

If you need any of our information provided in another format (for example; Microsoft Word or an audio file) please contact us.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

WE ALL PLAY OUR PART

1 in 3 women and 1 in 4 men have been physically abused by an intimate partner.

Lockdown measures, where victims have been isolated and confined with their perpetrators, have increased their exposure to violence and abuse.

At Accent, we do not tolerate any form of violence or aggression towards our customers or colleagues, and we will take whatever action is in our power against those who commit this kind of behaviour.

Accent is working towards the 'DAHA' (Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance) accreditation. It aims to improve how the housing industry responds to domestic abuse and the support it offers to victims.

Our Eastern region Customer Experience Director, Damian Roche, is a member of the group of colleagues working with DAHA.

DAMIAN COMMENTED THAT:

'As a housing association, we can sometimes see the results of domestic violence and harassment when our colleagues visit our homes. It's unacceptable behaviour and we will take whatever action we can to protect those who need it.'

'If you are a victim of domestic violence, or any other kind of harassment or unacceptable behaviour, please talk to us. We can help. If you are scared, or prefer not to talk to us, talk to one of the many specialist organisations out there.'



HOW YOU CAN HELP

We understand that some customers may not choose to speak to their landlord about problems they are experiencing with domestic abuse.

If a victim happens to confide in you, here are some tips to help you support them as a friend or neighbour:

- Listen to them, try to understand and take care not to blame them. Allow them time to talk and don't push them for too much detail.
- Tell them that no one deserves to be threatened or mistreated, despite what the abuser has told them.
- Don't tell them to leave an abusive relationship if they not ready to do this. Understand that there may be barriers preventing them from leaving. Allow them to make their own decisions.
- Offer to go with them to a hospital or to see a GP if they have suffered physical harm.
- Help them report any incidents to the police.
- Be ready to provide information on organisations that offer help.
- Plan safe strategies for leaving an abusive relationship, if they are ready.
- Offer them the use of your address and/or telephone number to leave information and messages. Offer to look after an emergency bag for them, if this is what they want.
- Ensure that you do not put yourself into a dangerous situation. Do not offer to talk to the abuser about your friend. The abuser may see you as a threat to the relationship.

USEFUL CONTACTS

Police:

999 press 55 when prompted if you can't speak

Refuge: UK-wide 24-hour helpline:

0808 2000 247

National Domestic Abuse Helpline:

0808 2000 247

The Survivors Trust:

The largest umbrella agency for specialist rape and sexual abuse services in the UK: 08088 010818

Women's Aid:

A grassroots federation working together to provide life-saving services for women and children: helpline@womensaid.org.uk.

GET INVOLVED

We'll shortly be inviting members of the Accent 1000 to help shape our promotional materials aimed at raising awareness of domestic abuse and the support we can offer. Look out for an activity on Your Voice.

CURRENT ENGAGEMENTS

Green Energy Tariffs

At Accent, we are aiming to become carbon-neutral by 2050.

As such, we have been thinking about the use of renewable energy in our properties and our buildings.

We understand that energy supply is a concern for many of you, especially given that prices are set to increase.

We're consulting with customers to find out about your aspirations for sustainable energy tariffs and to understand any concerns you might have.

We'd like to know:

- Would you consider switching to a green energy tariff, if you're not already using one?
- Could rising energy prices influence your decision to use green energy tariffs?
- Should Accent switch to green energy tariffs for the supply of gas and electricity to the communal areas of its buildings?

Take part [here](#).

Quality Neighbourhoods

In November 2020 the government published the Social Housing White Paper, setting out its vision for the future of social housing. It places emphasis on residents' right 'to have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in'.

In this discussion, we'd like to focus on 'neighbourhood' and what that means to you.

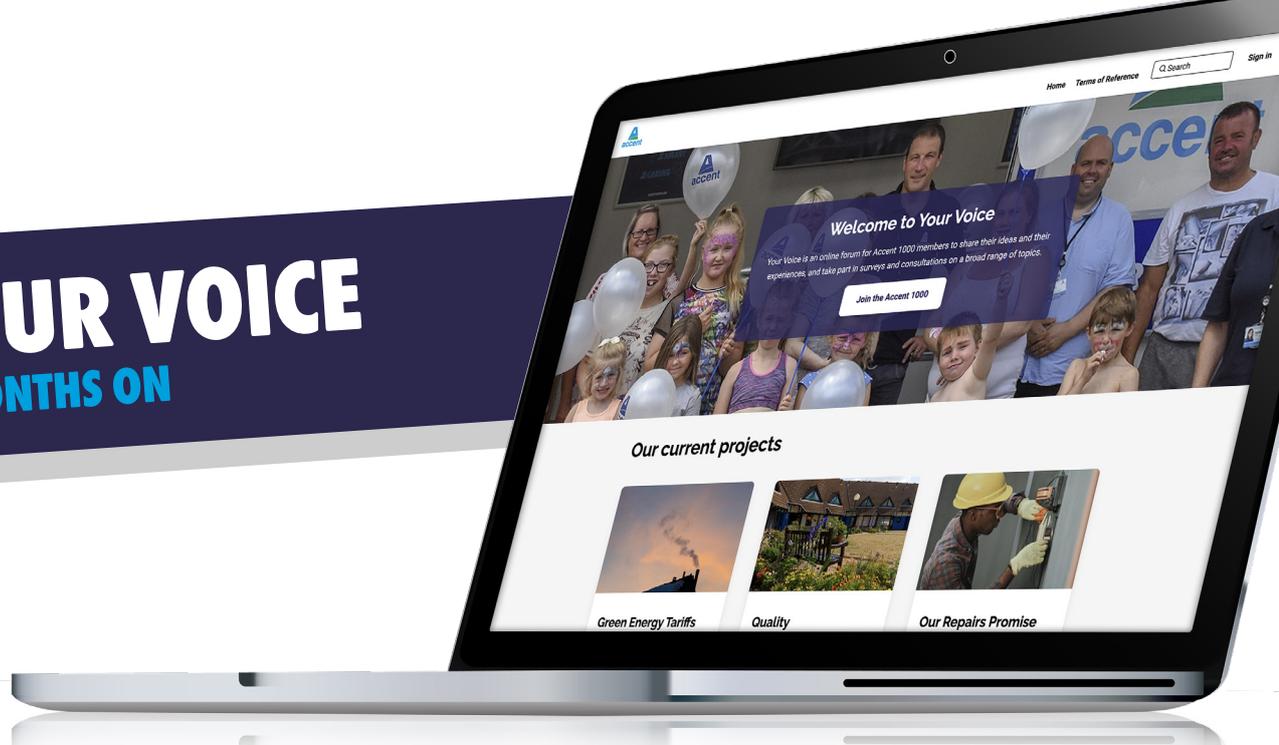
We would like to know:

- What area do you consider your 'neighbourhood'? Is it the block of flats you live in, the street on which your house is situated, the wider community, or something else?
- What does a 'quality' neighbourhood look and feel like?
- How can Accent improve the quality of its neighbourhoods?
- How can Accent measure the quality of its neighbourhoods?

Take part [here](#).

YOUR VOICE

6 MONTHS ON



As you will already know, **Your Voice** is our dedicated customer engagement website. Through Your Voice, you can take part in surveys and consultations on a broad range of topics and keep up to date with improvements to services based on your feedback.

We have been using Your Voice to carry out customer engagement for the last 6 months and have been reflecting on its success so far:

- 6 customers were involved in procuring the new website.
- 117 customers have registered and are taking part in surveys and contributing to discussions.
- There have been 16 activities on Your Voice to date.
- The most visits Your Voice received in one day was 226.
- The highest number of responses to a survey was 53. This was about energy-efficient heating systems.
- The highest number of contributions to a discussion was 66. This was about our Repairs Promise.

If you've not yet used Your Voice, you can get started [here](#).

If you have not used Your Voice before, you'll need to create an account. This is so we can verify you are an Accent customer – this forum is not open to the general public. Your Voice is a separate website from the online portal you use to manage your tenancy/lease (MyAccount), but you can create an account using the same details if you wish.

STAR CONTRIBUTORS

Thanks as always to everyone who has contributed to our discussions on [Your Voice](#).

Particular thanks to:

- Gillyanne
- Pam
- NikkiT

for your detailed and well-considered responses. As a token of our appreciation, we are sending you each £15 in vouchers.

Could you be our next Star Contributor?

Our Star Contributors typically engage in multiple projects on Your Voice and provide feedback on a broad range of topics. Their ideas and suggestions really get us thinking!

Here are some tips to increase your chances of being selected:

- We want to understand your point of view so please read the questions carefully and answer as fully as you can.
- Always explain thoroughly your opinion and let us know why you think/feel a certain way about the topics we discuss.
- Be objective. Feel free to draw on personal experiences but remember that Your Voice is not a forum for progressing personal complaints.



LOCAL ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHT

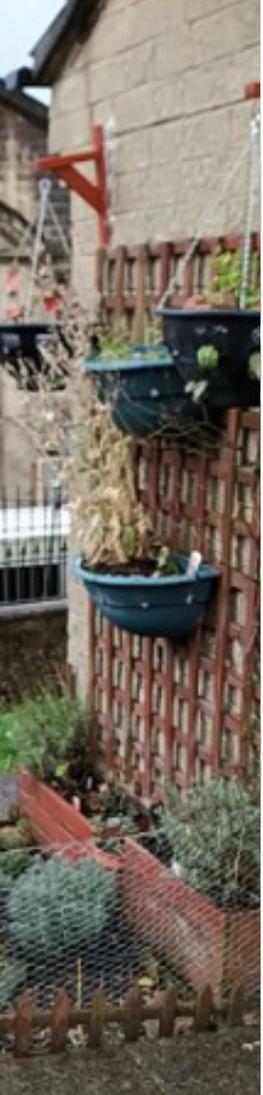
Burrans Meadow, Colne

Back in August, we visited the estate to catch-up with residents (new and existing), to find out how they'd been coping with the restrictions and provide any support we could. The restrictions had led to a backlog of repairs in some areas. Our staff were on hand to take reports of repairs and chase up any repairs which were outstanding.

At the event, residents expressed their desire to see more colour around their very 'green' community.

Burrans Meadow is full of grass and shrubs but lacks colour. Following consultation, we purchased spring bulbs and knocked on all of the residents' doors, inviting them to take part in a planting exercise. In spite of the weather warnings, the event attracted a good turnout. Together, we planted 1000 tulips, snowdrops, daffodils and other spring flowers. We rewarded the families who took part with a shopping voucher, thanking them for their hard work.

It is clear that residents take a great deal of pride in their neighbourhood. One resident runs an allotment project for the vulnerable and was able to loan Accent equipment to help make the day a success. We will continue to work together to create an attractive living environment that everyone can be proud of.





For more information contact **Lewis Holloway**, Resident Engagement Consultant on:

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