

MINUTES

Date/Time: Wednesday 1st April 2026, 12.00pm to 13.30pm

Venue: Virtual, MS Teams

Chair: Lyn Nelson (LN), Customer
Vice Chair: Chris Lynn (CLy), Customer

Customers Present: Angie Cheetham (AC)
Babs Trainer (BT)
Lynne Whalley (LW)
Martin Elliott (ME)
Paul Smith (PS)
Pauline McGregor (PM)

Accent Colleagues: Tanya Scott (TS), Assistant Director of Housing Services
Lizzy Robinson (LR), Regional Specialist Housing Manager

Guests: Emma Raven (ER), Customer
Nigel Wright (NW), Chair of the Board

Apologies Kim Tinneney (KT), Regional Specialist Housing Manager
Marie Strike (MS), Customer

Minutes: Callie Lancaster (CL), Customer Engagement Manager

1. **AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND APPOLOGIES**

LN opened the meeting and led introductions around the virtual room. New members were welcomed and apologies were noted from anyone unable to attend. TS introduced herself and explained her new role as Assistant Director of Housing for the North. She reassured the group that she still supports independent living schemes nationally and remains the safeguarding lead. LR also introduced herself as Regional Specialist Housing Manager for the North, explaining she works closely with KT who covers the East and South regions.

2. **AGENDA ITEM 2 – WELCOME FROM NIGEL WRIGHT**

LN welcomed NW to the meeting. He explained that he was attending to listen and hear directly from customers, understand their experiences, and take feedback back to the Board. He emphasised the importance of co-designing services with customers rather than consulting after decisions have been made.

3. **AGENDA ITEM 3 – UPDATE ON ACTIONS**

LR explained that involvement in scheme inspections (previously referred to as “pen pictures”) had been paused due to internal changes but will now be picked back up.

Action

There is a renewed commitment to inviting customers to take part in scheme walkarounds so experiences and learning can be shared across different schemes.

LR confirmed the Mobility Scooter policy remains under review and is being developed jointly with health and safety, fire safety and specialist teams. External research is also being carried out due to the variation between schemes.

LR also shared that while weekend working has not yet been introduced, some schemes have successfully trialled later evening cover to better support customers who work during the day. This has been positively received and made permanent in some locations.

TS explained that a framework has been developed for the content of the customer handbooks, with the intention of keeping information clear, simple and accessible rather than overly detailed. While progress has been slower than hoped due to competing priorities, the handbook work has not been dropped. TS confirmed that customers will be involved in further development and this will return to a future agenda.

LR shared an update on scheme signage and confirmed rebranding has been completed in most schemes, though some still have older signage in place. TS noted that she has also observed this and agreed that removal of old signage is as important as installing new signage. TS agreed to raise this with the Communications Team.

TS

TS confirmed 'No excuse for abuse' will now be known as Acceptable Behaviour. She confirmed work is underway to support colleagues and customers including reviewing the acceptable behaviour policy, developing new training for colleagues and taking a trauma-informed approach that recognises frustration while making clear that abuse is not acceptable.

Customers shared a range of views. LN described her experience of hearing a recorded message when calling the Contact Centre that asks callers to be respectful, which she felt was a positive step that encouraged reflection.

BT suggested visible signage or posters within schemes stating that abuse is not acceptable. She shared personal experiences of serious abuse between residents and felt that clear messaging would help residents challenge unacceptable behaviour and protect both staff and others.

PM expressed concern that signage could damage the relationship between residents and scheme managers, explaining that she values trust and personal relationships over formal notices. She also shared that she found the Contact Centre message uncomfortable, feeling that it implied residents were the problem. LW echoed concerns about a "them and us" feeling and highlighted frustrations caused by reduced staff visibility and part-time cover within schemes, which can escalate tensions.

TS acknowledged the different views and confirmed that no decision has been made. LN agreed that the group will continue to reflect on this topic in their monthly meetings and revisit it at a future quarterly meeting.

LN

4. AGENDA ITEM 4 – UPDATE ON SOCIAL HOUSING INNOVATION FUND

LN and CLy shared the news that the Independent Living Group has been successful in securing £120,000 through the Social Housing Innovation Fund. LN explained that the idea was rooted in customer feedback about communication, transparency and feeling disconnected.

CLy presented the project, titled “Belonging Begins Here – Connecting Our Communities”, which will introduce interactive digital screens in independent living schemes. He explained that the screens will be simple to use and led by residents, with customers shaping the content. Potential uses include local information, scheme updates, repairs messages, community events and important safety information. Accent will project manage the delivery, but the project remains customer-led.

TS reflected that the project is a direct result of customer insight gathered from over 200 residents and praised the group for turning lived experience into a funded, resident-led project. She emphasised this will be a phased programme delivered over approximately 12 months.

NW formally congratulated the group and confirmed the Board fully supports the project. He described it as a strong example of genuine co-design and confirmed the Board will receive progress updates.

5. AGENDA ITEM 5 – FUTURE FOCUS

Customers raised several wider issues including disruption from repeated planned works, lack of coordination between contractors, communication gaps, and concerns about property condition and safety.

Specific issues were raised regarding asbestos, access to water shut-off points, and vulnerability where residents cannot safely remain in their homes during works. LR reassured the group that homes should never be left in an uninhabitable condition and offered to follow up specific cases separately.

LR explained that Accent carries out regular scheme inspections covering communal areas and that customers can be invited to take part. Inspection findings are shared internally to trigger repairs and estate actions. She also outlined new “kick-off meetings” planned ahead of major works so customers are informed earlier and can raise concerns in advance.

LN suggested that future work for the group could focus on estate management, property condition and maintenance standards. Members agreed to reflect on potential projects and bring ideas to the next meeting.

6. AGENDA ITEM 6 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)

NW thanked the group for an open and honest discussion and reaffirmed the Board’s focus on customer outcomes, quality homes and strong communities.

LN confirmed an interim monthly meeting is planned for late April, with details to follow. Members were encouraged to share ideas and reflections ahead of those discussions.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Date: 3 June 2026

Venue: Virtual, MS Teams

ALL