plan for where I live, not some generic leaflet that basically tells me nothing.

**Miss L, Heywood**

Emphasise the need to keep communal areas clear of prams, bikes and door mats etc. Put it as a large bold list.

**Mr D, Peterborough**

I found it easy to follow, but shorter words would have helped.

**Mr S, Chorley**

I find the colour scheme makes the leaflet difficult for elderly people to read.

**Ms T, Nottingham**

I'm finding it very hard to find anything you could have done to make it clear. Possibly a sticker with as much info on, which could be stuck to the inside of your front door, even if it's the 'stay put' advice. **Mr L, Peterborough**

It was too general in its advice. It could have been aimed more at my type and size of building.

**Mr M, Camberley**

Maybe have more pictures for people to understand better.

**Miss R, Bradford**

# How could this advice have been made clearer, more engaging or more memorable?



Much sooner in my tenancy would have been more appropriate.

**Mr G, St Ives**

Using diagrams as well as words. Placing it in an envelope with 'contains important information' clearly displayed.

**Miss S, Bradford**

After Grenfell Towers, nobody is going to stay put in their own home - don't even think about it!

**Mr G, Bradford**

Considering the number of foreign residents, it may be helpful to include a visual guide to all points as used in many European countries.

**Mr G, Bradford**

In all honesty I've had fire training at previous jobs and didn't read it through, but the leaflet was laid out well and could be understood.

**Mrs K, Middlesbrough**

It is very clear to me. Could advice on fire safety be mentioned in the annual Personal Statement, whether is read digitally or paper copy?

**Mrs N, Camberley**

I think it speaks for itself. It's a striking cover.

**Mrs R, Mirfield**

Someone taking the time out to help with questions and answers.

**Miss M, Camberley**

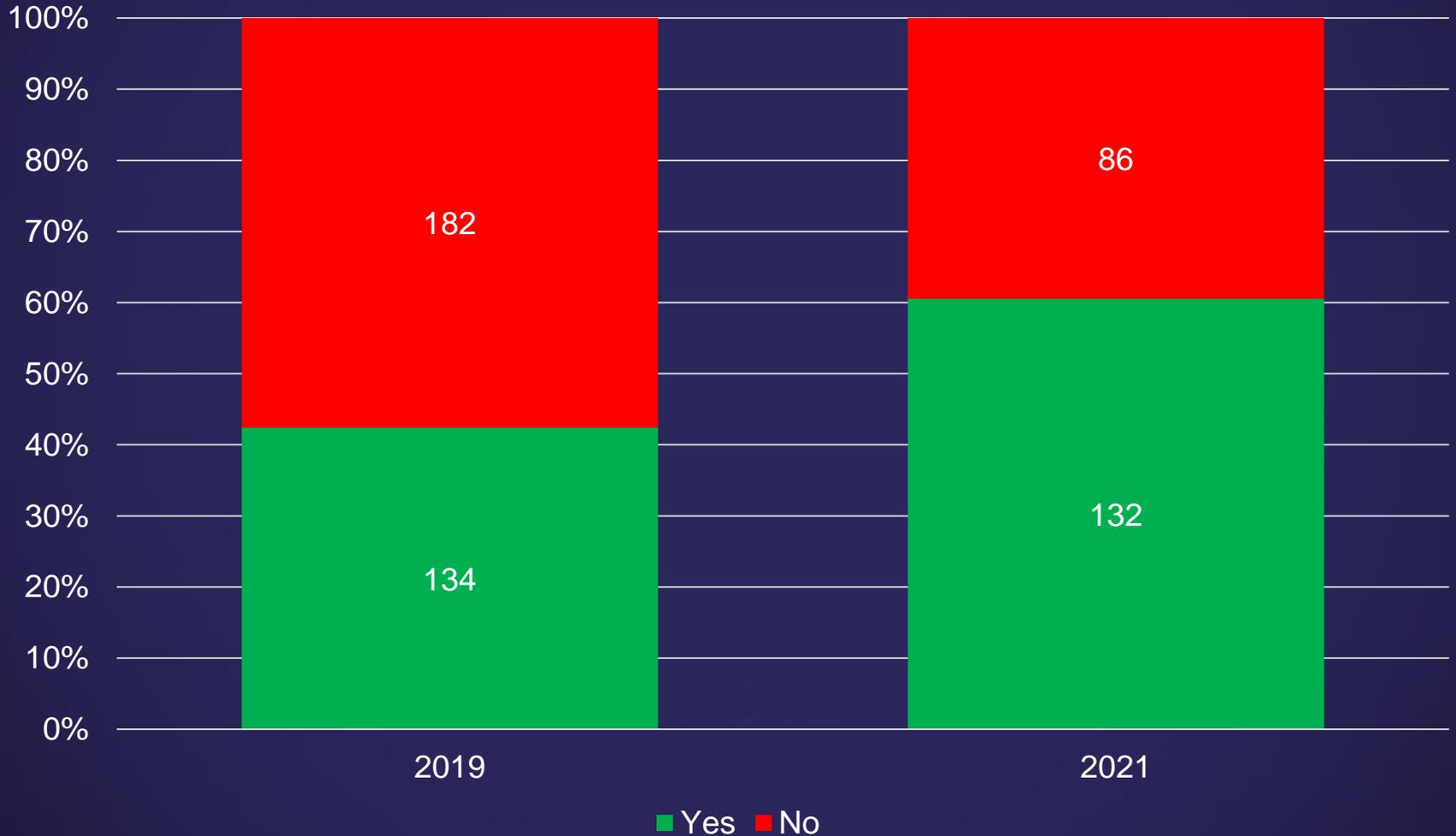
Perhaps using red (for fire safety) instead of blue, which makes a person think of water.

**Mrs H, York**

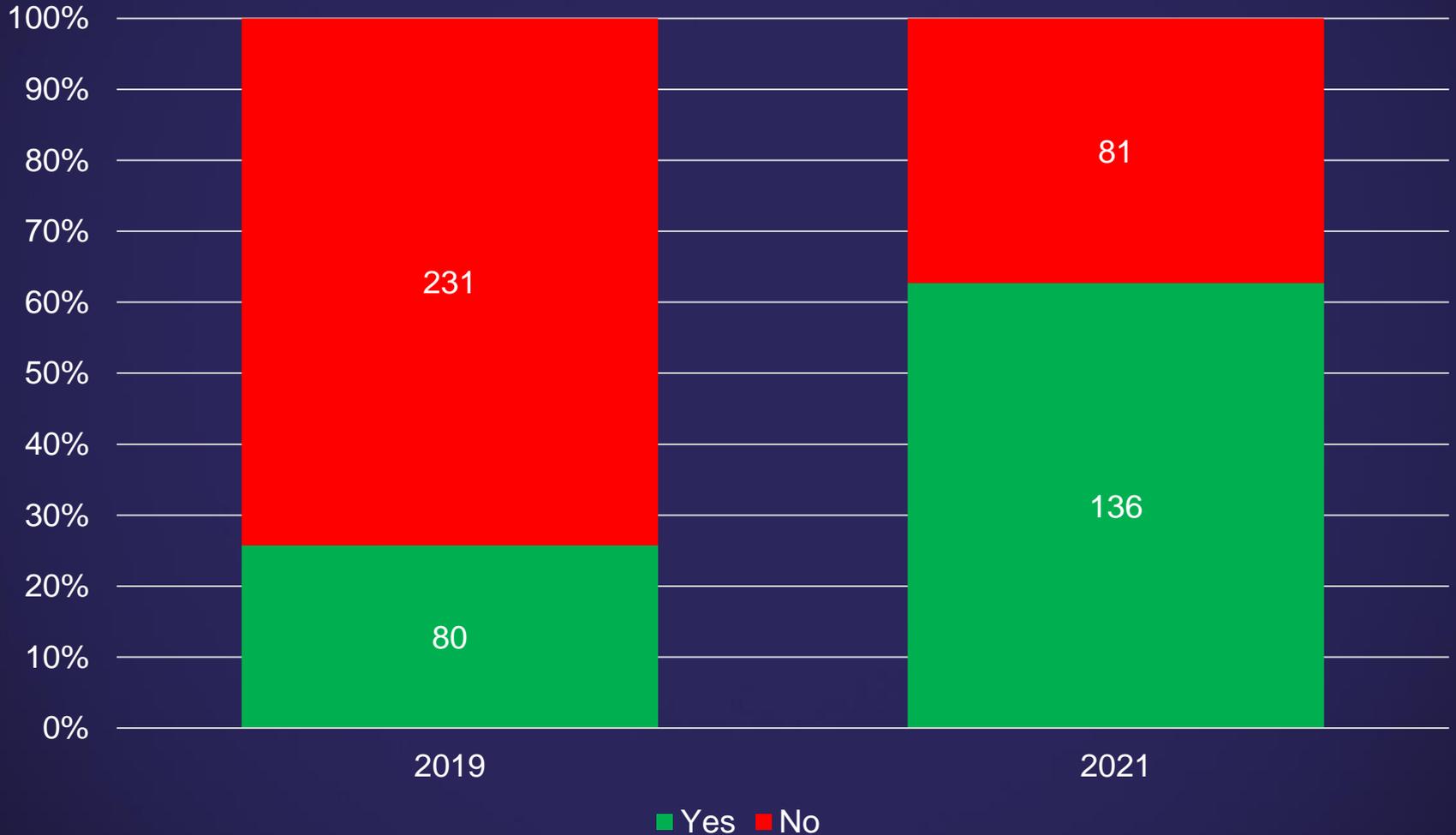


For customers who have an internal entrance to their flat, Accent operates two separate policies on evacuating buildings in the event of a fire. You are advised either to vacate the building, or to stay in your flat (unless the fire is in your flat). The policy which applies to you will depend on the type and layout of your building and the type of people living there.

# Do you know which policy applies to your building?



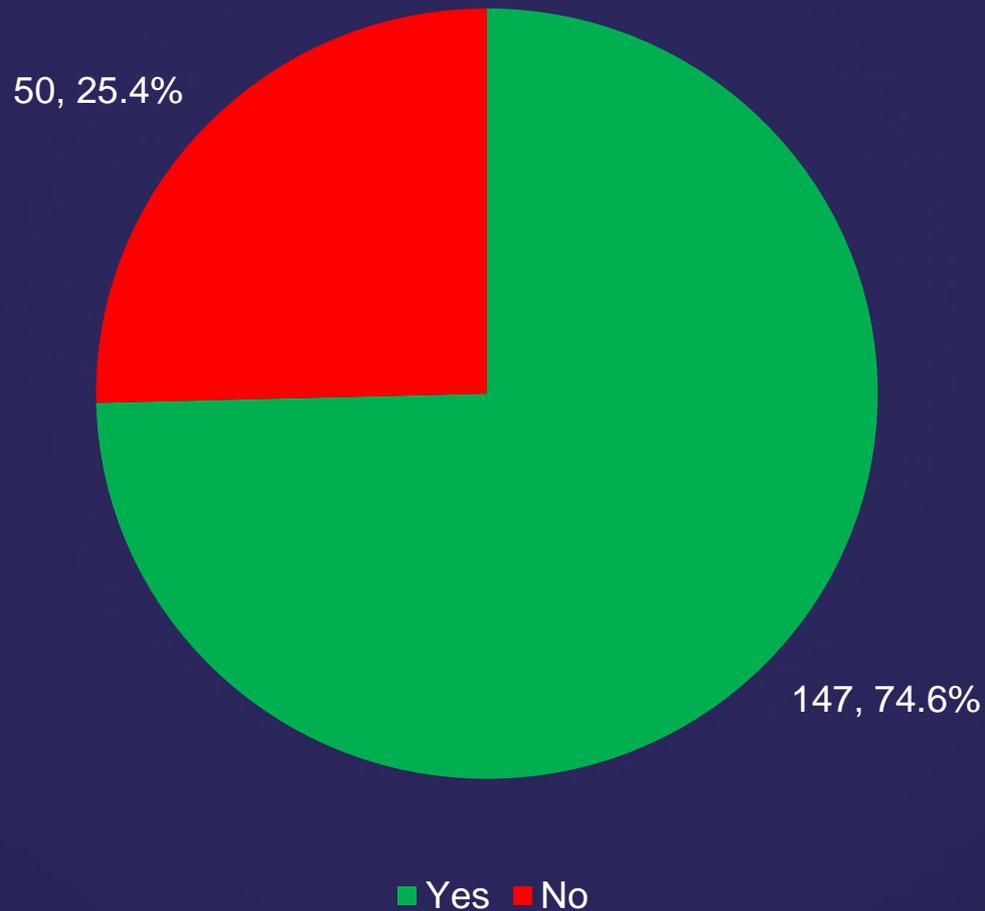
# Do you understand the reasons why this policy applies?



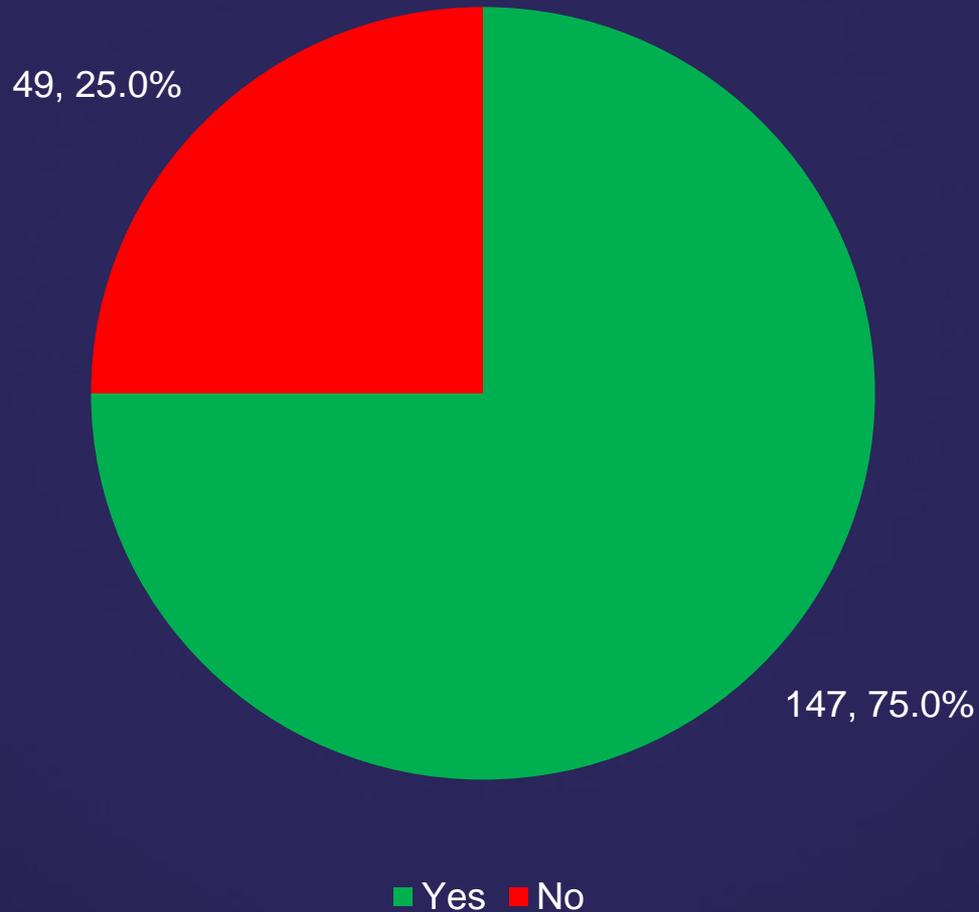


New customers will be shown a two-minute [video](#), before receiving their keys, describing the measures they can take to stay safe in their homes or evacuate safely if they need to. We would encourage all customers to remind themselves of this important fire safety information.

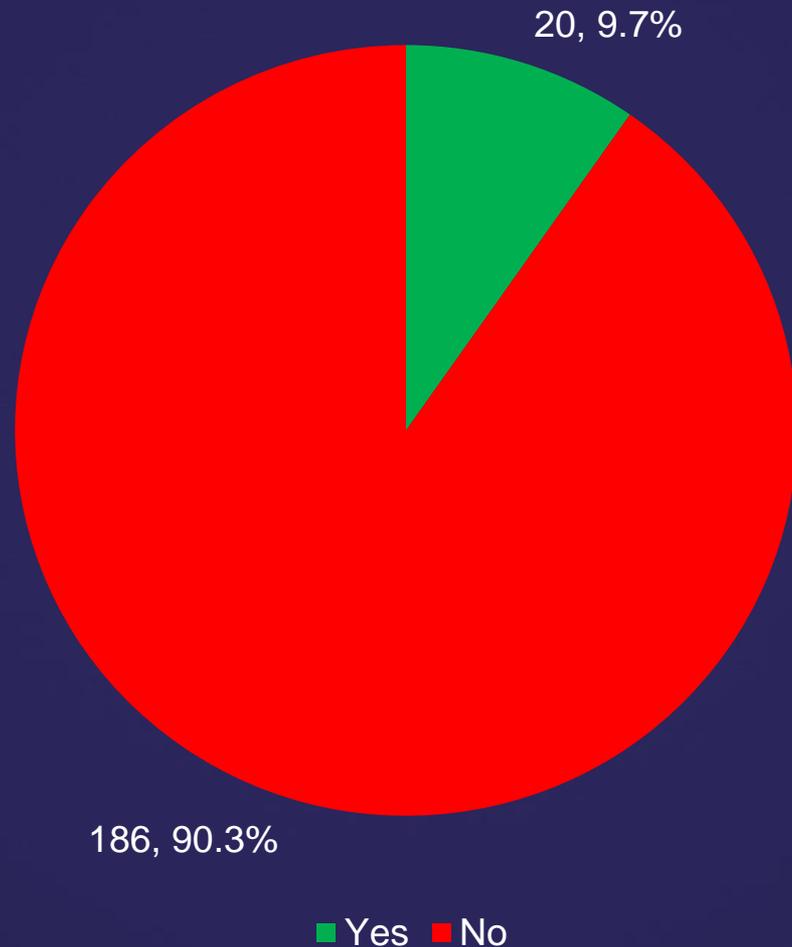
Having watched the video, are you clear about the recommended course of action if there is a fire in your HOME?



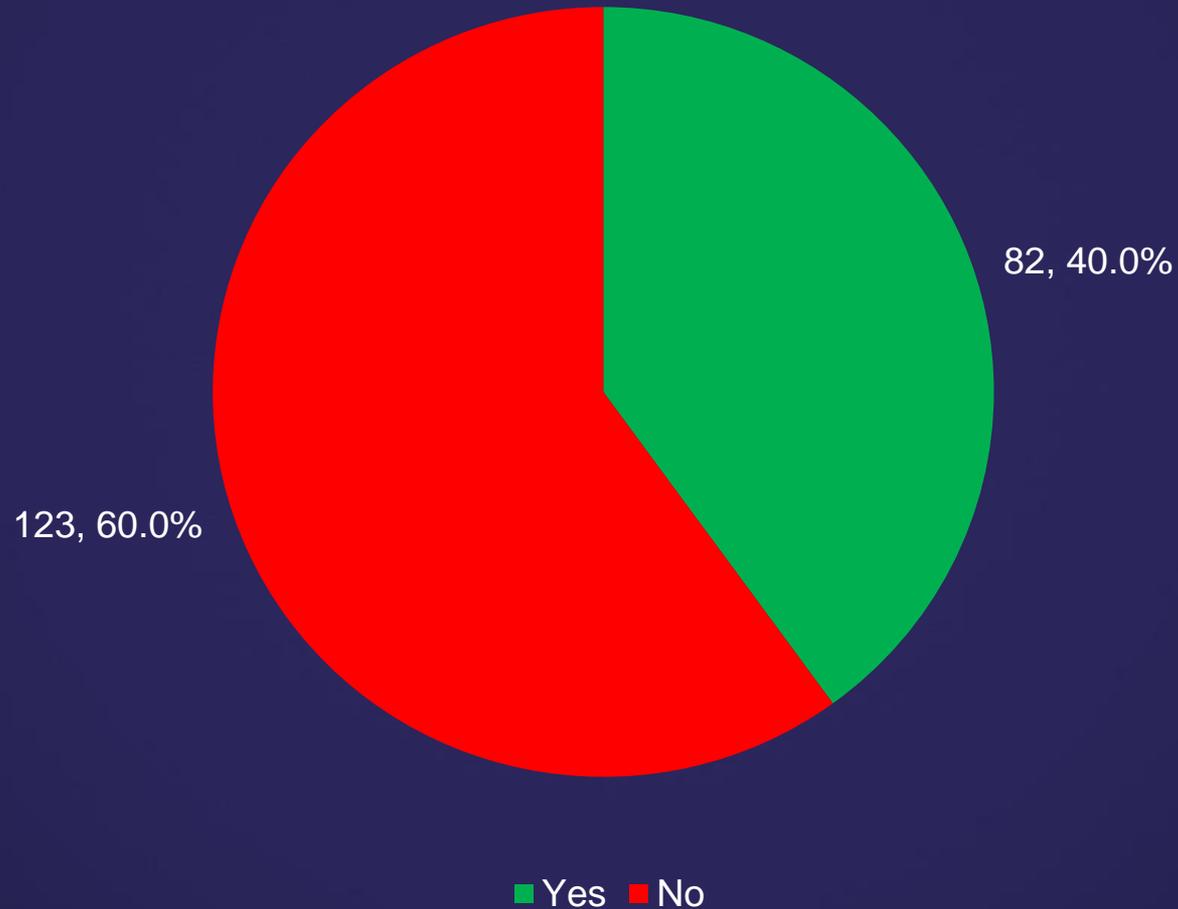
Having watched the video, are you clear about the recommended course of action if there is a fire ELSEWHERE IN THE BUILDING?



Have you been invited to attend any events or briefings (either in person or online), at which fire safety was discussed (coffee mornings etc.)?



# Would you be interested in attending an event of this type?



# Do you have any disabilities which could impact on your ability to carry out the recommended evacuation plan?



Dementia - contact my daughter.

I am 50% deaf. What if an alarm doesn't wake me?

I have health conditions and a disability which may cause shutdowns or blackouts and during those times I would not be conscious.

Poor mobility, unable to walk far, wheelchair user.

I am deaf and if there is a fire at night I will not be able to hear as I have to take my hearing aids out.

My arthritis slows me down but I live on the ground floor so feel confident I can escape if needed and always keep my keys near the door.

Poor hearing and diagnosed as having quite advanced Alzheimer's. My son does a lot of my care and he is interested in fire prevention and procedure.

As you know I am registered as physically disabled so cannot always move as quickly as I would like - some days are worse than others and I have difficulty in getting out of bed.

My tenant is not very mobile. She is in her 80s and needs a frame to walk with.

# Do you have any concerns about fire safety which you would like to bring to our attention?



Bikes etc. left on the ground floor near stairs. Could be a trip hazard if the building had to be evacuated.

**Mr R, Halifax**

If the fire is in the communal corridor, it would be very difficult to get out of the building as the my other way out is the window which is high up and to difficult for anyone that might need to climb out. **Miss B, Woking**

Perhaps it would be a good idea to have a fire extinguisher in the kitchen for electrical fires.

**Miss G, St Ives**

Mattresses and other junk had been left on the landing for more than a month.

**Mr M, Camberley**

Some residents use walking frames and keep them just outside the door. In the past they were told they had to move them as they cause an obstruction. I find this part of your policy ridiculous... **Ms T, Nottingham**

Sometimes people leave their stuff in the main entrance of the building (inside) which Accent should discourage tenants from doing. I don't see any effort Accent is making on it.

**Ms R, Farnborough**

The alarm portions for the buildings are not linked. One large building split into three sections should be linked.

**Mr J, Ripon**

If the fire is extreme and we need to jump out the windows, we cannot as the bloody scaffolding restricts the windows being opened.

**Mr J, Nottingham**

I will not be able to hear the alarm outside my flat i.e. in a communal area. Also, there is no alarm in the communal area to sound others in the flats if there was a fire in the communal area.

**Miss T, Woking**

# Do you have any concerns about fire safety which you would like to bring to our attention?



There is a big problem with EWS1 forms... the buyers don't feel it is safe to live here if they don't have a form as there is cladding.

**Ms K, Cambridge**

My flat is at the top of a flight of stairs, which is the only exit. In the event of a fire downstairs, we could be trapped. Our only option would be to jump from a window onto concrete.

**Ms H, Burnley**

The fire exit at the rear of the building, which is for use during a fire only, is constantly being used as an entrance/exit from the building and the fire door on ground level is broken.

**Miss Q, Aldershot**

Current notices are confusing and seem to involve making decisions, which in the case of panic would be difficult to make.

**Mr O, Bingley**

Doors to flats are not fitted well. Big gaps around them.

**Miss S, Camberley**

I'm not sure I would obey the rule to stay in my flat unless the fire was obviously just outside it.

**Mrs H, York**

If we are safe in our flats for up to 30 mins, what happens if the fire is underneath me and very bad? How do I know how bad the fire is to get out of the building ASAP?

**Mr S, Bradford**

Our hallway lights can be an issue. They're constantly not working.

**Miss S, Camberley**

Quite often the gates in to our flats break. They won't open so we can't get out and firemen can't get in.

**Mrs J, Woking**

# Conclusions



- Just over half of the respondents remembered receiving the fire safety leaflet.
- Of those who did remember receiving the leaflet, most appeared to have understood the explanation of the evacuation procedure. Some respondents queried some of the other details in the leaflet; such as the guidance on doormats.
- Even when shown the sample leaflets, customers did not remember having received it. This suggests that while the content of the leaflet was sufficiently clear, it may have failed to capture customers' attention.
- Although respondents felt that the content of the leaflet was clear, some would have preferred the information to have been communicated more visually.
- Printing the scheme name on the leaflet helped respondents to understand that the information was relevant and applicable to them, but some felt that the advice was still too generic (i.e. lifts are mentioned in cases where the scheme does not have a lift).
- Some respondents felt that they would have benefitted from this advice earlier on in their tenancies or would benefit from reminders periodically.

# Conclusions



- Awareness of the evacuation procedure rose from 42%, when the question was last asked in 2019, to 61%. Understanding of the reasons why the evacuation procedure applied rose from 26% to 63%.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  respondents felt that the video helped them to understand how to respond in the event of a fire in their home or elsewhere in their building.
- 10% of respondents had already been invited to take part in events at which fire safety was discussed. 40% of respondents indicated that they would be interested in attending an event of this type.
- Some respondents with hearing and visual impairments, physical disabilities and mental health illnesses expressed concern about their ability to execute the recommended evacuation plan.
  - Some respondents raised concerns about:
    - Obstructed corridors
    - Irresponsible behaviour of other residents
    - Their ability to escape the building, if they needed to
    - Repairs and maintenance issues which could impact on fire safety.