

MEETING GUIDELINES

National Customer Group (NCG)

These guidelines outline the purpose of the meeting, expected outcomes, membership, time commitments and general ‘housekeeping’ for the meetings.

PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

1. **Summary:** The National Customer Group (NCG) ensures customer insight and feedback shape Accent’s services and priorities, supporting Regional Customer Groups (RCGs) to raise local voices at a national level and strengthening the link between customers, the Customer Experience Committee, and the Board.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

2. **Promoting the Customer Voice:** To bring together customer insight and feedback to influence Accent’s services and priorities. The group reviews key issues and policies, supports the work of Regional Customer Groups (RCGs) by raising local voices, and provides constructive challenge on service delivery.
3. **Check and challenge:** You will be the ‘critical friend’ of the Customer Experience Committee by influencing key issues, policies and priorities affecting the customer experience, ensuring decisions are fair, informed, and customer focused.
4. **Track progress:** The group will receive updates from the Customer Engagement Manager on recommendations submitted to the Customer Experience Committee.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

5. **Recommendations for improvement:** The group will provide a quarterly summary report to the Customer Experience Committee (CEC), which summaries the customer voice and recommendations for improvement. The Chair will be responsible for making sure all recommendations are clear, fair and based on evidence before sharing with the Customer Experience Committee.
6. **Evidence of Influence:** The Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) requires clear evidence that customers are actively shaping service delivery. You will play a key role in gathering and sharing this evidence to highlight the real impact of your involvement.

WHO CAN JOIN THE GROUP

7. **Open to all Accent customers:** Any customer living in a home that is fully or partially owned by Accent can join the group. This includes customers who rent, are shared owners, or live in specialist housing. To make sure the group reflects a wide range of communities, the Customer Engagement Manager will actively manage membership and ensure each region is represented.

WHEN AND HOW WE MEET

8. **When the group will meet:** The group will meet at least once every three months (quarterly). Each meeting will last approximately 2.5 hours.

9. **How the group will meet:** To encourage maximum attendance, meetings will primarily be held virtually via Microsoft Teams. However, we encourage the group to meet in person at least once a year to foster stronger working relationships.

EXPECTED TIME COMMITMENT

10. **Monthly commitment:** Members are asked to contribute around approximately 4–6 hours per month, which includes attending meetings, reviewing information, and gathering feedback.
11. **Optional opportunities:** Members can also choose to get more involved – such as joining conferences, workshops, or training, participating in community events, supporting with Accent’s annual ‘Big Conversation’ and attending Accent’s annual colleague conference.
12. **Voluntary resignation:** Members can choose to step down at any time during their term if their circumstances change. Notice should be given to the Customer Engagement Manager.

MANAGING MEMBERSHIP

13. **Group size:** The group includes up to 12 members plus a Chair, with at least 7 members needed for meetings to go ahead (to be quorate).
14. **Recruitment:** The Chair and Customer Engagement Manager will lead recruitment when vacancies become available.
15. **Term length:** Members will be appointed for an initial three-year term. At the end of the three-year term, a review will take place to members may be invited to serve a further term or step down. After stepping down, members are asked to take a 12-month break before reapplying to rejoin the group.
16. **Stepping down:** Members may be asked to step down if they do not follow the Working Well Together Guidelines or if they miss three meetings without a valid reason unless alternative arrangements have been agreed.

THE CHAIR

17. **Selection:** The Chair is selected from within the group, and members are welcome to put themselves forward. If more than one person expresses interest, a fair vote will be held, with the option of a secret ballot organised by the Customer Engagement Manager.
18. **Responsibility:** The Chair plays a key role in the success of the group. They help guide discussions, keep the group focused, and ensure everyone’s voice is heard.
19. **Role Profile:** A role profile for the position of NCG Chair will be maintained, and the post holder will carry out the role in line with the requirements of the role profile.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

20. **Leading the meeting:** The Chair will set the agenda and lead each meeting. If the Chair is unavailable, another group member will be nominated to carry out the responsibilities of the Chair.
21. **Support and coordination:** The Customer Engagement Manager will support the group by organising the meetings and supporting with facilitation. All meetings will be minuted, with actions recorded and tracked.

MAKING DECISIONS

22. **Reaching agreement:** The group will aim to make decisions by consensus, ensuring everyone's views are heard. If consensus is not possible, a majority vote by show of hands will be used to reach a decision.

MONITORING THE GROUPS EFFECTIVENESS

23. **Ongoing support and oversight:** The group will receive ongoing support from the Customer Engagement Manager, with oversight from the Customer Experience Committee.
24. **Annual review:** An annual review, led by the Chair, will check how well the group is working. If needed, an independent review may be arranged to ensure transparency and accountability.
25. **Individual support:** Accent can offer individual support to help members carry out their roles confidently whether this be professionally or personally.

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

26. **Inclusive Approach:** Members are expected to follow Accent's Equity and Diversity Policy, ensuring all service reviews and recommendations reflect the diverse needs of customers.
27. **Reflecting our communities:** The Customer Engagement Manager will review group membership each year to help ensure it reflects the communities Accent serves.

CONFIDENTIALITY

28. **Respecting privacy and trust:** Members may have access to sensitive or confidential information. All members are required to follow the confidentiality guidelines outlined in the Working Well Together Guidelines, which they will sign when joining the group.

EXPENSES AND REMUNERATION

29. **Claiming expenses:** Members can claim back reasonable costs they incur while carrying out their role, in line with Accent's Involved Customer Expenses Policy.

REVIEWING AND UPDATING THE MEETING GUIDELINES

30. **Annual review:** The Chair and Customer Engagement Manager will review the Meeting Guidelines annually to ensure they remain relevant and up to date. Any proposed changes will need to be agreed upon by a majority of group members and then approved by the Customer Experience Committee before being implemented.

CLOSING THE GROUP

31. **Right to close the group:** Accent may choose to close the group if it is no longer meeting its intended purpose or goals. Should this happen, we will ensure all members are informed in writing, with a clear explanation of the reasons behind the decision.