

MINUTES

Date/Time: Wednesday 23rd September 2026, 12.30pm to 14.00pm

Venue: Hybrid: Camberly Baptist Church, Camberley and MS Teams

Chair:	Callie Lancaster (CL), Customer Engagement Manager
Customers Present:	Chrissie Mansfield (CM) David Clements (DC) Emma Raven (ER) Lyn Nelson (LN) Sarah-Jane Johnson (SJJ)
Accent Colleagues	Cara Jackson (CJ), Assistant Director of Housing Services John Place (JP), Director of Customer Relations Ricky Cronshey (RiC), Building Services Manager
Observer/s	Jack Thompson, Senior Regulatory Engagement Manager Tanya King, Senior Regulatory Engagement Manager
Apologies	Chrystyna Wirdnam Debbie Cammock Gail Redmond Mark Wade Royston Crandley Veronica Wilson
Minutes:	Callie Lancaster (CL), Customer Engagement Manager

Actions

1. AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND APPOLIGIES

Callie Lancaster (CL) welcomed everyone and outlined the agenda. The meeting would cover outstanding actions, regional and national updates, complaints, repairs and maintenance, the group focus for the next quarter and any other business.

2. AGENDA ITEM 2 - OUTSTANDING ACTIONS

Callie Lancaster (CL) reviewed the actions from the previous meeting and provided the following updates.

Completed Actions

1. Planned Works Scrutiny

DC was invited to the planned works workshop as requested.

2. Avenue Sucy Service Charge

The service charge query was investigated. Ten customers received refunds of £57.80 relating to an electrical service charge.

3. **Post-Inspections**

RC confirmed that information on post-inspections would be presented during the meeting.

4. **Repairs Allocation**

RC provided a repairs allocation flow chart within the meeting pack.

5. **Operative Workload and Cancelled Appointments**

RC had raised previous customer feedback with Ian Williams regarding an operative commenting that they felt overworked. Ian Williams advised that this related to the unpredictable nature of emergency jobs. LN asked whether customers would be informed if this resulted in appointments being changed or cancelled. RC confirmed that customers should be contacted when appointments change.

6. **Final-Mile Tracking**

RC confirmed that the final-mile tracking link requires a mobile number to be linked to the property and currently applies to Ian Williams' directly employed operatives, rather than subcontractors. This may explain why some customers do not receive a tracking link. Further information is available through customer leaflets.

Action: CL to circulate information explaining final-mile tracking.

7. **Accuracy of Operative Tracking**

Following concerns raised by ER about the tracker showing operatives as being outside a property when they were not, RC explained that inaccuracies can occur when the correct process is not followed by operatives when using the system. Ian Williams has introduced additional monitoring to improve the accuracy of updates.

8. **Shoe Covers**

RC confirmed that previous feedback regarding operatives not wearing shoe covers had been raised with Ian Williams and reinforced through toolbox talks. SJJ advised that she had recently experienced operatives still arriving without shoe covers.

9. **Hippo Bags**

CL confirmed that the large Hippo bags previously reported had been removed.

10. **Promoting Customer Engagement Opportunities**

CL confirmed that a wider range of communication methods is now available to promote customer engagement opportunities, including email, text messages, social media and printed flyers. DC emphasised the importance of local targeting, appropriate timing and recognising customers' communication preferences.

11. **ASB**

The previously raised ASB issue has been managed locally, including the introduction of signage relating to smoking.

12. **Executive Attendance**

CL confirmed that Dean Anderson, Executive Director of Customer Experience, will be invited to the next meeting in December. Conan McKinley, Executive Director of Assets and Compliance, will also be invited to a future meeting to discuss repairs.

Action in Progress: Customer Champion Role

CL confirmed that the Customer Champion role is currently under review. It was therefore not appropriate to invite a Customer Champion to the meeting as

CL

previously requested. An update will be provided to the group once the review has progressed.

LN and EM asked about the future purpose of the role and whether customers could be involved in shaping it. JP confirmed that formal customer groups would be consulted on any changes. ER and CM suggested considering an ambassador-style role across communities and regions.

Further questions were raised about how the Customer Champion role links to membership of the Customer Experience Committee, how individuals are selected and why there is currently no Customer Champion based in the South. CL explained that Customer Champions are Customer Experience Committee members who champion particular areas, such as repairs and ASB, and that Committee membership is subject to a formal recruitment process. The absence of a South-based Customer Champion reflects the outcome of this recruitment rather than a decision not to have representation from the region.

JP reiterated that the role is under review, recognising that Accent's approach to customer engagement has evolved since the role was introduced. With the National Customer Group and Regional Customer Groups now in place, consideration will be given to whether the role should have a greater focus at community level.

Action: CL to keep members updated on the Customer Champion role review and ensure they are involved in shaping the future role.

CL

3. AGENDA ITEM 3 - REGIONAL UPDATE

Cara Jackson (CJ) provided an overview of the structure of the South region and the role of Housing Partners. Housing Partners manage an average of 327 homes each, with responsibilities including tenancy management, anti-social behaviour (ASB), safeguarding, arrears and supporting customers with complex needs.

CJ highlighted a number of challenges across the region, including increased rough sleeping in some blocks, fly-tipping, ASB and customers requiring more intensive support due to vulnerabilities. Teams work with local authorities, the police and social services, alongside community action plans, to coordinate local improvements.

CJ also provided an update on support funding being used for practical assistance, including white goods and estate improvements. At the end of August, the South accounted for 23.7% of Inclusion Fund spend and 51.1% of Estate Improvement Fund spend. The Avenue Sucy play park was highlighted as a positive example of collaboration between customers, Accent and local stakeholders. Customers welcomed the project and emphasised the importance of working with councils and community partners. DC also commented positively on the park opening and the attendance of Accent's CEO, Nick.

South arrears were reported at 2.64%, compared with 2.07% nationally. Approximately 1,090 accounts were in arrears, with Housing Partners managing an average of 121 cases and an average arrears balance of £674.45. Nationally, 752 ASB cases had been managed, with the South accounting for 16.49%. Harassment and intimidation were the most common causes in the

South. ASB funding has also been used for preventative measures, including CCTV and physical improvements. LN asked whether the figures presented included Independent Living customers, alongside general needs and shared ownership customers. CJ confirmed that they did.

CJ explained that the Q1 Tenant Satisfaction Measure (TSM) results were still being analysed. Early information indicated that the South remained the most dissatisfied region, with more detailed findings to be brought back to the group.

Action: CJ to present the detailed TSM findings at the next meeting.

CJ

SJJ raised concerns about Housing Partner visibility and responsiveness in her area, explaining that some residents did not know who their current Housing Partner was.

Action: CJ to discuss the concerns raised with SJJ outside the meeting and explore the possibility of a local community event.

CJ

4. **AGENDA ITEM 4 – NATIONAL ENGAGEMENT UPDATE**

Callie Lancaster (CL) reported that the Big Conversation reached 1,729 customers and captured 4,539 pieces of feedback. The feedback will inform community action plans, with work under way to make progress visible so customers can see what has changed and hold Accent to account.

CL confirmed that the Customer Charter, which was developed with customers, had been launched through the Annual Report. A scorecard will support the Charter, enabling customer groups to review progress against Accent's commitments.

Action: CL to bring the Customer Charter scorecard to the next meeting.

CL

CL provided an update on the planned works scrutiny, which is focusing on bathroom replacements. Customers with recent experience have taken part in a workshop, alongside interviews with contractors, operatives and Resident Liaison Officers. The findings will be used to develop recommendations for service improvement.

CL confirmed that the Independent Living Group had started a scrutiny review of anti-social behaviour (ASB). This will explore the distinction between neighbourhood management issues and ASB, with any wider learning shared where relevant. ER commented that she lives opposite an Independent Living Scheme and had observed a number of neighbour disputes compared with her experience of general needs housing.

CL explained that customer feedback from the recent home safety check campaign is being reviewed with the Health and Safety team. The aim is to identify improvements to customer communications that could support improved access to customers' homes.

CL updated the group on the customer workshop held in August to gather feedback on the Corporate Strategy. Customers called for a different tone, a strategy that feels realistic and reflected in day-to-day services, and commitments that do not over-promise.

5. AGENDA ITEM 5 – COLLEAUGE COMPLAINTS

John Place (JP) introduced his areas of responsibility, which include Complaints, Allocations, the Housing and Technical Hubs, and Customer and Community Engagement.

JP provided an overview of complaints performance. The South currently has the highest volume of complaints, although response performance has improved compared with the previous financial year, from 91% to 96% for Stage 1 complaints and from 51% to 93% for Stage 2 complaints.

Following a request from the National Customer Group to explore colleague-related complaints, Accent carried out a review of complaints, surveys and customer comments. The review found that concerns were more commonly associated with incorrect or inconsistent advice, rather than colleague conduct. Other themes included customers having to chase for updates, delays to repairs and the financial impact and individual circumstances or reasonable adjustments not always being recognised.

These complaints account for approximately 1% of complaints overall. An improvement action plan has been developed in response to the findings. JP explained that one of the improvements is the introduction of a Promised Action Tracker, which monitors further work required following a complaint response. This is intended to improve accountability and build customer trust and confidence.

Overdue promised actions in the South have reduced from the 80s to the 10s through improved monitoring and regular meetings with contractors. Customers welcomed the term “promised action” and felt it should be more visible and better understood by the wider customer base. The group suggested linking this to the Customer Charter and considering whether the principle could be used more widely outside the complaints process.

JP

Action: JP to explore how Promised Actions and their impact on service and customer satisfaction can be better communicated to customers.

JP outlined further actions from the improvement plan, including quality assurance, improved colleague knowledge resources, better contractor handovers, more consistent advice, improved recognition of reasonable adjustments and additional training and resources for the Complaints team and Housing and Technical Hubs.

JP advised that during July and August, 5% of reported repairs, covering 656 repairs, were recorded as having an adjustment to the service.

CW raised an individual complaint which appeared to have been closed or could not be located. CL confirmed that a complaint had been logged on CW’s behalf the previous day and that the Complaints team would make contact. JP clarified that information cannot be deleted from the system and that, in this instance, it appeared the original complaint may not have been recorded correctly. Customers shared examples of receiving inappropriate advice from Contact Centre colleagues. The group suggested inviting Rebecca Price, the new Head of Customer Contact, to a future meeting to discuss improvements and colleague training.

CL

Action: CL to invite Rebecca Price to the next meeting to provide an overview of the Technical Hub and planned improvements.

6. **AGENDA ITEM 6 – REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE UPDATE**

Ricky Cronshey (RiC) provided an update on repairs performance. At the end of August, there were 594 open repairs, which was reported as a positive position. A new Contract Manager at Ian Williams has introduced a greater focus on reducing overdue repairs and increasing capacity by recruiting operatives across a range of trades.

RiC confirmed that emergency repairs completed on time remain on target. However, prioritising emergency repairs can affect routine repair performance, which was reflected in the August figures.

ER shared an example where a contractor did not attend an appointment and no communication was provided.

Action: RiC to investigate ER's example and use the feedback with Ian Williams to reinforce the importance of communication when appointments cannot be kept.

RiC

ER raised concerns that, provided a repair is completed within the 28-day target, missed appointments along the way may not be reflected in the overall performance measure. She questioned whether positive emergency repair performance was being achieved at the expense of the routine repair experience. CM also shared concerns about missed appointments and a lack of communication.

Action: RiC to continue bringing repairs performance data to future meetings so the group can monitor whether the improvements discussed are having an impact.

RiC

RiC confirmed that first-time completion of routine repairs improved and was above the 88% target at the end of August. He explained that training with the Technical Hub has improved job coding, helping ensure the correct trade and appropriate time are allocated. ER asked whether the figures included repairs where a variation order (VO) had been required. RiC confirmed these were not included.

LN asked whether Accent had an ambition beyond the current 88% target. RiC was confident that performance should remain above target. CL suggested comparing performance against sector best practice.

Action: RiC to explore available benchmarking data for first-time fix performance.

RiC

RiC reported a reduction in customer satisfaction, with feedback indicating cancelled appointments as a contributing factor. He explained that additional resources should help improve this and confirmed that satisfaction is reviewed weekly with the contractor to identify service failures and corrective actions.

LN asked whether emergency repair volumes were increasing. RiC explained that volumes fluctuate from month to month depending on several factors. The group discussed property condition and component life cycles for kitchens and bathrooms. RiC explained that condition can influence replacement timing and that individual repairs or replacements can be completed without waiting for a full kitchen or bathroom replacement. JP confirmed that current life cycles align with the Decent Homes Standard.

Members responded positively to the repairs allocation flowchart and felt it should be communicated more widely, including on Accent's website.

RiC

Action: RiC to arrange for the repairs allocation flowchart to be added to the website.

RiC outlined the post-inspection process. Surveyors target 10% of completed repairs and may consider photographs, diary entries and customer feedback. Where work is incomplete or below standard, it can be recalled through the Technical Hub or a Surveyor.

ER asked whether a recalled repair would be treated as a complaint. RiC confirmed that it would not automatically be raised as a complaint. ER highlighted concerns raised by customers on her scheme that when a repair is recalled, there can be a lack of clear communication about what will happen next and when. RiC confirmed that Ian Williams should rearrange the appointment.

RiC

Action: RiC to clarify the process and expected timescales for recalled repairs, including how and when customers should be updated and a new appointment arranged.

7. AGENDA ITEM 7 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)

The group agreed they would like to focus on the customer journey following a failed post-inspection or repair recall. Customers felt there should be a clear and consistent process setting out what happens next, who is responsible for progressing the repair, expected timescales, how appointments are rearranged and how customers will be kept updated until the issue is resolved.

Action: CL to support the group to carry out a deep dive into the repair recall process and identify opportunities to improve the customer journey.

CL

CL thanked customers and colleagues for their open and constructive contributions and closed the meeting.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date: Thursday 3rd December, 12:00pm to 13:30pm

Venue: Virtual via Microsoft Teams.