

The magazine for Acis Group customers



HOME

Summer 2022

**You said,
we did**

What we're doing in response to your feedback



Welcome

A warm welcome to the latest edition of Home News. We're focusing on how we've been putting your ideas, recommendations and feedback into action.

On pages **18** and **19** you'll find information about how our repairs service is evolving to help you get things fixed quicker and easier. And on pages **14** and **15** we've included some information about where you can find advice to support you in your home.

In the last edition we talked about Your Voice and how you can get involved and have a say on our service. On pages **16** and **17** we've included a round up of what happened in Your Voice month in February and March and the opportunities that are coming up in the future. And on page **3** we've included the latest update about Together with Tenants and the work we are doing.

You'll also notice that this edition is a little different. Home News has had a redesign. Based on your feedback the middle section of the magazine is now

more focused on your area, and we've reduced the number of magazines you'll receive to two a year. We would love to know what you think and how we can keep providing you with the information you want.

I hope you enjoy reading.

Greg Bacon,
Chief Executive

"We would love to know what you think and how we can keep providing you with the information you want"



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Hearing your voice

Hundreds of you have taken part in Together with Tenants activity so far - from giving us feedback to producing recommendations for service improvements.

In November 2020, we adopted the Together with Tenants (TWT) Charter, which was launched by the National Housing Federation to help build stronger relationships between customers and housing associations like us.

In working towards the Charter's six commitments, we've reviewed and revamped some of our engagement activities following conversations with you.

All customers were invited to rate us against these commitments, with more than a hundred people giving us honest feedback about their experiences - both positive and negative.

As a result, we created a new action plan and launched a new Customer Voice Panel and Scrutiny Group to ensure we keep on track.

Our newly formed Customer Voice Panel has oversight of this action plan and reviews progress at its quarterly meetings, raising challenges and queries to our Board regularly. It also identifies areas for further review, which are then delved into by our Scrutiny Group.



Since putting the TWT action plan in place in 2021, we have been working with our customers to meet the various actions set out, including:

- Launching a new website in March 2022 after consultation with customer groups
- Reviewing the content, format and presentation of our performance reporting so it can be more easily understood
- Increasing awareness of further engagement opportunities through our Your Voice activities
- Creating new customer groups focused on repairs and complaints

Claire Tunstall, our Customer Engagement Coordinator, said: "We have a longstanding commitment to customer engagement, having been accredited by TPAS (Tenant Engagement Specialists) since 2008. Our customers are our number one priority and so it was an obvious step for us to back the Charter."

"It's important that we remain flexible in our approach as we know every single one of our customers is different, with different circumstances, needs and time limitations so opportunities to engage with us need to reflect that."

Find out how you can get involved - follow the QR code



"Our customers are our number one priority and so it was an obvious step for us to back the Charter"



A day in the life of a Safer Communities Officer

Our Safer Communities team are here to help keep your communities safe and for you to report antisocial behaviour (ASB).

We caught up with one of our officers, Jo, to find out more about what goes on in the world of a Safer Communities Officer on a daily basis.

Logging on

Every morning we start with our daily connect meeting where we discuss any key or urgent tasks that need picking up within the team - and where we can support each other.

After this, I check my case load and check in with any customers who are due a call that day to update them on their case.

Working with partners

We rarely work alone. Our role means we work with lots of different partners to support our communities. From social workers to solicitors and the police to local councils - we meet with them all on a regular basis. Linking with other external agencies means we can find the best solution possible as quickly as we can.

The case I'm working on today has resulted in a meeting with other internal teams at Acis to refer someone into our Supporting Foundations team.



I also regularly attend a multi-agency risk assessment conference with other Lincolnshire based agencies to make sure we're all on the same page when dealing with certain ASB cases that may be bigger than just us. We meet, come up with solutions and put them into action together.

Day to day work

Ultimately, my role is to support you, our customers, in any way I can to keep you safe in our communities.

Today I'm also carrying out a joint visit with the police to mediate between some neighbours. This is typical preventative work we do to try to stop things escalating into anything serious. Not only are we there to prevent and stop certain antisocial

"Ultimately, my role is to support you, our customers, in any way I can to keep you safe in our communities."

behaviour cases, we are also there to help you work with your neighbours to avoid things going too far.

And finally, as part of my role, I also support our internal people as a Mental Health First Aider so if anyone is struggling, needs signposting or simply wants to grab a cuppa and have a chat, I support them.

I then end the day making sure my case load is up to date, the customers have been communicated with and everything is ready for the next day.



What is ASB?

ASB can be anything from low-level nuisance to serious violent or criminal behaviour. It includes behaviour that impacts negatively on people's quality of life in and around their home.

Examples of what may be considered ASB are:

- Noise nuisance such as regular late-night parties
- Verbal abuse or threats of violence to others
- Intimidating or harassing others
- Criminal behaviour such as storing stolen goods at a property
- Drug use or drug dealing from or in the locality of the property
- Domestic Abuse (further details covered in the Domestic Abuse Policy)
- Hate Crime (further details covered in the Hate Incident & Hate Crime Policy)

Examples of what we may not consider ASB are:

- Babies crying / children playing considerably
- Parking disputes
- One off parties / BBQ's
- Noise transference due to poor sound insulation
- Everyday behaviour occurring at unusual times e.g. due to different work patterns
- Neighbour disputes such as social media arguments or unpleasant staring

This is not an exhaustive list and professional judgement will be used when assessing any reports we receive. When we believe the behaviour is not ASB, advice and self-help options will be given as appropriate.

Kickstarting new careers

Almost a hundred young people have been helped to launch their careers thanks to a scheme being delivered by our Riverside Training team.

We've supported 93 16-24-year-olds on the government's Kickstart Scheme, which came to an end earlier this year.

Through the scheme, we have been helping to place young people into paid roles for six months - funded by the government as part of their Plan for Jobs response to the coronavirus pandemic.

The scheme aimed to provide young people with real life work experience as they looked to kickstart their careers.

Young people were supported into roles across our communities.

And with the scheme coming to an end, it's clear it has had a lasting impact. Gainsborough-based LEW Electrical have committed to keeping on all eight of the people they took on through the scheme, and now plan to put them through Apprenticeships to further upskill them.

Hollie Kemp, Employer Services Officer at Riverside Training, said: "We're delighted to have been so successful in matching young people up with some very supportive local employers. But the success is really down to the determination and attitude of the young people involved to impress their new employers."

"We've seen a mix of sectors getting involved too. The people we've been supporting have gone into a wide variety of roles, including administration, manual labour, customer service, landscaping, hospitality, and marketing."

Areas we've placed people

1. Bradford
2. Leeds
3. Wakefield
4. Sheffield
5. Scunthorpe
6. Gainsborough
7. Lincoln
8. Mansfield
9. Retford
10. Nottingham
11. Leicester



river^{side}

part of the acis group



"The collaborative working between DWP Gainsborough Jobcentre and Acis Group ensured a success to the national Kickstart Scheme"

"The Kickstart Scheme may have ended, but we're continuing our work to support people to reach their full potential across the East Midlands and Yorkshire."

Mark Barker, Gainsborough Jobcentre manager, said: "The collaborative working between DWP Gainsborough Jobcentre and Acis Group ensured a success to the national Kickstart Scheme. The dedication shown by staff and colleagues guaranteed numerous positive job starts and gave this customer group a welcome return to the labour market in the West Lindsey area."

Riverside Training also offers a wide range of courses, programmes and qualifications to help people realise their full potential.

For more information, visit www.riverside-training.org.uk

How are we doing?

Every three months we ask a group of you, our customers, what you think about the service we offer and how satisfied you are.



76%

Overall rate of people satisfied with our service
(target 2022/2023 87%)



81%

Customers satisfied with the quality of their home
(target 2022/2023 87%)



87%

Customers satisfied with the value for money of services provided
(target 2022/2023 88%)



79%

Customers satisfied with the overall repairs and maintenance service provided
(target 2022/2023 78%)



85%

Customers satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live
(target 2022/2023 86%)



71%

Customers satisfied that their views are being taken into account
(target 2022/2023 80%)



79%

Customers satisfied that we did what we said we would do
(target 2022/2023 84%)

Helping you realise your potential

We're here to help you get the skills and experience you need to take you where you need to go - personally or professionally.

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Our courses and support go hand in hand so whatever your situation, we have something for you.

Courses

From English and Maths to Business Admin and Building Resilience, we have courses and qualifications to suit everybody.

Routeways

We've teamed up with local employers to design routeways to help people get work in the care, construction and warehousing sectors.

Employability

We deliver programmes to help people get the confidence they need to get back to work - or even find work for the first time.

Support

If you're feeling lonely, we're there for you. If you're struggling to cope, our door is always open. Our regular support sessions have been proven to help.

Find out more: 01427 627 277
enquiries@riverside-training.org.uk
www.riverside-training.org.uk



Further your learning

Develop your skills further with our friends at CLIP.

With learning centres in Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Mablethorpe, you'll be able to make your career flourish.

CLIP delivers Access to Higher Education courses aimed at helping people to reach university if they haven't yet got the qualifications or confidence to do so.

The team can also offer a range of vocational qualifications, help for young people and a range of support and study programmes for people of all ages and abilities.

Get back into education with CLIP.
Visit www.cliplearning.com to find out more.



Ann scoops Learner of the Year award

A Gainsborough woman has picked up a regional award for her journey towards becoming a self-employed accountant.



Ann Slater, 49, has been named as Lincolnshire County Council's Learner of the Year at the Lincolnshire Show.

Ann, who has been unemployed for three years despite having good experience in hospitality, retail, administration and cleaning, is being supported in her journey by Riverside Training.

She left her last job in 2019 and was struggling to find work due to the coronavirus pandemic. Her situation worsened in 2021 when she became ill and was eventually diagnosed with osteoarthritis.

But she was determined to make a success of herself and get her career back on track - in a totally new sector.

Ann started her learning journey with a Business Administration course in a bid to improve her office skills. It proved to be the kickstart she needed, with her enrolling on a further six courses at Riverside and igniting a fire inside her to go self-employed.

She's now undertaking an accountancy and bookkeeping qualification at Lincoln College.

She said: "My dream is to become a self-employed accountant within the next two years. It's hard but I'm so determined to achieve it.

"I know I'm 50 this year but they always say age doesn't matter.

"During Covid, I was staring at four walls and not really speaking to anyone. It was really difficult. I'd always worked so going onto Universal Credit was horrible.



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"Things are a lot different now. I didn't think I had the brains to do something like accountancy before, but that's changed thanks to the people at Riverside"

"Things are a lot different now. I didn't think I had the brains to do something like accountancy before, but that's changed thanks to the people at Riverside.

"Getting this award is hard to explain. I've never been recognised for anything

before so it's a bit of a different experience. I'm very thankful for being nominated in the first place.

"The Riverside team are fantastic and the courses are really helpful. They don't leave you to struggle and they have helped me a lot."

Apprentice Blake flourishes in trades role

Our trade apprentice Blake Partridge has joined our friendly Acis HomePlus team to put his classroom knowledge to practice in the field.



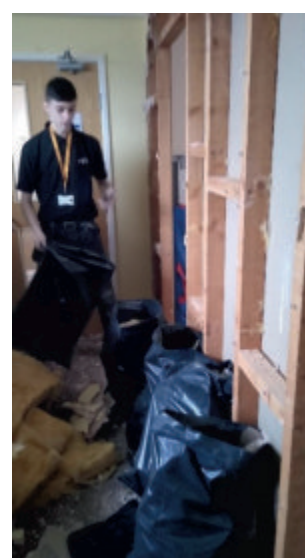
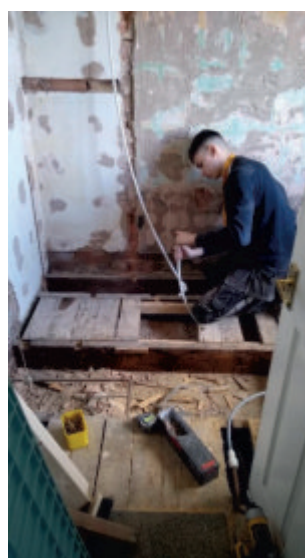
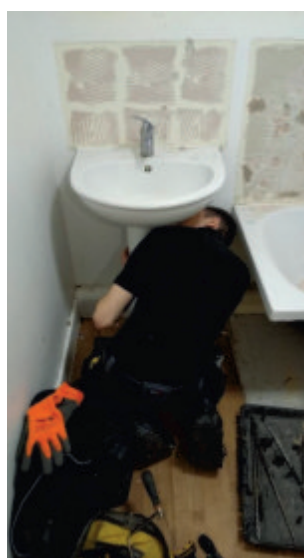
Since school, Blake has dreamed of becoming an engineer. And now he is one step closer to living his dream.

Blake is studying a plumbing course at Lincoln College and wants to test his skills in a practical environment. He said: "Even though it is a plumbing course it is multitrade so you learn a variety of skills. I joined Acis to learn more about the trade and contribute 315 hours of practical work towards my course."

Blake's passion for trade is forever growing. And at age 18 he already has a great deal of expertise. He said: "I had basic plumbing and engineer knowledge which has helped whilst being at Acis.

"But I didn't know how to fit a wet room. And I've quite enjoyed ripping out bathrooms. It's always good fun.

Blake's days are never the same and in fact varied. From installing taps at one home to building a wet room at another, Blake is constantly putting his skills to practice. He said: "There is always a variety of work to do. From demolishing



"The experience has been great. Everyone has been really nice and welcoming. I enjoy the work environment and that's why I asked to work another day"

a wall to fitting grab rails. But it has mostly been bathrooms, tiling and fitting showers.

"And before this I didn't know how to fit a whole wet room. So I've definitely learned a lot and I can get things done quicker.

"The experience has been great. Everyone has been really nice and welcoming. I enjoy the work environment and that's why I asked to work another day."

During Blake's time shadowing with the team, he has flourished and shown great expertise. Now, he is determined to find full time work in trades when he finishes college.

If you're looking for work opportunities in trades or for apprenticeship placements, get in touch at info@acisgroup.co.uk





Neighbours join forces to clean up their street

Residents living on Haldane Street in Gainsborough took part in a 'Love Your Street' day which took place in March.

Dozens of people got involved on the day, recycling unwanted items, clearing messy areas and removing over-sized items. In total, six clearance vans full of rubbish and four large bags of litter were removed.

The event was supported by West Lindsey District Council and saw local ward councillors Matt Boles and Jim Snee also turn out in force to tidy the street.

The day also coincided with Red Nose Day, with our Riverside Training team helping to bring some fun activities to the street to engage local children.

Claire Tunstall, our Customer Engagement Coordinator, said: "It was

great to see so many people join in with our teams. Our Love Your Street initiatives are all about proving our commitment to the areas in which we work, ensuring our customers have communities they can be proud of."

Cllr Matt Boles, local District Councillor for the area, said: "When it comes to keeping our streets tidy, coming together as a community like this can not only create a sense of pride in our neighbourhood, but also keep our health and wellbeing high too.

"It was fantastic to talk to so many locals who came out onto the streets with real enthusiasm to take part in this community event."

Fellow District Cllr Jim Snee, added: "My sincere thanks go to Acis for organising this event and for the Haldane Street community for embracing the occasion. I'd also like to thank all the volunteers who came to support the day.

"Tidying our streets is a simple, community-focused act we can all do to keep pride in our surroundings and help the environment and I look forward to taking part in more community events such as this one."

To find out how you can get involved and have your say check out our Your Voice page.



Puzzle time

Enter our summer wordsearch.

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

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

Words can go in any direction and can share letters as they cross over each other.

Name:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

.....

Telephone:.....

Please complete your details for a chance of winning a £20 shopping 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 30 September 2022.

**Beach
Camping
Flowers
Parasol
Picnic
Pool
Sandals
Shorts
Sunbathing
Sunny**



Help us protect our people from the effects of passive smoking

Our people may attend your home to support you for lots of reasons - whether that's a repair or just a chat about your community.

Our people are there to keep you safe and comfortable in your home so please help us keep them safe and comfortable in doing so.

We ask that if an engineer, your Area Service Manager or any of our people are attending your home, please refrain from smoking.

If one of our people asks you, please do the following:

- refrain from smoking for the duration of the visit
- should you wish to smoke, do this outside or in another room
- open windows should there be evidence of smoke

The NHS offer a wide range of free services to assist smokers should they wish to quit.

For further assistance go to www.gosmokefree.co.uk, call the NHS smoking helpline on 0800 1690 169, or TEXT 'GIVE UP' and your postcode to 88088

Thank you for your support and cooperation.



At your fingertips

Worried about budgeting? Concerned about your health? Niggled about toilet blockages?

Don't worry. Help is at hand.

We've recently given our website a refresh to signpost you to some handy guides on things related to your home, your money and your health.

Your home

We know you want to live in your home stress-free. But we also know issues will sometimes crop up. When that happens, you'll need answers sharpish.

Our new website incorporates everything into one easy-to-find place.

Want to find out how to pay your rent? Sorted.

Need to see the process involved in moving out? We've got it covered.

Like to make improvements to your home but not sure how to go about it? It's all on there.

We've also created some quick-fire guides to help you fix some simple issues around the home.

So whether you're in need of some guidance around bleeding a radiator or checking to see if your thermostat is working properly, you'll have the solution in no time.

This isn't us trying to get you to fix repairs yourself, though. If something needs fixing, our repairs team are there for you when you need them. Read more about our new and improved repairs service on pages 18 and 19.

Your money

We're not the experts in money - but we know the people who are.

We've teamed up with the friendly folk at MoneyHelper, the independent specialists who are on hand to offer guidance about everything money related.

You can now find the latest advice about budgeting, benefits, tax, loans and paying your rent on our website.

It's updated automatically, so if anything like legislation changes, the website changes too, so you'll always get the latest information at your fingertips.

Your health

Want to eat more healthily? Inspired to exercise more? Need to know the latest on coronavirus?

Our health and wellbeing section has you covered.

From finding services near you and accessing support to tackling loneliness and quitting smoking, our guides have been hand-picked to help you live a happier and healthier life.

We've sourced the best advice and guidance from the NHS and healthcare providers to serve you with the information you need.



Have we missed anything?

If you have questions that we haven't answered or think we should be providing information on other topics, get in touch.

The chances are that if you think it, others will too.

**Tell us what you think -
email marketing@acisgroup.co.uk
or give us feedback through the
MyAcis platform.**

Check out our website for more
information. Follow the QR code or visit
www.acisgroup.co.uk/your-home



Your Voice month

During February and March, we celebrated Your Voice. Your Voice month was about shining a light on the impact that you, our customers, have made to our service.

Over the course of the month, we were out and about in South Yorkshire, held Discuss Its, shared information about our Customer Voice Panel and Scrutiny Group and asked you, our customers, for your thoughts on key areas of our service.

We ended the month on Haldane Street in Gainsborough with the relaunch of Love Your Street.

But it doesn't end there! Although Your Voice month has ended you can have your say all year. Here are some of the opportunities available at the moment to get involved in:

- Repairs customer group
- Complaints customer group
- Customer Voice Panel which meets quarterly and independently reviews our performance data. They also choose an area that needs to be looked at in more detail for the Scrutiny Group.
- Scrutiny Group looks in detail at one of our areas and puts forward a number of recommendations about how that area could be improved.

Interested in getting involved?
Email yourvoice@acisgroup.co.uk to find out more.

What is Your Voice?

We put you first, and we are continually improving our service. Feedback from our customers is important in helping us to build that better service.

We offer a range of opportunities for you to have your say on what matters - whether that's our performance, reviewing our processes and policies, looking at where we work, or even just giving us views on projects we are working on.

say it

We encourage you to give us feedback on our service, whether good or bad, through MyAcis or over the phone.

view it

You are welcome to join us as we take a walk around our communities to let us know what is happening and what might need improving.





focus on
your voice



talk it

Tenants and residents living local to each other join forces to discuss issues affecting their community - not just housing-related issues.

review it

We invite you to have your say on any new policy or strategy before it goes to our Board for approval.

discuss it

We regularly hold small group workshops where you can discuss or answer questions on a variety of topics to shape our services going forward. This could be anything from customer service, communications through to gas servicing or repairs.

improve it

Our Customer Voice Panel and Scrutiny Groups take an independent view of how we deliver our services. They look at various topics to see if they can be delivered better.



A man with a beard, wearing a black hoodie, is seen from the side, working on a white Vaillant boiler. The boiler is mounted on a wall in a kitchen, with a wooden countertop and a metal mug rack visible below it. The boiler has a 'Vaillant Important' sticker and a digital display. The background shows a white cabinet with a silver handle.

Prime is now Acis

Your repairs and maintenance services are now being carried out by Acis Group.

We made the subtle change in April, replacing the old Prime branding so it's clearer for everyone.

Work is still being carried out by the same trusted and experienced tradespeople - they're just wearing slightly different uniforms and driving slightly different vans.

You'll have started to see some changes from 1 April, but all the

changes won't come into effect until the autumn. So, for a few months, you may still see some people in Prime branding.

But, as always, all our engineers will carry correct identification. If you're concerned about who might be calling at your property, we're always happy to verify people's identity.

Call us on 0800 027 2057 and we'll help.

Helping you get your repairs fixed quicker

Your repairs service is evolving - helping you get things fixed quicker and easier.

In your feedback, you've always told us that you'd like us to be more flexible. We've listened and are implementing an improved service.

To book a repair give us a ring on 0800 027 2057 or log into your MyAcis account.

We recognise your time is important to you. We already made changes to our customer service centre to be there when you need us, now it's the time for our repairs service to evolve.

Many of our engineers are now working 8am-8pm, seven days a week.

That means if you report a repair before 3pm, you may be called back by an engineer on the same day to triage the issue, book a repair and sort the issue quickly - all in the same day if possible.

If repairs are reported after 3pm, you may get a call the next day.

This call may come from a mobile number you won't recognise, but you'll know they're genuine because of the information they'll know about your repair.

We piloted these changes in the spring, with the average time for a repair being reduced from three weeks to just three days.

This new service isn't available for every type of repair just yet, but we're working on it.



No job too big or small
- our handyperson
service does it all.



**Our friendly and reliable
team are on hand to do the
jobs you can't.**

- Painting and decorating
- Changing lightbulbs
- Fitting carpets and flooring
- Putting together flatpack furniture
- Installing washing lines and dryers
- Radiator bleeding
- Clearing blocked sinks and drains
- Putting up shelving

And much more...

Get in touch to find out how we can help
www.acishomeplus.org.uk
0800 049 5397