Customer Safety Policy

Accent Housing: Customer Safety Policy CUS-P-2022-1 1310826 v4.1

ACCENTGROUP.ORG

Customer Safety Policy

Document Owner: Assistant Director of Compliance and Building Safety

Author: Customer Safety Manager

Version History			
Version No	**4.1**	**Doc ID (if applicable):**	**CUS-P-2022-1**
Date Produced: 13 October 2026			
Audience: Customers/colleagues/auditors/homeowners			
Strategic Theme: Quality Homes for the Future/Underpinned by Organisational Resilience			
Approval Route: Strategic Health & Safety Group			

VERSION	APPROVED BY	REVISION DATE	NEXT REVIEW DATE	**DESCRIPTION OF CHANGE** New docs and major changes must be communicated to colleagues e.g. SharePoint/TBT/ eLearning	AUTHOR
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
4.1	SH&SG 16/08/2026	12/08/26	16/08/2028	Review and update, including reflection of current access procedures.	Hayley Firth

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. Introduction 4
2. Scope 5
3. References 5
4. Requirements 7
   - Customer & Building Safety Team 7
   - Colleagues 8
   - Customers 8
   - Contractors 8
   - Reporting 9
   - Auditing 9
5. Policy Review 9
6. Exceptions 10
7. Responsibilities 10
8. Summary 11

1. Introduction

Accent are committed to a Zero Tolerance approach to matters that compromise customer safety and property compliance. Accent's overall risk appetite concerning matter of health and safety is averse. 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 Bill 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, enabling greater transparency, enhanced oversight, and clear lines of responsibility across the organisation.
- 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, fire & 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. Supporting colleagues to develop and maintain the skills, knowledge and behaviours required for their roles through effective learning, development and competence assurance, while promoting greater transparency, accountability and confidence in the delivery of customer, fire and building safety services.

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

Customer safety is a core organisational priority and underpins the way we manage our homes, services, and assets. We recognise our legal and regulatory responsibilities to customers, colleagues, contractors, and anyone who may be affected by our activities.

Through effective governance, robust compliance management, and a risk-based approach to assurance, we will identify, assess, and manage customer safety risks to ensure our homes remain safe, compliant, and fit for purpose.

We are committed to maintaining compliance with all applicable legal and regulatory requirements, monitoring performance, and continuously improving our services to protect customers, provide assurance to stakeholders, and maintain confidence in our ability to deliver safe homes and communities.

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
- Lightening Protection Systems
- Warden Call and Life Safety Systems (Excluding Fire Safety)
- Portable and Fixed Electrical Equipment (PAT)
- Automatic Gates, Barriers, Shutters, and Doors
- Domestic and Commercial Water systems
- Powered Lifting Equipment
- Asbestos
- Radon

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
- Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 and associated requirements commonly referred to as Awaab's Law.

The following details are 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
- Gas Industry Unsafe Situation Procedures - Document IGEM/G/11

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 2012

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)

Associated documents

- Building Safety Cases

Accent Policies and Procedures can be found in the Corporate Library.

- Fire & Building Safety Policy
- Gas Safety Procedure
- Electrical Procedure
- Asbestos Management Plan
- Fire Safety Management Procedure
- Radon Procedure
- Powered Lifting Equipment Procedure
- Water Hygiene Procedure
- Contract Management Policy & Procedure
- Access Policy and Procedure 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

The Customer Safety Team comprises specialist Customer Safety Project Managers responsible for gas, mechanical and electrical compliance, water hygiene, asbestos management, and other customer safety disciplines. Led by the Customer Safety Manager and supported by a centralised administration team, the service provides oversight of statutory compliance programmes, contract performance, regulatory compliance, risk management, and assurance activities.

Fire Safety Team comprises competent Fire and Building Safety Assessors led by the Fire Safety Manager. The team provides specialist oversight and assurance of fire and building safety compliance, ensuring risks are identified, monitored, and managed in accordance with legislative, regulatory, and organisational requirements.

Combined, both teams are managed by the Assistant Director of Compliance & Building Safety, working in partnership with the Head of Health, Safety & Facilities, they provide assurance that statutory obligations are met, compliance risks are effectively managed, and safe outcomes for customers are maintained.

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 local knowledge and expertise to support access for servicing and remedial actions, particularly where access is challenging. In accordance with the Access Policy, decisions relating to access will take account of individual circumstances, customer vulnerabilities and other relevant risk factors to ensure a proportionate approach that balances customer needs with the organisation's statutory safety responsibilities.

Customers

We will support customers to meet their responsibilities by encouraging the reporting of repairs and safety concerns and by facilitating access for inspections, servicing, maintenance and remedial works. Where access is not granted, we will take reasonable and proportionate steps, in accordance with our Access Policy and legal obligations, to gain access and manage any resulting risks to safety and compliance. In doing so, we will consider individual circumstances, known vulnerabilities and other relevant risk factors to ensure that our approach is appropriate, proportionate and customer-focused.

We recognise that customers are key stakeholders in the delivery of safe homes and buildings. We are committed to listening to and learning from customer feedback, concerns and experiences, using this insight to inform decision-making, improve services and strengthen our approach to customer safety. We will provide meaningful opportunities for customers to engage with and influence matters that affect the safety of their homes and communities, ensuring their views are considered and helping to promote greater transparency, trust and continuous improvement in our services.

Where necessary, we will communicate with customers to ensure they have the information they need to live safely in their homes. We will work with communications specialists to provide clear, timely and accessible information in the most appropriate format for each customer, taking account of individual needs and ensuring customers are informed about safety matters that affect them.

Contractors

We work with carefully selected contractors who share our commitment to keeping customers safe. Through robust procurement, contract management and assurance arrangements, we ensure contractors have the appropriate skills, knowledge, experience, qualifications and competence to deliver customer safety services. Contractors are expected to comply with our Code of Conduct and demonstrate behaviours consistent with our organisational values, including professionalism, respect, inclusivity, customer focus and effective communication. They must take account of customer needs, vulnerabilities and individual circumstances when delivering services. Contractor performance, conduct and compliance are monitored

regularly to provide assurance that obligations are met and services are delivered safely, effectively and in the best interests of our customers.

Reporting

Compliance performance is monitored through a structured framework of reporting, management oversight, and assurance activities. Key compliance indicators, risk data, audit outcomes, contractor performance, and remedial action programmes are reviewed and reported at appropriate operational, managerial, and governance levels on a monthly and quarterly basis.

A suite of compliance dashboards and performance reports is presented monthly to Senior Leadership Team members, providing oversight of statutory compliance performance, emerging risks, overdue actions, assurance activities, and key service trends across all customer safety disciplines.

These arrangements provide assurance that statutory and regulatory obligations are being met, compliance risks are identified and effectively managed, and corrective actions are implemented in a timely manner. Performance trends, assurance outcomes, and areas of non-compliance are monitored to support informed decision-making, continuous improvement, and the ongoing delivery of safe and compliant homes for customers.

We will actively promote a culture of learning and continuous improvement, ensuring that findings from audits, investigations, customer feedback, complaints and assurance activities are shared, understood and used to drive service improvements, strengthen controls and enhance customer safety outcomes across the organisation.

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. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years, or sooner where there are changes to legislation, regulation, organisational structure, or identified risks.

Changes to this policy will be communicated to colleagues and relevant stakeholders through appropriate communication channels.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored through regular compliance reporting, internal audits, external assurance activities, and governance reporting to the Strategic Health & Safety Group, Executive Team, and Board as appropriate.

6. Exceptions

We recognise that customers may have differing circumstances, vulnerabilities, support needs and communication requirements. These factors will be considered as part of the normal delivery of customer safety services to ensure that decisions and actions are appropriate, proportionate and customer-focused.

In exceptional circumstances, it may be necessary to reconsider the application of specific requirements within this policy. Any exceptions will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, taking account of individual circumstances, customer safety, statutory and regulatory obligations, and any associated risks. Where an exception is agreed, it will be applied with empathy, flexibility and fairness, ensuring customers are treated with compassion, dignity and respect.

7. Responsibilities

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

The Exec Director of Assets and Compliance is responsible for ensuring that the principles within this policy are communicated and understood by all within the directorate.

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

The Customer Safety Manager is responsible for the effective day-to-day delivery, management, and monitoring of all compliance arrangements relating to this policy and associated policies and procedures. They shall ensure adherence to policy requirements and develop, implement, and maintain procedures that support the achievement of the policy's objectives and principles.

The Customer Safety Project Managers 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.

8. 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.