

### MINUTES

Date/Time: Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2026, 12.00pm to 14.00pm

Venue: Virtual, MS Teams

**Chair:** Stacy Hartley (SH), CEC Member, Customer Champion

**Customers Present:** Chris Lynn (CLy) Chair of Independent Living Group  
Edmund England (EE)  
Mark Waite (Customer)  
Piotr Szymankiewicz (PS)  
Razina Bostan (RB)  
Richard Wilkinson (RW) CIC Member

**Accent Colleagues:** Dean Anderson (DA), Executive Director of Customer Experience  
Gwen Jefferson (GJ), Director of Organisational Development and Culture  
Jo Gallagher (JG) Head of Customer and Community Engagement  
Mike Squires, Head of Repairs Service (MS)  
Stephen Love (SL) Customer Insight Manager  
Tanya Scott (TS) Assistant Director of Housing Services

**Guests:** Nigel Wright, Chair of the Board  
Ilona Blue, Accent Board Member

**Apologies:** Helen Hutchinson (HH) CEC Member, Customer Champion  
Jackie Best (JB) CEC Member, Customer Champion  
Katarzyna Bajdiuk

**Minutes:** Callie Lancaster (CL), Customer Engagement Manager

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| 1. | <b>AGENDA ITEM 1 – WELCOME AND APPOLIGIES</b><br>Stacy Hartley (SH) welcomed members to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. A special welcome was extended to Nigel Wright, Chair of the Board, and Ilona Blue, Board Member and Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee, who attended to observe the meeting and hear directly from customers. Members were reminded that the meeting was being recorded for minute-taking purposes and housekeeping arrangements were outlined. RW was congratulated on winning the Lifetime Achievement in Housing Award at the Housing Heroes Awards. |        |
| 2. | <b>AGENDA ITEM 2 – UPDATE ON ACTIONS</b><br>Members received updates on actions from previous meetings, including:                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |        |

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|    | <p><u>In progress</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conan McKinley (Exec Director of Assets and Compliance) will attend the November meeting to present findings from work on repetitive repairs and planned works investment.</li> <li>An awareness campaign is being developed to promote the translation app available to Housing Partners.</li> <li>Progress made on colleague complaints will be provided by Zain Janjua (Head of Customer Service Improvement) in November meeting.</li> <li>Rob Bloom (Director of Housing Services) will provide an update on colleague turnover at the November meeting.</li> </ul> <p><u>Paused</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Peterborough office location proposal remains on hold due to the contract not ending until December 2032.</li> </ul> <p><u>Complete</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Report back to group on progress of repairs improvement plan 6 months after customer workshop took place (Mike Squires providing update in this meeting)</li> <li>Colleagues have been reminded to minimise the use of abbreviations in communications.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |    |
| 3. | <p><b>AGENDA ITEM 3 – CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE COMMITTEE (CEC) UPDATE</b></p> <p>SH shared that CEC members heard a customer case study involving a failed tenancy sign-up appointment due to an unsafe property condition. The discussion highlighted the impact on the customer, including lost earnings, childcare costs and loss of trust. Lessons learned included stronger property checks before sign-up appointments and clearer accountability processes.</p> <p>SH shared that CEC members commended the fact we have listened to customer feedback when planning the Big Local Conversation, where customers highlighted a desire for Accent to be more visible within communities. In response, Accent is also piloting Community Connects drop-in sessions in local venues to encourage face-to-face engagement. There are plans to use a blended approach to engage with customers and gather feedback including home visits and QR code responses when customers are not home. RW also highlighted the importance of providing alternative methods for customers to respond to the Big Local Conversation, noting that not all customers are comfortable using QR codes. PS agreed that reliance on QR codes could exclude some older customers and expressed concerns about the use of digital twins rather than engaging directly with real customers.</p> <p>JG confirmed that findings from digital twin work would always be validated with real customers and confirmed alternative ways to submit responses would be explored.</p> <p><u>Action: Add alternative ways customers can provide feedback including customer services number or speaking to Housing Partner.</u></p> | JG |

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|    | <p>AI technology, Digital twins, was discussed with reassurance that this will complement, not replace, engagement with real customers. RW raised concerns regarding the use of digital twin technology and emphasised the importance of ensuring real customer voices remain at the centre of service improvement. RB also highlighted the importance of ensuring Accent maintains the right balance between investing in AI initiatives and addressing core service delivery issues that matter most to customers.</p> <p>Improvements on Planned maintenance were discussed, including the development of contractor standards, new communication materials for customers and customer lookbooks.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |  |
| 4. | <p><b>AGENDA ITEM 4 – PERFORMANCE UPDATE</b></p> <p>Stephen Love (SL) presented the latest performance update. There were 12 underperforming KPIs, two amber indicators and 11 performing on target. Key areas of concern included building safety compliance, antisocial behaviour response times, stock condition data, customer data quality, first-time fix rates and complaint volumes.</p> <p>A key area of strong performance is how complaints are handled when things go wrong. There have been significant improvements in responding to both Stage 1 and Stage 2 complaints, alongside a reduction in Ombudsman referrals. Customer satisfaction with complaint handling has also increased, indicating that improvements to the complaints process are having a positive impact on both service delivery and customer experience.</p> <p>SL highlighted a change to the way complaint response performance is reported. Previously, month-end snapshot reporting could create discrepancies because complaints received towards the end of the month may still be resolved within target times after the reporting date. To provide a clearer and more consistent picture of performance, a new calculation method has been adopted that focuses on the number of complaints dealt with within target timescales during the reporting month. The change does not alter or hide performance results but aims to remove confusion and ensure consistent reporting across all future reports.</p> <p>Dean Anderson (DA) provided context on a few indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outstanding compliance checks were largely due to access issues rather than missed activity.</li> <li>• ASB response measures were newly introduced and based on limited available data (April and May only).</li> <li>• Decent Homes performance reflects planned investment works which have not yet been completed.</li> </ul> <p>RW noted that rising complaint volumes may reflect increased confidence amongst customers to raise concerns and improved complaint recording across the sector. He stressed the importance of learning from complaints and acting on customer feedback.</p> <p>MW shared his experience of a lengthy repairs journey and highlighted communication issues between contractors and trades.</p> |  |

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|    | <p>RB questioned whether repeat repairs could be linked to the condition of Accent's housing stock. PS and MW both emphasised the importance of identifying and resolving root causes rather than repeatedly treating symptoms.</p> <p>CL and JG confirmed Conan's upcoming work on repeat repairs would explore these themes further, including links between housing condition and recurring repairs.</p> <p><u>Action: Include discussion on property condition, repeat repairs and root causes within November update.</u></p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | CM |
| 5. | <p><b>AGENDA ITEM 5 – PROGRESS UPDATE ON REPAIRS IMPROVEMENT PLAN</b></p> <p>Mike Squires (MS) provided an update on progress against the Repairs Improvement Plan. The plan contains 25 objectives, with 3 completed, 11 in progress and 11 scheduled into the next financial year.</p> <p>To improve repairs diagnosis and escalation, a Duty Surveyor role has been introduced to provide technical support to the Tech Hub. This addresses concerns that, in some cases, repair requests were being assessed without sufficient technical expertise, leading to uncertainty around the correct trade or resource required. The new approach enables complex or unclear cases to be escalated to a surveyor for clarification, helping to improve diagnosis accuracy, ensure the right repairs are identified first time, and ultimately enhance overall repairs performance.</p> <p>Work has been undertaken with Zane, the new Head of Customer Service Improvement, to review outstanding complaint actions that were not being completed as expected, contributing to customer dissatisfaction and complaint escalation. Weekly reviews and enhanced monitoring have been introduced with regional teams and Ian Williams to improve oversight, while an activity demand analysis is also underway to identify wider service improvement opportunities.</p> <p>An activity review found that surveyors' time is split almost evenly between failure demand (35%), required work (33%) and value-added work (32%), highlighting opportunities to reduce inefficiencies and increase customer-focused activities. A similar review of Building Services Managers found that over 50% of their time is spent dealing with failure demand, such as chasing contractors, appointments and complaint-related actions. The findings are now being used to develop an improvement plan focused on reducing failure demand, improving ways of working and enabling more time to be spent on value-adding activities.</p> <p>A Contractor Day was held on 20 May with Accent's main contractors, focusing on customer inclusion, complaints learning and the development of a customer charter. Real customer experiences and complaint examples were shared to highlight areas where service was falling short, prompting contractors to reflect on lessons learned. As a result, a Customer Charter and Code of Conduct have been developed and are currently being reviewed ahead of a joint training programme for contractors. The aim is to create a consistent, customer-focused approach across all contractors, improve awareness of customer needs and vulnerabilities, and drive improvements in service delivery.</p> |    |

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|    | <p>A review is underway to assess whether additional quantity surveying support is needed to provide greater oversight of contractor performance, value for money and variation requests. Alongside this, work is being carried out to improve the management of complex repairs, which are more likely to involve multiple trades and experience delays or service failures. The aim is to develop a more efficient, coordinated and customer-focused approach, particularly as demand for damp and mould works continues to increase and further requirements under Awaab's Law are introduced.</p> <p>MW welcomed the improvements being introduced and offered detailed feedback from his own repairs experience to support ongoing service development. He highlighted the importance of resolving root causes before undertaking cosmetic repairs and provided examples of damp and mould issues that required more extensive investigation before being resolved.</p> <p><u>Action: Reach out to MW to gather recommendations to improve repairs service.</u></p> <p>EE challenged the quality of work by subcontractors and if they're managed in the same way. MS confirmed the performance of subcontractors is closely monitored through regional reviews, national contract meetings and contract management arrangements. Where subcontractors are found to be consistently underperforming, Accent has worked with Ian Williams to remove them from the contract, helping to ensure customers receive a better-quality service and that contractor performance standards are maintained.</p> <p>PS shared an example of a damp and mould repair where the issue was only treated superficially. The mould was cleaned and repainted, but the damp returned because the underlying cause had not been identified or resolved. He felt repairs should focus on fully diagnosing and fixing the root cause rather than applying temporary solutions. MS agreed and said this type of issue would be considered a complex repair rather than a routine repair. He outlined plans for a specialist approach to complex repairs, with dedicated teams within Accent and contractors providing the expertise, time and resources needed to investigate root causes and deliver lasting solutions, rather than temporary fixes.</p> | MS  |
| 6. | <b>BREAK</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | ALL |
| 7. | <p><b>AGENDA ITEM 7 – COMPETENCY AND CONDUCT POLICY FEEDBACK</b></p> <p>Gwen Jefferson (GF) set the scene by reminding the group new regulatory standards on competence and conduct will come into effect from October, with a focus on ensuring customers can expect high standards of professionalism across the housing sector.</p> <p>Customers were invited to review and provide feedback on two draft documents: the Learning and Development Policy, which outlines how Accent will support colleagues to develop the right skills and experience throughout their careers, and the Code of Conduct, which sets expectations around professionalism, respect, accountability and integrity. The purpose of the session was to understand whether the documents reflect the standards customers expect from Accent colleagues, identify any gaps, and ensure the</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |     |

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|    | <p>content is clear, accessible and free from unnecessary jargon. Customers were encouraged to provide honest and open feedback on both documents.</p> <p>SH suggested that empathy should be more explicitly reflected within the Code of Conduct, explaining that empathy, compassion and understanding are key elements of building trust between customers and colleagues.</p> <p><u>Action: Strengthen the need for demonstrating empathy in the Code of Conduct</u></p> <p>JG recommended incorporating more themes from the Customer Charter, particularly around listening, respect, inclusion and understanding diverse customer needs. She noted the importance of ensuring consistency between customer expectations and colleague behaviours.</p> <p><u>Action: Review the Customer Charter and bring themes into the policies</u></p> <p>PS emphasised the importance of clear language and avoiding jargon. He explained that overly technical language can discourage engagement and should be avoided wherever possible.</p> <p>MW praised improvements in customer service experienced over recent years and highlighted the positive attitude, empathy and support demonstrated by many frontline colleagues. He suggested introducing account management when dealing with customer queries, so customers didn't have to repeat themselves. DA confirmed this would not be feasible due to the high call volumes. He confirmed Accent are working on improving recording keeping and access to information for colleagues to improve the customer experience. RB confirmed from personal experience this would be difficult for general queries but could work for complex cases.</p> <p>RB highlighted the importance of empowering colleagues to identify vulnerabilities, escalate complex issues and move beyond simply listening to actively resolving customer problems. She stressed that empathy must be reflected through action as well as communication.</p> <p>CLy reflected positively on his experiences visiting Accent offices and praised the culture, transparency and willingness of colleagues to involve customers in decision-making.</p> | <p>GJ</p> <p>GJ</p> |
| 8. | <p><b>AGENDA ITEM 8 – ANTISOCIAL BEHAVIOUR SERVICE UPDATE</b></p> <p>Tanya Scott (TS) provided an update on Accent's approach to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB), including current performance, recent improvements and future plans. Members were encouraged to share ideas and feedback to help shape the future ASB offer.</p> <p>Accent recorded 791 ASB cases in 2025/26, equating to 30.42 cases per 1,000 homes, which is lower than the HouseMark upper quartile benchmark for similar housing associations. The highest proportion of cases is in the Northeast, with the most common case types being harassment and intimidation, followed by noise nuisance and drug-related issues.</p> <p>Customer satisfaction with ASB handling currently stands at 51%, which is below the sector average and Accent's aspirations. Several improvements have recently been introduced, including the appointment of two specialist ASB roles, one in the North and one in the South. These roles will support</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |                     |

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|    | <p>colleagues with complex cases, provide training, build confidence and help identify lessons learned to improve service delivery.</p> <p>The former ASB Best Practice Group has been restructured into a Service Improvement Group, with a greater focus on reviewing policies and procedures, developing training, preparing for legislative changes and carrying out detailed case reviews to identify opportunities for improvement.</p> <p>An audit of the ASB service has recently been completed. Early findings identified several strengths, including the updated ASB policy, the introduction of a staff training matrix and a new case audit process for managers. Areas identified for further improvement included strengthening case management, improving oversight and ensuring compliance with service timescales.</p> <p>SH asked if Accent were looking for customers to join the Service Improvement Group. TS confirmed customers are encouraged to join to bring real customer views into the group.</p> <p><u>Action: Group members to consider joining the ASB service improvement group and to email engagement team if interested.</u></p> <p>MW questioned how customers with vulnerabilities are considered when it comes to services like planned works. TS confirmed this is something we've improved on at Accent, especially since the introduction of the Customer Inclusion and Support policy. JG also confirmed there is a planned works scrutiny currently happening which will touch on improving the experience for vulnerable customers.</p> | Group members                  |
| 9. | <p><b>AGENDA ITEM 9 – ANY OTHER BUSINESS (AOB)</b></p> <p>SH shared with the group that she is looking for a vice chair to support her with the National Customer Group and customers should contact her directly or email engagement team to express interest.</p> <p><u>Action: Group members to consider taking up the vice chair role and contact SH or engagement team.</u></p> <p>RB raised concerns about being advised they could be charged for a smoke alarm battery replacement, despite this previously being treated as Accent's responsibility. While the complaint was upheld, concerns were raised about the impact on vulnerable customers, safeguarding implications, and the potential health and safety risks if customers choose not to report faulty alarms.</p> <p>The discussion highlighted the need for clear policies, consistent processes and better communication when service responsibilities change. Questions were also raised about how many customers may have been affected by the approach and whether current guidance aligns with information provided on Accent's website.</p> <p>JG thanked RB for raising and reassured the group this is being taken seriously and is currently being investigated. She confirmed John Place is leading on this review looking at how Accent recharges customers and revisiting procedures and training with colleagues.</p> <p><u>Action: Update the group on progress in the November meeting.</u></p>                                                                                                   | <p>Group members</p> <p>JP</p> |

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| <b>10.</b> | <b>DATE OF NEXT MEETING</b><br>Date: Tuesday 17 November 2026 at 12.00pm<br>Venue: Virtual, MS Teams |  |