

Accent



**In the Loop**   
**customer newsletter**

*Shared Owner 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 Shared Ownership 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 seeking your feedback to 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*

## Finding independence with Shared Ownership in Bourne

For many sole purchasers, the biggest hurdle is making that first step onto the *property ladder*.



**For Katie, an NHS worker, the decision was not just financial but deeply personal.**

She had been living with friends and, like many in her position, faced the choice between moving into private rented accommodation or finding a way to buy her own place. Renting, however, didn't feel right. She wanted stability and a place she could truly call home.

That's when Shared Ownership became the solution as she explained "I looked at other buying options but found Shared Ownership to be the best value for money".

When asked how she found Elsea Park, Katie responded "I googled Shared Ownership homes and the Share to Buy website came up". Katie discovered the Homemade Homes development in Bourne, whose reputation for being transparent and supportive immediately stood out. From the very beginning, she felt reassured adding "the information and paperwork provided by the sales team was clear and concise".

For Katie, the Shared Ownership route provided two essential benefits:

**Affordability.** With a lower deposit requirement compared to buying outright, she was able to take the step she thought might be years away.

**Security.** Rather than spending money on rent, she was investing in her future.

Her story shows how Shared Ownership can offer more than just a roof over your head - it can provide peace of mind, stability, and the pride of having a place to call your own.

## Understanding aftercare and defects in your new-build home

**A defect in your newbuild home is something that doesn't meet the building warranty requirements - most warranties generally follow the same guidelines.**

The standard defect period is 1 year however some may be longer, and you should have been advised on this when you moved in and included in your welcome pack.

Defects can include things like leaks, carpet lift or external doors dropping. If you believe you have a defect, please contact our New Build Aftercare Team with photos or videos and this will be investigated for you.

We advise not to decorate or screw anything onto the walls within the first year of moving into your new home as during this period your home is drying out and settling. During this time, it is normal for your home to have shrinkage cracking and this can be reviewed at your End of Defect Inspection. We also advise to avoid any changes to the property as this may void your warranty. If you have any questions about this, please do contact us.

When your warranty period is coming to an end, we will arrange an End of Defect Inspection with you. A typical inspection can take up to 15 minutes and that is only if you have queries for us. Present at your inspection will be a representative from Accent, an Employee Agent and the Developer.

If you have any question about your new build home, please email the New Build Aftercare Team on [aftercare@AccentGroup.org](mailto:aftercare@AccentGroup.org).



## **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/](http://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.

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.

“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.”

“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/your-community/get-involved](http://www.accentgroup.org/your-community/get-involved) to find out more.

## Thousands of chats, one Big Conversation

# Did you see us out-and-about on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> 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/qovdwiz4/customer-annual-report-2025-20-08-2025-lowres.pdf](http://www.accentgroup.org/media/qovdwiz4/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.



**Share your festive home with us**

*Christmas* is coming and we'd love to see how you've made your home feel *festive* this year.

**Whether it's a cosy tree in the corner, a wreath on your front door, or your very best fairy lights, we'd love you to share it with us.**



**Take part by**

- Following us on Instagram ([homemadehomes.com/instagram](https://www.instagram.com/homemadehomes.com)) or Facebook ([homemadehomes.com/facebook](https://www.facebook.com/homemadehomes.com))
- Sharing a photo of your Christmas decorations
- Tag us and include the hashtag #homemadehomesatchristmas so we can find your entry

Our team will choose their three favourites. Each winner will receive a £25 Amazon voucher.

It doesn't need to be perfect. It's about personal touches, favourite traditions, and the feeling of home at Christmas. We can't wait to see your photos.

Entries must be shared publicly on Instagram or Facebook and include the hashtag #homemadehomesatchristmas for us to view and consider them. By entering, you give permission for Homemade Homes to share your photo on our social media channels. Three winners will be selected by our team based on creativity and presentation. Each winner will receive a £25 Amazon voucher. No cash alternative is available. One entry per household. Competition closes 24th December. Winners will be contacted directly via the account they used to post their entry.

## 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:

- **Customer influence:** We launched our new Customer Influence Framework, with customers from across the UK now shaping services and holding us to account.
- **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.
- **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/](http://www.accentgroup.org/your-community/get-involved/)

## Stay warm this winter – helpful tips from your Safety Team

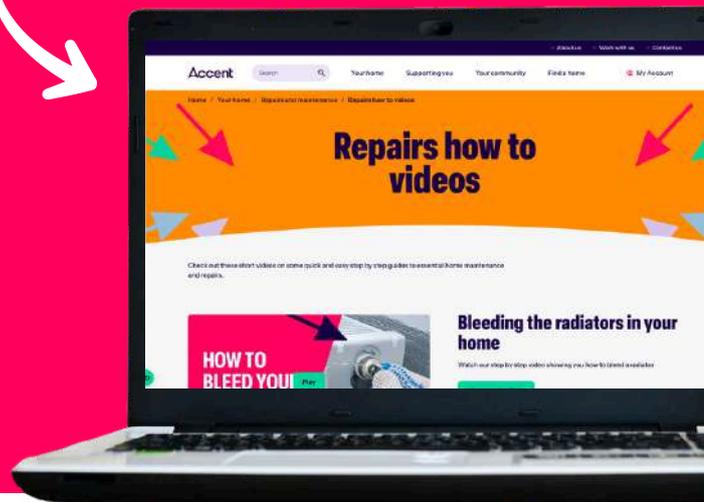
**As the colder months approach, it's a great time to check that your heating is working properly before the chill sets in.**

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/](http://www.accentgroup.org/your-home/repairs-and-maintenance/repairs-how-to-videos/)

### Quick checks you can do now

- **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.
- **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.



## 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.

## 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. Switch off and unplug electrical appliances, such as TVs and all chargers, when you go to bed
4. Make sure cigarettes are put out properly and use a proper ashtray
5. Be careful charging e-bikes or e-scooters – read more: [www.accentgroup.org/news/fire-safety-tips-charging-e-scooters-and-e-bikes-at-home/](http://www.accentgroup.org/news/fire-safety-tips-charging-e-scooters-and-e-bikes-at-home/)

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

## 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/](http://www.accentgroup.org/contact-us/compliments-and-complaints/)** or call us on **0345 678 0555**.



## We can help you move forward

If you already own a *Shared Ownership* home, you might be wondering what happens when it's time to sell and whether it's as straightforward as buying initially was.

**The good news? With the right support, it can be.**

**When Brenton's circumstances changed, he needed to sell his Shared Ownership home quickly. What could have been a stressful experience turned into a smooth and positive journey, all thanks to the clear guidance and hands-on help from our sales team.**

From the moment he got in touch, Brenton felt supported. Our team explained exactly how the resale process works, provided step-by-step advice, and recommended solicitors who specialise in Shared Ownership. That expert guidance helped him feel confident every step of the way.



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Next came the valuation and marketing. We helped Brenton present his home in the best possible light and made sure it reached the right audience. Viewings were arranged almost immediately and within just nine days, he received an offer.

Even the legal stage, which can often be daunting, was made simple thanks to experienced solicitors familiar with Shared Ownership requirements. Everything moved forward smoothly and efficiently.

For Brenton, the sale was faster and easier than he ever expected. His story shows that when you have the right people by your side, people who understand Shared Ownership — selling your home can be straightforward, stress-free, and successful.

So, if you're starting to think about your next move, remember we're here to guide you through every step, from valuation to completion.

For more information on the process visit [homemadehomes.com/sell](https://www.homemadehomes.com/sell)

**Do you know someone  
who may be interested  
in buying a home with  
Shared Ownership?**

You already know  
how great Shared  
Ownership can be  
and here is your  
chance to share  
the benefits with  
someone you know.

If you have a friend or family member who's looking to buy a home, you could both be rewarded when they purchase a brand-new Shared Ownership home with us.

When your friend reserves and completes on a qualifying development, you'll each receive a £250 IKEA voucher – perfect for adding those finishing touches to both your homes.

It's our way of saying thank you for helping others take their first step onto the property ladder.

To find out which developments are included and to read the full terms and conditions, visit [homemadehomes.com/friend](https://www.homemadehomes.com/friend)



## Considering purchasing more of your Shared Ownership home? We can help.

As a *shared owner*, it is likely that your lease allows you to buy further *shares* in your *home*.

**Purchasing more, or all the remaining shares, in your home is often referred to as staircasing. Every year we help many of Accent's shared owners carry out staircasing transactions.**

Many shared owners use the equity they may have built up as a 'deposit' when staircasing and often staircase when remortgaging.

**There are several benefits for shared owners who staircase:**

- Your rent will reduce on the unsold share and no longer be payable at 100% ownership
- The share in your home will increase or you will own all of your home if fully staircasing
- You will benefit more from any appreciation in value
- If you purchase the rest of your home, you may have a wider choice of mortgage lenders and future options for financing, improving and selling your home

Some shared ownership homes may have restrictions with regards to staircasing. Your lease will state if you can staircase and the maximum percentage you can purchase. We can assist you with this if you do not have a copy of your lease.

For more information please visit [www.homemadehomes.com/buymore](http://www.homemadehomes.com/buymore), scan the QR code below with your smartphone or call our team on **0345 678 0551**.



*Limited Time Offer*

**We pay £500 towards your legal fees\*!**

\*Terms and Conditions apply – contact us for details.



**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](mailto: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.

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