

Employability Newsletter

Winter 2020/21

Welcome to the Thirteen Employability Newsletter

Thirteen's employability service continues to work with customers throughout the Tees Valley and has provided much needed support during these unprecedented times. We'd like to share with you some of the successes, developments, and achievements of our service.

We offer a range of services throughout the Tees Valley to support people into employment, education, training and volunteering.

From our launch in May 2016 to December 2020, we have supported

4,954
customers



2,222
customers

have started in employment, education or training



From those,
1,563
customers
found employment or an apprenticeship

and
659
customers

accessed full-time education or vocational training.

3,067
customers

also received some form of supported intervention to break down barriers to work, improving their chances of landing their ideal role.



Joe's Quick Win

Joe signed up with Thirteen's employability service after speaking with a Host at our Stockton store (see page 5 for details).

He'd been unemployed for less than six months and was looking for work after being medically discharged from the army.

His caseworker supported him in accessing various exclusive vacancies we held, including roles in warehousing.

The Employer Engagement Team met with Joe in our Stockton store two days later and supported him with online applications for the roles.

Joe was invited for an interview the following day and was successful in starting work at a warehouse just ten days after meeting with the team!



For more information or to book an employability appointment please email employability@thirteengroup.co.uk or call us on **01642 947 840**.



thirteenplus

Support for living

Employability Newsletter

Winter 2020/21

Training

Thirteen's employability service continues to offer quality training courses remotely, using Microsoft Teams. Between March 2020 and December 2020, we have supported 127 customers into both external and internal training.

Here's what some of the learners who've had training from our fabulous tutors have said:

“ I loved it! I felt engaged as a group on the live chat and that we can do it in the comfort of our own home. ”

“ I liked discovering new opportunities and skills for a career path I want to follow. ”

“ I would recommend this course and the tutor. She was supportive and a great help to get me into employment. ”

“ The materials are really well done. They are done in such a way that they aren't daunting or scary to look at, you can easily see what you have to do. ”

“ I enjoyed working in a group and meeting new people, I learned a lot. ”

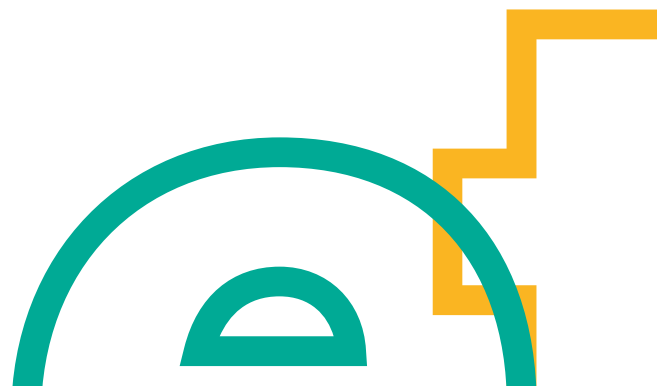
Course Name/Qualification	Eligibility	Location	Date
Steps to Success - NOCN Level 1 Employability	Any customer accessing our employability services	Delivered virtually via MS TEAMS	23.02.21 to 05.03.21
My Future Self - Only 4 days non accredited	19 + NEET	Delivered virtually via MS TEAMS	02.03.21 to 5.03.21
Learning Curve - NOCN Level 2 Employability	16-24 NEET	Delivered virtually via MS TEAMS	15.03.21 to 25.03.21

Key topics covered in the training include:

- Customer service skills
- Developing a career portfolio
- Presentation skills
- Skills renewal to match current labour market
- Interpersonal skills
- Confidence building

If you are interested in any of the training mentioned above or would like to make a referral, please contact our training team via email at

employability-training@thirteengroup.co.uk



Employability Newsletter

Winter 2020/21

Employment

We've continued to work with employers and customers throughout the year to access exclusive vacancies and move customers into key worker positions.

The Employer Engagement Team has supported employers across the Tees Valley with vacancies and apprenticeship opportunities, finding staff to meet their business needs.

One of them was local building company, Vision Building Services (VBS).

VBS approached our Employer Engagement Team because of previous successes a contractor within their supply chain had experienced. The company was looking for Groundwork Operatives and General Operatives for work associated with a repairs and maintenance contract they had recently been awarded by Thirteen.

They needed operational competency but they also needed operatives to show exceptional customer service skills, as they would be working in and around customers' homes. The team built this into the pre-screening process which resulted in us finding the right candidate, specifically for this employer, exceeding their expectations and leading to repeat business.

VBS said: "We work closely with Thirteen's employability scheme. Darren, a previous Thirteen tenant who had used the service before, recently became unemployed. He got back in touch with Thirteen to see if they could help again as he was now a homeowner with young children and was keen to get back into work.

"Nathan from Thirteen got in touch with us after we sent him a vacancy for a General Operative. His team

screened Darren before passing his details over to us. This recruitment process was quick and easily allowed us to find talent from the local area who are ready and willing to work. We're extremely pleased that Darren is now working for us here at VBS. A big thanks to Nathan and Darren's Case Worker, Jay."

For businesses across Tees Valley we offer the following free services:

- A dedicated Employer Engagement Officer who will meet with you to understand your business needs and tailor a service to meet them. This gives you a single point of contact who will support you before, during and after the recruitment process.
- An end-to-end service providing support to identify suitable, enthusiastic and job-ready candidates for your business.
- Promotion of vacancies with our customers
- Advertising on our social media page
- Pre-screening, shortlisting and matching candidates to ensure suitability to vacancies
- In-work support to keep in contact and make sure the recruitment process runs smoothly

For more information on our employer engagement service, please contact the YEI Teems Leader, Karen Taylor:

Email: Karen.Taylor@thirteengroup.co.uk

Phone: **07972 622194**



Employability Newsletter

Winter 2020/21

Volunteering

Volunteering plays a big part in our employability service, giving people the chance to gain work experience and develop new skills. Throughout 2020, the service continued to grow with 15 positions created across the business as telephone befrienders and support service volunteers. These roles are currently within Thirteen's employability service, older people's housing schemes and neighbourhood's teams.

Throughout the pandemic, our telephone befrienders have been helping to combat loneliness by calling customers each week for a chat and a 'virtual' cuppa. The volunteer builds relationships with the customers and offers a listening ear. They're trained in our safeguarding procedures so if something doesn't sound quite right, they know how to raise it through the proper channels.



Meet Rosie

Rosie (pictured here during a Teams catch up) joined the volunteering service in March 2020. After her induction training and remote e-learning, she started volunteering for us in July. In just four months, Rosie has completed 163 hours of voluntary work, supporting over 20 customers as a befriender and supporting our employability team.

Rosie said: "I started volunteering with Thirteen to gain professional experience within a support-based role. As a befriender, I am developing meaningful relationships with my client group and encouraging their independence, with their physical and mental wellbeing as a priority.

"Within my employability support role, as well as gaining evaluation feedback, I regularly make follow-up phone calls to give our customers the chance for more support if they think they'd benefit from it.

"Remote volunteering has presented some challenges and it's been strange adapting to this new way of working. Thirteen has been incredibly supportive though, encouraging my personal and professional development through training opportunities and regular check-ins."

Colleagues from the Hartlepool older persons service were very keen to have a volunteer in their team and took Rosie under their wing as the first telephone befriender at Thirteen. She now volunteers with them every Friday.

“My experience with Thirteen has reinforced my goals of entering a support-based career role. I hope to continue working with Thirteen and to take the skills and knowledge I've gained into employment.”

Eleanor Matthews, housing for older and vulnerable persons co-ordinator said: "Rosie is a fantastic addition to the team. She's helped our customers feel less isolated at a very pinnacle time and the information she receives helps too."

Rosie also helps the employability team once a week, gathering valuable evaluation feedback from our customers that will help shape the employability service. She has also been involved with developing new projects and shadowing caseworkers.

Jo Whistler, Employability Team Leader said: "Rosie is a real asset to the employability team. We rely on quality customer feedback to help shape future service delivery and promote continued contract work. Rosie has been instrumental in gaining unbiased customer insight for several contracts.

"She's supported the team with other tasks as well, including calling previously supported customers to check their current circumstances in case they need any further employability support. We are also planning for Rosie to offer guidance and coaching to customers that have internet access and a device for using MS Teams. This will help them get ready for virtual appointments with their caseworkers going forward."

Get in touch!

We are creating new positions all the time as teams develop a need for the befrienders, so if you have a customer who is chatty, friendly and would make a great befriender please get in touch!

Drop us an email at volunteering@thirteengroup.co.uk and we'll make it happen!

Employability Newsletter

Winter 2020/21

See our new venue and meet our new colleagues!



On the High Street

Thirteen has its own store in a prime spot on Stockton High Street and the Employability Team has a daily presence. At the time of writing, the store was closed due to the national lockdown and looks forward to opening again as soon as it's safe to do so.

When it re-opens, people will be able to once again visit the store to find out more about Thirteen's homes, employability services, to pay their rent and for a range of other support.

Susan Borrow, Care and Support Manager (Contracts) at Thirteen, said "The store is a fantastic opportunity for the employability service to be at the heart of Thirteen's support for customers. It allows customers to deal with their housing queries and employability appointments all at once, as well as engage with Thirteen's other services and products."

Customers across the Tees Valley have already felt the benefits of accessing our store. From the store opening up to the end of December 2020, 2,991 customers visited for appointments. Of those, 286 have had appointments with the employability team.

Thirteen's store is at 145 Stockton High Street, next to 'the hub' (cycling and walking centre). It will reopen when it's safe to do so after the lockdown restrictions end, with appointments available to meet members of the team.

Amey-Rose McGrogan –
YEI Teems Employability Caseworker

Hi, I started with Thirteen in August 2020, currently home based.

I am a proud Teessider and love to be able to make a difference in my local communities by empowering people to realise their potential.

I come from an IAG background, specialising in self-employment and coaching and have worked in this sector across the Tees Valley and North East for the past eight years.

I've loved my transition into Thirteen's employability service as it allows me to follow my passion of inclusion for all – being able to offer a joined-up service that supports customers with employability, money advice and housing is a fantastic thing to be part of.



Neil Crabtree –
YEI Teems Employability Caseworker

I joined the employability team in July 2020 after a long career supporting various client groups in schools and colleges to help develop career aspirations and goals.

I love working with our customers. Helping someone progress from feeling despondent to gradually helping them develop their skills and employment prospects is incredibly rewarding, seeing their reaction to being back in work really does make the job worthwhile.



Heather Campbell –
Employability Tutor

Hello! Since starting with the team, I have developed from my role as an Employability Caseworker to a new role as Employability Tutor.

I enjoy learning myself and developing others. I've worked with over 150 customers in the past two years and completed over 150 CVs. I have a passion for developing and motivating others to enable them to reach their maximum potential. I thoroughly enjoy my work and thrive on the opportunity to help others and help make a difference.



Employability Newsletter

Winter 2020/21

See our new venue and meet our new colleagues! continued

Alex Summerhill –

YEI Employer Engagement Officer

Hi, I'm an Employer Engagement Officer. I started my role in July 2020.

I'm from Middlesbrough but lived in Sydney, Australia for ten years where I worked as a Careers Engagement Manager supporting secondary and tertiary students into internships and graduate positions.

I feel very lucky to work with colleagues who are passionate about improving the lives of our customers. I love working in the team and to receive a message of thanks when you've helped someone secure employment is the best feeling!



Ann-Marie Moore –

Employability Caseworker

I've worked within support services for over 13 years and I'm thrilled to bring that experience to Thirteen's Employability Team.

My background is working with vulnerable customers, previously supporting survivors of domestic abuse and individuals living with physical disabilities, mental health issues and learning difficulties to live fuller, more independent lives.

I am passionate about empowering people to build confidence, overcome barriers, achieve goals and strive for outcomes they never thought possible.



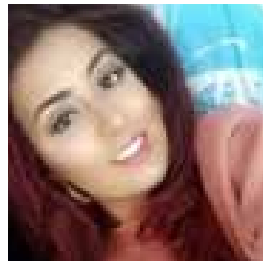
Rizwana Khan –

Apprentice

Hi, my name is Riz and I'm an apprentice. I've recently joined the employability service.

I previously worked in Thirteen's supported housing schemes offering a wide range of support for customers with various needs.

The best thing about working in employability is seeing the progress of customers, transitioning from unemployment to gaining confidence, skills, and a new career!

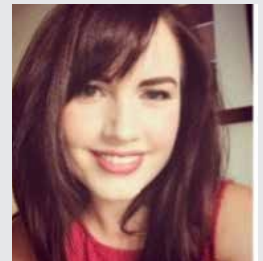


Marybeth Nicholson –

YEI Teems Employability Caseworker

I've worked with Thirteen for two years. I started with the Universal Credit team, supporting customers with new claims.

Before this, I worked in the employability sector for six years and have supported all age groups into employment and training. Supporting customers into employment, skills and training is a real passion of mine!



Karina Le Fevre –

YEI Recruitment and Communications Officer

Hi, I started working at Thirteen, in December 2020.

I graduated from Teesside University in 2018 with a master's degree in marketing and I have implemented my skills for organisations before joining Thirteen.

My main aim is to reach out to as many people as possible through social media and the various channels by making content interesting and relevant. I'm excited to get started as it will be a very rewarding role for me.



Employability Newsletter

Winter 2020/21

Introducing our other care and support services

As well as providing employability support to communities, we offer help with accommodation, financial issues and deliver a range of contracts and services to some of the people most in need.

Money advice

The Money Advice Team provides free confidential support to Thirteen customers. In 2020, the team supported 2347 customers. They offer advice on issues relating to benefits, debt and rent arrears, money management and the best financial choices, energy, financial planning and grants and hardship payments.

Individuals accessing the service are supported to become more financially confident and sustain their tenancies. If you're interested in engaging with the service or for more information, please email: money.advice@thirteengroup.co.uk or call **0300 111 1000**



Support and accommodation for ex-offenders

This service provides a package of support to individuals leaving prison and provides one-bedroom accommodation with a tailored support programme. The main aims are to reduce the re-offending rate, help individuals sustain tenancies and help individuals integrate back into communities.

The service provides:

- Good quality, settled accommodation
- A tailored support package to meet individual needs
- Help with setting up utility supplies
- Supporting with benefit, debts and grant applications
- Help accessing health services and use of Thirteen's employability and financial support services
- Training and support on tenancy management skills

If you are interested in engaging with the service or would like more information, please email: lisa.metcalfe@thirteengroup.co.uk or call **0300 111 1000**

Universal Credit (UC)

The UC team offers a comprehensive support package to any new UC claimant living in a Thirteen property, from their date of claim to the date of first payment. The team supported 3,861 Thirteen customers in 2020.

The support package includes:

- Checking the claim and maximising benefit entitlement,
- Providing digital support
- Identifying vulnerabilities and ensuring necessary adjustments are in place to meet the needs of the customer.
- Checking the award at first payment date and assisting customers in challenging any discrepancies
- Hardship, budgeting and other financial advice

If you are interested in engaging with the service or would like more information, please call **0300 111 1000**

Working together to help customers: Kevin's Story

Kevin had been a carer for his mum for five years before she died, when he was suddenly faced not only with a bereavement, but with the loss of his daily duties, and of his home. He was in a bad place in his life.

Working together, members of the money advice and employability teams worked alongside housing colleagues to transfer the tenancy to Kevin, secured him employment and supported him with his household finances.

Kevin is now happily working in his local convenience store and is secure in the home he shared with his mother.



Employability Newsletter

Winter 2020/21

Thirteen's employability service offer

We deliver several contracts across the area and would like to share with you a bit more information on our full employability offer.

Employability service for Thirteen customers

The service delivers an employability offer for anyone living in a Thirteen property of working age, to access quality support, advice and guidance to support them into work, education, or training. We can support those already working to gain alternative employment or learn new skills. If you're interested and would like more information, please email employability@thirteengroup.co.uk

New Directions (YEI)

Thirteen's employability service is continuing to deliver the YEI programme until 2021 covering the areas of Stockton, Middlesbrough and Hartlepool. The programme supports those aged 15 to 29, who are currently out of work, education and training and are living in the Tees Valley area. If you're interested and would like more information, please email newdirections@thirteengroup.co.uk.

Employability support for Accent and Clarion housing tenants

Thirteen is working in partnership with Accent and Clarion housing to provide employability support to their tenants. Through our continued delivery of job clubs and one-to-one appointments, we're supporting these tenants and the wider community with employability advice and guidance. The support offers a raft of benefits including e-learning opportunities, exclusive vacancies, IT facilities and access to a range of grants to support customers into work. If you're interested and would like more information, please email tracy.simmons@thirteengroup.co.uk

Volunteer and peer mentor service

Thirteen continues to offer its volunteer and peer mentor service across the Tees Valley, County Durham and Tyneside. Individuals can access volunteering opportunities internally at Thirteen and externally to boost their experience as a volunteer and their employability skills. We support volunteers throughout their structured

placements to ensure they are achieving an experience that is rewarding and right for them. Volunteering at Thirteen is open to everyone and anyone. Interested? Please email volunteering@thirteengroup.co.uk

Employment bootcamps (NEETs contract)

Thirteen is excited to be delivering these in partnership with Learning Curve, as part of their ESF funded NEETS programme.

We deliver monthly 'Employment Bootcamps' in venues across the Tees Valley. The courses have exclusive job vacancies attached and further support for customers to support them to get jobs, apprenticeships, traineeships and education opportunities.

The bootcamps are available to 15 to 24-year olds living in the Tees Valley, who are not in education, employment or training (NEET).

If you're interested in attending a bootcamp or would like more information, please email employability-training@thirteengroup.co.uk

My Future Self (AEB Contract)

We are delivering training on behalf of Middlesbrough Community Learning for anyone aged 19 and over, NEET and living in the Tees Valley. We're currently delivering remote sessions which are fun, interactive, and engaging. There's a variety of modules to increase confidence and motivation. We match the learners to exclusive hot job vacancies, remote volunteer opportunities and further training, education requirements.

If you're interested in attending 'My Future Self' or for more information, please email employability-training@thirteengroup.co.uk

To discuss partnership working opportunities with Thirteen's employability service, please contact Susan Borrow, Care and Support Manager (Contracts) by calling **07816 070370** or emailing susan.borrow@thirteengroup.co.uk

There's also more information on our website and on our social media pages:

www.thirteengroup.co.uk/page/employment-support
<https://www.facebook.com/hotjobsandtraining/>
<https://www.facebook.com/Thirteengroup/>