

thirteen

Managing and building homes

Customer Annual Report

2022 - 2023



Hello and welcome



My mission over the next 12 months is to strengthen the customer voice even further. Everyone can make a difference and I'd love for you to join us.



I'm delighted to invite you to read the Customer Annual Report for 2022/23.

This report has been designed and developed alongside a group of customers involved in reviewing Thirteen's services and performance. You'll find an update on how the company is performing, hear real-life customer stories and see what Thirteen has done to address customer feedback.

The voice of the customer is more important than ever. Whilst customer feedback may sometimes lead to complaints or dissatisfaction, it's important we continue to provide it. Our views can help shape the future of Thirteen's homes and services.

As chair of Thirteen's involvement framework, I see the hard work and dedication from customers who give up their time to help shape Thirteen's services. I'm proud to be a part of it. After all, without customers, Thirteen would not exist.

My mission over the next 12 months is to strengthen the customer voice even further. Everyone can make a difference and I'd love for you to join us. There are several ways to get involved, from completing customer surveys, to joining one of Thirteen's customer project groups. These project groups work alongside colleagues to make sure that Thirteen is compliant with government regulation for social housing.

Thirteen recently introduced a Customer Committee which consists of myself, two board members and four Thirteen customers. This committee reviews all customer feedback and insight and reports it back to the Thirteen Board. It also has an overview of all services that impact customers. You can read more about the committee on page 8.

Being involved comes with so many benefits. It's rewarding to be part of such important conversations and help fellow customers, but it also gives us the chance to connect with likeminded people and form new friendships.



I would like to thank all the customers who got involved over the past year. Also, my thanks go to the customer involvement team and colleagues who help to support us. We have achieved some great things together and I'm excited to see what's to come.

If you are interested in getting involved, please get in touch with the customer involvement team and they'll be happy to help. You can email customer.engagement@thirteengroup.co.uk or call **0300 111 1000**.

I hope to see you soon.

Val Scollen

Chair of Thirteen's Customer Involvement Framework and Customer.



What have our customers been involved in?

Here's a snapshot of the year...



As an ex-Clarion customer I've been an involved customer for 40 years, including two years at Thirteen. I find it interesting because you learn more, you help residents, and you find out how to help Thirteen as well. I get involved in different meetings from damp and mould project groups to walkabouts on the estate. It's about bringing the community together and getting their thoughts and ideas.



Pauline, Thirteen customer from Hull

The customer voice is very much heard and well received at Thirteen. In the last year, our involved customers have:

- attended 110 customer involvement meetings
- consulted on 4 policies
- made recommendations on 24 projects which have been agreed by Thirteen
- carried out 20 surveys
- and assured the Board on consumer standards – find out more below.

Consumer standard assurance

The new consumer standards sit alongside the Social Housing Regulation Act which passed into law in July 2023. They require landlords to be open with residents and treat them with fairness and respect so that they can access services, raise complaints when necessary, influence decision-making and hold their landlords to account. As part of this, landlords must consider tenants' diverse needs.

In 2022-23, our customers continued their work in gathering evidence to provide assurance to the board on Thirteen's compliance with the Regulatory Consumer Standards. These are:

- **home standard** · **tenancy standard**
- **tenant involvement and empowerment standard**
- **and neighbourhood and community standard**



By getting involved, I've made friends, increased my confidence, and it's given me something to focus on. It also means that I'm doing something good for Thirteen and for customers.



Bev, Thirteen customer from Port Clarence



Rent cap consultation

Customers contributed to a consultation on rent cap proposals due to the increasing inflation rates across the country. The Government proposed that housing providers could increase rent by either 3%, 5% or 7%. Following a discussion with colleagues, customer views were passed on to the government for consideration in decision making.

Customer open days

It was fantastic to attend the first customer open day in Hull and host another in Middlesbrough. It's important to us to make sure that all customers feel part of Thirteen and can share their views. We look forward to more engagement with customers from across our geographic footprint and hope to see some of you getting involved!

Electrical self-help

A new electrical self-help video was proposed to our involved customers. This aimed to support customers to identify a faulty appliance or a fault with the electric meter at their home.

Staff recruitment

We want to make sure we recruit the right people and that's why it's important to us to involve our customers. In the last year, our involved customers sat on the interview panel for roles including high rise champions, chair of the Board, housing services co-ordinators and chief executive officer.

Complaints review and insights

The involved customers meet bi-monthly to look at the number of complaints received by Thirteen. They discuss with colleagues the reasons behind the complaints and what can be done to prevent them in future. This year, the customers also reviewed the complaints webpage and gave feedback on how to improve the process.

And so much more...

Unfortunately, we can't squeeze everything our customers have supported us with into just a couple of pages. If you'd like to find out more or would like to get involved, you'll find contact details on the last page.

Community fund

Our involved customers play a key role in reviewing applications for our community fund. Over the last year, we have awarded over £30,000 in funding and helped 74 groups. Some of the groups who received support were Cleveland Fire Authority, Genesis Project, The Shack and Cash for Kids North East.

The funding helped:



- Cleveland Fire Authority provide 150 meals to support young people who are not in education, employment, or training (NEET) to aid their learning with the Cleveland Fire Authority.



- The Genesis Project to provide items such as seating and play equipment for their local toddler group.



- The Shack (a community space for Ragworth and Primrose Hill) establish a gardening club and provide equipment for an allotment project. This helped to encourage community cohesion with positive outcomes for volunteer wellbeing and the environment.



- Cash for Kids North East to provide wellbeing packages and food hampers to vulnerable children living in poverty across the region.

You said, we listened

A look at the last 12 months

You said:

Customers told us they wanted the telephone message to be clear and easily understood when they call us. They wanted to save time too.

We listened:

We've got a new message on our phone lines, making it easier to know which option to press. While customers wait, we let them know important information, which may save them time. There's also an option for a callback.

You said:

Customers told us our communication with contractors needed to improve.

We listened:

- We now run a report three times per week (instead of one) to make sure contractors are meeting our deadlines.
- We have introduced calling cards for contractors, so our customers know when they have visited their home.



You said:

Customers said they wanted a single point of contact, rather than having to contact many different people.

We listened:

We've created a holistic tenancy support service, so customers have one point of contact and aren't passed between teams.

You said:

Customers in Central Mews, Middlesbrough told us they wanted a central space for community events.

We listened:

We applied for grant funding and used this to buy paint and furniture to make improvements to the community centre and to source resources for activities. The community centre is now used to host drop-in sessions with Thirteen and by charity partners to host workshops on mental health support, substance misuse and energy and money saving tips.

You said:

Customers in Middlesbrough told us they wanted a dedicated store in the town to be able to find out about available homes and other support services on offer.

We listened:

We opened our third Touchpoint store in Middlesbrough. The store offers customers the chance to learn more about Thirteen face to face, you can even just pop in for a coffee and a chat.

You said:

Customers said if they weren't home, they didn't know when external repairs had been completed.

We listened:

We now post a 'sorry we missed you' card to advise the customer when external repairs have been completed.

You said:

Customers told us to build more affordable homes and offer affordable options.

We listened:

Last year, we built 435 new homes. 296 for affordable rent, and 139 for shared ownership.

**Customer success:
Sharing your stories**



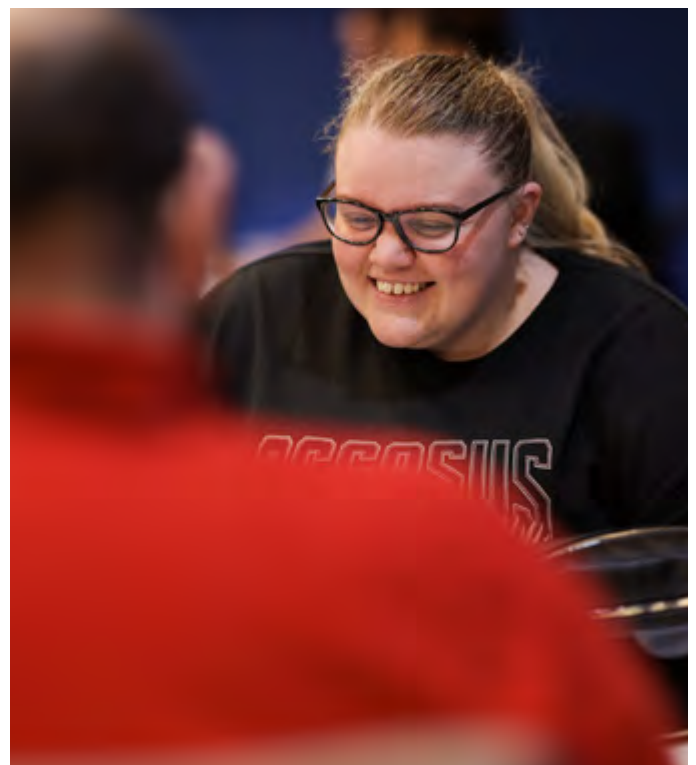
I have been a Thirteen customer for eight years and have received excellent support over this time.

“My housing services co-ordinator, Laura has been fantastic and has always been there for me when I have wanted a listening ear. She is a credit and an asset to Thirteen and looks after her tenants really well.

“I love being a Thirteen tenant and would 100 per cent recommend Thirteen to others.



Angela, Thirteen Customer



Customer case studies

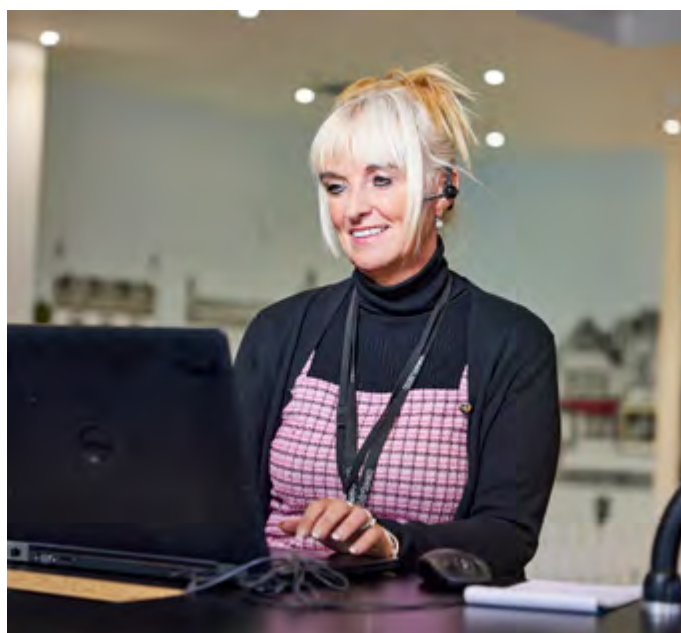
Hear from the customer committee that is helping to shape services at Thirteen

The launch of our customer committee last year has given a group of customers the opportunity to join forces and have a bigger say in how we deliver services at Thirteen.

Our customer committee includes five of our customers, as well as Katy Wilburn (a board member) and Winsome Small (a member of Thirteen's audit and risk committee).

As part of their role, the committee looks at recent feedback and performance information collated by our involved customers to give their perspective on the services and business decisions that impact customers.

The committee also reviews reports from our involved customers so they can give feedback to the Thirteen board about the standards that housing associations need to meet.



Thornaby resident Dawn Keogh is a mother of four daughters who is passionate about making a positive difference for the future generation.

Dawn has described the role as an exciting step in helping to improve services and opportunities for other customers of Thirteen.

She said: *"Climate change is a big interest of mine, and the customer committee offers a platform to promote the benefits of making homes more sustainable."*

"I am a big believer in equal opportunities for everyone, and as a customer committee member, I like to make sure that people know where to turn to for support when they need it."



Val Scollen, a customer committee member from Billingham, is also chair of Thirteen's customer involvement framework and has been involved for over 22 years.

Val said: *"Being part of the customer committee is a fantastic way for me to continue to help make a real difference in our communities. "Playing my part as a customer committee member means that I get to make sure everyone's voice is heard."*



Ryan Davis, a customer committee member from Stockton, has lived most of his life in Teesside and has recently started his career in children's social care reform.

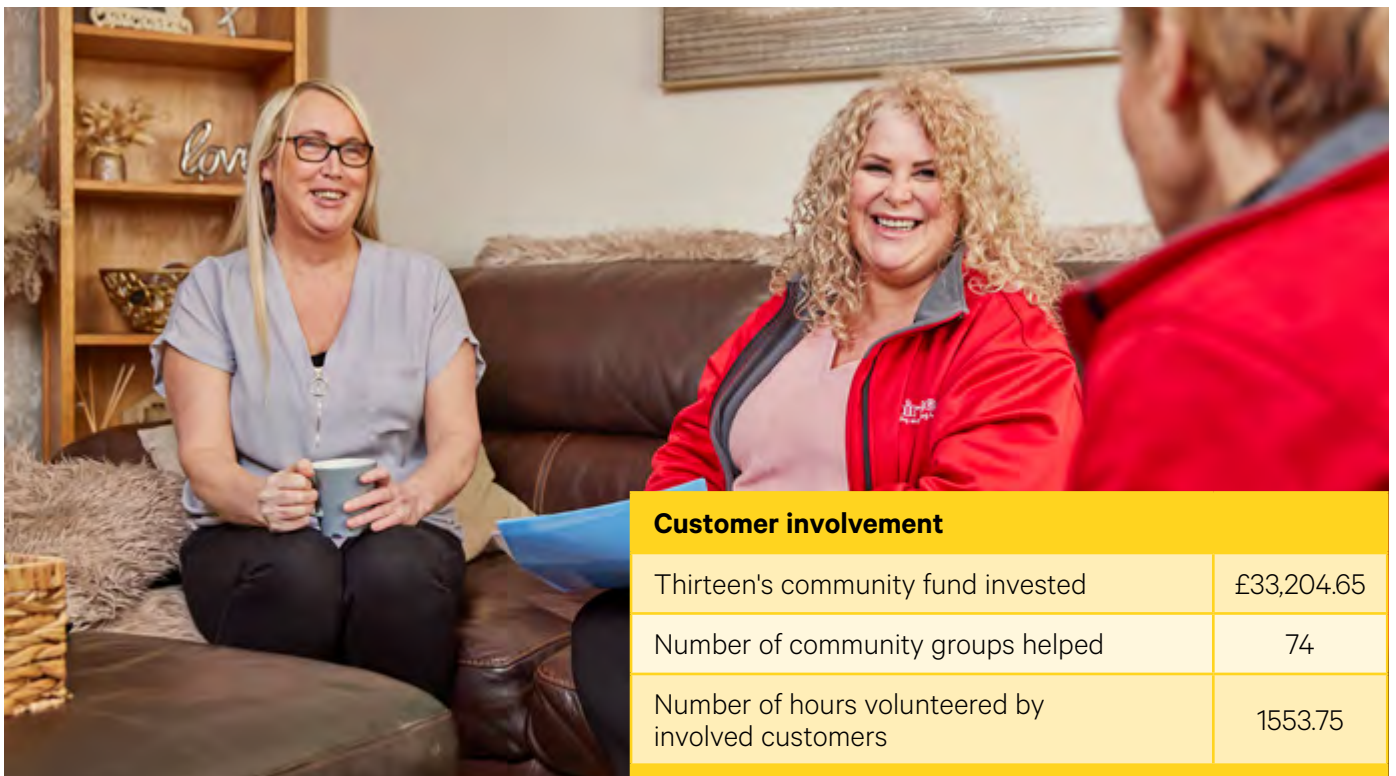
Ryan was successful in applying for a scholarship from Thirteen for the last two years of his studies at university and says that being part of the customer committee is a way for him to repay the faith Thirteen showed in him. He said: *"My personal experience means I know the challenges and barriers that young people in Teesside can often face, and I want to make a difference by helping people who are in a similar position as I was as a young person. 'I'm always thinking about how I can make change happen. The customer committee is a way to help other Thirteen customers, by working with the organisation to make sure services are the best they can be."*



Russell Jameson, a customer committee member from Middlesbrough, is a fire fighter who has spent the last 15 years keeping people and communities in Teesside safe.

He is a father of three children who is passionate about his local area. Russell said: *"I got involved in the customer committee to make a positive impact in communities. 'As a dad, I care about the opportunities available to young people and I know how challenging it can be for people to get a good break in life, so I'm keen to do what I can to help young people living in Thirteen properties."*

Customer involvement



Thirteen involves customers who have a lived experience of our services to bring fresh ideas and help us to improve services, neighbourhoods and opportunities for all customers.

They are involved in helping us scrutinise services and performance, consult on policies and strategies, and comply with regulations.

Customer involvement	
Thirteen's community fund invested	£33,204.65
Number of community groups helped	74
Number of hours volunteered by involved customers	1553.75
Involving customers	
Number of involved customer meetings held	110
Number of policies consulted on	4
Number of surveys carried out	20
Number of services changed or implemented as a result of customer involvement	24
Number of consumer standards tested, and assurance given to the Board we are compliant	4



For me, getting my teeth into information and finding out how everything works is the highlight of being an involved customer. I started off attending the rent and income group and it's escalated from there. I just love what I do, keeping myself active and helping other people where I can.



Pauline, Thirteen customer from Stockton

Customer satisfaction with services



Satisfaction indicates customers' perception of the service standards we provide. Our performance is measured against targets specific to the organisation, allowing us to measure success over time.

Like most landlords, Thirteen seeks feedback via various mechanisms, including one-off perception surveys and in-depth research.

Customer satisfaction with services

% of customers satisfied with our services	84.4%
% satisfied we listen to customer views and act upon them	76.7%
Customer net promoter score	64



Our repairs drop-in sessions in Hull have been a great success. They have given us the opportunity to get feedback and improve how we communicate with our customers.



Repairs in customers' homes

We carry out a range of repairs to customers' homes, ensuring they're kept in good condition. Our skilled colleagues 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 better allocate repairs jobs, ensure quality customer service and increase satisfaction.

Repairs in customers' homes

Number of repairs completed including emergency and call outs	141,551
% of repairs completed on first visit	97.4%
% customer satisfaction with our repairs service	85.6%

Access to properties

We have launched our stay in to win campaign to encourage customers to remain at home for their scheduled repairs. Each month, those who have stayed home for their appointments are entered into a prize draw to win £250.

Access

Number of no access properties	31,773 (total repairs)
Total no access cost	£793,325

Adaptations

Adaptation jobs completed	7,877
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Disabled Facilities Grants approved:

Curved stairlifts	30
Ramps	9
Specialist toilets	8
Level access showers	105

Supporting our customers



Employment support

We offer a range of free employability services for our customers and the wider public across the Tees Valley. We support people who are not in employment, education or training, but also anyone looking to gain a new job or more hours.

Employment support

People helped into employment, education or training	533
Who are Thirteen tenants	199

Tenancy support

Number of customers supported by the tenancy support team	1,591
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Improving neighbourhood services

ASB (Anti-social behaviour)

We are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour in our estates, alongside our partners, to create communities our customers are proud to live in.

ASB	
New cases of anti-social behaviour	2,358
Number of anti-social behaviour cases closed	2,410



Improving neighbourhood services

Customers told us they wanted our staff to be more visible in neighbourhoods, helping them deal with day-to-day issues. We adopted an operating model with neighbourhoods at the heart of our business, and more housing services co-ordinators managing a reduced number of properties.

Improving neighbourhood services	
Number of housing services co-ordinators managing homes	121
Number of fly tipping jobs	2,321
Number of graffiti removal jobs	191

Customer Success Story

Kennedy Gardens in Billingham is located next to the town centre, which means on weekend evenings it can get busy and there have been cases of anti-social behaviour.

Customers told us that the current time of 10pm-2am for cover from the mobile security team was too late. We reviewed the contract with the supplier and from October 2023 there will now be a security presence from 6pm-10pm as requested.

Working with our involved customers, the below improvements have been made:

- a new set of written communication for customers has been designed setting out the expectations and service standards when reporting ASB.
- a new approach to using technology to collect evidence with CCTV and noise monitoring equipment.
- a wider group of involved customers have reviewed recommendations made by the Housing Ombudsman around how housing associations should handle noise complaints and made further recommendations to what Thirteen should implement.
- we are encouraging customers to tell their stories and experiences so we can use them to help encourage other customers to report issues to us.

Touchpoints



We believe everyone should receive the same quality of service, no matter where and how they come into contact with Thirteen.

That's why we're investing in our 'Touchpoints' programme, including a high street presence, our self-service platform, My Thirteen, our call centre and other communication methods such as email and social media. These all help to promote the range of services we have to offer and make them more accessible, direct, quick and easy.



Touchpoints	
Number of customers signed up to My Thirteen last year	11,752
Number of customers signed up to My Thirteen in total	43,815
Number of calls answered	251,774
Average call waiting time	7 minutes 54 seconds
Number of customers who visited our Hull store	1,473 face to face, 2,910 over the phone
Number of customers who visited our Stockton Store	8,648 face to face, 2,541 over the phone

Dealing with complaints

We're committed to achieving 100% of complaints resolved promptly and fairly within five working days. Our aim is not to receive a repeat complaint, so we work with managers on the learning from those we've had. However, we've fallen short of our annual target.

We're working to rectify this by looking at where complaints come from, why they're happening and how we stop them from happening again.

Dealing with complaints	
Number of complaints received	986 stage 1, 54 stage 2
% of complaints responded to and resolved within our target of five days	94%

Lettings



Lettings

As part of our new homes development programme, Thirteen builds homes for affordable rent. We also bring existing empty homes back to life by carrying out extensive renovations to ensure customers live in a quality, secure rental property.

Lettings	
Total number of properties let to customers	3,869
Number of general needs properties let to customers	3,164
Number of extra care properties let to customers	102
Number of supported housing let to customers	196
Number of homes for older people let to customers	286
Number of properties let to shared owners, leaseholders and bespoke	121

Bespoke lettings

We have over 100 bespoke lettings homes designed for rent for specific customers such as students and medical staff. These homes give customers the chance to live close to their place of study or work. The team also look after several homes for older and vulnerable people.

Bespoke lettings	
Number of bespoke letting homes such as students, medical staff etc.	178

Rents and income

We work with customers to make paying rent as simple as possible. We also offer support to those who are struggling to pay.

Rents and income	
Number of customers with clear rent accounts at end of 22-23	12,962
Number of customers in arrears	12,366
Number of notices served for rent arrears	980

Leaseholders

We also have a range of leasehold properties, including garages and shared ownership properties.

Leaseholders	
Number of leaseholders	819
Number of shared owners	1,027
Number of leasehold schemes for the elderly/older person shared ownership	146

Supported housing services

We provide services to meet the needs of vulnerable people and support them to improve their quality of life. These include extra care and sheltered housing, homeless people, ex-offenders, people with mental health issues, those recovering from substance misuse, families, women and young people.



Supported services	
Number of people helped by support services	11,733
How many customers our care and support services saw in 22-23	
Sheltered housing, extra care and older people	2,723
Ex-offenders (Ministry of Justice support service)	4,262
Ex-offenders (Ministry of Justice Personal Wellbeing)	160
Ex-offenders (Future Steps)	138
Tenancy support (ex-offenders)	113
Tenancy support	1,591
Employment support	1,129
Homelessness prevention (Key Steps)	52
Domestic abuse support (NIDAS and Stone Meadow)	1,342
Homelessness prevention in Sunderland (Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme)	47
Refugee resettlement support	22
Support for young people and parents (Anna Court, Rose House, floating support and Durham)	154

Recycling and energy efficiency

Recycling at the Thirteen Recycling Centre (TRC), Billingham

We are committed to reducing our carbon footprint and part of that is a focus on how we manage waste. The figures below demonstrate how many tonnes of waste were reclaimed at the TRC.

Recycling at the Thirteen Recycling Centre	(tonnes)
Mixed wood	163.84
General waste	132.82
Upholstered furniture	94
Construction and demolition	58.2
Mattresses	47.32
Metal	33.72
Upcycled/reused items	15.27
Fridges and freezers	13.68
Plate glass	6.06
Paper and card	1.12
Tyres	0.75
Plasterboard	1.26
Florescent tubes	0.03
Monitors	7.95

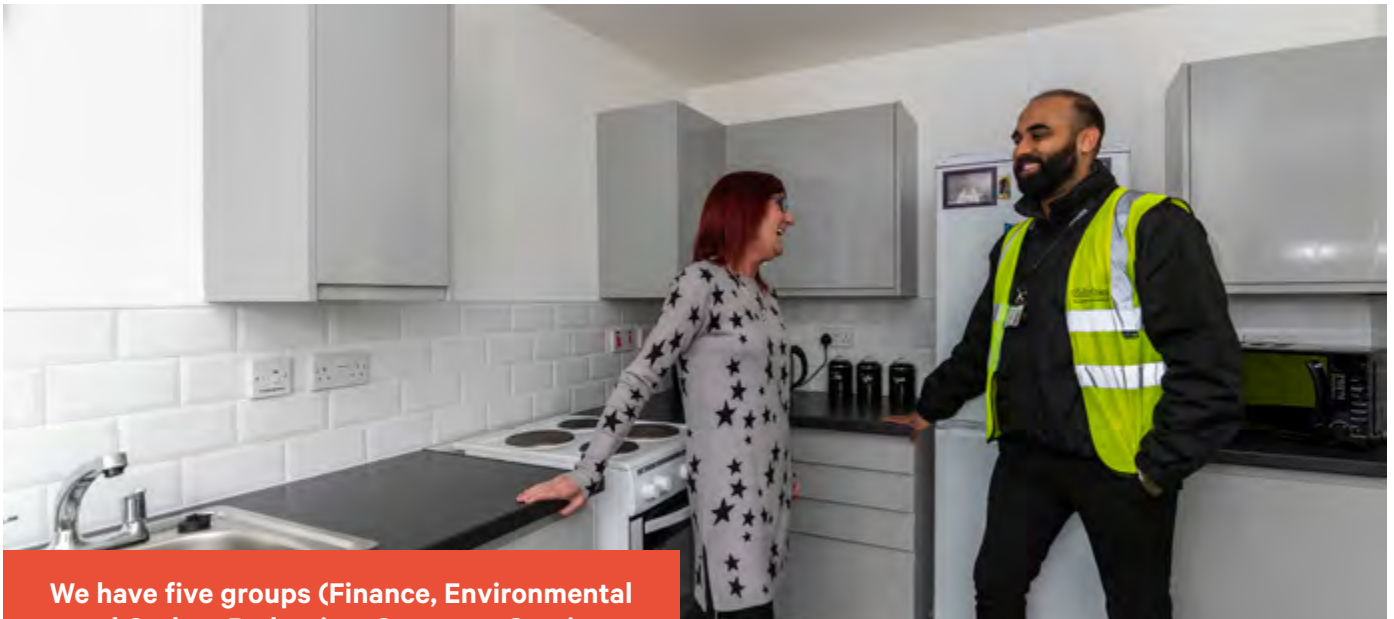


Energy efficiency improvements

In the last year, we carried out energy efficiency improvements to some of our homes from installing new technology to improved insulation.

Energy efficiency improvements	
Number of air source heat pumps installed	14
Number of properties that have had their lofts insulated	190
Number of properties that have had cavity wall insulation	135
Megawatts generated by Solar PV systems	1008.189742

Investment in homes



We have five groups (Finance, Environmental and Carbon Reduction, Customer Service, Quality Assurance and Health and Safety) focusing on different areas of investment which are now attended by involved customers to help us to shape the delivery of this service. Having this customer voice has added real value to what we are trying to achieve by genuinely putting customers at the heart of what we do.

Investment in homes

From April 2022 to March 2023, we carried out £88.3m of improvements to homes, including replacing kitchens, bathrooms, boilers and installing new roofs, windows and doors.

Investment in homes	
Total investment	£88.3m
Number of new kitchens installed	1,606
Number of new bathrooms installed	1,264
Number of new boilers installed	1,360
Number of new windows installed	735
Number of new external doors installed	1,564
Number of new roofline installations	610

Fire risk assessments

Our homes in multi-storey blocks are regularly assessed for fire risk, and our standard inspection cycle is over and above recommendations set out in Local Government Association guidance. We go above and beyond to ensure buildings are as safe as possible.

High-rise properties are checked every six months

Complex or three-storey and above buildings are checked annually

Buildings considered low risk are checked every two years

Inspections help us identify fire hazards and any required improvements, looking at multiple aspects of how the building is managed and what can be done to reduce fire risk.

Fire risk assessments	
Number of fire assessments carried out	361
% of post inspections completed on time	99.6%
Number of properties checked as part of domestic flat door inspection programme	2060

Developing new homes



Developing new homes

We place enormous importance on building new homes. In our strategic plan, we set out our intention to invest in new builds, including affordable rent and shared ownership, to ensure that we have the right mix and quality of homes to meet our customers' expectations now and in the future.

Developing new homes	
Amount invested building new homes	£76.2m
Total number of new homes built	435
• Number of social rent	18
• Affordable rent	278
• Shared ownership	139

Value for money

We're committed to providing value for money, delivering our vision and maximising the social impact of our resources and investment. It's important because we want to make sure we can invest in more new homes, existing homes and create quality services for residents, customers and other stakeholders.

Value for money	
Total savings across Thirteen's services	£4.4m
% of social housing turnover	2.6%

Sharing your stories



Mr Doe* moved into his Thirteen home in May 2023 at a difficult time in his life. He had recently lost his job, was struggling to pay his rent, and was dealing with some family issues.

Rather than let these worries build, Mr Doe explained the situation to his housing services co-ordinators. He said: “The co-ordinators were both great and really understanding of my situation. They spoke to me about my difficulties and did everything they could to help.”

The housing team arranged for Universal Credit payments to come directly to Thirteen to avoid issues with the tenancy and arrears. They then sourced a second-hand cooker, further easing some financial pressures.

*The name in this story has been changed to respect the customer’s privacy.

To support Mr Doe back into work, the team also referred him to Thirteen’s employability service. This proved to be a great success; Mr Doe worked towards obtaining his HGV licence and has since gained employment.

He added: “I am so grateful for all the support received. It has helped improve the beginning of my journey as a Thirteen customer.

“Both myself and my child are really settled in our new home and love where we live. I’ve been absolutely over the moon with the service I’ve received from Thirteen.”

Helping our customers and the environment



Did you know that Thirteen has a furniture recycling scheme?

Since April 2022, we have collected and distributed approximately 30 tonnes of furniture, helping more than 50 families.

After reviewing our waste policy, we recognised an opportunity to both support our customers and reduce waste. To help us achieve this, in early 2022, we recruited a small team to repair or upcycle furniture left behind in our properties.

The upcycling team consists of Rhys Baker, a photography and art teacher, and Katie Forde, a graduate from the Chelsea College of Art in London.

When a tenant is referred to the scheme, we put together a 'starter pack' of the items most likely to be needed at the start of a tenancy. Depending on needs, we can also provide bed frames, sofas and wardrobes.

Customer story

Adam* was pleased to have been offered a home with Thirteen, but the initial excitement turned to dread. He had become used to sleeping in his car and did not have the funds to furnish his home. Adam said: "I was grateful to have a roof over my head again, but I had very little money to make my house a home."

That's when his housing services co-ordinator referred Adam to the furniture recycling scheme. The team provided Adam with a table and chairs, a TV stand, a two-seater sofa and a kitchen starter pack.

He continued: "I'm slowly getting there. Most importantly, with shared childcare responsibilities, I have a home that my children can come to. That means a lot to me."

If you would like to know more about our furniture recycling scheme or environmental sustainability at Thirteen, please visit www.thirteengroup.co.uk/page/take-control-carbon

*The name in this story has been changed to respect the customer's privacy.

How we compare with our peers



We're continuing to challenge ourselves to save money where we can and take the long-term view to invest in being more effective and efficient in the future.

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 to understand where we're going and be clear and realistic about the scale of the task.

Operational measures	Thirteen	Benchmark figures*
% of repairs completed first time	97.41%	90.74%
Average calendar days to complete a repair	20.86	14.5
% of complaints responded to within five working days	94%	87.65%
% of valid gas safety certificates	99.96%	100%
% current tenant arrears as a % of the annual rent debit	3.14%	3.52%

*Housemark 2021/22 results for housing providers in the North East, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside >10k units.

About the Annual Report

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

We provide our customers with homes, support and opportunities to grow. As a not-for-profit housing association, we focus on delivering our charitable objectives of providing housing, care and support for those who need it.

We own over 34,000 properties and manage more than 35,000 homes across the North East, Yorkshire and Humber, providing services for over 72,000 customers.

Our strength, capacity and ambition to deliver what customers need mean we can change things for the better.

This document gives you some quick and accessible information about the performance of Thirteen. It provides 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 2022 and March 2023.

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

Would you like to get involved?

Getting involved with Thirteen means you can have your say about the things that matter to you the most as a customer. As an involved customer, you can help us to improve services and influence the decisions that affect your community.

E: **customer.engagement@thirteengroup.co.uk**

T: **0300 111 1000**

W: **www.thirteengroup.co.uk**