

# HOME

## NEWS

**We're  
growing**

**Apprenticeship  
success**

**Spring  
cleaning  
tips**

**Texting  
is here**

# COMMUNITY FOCUS

**We relaunch our awards**

**WIN!**  
**VOUCHERS  
TO BE WON  
INSIDE!**



# INSIDE



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## New texting service

You can now text us to find out your rent balance



**12-13**

## We're growing

We recently gained over 400 new customers in the East Midlands



**16-17**

## #DayByDay

A look at the great things our people get up to on a day to day basis

# Welcome

In this issue you'll find out about:

- Our Heroes awards 2019
- Community engagement projects
- Our new developments
- And much more!



**HOME  
NEWS  
EXTRA**

Don't forget to check out Home News Extra for more content from Acis including videos, photos and infographics.



Find it all at [www.acisgroup.co.uk/home-news-extra](http://www.acisgroup.co.uk/home-news-extra)



# For better mental health

**Over the past two years we have raised money in lots of ways, including dress down days, bake sales and Christmas Elf days for the Alzheimer's Society as our charity of the year.**

We are proud to say that we have raised **£4,761.61** for Alzheimer's Society.

This year, our people have decided that Mind should be our charity of the year for 2019/20.

Mind is a charity which focuses on mental health, offering advice and support to anyone experiencing any form of mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and improve understanding of mental health.

Here at Acis, we take the wellbeing of our people and customers seriously and last year we launched our internal mental health service with our qualified mental health first aiders.

It's extremely important that everyone has someone to talk to in times of hardship. If you would like to find out more about Mind, you can visit their website at **[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)**

As part of our commitment to the wellbeing of our customers, our Supporting Foundations team are there to support, advise and signpost around any needs you may have.

You can find out more about this service on our website at **[www.acisgroup.co.uk](http://www.acisgroup.co.uk)**



**“ We are proud to say that we have raised **£4,761.61** for Alzheimer's Society.**

Customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live

**87%**



Target: 86%  
at Sept 2018



# OUR HEROES

NEW AND IMPROVED

2019

We have some fantastic people in our communities. People that go the extra mile to make the world a better place one step at a time. To celebrate and recognise those people, 'Our Heroes' awards are back.

Following last year's event, which proved to be a massive success with scores of entries, we want to make this year's event even bigger and better.

We want to recognise and reward even more amazing people this year. That's why we're introducing the...

**Positive Change Award** for the ones that can change any situation into something positive. For those that decided that change needed to happen and went for it!

...on top of last year's rewards that were:

**Garden Guru Award** for the green fingers amongst us who take special pride in their gardens, allotments or open spaces.



Customers satisfied with the  
quality of their home

84%



Target: 83%  
at Sept 2018





**Wonderful Neighbour/  
Neighbourhood of the Year  
Award** for those with a kind  
heart and a positive change  
on their mind.

**Young Person/People of the  
Year Award** for anyone aged  
24 or under doing great things  
and deserve recognition.

It's all down to you now.  
Do you know anyone that  
makes a positive impact on the  
community?

## Nominate them!

Tell us what they're doing and how it's  
making a positive change - and remember  
- they don't have to be an Acis customer.

You can nominate your hero online at:  
**[www.acisgroup.co.uk/ourheroes](http://www.acisgroup.co.uk/ourheroes)**

Or alternatively look out for one of our  
nomination cards available from your  
Area Service Manager. The deadline for  
nominations is 31 July 2019.



# Time • for a Spring *Clean!*



The days are getting longer, the sun is out, and we all tend to have a bit more energy now winter is behind us. If you're wanting to use that excess oomph to give your house a spring clean, we've got some tips for you.

## Declutter

They say a tidy house makes for tidy minds. Try to put things away into storage if you don't use them regularly and consider selling items online or donating things to charity if you don't want them any longer.

## Clean your oven

Ovens tend to get dirty quickly. Clear any loose pieces of food debris from any trays or hobs before sprinkling baking soda with a few drops of white vinegar. Let it bubble away and then wipe with a warm sponge. You might need to work up some elbow grease.

## Make your bathroom sparkle

Did you know white vinegar is also great at breaking down the

dirt and stains that can build up in bathrooms? Spray it on and leave it to get to work for a while before rinsing away.

## Clear the drains

Leaves and rubbish may have blown into your drains and gutters. Remove what you can to ensure water can run freely. And don't forget wet wipes aren't for flushing – they can block up drains and sewerage systems for the whole neighbourhood. Try to find alternatives but if you do use them, make sure you put them in the bin instead.

## Wash your windows

Summer's coming so make sure the light can get into your home. Don't hold back on your spray of choice but choose a dry, cloudy day as direct sun can lead to streaky windows after washing.

Overall customer satisfaction  
with Acis and its services

87%



Target: 90%  
at Sept 2018

If you think clutter is becoming a problem in your home you can contact our Supported Foundations team for more information on how we can help you if you're struggling, but did you know Lincolnshire Fire and Safety offers a free safety check - find out more by visiting



[www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lincolnshire-fire-and-rescue](http://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/lincolnshire-fire-and-rescue)



# Out & about

with Ross Payne

**The latest feature in our series sees us follow a member of our safer communities team through a typical day.**

Safer Communities Officer Ross Payne is one of a four person team team helping neighbourhoods feel safe and secure for our customers.

## Setting up for the day

I start the day by reviewing any complaints of antisocial behaviour that have been taken by our Customer Contact Centre and check up on any emails that may have come in overnight.

“

**The most satisfying part of my role is making sure our customers are able to live a safe, peaceful and happy life.**

## Meeting with local partners

Part of my role is to build and keep relationships with any local partners that we can work closely with to help keep our communities safe. So I check in and meet with the police and other partners to see how we can continue work together to prevent any disturbances in our communities.

You can find more about what we can help with and where our partners support on our website at [www.acisgroup.co.uk/asb](http://www.acisgroup.co.uk/asb)

## Keeping customers involved and updated

I currently have two cases open today so I make sure I contact the complainant of each case to discuss any updates or just to let them know I'm there to support them through what is often a distressing time.

## Going out and about

With antisocial behaviour cases, the team need to be dynamic and alert to be able to support customers when needed.

In these cases I am attending both complainant's homes to gather any evidence that is needed to take the case forward to a positive outcome for our customer.

I will also work closely with the customers' area service manager (ASM) to make sure the customer is comfortable with everything that we are doing.

## Checking in on other customers and new reports

Whilst I am in the area I visit others in the community who are affected by the antisocial behaviour and collect any incident diary sheets that have been completed and reassure them that we are still dealing with the issues raised.

I then go back to the office to finish the day by checking the diary sheets for each case and look for any new reports that may have come through from our online reporting form. You can find this form at [www.acisgroup.co.uk/asb](http://www.acisgroup.co.uk/asb)

The most satisfying part of my role is making sure our customers are able to live a safe, peaceful and happy life.



# Acis in the community

Our aim is to continue to improve our services and be more than the bricks and mortar of your home.

Over the past six months we have once again stepped up our community engagement with a number of initiatives and partnerships.

## Youth action

Our youth action programme based in the Woodthorpe area in Sheffield is starting this spring.

This programme, delivered by Woodthorpe Development Trust, now known as 'All About You', aims to engage young people aged between 11 and 19 in the delivery of social action and community events.

Running every Monday evening at 4.30pm to 7pm, the programme will last for 12 months helping young people gain valuable skills and experience for their futures.

If you're interested in getting involved, please call All About You on 0114 2654165 or email Ryszard Szumski on Ryszard@woodthorpedt.co.uk to find out more.



## Have Your Say Day

In March we held an event to hear from young people in our communities about their views on what employment support should look like for them.

Our aim is to engage with local young people and businesses to design a new service that will help young people as they enter employment.



Find out more about this by visiting Home News Extra.







## New research

Following on from our 'More than Bricks' research published last year, we have begun a new piece of research around customer expectations.

Engaging with our own customers as well as a number of customers from other housing associations we are working with, this is set to be our biggest piece of research yet.

Keep an eye out for the results on our website and in Home News Extra!



## Woodthorpe pop-up playground

We have also been engaging with the community in Woodthorpe and promoting the potential for a new adventure playground in the area.

Again, keep an eye on our social media for more updates on this and how to get involved in any future consultations.

# Green paper response

Back in August, the government published its green paper looking at social housing of the future.

We responded to this after involvement and consultations with customers and employees on topics such as complaints, customer engagement and social impact.

And in February, we hosted a roundtable event with a number

of social housing providers to discuss the response and form working groups to collaborate and move the identified projects forward.

**WATCH  
THIS  
SPACE!**

Customers satisfied with the value for money of services provided

**87%**



Target: 86%  
at Sept 2018





Did you know?

We have a range of new developments of affordable housing across our areas in:

- Edwalton
- Harworth
- Holdingham Grange
- New Waltham
- Louth
- Saxilby
- Skegby
- Waddington
- Welton
- Wombwell

# New homes update

In the last edition of Home News, we announced a new development of 60 homes in Saxilby.

These homes for the over 55s are split evenly between outright sales, shared ownership and affordable rent.

In March we were delighted to open our showhome at the site as the development grows.



Visit **[www.acisgroup.co.uk](http://www.acisgroup.co.uk)** to check out the properties available



# text us

*Last year, we told you about our plans to introduce our new texting service to help you get information from us quickly and easily.*

## Now it's here

### Get updates

You can now text us to receive updates about your rent balance or request a call back from one of our friendly customer contact centre team.

We're also planning to expand the service to include updates about rent arrears, gas servicing, repairs appointments and customer satisfaction.

It's all part of our plan to offer you better ways of communicating with us. We're also working on some exciting changes to our website to enable you to manage your own tenancy more effectively – but we'll tell you more about that when the time is right.

### How it will work

To find out how much your rent balance currently is, text **BALANCE** to **07800002270**. This will trigger an automated response back to you if we have your correct mobile phone number stored on our system.

To request a call back, text **CALLBACK** to **07800002270**. One of our trusty team will get back to you as soon as possible.

Texts cost your standard network rate.

To update your contact details, email us at **info@acisgroup.co.uk** or call us on **0800 027 2057**.

We take your privacy seriously and we abide by the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. You can view our privacy statement on our website at [www.acisgroup.co.uk](http://www.acisgroup.co.uk)

Customers satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service provided

# 66%



Target: 88%  
at Sept 2018





“ Looking forwards, we’re delivering on our growth aspirations and stepping up to the government’s call for more social housing to be developed with further new homes in our pipeline

# We’re growing

Welcome to our new customers in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.

In February, we grew as an organisation after we took on more than 400 homes from PA Housing in the East Midlands.

The transfer of these homes in and around Mansfield, Langwith, Chesterfield, Newark, Worksop, Retford,

Hucknall and Ollerton means we now support people in more than 7,000 homes across the Midlands and North of England.

We jumped at the chance to work with PA Housing to transfer these homes as they fit well within our existing footprint





**“** We're delighted to be building on our existing footprint in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, making a real difference to people's lives

and we know we can deliver a service which our new customers require.

It's the largest transfer of homes since we took on 1,100 homes in Sheffield in 2006 and is part of our ambitious growth plans as we look to expand our services to help as many people as possible.

Our Chief Executive Greg Bacon said: "We're delighted to be building on our existing footprint in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, making a real difference to people's lives. We're thrilled to be able to support even more people through our services.

"Looking forwards, we're delivering on our growth aspirations and stepping up to the government's call for

more social housing to be developed with further new homes in our pipeline."

To say hello to our new customers, we sent out welcome packs with all the information you need to know. But, like all our customers, anyone with any questions about the services we deliver can email us at [info@acisgroup.co.uk](mailto:info@acisgroup.co.uk) or call us on call us on 0800 027 2057.

## Quick tips for our new customers

### Get involved

There are six different ways to make Your Voice heard. Check out your welcome book for more information on ways to get involved.

### A focus on you

Our 'Focus on' services are designed to help you in various aspects of your life – from managing your finances to finding work

### Repairs

You can call us anytime to report a repair. Or even do it online.

### Rent

You can pay your rent lots of different ways – even via an app.

### Freephone

You can call us for free on 0800 027 2057

### Website

Visit [www.acisgroup.co.uk](http://www.acisgroup.co.uk) to find out all about our services







*Jack*

**Jack Hand, 20  
IT Apprentice**

"The thing I'm enjoying most about the apprenticeship is the social skills I'm gaining as it's my first job. I'm getting lots of opportunities to learn from people from across the organisation."

# You're hired – Perfect ten for Acis

We are proud of our Apprenticeship programme, which now sees ten apprentices working as part of our team

Josh Aisthorpe, 20, joined us as an apprentice in December, working in conjunction with Lincoln College, to make it ten.

Alongside his work, Josh will be studying Business Administration to aid his development and take those next steps in a fledgling career.

On signing up for his Apprenticeship, Josh said: "I'm delighted to have been given the opportunity to start my Apprenticeship with Acis.

"It's been very beneficial already, teaching me about the role but also having the experience of an office environment and learning from others here."

Our ten apprentices work across a range of teams in the organisation in human resources, marketing and IT as well as five engineers.

Jill Dickson, Volunteer and Employability Coordinator said:

"It's great that we are using Apprenticeships as a way to develop and introduce new talent into the organisation.

"We are committed to providing quality training and development by working with our partners to develop the skills and knowledge of our people."

The news also sees our partnership with Lincoln College continue to grow with seven of

the ten apprentices studying at their Gainsborough campus.





# Josh joins Apprenticeship programme

We are very proud of our Apprenticeship programme, offering opportunities for people to get into work in various areas.

We caught up with Prime apprentice Josh Aisthorpe as he settled into the role.

## How are you getting on?

I think I've settled in pretty well having started in December. I've had good feedback from my colleagues who are helping me improve on lots of different aspects.

## What do you do on a daily basis?

At the moment I am working on invoicing and assisting the commercial team within Prime whilst studying towards a Level 3 qualification in Business Administration.

## What have you enjoyed most about it so far?

I've enjoyed learning new things and expanding my horizons. The course is pretty interesting and I've also learned a lot about office environments which is very beneficial and valuable.

## Would you recommend an Apprenticeship?

Yes. It's a great way to get on the career ladder. You're being paid to learn and you get new experiences every day as opposed to being on a full time course. You get the taste of a work environment in a unique way.



**Katie Butterworth, 34**  
**HR Apprentice**

"I enjoy all aspects of the apprenticeship from learning of the job, going to class, meeting new people from different organisations and learning how others work."



**Damian Suma, 19**  
**Marketing Apprentice**

"It's a great opportunity for me to learn. I can boost my current skills in this role but also have lots of opportunities to try something new and lead on my own projects."





# #DayByDay

You may have noticed on our website and social media channels that we have been increasingly talking about our day to day activities.

Every day, our teams do some fantastic work in our communities from attending meetings with local police forces to making sure customers are signed up and settled into their homes well.

Here you'll see just some of the things we've been up to on a #DayByDay basis.

“ Our area service managers look after any new customers when they sign up and move into one of our homes. We hope these customers in Harworth enjoy their new home.

“ Our estate officers attend regular estate audits in our communities to make sure everything is in order and to report back on anything that may need sorting out.





“ We pride ourselves on collaborating with local partners to work to keep our communities safe. Our safer communities team often meet with the police to tackle antisocial behaviour.

“ Here you'll see just some of the things we've been up to on a #DayByDay basis.

Acis Group  
@acisgroup

#DayByDay | Once again our safer communities team have been working hard. This week they met with @syptweet in Sheffield to continue their working partnership in tackling antisocial behaviour



4:35 PM - 1 Mar 2019

Acis Group  
@acisgroup

! | Our Safer Communities team are investigating some noise complaints this afternoon! #DayByDay

! ? Did you know you can report antisocial behaviour on our website - [acisgroup.co.uk/antisocial-beh...](http://acisgroup.co.uk/antisocial-beh...)



9:05 AM - 20 Jan 2019

“ Once our estate officers have identified things that need sorting out in our communities, they work with other local partners to keep our areas tidy.

Acis Group  
@acisgroup

#DayByDay | Working with the Community Payback Scheme we have been down to Newlands Court and cleared up some of the communal areas



3:59 PM - 7 Mar 2019

“ The wellbeing of our customers is important. Our Supporting Foundations team is on hand to support, advise and signpost any of our customers to help they may need.

Acis Group  
@acisgroup

#DayByDay | Our supporting foundations officers have been out yesterday visiting our lovely new customers at Chewton Close, sheltered scheme in Bilsthorpe. We will be visiting the scheme every Thursday morning, offering support.



10:22 Feb 2019

Acis Group  
@acisgroup

#DayByDay | Last week our Customer Engagement Coordinator attended a tenant engagement workshop with @tpasengland and @WMinsightUK in London!



10:43 PM - 4 Feb 2019

Acis Group  
@acisgroup

#DayByDay | We visited @P3LincsFS today to learn more about their service in supporting adults at risk of homelessness. It was great to chat about how we can help each other support our customers!



8:43 PM - 20 Jan 2019

Acis Group  
February 7

#DayByDay | Earlier this week our safer communities team attended the Manor & Castle Action Group to meet with community partners to discuss community safety, cohesion and engagement including anti-social behaviour and crime that affect the area!



Acis Group  
February 25 at 5:00 PM

#DayByDay | Recently we met with Lincolnshire Police for the Antisocial Behaviour Reduction Meeting (ARM). We discuss with them and West Lindsey District Council on-going antisocial behaviour cases in the West Lindsey district.





# Spring Sparkle Recipe

Courtesy of  
BBC Good Food.



Serves

6

With winter behind us it's time to embrace the freshness of spring. Why not start off with an aromatic dish?

## Veggie casserole with little herb dumplings

### Ingredients

- 100g self-raising flour
- 50g butter at room temperature, cut in pieces
- 50g mature cheddar, finely grated
- 3 tbsp finely chopped parsley
- 3 tbsp light olive oil
- 8 shallots, peeled and cut in half lengthways
- 250g small new potatoes, cut in half
- 3 peeled garlic cloves, cut in half lengthways
- 200g baby carrots, scraped but left whole
- 2-3 fennel bulbs (about 500g total weight), each cut into 8 wedges
- 600ml boiling vegetable stock
- 300g fruity white wine, such as sauvignon blanc or pinot grigio
- pinch of muscovado sugar, light or dark
- 1/2 tsp light soy sauce
- 200g green beans, trimmed and cut in half
- 250g chestnut mushrooms, halved if large
- 200g baby courgettes, each cut into 4 chunks, or 2 courgettes cut in sticks
- 2 tsp cornflour
- 1/2 fresh red chilli, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 tbsp each snipped chives and chopped parsley

### Method

To make the dumplings, rub the flour and butter together so it looks like breadcrumbs. Stir in the cheese, parsley and salt and pepper to season and set aside.

Heat the oil in a large pan or flameproof casserole (about 3.5 litres) over a high-ish heat, then throw in the halved shallots. Fry for 2-3 minutes till beginning to soften and turn brown and gold in places. Now, still working on quite a high heat, add the potatoes and watch for the same effect, about 5-7 minutes,

stirring with a wooden spoon and generally moving the pan about a bit. Add the garlic, carrots and fennel, allowing a couple of minutes between each so they get a chance to release their flavours. Pour in the stock along with most of the wine, then stir in the sugar and soy sauce and return to the boil. Simmer covered for 10 minutes.

Stir about 2 tbsp of water into the dumpling mixture to form a soft dough. Break off small pieces to make 20-25 dumplings, then shape into rounds about the size of a cherry tomato. Add the green beans and simmer for 5 minutes, then add the mushrooms and courgettes. Stir the cornflour into the remaining wine until it has dissolved, then stir into the casserole until it thickens. Bring to the boil, stir well then gently place the dumplings on top. Cover the pan with a lid and simmer gently for about 15 minutes till the dumplings have risen, and the stew is rich and thick and the vegetables deliciously tender.

Mix the chilli and herbs together in a small bowl and scatter on top of the casserole.

Customers satisfied that their  
views are being taken into account

59%



Target: 78%  
at Sept 2018



For more exciting recipes like this one,  
visit [www.bbcgoodfood.com](http://www.bbcgoodfood.com)



# PUZZLE

## time!

**£20  
VOUCHER  
UP FOR  
GRABS!**

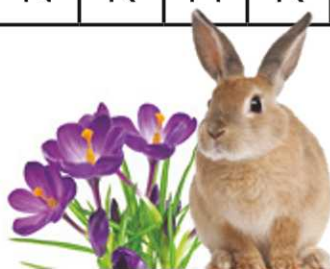
Enter our Spring wordsearch.

Find all 10 words from the list below, then return it along with the completed entry form. **Last winner was Mrs Lusby of Market Rasen.**

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

**BLOSSOM  
BULBS  
BUNNY  
CROCUS  
DAFFODIL**

**HATCHING  
LAMBS  
SHOWERS  
TADPOLES  
THAW**



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: 30 May 2019.



## DAY OF ACTION

We are committed to keeping our customers and communities safe so we joined Sheffield City Council and South Yorkshire Police for their Day of Action in Woodthorpe, Sheffield.

The day was to show our customers and the wider community that Woodthorpe is a safe and thriving place to live and by working with the police and council, it can continue to be that way.

Some of our people joined forces with our partners to send a positive message around police presence and community cohesion.



Whilst the police patrolled the area on their off road motorbikes and horses speaking with residents, some of our people took part in a litter pick around the area.

It was a great day with lots of community engagement. Keep an eye out on social media and Home News Extra for more photos and future similar events.



# Simple savings and affordable loans

Did you know that, as an Acis customer, you can join the Lincolnshire Credit Union - even if you don't live in Lincolnshire.

Credit unions are community savings and loans providers, ideal for people who might struggle to qualify for high street borrowing. And while savings rates are so low, they can sometimes beat high street rates.

For more information, call Lincolnshire Credit Union on 01522 873550, quoting 'Acis' if you join up.



If your New Year resolution was to start saving for next Christmas, talk to us about our **Christmas Saver Account** and how we can 'lock' your savings away until November to avoid temptation.

Save a little amount regularly with the **Christmas Saver Account** to make this year extra special.

Remember your savings are protected by the FSCS unlike many other unregulated Christmas Savings Schemes.



Lincolnshire Credit Union, City Hall, Beaumont Fee, Lincoln, LN1 1DD  
Tel: 01522 873550  
[www.lincscreditunion.org.uk](http://www.lincscreditunion.org.uk)



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