

# Meeting Minutes

National Customer Group (NCG)



12.00pm  
to 14.00pm



Microsoft  
Teams

<b>Attendees</b>	<b>Customers:</b>
	<b>NCG Members</b> Stacy Hartley (Chair) Chris Lynn Edmund England Johanne Lowther Lyn Nelson Razina Bostan <b>Customer Champions</b> Helen Hutchinson Jackie Best
	<b>Accent Colleagues:</b> Nick Apetroaie - Chief Executive Callie Lancaster - Customer Engagement Manager Jo Gallagher - Head of Customer and Community Engagement John Place - Director of Customer Relations Linda Colburn - Director of Assets and Compliance Naeem Nawaz – Head of Business Finance Rob Bloom - Director of Housing Servies
<b>Apologies</b>	Alicia Haines (Customer) Richard Wilkinson (Customer) Musa Sanoe (Customer) Mark Waite (Customer) Ernesta Biliunaite (Customer)

Agenda Item	Minutes	Actions
1.0	<p><b><u>Welcome &amp; Introductions</u></b> – Stacy Hartley (Chair)</p> <p>Stacy opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the first gathering of the National Customer Group. She spoke about how important it is for Accent to hear directly from customers and how the group will help shape</p>	

	<p>services moving forward. She explained that the NCG exists so customers can influence key decisions, take part in co-design and scrutiny, and raise local issues at a national level, showing Accent’s commitment to customer-led services.</p> <p>Everyone around the virtual table then introduced themselves, including senior leaders such as Nick Apetroaie, Jo Gallagher, Jonathan Place, Linda Colburn and Rob Bloom, along with customer representatives from across different regions, a mix of both long-standing and newly involved customers.</p>	
2.0	<p><b><u>CEO Update</u></b> - Nick Apetroaie</p> <p>Nick shared an update based on what customers have been telling Accent. He explained that repairs continue to be a top priority, with customers wanting more reliable appointments, clearer communication and better-quality work. He also talked about the need for more consistent grounds maintenance and for staff to be more visible on estates.</p> <p>Nick acknowledged that communication around complaints needs to be clearer and faster, and he said customers want more transparency about future investment plans, especially around things like kitchens, bathrooms, and windows. He also shared some positive news: customer satisfaction has risen to 68%, up 3.8% from last year, and Accent is investing in new IT systems that will make it easier for customers to track services and stay informed. His message was clear. Accent aims to be a good landlord providing safe, warm homes.</p>	
3.0	<p><b><u>Customer Experience Committee Update</u></b> - Stacy Hartly (Chair)</p> <p>Stacy gave an overview of the work happening within the Customer Experience Committee and the wider Customer Engagement Framework. She highlighted that more than 130 customers are now actively involved in different engagement activities. A training programme with Tpas has been launched, and plans are underway for customer “Power Hour” learning sessions next year.</p> <p>She shared examples of real changes already shaped by customer input, improvements to tenancy onboarding, development of the Diverse and Additional Needs Policy, and the detailed Damp &amp; Mould scrutiny which produced 27 customer-led recommendations. She also spoke about the successful Customer Influence Summit, which brought together more than 60 attendees.</p> <p>Several ongoing projects are still progressing, including the website review, customer influence policy, new customer portals, CRM procurement and the three-year service charge review. Stacy emphasised the importance of keeping a “golden thread” of customer voice running from frontline staff all the way to the Board.</p> <p>Stacy set expectations for respectful, constructive discussion, encouraged diverse opinions, and explained the meeting's format, including agenda item introductions and open floor discussions.</p>	

4.0

**Complaints Performance Update** - John Place

John detailed the recent centralisation of Accent’s complaints process, improvements in performance, and the embedding of a quality assurance framework, with discussion from Edmund and Chris on historical challenges and the need for tangible change.

Jonathan explained how the new centralised Complaint Resolution Team, set up in late 2024, has helped bring more consistency to complaint handling. He said the organisation now treats complaints as opportunities to learn and improve services, which is starting to show real results.

He shared that complaint response performance has improved significantly, with 85.9% of complaints now responded to on time, a huge jump from last year’s 51.6%, even though the total number of complaints has continued to rise. Customer satisfaction with complaint handling is improving as well, and Accent is seeing fewer escalations to the Housing Ombudsman.

Members shared their views too. Many said they appreciate the more open approach but want clearer confirmation when a complaint has genuinely been resolved, not just closed. Some expressed frustration that issues like repairs and grounds maintenance still feel like long-running concerns. The group welcomed the progress but stressed the importance of following through on promised actions.

Edmund noted that, historically, customers had opportunities to engage directly with senior leaders, including walkabouts with board members. Nick added that the board is currently exploring ways to strengthen this connection and is considering ideas to increase board involvement with customers. One suggestion discussed was hosting an annual event that brings together involved customers and board members.

**Action: Callie to follow up with Nick about how involved customers will engage with Board**

**Repairs & Assets Update** - Linda Colburn

Linda talked through the current position of the repairs service and explained some of the challenges shaping daily performance. She provided a comprehensive overview of the current state of Accent’s repairs and maintenance services, including contractor management, system limitations, performance metrics, and the impact of historic underinvestment, with questions from customers about investment and digital access.

She noted that historic under-investment has created a high volume of reactive repairs, and while the contract with Ian Williams has stabilised things, some gaps remain.

She highlighted that overall repair performance is improving, with high satisfaction levels, strong response times for emergency and routine repairs, and an 83% first-time fix rate.

Linda also acknowledged ongoing issues, such as limited visibility of subcontractor work, communication gaps during the repairs journey, and

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	<p>systems that don't yet give full oversight of workflows. Demand is also high, and winter pressures coupled with the 6,500-home stock condition survey are likely to uncover more structural issues.</p> <p>Linda outlined steps already being taken: strengthening contractor management, improving communication, ensuring visibility of promised actions, and involving customers in shaping the next repair model ahead of contract procurement in 2027.</p> <p>Members welcomed her openness and said they appreciated understanding the context behind the challenges.</p>	
	<p><b><u>Break</u></b></p> <p>Short break before the next agenda item.</p>	
5.0	<p><b><u>Rent Setting &amp; Convergence – Naeem Nawaz</u></b></p> <p>Naeem explained how formula rent works and why some properties currently sit below that level due to historical variations. To bring rents in line with the correct formula rate, Accent plans to use rent convergence, small weekly increases, normally £1 or £2 a week, until the rent reaches the correct level. This will be in addition to the government-set CPI + 1% annual rent increase.</p> <p>He explained that around 1,839 customers are likely to be affected by this, with the most any customer would pay being an extra £104 per year. A government decision on convergence is expected on 26 November, with changes likely from 1 April 2026.</p> <p>Stacy raised concerns that customers might not receive this information early enough and asked that communication be shared well in advance, so no one feels caught off guard.</p> <p><b>Action: Callie to inform the Communications and Customer Income Teams of recommendation.</b></p> <p>Helen highlighted that while some customers receive benefits, there are also customers on low incomes who may need additional support. Rob and Jo outlined the support currently available and explained how Accent works to target those most in need. Helen expressed confidence that Accent is actively 'watching out' for customers.</p>	CL
6.0	<p><b><u>Round Table Discussion: Priorities for Q4 - NCG Members</u></b></p> <p>Stacy, Jo, and participants discussed priorities for future meetings, including regular performance reporting, regional differences in service issues, and further exploration of complaints data, with an emphasis on customer-led agenda setting and ongoing feedback.</p> <p>Stacy suggested that the group take a closer look at complaints related to "Accent Colleagues," as these currently account for 15% of all complaints.</p> <p><b>Action: John to present a deep dive into colleague complaints at the next meeting.</b></p>	JP

7.0	<p><b><u>AOB/Close</u></b> - Stacy Hartley (Chair)</p> <p>Members requested regular performance information so they can see whether improvements are happening over time.</p> <p><b>Action: Callie to work with the Data and Insights Team to develop a proposal.</b></p> <p>Razina offered her expertise to help explore benefit take-up campaigns.</p> <p><b>Action: Jo agreed to connect her with the Inclusion Partner.</b></p> <p>Stacy also noted that some members preferred lunchtime meetings.</p> <p><b>Action: Stacy agreed she would review the meeting schedule.</b></p> <p>Stacy closed by thanking everyone for their engagement and noting that customers clearly expect transparency, follow-through and sustained improvement as Accent continues to change.</p> <p><b>Date of next Meeting:</b> Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026 – 12.00pm to 14.00pm</p>	<p>CL</p> <p>JG</p> <p>SH</p>
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## Actions

Action	Action Description	Action Owner	Target Date / Progress
1	Callie to follow up with Nick about how involved customers will engage with Board.	Callie Lancaster	To provide an update at the next meeting.
2	Callie to inform the Communications and Customer Income Teams that NCG members highly recommend Accent to communicate with customers affected by rent convergence in a timely manner.	Callie Lancaster	To provide an update at the next meeting.
3	John to present a deep dive into colleague complaints.	John Place	To provide an update at the next meeting.
4	Callie to collaborate with the Data Team to develop a proposal for regular performance reporting, including suggested frequency and format.	Callie Lancaster	To provide an update at the next meeting.
5	Jo to connect Razina with the Inclusion Partner to explore opportunities for benefit take-up campaigns.	Jo Gallagher	December 2025.
6	Stacy to consult NCG members on the preferred day and time for future meetings.	Stacy Hartly (Chair)	November 2025.