

HOME

NEWS

**Annual
report**

**Tradespeople
of the future**

**Universal
Credit
roll out**

OUR HEROES

Shortlist revealed!

WIN!
VOUCHERS
TO BE WON
INSIDE!

INSIDE



Preventing damp and mould

Tips to keep damp and mould at bay this winter.



Direct Debit

Competition to win £100 by paying via Direct Debit.



Competition page

Your chance to win some vouchers by entering our Autumn wordsearch.

Welcome

Welcome to the Autumn 2018 edition of Home News!

In this issue you'll find out about:

- Our annual report
- Our Heroes awards 2018 shortlist
- And much more!

And Home News is changing!

Keep an eye out for our new online version of the magazine, Home News Extra!

Home News Extra will be your source of all things Acis and will include videos, infographics, photos and

**HOME
NEWS
EXTRA**

more details to give you more insight into our work and our communities.



From 28 September, you will find this at
www.acisgroup.co.uk/home-news-extra

Investing in your communities

Our work to improve the communities around your homes is continuing through our Better Places initiative.

Our latest investment is in Lower Manor in Sheffield where we are improving the area with new fencing.

Working with our partners at Gelder Group, we are also carrying out boundary and rendering works to around 100 homes in the area.

This work began in July and will be completed by January (subject to any severe weather conditions over the winter).

For regular updates on this, keep an eye out on social media and our website as well as Home News Extra.



Summer Fayre

More than 80 people turned out for our annual Summer Fayre at the Gainsborough Uphill Community Centre in July.

Attendees enjoyed a range of activities including a petting zoo and a bouncy castle as well as face painting and crafts.

Organised by Claire Tunstall, our Customer Engagement Coordinator, the day was a huge success, raising more than £160 which was split between our charity of the year (Alzheimer's Society) and the community centre for future fun events.

Keep an eye out in Home News Extra for any more upcoming events.



Customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

82%



Target: 86%
at Sept 2018

YOUR HEROES

We have had an amazing response to the Our Heroes awards this year with almost a hundred nominations across the three categories.

Our judging panel have studied the nominations and have agreed on a shortlist.

The awards ceremony will be held on 24 October 2018 where we will find out the winners.

The judging panel is made up of our Chief Executive Greg Bacon, West Lindsey District Councillor Sheila Bibb, and one of our Board members Kath Smart.



DALE VIEW
Market Rasen

MR MIDDLETON
Caistor

MRS BARSLEY
Welton

MRS TAYLOR
Pleasley



WELL WOMAN GROUP
Gainsborough

NEIL HADDOCK
Bardney

BETTY SMART
Welton

JANE WILSON
Woodthorpe, Sheffield



JAKE FARROW
Gainsborough

**MURRAY AND EVAN
CHAPMAN**
Market Rasen

**BARDNEY YOUTH
FOOTBALL CLUB**
Bardney

**THE CHILDREN OF ST
GEORGE'S PRIMARY
SCHOOL**
Gainsborough

Customers satisfied with the
quality of their home

80%



Target: 83%
at Sept 2018

MRS BARSLEY



MR MIDDLETON



MRS TAYLOR



DALE VIEW



To find out more about our local heroes, visit our website or see Home News Extra where you'll find videos, interviews and more about our shortlisted entries!

Preventing damp and mould this winter

Our Asset Project Officer, Stuart Spriggens is on hand with his tips to keep damp and mould at bay this winter.



Stuart's top tips:

Try to produce less moisture

- Put lids on saucepans while you're cooking to reduce the amount of steam.
- Avoid drying laundry on a clothes airer or radiator. If you need to dry clothes indoors, open the window and close the door of the room where the clothes are drying, so that moisture can escape outside rather than circulate around your home.

- If you use a vented tumble drier, make sure it's properly vented.

Stop moisture spreading

- While cooking, bathing or washing, use an extractor fan and/or open a window, and keep the door closed. Keep the extractor fan on and/or the window open for about 20 minutes after you have finished (with the door closed).
- When condensation appears, wipe it away.

Ventilate

- Leave trickle vents (slotted vents in the window frames) open when rooms are occupied - even in the winter when your heating is on. These vents provide constant ventilation which removes water vapour.

- If you can, put free-standing wardrobes and other furniture against internal walls, leaving a gap between the wall and the furniture so that air can circulate around the room. Try not to overfill cupboards, wardrobes and drawers so that air can circulate around the contents.

Provide even heating

- Keep your home warm to avoid cold surfaces, and remember that it can take a long time for a building to warm up.
- If your home is unoccupied during the day, make sure the timer is set so that your home is warm by the time you return. During very cold weather it's better to leave the heating on during the day to maintain an even temperature. The temperature can be set a few degrees lower while you're out.



For more tips like these, visit the InfoHub on our website.



Overall customer satisfaction
with Acis and its services

77%



Target: 90%
at Sept 2018

Woodthorpe Tenants And Residents Association (TARA)

AGM

Annual General Meeting

Tuesday 9 October 2018 at 6pm
Woodthorpe TARA building, Ulley Road



Come and join us for our Annual General Meeting

We will review the year and have elections for the main committee roles including; Chair, Vice-chair, Treasurer and Secretary.

This is your opportunity to help us set up next year's priorities and activities.

All are welcome to come along and find out more about what we do. By attending our AGM you can help support your TARA in shaping the future of your estate and your home.

Have your say - Join the **TARA**
Woodthorpe **T**enants **A**nd **R**esidents **A**ssociation
Email: Woodthorpeta14@gmail.com



Sizzling fun

In August, the tenants of Newlands Court in Gainsborough suggested holding a barbecue event in their communal area.

This was a fantastic idea to make the most of the beautiful summer weather we have enjoyed this year.

Funded jointly by the residents and us, the event was a great success enjoyed by nearly 40 attendees.





Matthew gets a foot on the career ladder

We offer some fantastic opportunities for people to get into work in various ways. One of which is our Apprenticeship programme which this year sees a number of young people enjoying the chance to get their foot on the career ladder.

We caught up with one of our apprentices, Matthew Foster, on site to find out more.

How are you getting on?

I'm really enjoying it. It's been really good. I've been learning some new skills on the job like concreting and plastering so it's been good for me so far.

How has it been getting on-the-job experience with our tradespeople?

It's been great. Nigel has been teaching me some new skills like plastering. It's easier for me

that him though because I'm tall so I can just reach the ceilings easier!

It's also been useful because they have been teaching me how to use all the different every day tools as well as the different trades. It's only early days but I'm learning a lot.

How important is this Apprenticeship for you?

It's very important and is a great way to learn. I want to be a multi-skilled tradesman in the future so I really appreciate this opportunity that Acis has given me.

Keep an eye out on our social media channels and Home News Extra for more updates on how Matthew and our other apprentices are getting on.



The tradespeople of the future

More than 30 students have taken part in our latest project to give young people the skills they need to gain careers as tradespeople.

The project, which sees young people work alongside our trades teams to renovate empty properties alongside their official college qualifications, has proved a huge success and is now in its second year.

It is run by our Volunteering and Employability Coordinator Jill Dickson and delivered on site by one of our fantastic multi-skilled tradespeople, Paul Exton. This year, Paul gave an outstanding 242 hours of his own time for this project!

Jill is proud of what we are doing for the communities

with this project and is also delighted to see Paul giving so many hours of volunteering to the cause.

"As an organisation we want to give back to the areas we work in and the partnership with the college is something we're very proud of.

"We're pleased to see that we're doing our bit to invest in future tradespeople and helping these young people gain some important skills for their future careers.

"Paul has always given a massive contribution to



volunteering and support for the kids.

"He is one of many who work positivity with our partners and this project is a great opportunity for him to share his skills and knowledge with the next generation of tradespeople."

Introducing Accelerate!

As part of our commitment to providing more than just bricks and mortar, we are introducing a new programme to help customers get back into work.

Our new Accelerate service will provide 30 weeks of intensive employability support for anyone looking for employment, to enhance their careers or move towards the job market.

This includes anyone who has any potential barriers to working, such as health issues or convictions.

The programme will also provide a further six weeks of in-work support, once a person has found work, to ensure both

the employer and new recruit are both comfortable with how it's working.

Introducing... Jessica Sanders

Jessica will be delivering this programme to help our customers get back into work.

Jessica comes from a background of delivering information, advice and guidance to a variety of customers. She is looking forward to taking this programme forward to support our tenants who are looking to further their careers.



She said: "I am really looking forward to working with our customers to help them achieve their goals and career ambitions."



For more information,
call us on **0800 027 2057**.

Customers satisfied with the value
for money of services provided

84%



Target: 86%
at Sept 2018

A focus on **you**

We're not like a normal social housing provider. We like to go above and beyond our responsibilities as a landlord, making sure we deliver on our vision to create better lives for people.

We focus on you – as a person, as a household, as a family, and as a community.



We focus on the environment. Each year, we help to save our customers thousands of pounds on energy bills.

We saved customers £4,284.75 last year on their energy bills



We focus on the futures of our customers through working with our partners to enhance people's career prospects.

We engaged with 81 partners last year to help offer our customers the best possible opportunities to get into work.



We focus on our customers' voices. We want to connect with them and hear what they think about our services.

Last year we engaged with 522 people at 22 community events.



We focus on the needs of the customers we support, helping them to sustain their tenancies.

We successfully helped 87.5% of those customers who were referred into our tenancy support officer.



For a full update on how we have supported our customers, please see our website www.acisgroup.co.uk/a-focus-on-you and find more in Home News Extra.

DIGITAL UPDATE

ALLPAY

In April this year we launched a new, faster way for customers to make payments to us as we enhance our support services.

Since the introduction of our new Allpay service, we have seen a 93% reduction in the amount of monthly telephone payments made via the contact centre from 930 to 70.

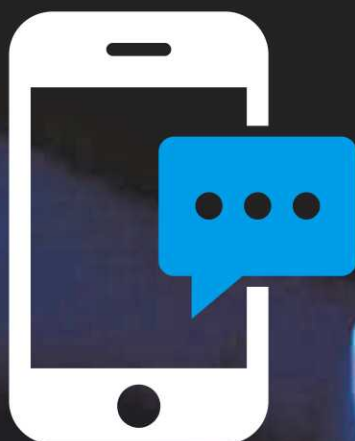
This has allowed our contact centre team to improve their response times for other queries while meaning you have the ability to pay your rent in your own time.

Acis tenant Denise Armitage has been using the AllPay app to pay her rent and has told us how it has improved her experience.

She said: "The old way of paying was so longwinded and took a long time to get it sorted.

"Using the new system is easy. I just use my card, enter my details and it's done. It's as simple as that.

"It takes about a minute for me to make payments now I have an AllPay card. It's a much easier way of doing things."



TEXTING IS COMING!

Over the next year we will be rolling out our texting service to make life easier for you.

The first stage to go live will be texts about your rent, allowing you to text us 24/7 and find out your rent balance.

Keep an eye on our website and Home News Extra for updates on when this is going to be launched.

You can call us on **0800 027 2057** to make sure we have the correct mobile phone number for you.

Customers satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service provided

63%



Target: 88%
at Sept 2018

Universal Credit full service roll out - now in Gainsborough

Universal Credit full service is being rolled out across the country, including all of our areas by the end of the year. Gainsborough joined the scheme in September.

For those of you in Sheffield and North Kesteven, this will be being rolled out in your area in November.

But what is Universal Credit?

Universal Credit supports you if you are on a low income or out of work. It includes a monthly payment to help with your living costs.

The easiest way to manage your rent payment is to pay via Direct Debit. To set up a Direct Debit please call us on **0800 027 2057**.

Universal Credit replaces:

- Child Tax Credit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA)
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- Working Tax Credit

When will Universal Credit Full Service be live in your area?:

March 2018
Lincoln

May 2018
Newark

July 2018
North East Derbyshire
Rotherham

September 2018
East Lindsey
Mansfield
West Lindsey

October 2018
Doncaster
North Lincolnshire

November 2018
Bolsover
North Kesteven

December 2018
Bassetlaw
North East Lincolnshire
Sheffield



For more information, please visit
www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk
and see Home News Extra for videos
explaining what this change means for you

Ever thought of paying your rent by Direct Debit?

It's quick and **easy** to pay by Direct Debit - once set up, it's completely **hassle-free**.

No more reminders to pay your rent. And the best bit of all, we'll let you choose the date that your payment comes out of your bank.

Sign up to pay your rent by Direct Debit during the month of October and you will be entered into a prize draw to win £100 in vouchers!

All customers who are set up to pay by Direct Debit at the end of October



2018 will automatically be entered into a draw. Once rent payment has been received in November, the winner will be given their prize in December.

And there will be two draws! One for new Direct Debit customers and one for current Direct Debit customers! This includes all customers who signed up to pay by Direct Debit prior to October.

For more information, or to request a form to pay your rent by monthly Direct Debit, please contact our Income Team on **0800 027 2057**.

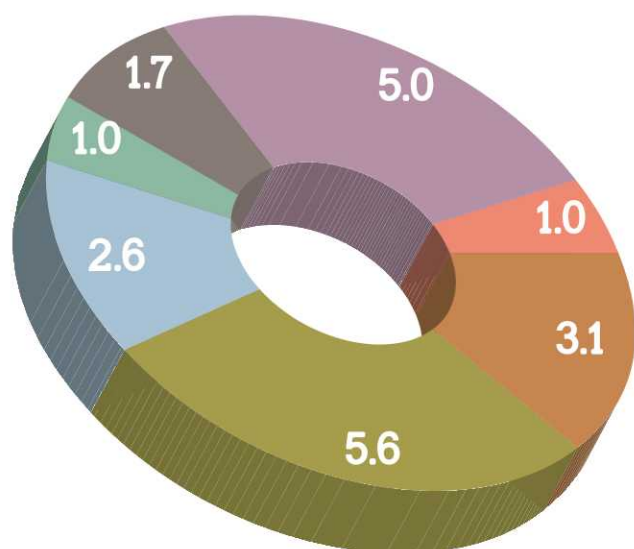
win!
£100 IN VOUCHERS

Your home. Your community. Your annual report.

Our vision is to create opportunities for people to have better lives through having better homes and accessing better services. In short, we're here to help you. We're here to serve you.

Each year, we look back at how successful we've been in helping you. We look at the impact we've had, take stock and evaluate to see how we might be able to improve our services.

This annual report reviews our progress over the last 12 months and benchmarks our success against the best housing associations in the country. You can see the fuller version on our website.



How your rent is spent (£)

Finance costs	5.0
Gas servicing	1.0
Housing management	3.1
Property improvements	5.6
Routine maintenance	2.6
Service costs	1.0
Empty properties	1.7

Better homes

In the last year we've developed 92 homes as we look to widen our services to more people.

But we've also invested in our existing properties as well, installing:



66 new kitchens
140 new bathrooms
242 new windows
258 new heating systems



Closer working across our teams helped us to cut the number of days it took to let our empty properties to new customers by

23%

81%

Percentage of customers satisfied with the overall quality of their home

Down from 84% (Top performers: 90%)

Better services

We know we can't work alone to support you.

We worked with



Last year, our wider support services contributed more than **£2.4m*** to local communities through various engagement initiatives - smashing our £1.5m target.

*as calculated by the Housing Association's Charitable Trust's social value calculator

We implemented or took on board **11 recommendations** from customers

And we're planning a lot more next year, including introducing **new digital features** to help you manage your tenancies easier.

81% Percentage of customers satisfied with the overall quality of service

Down from 83% (Top performers: 92%)

65% Percentage of customers satisfied with the repairs and maintenance service

Down from 71% (Top performers: 86%)

84% Percentage of customers who say their rent provides value for money

Down from 86% (Top performers: 87%)

60% Percentage of customers who say their views are listened to and acted upon

Down from 61% (Top performers: 77%)

Better lives

We're about more than bricks and mortar. Our work to support you doesn't stop when you leave your front door.

We've invested more than **£90,000** in the communities through our Better Places initiative designed to improve the street scenes around our estates.

We saved our customers almost **£4,000** just by helping them switch energy suppliers.



We carried out **500 customer assessments** and gave **145 people** further support with various aspects of their lives.

Our Supporting Foundations service, which helps people manage their tenancies better, had an **87.5% success rate**

83% Percentage of customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

Down from 86% (Top performers: 91%)

Complaints and compliments

	2016/17	2017/18
Stage 1	106	154
Stage 2	8	10
Stage 3	2	2
Compliments	68	136

If you have any ideas about how we could deliver our services better, get in touch and tell us.

Visit **www.acisgroup.co.uk/your-voice** for all the ways you can reach us.



Out & about

with Jude Calvert



Our Area Service Managers (ASMs) do a fantastic job working with our tenants to help support them in their home.

We went out and about with Jude Calvert, one of our ASMs for Sheffield, to see what she gets up to on an average working day.

Visiting a tenant who was struggling to apply for benefits

We understand tenants may have difficulties applying for various types of benefits. On this occasion, a tenant has been struggling to sort out his Housing Benefit so

Jude arranged for him to meet her in the office to help support him make the application and get it right.

Gardens round up


Jude also had a check in with a number of tenants who have been clearing up their garden areas.

Thankfully, the tenants involved had all made great progress so Jude was able to hand out some thank you cards.

Visiting a tenant following a bereavement

We also visited a tenant who had sadly recently lost her husband. The tenant was asking a few questions, such as taking her husband's name off the tenancy and what to do moving forward. Jude was able to support and help with this.

Jude: "It's a sad situation the tenant is dealing with. I just want my tenants to know that



“ I just want my tenants to know that I will help to support them through anything they may need.

I will help to support them through anything they may need. In this case, she is lucky to have such a great family to be by her side.”

Visiting a tenant with rent issues

Jude often deals with people who are having issues paying their rent. It's not always for bad reasons, and in this case, it was just to clarify some confusion. However, the tenant was hard of hearing so is unable to discuss matters over the phone. Jude worked with the tenant to come up with a new payment plan to make things easier as well as making sure his partner is now able to discuss tenancy issues with us over the phone.

Jude: “We will always try and help any tenant struggling with their rent and we have lots of ways we can do this. In this case we agreed on how we can clear his arrears and get him back on track. It's always best to get in touch to see how we can help.”



Winter Warmer Recipe



With Winter just around the corner, here's something to keep you warm when the cold weather drifts in. Courtesy of BBC Good Food.

Indian winter soup

Ingredients

- 100g pearl barley
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1/2 tsp brown mustard seeds
- 1 tsp cumin seeds
- 2 green chillies, deseeded and finely chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 cloves
- 1 small cinnamon stick
- 1/2 tsp ground turmeric
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 parsnip, cut into chunks
- 200g butternut squash, cut into chunks
- 200g sweet potato, cut into chunks
- 1 tsp paprika
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 225g red lentils
- 2 tomatoes, chopped
- small bunch coriander, chopped
- 1 tsp grated ginger
- 1 tsp lemon juice

Method

Rinse the pearl barley and cook following pack instructions. When it is tender, drain and set aside. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a deep, heavy-bottomed pan. Fry the mustard seeds, cumin seeds, chillies, bay leaf, cloves, cinnamon and turmeric until fragrant and the seeds start to crackle. Tip in the onion and garlic, then cook for 5-8 mins until soft. Stir in the parsnip, butternut and sweet potato and mix thoroughly, making sure the vegetables are fully coated with the oil and spices. Sprinkle in the paprika,



ground coriander and seasoning, and stir again.

Add the lentils, pearl barley, tomatoes and 1.7 litres water. Bring to the boil then turn down and simmer until the vegetables are tender. When the lentils are almost cooked, stir in the chopped coriander, ginger and lemon juice.

This recipe along with many other ideas for hearty, winter meals can be found at www.bbcgoodfood.com



Customers satisfied that their views are being taken into account

65%



Target: 78%
at Sept 2018

Why not send your photos or recipes ideas to marketing@acisgroup.co.uk

PUZZLE

time!

**£20
VOUCHER
UP FOR
GRABS!**

Enter our Autumn wordsearch.

Find all 10 words from the list below, then return it along with the completed entry form.

Y	H	A	R	V	A	F	L	S	P
D	Z	A	L	Z	R	E	T	T	U
N	O	H	R	A	A	U	R	Z	M
I	G	L	C	V	N	V	B	Q	P
W	R	S	E	T	E	R	G	O	K
X	Y	S	S	L	E	S	O	Q	I
B	I	E	F	W	P	K	T	C	N
B	H	Y	L	L	I	H	C	F	A
C	S	C	A	R	E	C	R	O	W
R	A	K	E	D	H	B	N	S	G

**ACORN
CHESTNUTS
CHILLY
HARVEST
LEAVES**

**PUMPKIN
RAKE
SCARECROW
SCARF
WINDY**



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: 14 December 2018.

0800 027 2057 info@acisgroup.co.uk www.acisgroup.co.uk

AND THE WINNER IS...

Tablet winner

Congratulations to **Miss Derbyshire of Sheffield** who was drawn as the winner of our contact details mailer competition.

Back in May, to fall in line with new data protection regulations, we asked tenants to let us know if the contact details we have for them are correct and if we could contact them in the future for any marketing news like competitions and information about our events.

More than 1,300 tenants returned the mailer and were entered into our prize draw to win a tablet.

Didn't send yours back? No problem, email us at **info@acisgroup.co.uk** or call us on **0800 027 2057**.



Customers satisfied that we get back to them and keep them informed

68%



Target: 75%
at Sept 2018



New homes coming to Saxilby

We are delighted to be able to offer some new affordable homes for those over the age of 55.

We are working with Lindum Construction to develop 60 new homes in Saxilby for the over 55s with availability being split evenly between outright sales, shared ownership and affordable rent.

There will be 50 bungalows and 10 flats being built with the support of a social housing grant from Homes England.

We recently visited the site with our Chief Executive Greg Bacon

taking part in a ceremonial ground cutting event.

You can find all the information about Saxilby and our other fantastic new developments on our website as well as regular updates in Home News Extra.



To register your interest in these properties, please email sales@acisgroup.co.uk

**FANTASTIC
BUNGALOWS
NOW
AVAILABLE
TO RESERVE!**

Did you know?

Did you know we have launched a new way to apply for a shared ownership home? www.acisgroup.co.uk/shared-ownership-application

We're always looking to improve our services to customers and this is a way for Shared Ownership applicants to easily track their applications.

simple!

easy!



Acis Group Limited,
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Gainsborough DN21 1GG



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