

Accent

Candidate Guidance

Your career at Accent

Inclusive and inspiring

Making a real difference

The UK has a housing crisis, and career with Accent is a step towards helping fix this.

We don't just provide homes: we provide a sustainable future for our customers and their communities. Whether you're working directly with customers, or giving crucial support from behind the scenes, your role will be rewarding and will make a real difference.

At Accent you'll feel valued, respected, and appreciated for who you are and what you bring. We support our people to thrive and create moments that matter every day.

Our selection process is built around our Accent values and behaviours. We've put together some useful tips to help you apply for your role with us.

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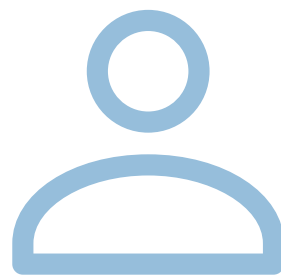
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About us



Our vision

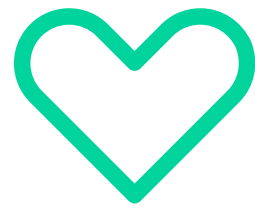
We believe solving the housing crisis will provide people with the foundation for better living, and contribute to the nation's wider objectives for local and national growth and stability.



Our people

We build an organisational culture where everyone is valued, respected and appreciated for who they are and what they bring. Through supporting colleagues and teams to thrive, we drive high performance to best serve our customers.

Values and behaviours



Caring

We are genuine people who really care.

- We are customer centric
- We are authentic
- We are compassionate



Driven

We do whatever it takes to get it right.

- We take ownership and accountability
- We keep our promises
- We are solutions focused



Smart

We challenge ourselves to improve every day.

- We are curious
- We admit and learn from our mistakes
- We give and receive feedback openly



Inclusive

We are inclusive in how we work, behave and think.

- We are collaborative
- We respect and celebrate difference
- We value different perspectives

Our history

Everyone has the right to a safe, secure and warm place to call home but that's not a reality for everyone. As a UK Housing Association, our purpose is to change that by providing homes where they are most in need and help to tackle the housing crisis by building more homes.

1966

Accent was formed in 1966 and began life as the Bradford & North Housing Association providing homes in Yorkshire, the North East and the North West. In 2004 we rebranded and became Accent. In 2005 Accent merged with Nene Housing, moving into the East and in 2006 we merged with Peerless Housing, moving into the South.

20,000

Today we have over 20,000 homes across England which are home to almost 42,000 customers and their families.

G1/V1

As a Housing Association we're governed by the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH). The RSH make sure all social housing providers are viable, efficient, and well-governed. Accent has been awarded a G1/V1 rating - the highest rating the RSH can award which means we have excellent governance frameworks in place and good financial stability.

Our corporate strategy

Our approach from 2024 onwards

We're committed to building new, sustainable homes and investing in our existing homes to ensure they offer our customers the very best living standards.

We're financially stronger, more resilient, and able to embrace our unique geography and size, which gives us improved visibility of the sector and our customer needs.

This means we can use our influence and resources to tackle the real challenges faced by our customers. Our new corporate strategy, '**Building on Strong Foundations**', will allow us to meet our vision through the delivery of four key objectives. These are:

1. Quality Homes for the Future
2. Excellence through Customer-Influenced Services
3. Investing for Success
4. Lasting Change

Click [here](#) to read our full Corporate Strategy.

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Accessibility

We work to create an inspirational workplace where everyone feels included and like they can truly thrive.

So we recognise that we may need to make some adjustments to our recruitment process to make sure you are able to show us your authentic, best self. This includes making adjustments to support you if you are neurodivergent.

If you require any adjustments, please get in touch with us at PeopleServices@AccentGroup.Org and we will make the necessary arrangements.

Examples of adjustments could include:

- ▶ Questions and tasks sent in an email or document before the interview.
- ▶ A British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter
- ▶ Alternative document formats e.g. braille and audio versions.
- ▶ Wheelchair accessible interview venues
- ▶ Remote interviews
- ▶ Accessibility software for tests



Our office locations

Bradford

3rd Floor, Scorex House, 1 Bolton Road, Bradford, BD1 4AS

Burnley

Lodge House, Cow Lane, Burnley, BB11 1NN

Camberley

Watchmoor Park, Camberley, Surrey, GU15 3YL

Peterborough

West Point, Lynch Wood, Peterborough, PE2 6FZ - for satnav, please use PE2 6GG

Stockton

Trident House, Falcon Court, Preston Farm Industrial Estate, Stockton, TS18 3TX

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Our benefits





Holidays

Our colleague's wellbeing is important to us, and we recognise the value of recharging your batteries.

Accent colleagues are entitled to **28 days** holiday plus bank holidays (pro-rata for part time colleagues) and this increases by an additional day each year up to a maximum of **33 days**.

Colleagues also have the option to purchase up to an additional two weeks of annual leave through salary sacrifice at their manager's discretion.



Pension: defined benefit

We want our colleagues to feel secure about their future and offer a choice of two pension schemes. A **defined benefit scheme** is based on the average of your pensionable earnings throughout the scheme, revalued in line with inflation. It's calculated by adding together all the revalued pension earned in each year of membership and provides you with a guaranteed pension. Only 10% of Defined Benefit Schemes are open to new members! 7.5% colleague contribution



Pension: defined contribution

We want our colleagues to feel secure about their future and offer a choice of two pension schemes. Through the **Defined Contribution Scheme**, your contributions are paid into your personal 'pension pot' and are invested in funds by an Investment Manager or funds that you choose to self-select. The benefit depends on the value of your personal pot at retirement and is not guaranteed. 4% matched colleague contribution.



Life Assurance

Life can be unexpected but at Accent we've got you covered, colleagues that join one of the Accent pension schemes will receive life assurance cover which is 3 times your gross salary for death in service and a dependent's pension.



Discounts

With our colleague discount portal, Hapi, you'll get access to vouchers and perks from a huge number of retailers in the UK.

You can also save with fitness memberships through our Health Club Membership scheme - which gives colleagues access to a host of gyms across the UK at a discounted price. This includes PureGym, Anytime Fitness, Nuffield Health, Virgin Active and many more.



Employee Assistance (EAP)

Receive confidential, emotional and legal support when you need it through our partner, Wisdom. Support is available 24/7, 365 days a year.

This includes counselling, legal advice and access to an online GP (video or phone consultation). We also cover the cost of eye tests for display screen equipment users, and contribute £50 towards the costs of frames and lenses. And, because we want you to stay fit and well, we'll contribute up to £10 towards a flu vaccine.



Cycle to work

Save up to **42%** on a bike and accessories through our Cyclescheme. You pay nothing upfront, and the payments are taken from your salary through the salary sacrifice scheme. If you're looking for more pedal power, you can also explore the e-bike options.

You can also protect your ride through exclusive discounts on bike insurance through the scheme.



Volunteering

Accent colleagues have the opportunity to spend two days a year shadowing and supporting customer engagement activities and an additional day of volunteering for community events that are organised by Accent or a partner organisation.

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Your career journey:

The selection process

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Your CV

A CV is your opportunity to showcase the relevant skills and experience you'll bring to Accent. Below are some tips on how to write a good CV:

- Set your CV out in a clear and concise format. Have clear sections and use bullet points to ensure it's easy to read.
- **Avoid putting personal information other than contact details in your CV to mitigate against any potential unconscious bias.**
- Review your CV against the Job Description and highlight your relevant experience and transferable skills.
- Add your achievements. For example, awards you've won/been nominated for, how have you performed against your KPI's, etc to show us how have you added value in your previous roles.
- Add any relevant volunteering experience you have.

How to apply

It's easy to apply online via our careers site where you'll fill in some details about yourself and upload your CV.

As part of the application process, you'll be asked to create a careers account so that you can log in and see how your application is progressing, book interview slots, withdraw your application if your circumstances change and so on.

You'll also receive an email asking you to verify your email address . This is an important step to ensure you don't miss important notifications as your application progresses. Your application won't be submitted until this verification is completed.

Can't see your ideal role on our careers site? You can sign up for job alerts so that you'll be notified when new opportunities become available.

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Your career journey:

Applying for a role

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Applying for a role

Our hiring managers will review your suitability for the role and shortlist against the criteria set out in the job description.

We'll let you know about next steps once you've been shortlisted. Shortlisting usually takes place once the advert has closed.

The selection process will depend on the role you've applied for but could involve a role related assessment and an interview that will include some skills-based and behavioural questions that are linked to our values.

? **How long will the process take?**

We advertise our roles for two weeks (we may take the advert down early if there is a high level of interest) and aim to complete the selection process within the following two to three weeks.

? **Will I get feedback?**

At the application stage we can't offer feedback as we get a lot of interest in each role. If you've had an interview, then we'll let you know the decision and offer feedback if you would like.

? **What assessments could be involved?**

Assessments are an objective way of measuring your ability to perform a role. Types of assessments you could be asked to complete include:

- Analysing and interpreting information
- A group discussion
- Role play
- Presenting
- Psychometric assessment

If you're asked to complete an assessment, be yourself and try not to overthink it. Make sure you participate as you can only be assessed on your contribution.

Interviewing with Accent

We want to understand your relevant experience, development areas and potential fit for the role. Our interviews will contain a mixture of **technical** and **behavioural** competency questions.

Technical questions will explore your ability to fulfil the deliverables of the role. We're not expecting you to be a perfect fit, this will show us where your areas for development lie.

Behavioural questions will explore how you align to our values. We've shared some example questions in the next few pages.

We recognise that you may need adjustments made to the interview process or structure in order to be able to thrive and show your best self. Have a look at section 2 for information on how to request adjustments.

Some tips on how to prepare for the interview

- It's natural to feel nervous before an interview. Take some deep breaths and try to remain calm.
- If you're coming to meet us face to face, plan your route in advance and leave plenty of time to travel.
- If you're invited to a virtual interview, it's most likely to be via Teams. If you're using Teams on your phone, make sure you have enough charge/you're able to have the phone on charge during the interview and have something ready to keep your phone propped up – you want to be completely present during the interview.
- Do your research on Accent and think about why you'd like to join the team. You can also check your interviewers' backgrounds on LinkedIn to see if you have anything in common.
- Read through the Job Description and think of relevant examples from your experience that are linked to the role responsibilities and that can demonstrate our values.
- Practice the STAR (Situation, Task, Actions, Result) interview technique. There are lots of example questions and answers online. Make sure you keep the question in mind (it's easy to go off topic) and give specific examples that demonstrate your experience.
- Don't forget, an interview is a two-way process. You need to make sure Accent is the right fit for you, so make sure you've prepared some questions to ask your interviewers. Feel free to bring a notepad and pen to jot down any notes and questions during the interview.
- If you're preparing a presentation, then practice it out loud to ensure you're running to time.



If you're not sure what a question means, feel free to ask for clarity. If you hear an expression you're unfamiliar with, or you process meanings literally, you can say **"I think that you're asking me [say your understanding here]. Is that correct?"**



What should I wear for the interview?

At Accent we love everyone's individuality, and therefore encourage you to be your authentic self with what you wear to work.

However, we do ask all colleagues to avoid ripped jeans and sportswear, and to avoid any slogans on clothing that may be considered offensive to others.

If you have a sensory processing need to wear specific fabric or clothing that you think may be seen as unprofessional, please get in touch - we're eager to make sure we make reasonable adjustments for all neurotypes.

Are there example questions?

Here are some values-based questions that we may ask:

Caring – ‘We are genuine people that care’

- Tell us about a time when you have delivered exceptional customer service.
- How do you handle disagreements or conflicts while staying true to your authentic self?
- Describe a time when you put your needs aside to help a coworker.

Driven – ‘We do whatever it takes to get it right’

- Can you give an example of a time where you've stood up for your own opinions and got others to accept your judgement?
- Give an example of when you have had to work to a challenging deadline
- Can you give an example of a time when you've interpreted a rule, standard or procedure creatively and more flexibly?

Smart – ‘We challenge ourselves to improve every day’

- Tell us about a time when you have built trust with a customer who is not engaging.
- Can you give us an example of a time when you've had to cope with a significant set back at work?
- Tell me about a time where you needed to influence different stakeholders who had different agendas

Inclusive – ‘We are inclusive’

- Detail a time when you had to collaborate with someone who had a completely different working style.
- Tell us about a time when you have taken steps to ensure that everyone (in your class, on your team, in your organisation) felt included.
- Describe a time when you had to help resolve a conflict between two colleagues or students.

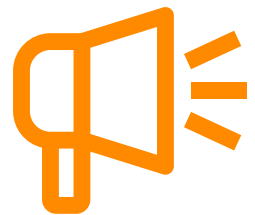
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Your career journey:

Onboarding

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Your journey with us – after the interview



Follow-up

After the interview we'll be in touch to let you know the outcome. If you're successful, then our hiring manager will contact you to verbally offer you the role and agree a start date.



Onboarding

You'll then be contacted by our friendly **People Services** team.

They will send your new starter and onboarding documentation via email.



Checks

Once we've completed all your onboarding checks, your new line manager will be in touch to make the arrangements for your first day, where to go, who to meet etc. There's more information on checks next.



Common questions:

I already have holidays booked – will this be a problem?

Please let us know during the interview if you have pre-booked holidays. We will always try to accommodate them. However, there are some roles where this is not always possible due to the induction training programme.

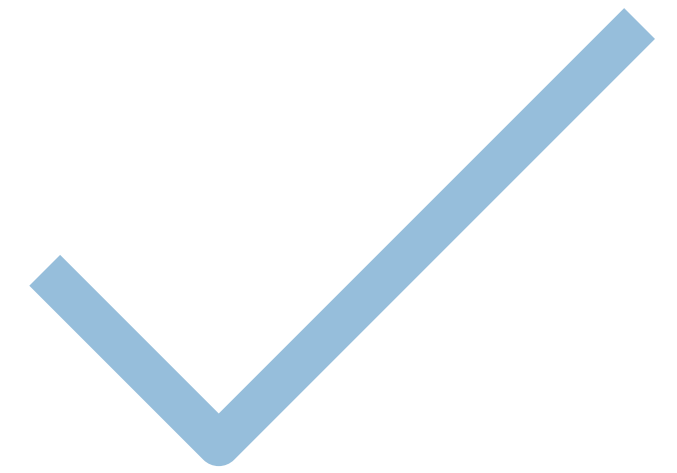
Will I have a probation period?

Yes, at Accent all our new colleagues complete a 6-month probation period.

Do you sponsor work visas?

Accent can only accept applications from candidates with current eligibility to live and work in the UK. If this is not the case for you, we would welcome an application from you should your situation change.

Pre-employment checks



How do you check my right to work?

We conduct an online right to work check through a partner company, although there are some circumstances where you'll need to bring your right to work documents into your local office. The People Services team will be in touch to make arrangements if this applies to you.

What if I have gaps in my employment history?

We know that life looks different for everyone. While we require a full 3-year history before you can join us, we don't want this to put you off applying for a role with us! **So, whether you took time off to start a family, decided it was time for a well-deserved break, or perhaps went back to school, just let us know. This won't negatively impact on your application.** After all, at Accent we know that life experiences help shape us into the people we are today.

Do you need any additional information for my onboarding?

- Some of our roles require a DBS check. If this is the case, we'll send you a link to apply through our provider.
- If your role involves business travel our People Services team may ask you to send us documentation regarding your driving license, car insurance & MOT.
- Certain roles will require us to hold a copy of your vocational qualifications on file. Our People Services Team will let you know if this is the case and may ask for a copy of your certificates.

Do you need my reference details?

Our People Services team will ask for professional/educational references that cover the last 3 years.

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Your career journey:

Work style and hours

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Working arrangements:

At Accent we're a keen promoter of agile working and encourage the use of working from home, as long as we meet our customers needs.

Hours of work

We work a 35-hour week, with starting times depending on the role.

Early careers

We currently offer apprenticeship opportunities across the business.

Got any questions? Feel free to get in touch at any point on your journey.

Good luck, and hopefully see you soon!



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