

**thirteen**

Managing and building homes

# Housing Solutions

Homes, support  
and opportunities  
to grow





**thirteen**  
Managing and building homes

**2 Hudson Quay**

[www.thirteengroup.co.uk](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk)  
T: 0300 111 1000



## Introduction

Thirteen owns and manages some 34,000 properties in the North East and Yorkshire, with 30,000 of these in the Tees Valley. Here our offices in the three major centres of Middlesbrough, Stockton-on-Tees and Hartlepool make contact simple for customers and partners alike.

We're about homes and so much more. Our experience spans from providing homes for rent to building and selling new homes and supporting vulnerable people with thoughtful and effective services. The homes and support services we provide are just the beginning.

Over the next five years we will invest over £1billion to improve our services, tenants' homes and their neighbourhoods as well as delivering new affordable homes.

At Thirteen, we're continually improving and growing. But we're not a business that just wants to work alone.



**We have the scale, expertise and funds to do much more to regenerate our heartland across the North East and Yorkshire.**



## Our Philosophy

### Homes, support and opportunities to grow

That's the Thirteen mission because at Thirteen we're all about providing homes, support and opportunities to grow. With a vision of a caring landlord and housing developer, we understand that everyone is an individual. We offer a home for their life.

Whether that's a space to enjoy with family, a haven to return to every night or somewhere to put down roots, we're there to provide what customers prefer.

Putting them at the heart of our business helps us shape the organisation and continue to ensure we're there for anyone who needs a home, and maybe helping hand, too. Our

housing support services include money advice, sheltered accommodation, home adaptations, help with anti-social behaviour and more.

Our vision extends beyond homes to investing in neighbourhoods and communities across the North East and Yorkshire too.

**We're there for anyone who needs a home, and maybe a helping hand, too.**

## Building on Partnerships

Partnership is our history. A succession of unions between social housing over 20 years has led to Thirteen becoming the largest landlord in the North East and amongst the biggest 25 nationally.

Partnership is also our future. Links between Thirteen and private companies, social enterprises, health trusts, local and national government open up opportunities for special projects delivering mutual benefit.

Our skilled colleagues and committed board directors all work tirelessly to support 70,000 tenants and customers, bringing a breadth of experience and a can-do attitude.

We have the size and scale and we're financially strong - but we still remain locally responsive. We work hard to support communities in the places we have homes to help address the social, economic and environmental issues that matter to our customers and partners.

## Pride of Place

The Tees Valley is an area of opportunity, with England's largest port, the UK's highest business start-up rates, a 20% rise in digital companies, a plentiful supply of enterprise zones and talent on tap from its universities.

We have the scale, expertise and funds to do much more to regenerate our Teesside heartland, while our ambition to grow further into Yorkshire will see us working in partnership to create regeneration opportunities across all of our operating areas.



## How We're Shaping Up

When the group of landlords and care and support arm within Thirteen consolidated in 2017, we became one single landlord for all of our tenants and customers. Making that change means increased financial stability, spending and bargaining power and the ability to save money to fund new services, as well as releasing financial capacity to invest in our homes.

We touch the lives of some 70,000 people. How we respond, treat and serve tenants, customers and clients is the lifeblood of Thirteen. So we're constantly improving and responding to changes and challenges in our sector, the wider environment and in response to feedback too.

Overall satisfaction shows customers would recommend us – but they've also said they wanted a closer relationship with our teams. That's why we introduced a new operating model, putting neighbourhoods at the heart of our business, having a more visible presence, with our teams on the ground speaking to customers day in, day out so that we can develop closer relationships, creating an even bigger impact in our communities and giving tenants greater voice.

We've also opened our first store in Stockton, to help make our customers' lives easier. Customers can drop in for a tea and a chat and talk through any question they'd like to ask or problem they want solving. We're looking at opening more stores across our operating area in the future too.

As part of delivering this model, we've reshaped many of our teams, making us much easier to do business with. Learning from customer feedback, we've significantly improved on core services such as delivering repairs right first time, the number one request from tenants.

As a caring landlord and developer, we know that some people in our area of operation need a helping hand and that's why we continue to focus on accommodation-based support and specialist support services. From homes to help people live independently for longer, to money advice and help to get people into training or work, we offer additional support through our Thirteen Plus range of services.

Thirteen folk are passionate about what they do. They care about making a difference and are striving to improve all that we do. Proud of our achievements, we also know we have areas to improve on and these are firmly in our plans.

Whilst we're financially strong and resilient to deal with challenges that constantly face us, we remain flexible, with a clear focus on our role in helping to address housing need and improving what we do for the people in our area.

Partnerships are key to this and we're committed to working with partners to make a positive impact across the Tees Valley and Yorkshire.



**We're committed to working with partners to make a positive impact across the Tees Valley and Yorkshire.**

## Where We're Heading



We draw upon a wealth of experience and strong partnerships and exercise a dynamic and flexible approach to create new solutions.

We're a social purpose business that uses our commercial expertise to provide good quality homes, support those in housing need and help people live independently and make a positive change for themselves. To continually improve the way we meet these aspirations, we draw upon a wealth of experience and strong partnerships and exercise a dynamic and flexible approach to create new solutions. Our key business areas are set out below:

### Customer experience

We believe everyone should get the same quality of service, no matter where they come into contact with us. That's why we've invested in our Touchpoint programme, including a high street presence, new digital approach and in our contact team at the end of the phone, to make all our services more accessible, direct, quick and easy.

### Investing in our homes

We have a continuous programme of improving our stock. A typical year sees around 4,000 properties receive work, including new roofs, kitchens, bathrooms, windows and doors and energy efficient boilers installed. Our in-house team of 450 specialist colleagues including plumbers, plasterers, electricians, joiners, gas fitters, decorators and bricklayers complete 150,000-160,000 repairs each year.

### Neighbourhoods at the heart

Quality of location is as important as quality of housing in contributing to quality of life. Thirteen can't create a sense of community, but we can put in place many of the conditions for it to happen. That's why our operating model puts neighbourhoods at the heart of everything we do, ensuring we work with partners to deliver exactly what's right to make communities thrive.

### Building new homes

As people move through life, they want more choice. Our plans to build at least 400 homes each year include properties for affordable rent, but a growing proportion are for shared ownership or outright sale through our subsidiary Thirteen Homes. The variety is growing, too, spanning apartments, houses, bungalows, NHS and student accommodation, as well as converting existing buildings.

### Health and independence

Across our operating area people's lives are changed as Thirteen enables them to achieve healthier independent living. Our range of specialist accommodation is tailored to the needs of people including care leavers, the homeless, teenage parents, people with profound learning disabilities and victims of domestic abuse. We offer home adaptations to enable older people to stay in their homes longer and supported accommodation when they choose to move.

### Additional support

We go beyond bricks and mortar to develop targeted help and support so people in need can live more successfully, becoming the best they can be. The ever-growing range of services includes money advice, help to get into work or training, gardening services and homeless support.

### Finances and governance

We have G1 and V1 rating for our governance and finances and value for money and being more efficient are key drivers in everything we do. One of our aims is to maintain an operating margin of 30% and continue to make efficiencies across the business.



# How Thirteen Became One

The history of Thirteen is rooted in communities across the North East. We grew from traditional housing associations and local authority housing which provided safe and sustainable homes for thousands of people in the region.

The story begins with the formation of Tees Valley Housing Association over 20 years ago by merging Cleveland and Teesside Housing Society and Phoenix Housing, bringing together properties across the North East and Yorkshire.

In April 2000, Tees Valley Housing Group was formed by Tees Valley Housing Association, Tees Valley Trust, and joined by Sunderland-based Banks of the Wear Community Housing. Tristar Homes was created in 2002 to manage council housing stock on behalf of Stockton Borough Council and went on to take ownership of the council's stock in 2010.

A little further down the Tees in Middlesbrough, Erimus Housing was created from the transfer of council housing stock in November 2004. Meanwhile in Hartlepool, the housing stock was transferred from the council to Housing Hartlepool in March 2004.

Four years later, Fabrick Housing Group was created by the joining of Tees Valley Housing and Erimus Housing. Tristar Homes and Housing Hartlepool joined in partnership to form Vela. In 2012 Newcastle-based charity Norcare (later to become Thirteen Care and Support) joined Fabrick.

The Thirteen Group was formed in 2014 by bringing Fabrick and Vela together. Now we had the collective strength to thrive in a changing and ever more difficult environment, share resources and costs and deliver a greater number of enhanced services and initiatives. In the first year alone, we saved £7.5m and consolidated in 2017 to become one landlord as Thirteen, bringing even further strength and a simpler, easier business to work with.

As Thirteen we have focused our efforts on growing our operating area, expanding further into Yorkshire and across the North East, all while continuing to deliver excellent customer experience and ensuring we remain financially resilient.



To meet our ambition to be the trusted provider of good quality housing and support services to regenerate neighbourhoods, we set out three priorities for Thirteen, which are intrinsically linked by elements of being a social entrepreneur.

## Where Our Priorities Lie

Priority One:

### Delivering great customer service

Renting, repairing and re-letting will be operationally excellent and customers will experience clear and prompt responses to all service requests, both online, by phone and in person. We believe that everyone should get the same quality of service, no matter where they come into contact with us - and we'll work with partners to create better outcomes for customers.

Priority Two:

### Delivering quality places to live and improving neighbourhoods

What we gain through business activities we will invest in neighbourhoods to improve both the housing offer and the place and provide employment opportunities to make a major contribution to transforming the Tees Valley and our wider operating area.

Priority Three:

### Being Team Thirteen

We will be an employer of choice, high performing and structured so that working in collaboration is second nature for everyone - board and committee members and colleagues. There will be smarter working with transferable skills, more in teams than individual roles and a supportive and motivating environment for our 1,600 skilled and talented employees.

The history of Thirteen is rooted in communities across the North East.



# Key Services

## Building new homes

We place enormous importance on building new homes. If we don't build, we don't grow, and in the long run lose our reason for being.

But it's not just a matter of replacing stock lost through demolition or right to buy. What we build instead can be targeted more precisely to the needs of a diverse market of both social and private – single people of all ages, couples starting out, retired people downsizing, people with disabilities and vulnerabilities. Those properties we build for sale generate extra money to invest in more homes for affordable rent.

We have a pipeline of residential development schemes across the North East and Yorkshire.

Alongside our programme of affordable homes, our subsidiary Thirteen Homes offers homes for outright market sale in addition to the 400 affordable homes we have committed to building in our strategic plan each year.

This will ensure we continue to grow our overall housing offer to customers by providing homes for outright sale through joint ventures with private developers or directly by Thirteen.

Thirteen Homes will be able to make a profit to help us grow the business and will be supported by Thirteen's corporate functions including finance and governance.

## Partnership in action

An indicator of Thirteen's thinking is what we're doing on the ground at Gresham, Middlesbrough. This is a housing site that was demolished years ago and is now being transformed with 222 new affordable rent homes planned. It's a transformational regeneration scheme and the design is inspired by Goldsmith Street in Norwich. The scheme will cost £32m which includes £36m Brownfield Housing Funding secured from the Tees Valley Combined Authority. It also includes an Innovative legally binding Cooperation Agreement with Middlesbrough Council to improve community safety and environmental standards as part of the wider regeneration of the area.

Plus, Thirteen and Middlesbrough Council will jointly fund a neighbourhood manager post for the area.



**What we build can be targeted more precisely to the needs of a diverse market**



# Key Services



## Core landlord functions

### Looking after our assets

Thirteen's housing properties are worth approaching £1bn. To keep them in good order, 365 vehicles transported our 450 plumbers, plasterers, electricians, joiners, gas fitters, decorators and bricklayers to carry out tens of thousands of repairs every year – almost 98% of them completed on the first visit.

Thirteen implemented a new repairs system in September 2017 which is better for allocating jobs. To fit in with busy lives, we now offer Saturday appointments for routine repairs. All of which has earned a 96% approval rate.

### Improving neighbourhoods

Tenants and customers have told us they want our staff to be more visible in their neighbourhoods, helping them to deal with day-to-day issues. This has prompted the radical rethink of how we work within our communities – putting neighbourhoods at the heart.

### Neighbourhood coordinators

The face of Thirteen in every estate is the neighbourhood coordinator who can help with problems around tenancy; bills or rent account; work with the council or police to improve the neighbourhood, and lead tenants in estate walkabouts, keeping an eye open for issues such as fly-tipping, minor damage to properties and graffiti.

## Environments and grounds

Our grounds maintenance team looks after the public and communal areas, keeping the grass cut, trimming hedges, trees and shrubs. We have also introduced grounds maintenance inspectors, customer volunteers who check on the quality of the work and report their findings.

We also work with partner organisations on projects to transform local areas, with £5m of environmental work in the pipeline.

## Anti-social behaviour

This can range from barking dogs or loud music next door to threatening behaviour and hate related issues. Customers can report this to us via a form on our website or phoning us.

A dedicated officer will contact people within a day to plan a solution and support them in implementing it. The service scored 9.7 out of 10 for overall satisfaction.

## Bespoke residential services

Our specialist team offers a range of accommodation from student properties to NHS accommodation to supported properties for people with learning disabilities. The team also offers a service working with private landlords to manage their homes for them, including renting and repairing.



# Key Services

## Independent living

### Younger people

Because housing is our business, we are perfectly placed to use our skills and resources to construct or convert buildings tailored to particular groups of young people who would welcome a protective roof over their heads.

### Leaving care

We provide a bridge to ease a young person's passage into the working world: secure and supported accommodation in houses with ensuite bedrooms, communal kitchen and lounge, staffed 24/7. Key workers help people deal with issues such as health and relationships and develop life skills – from cooking to managing money – to go and stand on their own feet.

### Teenage parents and young families

Becoming a parent is never easy, especially for a teenager - single or in a new relationship. That's why we provide high quality accommodation that's safe and secure and work with young parents to develop personal support plans and a range of guidance and life skills training to help them live independently.

### Profound learning disabilities

It's right for people with complex needs to move from institutional settings out into the community wherever it can be made possible. That's why, along with NHS partners, we set out to plan and build high quality housing that allows maximum independence cushioned by expert care and support.

### Older people

The proportion of older people in the North East and Yorkshire population is growing, with the number of over-65s predicted to increase by 41% in the next 20 years. But that doesn't mean their quality of life has to diminish. We offer a range of affordable housing options to match the needs of people as they grow older.

### Supported living

At Thirteen we manage purpose-built self-contained one or two-bedroom apartments or bungalows, available for a range of tenures, they're grouped in supported living communities, featuring full wheelchair access, lifts, CCTV and secure entry, an out-of-hours repair service (some with a part-time caretaker) and regular social activities.

### Sheltered housing

On-site staff members assist with housing management, coordinate repairs, respond to queries and look after the building's health and safety. Our out-of-hours team ensures a quick response to medical or maintenance emergencies. We offer similar schemes with special features for Chinese elders.

### Extra care housing

The need for a helping hand varies and extra care long-term housing means people can adapt the support to their needs – simply enjoying a sense of security or calling in extra help to assist with daily tasks. These friendly supportive environments often provide communal gathering places including a hairdresser, lounge and bistro.

Because housing is our business, we are perfectly placed to use our skills and resources to construct or convert buildings tailored to particular groups of people.



We plan and build high quality housing that allows maximum independence cushioned by expert care and support.



# Key Services



At Thirteen we believe that people can make the most of themselves, given the right extra help at the right point in life's journey.

## Reaching out a helping hand

### Thirteen's support services

At Thirteen we believe that people can make the most of themselves, given the right extra help at the right point in life's journey. Our support services reach out not only to our own properties, but often to where people struggle with life's challenges.

### Preventing homelessness

Our specialist teams work with people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to improve their lives by offering advice and practical support. This can include help with finding a home or a job, building resilience or working towards personal independence. Having won £712k of government funding we launched the trailblazing Key Step programme offering single individuals fully furnished properties for people to share for up to six months with utility bills included in a weekly charge. Prison leavers of any age with nowhere to go can expect single person accommodation.

### Gaining employment

Our specialist teams help people from the age of 15 who want to work, learn or train for a job. Team members create a personal training and development plan, provide one-to-one mentoring and coaching in interview technique, personal presentation, CV writing and job search skills.

### Apprenticeships

As one of the largest employers in the North East, Thirteen is playing a major part offering apprenticeship opportunities to gain work experience, earn a salary and work towards a recognised qualification in plumbing, joinery, gas or electrical engineering, business administration, finance and much more.

### Money management

Our teams provide information about budgeting, bank accounts, savings and loans and credit unions. They help more than 2,000 people a year to claim the benefits they're entitled to and deal with benefit and debt problems.

### Support to Stay

Our expert team will visit people falling behind with rent payments to explore what's putting their tenancy at risk, for example, financial issues, welfare benefits or health problems. Over the following three to six months we'll work with them to overcome these issues. In just its first year the team helped over 200 residents and was recognised for its pioneering work at the UK Housing Awards.

**Our support services reach out not only to our own properties, but often to where people struggle with life's challenges.**



# Our Culture

The ability to deliver high quality services to our 70,000 customers in a coordinated way depends critically on attracting and retaining the right staff with the right skills who are ambassadors for Thirteen. Part of that means providing a supportive and motivating environment for our skilled and committed 1,600 members of staff.

## Reshaping the organisation

Following the consolidation of Thirteen into one single integrated business, we reshaped teams to ensure the right capacity, resilience, skills and aptitudes to deliver with our new operating model at the centre. People are situated in the right place and roles for optimum performance, with any structural obstacles to performance and growth removed and the expectations of colleagues made clear.

## Colleague experience

Each element of the employee's life cycle is of vital importance; from 'attract me', to 'get me started', to 'develop me', right through to 'wish me farewell', helping us to attract and keep the best staff. We have already achieved:

- A 'reset' programme for colleagues following the reshape
- The development of profiles including expectations of behaviours and accountabilities at each level across the business
- The implementation of a digitised performance management framework for all staff
- The introduction of a suite of employment policies, procedures and toolkits
- A new staff induction process
- Be Thirteen, a campaign based around our values of considerate, smart and progressive

- Manager of Thirteen training
- A review of our reward strategy and subsequent frameworks
- A Rising Stars programme to develop future talent and leaders



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# Governance

Our board of directors oversees Thirteen's activities and is responsible for our strategic direction and priorities, agreeing our strategic plan including our mission, vision and values.

Our experienced directors bring a vast scale of talent, experience and expertise and some also sit on our committees.

## Thirteen Board Directors



**George Garlick**  
Chair of the Thirteen Board



**Richard Buckley**  
Thirteen Board Director and Chair of Thirteen Homes, a subsidiary company



**Mark Simpson**  
Thirteen Board Director and member of the Remuneration Committee



**Annette Clark**  
Thirteen Board Director and Chair of Audit and Risk Committee



**David Swann**  
Chair of Treasury Committee



**Anthony Riley**  
Chair of Development and Investment Committee



**Catherine Wilburn**  
Thirteen Board Director



**Robert Cuffe**  
Thirteen Board Director



**Chris Newton**  
Thirteen Board Director



# Governance

Our leadership team is led by Chief Executive Ian Wardle and is responsible for delivering our strategic plan and meeting the needs of tenants, customers, wider stakeholders and partners whilst delivering good financial and operational performance.

## Leadership Team Members



**Ian Wardle**  
Chief Executive and Executive Board Director for Thirteen



**Heather Ashton**  
Executive Director of Business Change and Improvement



**Chris Smith**  
Executive Director of Business Growth



**Paul Jenkins**  
Executive Director of Assets



**David Ripley**  
Executive Director of Customer Services



**Jane Castor**  
Chief Finance Officer



**Craig Taylor**  
Managing Director for Thirteen Homes

# Work in partnership with Thirteen

As well as always improving what we do, we're growing our business to provide more affordable homes, homes for market sale, delivering regeneration projects and providing accommodation with care.

We're overflowing with ambition but we don't want to develop and deliver it alone. Where aims overlap and where skills complement each other's, this is an area of opportunity for collaboration and partnership.

We can provide services on behalf of your organisation. Our skilled colleagues and committed board directors who work tirelessly to support over 70,000 tenants and customers, bring breadth of experience and a can-do attitude.

At Thirteen we have scale, scope, character, capability and financial strength. We're a willing and able partner so to get working relationship started, just get in touch at:

**Thirteen Group**  
Hudson Quay  
2 Windward Way  
Middlesbrough  
TS2 1QG

Tel: 01642 947242

Email: [david.ripley@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:david.ripley@thirteengroup.co.uk)



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