Accent

The Accent Code of Conduct

Living our values every day

A *place* to make a difference

A *place* to drive change

A *place* to build a future



Version:
Approval date:

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A message from Nick Apetroaie, *Chief Executive*

"Every interaction is an opportunity to make a positive difference to our customers' lives and to shape how they experience Accent.

"Our **Code of Conduct** is more than a set of standards; it is a shared commitment to the values, behaviours and integrity that define who we are and how we work together.

"Together, we create a culture where people feel respected, supported and trusted. By living these standards every day, we build stronger relationships with our customers, support one another as colleagues, and ensure we remain an organisation we are all proud to be part of.

"Thank you for the contribution you make every day. By living our values and holding ourselves to the highest standards of professionalism and conduct, we will continue to build trust, deliver excellent services and make a lasting difference to the people and communities we serve."



Introduction

How we conduct ourselves matters as much as what we deliver.

This Code of Conduct sets out the standards of behaviour, professionalism and integrity expected of everyone working for or on behalf of Accent.

It supports our values, Be Accent Framework and regulatory obligations, helping us make good decisions, build trust and deliver safe, respectful, high-quality services .

Through this Code of Conduct, we commit to:

- Acting with integrity, accountability and respect
- Delivering safe, respectful, high-quality, customer-focused services
- Recognising that every customer is different and adapting our approach where appropriate

Scope

This code applies to:

- All colleagues
- Board members
- Contractors and agency workers
- Anyone acting on behalf of Accent

Partners and suppliers delivering services on our behalf are expected to meet the conduct standards in this code that apply to their work.

This version explains how Accent's Code of Conduct applies to contractors and suppliers delivering services on our behalf.

Board members and Independent Committee Members are also subject to a separate Code of Conduct, which reflects the specific responsibilities of their governance role.

Working with our contractors

Our Contractor Charter describes how we work together. This Code sets out the behaviours expected when representing Accent, while competence assurance checks that those delivering services have the skills, knowledge and experience for their roles.

Contractors must ensure their workers and subcontractors understand and follow these expectations. This interim update supports the Competence and Conduct Standard and sits alongside the Contractor Code of Conduct appended to contracts, which will be updated in 2027.

Working with our customers

This code has been shaped by feedback from our customers. Customers told us they expect colleagues to be respectful, professional, reliable and inclusive; to listen, communicate clearly, treat people with dignity and recognise individual circumstances.

Those expectations are reflected throughout this code.

Our commitment to professional standards

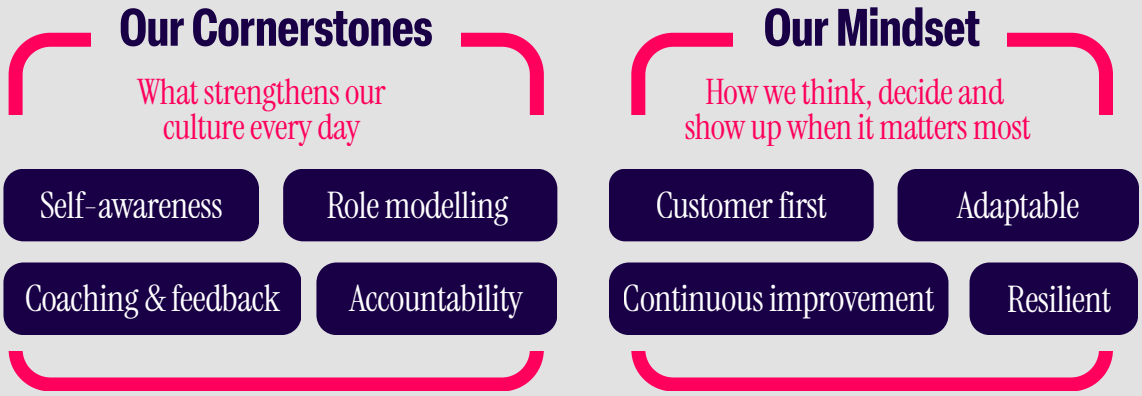
Accent adopts and aligns with the National Housing Federation (NHF) Code of Conduct and reflects the Nolan Principles of Public Life through our competency frameworks.

Together, these external standards support expectations of integrity, professionalism, accountability, inclusion and customer focus.

Our Cultural Foundation: A Place To *Be* Accent

This code builds on our Be Accent framework, bringing together the values, behaviours and expectations that guide how we work everyday.





The Be Accent Culture Book, brings these behaviours to life through practical examples. Together with our Customer Charter, it helps translate this Code into everyday practice.

The Be Accent Decision Check

When it comes to real situations, it's not always straightforward. That's where the Be Accent Decision Check comes in. A quick way to sense-check decisions:

- Is this fair for the customer?
- Would it stand up to regulatory scrutiny?
- Would I feel comfortable explaining this decision?
- Is it legal and in line with our policies and standards?
- Does it reflect our values and behaviours?
- Does it protect Accent's reputation?
- Do I understand this customer's circumstances and considered if they may need a different or additional approach?
- Would I be comfortable if this behaviour or decision was visible publicly, including online?

If the answer is no or unclear – stop and seek advice. If it doesn't feel right don't ignore it, speak to someone. Every customer and colleague matters, and your actions matter each and every time.



Core expectations of conduct

In line with sector expectations, this code is built on five core principles:

Customer first

We will:

- Act in the best interests of customers
- Explain who you are and who you work for, respect customers' homes and belongings, and keep customers informed about the work and any changes
- Deliver safe, respectful and customer-focused services, taking time to understand individual circumstances
- Listen to customer feedback, learn from complaints and use what we hear to improve our services
- Safeguard and promote the wellbeing of customers, colleagues and communities, particularly where someone may be vulnerable or at risk

Do:

- Listen first and take time to understand each customer's circumstances before making decisions
- Communicate clearly and in a way that works for the customer wherever possible
- Take ownership of issues to achieve the best outcome for the customer.
- Report safeguarding concerns promptly and appropriately

Don't:

- Ignore concerns or delay action unnecessarily
- Ignore signs that someone may be at risk of harm, abuse or neglect
- Make assumptions about a customer's circumstances or needs
- Dismiss concerns without listening or explaining our decisions



Integrity and ethical behaviour



We will:

- Act honestly and in good faith
- Make impartial decisions
- Declare and manage conflicts of interest
- Never use our role for personal gain

Do:

- Be transparent in decisions
- Declare conflicts early

Don't:

- Allow personal interests to influence decisions
- Use your position for advantage

Professional competence

We will:

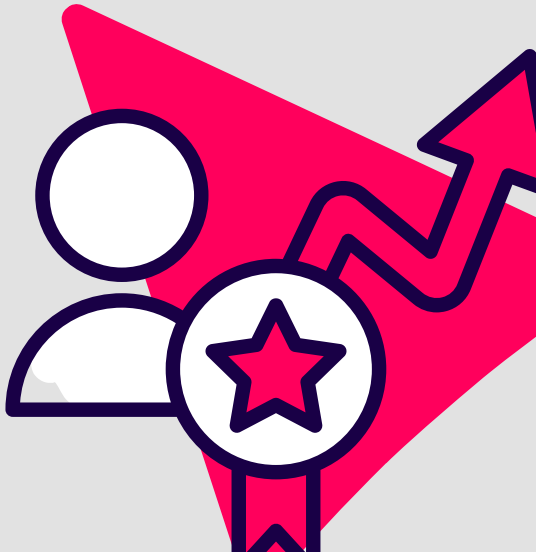
- Maintain the competence required for our role through learning, development and professional practice
- Engage in continuous development
- Apply learning in practice
- Carry out our roles safely, responsibly and professionally

Do:

- Take responsibility for your development
- Only undertake work you are competent and authorised to do
- Raise gaps in your skills, training or support promptly

Don't:

- Rely solely on completing training without applying it
- Attend work or undertake work activities in a way that compromises safety, judgement or performance



For contractor organisations

Ensure workers and subcontractors are competent and appropriately supervised. Keep competence records current and provide evidence to Accent when requested.

Respect, equity and inclusion*

We will:

- Treat everyone with dignity, respect and compassion, recognising that every person has different experiences, circumstances and needs
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour
- Promote inclusion and adapt our communication to meet individual needs wherever possible

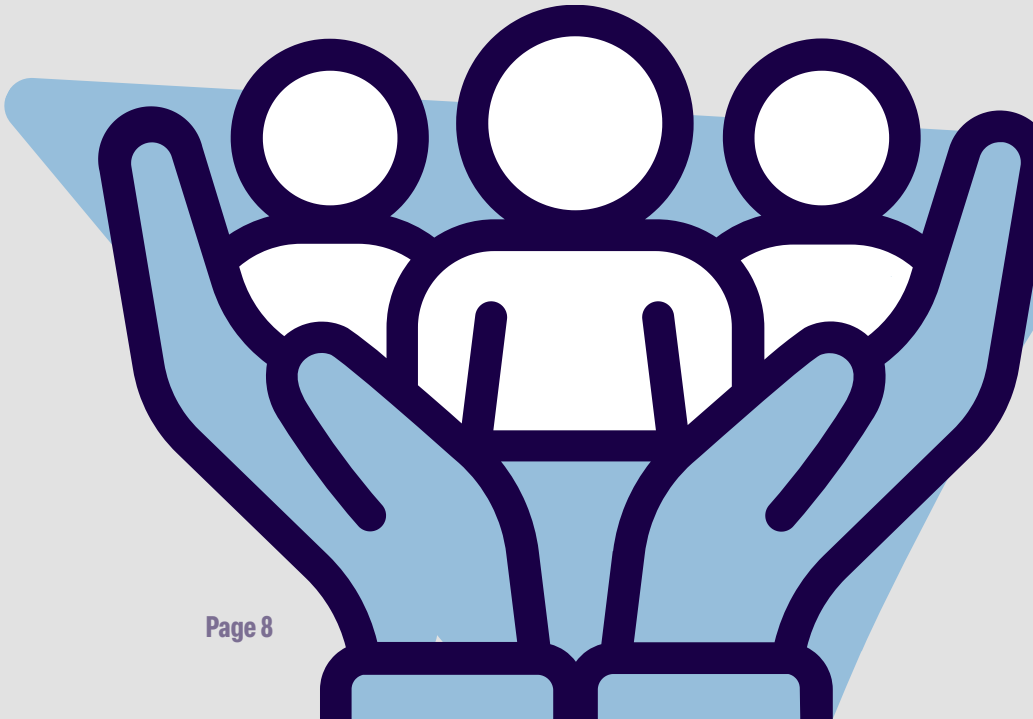
Do:

- Create safe, respectful environments
- Communicate respectfully and professionally, even in challenging situations
- Adapt your communication and approach to meet individual needs wherever possible

Don't:

- Engage in or tolerate discrimination, harassment, bullying or victimisation
- Ignore or fail to act on inappropriate behaviour
- Use language or behaviour that could reasonably be viewed as offensive, intimidating, abusive or disrespectful

*Accent has zero tolerance for harassment, bullying, discrimination or victimisation of any kind. This includes behaviour that is verbal, physical, written or online, and applies in the workplace, when working remotely, and in any setting connected to work.



Accountability

We will:

- Take responsibility for our actions
- Be open to feedback and challenge
- Learn and improve

Do:

- Own decisions, actions and outcomes
- Speak up when things are not right
- Put mistakes right and learn from them

Don't:

- Avoid accountability for decisions or actions
- Dismiss feedback or opportunities to improve



Specific Standards of Conduct: Putting our values into practice



Conflicts of interest

We will:

- Declare any actual or potential conflicts
- Step back from decisions where conflicts exist

Examples:

- Personal relationships at work
- Financial interests
- External roles

Gifts, hospitality and bribery

We will:

- Not accept or offer anything that could improperly influence decisions
- Declare gifts and hospitality in line with policy

Do:

- Keep hospitality proportionate, transparent and appropriate
- Notify your Accent contact of gifts, hospitality or conflicts relating to Accent work, alongside your employer's reporting requirements.

Don't:

- Accept gifts linked to decisions or contracts
- Accept cash or equivalents





Use of funds, and resources

We will:

- Use Accent funds, property and resources responsibly
- Ensure value for money

Do:

- Spend organisational resources responsibly and only for legitimate business purposes

Don't:

- Use Accent resources for personal benefit

Specific Standards of Conduct: Representing Accent



Representing Accent

When representing Accent, **we will:**

- Act professionally and in line with our values
- Protect and promote Accent's reputation
- Communicate responsibly, including on social media
- Ensure public statements are accurate and appropriate

We recognise that:

- Our behaviour inside and outside work reflects on Accent
- This includes personal use of social media where content could reasonably be linked to us as an organisation or conflict with our values and standards

Do:

- Act responsibly on social media, even in a personal capacity
- Consider how posts may be perceived by customers, colleagues and the wider public
- Only make commitments or public statements on Accent's behalf where you are authorised to do so.

Don't:

- Share content that is discriminatory, offensive, harassing or unlawful
- Post anything that could damage Accent's reputation or undermine trust in our services

Speaking up



We will:

- Raise concerns about wrongdoing, poor practice or unacceptable behaviour
- Support a culture where colleagues feel safe to speak up

If you have a concern:

- Raise concerns with your supervisor and your Accent contract manager or nominated contact.
- Use Accent's speaking-up arrangements if your concern involves that contact or remains unresolved.
- Report urgent safety or safeguarding concerns immediately through the relevant reporting route.

Accent will:

- Treat concerns seriously
- Protect individuals from retaliation

Protecting the environment and communities



We will:

- Act responsibly to minimise environmental impact
- Support sustainable practices
- Consider long-term community impact in decisions
- Sustainability is a shared responsibility across Accent

Leadership Responsibilities



Leaders are accountable for embedding this code.

Leaders must:

- Role-model expected behaviours
- Set clear standards and expectations
- Foster a culture where colleagues consistently demonstrate professionalism, respect and understanding in every customer interaction
- Support learning and development
- Address poor conduct or capability early and fairly

Contractor organisations are responsible for communicating these expectations, ensuring appropriate supervision, addressing poor conduct or competence concerns and checking that subcontractors meet the same standards. Accent contract managers are responsible for explaining expectations, reviewing evidence and following up concerns through contract management.

> Managing conduct is a core leadership responsibility.

Embedding and Assurance

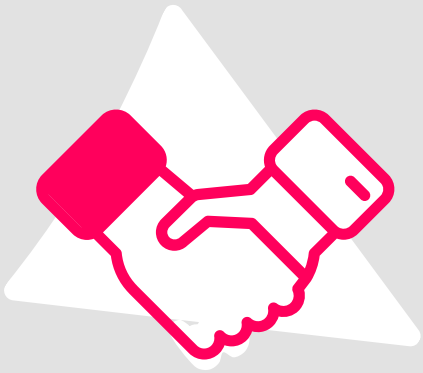


This code is embedded through:

- Contractor induction and briefings
- Contract review discussions and proportionate competence checks
- Customer feedback, complaints and observations of work
- Agreed improvement actions and follow-up

> The regulator expects conduct to be visible in practice, not just documented.

Specific Standards of Conduct: Professional Responsibilities



Professional relationships and boundaries

We will:

- Maintain appropriate boundaries
- Act impartially and professionally

Don't:

- Form relationships that compromise professional judgement or create conflicts of interest

Safeguarding, suitability and professional trust



We will:

- Be honest and transparent about information relevant to our role
- Comply with any safeguarding, DBS and other regulatory requirements where they apply
- Inform Accent where there are changes that may affect our suitability to carry out our role

Do:

- Raise safeguarding concerns or changes promptly and appropriately
- Follow safeguarding procedures and act where concerns are identified
- Notify Accent promptly of changes affecting a worker's suitability or authorisation, sharing information appropriately and securely

Don't:

- Withhold information that could place customers, colleagues or Accent at risk
- Ignore concerns relating to safety wellbeing or safeguarding



Confidentiality, data and information

We will:

- Protect customer, colleague and organisational data
- Handle information lawfully, securely and appropriately

Do:

- Follow data protection and information governance requirements

Don't:

- Share confidential information without appropriate authority

Breaches of the Code



Failure to meet the standards in this code will be addressed fairly and proportionately.

For Accent colleagues, this may include action under our performance management or disciplinary procedures.

For contractors and suppliers, concerns will be addressed with the contractor organisation through the relevant contractual arrangements. Depending on the circumstances and contractual provisions, this may include corrective action, additional training or supervision, removal of individuals from Accent work, or other contractual remedies.

Where there is an immediate risk to safety or customer wellbeing, prompt protective action will be taken.

Embedding and Assurance



This code **will be:**

- Reviewed regularly to reflect regulatory and organisational changes
- Informed by colleague and customer feedback
- Embedded within governance, assurance and reporting processes

Customers will continue to have meaningful opportunities to influence and review this code, ensuring it remains relevant, reflects customer expectations and meets regulatory requirements.

Our commitment

At Accent, conduct is how we bring our values to life.

We are committed to:

- Acting with integrity and professionalism
- Delivering excellent outcomes for our customers through professionalism, respect, care and continuous improvement.
- Supporting each other to learn and grow
- Continuously improving how we work

This is more than a policy. It is our shared commitment to how we lead, behave and deliver every day.

This is how we lead, behave and deliver, every day.

