

Thirteen Customer Engagement Update

September 2020

BRICKS



Regulatory Consumer Standards Assurance

The Consumer Standards tested are:

- Home Standard
- Tenancy Standard
- Neighbourhood and Community Standard
- Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard

Involved customers have carried out a number of checks including reviewing policies and procedures, mystery shopping, speaking to customers who have used the services and reviewed performance information.

Customers have recently tested the Home Standard and the Neighbourhood and Community Standard. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic we had to change the way we tested these standards, which included virtual meetings and virtual job shadowing via video. We have given assurance that Thirteen are compliant with both standards.

We are about to begin our testing of the Tenancy Standard. We'll share our findings once the testing is completed.

If you would like to support with this testing, please contact Pauline Brace (Customer and Stream Lead for Consumer Standards Assurance) via the Customer Engagement team. (see details at the end of the newsletter)

Community Fund

The customers who are involved in allocating the funds for the Community Fund meet every six to eight weeks to scrutinise applications.

We had to change the way we reviewed applications due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Applications are sent to us beforehand with meetings being held virtually using Microsoft Teams. Since April 2020 we have funded 24 applications totalling £33,884.34.

Some of the projects funded include:

- The Big League CIC for The Poolie Time Exchange project which helps to support those who are elderly and self-isolating during COVID-19
- Epic Teesside CIO for the Epic Summer Fun project which provides school holiday activities for children
- Thirteen's Customer Support Services team for projects in Hartlepool and Sunderland. In Hartlepool this was for the Connect, Engage and Care project - A project to maximise engagement and involvement of vulnerable children, young people and families. In Sunderland this was for the 5 Ways to Wellbeing project - supporting homeless individuals during their time at 'Move-On' accommodation

If you would like to become involved in scrutinising the grant applications, please contact Ann Carter (Customer and Stream Lead for Community Fund) via the Customer Engagement team. (see details at the end of the newsletter)

Thirteen Academy

In late July customers were involved in deciding which applicants would be awarded scholarship funding through the Thirteen Academy for courses with Teesside University.

We held a virtual meeting where we sifted the applications. Four applicants who we had funded last year for the first year of their course had reapplied for further funding, and after reading their application and looking at their feedback we decided that we would fund them for the remaining two years of their course. We also funded an applicant from the previous year who had to withdraw due to not having the required grades for the course. She had gained the required grades this year, so we decided to fund her first year.

We then held virtual interviews with six applicants using Microsoft Teams. Following the interviews, we decided to fund four applicants for one year of their course, and one applicant for two years of their course.



Policy and Strategy Development

Involved customers have been consulted on changes to the following policies and strategies:

- Independent Living Policy
- Complaints Policy / Process
- Volunteers Policy

These consultations are all completed in the comfort of your own home, these can be sent out online with a copy of the policy and a link to the survey questions. If you do not have access to the internet, we can look at sending this out to you in the post.

If you would like to be involved in future Policy and Strategy Development, please contact the Customer Engagement team. (see details at the end of the newsletter)

Service Projects

Touchpoint Operating Model

The project is looking at how we effectively manage the expansion of our stock, at what matters to customers, how we can become more digital, how we ensure best value for money, what doesn't add value and what drives customer satisfaction. It will define what our target operating model will look like and this will include understand what services can be provided online / digitally.

Touchpoint Stores

The store is now open on Stockton High Street. We have been given regular updates during the difficult period leading up to the opening of the store and staff have kept us up to date with emails, photographs and a time-lapse video of progress and will visit the shop when it is safe and convenient.



If you would like to be involved in future service projects, please contact Jim Martin (Customer and Stream Lead for Service Projects) via the Customer Engagement team. (see details at the end of the newsletter)

Performance Monitoring

We have had our final performance meeting in its original format and agreed the changes we will make to how the meetings are run moving forward.

We will focus on areas showing reds and ambers which indicate we are not meeting our targets and will dig deeper to see why and look at what recommendations we can make to improve them.

We will be monitoring complaints performance on a quarterly basis and will look for trends in complaints over a rolling 12-month period and investigate where needed.

We will also be reviewing and monitoring the action plans and recommendations from all customer involvement activity.

If you would like any further information on this, please contact Melvyn Rhodes (Customer and Stream Lead for Performance Monitoring) via the Customer Engagement team. (see details at the end of the newsletter)

Online consultation

Involved customers have continued to take part in various consultations and activity. They have embraced the new ways of working and are slowly becoming experts at using online methods such as Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Forms to engage with Thirteen.

No Access

In early June customers were consulted on how Thirteen can address no access. No Access is how we describe not being able to access a customer's home to carry out essential repairs. A survey was sent out to all involved customers and from the responses customers liked all suggestions put forward. The most popular were the prize draw entry for customers and colleagues where 100% access was achieved - these both scored the same and the highest. There were also some good suggestions from customers for Thirteen to consider. Following this consultation, we sent out some communication mock-ups to those who had taken part so that we could gather their feedback.

Contacting Thirteen during COVID-19 and beyond

Customers attended a Microsoft Teams meeting with Jayne Lawson, Interim Director of Customer Experience, to gather their views on Thirteen's service offer during the COVID-19 pandemic. Overall customers were happy with the level of service received by Thirteen during COVID-19 and have embraced the way services have been adapted.



Online Consultation (continued)

Noise Nuisance Leaflets Consultation

Customers were consulted about noise nuisance leaflets. The responses received indicate that most of the Involved Customers taking part found the leaflets to be informative, helpful, and clear and easy to understand. Some comments for changes to be made included that all forms of contact options (including out of hours) to be added, an explanation on what would happen if no agreement is reached and the leaflets should be provided in a different format when required.

Home Visits and Property Inspections

Helen Ivison, Senior Neighbourhoods Manager, held a virtual meeting with customers to gather their views on the safe operating procedures that had been put together for Neighbourhoods staff to follow when carrying out home visits and property inspections. Overall, customers were happy with the procedures and recommended that the following should be added to the procedure:

- The Neighbourhood Coordinator must let the customer know if they are running late to the appointment
- PPE requirements to state that protective over shoes must be placed over shoes when entering a property
- Staff should ask customers if they would like us to wear gloves or not

Estate Walkabout Consultation

Customers were consulted on how Thirteen could get the most out of their estate walkabouts and whether they were the best use of time for Neighbourhood Coordinators. Responses from customers were mixed. Some responses indicated they were happy with the walkabouts as it shows that Thirteen representatives are active in the area, available to ask questions or find things out. Others were concerned that walkabouts were poorly attended and a waste of employee's time. When asked how customers would like to engage with their Neighbourhood Coordinator customers stated they could do this through emails, through Microsoft Teams or using local meeting hubs with appointments in place. Other comments included that they should be abolished as there are more effective ways of picking up problems and issues, and walkabouts need to be flexible and informal.

Meeting with the Executive Director of Customer Services - his vision and his plans

David Ripley, Executive Director of Customer Services, delivered a presentation on his plans and vision for the Customer Service directorate. Customers were happy with the information shared by David. The customers mentioned to David that more work is needed on how Thirteen communicates with customers about work going on in their area. They also mentioned that they were concerned about Thirteen not recording customers mental health issues on Orchard. David will take these issues on board and provide feedback to the customers.

Thirteen Newsletter Consultation

Customers were consulted on the content that was to be published in Thirteen's 'Together' newsletter. It is vital that Thirteen understands what information is important to customers and what is not-

Overall, customers are happy with the content included and suggested adding in an FAQ's section to include information on what customer support is available during the pandemic, including rent arrears and universal credit.

Your Neighbourhood Consultation

Kay Glew, Director of Neighbourhoods, sent out a video to involved customers to showcase some of the work that has recently been completed by Neighbourhood Teams. She also wanted to gather their views on how their neighbourhood can be improved.

Customers gave lots of suggestions on how neighbourhoods can be improved, including grounds maintenance and fly tipping issues.

Customer Open Day

We are currently in the planning stages of our next Customer Open Day. This will take place virtually for the first time in October. We will share more details with you closer to the time.

If you would like any further information, please contact the Customer Engagement team. (see details at the end of the newsletter)



Other Involvement Activities

Customer Involvement Framework Review

Following consultation with customers earlier in the year the new involvement framework was produced, and it was approved by Board in May. This has now been implemented. We have a consultation database of 325 people who we share information and consult with.

Customer Annual Report 2019/20

We have been working on pulling together the Customer Annual Report for 2019/20. We have consulted with involved customers on the design of the report and what content they feel should and should not be included. We are working with our Performance team and Communications team to get the first draft of the report ready and are liaising with teams across the organisation to gather their performance figures.

The report will be published on the Thirteen website by 1st October 2020.

Training, Conferences and Networking

NHC Resident Involvement Conference

Four involved customers attended the Northern Housing Consortium's (NHC) Resident Involvement Conference, which this year was done as a webinar. Topics discussed on the day included Resident Involvement in Building Safety, different approaches to scrutiny and neighbourhood planning. Feedback from customers who attended indicates that they feel the conference was not value for money. It was more officer led than tenant led, and they feel that Thirteen are further ahead in terms of how we engage with our customers and what we involve them in.

e-learning

We also offered out Thirteen's e-learning training package to involved customers and those who have taken up the offer have been working through them at their own pace.

If you would like any further information on Training, Conferences and Networking, please contact Val Scollen (Chair of the Framework) via the Customer Engagement team. (see details at the end of the newsletter)

Tpas Awards 2020



We are delighted to announce that Thirteen's Customer Involvement Framework has been shortlisted for an Outstanding Tenant Engagement Award at the Tpas Awards 2020. The winners were due to be announced in March, but the event was postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The winners will now be announced at a virtual awards ceremony in September.

Contact us

For any further information, or if you would like to get involved to help us shape, give assurance on compliance and improve services please contact Val Scollen (Customer and Chair of the Framework) or the Customer Engagement team using the details below:

Val Scollen – valeriethirteen@gmail.com



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