“IT’S LIKE BEING ON HOLIDAY”

We follow the Robertsons as they move in
Our gardens are blooming
The winners of our Acis in Bloom 2017 competition have been announced.

Bonfire night
Follow some of our tips to keep you and your family stay safe on bonfire night.

£20 VOUCHER UP FOR GRABS!

Competition page
Your chance to win some vouchers by entering our Annual review quiz.

Newborns are snug as a hug

Five of our residents have knitted blankets for the newborn babies in the neo-natal intensive care unit at Lincoln County Hospital.

Cathie Bostock, Gladys Kirby, June Stainton, Carol Hodgkinson and Barbara Smith put in hours of time and effort into making the knitted blankets.

The women who live at Newlands Court in Gainsborough said they wanted a purpose and felt like they could still do amazing things for other people.

With donations of wool from various people around the town, they spent two months knitting beautiful blankets to be used by the families and the youngest patients at the hospital.

Bryony Roberts, our Talent Match Area Ambassador, said: “I visit the ladies up at Newlands regularly and we also chatted about what we would love to do and who we want to be.

“We spoke about having a purpose and the feeling as doing something good so our project, ‘Snug as a Hug’ was born!

“With the help of some fabulous ladies and their friends we created beautiful knitted blankets for the care unit in Lincoln County Hospital.”

“And the sense of happiness and love from the project is something worth remembering. I am so proud of the project and all who got involved.”
Are you smart?
Your energy meters could be

We’ve teamed up with Smart Energy GB to raise awareness of the effectiveness of smart meters in your home.

Smart meters track your energy usage and attempt to save you money. They’re replacing traditional meters, including prepay key meters, and all energy providers are fitting them in homes for free. Every home is entitled to one.

As well as saving an estimated £17 billion in energy bills over the next 15 years, they’re also helping to reduce carbon emissions and conserve energy. The devices will show you the energy you are using in real time, making it easy to identify when you’re using a lot of energy and change your behaviour accordingly.

We’ll be delivering awareness sessions to our sheltered accommodation schemes and through community events, primarily aiming to support people aged 65 and over without internet access. We’re also on hand to give advice and support anytime you need it, though.

We can tell you all there is to know about smart meters and help you apply for one. For more information, contact us on 0800 027 2057.

Green-fingered help

Volunteers from the organisation came together to help transform the garden of one of our tenants.

The support came forward after hearing of one of our tenants in Market Rasen, whose health had deteriorated. As a result, she had not had the time to look after her garden, which then became unsafe.

Nine members of our team volunteered to help fix the garden over a two-day period.

Debbie Clubley, our Area Service Manager, said: “We all worked really hard and achieved much more than originally planned which was brilliant work by all.

“It was lovely to see her sat at her garden table drinking a cup of coffee chatting to our members of the team. She said it has totally transformed things for her.

“The task now for us is to find a local gardener to just keep on top of things for her.”

We and our partners have also been supporting her to ensure her health and wellbeing is being looked after.
This year we saw a wide range of entries from across our areas including Grimsby, Sheffield, Lincoln, Blyton, Gainsborough, Retford and many more.

The winners of the competition were:

Gainsborough resident Margaret Conway who scooped the award for ‘best flower garden’.

She said: “It’s a lovely hobby and it’s great exercise. It gives you a sense of purpose in life. It means everything to win. It’s nice to know hard work is appreciated. It’s nice to try different plants and flowers and we have 56 roses this year.”

Colin Bates from Market Rasen who took first place in the ‘best fruit and veg plot’.

He said: “It’s the first time I ever entered anything like this and I never expected to win - it’s fantastic. I had a wonderful teacher who taught me all I wanted to know about it (gardening). It was brilliant to get involved in and it has been with me ever since. It is one of the most relaxing and rewarding things to do in your spare time.

“Gardening is a good exercise and good for your health in my opinion, especially for the older generation. You don’t have to do everything in one day but you can do a bit at a time and work when you feel like it. I go in my green house, sow my seeds,
do some cuttings, and finally plant them. You can see the fruits of your labour in real life. Now I’ve got all my veggies done and my borders all set up I’ve got a great place where I can sit outside with a beer or cup of tea and admire my work.”

Michele Robinson from Retford who won in the ‘best use of outside space’ category.

She said: “I just find gardening so therapeutic. It’s great to see the flowers out especially when I come home. I’ve always loved gardening and it’s a great hobby to get into. I was over the moon to win. It really made my weekend. I had just come out of hospital after two months and I was ringing everyone up. My dad was especially proud as he was always a keen gardener.”

Judges were impressed with the creativity of our customers and spent some time whittling down the entries to find this year’s winner. This year, the awards were judged by our Director of Customer Excellence Paul Woollam, volunteer gardener at Gainsborough Old Hall Paul Dawson and our Talent Match Area Ambassador Bryony Roberts.
In our new feature, we’re following customers’ progress as they move through their tenancy with us. June and David Robertson tell all about moving into their new property near Chesterfield.

June and David Robertson say the first few months in their new home feels just like a holiday. After moving out of their local authority-owned property near Stretton, the 56-year-olds moved the 13 miles north this summer to one of our houses in Grassmoor, just south of Chesterfield.

“We love our new home”, says June. “It’s a world away from where we were living before. We’d been in our previous place for exactly ten years, but it was a non-traditional house meaning we struggled to get things done to it. We’d been wanting repairs done for the last three years but they said nothing could be done so we decided to move.

“We knew we needed to make the right choice so we took our time and found this beautiful house in Grassmoor. As soon as we saw it, we knew we wanted it. The street is really quiet and the views are fantastic. There’s no graffiti or rubbish flying around. And the process was quick, easy and very smooth.”

The couple were supported in their move by Area Service Manager Dorothy Cunningham, based in our Sheffield office.
June says: “Dorothy has been lovely. She arranged for everything to go through smoothly, and even asked us what colour we’d like the walls. Because the house was so clean we were able to get our new carpets fitted before we moved in. It was just the furniture that we had to sort. It seemed we were all in and settled within just a few days of making the decision.

And the praise isn’t only reserved for Dorothy. Our Prime team come in for some admiration too.

“The house is 100% better than where we used to live. It’s like being on holiday. There’s no need to do any decorating and everything’s great

“We’ve only had one problem since we moved in - the toilet was acting up a bit, not leaking or anything, but we needed someone to have a look at it. We contacted Acis and we had a man come out to look at it a couple of days later which was fine for us. I must say he was very friendly and looked very smart - he even took his shoes off even though there was no need to. He fixed the toilet and it’s still working fine today.

David concluded: “The house is 100% better than where we used to live. It’s like being on holiday. There’s no need to do any decorating and everything’s great. We’re looking forward to our first Christmas in our new home.”

To apply for a home, you need to register with your local authority’s own choice-based lettings scheme and they will assess your eligibility.

You’ll need to be able to tell them:
• How many people there are in your household
• What type of home you are looking for
• Why you need to move out of your current home
• How urgently you need to move

Our homes will be advertised exclusively on the schemes for two weeks. If a property has received no successful bids in that time they will then be advertised further on our website.

You can find out more about your local choice-based lettings scheme on our website.

For more news stories visit our website at www.acisgroup.co.uk
Innovative link-up with college

We have teamed up with the Construction Career College in Gainsborough to give hands-on opportunities to the future generation of tradespeople.

Students from the College, which is part of the Lincoln College Group, are being given the chance to renovate and refurbish some of our empty properties so they can be re-let to people in the area.

The project, funded by Teach Too, sees groups of around 20 students work alongside our tradespeople, giving them practical, real-life skills as they train for their qualifications.

The first renovations were completed earlier in the summer, with students undertaking such work as fitting a new kitchen, refurbishing a bathroom, and undertaking plastering and decorating.

Participating students were presented with a certificate and Screwfix vouchers by our Chief Executive Greg Bacon at a small ceremony following the work.

Jill Dickson, Volunteer and Employability Coordinator, said: “This project is all about giving young people direct experience of today’s industry so they’re ready to hit the ground running when they qualify and enter the workplace. We’re committed to developing the next generation of multi-skilled tradespeople.”

Rick Long, Head of Career Colleges at Lincoln College, said: “This is a perfect example of real collaboration between employer and educator, both investing to create inspiring opportunities for young people.”

Kieran Cowan, one of the College students to participate, said: “It has been a privilege to be part of this project, I have gained valuable on-site experience.”
A look back at 2016/17

It’s that time of year again when we look back over what we’ve achieved in the last 12 months in our Annual Review for Tenants.

The 2016/17 financial year was one of significant change for us, with new Chief Executive Greg Bacon joining us and a restructured Executive Leadership Team taking shape, allowing for a greater focus on you - our customers.

We’ve made no secret of our desire to improve customer satisfaction - you’ve told us our service isn’t what it needs to be at times and we’re listening. That’s why we’ve invested substantial amounts of time and money into a series of initiatives all designed to positively impact on the homes you live in and the lives you lead.

Our strategy focuses on four areas - customers, partners, efficiency and growth. This strategy recognises the importance of putting you - our customers - first and identifying the need to develop partnership opportunities so we can offer more services.

It also emphasises the need to constantly improve our internal efficiency and value for money, so that we can reinvest in things that really matter to the people we serve. And through all of this, we want to grow as an organisation and help even more people, without losing sight of our existing customers and what they need us for first and foremost - a quality home.
Customers

In 2016/17, we launched our ‘Focus on’ programme to help our customers further. Our ‘Focus on...your environment’ service has helped save our customers an average of £250 on their energy bills and our ‘Focus on...your needs’ service is helping people to overcome issues like getting used to Universal Credit and settling into their new homes. Our ‘Focus on...your future’ service is helping to give our customers the skills they need to improve their job prospects while our ‘Focus on...your voice’ service is giving you a series of channels to tell us how we can improve.

Latest figures show that as a direct result of this service, particularly our ‘Focus on...your needs’ service, 93% of our new customers are now staying for at least 12 months. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and our estimates, through the Housing Associations’ Charitable Trust calculator, show that the project has achieved almost half a million pounds’ worth of social value to our communities, proving we’re giving back to the places where we work.

Partners

We’ve continued to develop partnerships this year as we look to improve and widen our services to our customers - of all ages. After receiving funding worth £4,500 from Igas, we worked with the Gainsborough Academy to bring together some of Lincolnshire’s younger and older residents. Through the Growing Potential project, we worked alongside the Academy’s Compass project, which supports disengaged students. The young people joined forces with us to redevelop outside spaces at two of our sheltered accommodation schemes, where our customers had expressed a keen interest in growing their own fruit, vegetables and flowers in the communal, external areas of the grounds.

We also started an innovative project during the year with the Construction Careers College in Gainsborough, giving students a chance to work with our tradesmen and renovate some of our empty properties.

Efficiency

In September last year, we launched Prime - our new repairs, maintenance and planned improvements service. We listened to our customers and embarked on an ambitious project to transform the way we deliver our services. It’s still early days, and we’re making improvements all the time but it’s hoped this new way of working, while giving customers an enhanced service, will help save more than £1 million each year meaning more money can be invested into our homes.

And as always, we’ve been focusing on value for money internally as well as externally, saving thousands from our day to day tasks by changing suppliers, reviewing our processes and renegotiating contracts.

Growth

The year saw us develop 136 new homes - 84 for affordable rent, 33 for shared ownership and 19 for sale on the open market. We agree with the government’s ambition to create more homes for people to own, but we remain firmly committed to providing affordable, quality houses to rent. We know many of our current and future customers either are not able to or have no desire to buy, and so access to safe and secure housing at a genuinely affordable rent is essential.

We’ve also just launched a new three-year project to change the way we work across the organisation - you’ll hear more about this and the benefits it will bring in the coming weeks and months.
Our impact: 2016/17

We now own and manage almost 7,000 homes across Lincolnshire, South Yorkshire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire

We've invested more than £200,000 in our Better Places environmental project

We refurbished our nine sheltered accommodation schemes with new carpets, doors and colour schemes

We're now a ‘Dementia Friendly’ organisation

For every £1 we spent, we created £16 in social value for our communities

We surveyed 2,731 of our properties to better understand what might need doing to them in the future

Our properties are now creating more than £300,000 in renewable energy each year

Just over 1% of income was lost as a result of an empty home at some point last year

We resolved 287 antisocial behaviour issues - a 97% success rate

We performed 20,694 repairs to make sure your homes are running better. Our customer contact centre handled 77,496 calls

How we’re performing

We measure how we perform in a number of ways, including through benchmarking against the top performing organisations working in the same sector as us.

Percentage of customers satisfied with the overall quality of their home

84% up from 77% (Top performer 90%)

Percentage of customers satisfied with the overall quality of service

83% up from 79% (Top performer 78%)

Percentage of customers satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service

71% down from 78% (Top performer 86%)

Percentage of customers who say their rent provides value for money

86% up from 76% (Top performer 87%)

Percentage of customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

86% up from 85% (Top performer 89%)

Percentage of customers who say their views are listened to and acted on

61% down from 64% (Top performer 76%)

Comparative data taken in 2014
Top performer comparator taken from National Benchmark data 2015/16.
How your rent is spent (£m)

![Pie chart showing how rent is spent](chart.png)

- Finance costs: 5.0
- Gas servicing: 1.6
- Housing management: 1.3
- Property improvements: 2.5
- Routine maintenance: 1.0
- Service costs: 2.4
- Empty property repairs: 5.4

### Complaints and compliments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>2015/16</th>
<th>2016/17</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>106</td>
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<tr>
<td>Compliments</td>
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* Figures do not include our Repairs and Maintenance service - Prime.

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**Don't just read it, watch it**

We’re trying something new - and we’d like you to test it out. You can now view some extra content for this year’s Annual Review for Tenants. All you need is a smartphone or tablet, and to follow the simple instructions below:

1. Download the free Layar app on your smartphone or tablet. You can search for ‘Layar AR’ in your app store.
2. Once downloaded, open up the app and hold it over the image on this page before pressing to scan.
3. Enjoy a new experience as your Home News comes to life!
Who doesn’t love bonfire night? Fireworks, pumpkin soup, sparklers and especially hot dogs! It’s a fantastic time to be out and about but there are a few things you might need to keep an eye out for to make sure you’re safe.

As fireworks are very dangerous it is important to be very careful and take special precautions to keep you and those around you safe.

Here are some tips to make sure you have a fantastic injury-free night:

Sparklers
Only use sparklers when supervised by an adult. Also ensure sparklers are lit one at a time and are kept at arm’s length.

Bonfires
Keep bonfires out the way of things such as trees and buildings. Also ensure the bonfires are free from any animals such as hedgehogs.

Think of others
It is illegal to use fireworks after 11pm as it can keep people from sleeping.

Receptes de Turkey chilli jacket potatoes

What you need:
- 4 large baking potatoes
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 300g turkey mince
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp ground cumin
- 1 tbsp cider vinegar
- 1 tbsp soft light brown sugar
- 350ml passata
- Reduced-fat Red Leicester, grated, to serve
- 4 spring onions

What you need to do:

1. Heat the oven to 200°C/180°C fan/gas 6. Use a fork to prick the potatoes all over. Rub with a little of the oil, and bake for 45 mins until tender.

2. Meanwhile, make the chilli. Heat the remaining oil in a large frying pan over a medium heat. Add the onion, garlic and some seasoning, and cook for five minutes until soft. Add the turkey mince and season again, then increase the heat and break up the mince with the back of your spoon. When it’s cooked through, add the spices, vinegar, sugar and passata. Reduce to a simmer and cook for ten minutes or until the liquid has reduced.

3. Cut a cross in the top of each potato and spoon in the chilli. Serve each potato sprinkled with cheese and spring onions.

The facts and figures

990
In the recent year there were 990 injuries caused by fireworks in October and November

479
479 people of all ages needed to be treated in the hospital after being injured by a firework.

475
475 firework accidents at private family events and parties

494
out of the 990 injuries from fireworks 494 were injuries to children
We’ve joined forces with our new Charity of the Year, Alzheimer’s Society, to become Dementia Friends as we attempt to change people’s perceptions of dementia.

We’re Dementia Friends.
As well as raising money for the charity this year, a number of our people have been trained as Dementia Champions as we join the thousands of organisations looking to transform the way the nation thinks, acts and talks about the condition.

In turn, these ‘champions’ have run awareness sessions with dozens of people across the organisation with the key aim of developing dementia-friendly communities. We don’t want people to be scared of the condition. We want people to understand it better and be in a position to support friends and family members should they be affected.

Dementia is caused by a number of diseases that affect the brain. The most common is Alzheimer’s but diseases also include vascular dementia, dementia with Lewy Bodies and Pick’s disease.

Different types of dementia affect the brain at different rates and in different ways, but other things like someone’s personal circumstances, the people around them and the environment in which they live, will affect their experience of dementia.

Dementia progresses in a way that is unique to each individual.

While it affects more people over the age of 65, it is not exclusively an older person’s disease. Younger people can be affected, too.

Five things to remember about dementia:

- Dementia is not a natural part of the ageing process.
- Dementia is caused by diseases of the brain.
- It is not just about losing your memory.
- It’s possible to live well with it.
- There is more to the person than the dementia.

Dementia often starts with short-term memory loss but it can also affect the way that people think, speak and do things. People with dementia can become confused, find it difficult to communicate, as they can’t remember the words that they want, and can have difficulties planning.

Dementia also affects people’s moods and motivations. This can happen if the disease affects that part of the brain that controls emotions, but even if this does not happen, people with dementia can feel sad, frightened, frustrated or angry about what is happening to them.

However, with a helping hand, people living with dementia can still enjoy their hobbies, have good relationships with partners and friends and live independently for longer.

For more information, visit www.dementiafriends.org.uk

If you are interested in joining us on a Dementia Friendly awareness session contact us on 0800 027 2057
Sam Foreman is our Customer Liaison Officer. It’s her job to make sure our houses are well looked after. We sat down with Sam and asked her how she helps our customers and what gets her up in the morning.

What is it that you do in your job?
My job involves looking after our kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors, I make first contact with our customers to explain the work that will be carried out on a day to day basis. I go through the choices of kitchen units, worktops, tiles and flooring and how they prepare before we commence work. I also visit daily to make sure our customers are well informed and comfortable and managing through the duration of the work.

How did you get to where you are today?
I have had various jobs over the years but I started in this area being a scheduler on repairs, my job then evolved into a Customer Liaison Officer as the organisation grew, they then put me through a NVQ Level 3 in Customer Service.

How do you help our customers in your job?
I am more of a help to our more vulnerable tenants and the elderly. Some of the people I help find having work done in their home quite stressful. I am there for them to talk to and answer any worries they have. More often than not, they would prefer to speak to me about any issues rather than talking directly to the workmen, I then can do this on their
I have so many customers that are so pleased to see me and I am greeted with a great big hug!

Have you had any really positive experiences with customers that you remember?

What warms my heart with our customers is that one year I could have been visiting them for their kitchen and then a year or even two years later I see them again for maybe their windows. I have so many customers that are so pleased to see me and I am greeted with a great big hug. They want to share what they have been up to since we last met.

What gets you up in the morning to do your job?

This job is different every day. I work with customers all the time and every person has different needs and this makes the job more varied.

Home improvement figures for 2016/2017 to date

- 50 new kitchen installations
- 136 new bathroom installations
- 371 new window installations
- 210 new door installations
- 346 new central heating installations

What our customers say

A customer called in to let us know that he was very happy with an engineer who attended today to do his gas service - he was very kind and polite and he is very happy with the service.

Thank you to the plumber who attended to the leak, customer very happy with the prompt service and the way things were dealt with.

Compliment for gas engineer. Been to repair boiler this morning, customer extremely pleased with his attitude, work completed. She said he was very nice, pleasant young man, did the job quickly and left no mess. Customer very pleased.

A customer called to say thank you to the engineer very happy with service. The engineer was very courteous and nice man.
If there is something in your community you’re not happy about, these walks are a perfect opportunity to speak to us about the changes you would like to see.

These ‘view it’ walks have helped make improvements in the community including fixing fences, picking up litter and cleaning up gardens.

For more information about the ‘view it’ walks please contact our Customer Contact Centre on 0800 027 2057 or email info@acisgroup.co.uk you can also find out about our ‘view it’ walks on our website at www.acisgroup.co.uk

**View it**

Our estate walks are a great opportunity for you to get involved and talk face-to-face with a member of our neighbourhood team.

**Rural view its**

**Auckley**
27 October
11am start meeting at the carpark outside Lancaster court.

**Edenthorpe**
10am start meeting at layby outside number one and three Hollyfield Crescent.

**Kilnhurst**
24 November
11am start meeting on Wharf Road flats carpark.

**Wath-upon-Dearne**
10am start meeting at the Aldi car park on Colliery Avenue

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**Harworth**
15 December
Midday start meeting on Mirabelle Way, Harworth DN11 8NZ

**Worksop**
11am start meeting on Priory Mews, Worksop S80 2FA

**Retford**
Meet at 9.30am outside the Persimmons office and 10.15am at Old Hall drive outside Harron Homes office.

**Gainsborough and Sheffield view its**

**Park Springs**
Fourth Thursday of every month
10am start, meet at the Gainsborough Uphill Community Centre.

**Lower Manor**
Third Friday of every month
10am start, meet at the Lidl supermarket, Alison Crescent.

**Woodthorpe**
Second Friday of every month
10am start, meet at Nodder Road shops.
QUICK time!

Just tick your answer to each of the questions, fill out the entry form and return to the address below.

**Last year we launched a new programme to help our customers in different ways. What did we call it?**
- a) Focus on
- b) Your life
- c) In the community

**Acis is now what kind of organisation?**
- a) Global conglomerate
- b) A District Council
- c) Dementia Friendly

**How many new homes did we develop during 2016/17?**
- a) 101
- b) 82
- c) 136

**We performed how many repairs to homes during 2016/17?**
- a) 15,300
- b) 20,694
- c) 31,700

**What percentage of customers say their rent provides value for money?**
- a) 86%
- b) 75%
- c) 90%

Name:..................................................................................................................
Address:..............................................................................................................
...............................................................................................................................
Telephone:..........................................................................................................

Please complete your details for a chance of winning a £20 voucher.

Send your completed entry form to: Marketing and Communications, Freepost RTSH-THEK-SRRJ, Acis, Acis House, Bridge Street, Gainsborough DN21 1GG. Closing date: Friday 24 November 2017.

**Submit your tasty recipes**

Think you’re a master chef? We want to know your best healthy and tasty recipes to put in our next edition of Home News. To be in with a chance of featuring in our next issue you must send in your recipes along with a picture of the final product. You can either send your recipes and pictures via email to marketing@acisgroup.co.uk or send them via post using the free postal address above.

Best of luck and be sure to read next issue to see if you have made it.
Thinking about moving house?

We have brand new homes for sale in Waterford Meadows, Cherry Willingham.

We have six two-bedroom family homes available at £134,950, and ten three-bedroom family homes at £162,950.

The village boasts two schools, shops, a library, a doctor’s surgery, two pubs, playing fields and a church. Just two miles east of Lincoln, Cherry Willingham is perfect for those commuting to the city.

Call 01522 842730 or email info@frankeys.co.uk to register your interest.