

## Investment and Maintenance Policy v1.0

January 2020

<b>Company</b>	Thirteen
<b>Lead Manager</b>	Senior Strategic Operations Manager
<b>Date of Final Draft and Version Number</b>	January 2020
<b>Review Date</b>	January 2023
<b>Officer Responsible for Review</b>	Assets Service Standards Manager

## 1 POLICY HISTORY

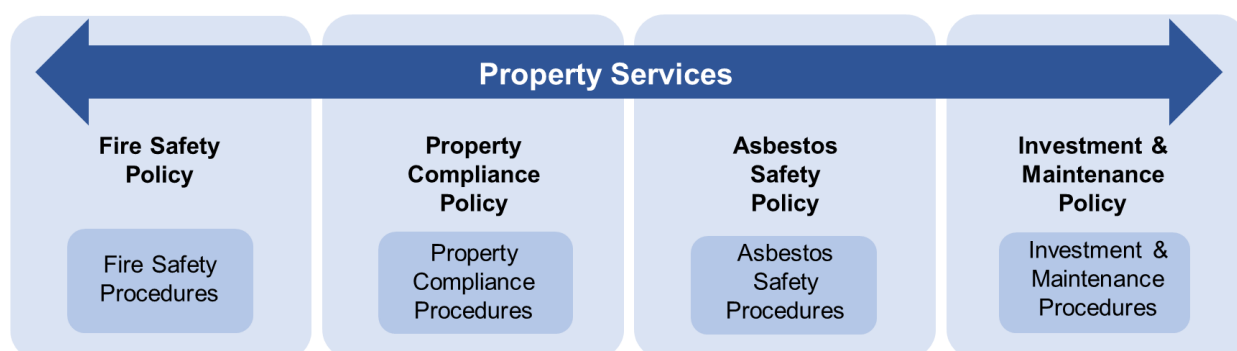
<b>Version</b>	<b>Action &amp; Changes</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Date</b>
1	New Policy	Asset Service Standards Manager	January 2020

## 2 POLICY STATEMENT

- 2.1** This document covers Thirteen's policy on investment and maintenance and how we will meet our responsibilities and duties as a leading landlord and housing developer, managing 34,000 properties, exceeding 70,000 customers and employing 1,600 staff.
- 2.2** Thirteen are committed to delivering a high-quality investment and maintenance service, providing customers with good quality homes, and a safe space they can enjoy. In addition, Thirteen have a wider responsibility to protect the value of its housing stock and to prevent disrepair to its assets.
- 2.3** The information contained in this policy is applicable to all Thirteen owned domestic and non-domestic properties, including communal areas and offices, unless specifically stated. Where properties are managed on behalf of external property owners, statutory responsibility will be detailed in individual management agreements.
- 2.4** This policy demonstrates our assurance to ensure full compliance with all legal, regulatory and statutory requirements associated to the duty of landlords within all buildings owned and managed by Thirteen.
- 2.5** The success of this policy depends on the positive working relationships between inter-departmental teams alongside external contractors, and the effective

implementation of agreed procedures. Each element within the policy contents will be supported by detailed procedural documents.

- 2.6** This policy may be adapted to respond to future legislative or regulatory changes with considerations for business continuity and maximising opportunities for service investments and improvements.
- 2.7** The Investment and Maintenance Policy is 1 of 4 policy documents covering the statutory areas of property maintenance and compliance which are relevant to the property services directorate, for managing both domestic and commercial properties. The link between these documents is shown below:



### 3 REFERENCE MATERIAL

This policy should be considered in conjunction with the corresponding procedure documents, associated policies and legislation, regulatory and approved guidance.

All relevant investment and maintenance legislation, regulatory and guidance documents Thirteen will comply with are set out in Appendix A. Our wider organisational commitment to health and safety is detailed within our Health and Safety Policy.

### 4 DEFINITIONS

A statement of exact meanings for this policy is outlined below:

Term	Definition
High Risk Residential Building	Defined by Thirteen as being a multi occupancy building of significant height and/or complexity within the building or tenure type
High Rise Block	Refers to buildings 18 meters or more in height
Resident	Refers to all occupants who reside in the premises
Customers	Refers to all residents, customers and tenants of Thirteen.
Leaseholder	Refers to all individuals who have a leasehold agreement with Thirteen.

## **5 POLICY CONTENTS**

### **5.1 Electrical**

Thirteen recognises the potential risks associated with electrical works and of poor maintenance of electrical installations. As a landlord Thirteen commit to having systems in place to ensure that electrical work is carried out in a safe manner, that there is adequacy and reliability of an electrical supply, which maintains a safe condition, and safety electrical testing is carried out within recommended cycles, and records are kept in line with current standards.

All properties within the ownership, or under contractual responsibility of Thirteen, shall be checked for electrical safety at intervals within the fifth year from the previously recorded check.

As a minimum Thirteen commit to a safety check that will include, but not limited to, those requirements detailed in associated regulations and approved codes of practice. Thirteen accept no liability to the electrical checking of tenant's own appliances.

Safety checks to leasehold properties are subject to each leasehold agreement.

Any electrical works undertaken on behalf of Thirteen will be managed by the Investment and Maintenance Electrical team.

Aerials within a domestic dwelling are the responsibility of the tenant.

All electrical safety detail supporting the Investment and Maintenance policy can be found in the associated Thirteen electrical procedural documents.

### **5.2 Gas**

Thirteen recognises the potential health risks associated with gas used for fuel in our properties. Potential risks associated with gas as a fuel and its products of combustion are significant, given the risks of fire, and or an explosion, or from carbon monoxide poisoning due to incomplete combustion arising out of poor or irregular maintenance.

Thirteen will take all reasonable steps to ensure appropriate management systems are in place so employees and members of the public are not put at risk from the effects of gas or carbon monoxide.

All owned and managed domestic, and non-domestic properties, or those properties under contractual responsibility of Thirteen, which duty extends gas fired heating appliances, shall be serviced and checked for gas safety at intervals of no more than 12 months from the previously recorded check date.

As a minimum Thirteen commit to a safety check that will include, but not limited to, those requirements detailed in associated regulations and approved codes of practice.

In respect of customers' own appliances, Thirteen accepts liability of the flues that the tenants own appliances are connected to and in recognition of those liabilities Thirteen will undertake a gas safety check on all appliances connected directly to Thirteen property flues.

In respect of appliances not connected to flues owned by Thirteen, a visual inspection for safe use will be undertaken.

Safety checks to appliances and flues on leasehold properties are subject to each leasehold agreement.

Any gas works undertaken on behalf of Thirteen will be managed by the Investment and Maintenance Gas team.

All Gas Safety detail supporting the Investment and Maintenance policy can be found in the Thirteen Gas Safety procedure document.

### **5.3 Investment**

Thirteen aim to maintain all our properties through investment programmes of planned works drawn together from information compiled within stock condition surveys, added to by customer consultation, maintenance recommendations and legislation changes.

The specification for improvements to our properties is aligned with the statutory housing standard with certain aspects and component parts delivered to an improved Thirteen Homes Standard introduced to enhance our customer offer and increase the sustainability of our housing portfolio.

### **5.4 Repairs and Maintenance**

Thirteen has a statutory duty to carry out repairs (and/or replace or remove) to our customers' home which are our responsibility. It is the responsibility of our customers to keep their property in a reasonable condition so that the need for repairs is minimised, but whereby a repair is required the onus is with the tenant to report it utilising one of the Thirteen methods of contact. Each repair will be allocated a priority which reflects its degree of urgency with the aim of completing all repairs right first time, with exception of those repairs which require us to make safe or carry out a temporary repair.

The Tenants Handbook details repairs which are the tenant's responsibility however, certain repairs cannot be undertaken by the tenant, where inadequate work may create legal liabilities for the landlord or leave the landlord compromised in relation to prosecution or regulatory intervention. Such work includes, but is not an extensive list, repairs relating to gas, electrical, plumbing that require re-routing of pipework and any such work which requires appropriate certification by a qualified tradesman.

Thirteen offer an out of hours service, which is available for emergencies only. Under this service, Thirteen will attend to an emergency repair if there is an immediate danger to a customers health and safety and / or the asset.

For those with assured tenancies which commenced prior to 9<sup>th</sup> April 2016, Thirteen commit to the Right to Repair.

All repairs and maintenance detail supporting the Investment and Maintenance policy can be found in the relevant procedure documents.

## **5.5 Voids**

The management of empty properties is a key business priority for Thirteen and therefore it is important to recognise that the teams and associated working practices cut across several directorates. Thirteen Investment and Maintenance commit to supporting the Empty Property Team in providing a streamlined service ensuring our product is fit for purpose, affordable and responsive to the changing needs and aspirations of customers.

It is the responsibility of Investment and Maintenance to bring empty properties to a minimum lettable standard without compromising the legal and regulatory requirements, quality of workmanship or the health and safety of staff, contractors or perspective customers. The ultimate aim is to maximise satisfaction of new customers with the standard of their home and the service offered.

All empty property policy information can be found in the Empty Property policy. All void maintenance detail supporting the Investment and Maintenance policy can be found in the relevant procedural document.

## **5.6 Contractors**

Thirteen is permitted to allocate investment and maintenance works to external companies providing those companies are part of an approved framework. The investment and maintenance service have access to both internal and external frameworks, variation details are given in the Procurement Code of Practice and departmental procedural documents.

All approved contractors are issued with a copy of Thirteen's terms and conditions prior to contract award with the expectation they fully comply with the Thirteen code of conduct. Our aim is to ensure the delivery of a seamless services, whereby behaviours are consistent with our values and high standards when utilising contractors to carry out works on our behalf.

Whereby Thirteen Investment and Maintenance are the appointed contractor, service standard information will be detailed within the project specification document and contract agreement.

## **5.7 Rechargeable Repairs**

The Investment and Maintenance policy sets out the principles to recharging the cost of work that is caused by tenant's neglect, deliberation misuse or damage that is above normal wear and tear, including unauthorized alternations that are undertaken to Thirteen assets. This approach extends to similar damage caused by visitors to the property, for whom the tenant is responsible, and is applicable to all customers regardless of tenure type.

Thirteen reserves the right to ask for non-essential (other than health, safety and security) rechargeable repair to be paid in full prior to the works being carried out and will allow for this to be paid in instalments. However, Thirteen will take into consideration the circumstances of the rechargeable repair and deliberate where a recovery of the recharge is not appropriate. In the event of the charge failing to be recovered, it will be held indefinitely against the customer's rent account and taken into consideration should a further tenancy be applied for.

As an exception, Thirteen consider circumstances surrounding damage caused by vandalism, criminal activity and access gained by the Police when an appropriate warrant is not present, fire damage and flooding, before recharging the cost of works.

Rechargeable repairs include damage to individual homes owned by Thirteen and communal or community areas of a building or estate.

## **5.8 Service Standards**

All staff working within, or on behalf of, the Investment and Maintenance department are subject to the Thirteen code of conduct which details expected behaviours consistent with demonstrating our values and high standards.

Standards associated to service delivery are reviewed in respect of changes in legislation, regulation and approved standards with considerations given to influencing factors including risk, satisfaction survey results, our current operating model, data analysis and customer feedback.

Thirteen have a zero-tolerance policy in relation to staff abuse.

## **6 QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING**

Thirteen will provide training, where required and which is task specific, to those with specific roles within the Investment and Maintenance service area, responsible persons and others with delegated investment and maintenance duties.

Thirteen will ensure any subcontractors / agencies carrying out works on the organisation's behalf will be qualified to the appropriate standards.

## **7 COMMUNICATION**

Thirteen commits to communicate with customers all appropriate investment and maintenance information on a regular basis through any available media sources necessary, including but not inclusive of signage, newsletters, resident group meetings, electronic media boards, website and new tenant sign up packs.

Thirteen will liaise with all stakeholders, frequently engaging in effective two-way communication to ensure operational functionality in Investment and Maintenance.

In the event of a major incident communication will be issued in accordance with the Thirteen Resilience Plan.

## **9 GOVERNANCE INFORMATION**

<b>Equality and Diversity</b>	In delivering the Investment and Maintenance Policy Thirteen aims to treat all customers fairly. Where additional support is required, individual equality assessments or PEEPS are carried out depending on their needs, services and dwelling type. Results from each assessment are accommodated for within specifications, delivery works and documentation to ensure we meet the needs of a resident or household but remain within the investment and maintenance regulatory and policy guidance.
<b>Customer/Stakeholder Involvement and Consultation</b>	The Investment and Maintenance Policy will be consulted on with the relevant customer involvement group as advised by the Governance and Compliance Team. Results from the consultation will be update prior to policy approval.
<b>Monitoring and Review</b>	<p>This policy will be reviewed every three years from the approval date, or in-line with impacting corporate, legislative or regulatory change requirements. Reviews will be conducted by the Assets Service Standards Manager or a competent delegate within the Thirteen and submitted to Governance Team for corporate approval prior to publication.</p> <p>The supporting procedural documents can be updated at any time and the changes can be implemented following approval from the Director of Investment and Maintenance or a competent delegate.</p> <p>Key performance indicators associated to investment and maintenance will be monitored and reported internally utilising reporting mechanisms within our software packages; Uniclass, Power BI etc.</p> <p>Where appropriate, valid certification will be issued for any works undertaken on a Thirteen asset with all electronic data being logged within a Thirteen database and managed and stored in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018.</p>
<b>Responsibility</b>	<p>As a Registered Social Landlord, we have a statutory responsibility to comply with all relevant health, safety and compliance requirements. Failure to properly discharge these responsibilities may result in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Prosecution by the Health and safety executive under the Health and Safety at work Act 1974.</li> <li>b) Prosecution under Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007.</li> </ul> <p>The Board and Chief Executive Officer are responsible for seeking evidenced assurance that all health and safety legislation relating to investment and maintenance is being adhered to, that the risks associated with investment and</p>



	<p>maintenance works are identified and managed, and that a proper control and assurance framework is in place. This will be demonstrated through Key Performance Indicators (KPI) reporting to the Board, Risk and Audit Committee and throughout the Group regularly.</p> <p>The accountable person with respect to Investment and Maintenance under the terms of this policy is Thirteen Housing Group.</p>
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## 9 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A - Reference Material

#### 9.1 APPENDIX A

##### Reference Material

Reference material used for consideration in formulating this document is outlined below, if a Standard or Act is withdrawn, repealed or superseded Thirteen reserve the right to follow the new guidance:

- Building Regulations Act 1984
- Care Act 2014
- Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012
- Thirteen Gas Safety Procedure
- Decent Home Standard
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Electricity at Work Act 1989
- Equality Act 2010
- Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998
- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974
- Housing Act 2004
- Landlord and Tenant Act 1985
- Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999
- RSH – The Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England from 2012
- The Secure Tenants of Local Housing Authorities (Right to Repair) Regulations 1994
- Asbestos Management Policy
- Code of Conduct
- Complaints Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- Fire Safety Policy
- Procurement Code of Practice
- Property Compliance Policy

This list is not exhaustive, and Thirteen will follow all other additional ACOPs and Regulation/Legislation and internal policy documents applicable to property Investment and Maintenance.

**For use by the Governance team**

<b>Date Agreed at Thirteen Board</b>	
<b>Date Added to Index</b>	
<b>Date Added to Internet</b>	
<b>Date Added to Intranet</b>	
<b>Linked to Policy to Procedure Number</b>	
<b>Linked to Strategy Number</b>	