



Thursday 15 May 2025

RE: Important update on solar panels at Franklands Park

We are writing to update you on the steps we are now taking following the recent fire at Henrietta Close, and to respond to the understandable concerns that you and your neighbours have raised with us.

While the official investigation is still ongoing and the exact cause of the fire has not yet been confirmed, we fully recognise the strength of feeling within the community. As part of our commitment to prioritising your safety and peace of mind, we can now confirm that we will be **removing all solar panels from Accent-managed properties and those previously sold by us across Franklands Park.**

Next steps and immediate safety measures

We expect the removal works to take several weeks and are currently working with our specialist contractors to finalise the timetable. We will prioritise blocks of flats first and aim to share the confirmed programme as soon as possible. We are hoping to upload this to our webpage and issue an email update by Monday 19 May.

In the early stages of planning, we explored whether applying a specialist silicone spray to the panels could act as an interim solution by reducing their heat absorption while longer-term plans were developed. However, following further review, we have made the decision to proceed directly and swiftly to the full removal of the panels as the most robust and safest course of action.

To support this approach and provide immediate reassurance to residents, we have also put in place a 24/7 waking watch across the estate, which will remain in place until all removal works are complete.

The waking watch involves trained fire safety personnel patrolling the estate at all times. Their role is to provide additional fire safety vigilance, raise the alarm in the unlikely event of an incident, and offer extra reassurance while the works are underway.

To ensure we can support you to the best of our ability, if you or any members within your household have any additional support needs you need us to be aware of, please let us know.

We have already started the most urgent decommissioning works, which involve safely isolating the systems and removing all inverters, metering, and switch gears to ensure the panels can no longer produce electricity. This work is continuing over the weekend and is expected to be completed by Monday evening, subject to property access. We will confirm completion on our dedicated webpage.

This work extends to our shared owners. However, as the panels are owned by you, the decision ultimately rests with you. If you would prefer to keep them in place, please contact us as soon as possible so we can discuss this with you directly.

We would also like to reassure you that **all of these works will be fully funded by Accent and will not be recharged to residents through service charges or any other costs.**

This is an evolving situation, and it's important we get our approach right. As we progress, there may be some changes or updates along the way, but please be assured that everything we are doing is focused on keeping our residents safe and supported.

On-site support and opportunities to speak to us

As Executive Director of Assets and Compliance (Interim), I will be on site at the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service trailer on Longden Avenue on Sunday 18 May from 12noon to 2pm if you would like to speak to me directly.

Additionally, our contractor has appointed a dedicated Customer Liaison Officer for Franklands Park, who will be on site regularly to provide updates, answer questions specifically related to the works, and offer reassurance as the programme progresses. The Customer Liaison Officer can be contacted at NRT Group by calling 01737 355776.

For all other general queries about your home or services, please continue to contact us directly via the details at the end of this letter.

Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and Accent on-site support

We continue to work closely with Surrey Fire and Rescue Service and their supporting partners, who will be on the estate every day until Sunday 18 May.

Their community events trailer and Safety Partnership Team will be based on Longden Avenue, offering residents advice and support on:

- Fire safety in the home
- Escape plans
- Electrical safety
- Wildfire awareness
- Fire safety outdoors

They are also providing Safe and Well visits, where they can visit you at home to offer personalised fire safety advice and install additional safety equipment.

Accent colleagues will also be present at the Surrey Fire and Rescue Service trailer throughout the week, alongside the Safety Partnership Team.

Our presence will include:

- **Friday, Saturday and Sunday:** Gary, our Fire and Safety Assessor, will be available from 11am to 1pm.
- **Sunday 18 May:** I will also be at the trailer between 12noon and 2pm.

We encourage you to visit the stand and speak to both Accent and Surrey Fire and Rescue teams.

Keeping everyone informed - your questions answered

We also want to make sure all residents have access to the same up-to-date information.

To help with this, we are collating key queries and concerns raised by customers and adding them to our Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on our dedicated webpage, which we are updating regularly:

<https://www.accentgroup.org/your-community/franklands-park-fire-update-supporting-our-customers-and-taking-action/>

Working closely with PA Housing

We know that Franklands Park is home to both Accent and PA Housing residents. While we are separate housing associations with different contractors and systems, we have been meeting daily with PA Housing to share information about the fire and the safety measures each of us is putting in place.

As separate organisations, there may be differences in how we progress the works, including timings, contractors on site, and the way our communications look and feel. However, we want to reassure you that both Accent and PA Housing are working with the same sense of urgency and commitment to resident safety, and we continue to coordinate closely to ensure all residents across the estate are supported and kept informed.

We appreciate how unsettling this situation has been, and we would like to sincerely thank you for your patience and understanding while we work through these important safety measures.

The safety, comfort, and confidence of our residents remains our absolute priority, and we will continue to provide regular updates through letters, our dedicated webpage, and our on-site team.

If you have any questions either email **FranklandsPark@accentgroup.org** or call our Customer Services team on **0345 678 0555**.

Thank you again for your continued cooperation and support.

Kind regards,

Alex Liburd

Executive Director of Assets and Compliance (Interim)