

## HOUSING OMBUDSMAN:

# Spotlight on Attitude, Respect and Rights



*‘Relationship of Equals’*

**Self-Assessment Form:**

**Accent Housing**

A decent home is a basic *human need* but fair and reasonable services, which recognise individual circumstances, especially when vulnerability presents, can be a *human right*. This role is not discretionary for social landlords, it should be *core*.

The full spotlight report is [here](#).

This self-assessment has been completed by Jonathan Place, Director of Customer Relations and Alice Keirle-Shaw, Senior Advisor Policy & Insights

The icons below are used to show where we meet or do not meet the Housing Ombudsman’s recommendations.



**We meet the requirement**



**We do not meet the requirement**



	Requirement	Comply?	Comments	Comments	Who?	When?
<b>Landlords' leadership Culture, vision and values</b>						
3	Consider adopting a values-based recruitment model to improve resident/landlord relationships. What does the resident need?		Accent integrates values-based recruitment through our Leadership and Colleague Competency Frameworks, embedded in our question bank. These frameworks assess not only skills and experience but also behaviours and mindset aligned with our values: caring, inclusive, smart, and driven. We also use congruity assessments to ensure customer service alignment and behavioural fit, identifying individuals who reflect our commitment to excellent resident experiences and trust-based relationships.			
4	Review your vulnerability policy in conjunction with current practice. Is the policy being implemented? If not, identify where the disconnect lies.		<p>While we do not currently have a dedicated vulnerability policy, vulnerability is referenced within several existing policies, including our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Policy. This gap has been identified, and we are co-designing a Customer Inclusion &amp; Support Policy with customers. Once finalised, we will implement a supporting procedure to ensure consistent and effective delivery.</p> <p>Colleagues were invited to a webinar in September 2025 outlining the new approach and inviting input.</p> <p>Monitoring of diverse needs is a key metric on our organisational EDI Strategy</p>	<p>The Customer Inclusion and Support policy will be presented to Customer Experience Committee in February 2026 and launched to the wider business in March 2026.</p> <p>We will be compliant with this recommendation once the Customer Inclusion &amp; Support Policy is launched.</p>	John Place, Director of Customer Relations	March 2026

	Requirement	Comply?	Comments	Comments	Who?	When?
<b>Landlords' leadership Culture, vision and values</b>						
5	Implement a vulnerability strategy, including how it is defined, who assesses, and what the review process is. This must be in line with The Equality Act, the Human Rights Act and the Care Act. This should be co-produced with residents and consider any future good practice guidance published by the Housing Ombudsman, following engagement and consultation.		We do not currently have a dedicated vulnerability strategy; however, we are co-designing a new Customer Inclusion & Support Policy in collaboration with customers. This policy incorporates recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman and aligns with the Regulator of Social Housing requirements.	Once the Customer Inclusion and Support Policy is launched, it will be subject to a regular review cycle and will maintain ongoing customer involvement.  We will be compliant with this recommendation once the Customer Inclusion & Support Policy is launched.	John Place, Director of Customer Relations	March 2026
6	Implement a specific reasonable adjustments policy.		Our EDI Policy outlines expectation that reasonable adjustments should be made to address specific needs.  We do not have a specific reasonable adjustment policy, this is being incorporated into the Customer Inclusion & Support Policy.	We will be compliant with this recommendation once the Customer Inclusion & Support Policy is launched.	John Place, Director of Customer Relations	March 2026
7	Test the vulnerability and reasonable adjustments strategy and policy against the '3Rs' on vulnerable residents – recognise, respond and record.		Our new Customer Inclusion & Support Policy includes guidance on how to recognise, respond, record and make reasonable adjustments.  This will be clearly identified in the procedure that will underpin the Policy.	We will be compliant with this recommendation once the Customer Inclusion & Support Policy is launched.	John Place, Director of Customer Relations	March 2026

	Requirement	Comply?	Comments	Comments	Who?	When?
<b>Landlords' leadership Culture, vision and values</b>						
8	Introduce minimum staff training requirements such as Dementia Friends, and training on customer care, mental health, learning disabilities, and sight and hearing loss.		Mandatory training for colleagues includes EDI, safeguarding, domestic abuse and customer services (aligned to Mary Gober training). This training covers matters such as mental health and disabilities. More specialised training is provided to specific roles, such as Housing Partners. This has included trauma informed practice training. We are preparing for the Competence and Conduct Standards, considering the training required for our colleagues.			
9	Consider a dedicated taskforce for vulnerability.		We have established a project team to co-design and develop the working practices that will underpin the Customer Inclusion & Support policy. The team will continuously evolve to understand customer needs and review service provision, ensuring our services are designed to meet the future needs of our customers. The reporting on supporting diverse needs is a part of our corporate EDI plan and broader People Strategy.	<p>Upon the launch of the Customer Inclusion &amp; Support Policy and supporting procedure, we will set clear objectives for the project team to deepen understanding of customer needs and shape future service provision.</p> <p>We are developing an EDI customer group. Once this is fully established, they scrutinise from an inclusion and vulnerability perspective and influence service delivery.</p>	John Place, Director of Customer Relations	April 2026

	Requirement	Comply?	Comments	Comments	Who?	When?
<b>Look to the future</b>						
10	Carry out your own “Resident of the Future” forecast for the next ten years. Draw upon the available information around demographics, both locally and nationally, and identify where you foresee the gaps being.		<p>We consider demographic information in our service provision, such as Census data. We have access to sector research on the customer of the future and are members of a number of research groups within the sector (e.g. NHF Research Forum, Research Users in Social Housing).</p> <p>We are beginning work on developing our next corporate strategy and part of this work will consider future customer needs.</p>			
11	Consider the ageing communities specifically in rural and coastal areas, with reference to Professor Whitty's report		<p>We consider demographic information in our service provision, such as Census data. We have access to sector research on the customer of the future and are members of a number of research groups within the sector (e.g. NHF Research Forum, Research Users in Social Housing).</p> <p>We are beginning work on developing our next corporate strategy and part of this work will consider future customer needs.</p>			

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<b>Look to the future</b>						
12	Devise an action plan for what you need to start putting in place from now onwards to ensure you are ready to meet the needs of your future residents. This should include the anticipatory requirement regarding reasonable adjustments.		Our EDI Plan outlines top-level strategic priorities for the business. We are developing an EDI customer group. Once this is fully established, they scrutinise from an inclusion and vulnerability perspective and influence service delivery.	Director of Customer Relations, Head of Customer & Community Engagement and EDI Lead to work with customer group and other key stakeholders to ensure strategic EDI goals align with day-to-day delivery, and to identify strategic goals for the next corporate strategy.	John Place, Director of Customer Relations & Matt Beeter EDI Lead	June 2026
<b>Complaint handling</b>						
13	Raise awareness of the complaints procedure and ensure it is accessible for residents who may face barriers to raising a complaint, as required by the Complaint Handling Code		We promote awareness of our complaints policy and service through multiple channels, including personalised newsletters, our annual customer report, our website and colleagues are equipped to actively encourage and support access to the complaint handling service. Our Complaint and Compensation Policy provide information on how to and who can make a complaint in line with the requirements of the complaint handling code.			
14	Ensure the complaints policy permits complaints about staff conduct, attitudes and approach		We permit complaints about our staff and contractors relating to conduct, attitudes and approach. Our definition of a complaint aligns with definition in the Complaint Handling Code which includes complaints about staff, or those acting on the organisation's behalf.			

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<b>Complaint handling</b>						
15	Establish and enforce a clear process for how complaints about bullying/discrimination will be investigated		<p>Our complaints are investigated independently by our Complaint Resolution team who liaise with the relevant managers to ensure that there is an independent investigation.</p> <p>Our people team have oversight of complaints raised about Accent colleagues and review trends with the relevant business area.</p>			
16	Contact restriction policies must set out clear timescales, review and appeals process. Where there is single point of contact, this should be applied consistently.		Section 8 of our Unacceptable Behaviour Policy outlines the Right of Appeal, ensuring that individuals subject to restrictions have a clear avenue to challenge decisions. Furthermore, section 6 stipulates that all imposed restrictions will be formally reviewed at a minimum of every three months, providing transparency and regular oversight to uphold fairness and accountability.			
17	Calls to be recorded, either a physical recording or a contemporaneous telephone record.		All interactions with customers are documented within our CRM system, and telephone conversations conducted through our contact centres are recorded using our call recording facilities.	We are exploring opportunities to expand call recording to other customer facing departments.	John Place, Director of Customer Relations, Rob Bloom, Director of Housing Services & Linda Colburn, Interim Director of Assets and Compliance	January 2027

	Requirement	Comply?	Comments	Comments	Who?	When?
<b>Case handlers</b>						
18	Landlords need to ensure they provide clear explanations; repeat information where needed, including in different formats; offer face-to-face contact as much as possible and a named point of contact; investigate concerns and share the outcome; recognise when things have gone wrong, apologise and explain how these will be addressed; and know when to make appropriate referrals to agencies and whom to signpost to. Underpinning all of these should be a baseline of empathy and respect.		<p>Our colleagues have undertaken both “Be Accent” and Mary Gober training, equipping them with the skills and expertise necessary to deliver a consistently high standard of customer care and to address customer needs with professionalism and empathy.</p> <p>Each complaint is managed by a dedicated, office-based Complaint Resolution Partner, ensuring personal accountability and continuity throughout the resolution process. Where face-to-face engagement is appropriate or requested, our team collaborates closely with local colleagues to facilitate direct meetings, thereby upholding our commitment to accessibility and tailored support for every customer.</p>	To further enhance our service delivery, we are actively conducting a comprehensive review of our Quality Assurance Framework and we will include a section to facilitate face to face meetings.	John Place, Director of Customer Relations	January 2026
19	Ensure disability or language needs are routinely considered as part of the complaints process and that extra accessibility support, or accessible materials, are offered where appropriate		Our policy sets out that we are committed to treating our customers fairly and will comply with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.	To further enhance our service delivery, we are actively conducting a comprehensive review of our Quality Assurance Framework. In addition, we will issue updated guidance to empower colleagues to effectively tailor our approach, ensuring we consistently meet the diverse needs of our customers.	John Place Director of Customer Relations	January 2026

	Requirement	Comply?	Comments	Comments	Who?	When?
<b>Case handlers</b>						
20	Identify where more specific training, guidance or support is needed to fulfil your role. For example, do you feel under confident in having what may be seen as a difficult conversation or delivering bad news		<p>Our colleagues have undertaken both “Be Accent” and Mary Gober training, equipping them with the skills and expertise necessary to deliver a consistently high standard of customer care and to address customer needs with professionalism and empathy.</p> <p>Complaint Partner training needs are reviewed regularly and colleagues can ask for support if required.</p>			
21	Maintain accurate records of residents’ vulnerabilities and individual circumstances		Our Housing Management System has the facility to record customer vulnerability.	To Strengthen our approach we have a project to improve customer data and the new Customer Inclusion & Support Policy and procedure will focus on maintaining accurate records of vulnerabilities and individual circumstances.	John Place Director of Customer Relations	March 2026
22	Use mandatory checks, such as annual boiler checks, as a ‘touchpoint’ opportunity to undertake welfare checks with residents.		Contractors are expected to act as an extra safeguard by treating residents respectfully, recognising signs of vulnerability or unsafe conditions, and promptly reporting any welfare or safeguarding concerns through Accent’s established reporting pathways.			

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<b>Case handlers</b>						
23	Although it is important for landlords to know the vulnerabilities and individual circumstances of its residents and any associated legal duties, the above approach should apply to all residents as, fundamentally, it is about a high standard of customer care and a human-centric approach to service delivery.		We are co-designing our approach to annual tenancy checks with customers.	<p>Launch annual tenancy checks</p> <p>During 2026-27, we will be formulating and implementing projects to enhance engagement with the broader resident population who may not actively voice their views. Our aim is to ensure that all individuals, including those less likely to participate directly, are meaningfully included in our consultation and service improvement initiatives.</p>	<p>Rob Bloom, Director of Housing Services</p> <p>John Place Director of Customer Relations</p>	<p>January 2026</p> <p>March 2027</p>