

Meeting:	Customer Committee	
Date of meeting:	13 November 2025	
Agenda number and title of report:	Agenda item 4. Complaints Report	
Author name and role:	Pauline Brace Involved customer	customer.engagement@thirteengroup.co.uk
What do you want the Committee to do:	Consider and discuss the matters included within the report and <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approve the customers assurance report on complaints 2. Note the trends identified by customers 	
The Committee is recommended to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approve the assurance report on complaints - Note the trends identified in the complaints made to Thirteen - Agree to the In-Depth Reviews to be carried out by involved customers - Note the recommendations made by customers across all streams 	

1. Summary Report

- 1.1 This report gives the Customer Committee assurance that complaints are being monitored and challenged by customers.
- 1.2 This report gives details of:
- Q1 and Q2 2025/26 complaints performance information.
 - Trends identified by involved customers.
 - Recommendations made by customers – within Thirteens Customer Involvement Framework recommendations are made for service improvement.

2. Background and context

2.1 2025/26 Complaints Performance Information

As a group we have monitored performance information from Q1 and Q2 of this financial year.

	Stage 1 -Target 5 working days	Stage 2 - Target 10 working days
Total number of complaints received (including low level claims)	Q1 - 600 Q2 - 565	Q1 - 91 Q2 - 82
% of complaints closed within timescale	Q1 - 95.9% Q2 - 96.9%	Q1 - 94.9% Q2 - 97.1%
Average time to respond (in working days)	Q1 - 5.00 Q2 - 4.98	Q1 - 10.02 Q2 - 9.15

Top 10 Root Causes (determined following investigations and outcomes)

Cause	Quarterly figures	Total
Timescales	Q1 - 106 Q2 - 154	260
Delay in service	Q1 - 84 Q2 - 57	141
Quality of service	Q1 - 65 Q2 - 50	115
Disagree with decision	Q1 - 55 Q2 - 50	105
Lack of communication	Q1 - 39 Q2 - 45	84
Staff attitude	Q1 - 39 Q2 - 30	69
Procedure	Q1 - 32 Q2 - 31	63
Quality of work	Q1 - 23 Q2 - 20	43
Damage to decor	Q1 - 14 Q2 - 24	38
Damage to other	Q1 - 18 Q2 - 6	24

2.2

Trends in Complaints identified by customers

The Complaints Monitoring Group have previously identified an increase in the number of complaints around Home Ownership and Right to Buy. This has been monitored over the last 6 months. It has been positive to see that the number of complaints received has dropped and the group are confident that the Home Ownership team are now able to cope with demand. The group have learnt, following investigations into complaints from customers, that there is currently no policy or procedure in place for Right To Buy/Right To Acquire, however, we are assured that Thirteen follow the Governance guidance on such enquiries or complaints.

The group have noticed that there have been the same three hotspots within complaints over the last few months and involved customers will be carrying out in-depth projects on each of these to gather evidence and propose recommendations to make improvements with the intention of the number of complaints reducing. These three areas are:

- Customer expectations – customers' expectations are beyond Thirteens processes and policies
- Communication with customers – although processes are being followed some customers need more contact to feel heard and understood
- Fencing – the timescales around fencing are causing many complaints. The Repairs customer group are looking at this separately and will keep the complaints customer group updated
- As a group we will be meeting with the Head of Customer Experience to look further into the actions and recommendations that have been implemented due to the trends and root causes of complaints over the last 6 months. This will take place over the next two quarters, and an update will be provided in our next report to committee in May 2026.
- The customer group previously recommended that Thirteen learn from compliments as well as complaints. We have been provided with the number of compliments received and this has been positive to see. The compliments that are received are also now reported on within the complaint's monthly performance pack. The compliments have been received across a range of teams in Thirteen including Repairs, Tenancy Management, Touchpoint, Neighbourhoods Income, Damp and Mould and Gas Compliance.
- Quarter 1 – 110 compliments received
- Quarter 2 – 113 compliments received

2.3 **Housing Ombudsman Determinations and Orders**

It has been agreed that the Customer Complaints Monitoring Group will meet bimonthly (although this may change depending on the number of determinations that Thirteen receive) to discuss findings from the Housing Ombudsman's investigations and the determinations made to Thirteen. The group will carry out In-Depth reviews where we feel it is necessary based on the feedback received around each of the determinations. For the Q1 and Q2 periods there were 6 determinations received. These were the findings:

Case 1 - Maladministration in the landlords decision to use credit on the residents' current account to pay arrears on a previous tenancy and a Complaints Handling Service Failure (CFHO) in the landlords complaint handling - Thirteen appealed the CFHO and in April 2025 the Ombudsman confirmed that they had rescinded the CFHO order for the handling of the complaint.

Case 2 - Service Failure in the response to the request to buy the property and in the complaint handling.

Case 3 - Maladministration due to the distress and inconvenience to the customer caused by Thirteens inadequate timescales and poor record keeping in the handling of reports of damp and mould and the associated repairs

Case 4 - Service failure with handling of reports of a leak from a neighbouring property into the resident's property and the time taken to resolve this.

Case 5 - Maladministration in the landlords handling of the resident's report of leaks and the related repairs and maladministration in the landlord's complaint handling - Thirteen appealed this case on 3/9/25 as there was no evidence of the customer reporting repairs of any leaks. They are still waiting for that appeal decision to be confirmed.

Case 6 - Service failure regarding pest infestation, subsequent repairs, damage and damp and mould - Thirteen appealed this decision on 26/9/25 due to the customer not contacting and reporting disrepair and damp and mould concerns previously. In addition, The Ombudsman have challenged around content insurance and why we didn't mention this in the complaint's responses. Again, appealed on this point as this was outlined within the complaint response which was sent to the Ombudsman when information requested. The Ombudsman have advised that Thirteen could wait up to 16 weeks for this appeal decision.

The group are aware of the appeals of the above cases/determinations and that Thirteen are waiting for further information from the Ombudsman around their findings on two of the appeals made. There is no consistent service level agreement or timescale for the Ombudsman to respond to appeals and Thirteen have been advised that all appeal decisions could take 16 weeks or more in some cases. The group will be meeting with the Head of Customer Experience in December where each determination and case review will be shared and delivered to the group so we can determine if we wish to proceed with any further in-depth reviews. An update will be provided on this in our next report to Committee.

2.4 **Annual Complaints Performance and Service Improvement Report Against the Complaints Handling Code (CHC) and Self-Assessment**

The Complaints Handling Code was reviewed and discussed with the Customer Complaints Monitoring Group in April 25. The annual complaints report was shared with the Ombudsman in September 2025 and will be presented and discussed with the customer group in December when we meet with the Head of Customer Experience.

The customer group are assured that Thirteen consistently analyse their complaints service against the CHC and are compliant. The group will continue to monitor the determinations received and decide if we wish to proceed to any in-depth reviews once we fully understand the determinations received and relevant orders given.

2.5 **Customer Recommendations**

The following recommendations have been made by customers throughout all projects that have been carried out in Q1 and Q2:

Stream	Recommendation	Progress
Performance and Complaints	To provide involved customers with an update on issues relating to repairs carried out by contractors	Complete – an update was provided at Repairs Group meeting on 13/5/25. An In-Depth project will be carried out on this.
Performance and Complaints	Cleaners to report and repairs they find in communal areas whilst carrying out their duties	Complete – Cleaning manager advised this is in place and reported on monthly
Performance and Complaints	Invite a member of staff from Liberty (contractor) to a future Repairs Group meeting	In progress – date to be arranged and will link in with In-Depth review to be carried out
Performance and Complaints	Request process for collecting former rent arrears and share with customers	In progress – to be discussed at customer meeting in November 2025
Performance and Complaints	Clear communication on section 106 properties for both colleagues and customers so they are aware properties cannot be bought	In progress – will link in with Legal team around this.
Performance and Complaints	Monitor the determinations received monthly or when necessary	In progress – Meeting booked in December to view Q1 and Q2 determinations and view the Ombudsman annual complaints performance report.
Consumer Standards – Tenancy Standard	Housing Services Coordinators are encouraged to promote customer involvement	Complete – agreed and in place. Referrals have been received
Consumer Standards – Tenancy Standard	Involved customers to be consulted on layout and format of new website and new branding style	Complete – customers involved in all aspects of website and brand development including procurement of developers
Consumer Standards – Tenancy Standard	Information on an area where a customer is moving to be shared with customer	Complete – agreed and in place at sign-ups.
Consumer Standards – Tenancy Standard	The Welcome email sent to customers when they move home is made available in all formats	In progress – agreed. Customers to carry out checks that this is in place
Consumer Standards – Tenancy Standard	Mutual Exchange is promoted as a way to move home in the next issue of Together Magazine	Complete – article in October 2025 magazine
Consumer Standards – Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard	Involvement activities, reports and outcomes are added to the ‘Get Involved’ section of the Thirteen website and Your Voice platform	In progress – this will be completed when new website is in place. Your Voice in use by Customer Involvement with more projects to be added.
Consumer Standards – Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion training to be made available to involved customers	In progress – working with Learning and Development team to look at the possibility of adapting colleague training to be used for customers.
Service Improvement projects	Involved customers to be consulted on the Cleaning Charter	In progress – this will take place in early 2026
Repairs group	Customers to carry out an In-Depth project to find out why customers are missing repairs appointments	In progress – In-Depth review started

Policy Consultation	Customer Promise - Wording to be changed to make the Customer Promise more user friendly	Complete – changes agreed with customers
Policy Consultation	Customer Involvement Framework – wording to be changed to make the framework more customer friendly	Complete – changes agreed with customers
Policy Consultation	Thirteen Strategy – Include the Tackling Stigma campaign in the strategy	Complete – this has been included
Policy Consultation	ASB Policy – To add examples to aid understanding of the policy and procedures on the website	Complete – examples added

3. Which of our Strategic Priorities does this Support and How?

Happy Customers – the learnings from each complaint and the recommendations can ensure that customers receive an improved service.

Fantastic Homes – complaints provide valuable, direct feedback that can identify improvements in services.

4. Summary for Committee Presentation

- We are happy to give assurance that we, as a group, are monitoring and challenging the complaints that Thirteen receive.
- The complaints received around Home Ownership have been monitored over the last 6 months and the number received has now reduced.
- We have identified trends and hotspots across complaints and will be carrying out In-Depth reviews to identify recommendations for service improvements. Our next 3 In-Depth reviews will look at
 - Customer expectations
 - Communication with customers
 - Fencing delays
- We will be meeting with the Head of Customer Experience to look further into actions and recommendations that have been put in place by Thirteen following investigations into complaints.
- Compliments are being recorded across Thirteen and are reported on
- We are informed of all determinations received from the Housing Ombudsman and look at these separately to identify the learnings Thirteen have taken from these. We will carry out In-Depth reviews if we feel further service improvements could be made.
- We are happy to give assurance that Thirteen are compliant with the Complaints Handling Code
- Recommendations have been made across all projects carried out by involved customers and they are monitored by a customer group to ensure these are implemented.

5. Appendices

None

6. Supplementary Documents

None