

CUSTOMER SCRUTINY REPORT

Damp and Mould

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Author: Callie Lancaster, Customer Engagement Manager

Background

The Customer Experience Committee commissioned a damp and mould scrutiny to support Accent's preparation for Awaab's law which is coming into force in October 2025. Five customers helped define the scope of the scrutiny and this focused on the aspects of the service which customers can influence; existing information for customers, performance information we share with customers and how we communicate case updates to customers.

Consultation

Potential new scrutiny panel members and customers who had reported damp and mould in the past 6 months were invited to a virtual half day scrutiny workshop. A desktop review was sent out a week before the scrutiny workshop, so customers had all the background information they needed including a copy of our policy and process, information on Awaab's law and our most recent performance information.

Six customers attended the scrutiny workshop on Weds 20th August 9.30am to 1.00pm. Adam Rickard (Building Services Manager), gave a short presentation providing an overview of the service and how Accent are preparing for Awaab's law. We then covered four discussions on topics that customers could influence within the scope of the scrutiny project. A summary of those and the recommendations our customers made, are below.

Accents Property Services team are currently reviewing the damp and mould service to make sure it's in line with the requirements of Awaab's law. The recommendations in this report will be actioned alongside the internal service review.

'At a glance' summary

Customers were generally positive about the information Accent currently provides on damp and mould. They felt the online information was clear, customer friendly and contained enough detail to help customers understand how to report an issue. However, they emphasised the importance of ensuring information is accessible to all customers, particularly those who are not confident using digital channels. Customers also highlighted

the need to provide reassurance about colleagues' skills and expertise, while recognising that discussions about damp and mould can sometimes cause concern or anxiety.

Customers felt that all information relating to damp and mould should be available to customers who wish to access it. They recognised that involved customers may have a greater interest in detailed information but stressed that any information shared should be easy to understand and presented in a way that makes sense to a wide range of customers.

When discussing communication during damp and mould cases, customers said it was important that Accent uses each customer's preferred method of contact wherever possible. While they did not express a strong preference for specific communication channels, they did highlight the importance of receiving timely updates, particularly regarding appointments and visits.

Listening and Acting on Customer Feedback

Customer recommendation	Accent's response	Service lead	Completion date/ notes
Accent should add images of different types of damp and mould to the website to help identify critical, severe, or minor cases, and to give customers some visual information to compare to.	Accepted – this will be added to the website	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
Confirm on the website Accent no longer send out Damp and Mould kits for customers to use as this is now covered by contractors in the inspection stage, saving customers time and effort.	Accepted – all mentions of the damp and mould kits will be removed	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
Identify those customers who cannot or do not access Accent's website and give them the damp and mould leaflet (via neighbourhood staff, surveyors etc), so they have access to the same information.	Accepted – printed copies of the damp and mould leaflet will be available to colleagues or customers who need it	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
Make sure any changes to website information are reflected	Accepted – all materials will be updated and refereed to in the colleague training	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025

in the leaflet, and in the training the technical hub staff have.			
Consider how to work with Independent Living Schemes to give information and reassurance on damp and mould, possibly via the Specialist Housing Partners.	Accepted – Comms team are working with the Independent Living Group to create an 'easy to understand' leaflet which can be printed	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
Share the YouTube videos on the website, via social media to spread the message and advice.	Accepted – videos on the website will also be shared on social media	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
Add a message to the website/leaflet to encourage customers to speak to Accent and ask for support if they are not confident to report an issue, don't understand how to do that, or are concerned about the risks of damp and mould.	Accepted – This information will be added	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
Link the damp and mould information to support for heating costs etc, for those who are in financial difficulties to promote broader available support.	Accepted - Accent do an annual 'winter ready' campaign which will include this type of information	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
Performance information should go out to everyone online annually, with a focussed item for customer meetings and committees (as often as needed).	Accepted – the Annual customer report will include performance information about damp and mould	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
At the first point of contact to report damp and mould, Accent should check the customer's communication preference and use this method throughout the case wherever possible.	Accepted – this information is captured on the triage form when the customer raises the damp and mould issue	Steve Gathercole	Oct 2025
Accent should consider how to make appointments available out of hours where there are access issues due to customers working commitments etc.	Accepted – customers can request appointments later in the evening and weekends on occasion.	Steve Gathercole	Oct 2025

Accent should also consider how customers without an SMS number can be told that Ian Williams or the surveyor are on the way. This could reduce 'no access' visits and means people are not receiving a reduced service because they are not digital.	Declined - most customers have a mobile number recorded and the operative tracking timescales are very short. Alternative methods, such as email, would not provide customers with the same real-time benefit.	Steve Gathercole	
Add the revised policy to the website where it's easy to find (on the damp and mould page) and easy to understand, removing corporate language so it's customer friendly.	Accepted – The policy is currently being revised. The updated policy will be updated to the website when it's been through our governance process.	Steve Gathercole	Oct 2025
Consider how best to send a seasonal "preventative measures" broadcast to all customers.	Accepted – Accent do an annual 'winter ready' campaign which will include this type of information	Adrian Flanagan	Oct 2025
Where cases are classed as critical, consider giving the customer a single point of contact for the life of their case.	Accepted - Once the damp and mould case is triaged, it is handed over to a surveyor who will act as the customers single point of contact.	Steve Gathercole	Oct 2025

Next steps

Once finalised, the report will be shared on the 'You Said, We Did' page of the Accent website and provided to the Customer Experience Committee for information.

The Customer Engagement Team is responsible for monitoring the progress of the agreed recommendations and ensuring actions are completed within the agreed timescales. The team will also review and report on the impact of the recommendations at 6, 12 and 16 months, demonstrating how customer feedback has influenced service improvements and the difference those changes have made for customers.

Impact Review schedule:

- 6 months: April 2026
- 12 months: October 2026
- 18 months: April 2027

Measures of success

- Ask customers who logged a damp and mould case whether the customer received an inspection report, and was it easy to understand
- The number of damp and mould cases have increased due to awareness
- Satisfaction with handling damp and mould cases has increased.
- Reduction in complaints relating to communication during damp and mould cases.