

MEETING GUIDELINES

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Group

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

PURPOSE OF THE GROUP

1. **Represent the diverse needs:** The group is here to make sure every customer’s voice is heard. Accent want to make sure services and decisions reflect the needs and experiences of all customers—no matter their background.
2. **Shape the culture:** The group will help Accent build a culture where fairness, inclusion, and respect are at the heart of everything they do.

PURPOSE OF THE MEETING

3. **Review work planner:** Review the work planner to understand what the focus will be for the upcoming months, adding to the work planner and planning any ad hoc meetings that may need to take place.
4. **Progress updates:** The panel will receive updates from the Customer Engagement Manager on feedback they’ve submitted and how it’s been actioned
5. **Collaboration time:** There will be dedicated time in meetings for panel members to work collaboratively on pieces of work on the planner.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

6. **Inclusive service design:** By reviewing and influencing policies, equity impact assessments and service plans it will ensure they are inclusive and accessible.
7. **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

8. **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 to ensure there’s a diverse range of customers.

WHEN AND HOW WE MEET

9. **When the group will meet:** The group will meet at least once every three months (quarterly). Each meeting will last approximately 1.5 hours.
10. **How the group will meet:** To encourage maximum attendance, meetings will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams. In-person meetings may be suggested for larger projects where it would be beneficial for Accent or customers to work together face-to-face.

EXPECTED TIME COMMITMENT

11. **Monthly commitment:** Members are asked to contribute around approximately 3–4 hours per month, which includes attending meetings, reviewing information, and gathering feedback.
12. **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.
13. **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

14. **Group size:** The EDI group will have no maximum number of members but can only operate with a minimum of five members (to be quorate).
15. **Recruitment:** The Customer Engagement Manager will lead recruitment when vacancies become available.
16. **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.
17. **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.

MEETING ADMINISTRATION

18. **Leading the meeting:** The Customer Engagement Manager will coordinate and facilitate the meetings.
19. **Support and coordination:** The Customer Engagement Manager will invite subject matter experts (Accent colleagues) in the room based on the work plan.

MAKING DECISIONS

20. **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

21. **Ongoing support and oversight:** The group will receive ongoing support from the Customer Engagement Manager, with support from the National Customer Group and the Customer Experience Committee.
22. **Annual review:** The Customer Engagement Manager will carry out a yearly review to ensure the group continues to work effectively and is achieving its expected outcomes.
23. **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

- 24. **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.
- 25. **Reflecting our communities:** The Customer Engagement Manager will review group membership each year to help ensure it reflects the communities Accent serves.

CONFIDENTIALITY

- 26. **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

- 27. **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

- 28. **Annual review:** The 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 National Customer Group before being implemented.

CLOSING THE GROUP

- 29. **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.