



Homes. Communities. Support.

# Lettings Policy

May 2026



|                                          |                          |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Date</b>                              | February 2025            |
| <b>Planned Review Date</b>               | February 2028            |
| <b>Reactive Review Date &amp; Reason</b> | May 2026 – Minor amends  |
| <b>Revised Review Date</b>               | n/a                      |
| <b>Author (Job Title)</b>                | Head of Housing Services |
| <b>Service Director (Job Title)</b>      | Director of Operations   |
| <b>Directorate</b>                       | Customer Services        |

### Policy Review History

| <b>Version</b> | <b>Action &amp; Changes</b>                                                                      | <b>Author</b> | <b>Date</b> |
|----------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-------------|
| 1              | New policy                                                                                       | JMc           | Sept 18     |
| 2              | Interim Policy Review                                                                            | JMc           | June 20     |
| 3              | Full Policy Review – in line with Review date September 2021                                     | KG            | Aug 21      |
| 4              | Minor amends made prior to final launch because of feedback during launch phase from colleagues. | KG            | Feb 22      |
| 5              | 3-year fundamental policy review                                                                 | KG            | Dec 24      |
| 6              | Minor amends to reflect Renters rights bill                                                      | KG            | May 26      |

### Governance Information

|                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Equality and Diversity</b>                | The policy has undergone an Equality Needs Impact Assessment, and actions from this will be monitored.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Customer Involvement and Consultation</b> | Customer consultation was previously carried out, there are no changes to legislation or operational delivery, because of this the current version has received no major changes that require further consultation.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Environmental Sustainability</b>          | No issues/implications affecting environmental sustainability.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Monitoring and Review</b>                 | <p>This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, but sooner in the event of any relevant legislation regulation or operational changes.</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services will be responsible for the review and tenant representative groups will be involved and consulted in any review of this policy.</p>                                                                                                             |
| <b>Responsibility</b>                        | <p>It is the responsibility of the Director of Housing and Communities to ensure that the policy is in place.</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services will be responsible for ensuring that all staff are aware of the policy and working within the policy requirements.</p> <p>The Head of Housing Services will also be responsible for ensuring that customers are fully informed of the policy and any changes made during review.</p> |

## Relevant Regulations

| <b>Regulation/<br/>Consumer<br/>Standard</b>                    | <b>Code of Practice</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <b>Policy section</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| <b>Regulator of<br/>Social Housing<br/>Tenancy<br/>Standard</b> | Registered providers shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock. | Section 3             |
|                                                                 | Registered providers must allocate and let their homes in a fair and transparent way that takes the needs of tenants and prospective tenants into account                                                                                            | Section 3             |
|                                                                 | Registered providers must seek to allocate homes that are designated, designed, or adapted to meet specific needs in a way that is compatible with the purpose of the housing                                                                        | Section 3             |
|                                                                 | Registered providers must support relevant tenants living in eligible housing to mutually exchange their homes.                                                                                                                                      | Section 3             |
|                                                                 | Registered providers must co-operate with local authorities' strategic housing functions and assist local authorities to fulfil their duties to meet identified local housing need. This includes assistance with local                              | Section 3             |

|                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |               |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
|                                    | authorities' homelessness duties, and through meeting obligations in nominations agreements.                                                                                                                                                         |               |
|                                    | Registered providers must develop and deliver services to address under-occupation and overcrowding in their homes. These services should be focused on the needs of tenants.                                                                        | Section 3     |
|                                    | Registered providers must have a fair, reasonable, simple and accessible appeals process for allocation decisions.                                                                                                                                   | Section 3 & 5 |
|                                    | Registered providers must record all lettings and sales as required by the Continuous Recording of Lettings (CORE) system.                                                                                                                           | Section 3     |
|                                    | Registered providers shall offer tenancies or terms of occupation which are compatible with the purpose of the accommodation, the needs of individual households, the sustainability of the community, and the efficient use of their housing stock. | Section 3     |
|                                    | Registered providers shall grant tenants who have been moved into alternative accommodation during any redevelopment or other works a tenancy with no less security of tenure on their return to settled accommodation.                              | Section 3     |
|                                    | Registered providers must support relevant tenants living in eligible housing to mutually exchange their homes                                                                                                                                       | Section 3     |
|                                    | Registered providers must provide support for accessing mutual exchange services to relevant tenants who might otherwise be unable to use them.                                                                                                      | Section 3     |
| <b>Safety and Quality Standard</b> | Registered providers must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services                                                                                                | Section 3     |
|                                    | Registered providers must co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is provided to tenants                                                             | Section 3     |

## 1 REFERENCE MATERIAL

- 1.1 Please refer to [section 7.1 of the supporting documentation](#).

## 2 WHY WE NEED THIS POLICY

- 2.1 To operate an efficient and effective business to the benefit of our customers and colleagues and their diverse needs whilst meeting our legal and regulatory requirements (Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) England) and ensuring that we meet our Local Authority strategic housing duties and that we achieve our own business aims and aspirations.
- 2.2 To set out how we will deliver this aim in a fair and transparent way so that customers can have access to good quality homes, providing choice to our

customers whilst also meeting the housing needs for individuals and ensuring that we create sustainable communities.

- 2.3 To demonstrate how we achieve the aims of this policy, we must publish a summary of the rules for determining the priority between applicants in the allocation of homes that show how it:
- Makes the best use of available housing
  - Is in keeping with its housing purpose
  - Contributes to the local authority's strategic housing function and sustainable communities, including the Local Authorities homelessness duties, by meeting obligations in nomination agreements.

### **3 HOW WE DO THIS**

- 3.1 The policy aims to:
- Provide the details for how properties will be let
  - Explains who can apply for housing with Thirteen
  - Describes all the Housing options that are available for customers
- 3.2 We take into account the housing needs and aspirations of tenants and potential tenants, with a clear application, decision-making and appeals process.
- 3.3 Properties can be relet through several routes:
- Direct management lets
  - Offers direct from Thirteen's digital portal MyThirteen
  - Alternative marketing platforms
  - Transfer applications
  - Nominations from Local Authority agreements
  - Mutual exchanges between social tenants

#### **Eligibility to apply for a home with Thirteen**

- 3.4 We offer a range of quality homes to rent through a variety of products, namely:
- Social rented homes
  - Affordable rented homes
  - Market rent
- 3.5 We want to maximise choice and provide access to a range of homes for rent. Any person over the age of 16 can be considered, regardless of whether there is a local connection to the area. We will provide advice around the different products that we have, promoting alternatives, such as homes for sale and shared ownership, to maximise rehousing choice linked to affordability. Where customers are struggling

to afford a home, we will offer advice so that homes that customers choose to apply for are affordable and sustainable in the long term.

- 3.6 Customers aged 16-17 can be rehoused in extreme circumstances but will need to have a rent guarantor so that we know that customers have the support needed to be successful in their new home. If a young person does not have a rent guarantor, then access to alternative accommodation is possible where we provide some additional support, for example we have accommodation specifically for young people. We want to make sure that all tenancies are successful, so we have a range of checks that are completed as part of the lettings process. This includes checking customers are eligible to access housing and seeking references. Some homes to let may have specific letting criteria i.e. bungalows and sheltered homes for over 55-year-olds and customers will need to meet the criteria to access these homes. These will be clear on our adverts where they apply.
- 3.7 We expect all customers accessing rehousing to have no outstanding debt (i.e., a clear rent account if currently renting, no former debt from previous tenancies, housing related debt for example rechargeable repair debt and sundry legal costs), no unspent criminal convictions and a good track record of managing and maintaining a tenancy where appropriate. Where this isn't the case, then we would ask that you are open and transparent with us and declare what debt that you have, any unspent convictions and where breaches in tenancy behaviour have occurred along with reasons. If a debt of less than £500.00 is owed, then we would not overlook your application, but would expect that this is cleared prior to any firm offer being awarded.
- 3.8 If you are found to have not been clear in your application this may impact your chances of rehousing with us and/or the continuation of your tenancy should this information, come to light once a tenancy has commenced.
- 3.9 Where customers are open and transparent, we may choose at times to consider customers for rehousing where debt, convictions or former tenancy breaches exist, based on individual personal circumstances.
- 3.10 Where a debt exists, and there has been a significant change in behaviour with reasonable attempts to reduce over a period which is proportionate to the debt owed, an application may still be considered. Where there have been previous tenancy breaches, or unspent convictions, evidence of changes in behaviour over a period, will also be considered on an individual basis.
- 3.11 Please see [section 7.3 of the supporting documentation](#) for further examples of unacceptable behaviour. We maintain the right to not rehouse any customer especially where no attempts to change behaviour has been shown. It is the customers responsibility to provide this detail to support their application.
- 3.12 We will not rehouse any applicant who has previously been evicted by ourselves (including respective landlords) for any tenancy breach. We will also not prioritise any customer for rehousing where they have disclosed information that suggests their tenancy may impact on the immediate community or property including but not exclusively relevant convictions spent or otherwise for arson, sexual offences, violent assault etc, whether as a Thirteen tenant or not.

- 3.13 Customers that have deliberately worsened their own circumstance by leaving a Thirteen property to gain additional priority on the scheme will not be considered for up to a 12-month period from the date of the application unless there is an exceptional change in circumstance.
- 3.14 Customers that have provided false, or deliberately withheld, information as part of their application will not qualify for a minimum of 3 years from the date of the assessment outcome.
- 3.15 Where a decision is made to make a customer ineligible they will be notified in writing of the reason and period of ineligibility along with the actions they need to take to rectify the decision. Customers can request a review within 21 days of the decision if they do not agree with the outcome. Please see ([Appeals in the supporting documentation \(Section 7.4\)](#)).
- 3.16 It will be the responsibility of the Customer to re-register after the ineligible period and to provide the supporting evidence to show they have complied with the actions required in the original decision.
- 3.17 EU Nationals, plus persons from Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, or Liechtenstein who arrived in the UK up to the 31 December 2020 will be able to access housing via My Thirteen if they have successfully applied to the EU Settlement Scheme; whether they have pre-settled or settled status. For those with pre-settled status it will also be necessary to undertake an affordability check, as those with pre-settled status may or may not have access to public funds. EU Nationals who arrived up to the 31 December 2020 and do not have either settled or pre-settled status cannot access housing with us unless they have some other form of immigration status allowing them to legally reside in the UK. Those arriving from the 1 of January 2021 will be treated as Third Country Nationals (see 3.19), unless they are joining EEA Nationals who arrived by the 31 December 2020 who have pre or settled status and they have a family permit issued under the EUSS.
- 3.18 Irish Citizens will continue to be able access Housing with my Thirteen under the Common Travel Area Agreement rules and are not subject to the rules set out above in 3.17.
- 3.19 Third Country Nationals who have legal immigration status will be able to access housing via My Thirteen even where a person has no recourse to public funds. However, they may also need to show how they can afford to pay the rent when they are unable to claim benefits to cover this; as part of the affordability assessment completed for all lettings a person with no legal immigration status will not be able to access housing via My Thirteen unless an exception applies.
- 3.20 Where customers may struggle to manage a tenancy, for example where customers may not have the capacity to hold a tenancy for medical reasons, access to alternative accommodation should be considered through Thirteen's care and support services.
- 3.21 Once the let or sale is complete, we record all lettings and sales as required by the continuous recording of lettings (CORE) system.

## **Digitised Lettings Portal, MyThirteen**

- 3.22 We advertise available homes on our digital lettings' portal called "MyThirteen" which can be accessed online or via our Touchpoint store and telephone line. This approach is designed to assist customers in finding a home that is most suitable for their individual needs. The portal includes a range of tenures including affordable rented and social rented options.
- 3.23 Customers receive updates through My Thirteen once they have registered their requirements for a home. We give all customers the opportunity to contact us and be considered for properties (subject to eligibility). Customers are offered in order of the criteria set out below based on what is affordable for them, through an affordability assessment, to support a long-term solution to their housing need.
- 3.24 Properties are advertised on MyThirteen with a description of its features, the rental and any service charges that apply, any additional features including any known adaptations and the local area/ amenities.
- 3.25 Customers that need assistance in finding a home due to disability, medical or support needs will be assisted through one of our Touchpoint advisors – either face to face or over the telephone.
- 3.26 We reserve the right to advertise / re-advertise on other lettings platforms for example, Rightmove or Zoopla, for market rent properties or where it is considered that there isn't sufficient demand generated from a MyThirteen advert from customers in housing need.
- 3.27 Thirteen will allocate properties based on the customer meeting the eligibility criteria for the property and customers housing need. Properties will be allocated in MyThirteen, on band rating first, followed by date band verified and then date and time of first registration.
- 3.28 Sometimes customers need to move urgently and are protected through public protection arrangements such as MAPPA level 2 or 3. Where this is the case, we will work with the Local Authority to ensure that access to rehousing is completed in a planned way, subject to risk assessments and plans being in place. This process will always take place as a direct let.
- 3.29 Additionally, Thirteen may find it necessary to make a direct let to a current Thirteen tenant for an alternative property. This may be due to an emergency fire, flood, domestic abuse or if the tenant would be at risk of serious harm to remain in their current home.
- 3.30 Where a customer has the right to succeed a tenancy but not the property due to it being too large for the successors needs or adaptations that are not required, then a direct let may also be undertaken. (This list is not exhaustive). This will be in mutual

agreement and approved by Senior Managers to ensure that there is a full audit trail, and that the decision meets with the Lettings Policy.

### Priority Bands

- 3.31 We prioritise customers who apply for rehousing via MyThirteen based on their priority band, followed by the date in which the band was awarded. Please refer to [Local Authorities Nomination agreements](#) section for details of nomination agreements in place, with lettings prioritised on local housing needs based on their local authorities' lettings policy.
- 3.32 In all circumstances, the responsibility resides with the customer to have provided the evidence to support the criteria below. Failure to provide this and/or provide appropriate evidence when requested will result in an automatic allocation of Band 4 need ([Evidence Examples shown in the supporting documentation](#)).

#### Band 1:

- Decant -Thirteen's tenants that are losing their home due to a recognised demolition and/or regeneration scheme.

#### Band 2:

- Non-Thirteen customers in employment or who need to move to the area due to an offer of employment and have a local connection to the Local Authority area where the property is located.
- Customers with an **Urgent** medical need where the property is unsuitable due to medical or mobility reasons, which will be resolved by applying for a property that is suitable for the customers' requirements.
- Thirteen transferring tenants who are seeking rehousing due to being a victim of abuse or through a police recommendation for immediate rehousing.
- A customer (Thirteen and non-Thirteen) who has left the armed forces within the last 5 years (supported through our armed forces covenant).
- A Thirteen customer requiring "move on" accommodation within our commissioned care and support services who no longer needs ongoing support.
- A Thirteen tenant who is pregnant (28 weeks+) or a parent with full custody of child(ren) under the age of 14 who are living in a high-rise block or a property above ground floor. Non thirteen customers who are working in the NHS, Police, Fire Brigade and Care workers.

#### Band 3:

- Customers with a **High** medical need will be allocated to customers who have been assessed as needing to move to an alternative property to receive support from relatives or a carer, or one which is situated within a supported housing scheme.
- Thirteen's tenants who are under-occupying and financially impacted.
- Thirteen's tenants who are over-crowded by 1 or more bedrooms.
- Newly granted refugees leaving asylum accommodation in the next 28 days

#### Band 4

- Anyone applying for a property will be treated as band 4 as a default where customer is unable to provide evidence to substantiate the above banding criteria.

## **Transfers**

- 3.33 Where a tenant wishes to apply for another property with us, they can choose to apply for a transfer via MyThirteen. All tenants wishing to transfer are subject to a home inspection and must have: -
- A clear rent account
  - Not committed any tenancy breaches; and
  - Leave their existing property with no damage, be decorated to a good standard and both the property and the garden should be clean, tidy and free of any rubbish or personal belongings. (link to video)
- 3.34 Where customers are new, a transfer cannot be arranged in the first 24 months, unless there are exceptional circumstances which warrant a transfer sooner.
- 3.35 Where transfer applicants want to be rehoused and there is damage to their home or outstanding debt on the account, then these must be rectified first before a transfer application will be considered. All recharges should be paid in advance of a move, or the damage rectified to an agreed standard. Customers will be offered support through our tenancy support service, or via external partner agencies where needed.
- 3.36 In exceptional circumstances where a property does not meet the Thirteen standard, and a customer **MUST** move, for example due to a domestic abuse incident, or high priority medical need, discussions will take place with the customer and other agencies around an agreed approach. This could include setting up a repayment plan following a recharge, an agreed repayment plan against an existing debt, acting against a perpetrator where a customer is subject to abuse and damage has occurred, or working with partner agencies to improve the property prior to a move.
- 3.37 All customers transferring to their new home, must leave their home clean and tidy prior to returning the keys to Thirteen. Any transferring customer who leaves any belongings in the property will be recharged the full costs for clearance and cleaning which will be paid by the customer on the day of the transfer.

## **Local Authorities Nomination Agreements**

- 3.38 We work with individual Local Authorities to agree the proportion of their homes that will be allocated via a local authority nomination agreement. Where nomination agreements are in place, this means that a certain proportion of our homes will be offered to the Local Authority for nominations of customers from their own waiting list, based on their assessment of housing need. This ensures that we're able to assist the Local Authority in its strategic functions, meeting local housing needs and will give preference to reasonable preference groups as set out in The Housing Act 1996 (Part 6). All nominations still need to meet the eligibility criteria for a property, be subject to

reference checks and comply with Thirteen's lettings policy. Local agreements in place and specific details can be seen in section 7.7.

Also see [Reasonable preference groups in supporting documentation](#) for further details.

- 3.39 Nomination agreements are also in place with Local Authorities in Tees Valley for our extra care accommodation and other specialist housing schemes (as detailed in relevant Local Authority Nomination Agreement) with 100% nominations to ensure that these homes are allocated to customers with the required care and support needs through either a panel or nomination process. Consideration is given to affordability and the balance of care needs within the scheme.
- 3.40 Nomination agreements with the relevant Local Authority also refers to the percentage of initial and subsequent relets on new builds. This is normally 100% nomination on initial lets where the property is built based on access to public funds and each nomination agreement provides more detail on the exact percentage nominations that are in place per Local Authority.

### **Local Lettings Policies**

- 3.41 Where there is a new build scheme, a local lettings policy is usually in place, which sets out the eligibility criteria for accessing these homes. For example, where homes are located near a hospital, then the Local Lettings policy may award additional priority to customers who are currently working within the NHS. Some local lettings policies award a percentage of lets to customers who are working or set clear criteria around local connection arrangements. All local lettings policies are implemented in consultation with the Local Authority. The majority of local lettings policies are implemented by the Local authority as part of the nomination agreement process, but on occasions the local lettings policy may indicate that the lettings will all be made via MyThirteen. Where this approach is taken it will be clear on all adverts for these schemes. There will be a clear rationale for a local lettings policy being needed and will be reviewed annually.

### **Mutual Exchange**

- 3.42 Tenants are encouraged to register on a mutual exchange scheme to maximise their opportunities for a suitable move. Further details of how the scheme operates is available on our website: [swap your home](#).

## **4 HOW WE MEASURE THE EXPECTATIONS AND OUTCOMES OF THIS POLICY**

We'll measure the expectations and outcomes of this policy by:

- 4.1 Monitoring the number of lets and the understanding it provides.
- 4.2 Monitor the percentages of properties managed through a local lettings agreement and how this is supporting a Local Authority.

- 4.3 Provide timely updates to customer bidding for properties to build confidence and manage expectations.
- 4.4 Monitor the uptake of support and advice given to customers through tenancy support.
- 4.5 Use customer feedback to inform change.
- 4.6 Monitor and report on service standards where appropriate.

## **5 CONSIDERATIONS FOR OUR CUSTOMERS.**

- 5.1 We endeavour to understand who our customers are and any specific needs they may have to underpin our service delivery and ensure our customers are treated fairly and with respect.
- 5.2 We have effective appeal processes in place as set out in our supporting documents and further supported by our complaint procedure.
- 5.3 We consider the expectations of the consumer standards when considering how we communicate; especially with regard to customers' diverse needs and how we inform them in an appropriate way that is clear, accessible, relevant and timely.
- 5.4 We take into account the diverse needs of customers throughout their tenancies and ensure that we minimise any barriers preventing customer from maintaining their tenancies.
- 5.5 To further consider customers' diverse needs we have made it accessible for customers to contact and engage with us, methods of communication can be seen in the supporting documents.
- 5.6 We ensure that all customers wanting to influence and scrutinise our strategies, policies and services have equitable opportunities to do this, using a range of different methods and contact styles, to support our customer and their diverse needs.
- 5.7 We use our involved customers to consider this policy from a customer's perspective to judge if our policies are fair, reasonable, transparent, and understandable and use their constructive feedback to inform us.
- 5.8 We listen and learn from our customers, through feedback and complaints to help inform further service improvements.
- 5.9 We have shared this policy with the customer committee to see if this meets our requirements and service standards while demonstrating effective management.

- 5.10 We let all our properties fairly and transparently, to ensure properties are allocated to the best suited applicant.

## **6 TRANSPARENCY ARRANGEMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS POLICY.**

We will ensure transparency in relation to this policy by:

- 6.1 Publication of this policy and supporting documentation in all relevant forums and accessible formats.
- 6.2 Social tenants' access to information requirements information (STAIRS)  
We are required to publish information as to how we manage Thirteen's business and we do this on our website.
- 6.3 If customers require further information, they can make a further request via our Data Compliance team [data.compliance@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:data.compliance@thirteengroup.co.uk). Requests will be considered against the STAIRS criteria will be responded to within the prescribe timescales.  
In the event that customers are disappointed in our response, they should raise a complaint via [Customer.Relations@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:Customer.Relations@thirteengroup.co.uk)
- 6.4 Publishing relevant performance information including publish a summary of the rules for determining the priority between applicants in the allocation of homes.
- 6.5 By responding to any enquires in an appropriate and timely fashion.
- 6.6 We will let customers have access to reliable and accurate information about our performance as a landlord which can be found in our annual reports ([Click Here for Annual report for customers](#))
- 6.7 For a copy of this policy in an alternative format, such as large print or a translation, please [contact us](#).

## **7 SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND GUIDANCE.**

| <b>Contents of supporting documentation</b> |                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>1.</b>                                   | Reference Material                                                |
| <b>2.</b>                                   | Definitions                                                       |
| <b>3.</b>                                   | Examples of unacceptable behaviour                                |
| <b>4.</b>                                   | Appeals – right to request a review of decision                   |
| <b>5.</b>                                   | How to search for a home on My Thirteen                           |
| <b>6.</b>                                   | Evidence examples                                                 |
| <b>7.</b>                                   | Local Authority Nomination Agreements Breakdown                   |
| <b>8.</b>                                   | Reasonable preference groups                                      |
| <b>9.</b>                                   | Criteria for Housing to prevent under occupation and overcrowding |
| <b>10.</b>                                  | Links to:<br>Annual report<br>Annual report for Customers         |
| <b>11.</b>                                  | How Customers can contact us                                      |
| <b>12.</b>                                  | Policies Related to this Policy                                   |

### **7.1 Reference Material**

The following reference material has been used:

This policy has been developed with regard to the codes of guidance issued to local housing authorities in England, in exercising the functions under 167(1A) and 167(2E) of the Housing Act 1996 and Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Thirteen will ensure that the policy is compatible with obligations imposed by other existing legislation, in addition to Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 as detailed below; this list is not exhaustive.

- The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (as amended 2006)
- The Human Rights Act 1998
- The Freedom of Information Act 2000
- Children Act 1989
- General Data Protection Act 2018 (GDPR)
- Crime & Disorder Act 1998
- Homelessness Act 2017
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Localism Act 2011

- The Welfare Reform Act 2012
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Tenancy policy
- Rent policy
- Right to Rent
- Mutual Exchange
- European Union (Withdrawal Agreement) Act 2020
- Rent Rights Act 2025

This policy also takes into consideration the following guidance:

- Commission for Racial Equality (Code of Practice on Racial Equality in Housing – September 2006)
- The Housing Green Paper - Quality and Choice (A Decent Home for All - July 2000)
- Code of Guidance (Choice Based Lettings - January 2007)
- Shelter's Good Practice Report (A Question of Choice - June 2005)
- Communities and Local Government (Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England – June 2012)
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (October 2017).

## **7.2 Definitions**

### **Eligibility**

Applicants must satisfy certain criteria to be eligible for an allocation of accommodation and support services, and to be allocated certain property types.

### **Local Lettings Policies (LLP)**

Are used to enhance the sustainability of defined communities by giving preference for offers of accommodation to customer groups. This may include customers outside of the housing needs categories and include key worker groups for example. Local lettings policies will be evidence-based and be approved for defined geographic areas.

### **Local Connection**

Connections to a particular area within a local authority boundary because of residency, employment, close family or a main source of support.

### **Advert Criteria**

Advertisements of properties may have an age criteria, for example for older person homes, or have a preference to certain size of households / groups. This will be described within the advert details.

### **Mutual exchange**

Applicants wishing to exchange their home with another Registered Provider/ Social landlord or tenant of a Local Authority can apply to do this, but this is subject to the policy guidelines for mutual exchange. The written agreement and inspection from the appropriate landlords are required prior to the exchange taking place.

### **Nominations**

A type of allocation defined in the Housing Act 1996, where a Local Authority puts forward (nominates) an applicant from the Local Authority Housing Register to Registered Providers for re-housing.

### **Registered Provider (RP)**

A housing association or housing company registered with the Regulator of Social Housing England (RSH).

## **7.3 Examples of unacceptable behaviour**

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are (this list is not exhaustive):

- £500 rent arrears outstanding or previous tenancy debt
- Evidence of serious rent arrears, which would constitute an outright possession order i.e. current and former tenancy arrears
- Evidence of conduct which is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household living within the local authority boundary e.g. severe noise nuisance, neighbour harassment
- Evidence of perpetrating domestic abuse
- Evidence of hate related crime or anti-social behaviour
- Relevant unspent convictions or convictions for prolific offences in the locality of their present or previous home/s, which affects the stability of the neighbourhood e.g. domestic burglary or unauthorised taking of motor vehicles
- Violence or threats of violence towards employees, board members or elected members
- Previous Thirteen tenants that have outstanding debt re-chargeable repairs due to leaving their property in an unacceptable condition.
- Where a debt relief order is still in place or bankruptcy order that prevents Thirteen from being able to recover any debt owed.

## **7.4 Appeals – right to request a review of decisions**

Applicants have the following rights concerning decisions about their housing application:

- The right to be notified in writing of any decision not to be registered on the scheme because of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant.
- The right to be notified in writing of any decision not to be registered on the scheme because of immigration control, within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996.
- The right, on request, to be informed of a decision about any information which is being taken into account in considering whether to make an offer of accommodation.
- The right, on request, to request a review of a decision in respect of any of the above. The applicant will also be informed of the decision in respect of the review and the grounds for that decision. This review will be final and there are no further grounds for appeal.

Applicants will be notified of these rights whenever a decision is made that affects their registration or status to receive offers of accommodation, and they will be informed of their right to submit further information, which may assist the review of their case.

The review will be carried out by a senior manager to the person that made the original decision and will have had no previous involvement in the original decision.

Tenants still not satisfied on a point of procedure may be able to seek a further review through the complaints process. In such circumstances the complaint will escalate straight to stage 2 of the Thirteen complaints process.

## **7.5 How to search for a home**

Searching via MyThirteen provides a quick and easily accessible way for customers to access a rented home. Customers can easily choose the most suitable rehousing option based on their circumstances and longer-term aspirations.

Customers can access help via our Touchpoints, whether that be over the telephone, on-line or at one of our Touchpoint stores. Customers will be able to apply for one of our homes as soon as they are registered, but additional supporting information will be required prior to a customer receiving an offer. Customers may warrant an additional priority due to their current housing need which will be established through a range of questions when applying via MyThirteen.

All homes will be advertised on MyThirteen for a minimum of 2 days and the number of homes advertised will change daily. Customers will be responsible for viewing what properties are available to let and to apply for the homes that they want to be considered for.

Where properties with are advertised with certain adaptations, preference will always be given to customers with an assessed need for the adaptation, as Thirteen aim to make best use of the homes we have available to let. Where there is no demand for the adapted property the property may be offered to a customer who

does not need the adaptation but is happy to accept the property with the adaptation in situ. Similarly, properties will only in exceptional circumstances be adapted (due to the high proportion of properties that already have adaptations) e.g. where the adaptation requirements are complex and have to be tailored to an individual's requirements or where there is only a small number of properties with a specific type of adaptation. Small minor alterations will be carried out I.e., ramps, handrails etc. as recommended by an Occupational Therapist.

Where Thirteen advertises homes for market rent, these will be advertised through a separate marketing platform and will be subject to specific eligibility criteria, which are outlined within the advertisement.

## **7.6 Evidence Examples**

Decant – this will be awarded and evidenced directly via Thirteen.

### Employment

- Payslip or P60 (within the last 3 months)
- Written evidence on letterhead from your employer (within last 6 months)
- Contract
- Offer letter of employment in the area

### Medical need

This will be assessed via the Local Authority Occupational Therapist as part of a medical assessment if the customer requires an adapted property. For other medical needs we may require proof of address for registered carers, or a letter from a medically qualified professional.

### Pregnancy or custody of a child if living above ground floor

- A copy of the MATB1 certificate showing expected due date or a letter from the NHS or GP Surgery confirming your due date.
- Proof of child benefit such as a letter from DWP or bank statements showing child benefit being received by the applicant.

### Armed forces

- Verification of service can be evidenced by discharge papers. If currently serving, a military identification card should be used. If the customer doesn't have either of these documents, they can apply for proof online at <https://www.gov.uk/get-copy-military-service-records/apply-for-your-own-records>.

### Refugee status

Evidence can be your biometric residence permit, or you can complete an online verification at [gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status](https://gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status), and provide a share code to us so we can verify your status online.

#### EU Settlers and Third Country Nationals

UK residence card, permanent residence card, derivative residence card biometric residence permit, or you can complete an online verification at [gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status](https://gov.uk/view-prove-immigration-status), and provide a share code to us so we can verify your status online.

#### Transfers

- Customers living in care and support accommodation-based services requiring rehousing will be evidenced via Thirteen
- Under/overcrowding
  - Proof of address for household members and a property inspection within the last 12 weeks.
  - An income and expenditure assessment and evidence of income (under occupying)
  - Statement from an advice agency i.e. Police, Social Care etc. where a customer is needing immediate rehousing

## **7.7 Local Authority Nomination Agreements Breakdown**

Hartlepool Borough Council – 50% nominations

Hull City Council – 50% nominations- for relets

Middlesbrough Borough Council – 50% nominations for relets

Stockton Borough Council – 50% nominations for relets

Redcar and Cleveland Council – 50% nominations for relets

Darlington Borough Council – 50% nominations for relets

South Tyneside – 50% nominations for relets

## **7.8 Reasonable preference groups**

Local Authorities must frame their allocation schemes to give additional preference to certain groups (reasonable preference groups).

Below is the definition used in the Housing Act 1996 to describe the types of housing need that should be given priority in a local authority's allocations policy:

- People who have been assessed as homeless by the Local Authority homeless service within the meaning of Housing Act 1996, Part 7 (Homelessness).

- People who are owed a duty by any Local Housing Authority in England under the Housing Act 1996 from a section 190 (2), 193 (2) or 195 (2) or the equivalent duties under the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation provided to them by the Local Housing Authority under Housing Act 1996 s 192 (3).
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds including grounds relating to a disability and;
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the Local Housing Authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship to themselves or to others.

Examples of these are defined as below:

- Those who need to move urgently because of a life-threatening illness or sudden disability
- Families in severe overcrowding which poses a serious health hazard
- Those who are homeless and require urgent re-housing because of violence or threats of violence, including intimidated witnesses, and those escaping serious anti-social behaviour or domestic violence
- Members of the Armed and Reserve Forces (or Former) that need to move because of serious injury, medical condition, or disability as a result of their service.
- Bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces leaving services family accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner.

## **7.9 Criteria for Housing to prevent under occupation and overcrowding**

**Under-occupation and overcrowding** will be assessed based upon the number of people within the household and according to best use of the bedrooms to reflect the criteria set out by the Department of Work and Pensions.

One bedroom will be considered suitable for:-

- An Adult /Adult Couple;
- Two children of the same sex under the age of 16;
- Two children under the age of 10 regardless of their sex;
- Any other person aged 16 or over;
- Any other child that cannot be matched with the above.

\*Does not include living room space unless there is a second living room which can be used as a bedroom and it does not breach health and safety standards.

\*Main householder(s) will be expected to share a bedroom with a child under the age of 12 months.

**Additional Bedrooms** There may be some circumstances where a household is allowed an extra bedroom as detailed below:

Health reasons; Bedroom for an overnight carer; Joint custody or overnight access to a child/children; or Prospective adopters and foster carers. Where one of the above applies, evidence will be requested and an affordability check may need to be completed to make sure the applicant can afford the additional bedroom.

## **7.10 Supporting Links**

[Annual Report](#)

[Annual Report for Customers](#)

## **7.11 How Customers can contact us**

[Contact Us - Thirteen](#)

## **7.12 Related Policies**

Tenancy Policy

Anti-social behaviour and Hate crime Policy

Acceptable Behaviour Policy

Repairs and Maintenance Policy

Complaints Policy and Procedure