



Allocations and Lettings Policy

Accent Housing: Allocations and Lettings Policy 080726 v4.1

ACCENTGROUP.ORG

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4.1	Dean Anderson	08/07/2026	1/3/2029	Minor amendment- removed HouseExchange and added HomeSwapper	Cara Jackson

Purpose: This Lettings Policy sets out our approach to letting our homes in a way that is fair, consistent, transparent, and responsive to local needs. It complies with all legal and regulatory requirements and local housing priorities.

The policy also supports our wider strategic aims to prevent homelessness, promote social inclusion, and ensure vulnerable individuals and families have access to safe, secure, and affordable homes.

The language and terms we use in this policy are explained in the glossary at the end.

As a customer, if you would like more information about any of the points this policy contains, a copy of any other policies referred to, or you would like a copy in another language or format, such as large print, please contact our Housing Hub on 0345 678 0555.

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1. Introduction

With this policy, we will make the best use of our homes, create long-lasting and manageable tenancies for our customers, and contribute to the development of sustainable communities.

Ensuring all our decisions and actions comply with all legal, regulatory, and statutory requirements, this policy explains how we:

- Let homes to people who need them most, fairly and without discrimination.
- Let homes efficiently and without delay.
- Make the best use of our homes to support sustainable and balanced communities.
- Help customers avoid financial hardship from under-occupying homes, due to, for example, the 'bedroom tax' and other welfare benefit changes.
- Support residents in managing their homes and understanding their responsibilities.
- Work with local authorities and follow planning agreements, nomination agreements and local lettings plans. This policy also explains who can apply to rent our homes and our applications process.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all applicants for our General Needs Housing, Specialist Housing/Older Person's Accommodation, Rent To Buy, Intermediate Market Rent and some supported housing (except where lets are made via a professional panel) and permanent 'decants.' This policy does not apply to court-ordered tenancy changes, moving residents temporarily or Mutual Exchanges.

The policy aligns with all relevant legislation, legal and regulatory standards, and our commitment to deliver high-quality homes and services.

3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Section 106 Agreements	These agreements are legally binding contracts between developers and local planning authorities in the UK. They ensure that new homes contribute to local communities, infrastructure, and services.
Mutual Exchange	This is when two or more social housing tenants agree to swap homes. When they swap, they take on the other person's type of tenancy and the rights that come with it. This is subject to all landlords' involved agreement.
Decants/ Decanting	This is the process of temporarily moving a customer from their home into alternative accommodation due to, for example, major repairs, renovations, or safety concerns. On some

	occasions this move may become permanent, known as a permanent decant.																			
Bedroom Tax	The bedroom tax, officially known as the under-occupancy penalty, is a policy in the UK that reduces housing benefits for tenants in social housing with spare bedrooms. <table><tr><th>Number of bedrooms</th><th>Overall no. of occupants</th><th>Maximum occupancy</th></tr><tr><td>0</td><td>1</td><td>Single Adult</td></tr><tr><td>1</td><td>1-2</td><td>Single / Couple*</td></tr><tr><td>2</td><td>2-4</td><td>Single/Couple plus 2 children of same sex up to age of 16, OR 2 children of different sex up to age of 10 OR A non-residential carer, providing overnight care for a resident adult Couple with agreed medical need for separate bedrooms</td></tr><tr><td>3</td><td>3-6</td><td rowspan="3">Any additional children subject to the same sharing criteria above Any other single adult member of household aged 16 plus</td></tr><tr><td>4</td><td>4-8</td></tr><tr><td>5</td><td>6 plus</td></tr></table> *A single adult within the household (who is not the applicant) would only be entitled to a separate room if there is no other person they can share with. However, an adult would not be expected to share with their own child.	Number of bedrooms	Overall no. of occupants	Maximum occupancy	0	1	Single Adult	1	1-2	Single / Couple*	2	2-4	Single/Couple plus 2 children of same sex up to age of 16, OR 2 children of different sex up to age of 10 OR A non-residential carer, providing overnight care for a resident adult Couple with agreed medical need for separate bedrooms	3	3-6	Any additional children subject to the same sharing criteria above Any other single adult member of household aged 16 plus	4	4-8	5	6 plus
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Social Rent Homes	Social Rent is the most common Social Housing Rent type. It is normally cheaper than renting from a private landlord and the rent charges are based on a formula set by the Government. You can find out more here Policy statement on rents for social housing - GOV.UK																			
Affordable Rent Homes	Affordable Rent can be up to 80% of what a private landlord would normally charge and is usually a more common rent type for newly built homes. You can find out more here Policy statement on rents for social housing - GOV.UK																			
Market Rent Homes	Market Rent is the typical rent private landlords charge for their homes based on things such as market conditions, size, location and local amenities.																			
Service Charges	Some of our homes have Service Charges. These can be broken down into two parts: • Eligible Service Charge – charges which can be covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit Housing Benefit if the tenant(s) are eligible. • Ineligible Service Charge – charges which cannot be claimed through housing related benefits and are paid directly by the tenant.																			

	Examples of Ineligible Service Charges may include, for example, charges for communal areas, cleaning and gardening. Our tenancy agreements explain all charges, both eligible and ineligible, for a property and how they are calculated.
Choice Based Lettings (CBL)	Schemes where homes are advertised and applicants place bids to register their interest. At the end of the bidding process, the applicant who has the highest priority under the allocations policy is allocated the property. Such schemes allow applicants to register interest for more than one property, providing greater choice when searching for a home.
Rent on Time	When a customer pays their rent on the date as specified in their tenancy or other agreement.
Income & Asset Limit	This is the maximum income and/or value of assets customers of social housing can have. These limits, which determine someone's eligibility to qualify for financial support, housing and other services, are set by individual local councils (or Accent) so they are often different depending on where someone lives.
Right to Rent	This is the legal requirement in England that mandates landlords to verify that tenants have the legal right to reside in the UK before renting a home to them.
Nomination Rights	Where we have such partnerships with local councils, it means the council can nominate applicants from their housing waiting lists for an agreed percentage of our homes
Priority Band	Categories used to organise and prioritise people who apply for social housing. When an applicant joins a waiting list, they are placed into a specific band based on need. Please refer to page 12 for more information on priority banding.
Regulator for Social Housing	The Regulator for Social Housing (RSH) is responsible for overseeing social housing standards in England. The RSH is responsible for setting the consumer standards, regulatory standards, social housing governance and legislation and the Social Housing Charter. For more information, visit http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/regulator-of-social-housing
Local Lettings Policies	Agreements that outline how homes are allocated and let between local authorities and housing providers. These are designed to address local housing needs and can include criteria such as age limits, income thresholds, or specific community needs.

4. References

This policy follows rules set by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) and complies with laws such as:

- Housing Acts ([1985](#), [1988](#), [1996](#), [2004](#)).
- Renters Rights Bill. This bill is not yet passed, but you can find more information here <http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-renters-rights-act>
- [Local Government Act 2000](#)
- [RSH's Tenancy Standard & Home Standard](#)
- [Affordable Homes Programme 2021 to 2026](#)
- [Homelessness Act 2002](#)
- [Homelessness Reduction Act 2017](#)
- [Localism Act 2011](#)
- [Welfare Reform Act 2012](#)
- [Immigration Act 2016](#)
- [Equality Act 2010](#)

We publish our main service policies and information on our website. These documents may be taken down from time to time whilst they are being reviewed or updated. Please use this link to access them [Policies and corporate documents](#).

You are very welcome to request copies of any of our policies. Please contact our Housing Hub on 0345 678 0555 if you would like to do so.

- Mutual Exchange Procedure
- Anti-Social Behaviour & Hate Crime Policy
- Decant Policy
- Domestic Abuse Policy
- Customer Support & Inclusion Policy
- Transfer Procedure
- Tenancy Policy
- Tenancy Fraud Policy

5. Who can apply for Social Housing?

Accent and Councils are responsible for checking the applicants they nominate can legally rent in the UK.

We assess applicants to understand their circumstances and to identify any factors that may affect their ability to start, or maintain, a tenancy. For example, if someone has a history of arrears, we may check to see if they have a repayment plan in place. Similarly, if someone has mobility issues, we will look at whether a property is suitable for their needs. Is it on the ground floor, for example, or does it need adapting?

Other things we might consider are, for example, if someone has steady employment, or receives income support or has other support needs that may impact their ability to manage their tenancy.

All this helps us make sure someone is ready to manage a home successfully, and any support they need is in place.

Where we identify potential tenancy risks, we will offer guidance to the applicant or refer them to specialist agencies and organisations who can provide more dedicated support.

Ultimately, if an Accent home is not the right option for someone at the time, we will support them with, for example, advice and signposting to partner agencies, or help them explore other housing options that better meet their needs.

Council Restrictions for Social Housing and Services

Councils generally set income limits for people who want to rent social housing. This makes sure affordable homes are occupied by those who need them most. At Accent, we follow those income and savings limits. Where a council has not set a limit, we apply our own limit of £50,000 a year for total household income. This does not include income from welfare benefits.

In the North-East and North-West regions, thresholds of £16,000 apply for savings or asset value. In the South and East regions, the limit is £30,000.

The reason for different limits is because housing costs are often much higher in the South and East of England, and applicants for social housing may need more financial resources to manage even basic living expenses. Therefore, the asset threshold is set at a higher limit to avoid excluding anyone that still needs affordable housing despite having modest savings. In regions with lower housing costs, (the North East and North West of England, for example), the threshold is lower because the same level of savings goes further in covering housing costs and basic living costs locally.

Applicants with thresholds or assets above these limits can only be accepted for housing with the approval of the Director of Customer Relations and the Director of Housing Services.

If an applicant does not inform us of their income, assets or savings that later become known to us, we will view this as fraudulent. We may take legal or other action to recover homes which have been let under such circumstances.

This policy does not apply to homeowners as homeowners usually cannot apply for rented social housing, unless they need housing for older people and cannot afford other options. If you are a homeowner seeking specialist housing for older people, please speak with us about your options.

We will not accept any applicants who have been violent or abusive toward our staff, gained housing fraudulently, or broken major tenancy rules, without approval from the Director of Housing Services.

6. Tenancy Fraud

Tenancy fraud is committed when someone obtains or uses a home dishonestly. It can include:

- Giving false information to obtain a home.
- Renting the home without permission (known as subletting).
- Moving out without letting us know (known as abandonment).
- Claiming a tenancy without being entitled to it because someone has left the property or died (Known as succession, please see the explanation below).
- Selling or giving away a tenancy for money or reward.

Tenancy fraud means homes are not available for people who really need them. It can also increase waiting times and cause other communities or neighborhood issues. We check applications carefully, investigate concerns and take appropriate action if fraud is committed. This can include ending the tenancy and recovering the property. We work with partner organisations where relevant to identify and tackle tenancy fraud. All reports of fraud are treated confidentially, and customers are encouraged, and supported, to report to Accent anyone they suspect of committing tenancy fraud.

Succession

Succession is when someone inherits a tenancy after the tenant dies. There are rules for different tenancy types about who can succeed.

Joint tenancies always pass to the other tenant named on the tenancy agreement. If there is no joint tenant, certain family members or close relatives may inherit the tenancy, provided they have lived in the property as their main home for at least 12 months before the tenant's death and are able to provide evidence of this.

Generally, only one succession is allowed per tenancy. If a tenancy has already been inherited once it cannot be passed on again by way of succession.

7. Right to Rent

We carry out 'right to rent' checks in line with Home Office guidance. You can find out more about the Right to Rent here, [Right to rent document checks: a user guide - GOV.UK](#)

We require valid identification for all members of a household who are over 18. We take photographs of all new residents to help prevent fraud, and we require some form of identification for any household members who are under the age of 18. This can be a passport, birth certificate, or proof of Child Benefit payments.

The most common forms of identification include, but are not limited to:

Single documents:

- Current or expired British or Irish passport.
- Home Office share code – This is a unique, nine-character alphanumeric code generated by the UK Government's online immigration status system. It allows non-UK nationals to securely prove their immigration status to employers, landlords and other relevant parties.

Two of the following documents:

- Proof that you are in receipt of benefits
- Full or Provisional Driving License
- Birth or Adoption Certificate (From the UK, Guernsey, Jersey, The Isle of Man, or Ireland)

Details on which documents can be accepted for household members over 18 can be found here [Prove your right to rent in England: Overview - GOV.UK](#)

We will also check landlord references where they are available. We may also check credit history, benefits, complete income and expenditure assessments, and carry out criminal background checks.

8. Local Lettings Policies

When new homes are built in a community, there is usually a Local Lettings Policy that explains who can apply and if there are any conditions. These policies are created in consultation with the local authority. In most cases, the council applies them as part of their nomination process. We may use our own local lettings policies to improve or support our existing communities and make sure we let our homes responsibly. There must always be a clear reason for having such a policy and it must be applied with the agreement of the local council and reviewed periodically.

Local lettings policies help to build strong and balanced communities. They respond to local needs which means they may be let using slightly different criteria than usual. For example, we might let a home to:

- People with a strong local connection to the area.
- Households in work or training.
- Families or individuals who can help create a balanced mix of customers.
- Applicants with a good tenancy history.

These policies are always designed to be fair and are based on evidence of what the local community needs. They are used alongside our main lettings policy and still follow national housing rules, including giving priority to those in housing need.

If a Local Lettings Policy applies to a home you are interested in, we will make sure you understand how it works and whether you are eligible.

9. “High Risk” Lettings

We will expect any nominating council to share all relevant recent medical or risk-related paperwork in accordance with data sharing protocols, for the safeguarding of our colleagues and customers. We reserve the right to refuse to rehouse high-risk potential nominees as well as those where relevant professionals do not provide relevant or required information and/or documentation. In some cases, we may not proceed with a high-risk applicant for a particular home due to specific local circumstances but, may consider them for housing elsewhere.

A high-risk applicant is generally someone whose circumstances or history indicate a possibility of harm, disruption or safeguarding concerns. Such examples may include someone with a criminal history, a record of severe anti-social behaviour or with safeguarding concerns.

We may seek to interview the potential nominee before any offer is made to ensure they understand that commitment to engaging with support services is integral to their maintaining a tenancy. We will work in partnership with Probation Services and the Police in relation to rehousing applicants subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) which assesses and manages the risks posed by certain sexual and/or violent offenders.

All exception requests, including those involving medical considerations, are reviewed and approved by either the Director of Customer Relations or the Director of Housing Services. This makes sure we have accountability at senior management level.

We do not employ medically qualified staff directly. Instead, when medical needs are disclosed, we require supporting evidence from qualified healthcare professionals such as doctors or Occupational Health Therapists to ensure we are making decisions based on evidence rather than subjective judgement or assumptions.

10. Our right to refuse Applications

In most cases we will be unable to accept applications:

- From anyone with any unspent criminal convictions.
- Where we have information to suggest a tenancy may impact the home or the community due to unspent criminal convictions for arson, violent crime, or sexual offences of any kind.
- From anyone who has outstanding rent or housing-related debts (see section 12). For example, if an applicant currently rents, they must have a clear rent account. They must also be debt free from any previous tenancies, for example, due to housing related debt for rechargeable repairs or sundry debts.
- From anyone who has previously been evicted by us or by our 'associated landlords' due to a breach of their tenancy conditions.

Where we have evidence or information that indicates an applicant may pose a risk to the immediate community or property, due to, for example, arson, violent assault or sexual offenses, they will not be given priority, even if they have previously been an Accent tenant.

We ask every applicant to be open and honest with us about any debts, unspent convictions or any past tenancy issues and the reasons for them.

11. Debt

If an applicant has debts of less than £500, we will not necessarily reject their application, but we will insist on it being paid off, or that there is a payment plan in place before we formally offer them a home. In some situations, we may still consider applicants with debts, convictions, or tenancy issues, depending on their personal circumstances. For example, if they have made a genuine effort to reduce their debt or improve their behaviour. This will be with the approval of the Director of Housing Services.

12. How we prioritise and let our homes

We prioritise applicants who apply directly to us based on their assessed housing need. This is determined by their priority band, followed by the date the band was awarded.

In areas where we have nomination agreements with local councils, a proportion of our homes are allocated to applicants from the local council's housing register. These nominations are made by the council in line with their own housing priorities.

Once we have met the conditions of any local authority nomination agreements, we will advertise areas where applicants can apply to us directly on our website.

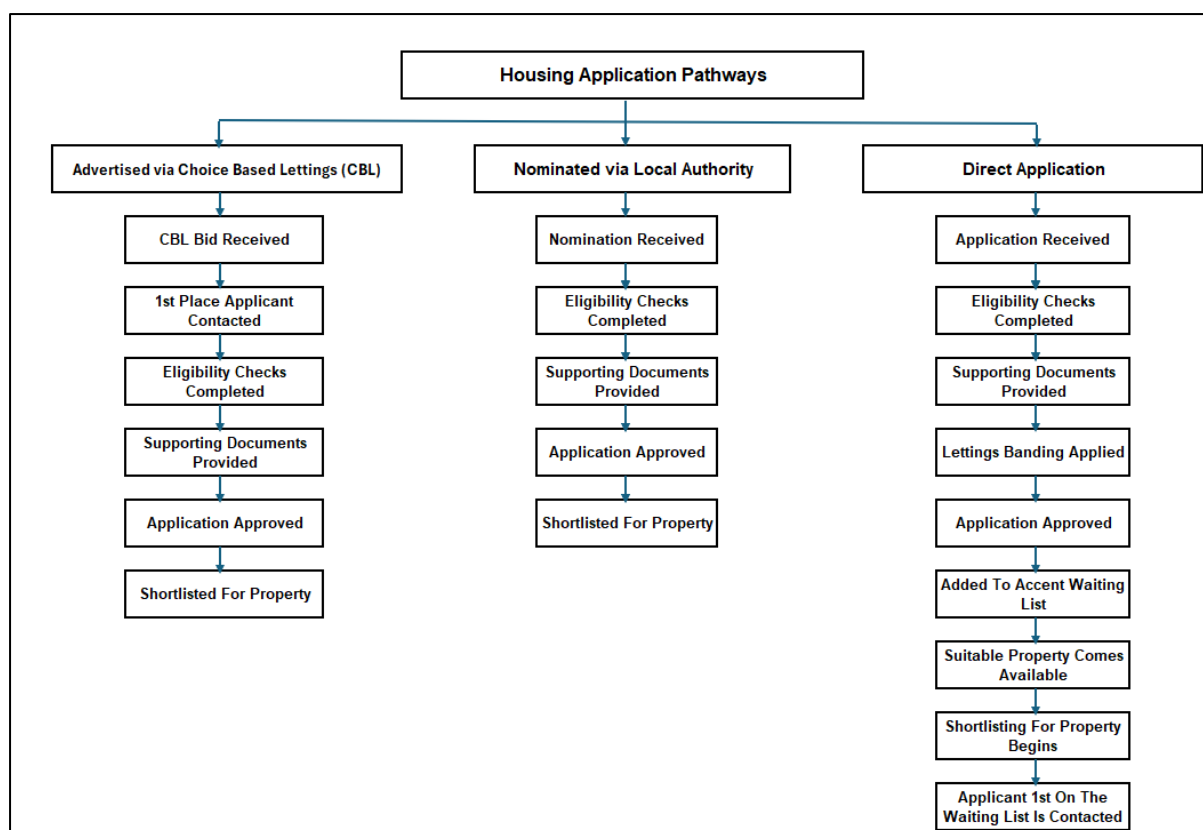
All applicants, whether applying to us directly, or via nomination, must meet the eligibility criteria, pass reference checks, and comply with the terms of this policy. In all circumstances, it is the responsibility of the applicant to provide evidence to support the banding criteria. Without evidence, applicants are automatically placed in Band D.

LETTINGS BANDING	
A	• Applicants who live in an area where they're not safe. • Applicants in employment or who need to move to the area due to an offer of employment and have a local connection to the Local Authority area where the property is located. • Applicants who have been discharged from the armed forces within the last 5 years. • Applicants whose current home is unaffordable. • Applicants who have no fixed or permanent home. • Applicants with an urgent medical need where their current property is unsuitable due to medical or mobility reasons, which will be resolved by applying for a property that is suitable for the applicant's requirements. • Applicants whose current home is unsafe to live in/is being demolished.
B	• Applicants who are under-occupying and financially impacted. • Applicants who are currently over-crowded by 1 or more bedrooms. • Applicants who are at risk of losing their current home. • Applicants who are unable to manage an illness in their current home.
C	• Applicants who want to move closer to family and friends. • Applicants who are living with an illness which would be easier to manage in a different home or location.
D	• Anyone applying for a property will be treated as Band D as a default where applicants are unable to provide evidence to substantiate the above banding criteria.

Where we have nomination partnerships with local councils, it means the council can nominate applicants from their housing waiting lists for an agreed percentage of our homes. This is still based on assessed housing needs and the requirements of this policy. This approach supports council housing plans and helps to meet local housing demand.

Nomination agreements may apply to both initial and subsequent lets on new homes. This is normally all nominations on initial lets where the home is built using public funds, such as Public Grant.

All nominated applicants must still meet the eligibility criteria for our homes, pass reference checks, and comply with this policy before we consider them for a home.



13. Transfers and Mutual Exchanges

Transfers - We will only consider transfer requests in exceptional circumstances. For example, with serious health or safety concerns, risks of domestic abuse, severe overcrowding, or urgent medical needs that cannot be met in the current home. Each request must be supported by appropriate evidence and will require approval from at least two Senior Managers to ensure consistency and fairness. Customers who ask to be transferred to another Accent home must be able to demonstrate the urgency of the need to be moved and why a mutual exchange may not be a suitable option for them.

Current tenants will need to have lived in their home for at least 12 months before they can apply for a transfer. They must also have successfully completed any starter or introductory period of their tenancy and have a clear rent account with no tenancy breaches. Current tenants must also have maintained their current home to an acceptable standard. A Housing Partner or Specialist Housing Partner will carry out an inspection to make sure the property is clean and free from damage beyond normal wear and tear. Fixtures and fittings we have provided must be intact and in working order and there must be no outstanding repairs due to the fault of the customer.

In exceptional circumstances where a property does not meet the above standard, and a current tenant **must** move, for example due to a domestic abuse incident, or high priority medical need, discussions will take place with the tenant and other agencies around an agreed approach. This could include setting up a repayment

plan following a recharge, an agreed repayment plan against an existing debt, acting against a perpetrator where a customer is subject to abuse and damage has occurred, or working with partner agencies to improve the property prior to a move.

If a transfer application is approved, transfer applicants are placed into a priority band based on need. When suitable properties become available these will be offered first to the highest eligible band. If a property has adaptations, we will prioritise applicants whose need match the adaptations. This could mean that someone with a lower band gets priority because the home is suitable to their specific needs.

Mutual Exchange - Customers can swap homes with other customers, either within Accent or with other social landlords. We partner with HomeSwapper, a free platform that helps social housing residents find swaps, known as Mutual Exchanges.<https://www.homeswapper.co.uk/>

If the current tenancy is a joint tenancy, **everyone named on the tenancy must agree** to the swap and all swaps are subject to conditions which we will explain to tenants at the start of the process. Please contact us if you would like a copy of our Transfer or Mutual Exchange policies.

14. Rightsizing

Sometimes, a home may no longer be suitable to continue living in. This could be because the household has become smaller or other circumstances have changed. In such cases, customers may consider 'rightsizing' - moving to a smaller home that better suits the current situation. There are lots of good reasons to consider this:

- Lower running costs – smaller homes are usually cheaper to heat and maintain.
- More affordable - a smaller home may mean lower rent and less cost due to, for example, the bedroom tax. (Read more about the bedroom tax here [What is the bedroom tax? | MoneyHelper](#).)
- Easier to manage – less space to clean, decorate, and look after.
- Better suited - especially if mobility or accessibility is more important.
- Freeing up larger homes – helping other families on the housing list who need more bedrooms.
- Financial benefit – there may be financial incentives for downsizing.

Moving to a smaller home is voluntary, but it could benefit someone long-term. If you are interested in rightsizing, talk through your options with your Housing Partner. You can then look at suitable homes to see what works best for you.

15. Specialist Housing

We have some homes available specifically for people aged 55 and over. This is our Specialist Housing service, but these homes are also commonly referred to as 'Independent Living' or 'Sheltered Housing'. These homes are designed to provide safe, comfortable and supportive environments where you can enjoy your independence while being part of a friendly community.

These homes are available to people looking to downsize, enjoy easier-to-manage accommodation, or be part of a like-minded community.

If someone has a medical condition or disability that makes this type of housing especially suitable, their application will be treated as a priority.

Our homes are designed with convenience in mind. They are often single level, with layouts that make day-to-day living easier. They offer some shared facilities and on-site staff to provide reassurance and practical help when needed. Although customers live independently, they are part of a welcoming neighborhood of people at a similar stage of life, with opportunities to connect socially while keeping your own space and privacy.

16. How to Apply

People can apply for an Accent home in different ways.

- **Directly:** Where we keep a percentage of our homes to advertise directly or where we do not have a Choice Based Lettings /Nomination (CBL) agreement with a local authority, we accept direct applications/register of interest via our website, www.accentgroup.org, Right Move or other advertising platforms.
- **Direct Waiting List:** We reserve the right to hold and maintain our own waiting list where local authority agreements allow or are not established.
- **Choice Based Lettings (CBL):** Where we have local authority agreements, we advertise a set percentage of our homes through CBL schemes. Applicants register and apply through their local council's housing team.
- **Nominations:** With local authority agreements, nominations are provided to us by local councils who match waiting customers to suitable homes as they become available.

Where we operate CBL or nomination schemes, customers apply through the council's website.

17. Offering a home

When a home becomes available, we match it to applicants from our own waiting list or the local council's housing register, based on eligibility, priority banding, and local connection criteria.

Our shortlisted applicants are checked against the property type, (size, adaptations, age restrictions etc.).

Before we make an offer, we carry out verification checks to verify the applicant's circumstances:

- Household make-up.
- Income and employment status.
- Immigration status and right to rent.
- Current housing situation and arrears history.

If any of the applicants' circumstances change during the process, we may re-assess the application.

Our formal offer process is as follows:

- The highest-priority eligible applicant is contacted with a provisional offer.
- They are given appropriate information of the property and a set time in which to accept or refuse.
- Viewings are usually arranged before the offer is confirmed.
- The applicant must confirm acceptance within the specified time.
- If the applicant refuses the offer, the reasons are recorded. If this happens more than once, future offers may be affected.

If the applicant accepts, final checks are completed where necessary. The applicant signs the tenancy agreement and receives keys.

18. Withdrawing offers

We reserve the right to withdraw an offer of a home in the following circumstances:

- **Verification Issues:** If an applicant fails to provide required documentation and/ or information, misses key deadlines, or supplies false or misleading information.
- **Serious Rent Arrears:** Where there is evidence of serious rent arrears from current or previous tenancies that could lead to legal action or possession.
- **Anti-Social Behaviour:** If there is evidence of behaviour likely to cause harassment, alarm, or distress to others in the community such as severe noise nuisance or neighbour harassment.
- **Domestic Abuse:** Where there is evidence that the applicant has perpetrated domestic abuse.
- **Hate Crime or Anti-Social Conduct:** If there is evidence of involvement in hate-related incidents or other forms of anti-social behaviour.

- **Relevant Criminal Convictions:** Where unspent convictions such as burglary, vehicle theft or drug offences have occurred in the locality of current or former homes and may impact community safety.
- **Threats or Violence:** If the applicant has displayed threatening or violent behaviour towards staff, board members, or elected representatives.
- **Repeated Refusals:** Applicants who repeatedly refuse suitable offers without valid reasons may be suspended or downgraded on our waiting list and the local council's housing register. More details are available from your local council.

19. “Rent on time”

We work with our customers at the beginning of their moving in experience to gain an understanding of their income and circumstances. This information is used to determine the most appropriate initial rent payment on the date of their welcome meeting in line with the terms and conditions of the tenancy agreement.

When a tenancy begins, we calculate the initial rent payment based on the start date and the customer's preferred payment frequency. For example, if rent is charged weekly, but the customer wishes to pay monthly, we convert the weekly rent into a monthly equivalent - weekly rent x 52 (weeks) divided by 12 (months). If the weekly rent is £120, the monthly amount would be £520. If the tenancy starts mid-month, the initial payment will include a pro-rata amount for the remaining days of the first week, plus the full monthly amount for the following month. This makes sure payments align with our tenancy agreement, whilst enabling customers to choose when they pay. Please speak with our Allocations & Lettings team if you would like further clarification once you are offered a property.

Our aim is to make sure customers have the best chance of keeping a clear rent account and preventing future debt. We follow the principle of 'rent on time.' The initial payment and future payments are discussed and agreed during the application process.

20. Special Considerations

Where a home has been specially adapted to meet medical or accessibility needs, we aim to let it to someone whose circumstances closely match those adaptations. In these cases, certain parts of this policy may not apply, as our priority is to make sure the right person is matched with the right home. Our first approach is to identify suitable applicants from our own housing register. If we do not have someone suitable, we may then ask the local council if they have people waiting who could benefit from the adaptations already in place.

Applicants Under 18

Tenancies are not usually given to anyone under the age of 18. However, in some extreme circumstances, we may offer a tenancy to someone aged 16 or 17. Any

applicant aged 16 or 17 must provide a rent guarantor to guarantee they have the necessary support to maintain their tenancy. Any successful applicant under the age of 18 will be enrolled into an 'Equitable Tenancy' (a short-hold tenancy that can be promoted to a lifetime or another appropriate tenancy type once the customer turns 18). This is on the condition that there are no tenancy breaches, and the customer has passed any relevant probation periods.

Vulnerable adults

If an applicant is identified as vulnerable and needing support, but does not currently have appropriate support in place, we may decide it is not suitable to offer a tenancy at that time. This decision will always be made with care and in the interest of the applicant's wellbeing and tenancy sustainability, in line with our Customer Inclusion and Support Policy. In such cases, we will:

- Provide clear advice on what support is needed to help sustain a tenancy.
- Signpost the applicant to relevant statutory or voluntary support services.
- Work with partner agencies to help the applicant access the support they need.
- Reassess eligibility once appropriate support is in place.

Our aim is to always make sure that all applicants, including those who are vulnerable, are given the best chance to succeed in their tenancy and live independently.

Pregnancy

Pregnancy can significantly impact someone's housing needs and personal circumstances. Where an applicant is pregnant, we will consider factors such as additional space requirements, health and wellbeing, and anticipated changes to household composition to make sure safe and appropriate housing is provided.

We are committed to supporting expectant parents with sensitivity, in line with our responsibilities under equality and safeguarding legislation. Nominated applicants will be assessed based on the housing need determined by the nominating authority. Exceptions to this policy may apply in these cases.

Please refer to Gov.UK for more information under our responsibilities under pregnancy and other protected characteristics [Equality Act 2010](#)

Exceptions

Sometimes we may need to make exceptions to this policy based on someone's individual situation. Our colleagues will be mindful of customers' vulnerabilities and specific needs in line with our Customer Inclusion & Support Policy and any necessary legislation and any decisions will be overseen by appropriate senior managers.

21. Lettings to Colleagues/Relatives/Contractors

Accent board members, employees, former employees, and their close relatives may have an Accent home, provided that:

- They are in housing need and have been assessed by their local authority and meet the letting criteria.
- They receive the same consideration as any other applicant.
- They are not involved with or have influence over the letting decision.

We will not consider applications from former employees if they have a conviction or pending legal action for alleged criminal activity related in any way to their employment with us. All potential allocations to employees and contractors, or their close relatives, will be subject to scrutiny and require approval by the Accent Executive team.

All applicants are asked to declare any interest they hold in Accent.

22. Appeals and Complaints

If you believe you have been unfairly denied housing or have had an offer withdrawn, you can appeal in writing within 21 days. If you are still unhappy, you can seek independent advice or follow our complaints process if this policy was not followed properly. If you feel we have not dealt with your concerns in line with our policies, we want to hear from you. Your feedback helps us enhance our services, respond to issues quickly and will improve the process for future applicants and customers.

You can contact us on 0345 678 0555 or online using our [Complaints form](#). For more information on our processes please visit our website, [Compliments and complaints](#).

23. Diversity and Inclusion

We treat all applicants fairly and equally, regardless of background, identity, or circumstances in line with our Customer Inclusion and Support Policy. You can request a copy of this policy as outlined in section 4.

24. Legal and Regulatory Compliance

We are committed to ensuring that our lettings practices comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements. This includes:

- Housing Act 1996 (Part 6): We allocate homes in accordance with the legal framework for housing need and reasonable preference groups. [Housing Act 1996](#)
- Equality Act 2010: We treat all applicants fairly and without discrimination, ensuring equal access to housing opportunities. [Equality Act 2010](#)
- Regulatory Standards for Social Housing Providers: We follow the standards set by the Regulator of Social Housing, including the Tenancy Standard,

Safety and Quality Standard, Consumer Standards and Neighbourhood and Community Standard. [Regulatory standards for landlords - GOV.UK](#)

- Data Protection and Privacy: We handle all personal information in line with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. [Data protection: The UK's data protection legislation - GOV.UK](#)
- Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice: We adhere to best practice in complaints handling and service delivery, as outlined by the Housing Ombudsman. [The Complaint Handling Code | Housing Ombudsman Service](#)
- Health and Safety Legislation: All our homes meet legal safety standards, including gas and electrical safety, fire safety, and fitness for human habitation. [Housing health and safety rating system \(HHSRS\): guidance for landlords and property-related professionals - GOV.UK](#)

We regularly review our policies to ensure they remain compliant with current legislation and regulatory guidance. Any updates will be communicated clearly to customers and customers will be invited to feed back on the contents of policies which need to change or update to ensure co-creation.

25. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, or sooner if required by changes in legislation or organizational practices. Amendments will be communicated to all staff and relevant stakeholders.

The implementation of the policy will be monitored through reports to Leadership Team and Audit and Risk Committee.