



thirteen

# Future Steps

---

Supporting ex-offenders, or those at risk of offending, across the Tees Valley and County Durham to get off to the best possible start in a home of their own.

[futuresteps@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:futuresteps@thirteengroup.co.uk)

# A look to the future

Dear Partner,

This report provides an overview of the work we have done supporting ex-offenders to live independently within our communities. Future Steps is one of a range of support services delivered by Thirteen, all of which have a shared objective, to provide people with the help and support they need at that time to live independently.

Future Steps has been running since its launch in February 2022 and I'm so proud of the work we have delivered in that time. It has helped change, in a positive way, the future of so many people, giving them the support to navigate a successful path forward. This not only includes those receiving support directly from the service, but also their family and friends.

We hope to continue delivering and growing this fantastic service to help more people live long-term stable and settled lives, but also to increase the exposure of our Future Steps customers to other support services delivered by Thirteen and our partners, such as employment, volunteering, and wellbeing support.

We look to the future with hope as we have seen first hand the difference these vital services make. We hope you enjoy reading about what the team has achieved and the impact this work can have in our communities.

If you have any comments or questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch. I'll be delighted to hear from you.



*Chris Joynes*

**Chris Joynes**  
Director of Thirteen Plus

# About us

We're a housing association that provides homes and support to over 73,000 customers across the North East, Yorkshire and Humber regions. As a registered community benefit society, we're not for profit, and our financial surplus is reinvested back into the organisation for the benefit of the communities we serve.

We don't just rent and build homes. We support our customers and communities by investing in services to help people to live their best lives. We have a strong history in support service provision which includes support for older people, helping people into employment, domestic abuse and homelessness, asylum seekers, care leavers and ex-offenders.



# Introducing Future Steps

We know that having stable accommodation and consistent support goes a long way to helping people break the cycle of re-offending. Our Future Steps programme has been designed to support individuals to live long-term stable and settled lives, by helping them find and maintain the right accommodation, as well as access to specialist advice when needed. This tailored approach for ex-offenders is only possible with external funding.

From 1st February 2022 to 31st March 2024 the Future Steps programme which is funded by the ARRC Board (Achieving Real Change in Communities) worked with 223 ex-offenders, or those at risk of offending, to sustain their tenancies and take positive steps to move forward with their lives.

**76.57%**

of customers  
sustained a tenancy  
for at least 3 months.

Target 60%

We have helped

**223**

ex-offenders  
sustain their  
tenancy.



# How our Future Steps programme works

An individual, personal approach is vital to delivering successful outcomes for our customers. We create support plans tailored to meet each customer's unique needs, in addition to providing the support of a dedicated Future Steps tenancy support co-ordinator for up to two years.

Consistent, intensive, and prolonged support delivered on a one-to-one basis has proven to help assist customers in regaining confidence, independence, and the ability to fully manage a home. This tailored, wrap-around service is essential for both male and female customers to maintain and sustain tenancies by providing invaluable referral routes to both mainstream and specialist support providers where required.

“

*The service has been put in place to help people to sustain their tenancies, whether that's in a Thirteen property or private property. It's about making sure they are comfortable and can pay their bills. We don't want anyone to feel like they have just been left to get on with it on their own.*

**Erin, tenancy support co-ordinator**

“

*After being released from prison, some people need extra support to integrate back into society. Every client is different, so we spend time getting to know them and tailoring support plans to make sure they are getting all the support they need.*

**Ann, tenancy support team leader**

”

”



# Support offered

## Support offered includes:

- Supporting customers with securing social, supported, or private rented housing.
- Providing holistic support with tenancy set up, sourcing furniture, accessing grants, maximising income, accessing employability services and other specialist support.
- Delivering advice on budgeting and saving, debt management support and benefit reviews.
- Gaining an understanding of tenancy rights and obligations and ensuring individuals are aware of these.
- Developing links with specialist and mainstream services to support access for customers; supporting and advocating for them in accessing these services.
- Brokering relationships with landlords, mediating and advising on the process for accessing and renting private and social housing to bring about a sense of belonging.
- Providing support around digital inclusion, ensuring customers have a valid email address, adequate digital skills, and access to manage claims online.
- Introducing one to one employability support to customers, where appropriate, to include training, volunteering, and accredited courses for when they are ready to progress with their employment journey.



# Success with high-risk customers

Future Steps successfully engages customers across all levels of defined complexities.

The service has the skills and resources to actively work with some of the hardest to engage customers, including those convicted of sexual offences.



# Empowering customers to make positive change: A case study

## Background

We first met David\* in May 2022. As a 54-year-old man who was having to sofa surf, David was low in self-esteem and self-worth.

David had spent over a decade serving a custodial sentence and was struggling to reintegrate into society. His only income was approximately £280 a month in universal credit and as a result, he was having to sofa surf and often found himself sleeping on his mother's sofa.

## Intervention

**The team were determined to give David a new focus and work to rebuild his confidence.**

During his sentence, David explained that he spent time re-building sewing machines, so a referral was sent to Thirteen's employability team to identify any potential opportunities to build upon his existing skills and experience. This was a great success and saw David completing both a level 1 and level 2 course in sewing, where he learned how to construct t-shirts, dresses and more.

David wanted a home to call his own and after his commitment to bidding each week for suitable properties, he was successful in securing a one-bedroom flat with Thirteen. To get him off to the best start, the team worked with David to set up accounts for his council tax and utility bills. He also received a fridge-freezer, cooker and washing machine.

He liaised with SSAFA, an army veteran's charity, who were able to source funds for new carpets and a sofa. We helped David with a second application to the Olive and Normal Field charity and David was successful in receiving a £500 grant to spend in their furniture store.

To further support David's financial situation, the team worked on a PIP award application and were successful in gaining a £730 backdated payment. He went on to receive a monthly PIP award payment, totalling £3,150 per year.

The support David has received from the Future Steps Programme has saved the public purse a total of

**£81,214**

A total of  
**£9,200**  
was gained to help support David.



### Ongoing support

**David's outlook on life has completely changed.** He attends fortnightly counselling sessions with Ingeus and he is now happy and brimming with confidence.

He continued working closely with Thirteen's employability team, going on to complete his HGV level 1 and 2 driving course and is now a fully qualified six-wheeler lorry driver. David also completed further qualifications, including chemical handling, showing his commitment to turning his life around.

“

**David is so grateful to the service and is now an ambassador for Future Steps service. He has supported Thirteen in promoting the difference the service can make to people's lives.**

”

David has sustained his tenancy for 18 months, has not re-offended, and continues to flourish, even meeting with an MP to tell his story.

\*Name changed to protect identity.



- Without help only 17% of ex-offenders get a job within a year of release.
- 57.89% of customers engaged with training and/or education. Target 20%
- 68% of Future Steps customers engaged with Thirteen's Employability service. Target 30%

# Working together to change lives:

## A case study

### Background

Alison\* had fallen into difficulty as a result of domestic abuse and often fled to her car in an attempt to escape repeated assault from her former partner.

On one occasion, she did so under the influence of alcohol. Her former partner reported this to the police, who then tracked down the car and pulled her over. This led to an arrest and a DUI (driving under influence) sentence, resulting in the loss of her licence.

At the time of arrest, Alison was employed in a mobile cleaning role within her local community. However, due to the loss of her licence, she could no longer travel between jobs and therefore her role was sadly terminated.

**Throughout a difficult period, Alison remained positive and determined to get her life back on track.** After months of applying for jobs and facing several rejections, she was successful in gaining a position as head of cleaning services at a local care home. Unfortunately, following the return of her DBS check and some risk factors being flagged, the job offer was put on hold.

### Intervention

Alison contacted her tenancy support co-ordinator to explain the position she had been put in and asked for support. We immediately contacted our partners at Changing Lives and worked together with Alison to find a solution.

The wording of the DBS stated that Alison was a threat to life under the influence of alcohol, however we strongly believed this did not take into consideration her former situation or truly reflect Alison's mental state.

**We empowered Alison to take control of her situation.** Following some advice and guidance, she liaised directly with both the DBS service and her employer to ask for an amendment to the wording. This was approved, meaning the employer felt confident that the risk could be mitigated, and she was able to begin her role in October 2023.

### Extra support

To ensure Alison got off to the best start, our tenancy support co-ordinator made sure she had uniform and travel expenses covered in advance of her start date. The team also made sure she was up to date with housing payments and supported her to liaise with universal credit to change her circumstances.

**Since our intervention, Alison has retained her new role, is managing her home and most importantly, is safe and secure.**

\*Name changed to protect identity.



**83.85%**

of customers **engaged independently** with other support services.  
Target 70%

**97.7%**

of customers were offered an appointment within 10 working days of a referral being accepted, ensuring there was no break in support to the customer.

“The Support Worker listened to you”

**9.86/10**

customer satisfaction.

“

***Sometimes a case is so complex that it isn't just a one-person job, so bringing in other services that offer specialist support gives the customer the best outcome.***

Thirteen tenancy  
support co-ordinator

”



Of the 223 customers supported,  
**90.14%**  
have not re-offended to date.

Only  
**9.86%**  
of these cases had to close due to breaching licence and/or returning to prison.

## Reducing re-offending

The North East has a higher percentage of offenders who re-offend (28.2%) when compared to the rest of the UK (23.9%). At Thirteen, we understand that having a quality place to call home is a contributing factor to reducing re-offending and we have an important part to play in the communities we serve.

A home, a job, having a sense of belonging, being socially involved, and having positive influences, all contribute to helping people escape the vicious cycle of crime.

Only  
**6% of**  
**Future Steps customers**  
compared to the **national average of 28.2%** went on to re-offend.



The 51 customers that did not go on to re-offend,  
**saved the public purse £1.3m\*.**

\*based on a prison place for one year.

# Financial savings for our customers

The Future Steps service has supported customers throughout the duration of the programme to collectively gain £316,831 - this is inclusive of £52,581 Personal Debt Reduction.

These additional funds have been invaluable for customers in setting up and sustaining their tenancies, as well as improving financial wellbeing.

<b>PIP</b> backdated and future payments	<b>£128,205</b>
<b>Housing Benefit</b> backdated and future payments	<b>£17,377</b>
<b>Bonds and/or deposits</b>	<b>£7,823</b>
<b>Council Tax reductions</b>	<b>£6,890</b>
<b>White goods</b>	<b>£22,664</b>
<b>Small kitchen appliances</b>	<b>£3,378</b>
<b>Food vouchers/parcels</b>	<b>£3,045</b>
<b>Training and/or education</b>	<b>£22,007</b>
<b>Debt relief order</b>	<b>£28,475</b>
<b>Tenancy arrears</b>	<b>£19,854</b>
<b>Council Tax arrears</b>	<b>£1,824</b>

# Added value

We have developed excellent pathways for support utilising Thirteen's customer offer with our external partners. This ensures a complete person-centred approach is taken to customers sustaining their tenancies and reduces the risk of re-offending.



## **Referral pathways:**

Seamless pathways from Ministry of Justice (MOJ) funded Accommodation and Personal Wellbeing services to provide joint working reduces the risk of dis-engagement for the customer.

---



## **Housing:**

Enhanced relationships with Thirteen's housing service co-ordinators has increased knowledge of the service and the needs of those engaged. It has also allowed for speedy information sharing and allocation of empty homes, leading to successful new tenancies for customers.

---



## **Unconscious bias:**

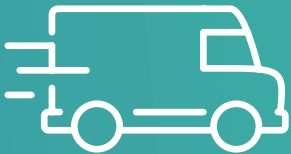
We have developed and delivered a series of 'Changing Perceptions' Workshops. These have been attended by 150+ housing service and care and support colleagues and focused on understanding spent and unspent convictions, considering our lettings policy and approach to this customer group and sharing successes of the many customers Thirteen has accommodated successfully who have sustained for considerable periods.



### **Activity hubs:**

We have embedded the service into local hubs. These hubs provide a safe space for people who have been released from prison to build a healthier, more stable and fulfilling life. They support us with providing ID cards, accessing additional support and advice/guidance.

---



### **Employment:**

With support from Future Steps, the Employability Service and in some cases working jointly with wellbeing coaches, customers have achieved incredible employment outcomes. This highlights that with the appropriate support customers can achieve their desired goals to becoming financially independent.

---



### **Access to training:**

A collaborative approach with Thirteen's Employability Service, who currently work with more than 70 training providers across the Tees Valley to offer a broad range of accredited and non-accredited training and deliver Personal Career Planning and Interpersonal Skills. This training is tailored around specific sectors including customer services and hospitality, helping develop confidence and resilience.

In addition, we work closely with our supply chain, many of whom are 'offender friendly employers' and have accommodated ex-offenders. We take a consistent approach within Thirteen to supporting ex-offenders into employment.

# Outcomes

## Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Key achievements 1st Feb 2022 - 31 March 2024.

Sustained a tenancy  
for at least 3 months



**76.57%**



60%



134 (175)

Engaged with  
employability services



**68%**



30%



51 (75)

Engaged in training  
and/or education



**57.89%**



20%



22 (38)

Engaged in  
volunteering services



**38.88%**



10%



7 (18)

Engaged  
independently with  
at least one other  
support service



**83.85%**



70%



187 (223)

Customer  
independently used  
the telephone on at  
least 3 occasions to  
request support with  
issues and/or problems



**68.77%**



60%



152 (221)

Customer  
independently  
accessed and attended  
appointments on at  
least 3 occasions with  
external services



**56.42%**



60%



123 (218)

## Additional Outcomes

Financial inclusion



**91.25%**



167 (183)

Digital inclusion



**78.94%**



105 (133)

Other holistic  
support



**85.71%**



138 (161)

Recognising skills  
/limitations



**89.65%**



156 (174)

### Symbol key



Achieved



Target



Cohort

# Customer satisfaction

Average score out of 10



Overall customer satisfaction

**9.77**



Customer satisfaction with the way the support worker helped address their needs

**9.9**



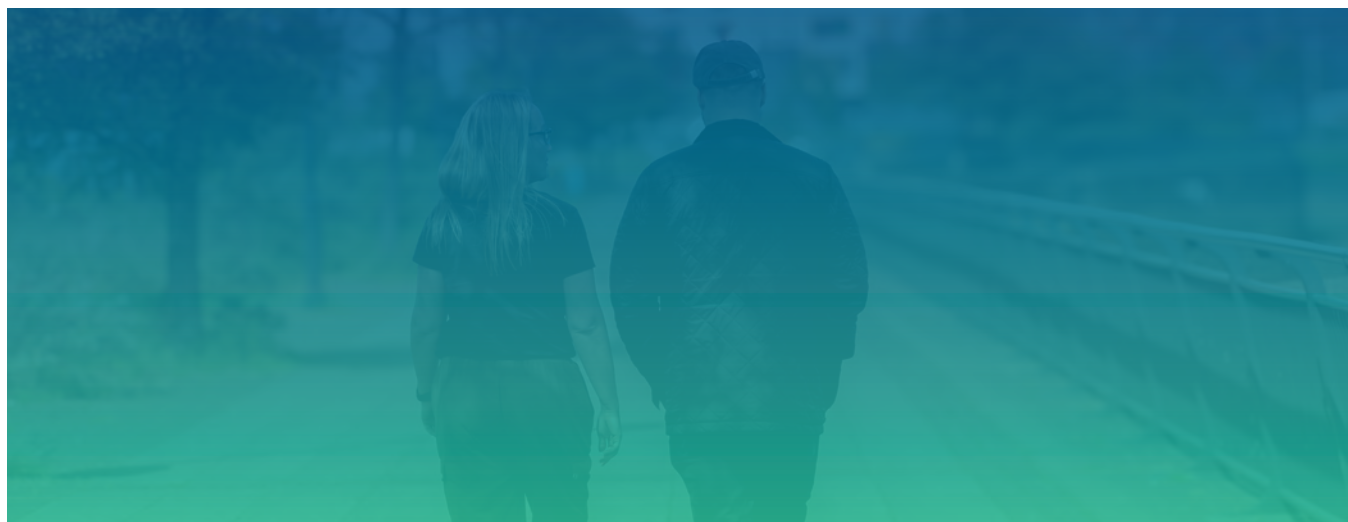
Customer satisfaction with progress towards achieving their goals

**9.67**



Customer satisfaction with how the support worker actively listened to them

**9.96**





## Moving forward

Due to its success the service has now been extended to September 2025.

Only with external funding are we able to continue to connect existing services and close gaps that are currently contributing to homelessness for ex-offenders in Tees Valley and County Durham.

Our approach of giving concentrated and prolonged attention and support to those identified with higher levels of complexities and risk has proven to give customers the best possible opportunity to obtain and sustain a tenancy and enhance their overall prospects. This unique offer has reduced the demand for homelessness services.

# Get in touch

If you would like to talk to us about anything you have read, please contact:

**Chris Joynes**

Director of Thirteen Plus

**[chris.joyes@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:chris.joyes@thirteengroup.co.uk)**

**Karen Kenmare**

Head of Business Growth

**[karen.kenmare@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:karen.kenmare@thirteengroup.co.uk)**

