

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



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH: **STEPCHANGE**

In April 2021, we launched a new partnership with the free and independent debt charity, StepChange.

Accent staff can now book appointments for customers to receive a phone call or email from a debt advisor at an agreed date and time. To date, we have made over 60 appointments for customers who are struggling with their debts.

StepChange has supported customers to reduce their outgoings by agreeing new payment plans with their creditors, ensuring they can comfortably manage their budgets.

James Place, Income Strategist, said 'This new partnership is one of several we have created since the pandemic started. It is independent from Accent and is a lifeline for people who are financially struggling. I have seen first-hand the work StepChange does to turn people's lives around.'

Accent is also creating its own financial inclusion offer for customers who find it difficult to access financial services. We are currently gathering insight and will be asking customers what they would want and expect from such an offer. Look out for an opportunity to give your views on Your Voice.

NATIONAL SCRUTINY WINS POSITIVE P

CONGRAT

Middlesbrough resident and National Scrutiny Group member, Jan Ryles, has been awarded the Positive Pioneer Award in recognition for the work she has done to support her local community of North Ormesby.

Jan serves as an advocate for customers across the North East region. She is known locally as being a 'go to' person to get things done and often helps customers who find it more difficult to resolve issues. Jan helps customers on low incomes manage their finances and access support from the local credit union, at which she also volunteers.



MY GROUP MEMBER PIONEER AWARD



Jan works hard on community initiatives to improve the lives of Accent residents and residents on estates shared with other housing associations. Her involvement with a local crime partnership resulted in an award from the Cleveland Police & Crime Commissioner.

Her work was also recognised in 2018 when she was named 'Volunteer of the Year' by Middlesbrough Borough Council.

We are very proud of Jan and thankful for all that she has done to help make our neighbourhoods safe and happy places to live.

GREEN ENERGY TARIFFS

THE RESULTS

Thanks to everyone who took part in our survey and/or discussion about green energy tariffs.

Your feedback certainly got us thinking. From your responses, we were able to draw the following conclusions:

- There is some confusion about what a green tariff actually is, and what benefits it offers. Many people did not understand why green energy tariffs are typically more expensive. Some would have expected them to be cheaper.
- Most people would consider switching to a green energy tariff, but cost is generally the overriding priority in selecting a tariff. Many people are already struggling to afford energy costs.
- Some people felt that improvements to properties would do more to help the environment than switching to a green energy tariff.
- Most people support Accent's aspirations to be more environmentally-friendly, but only a minority would be happy to pay a higher service charge to support that aspiration.

The full results of the survey are available on [Your Voice](#).

We are consulting with staff and customers to develop our Sustainability Strategy and will be seeking your views on a broad range of environmental issues over the coming months.

You can help by joining our Sustainability Hub; a group of customers and staff who discuss how Accent can achieve its aspiration for all homes to become net-zero carbon by 2050. If you would like to get involved, or to find out more, please contact:

lewis.holloway@accentgroup.org.



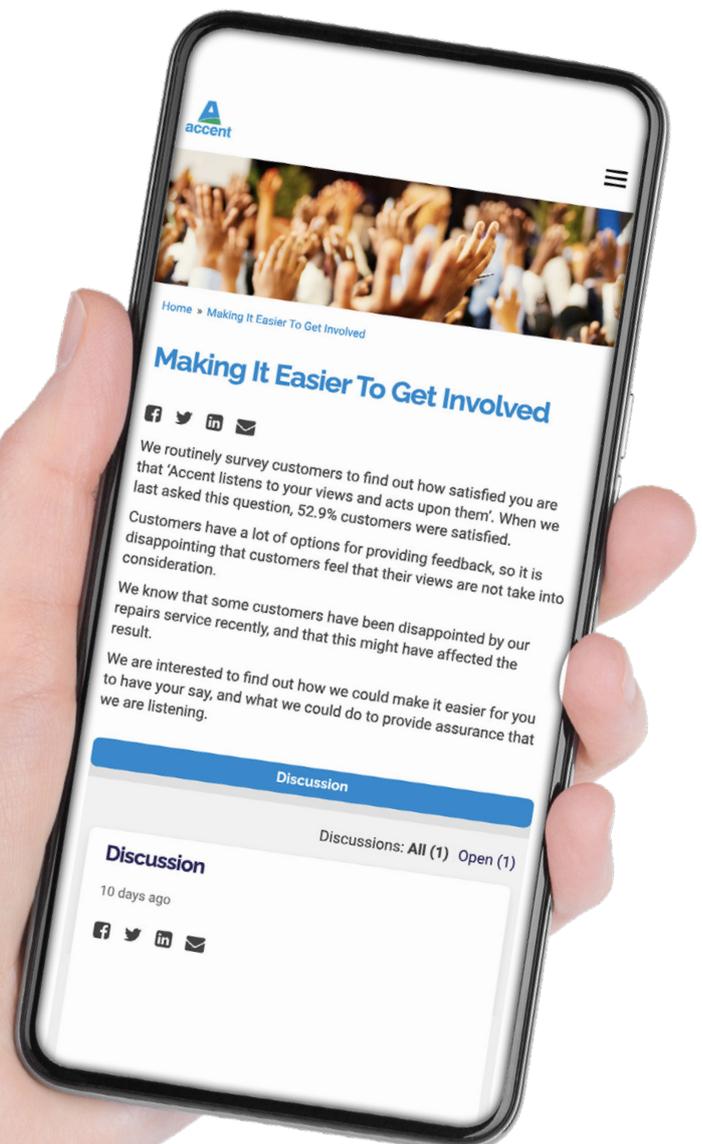
MAKING IT EASIER TO GET INVOLVED

We routinely survey customers to find out how satisfied are you that 'Accent listens to your views and acts upon them'. When we last asked this question, 52.9% customers were satisfied.

Customers have a lot of options for providing feedback, so it is disappointing that customers feel that their views are not take into consideration.

We are interested to find out how we could make it easier for you to have your say (especially where issues affecting your neighbourhood are concerned) and what we could do to provide assurance that we are listening.

Head over to [Your Voice](#) to have your say.



UPCOMING PROJECT:

HOW WE USE YOUR INFORMATION

We realise that privacy notices may not seem that exciting, but we believe it is very important that customers are aware of how we use your information.

We've recently updated our privacy notice and are looking for a few customers to check that it is clear, accurate and accessible. No specialist knowledge on data protection is required - just a keen eye for detail.

We would like to know:

- Does our privacy notice cover everything that you would expect?
- Is it clear how we obtain, process and store your information?

If you would like to get involved, please contact lewis.holloway@accentgroup.org. We're offering £15 in vouchers to those who take part, but please be aware that spaces are limited.



LOCAL ENGAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

YARM

You said:

Residents on this mixed-tenure estate expressed concerns about paying winter fuel bills, given the rising costs of energy.

We did:

We arranged for Cleveland Fire Brigade to visit the estate to offer residents advice on fire safety and staying warm over winter. The event also served as an opportunity to raise money for the Royal British Legion.

You said:

Residents complained about a large hedge which grew so quickly over the summer that it would cover footpaths. It was also attracting pests to the area.

We did:

Although the hedge would look nice for the few weeks that it was in bloom, it was a nuisance for the rest of the year. In consultation with residents, we cut back the hedge as much as possible. The result was drastic, but it will save on the cost of dealing with pests in the long-term.

HEMLINGTON, MIDDLESBROUGH

You said:

Residents were apprehensive about using the communal areas to socialise, following the relaxation of COVID restrictions.

We did:

We held an Open Day in Hemlington Community Centre in conjunction with mental health charity, MIND, to encourage residents to start using the centre again. MIND are working with some residents who have been a little fearful of coming back out into the community since lockdowns have eased. It was a great success and we are confident that this will promote attendance at the regular coffee mornings, where residents have the opportunity to discuss ideas, suggestions and concerns with the local Customer Partner face-to-face. The event also served as an opportunity to raise money for the Royal British Legion.



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

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