



Customer Safety Policy

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ACCENTGROUP.ORG
Customer Safety Policy



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1.0	H&S Committee 19/01/2022	04/01/2022	04/01/2023	Creation	Nick Warden – Group Customer & Building Safety Manager
2.0	H&S Committee 25/01/2023	04/01/2023	04/01/2024	Annual review – new template/change to roles and job titles	Adam Vanden
3.0	SH&SG 02/08/2023	19/06/2023	19/06/2024	Merging of various other Customer and Building Safety Policies to create an overarching Policy.	Adam Vanden
4.0	SH&SG 15/07/2024	28/06/2024	28/06/2026	New template & annual review and the demerging of Fire and Building Safety sections to form a standalone Policy.	Adam Vanden

Purpose: Accent Housing Limited (“Accent”), is a housing association that works to improve people’s lives. We exist to provide individuals and their communities with the service and support they need to aspire to better living. In doing so, we ensure that the decisions we make constitute excellent customer service, impeccable service standards, and represent value for money. This policy aims to ensure that we meet our obligations as a responsible landlord and employer and to provide assurance that statutory requirements and best practice is adequately managed in relation to Customer Safety.

This policy applies to all properties owned, leased or managed by Accent, and all work undertaken in these properties on Accent’s behalf.

Contents

.....	1
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Scope.....	5
3. References	5
4. Requirements	6
Customer & Building Safety Team	7
Colleagues	7
Customers.....	7
Contractors	7
Reporting.....	7
Auditing	7
5. Responsibilities	8
6. Summary.....	8

1. Introduction

Accent are committed to a Zero Tolerance approach to matters that compromise customer safety and property compliance. We will ensure our customers, contractors and colleagues understand their responsibilities. To achieve this, we will drive delivery through a specialised customer safety team, employing competent contractors and communicating and educating both colleagues and customers on their responsibilities, to ensure they are safe within their homes and the building they live in. This is aligned with our corporate strategy of *Building on Strong Foundations*.

Accent will also ensure that it understands and complies with government publications and proposed regulators such as the Social Housing White Paper and Tenants Satisfaction Measures.

This is underpinned through the following essential principals:

Strong and active leadership

- Visible, active commitment and support from our Board and Executive Team
- Effective communication systems and management structures, with clear ownership and accountability
- Ensure alignment with Accents' health and safety, colleague safety, customer safety and fire & building safety regimes, policies and procedures

Colleague, customer and contractor engagement

- Engaging everyone in the promotion, responsibility and delivery of customer & building safety
- Effective communication systems and reporting systems
- Providing high-quality training for colleagues, clear guidance and information for customers and ensuring the appointment of competent contractors for delivery

Monitoring and review

- Identifying and managing customer safety risks and those associated with health and safety
- Monitoring, reporting and reviewing performance
- Using our Customer and Fire & Building Safety regimes to effectively update, monitor and review our performance
- Utilising competent advice and guidance, internally and externally, in all areas of customer safety
- Internal and external audits are conducted with recommendations acted on

Accent puts Customer safety at the forefront of the business as a fundamental principle. We understand that we have legal responsibilities to our colleagues, customers, contractors and anyone who is affected by our business. We are aware and work to mitigate against any potential enforcement action, fine and / or reputational damage.

2. Scope

This Policy applies to all buildings owned or managed by Accent including all tenures including general needs, leasehold, shared ownership, social, affordable, and market rent and specialist housing

Service areas covered by this policy are limited to:

- Domestic and Commercial Heating and Hot Water Installations inc Gas and Renewables Including Associated Plant
- Domestic and Commercial Fixed Wiring installations
- Lightning Protection Systems
- Warden Call and Life Safety Systems (Excluding Fire Safety)
- Portable and Fixed Electrical Equipment
- Automatic Gates, Barriers, Shutters, and Doors
- Domestic and Commercial Water systems
- Powered Lifting Equipment
- Asbestos

3. References

Accent are committed to ensuring our customer's homes, and the buildings they live in, remain safe and fit for purpose. In achieving this, we will comply with all relevant legislation and regulations.

The following list sets out the main statutory, non-statutory and legislative compliance requirements for the overarching Customer Safety Policy:

- The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- The Building Safety Act 2022
- The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- The Fire Safety Act 2021
- The Fire Safety Regulations 2022
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 (s.11)
- The Housing Act 2004
- Defective Premises Act 1972
- Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 2002 (COSHH)
- Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 2013 (RIDDOR)
- The Construction (Design and Management) Regulations 2015
- Planning & Building Regulations
- Environmental Protection Act

The following details the main statutory, non-statutory and legislative compliance per customer safety area:

Gas Safety

- The Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (GSIUR) as amended by the Gas Safety (Installation and use) (Amendment) Regulations 2018

- Gas Safety (Management) Regulations 1996

Electrical Safety including Portable Appliance Testing and Lightning Protection

- The Electricity at Work Regulations (Act) 1992
- BS7671: The Wiring Regulations – 18th Edition
- BS EN/IEC 62305: Protection against lightning
- HSG107 – Maintenance of Portable Electrical Equipment

Asbestos

- The Control of Asbestos Regulations 1994

Water Hygiene

- *HSE Approved Code of Practice (ACOP) L8, “Legionnaires’ disease: The control of legionella bacteria in water systems*
- *HSG274 Legionnaires’ disease: Technical Guidance*
 - *Part 1: The control of legionella bacteria in evaporative cooling systems*
 - *Part 2: The control of legionella bacteria in hot and cold-water systems*
 - *Part 3: The control of legionella bacteria in other risk systems*

Lifts (including Passenger Lifts, Stairlift and lifting equipment)

- Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations 1998 (LOLER)
- Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998 (PUWER)

Associated documents

- Fire & Building Safety Policy
- Building Safety Cases
- Gas Safety Procedure
- Electrical Procedure
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Fire Safety Management Procedure
- Powered Lifting Equipment Procedure
- Water Safety Procedure
- Contract Management Policy & Procedure
- Guaranteed Access Policy & Procedures
- Colleague Health & Safety Policy
- Accident and Incident Procedure

4. Requirements

To ensure Accent fulfills its statutory and non-statutory legal obligations and to ensure our customers are safe within their homes and buildings, the following ways of working have been implemented to enable the successful delivery of the Customer Safety Policy:

Customer & Building Safety Team

Customer Safety Team incorporates individual specialised customer safety Project Managers (gas, mechanical & electrical, water hygiene and asbestos) supported by a centralised admin team and managed centrally by a Customer Safety Manager. They focus on regional delivery (with some national contracts), working with regional teams to contract manage and deliver against core Key Performance Indicators (KPI's) and servicing and remediation requirements.

The Building and Fire Safety Team are experienced fire and building safety assessors, who operate within a region but are managed centrally by a Fire Safety Manager. They are responsible for ensuring our customers are safe within their homes and buildings they live in, working closely with the Customer Safety Team.

Combined, both teams are managed by a Head of Customer Safety and Planned Maintenance working alongside the Head of Health, Safety & Facilities, to ultimately ensure we keep our colleagues and customers safe.

Colleagues

We work collaboratively across the business with colleagues to ensure our customers are kept safe within their homes and buildings. Regional teams utilise their localised knowledge and expertise to ensure we gain access to undertake servicing and remedial actions, particularly where access is challenging, in line with our policies and procedures.

Customers

We will ensure effective communication with our customers so that they are aware of their responsibilities towards customer safety, including the need to grant access when required and to report repairs, to achieve and maintain compliance we will also implement robust procedures to gain access where customers are not engaging.

Customers have a voice, and we will listen at every opportunity to ensure participation in the making of decisions that affect customer & building safety.

Contractors

These are people and companies carefully selected through a robust procurement process, to ensure they have the correct skills, knowledge, experience and qualifications and a similar ethos to Accent to ensure they deliver our customer safety requirements in line with each specific policy and procedure, managed by the Customer and Building Safety Teams.

Reporting

The reporting and management controls are reported and communicated weekly and monthly, both upwards and downward within the business. The main reporting is monitored by KPI performance of the customer & building safety requirements and remedial action delivery.

Auditing

Undertaken both internally and externally, auditing provides independent assurance that ourselves and our contractors are delivering the standards expected to achieve compliance with all customer & building safety requirements. The results and findings are used to ensure we are continually striving to improve the service we deliver and the performance of our contractors.

5. Responsibilities

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the policy and its related policies and procedures.

The Chief Operating Officer is responsible for ensuring that the principles within this policy are communicated and understood by all within the directorate.

The Director of Assets & Compliance is accountable for the implementation and delivery of this policy and associated policies and procedures.

The Head of Customer Safety and Planned Maintenance is responsible for ensuring adherence to this policy and for developing procedures that will deliver the policy principles.

The Customer Safety Manager and Fire Safety Manager are responsible for the day-to-day delivery and management of all compliance protocols relating to this policy, associated policies and procedures.

The Customer Safety Project Managers and Fire & Safety Assessors are responsible for the effective implementation of those policies, procedures and ensuring contractors perform to the required standards.

The Head of Health, Safety and Facilities will be responsible for advising key stakeholders on Accent's legal obligations and assist in the implementation and on-going review of this policy.

Accent colleagues have a duty to ensure they work in accordance with current Health and Safety legislation to ensure the continued safety of both customers and themselves.

Contractors to undertake all customer safety requirements, as set out within this policy in line with legislation and regulatory requirements.

6. Summary

This policy document acts to serve as a declaration of Accent's intent and commitment to uphold its statutory duty of care.

The arrangements for ensuring customer safety within Accent properties are detailed in [Section 2 References](#), associated documents, that supports this policy. These Processes and Procedures detail Accent Housing Limited's operational protocol and are listed in [Section 3 Requirements](#) of this policy document.