

CUSTOMER INFLUENCE REPORT

Rent & Service Charges Booklet Feedback

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Background

This review of rent and service charge communications was initiated in response to customer feedback and in line with CEC's commitment to continuous improvement. We conducted a two-stage consultation with customers, gathering direct feedback on both the booklets and our proposed wrap-around support campaign.

Consultation

Consultation 1 – April to June 2025

An extensive review of customer communications was carried out, combining desktop research with customer insight. This included in-depth interviews with engaged customers and Customer Champions, one of which focused specifically on rent and service charge communications.

Consultation 2 - October to November 2025

Members of the Customer Voice Group (130 members) were invited to provide feedback on two examples of rent and service charge booklets, as well as the proposed content for a new 'opening page'. Customers were also offered the opportunity to attend a one-hour online workshop on Friday 7 November to share their views. Five customers participated in the session.

We also approached Stacy Hartley, Customer Champion for Service Charges at Accent, for feedback as she was involved in the first consultation. An in-depth 1:1 conversation was held, and feedback gained on proposed new booklet changes. She also assisted in co-writing new language about financial worries. Feedback from all customers has been documented and responded to in the next section.

'At a glance' summary

Customers told us that rent and service charge information should be clearer, easier to understand and focused on the information most relevant to them. They wanted a simple

summary page highlighting key information and suggested that supporting information should use plain English and avoid unnecessary jargon.

Customers felt more visual and accessible communication would help, including videos to explain key messages and signpost support. They also told us that information about financial difficulties should be more reassuring and encourage customers to seek help early.

Customers requested greater transparency around how rents and service charges are calculated, why costs increase, and why charges can differ between properties. They also wanted practical information, such as how to obtain an Easy Payment Card, to be easier to find.

Customer feedback has directly influenced the design, structure and language of the revised booklet, with customers helping to shape both the content and supporting communications campaign.

Listening and Acting on Customer Feedback

Customer recommendation	Accent's response	Service lead	Completion date/ notes
Accent should introduce a 1-page summary document which tells me about the most important information in simple language.	Accepted: The customer communications team will work with involved customers to shape the content, tone and language of this new opening page.	Alice Lomas	November 2025
Accent should introduce videos to explain key information and signpost customers of where to get help.	Accepted: The customer communications team are working on a communications campaign leading up to the rent and service charge booklet landing on doorsteps, and this campaign will include a series of videos – to make content visual and accessible.	Alice Lomas	November 2025
If the boring legal 'stuff' needs to stay in the booklet, move this towards the back as customers rarely read it.	Accepted: The 'terms and conditions' page will be moved towards the back of the booklet – wherever possible, for practical printing reasons - so customers do not feel as	Alice Lomas	November 2025

	though they're being overwhelmed with information. In addition, the information about our privacy policy has been removed, to reduce legal jargon.		
The supporting information is not easy to understand so it never gets read.	Accepted: The tone and language of the supporting information will be fully reviewed, and re-structured and customers will be consulted to make sure they understand the information.	Alice Lomas	November 2025
Refer to 'rent convergence' to say we're aware changes for some customers may be coming, and we'll be reaching out to those affected	Partially accepted: As the government will not announce their plans for Rent convergence in the November Budget as previously thought, it will not be mentioned in the rent and service charge booklets. However, Accent still plan to reach out to the customers affected individually when appropriate.	Alice Lomas	November 2025
Clarify how to get an Easy Payment Card.	Accepted: This information has been added to the booklet.	Alice Lomas	November 2025
Please make the 'paying in advance' information easier to understand and relevant to all customer types.	Accepted: The information has been reviewed and amended.	Alice Lomas	November 2025
Add more content so customers genuinely feel they can come forward if they're struggling.	Accepted: We revised the language in the 'We're Here to Help' section, co-writing it with customer Stacy Hartley to provide reassurance. This included adding a new bullet point about support with debts and arrears.	Alice Lomas	November 2025

Add information about why costs are increasing to the opening page.	Accepted: This information was previously included within the FAQs and has now also been added to the opening page	Alice Lomas	November 2025
Add sentence about why neighbours pay more or less than each other.	Accepted: Information added to the opening page.	Alice Lomas	November 2025
Review the categories to make sure they're clear and easy to understand.	Accepted: Full category review will be carried out in 2026.	Alice Lomas	Not due until November 2026

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 18 months, demonstrating how customer feedback has influenced service improvements and the difference those changes have made for customers.

Impact Review schedule:

- 6 months: May 2026
- 12 months: November 2026
- 18 months: May 2027

Measures of success

- Ask customers if they found the new introductory page useful
- Ask customers if the new booklet was easy to understand
- Monitor the type and volume of rent and service charge queries received after the revised booklet is issued.
- Review complaints or challenges linked to service charge understanding or clarity of information.
- Reduction in customer queries asking for clarification of rent and service charges.