

thirteen

Managing and building homes

**Customer
Annual Report
2019/20**





Chair's Introduction



I'd like to welcome you to the Customer Annual Report for 2019/20.

Whilst 2019/20 was a positive year for Thirteen, it's ended with a great deal of uncertainty. We can't underestimate the enormous changes this has forced on us and our customers in such a short period of time and it seems like another world away looking back on last year's customer annual report.

We have been really busy embedding the framework we introduced last year to allow customers to have their say and hold Thirteen to account. This is key in creating Thirteen's yearly strategic plan.

The framework ensures all customers can be involved in shaping and scrutinising Thirteen's services, and testing compliance with the regulatory consumer standards. We're always keen to hear from new customers who are interested in being involved and support our work.

If you would like to get involved, please email customer.engagement@thirteengroup.co.uk or call 0300 111 1000.

Val Scollen

Chair of Thirteen's Customer Involvement Framework and Involved Customer

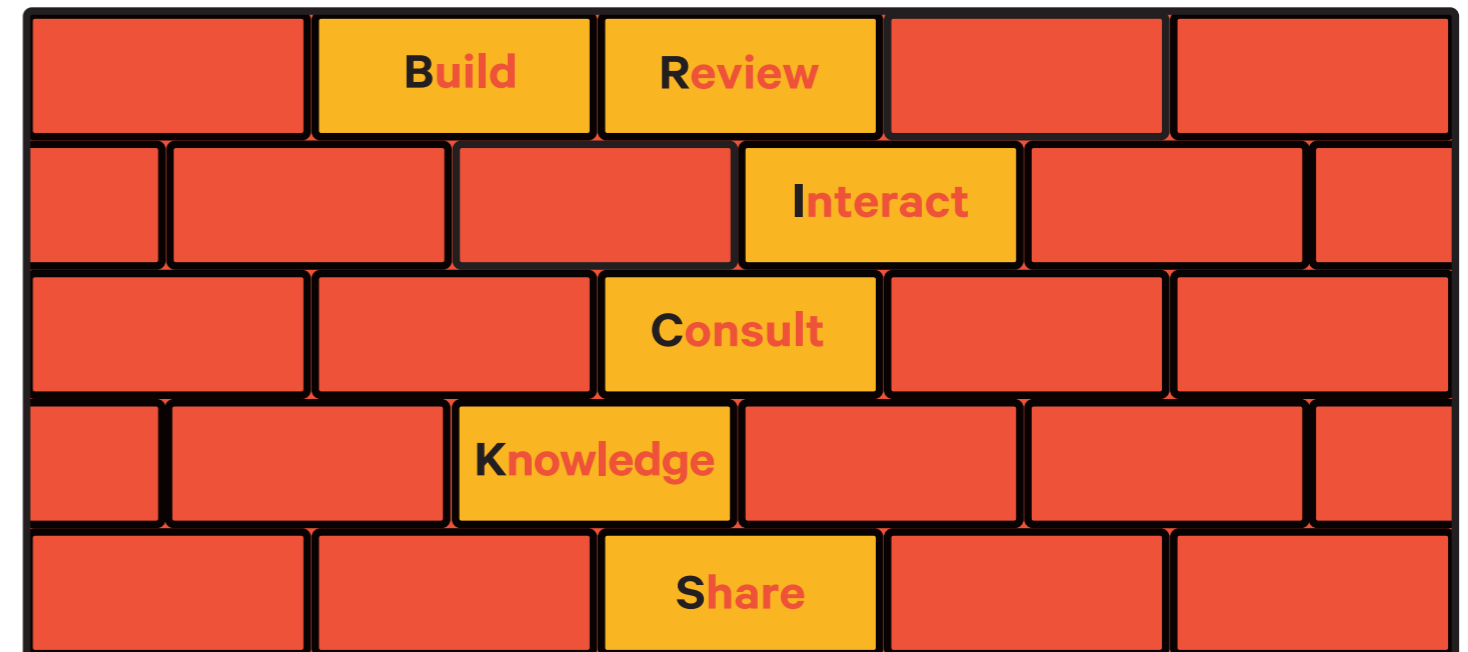


Thirteen's Customer Involvement Framework

Thirteen is committed to involving customers to:

- Scrutinise services and performance
- Provide assurance on compliance on all consumer standards to the leadership team and Board.
- Consult on policy and strategy development.

The framework provides a flexible, adaptable, value for money approach designed to support the delivery of the Strategic Plan objectives, and business priorities.



What does involvement look like?

Working with our involved customers, we have developed a framework that offers customers a range of options to get involved digitally from the comfort of their own home. This enables them to choose what they would like to be involved in and the amount of time they can commit.

Our framework is made up of different streams, each with a customer lead.

These include:

- Consumer Standards Assurance
- Policy & Strategy Development
- Service Projects
- Performance Monitoring (inc Complaints)
- Community Fund

Customers determine the methods they want to use to challenge and hold Thirteen to account.

This includes:

- Mystery shopping
- Customer journey mapping
- Job shadowing
- Reviewing and testing websites, systems and procedures
- Interviewing colleagues
- Completing surveys

Thirteen's Customer Involvement Framework (continued)

The community fund stream allocates funding to projects that benefit our customers and communities. This stream also interviews customers that have applied for funding from the Thirteen Academy to support them through university, enabling them to study for a degree to enhance their opportunities for personal and career development.

The Chair of the Customer Involvement Framework attends every Board meeting and takes an active part in discussions. Progress on projects and activities are shared with Board by verbal or video updates delivered by the Chair or stream leads. Stream leads present reports on their activities and recommendations to the Board. Reports presented at Board this year include; high rise living service standards, and the effectiveness of our neighbourhood operating model.

Our involved customers plan and hold an open day twice a year, where they share details of the activities carried out by their stream and the improvements to performance and services made. We are early adopters of the National Housing Federation's, Together with Tenants initiative and are working with other housing providers in the North East to develop a North East Tenants Voice.

Our involvement approach has been acknowledged as good practice, receiving a Compliance Plus accreditation in our recent Customer Service Excellence assessment. We have received recognition from Tpas and others, and have been shortlisted in the Outstanding Tenant Engagement category at the national Tpas Awards 2020.



Where our priorities lie



We're committed to listening to our customers' voice

Thirteen involves customers in developing services as we want to get things right. We want to know what's important to customers, whether our services meet their expectations, and listen to their ideas for improving services and performance.

This framework puts our customers at the heart of everything we do.

What have our customers been involved in?

Customers have tested, influenced, given their views, monitored, and reported on:

Customer reviews

- High rise living service standards
- New neighbourhood operating model

Policy

- Fire safety policy
- Property compliance policy
- ASB and hate crime policy
- Environmental policy

Consumer standards

- Home standard
- Tenancy standard
- Neighbourhood and community standard
- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard

Strategic and service projects

- Touchpoint store in Stockton
- Customer verification process



Where our priorities lie (continued)

Community fund
some of the projects funded

- Boro Soccer Schools
- Radio Stitch
- Tees Vision connect

More about Thirteen Academy

Last year, our involved customers helped eight students living in Thirteen properties begin their fully funded university studies. The scheme supports those from low-income households, who might not otherwise consider applying to university, to study for a degree.

This life changing initiative supports customers, and their dependants, with aspirations to study at university, with a scholarship. Its first group of successful applicants have just completed their first year at Teesside University, with which Thirteen has partnered to deliver the programme. Three budding academics are undertaking three-year courses in early childhood, nursing studies, and childhood and youth studies. A further five have commenced one-year courses in midwifery, social-work, nursing, psychology and HR.



You said, we're doing

This year, customers said:



You said:
You wanted to be able to manage your account in a more user-friendly and consistent way, improving your customer experience.

We're doing:
We've listened to what customers have to say, and building on Touchpoint, we've created a new and exciting digital experience called My Thirteen where they'll be able to update their details, make a payment, check their account, book a repair and much more.

You said:
You wanted a closer relationship with our teams.

We're doing:
We've introduced an operating model that puts neighbourhoods at the heart of our business, so we know our areas and the people in them even more.

You said:
You wanted to be more involved in monitoring and improving Thirteen's performance and services.

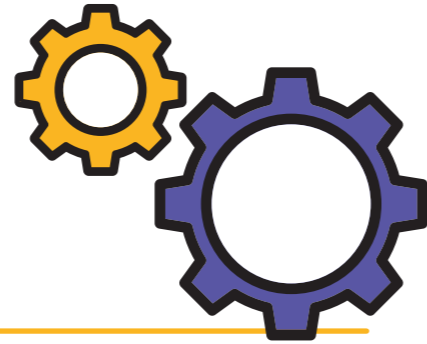
We're doing:
We've introduced a framework to make it happen. It's called **BRICKS**, and it sets out what opportunities there are for customers to get involved:

- Build relationships
- Review services
- Interact with all areas of our business
- Consult with customers and stakeholders
- Knowledge gained and shared
- Share findings and recommendations.

You said:
You wanted us to build more affordable homes.

We're doing:
Last year, we built 419 new homes across the Tees Valley and beyond to rent or buy.

Across the Tees Valley, every working day at Thirteen last year we...



V1 Maintained our regulatory financial viability at V1 (the highest possible rating)

G1 Maintained our regulatory governance rating at G1 (the highest possible rating)

Completed **605** repairs

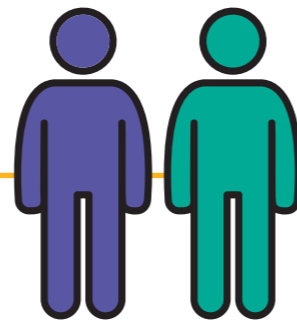
Invested **£4,367** to help tenants live independently at home

Invested **£128,352** in tenants' homes

Built **1.6** new homes

Gained **£20,568** in additional benefits for customers
of which **£11,022** related to Universal Credit for customers

Signed up **5.5** people to our employment and training programmes



What we achieved throughout 2019-20

Investment in homes

From April 2019 to March 2020, we carried out £42.7m of improvements to homes.

This included replacing kitchens, bathrooms, boilers, and installing new roofs, windows and doors.

147 new kitchens installed

991 (properties) window installations

47 new bathrooms installed

528 door installations

1,754 boilers installed

1,179 new roofs



Fire risk assessments

Our high rise buildings received two fire risk assessments during this time and they will continue to be assessed on a six-monthly basis.

Since April 2019. We've carried out

604

fire risk assessments in communal buildings, which resulted in **2,502** remedial actions. All these actions have been completed.

99%

of fire risk assessments were completed as scheduled, with the remaining 1% delayed due to access issues with vulnerable residents shielding at the very beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Did you know?

Last year our trade operatives were unable to gain access to

11,903

properties to carry out pre-arranged repairs or safety checks resulting in a total cost of

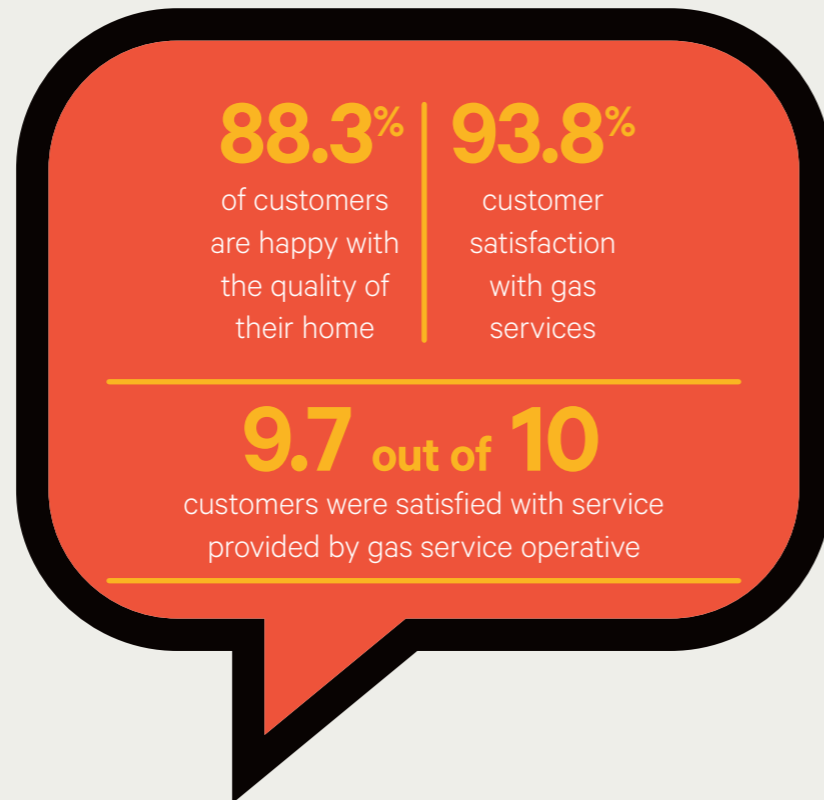
£595,150!

Customer satisfaction with services

Customer satisfaction is a major focus for Thirteen.

The satisfaction level among customers gives us a good indication as to how effective our services are, and where we need to make improvements.

We listen carefully to what customers tell us through a number of surveys that we carry out with them.

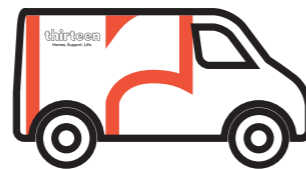


Repairs in customers' homes

We carry out a range of repairs in our customers' homes to ensure they're kept in a good condition.

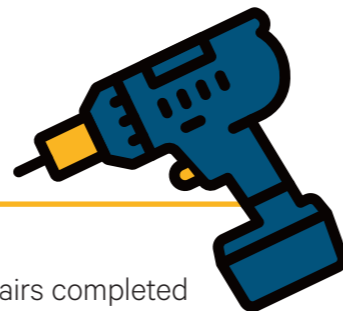
Our skilled staff include plumbers, electricians, plasterers and bricklayers who maintain and repair homes, together with gas fitters who service and repair heating systems.

We have continued to improve our repairs system to help better allocate repairs jobs, ensure a better service for customers and increase customer satisfaction.



Across all areas:

130,715 repairs completed



Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Across all areas:

1,748 ASB cases reported to Thirteen

7.3 out of 10 overall satisfaction with the service

Improving neighbourhood services



Since April 2018, we have fundamentally changed the way we work in our neighbourhoods.

Tenants and customers told us that they wanted our staff to be more visible in neighbourhoods, helping them to deal with the issues they face on a day-to-day basis.

So, we adopted an operating model to put neighbourhoods at the heart of our business, with more neighbourhood co-ordinators managing a reduced number of properties.

562 estate inspections carried out

98 neighbourhood co-ordinators manage Thirteen homes



15,321

welcome visits carried out by neighbourhood co-ordinators

Supported housing services

We provide services to meet the needs of vulnerable people and support them to improve their quality of life.

We support a wide range of people who face challenges in their lives including homeless people, ex-offenders, people with mental health issues, people recovering from substance misuse, families, women and young people.

380 referrals to supported services

4,376 people helped by supported housing services



Employment support

We help people aged 15 to 29 and tenants of any age, to find work, training and education.

Our employability services work with people and businesses across Teesside and County Durham to match them with jobs, apprenticeships, training and work placements.

The services help people and businesses to: find quality information, advice and guidance about jobs, training and education; find mentoring and support to plan a way into work or training; develop the skills that businesses need; and overcome barriers to getting a job or training.

Throughout all our areas we helped 729 Thirteen tenants to take up employment, apprenticeships or training.

1,441 people signed up to our employment and training programme

662 Thirteen tenants signed up to our employment and training programme

882 people received an offer of employment apprenticeships or training

729 people took up the offer of employment, apprenticeships or training



Lettings

As part of our new homes development programme, we also build new homes for affordable rent.

We have also brought existing empty homes back to life by carrying out extensive renovations to ensure customers live in a quality, secure rental property.

Customer satisfaction scores for the standard of the property are:

8.1
out of
10

Internal standard – decoration

8.1
out of
10

Internal standard – fixtures and fittings

8.8
out of
10

External standard – windows etc.

3,524 properties let to customers

This included:

2,982
General needs homes

117
Extra Care

218
Supported housing properties

207
Homes for older people

TO RENT

Developing new homes

We continue to develop new homes for people across the North East and North Yorkshire.

By developing new homes, we're supporting the regeneration of the region. We are also helping more people to buy their own home and access properties for affordable rent.



We invested over
£52m
in new homes

With over
£13m
Homes England grant

419
affordable new homes completed

27
schemes completed

Bespoke Lettings

We have over:

530

bespoke lettings homes designed for rent by specific customers.

These homes give customers the chance to live close to their place of study or work and provide a number of benefits to help them in their lives. The team also look after a number of homes for older and vulnerable people too.



Leaseholders

We also have:

774 leaseholders

706 shared owners

159 leasehold schemes for the elderly/older person shared ownership



Money advice

Thirteen's money advice team helps customers with their benefit problems, manage their finances and make the most of their money. The team helps customers and tenants to: claim the benefits they're entitled to; deal with benefit and debt problems; manage their money and budget for the things they need.

2,347 money advice cases

3,328 Universal Credit cases managed

Over **£5m** benefits gained for claimants

Of which **£2.8m** related to Universal Credit

This year, we have also worked with partners to create plans to tackle issues created by Universal Credit.



Value for money

3.5% total savings across all Thirteen's services

Over **£5.3m** social value gained across all our areas



Rents and income



20,247 customers with clear rent accounts at end of 2019-20

13,912 customers in arrears

1,573 notices served for rent arrears

Supported living

Our extra care and sheltered housing schemes offer specialist support to help older and vulnerable people to live independently for longer.

Accommodation and support is flexible and tailored to suit customer needs. Homes offer privacy as well as the chance to keep an active social life and remain at the heart of the community.

1,770 sheltered homes with support services available

61 homes for people with learning disabilities

486 extra care homes for older and vulnerable people

Over **2,300** major and minor adaptations to customer homes

Across the Tees Valley, home adaptations to help tenants remain in their homes:

£1.6m spent on adaptations across the Tees Valley

Preventing homelessness through Key Step

Our services help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

We're also responsible for helping people to move on from supported accommodation and into more general accommodation with a social landlord.

Thirteen's teams work to identify people at risk of homelessness and to improve their lives by offering help, advice and practical support. This can include help with finding a home or a job, building resilience or working towards personal independence.

171 referrals to the Key Step homeless project

79 people helped to move on from supported accommodation into general accommodation

Involving customers

Thirteen involves customers and tenants to bring fresh ideas and help us to improve services, neighbourhoods and opportunities for all customers.

Involved customers help us to scrutinise our services and performance, consult on policies and strategies, and comply with regulations.

Delivering the new customer involvement framework to support customers to be involved in the development of Thirteen both now and in the future

1,583 hours volunteered by involved customers

34 services changed or implemented as a result of customer involvement

£149,557 provided to local groups and organisations from the community fund

123 groups supported by the community fund

Customer services

Our Customer Contact Team is the first point of contact for many customers when they get in touch. They manage a wide range of communication channels including phone, emails and website.



Across all areas:

337,933 calls answered

22 seconds average call waiting time

How we compare against our peers - benchmarking

We're continuing to challenge ourselves to save money where we can, but also taking the long-term view to invest in being more effective and efficient in the future. In order to do this, we benchmark against our peers, using the Regulator of Social Housing ("RSH") - Global Accounts and

Housemark, using appropriate and representative peer groups. Looking at our ambitions for the future, we also forecast over the next five years so we can understand where we're going and be clear and realistic about the scale of the task.

Operational measures

Thirteen
89.1%
 Overall satisfaction with services provided by Thirteen



Benchmarking	
Northern	National

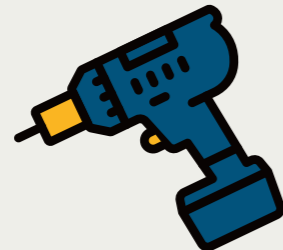
87.4% **85.35%**

Thirteen
90.80%
 Percentage of tenants very or fairly satisfied that their rent provides value for money.



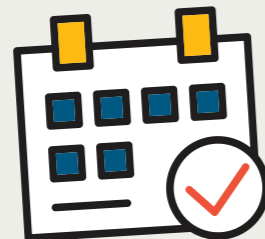
88.35% **85.62%**

Thirteen
97.99%
 Percentage of repairs completed first time



92.16% **93.88%**

Thirteen
7.8 days
 Average calendar days to complete a repair.



9.7 days **9.84 days**

Thirteen
88.30%
 Overall satisfaction with the quality of their home.



Benchmarking	
Northern	National

87.68% **85.56%**

Thirteen
100%
 Percentage of complaints responded to within five working days.



87.18% **84.44%**

Thirteen
100%
 Percentage of valid gas safety certificates



100% **100%**

Thirteen
3.40%
 Total current arrears



3.93% **4.39%**

Benchmark. Northern is all Associations in the North East, North West and Yorkshire and Humberside over 10,000 units (values are for year 2018/19, the most recent in Housemark).

About the Annual Report

At Thirteen, we've been working to help improve the lives of people in our neighbourhoods for years.

We provide homes, support and opportunities to grow.


We're a not-for-profit organisation and focus on delivering our charitable objectives of providing housing, care and support for those who need it.

Thirteen is the largest housing association in the region, managing 34,000 homes across the North East and North Yorkshire. The range of services that we provide has a far-reaching impact for tenants, customers and the wider community across our area.

This document gives you some quick and accessible information about the performance of Thirteen. It gives details about our performance in several important areas across the organisation and some of the things we've done to improve our services between April 2019 and March 2020.

We also have more information about performance and Thirteen's impact on the area on the website at www.thirteengroup.co.uk/aboutus.

 www.thirteengroup.co.uk

 0300 111 1000