

thirteen

Managing and building homes

# Together

magazine

All of your latest news and information from Thirteen



## Meet the customers shaping Thirteen

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- How to report damp and mould
- Your housing services coordinator
- Cost of living support
- Nominate your neighbour of the year

# Hello and welcome

**I am delighted to introduce the latest edition of Together, our customer magazine, and my first as chief executive officer.**



I've been at Thirteen for a few months and have already seen some of the great work we do for you. The cost of living is impacting us all. I want to reassure you that Thirteen is here to help and support you wherever we can. In this edition of our customer magazine, we have dedicated an area to highlight how we can help you deal with the increased cost of living. As well as where you may get support from other organisations. Times are extremely challenging now and there is help out there for people.

The government has put in place a cost of living support package, which I know is helping many households. The government also committed to increasing benefits in line with inflation, as it was at the end of September 2022. Benefits will rise by 10.1% in April. This is welcome and reassuring news.

The cost of everything has gone up over the last 12 months and this is affecting Thirteen in many ways. For example, we are dealing with big cost increases in everything from energy to maintenance and building materials, with some increases of up to 38%.

The government announced last November it would introduce a cap on how much housing associations like Thirteen could increase rents for customers. It announced a 7% cap on rent increases to protect you from soaring inflation. We have increased rent for most customers by a minimum of 7%. This is a decision the Thirteen Board has not taken lightly. Our priority is to keep on delivering our services to customers at the same high level as we have been doing.

Customers are at the heart of everything we do. We want to make sure we are continuing to deliver the right standard of customer service to you. This is something I am committed to and very passionate about. Like me, many of you will have been saddened by the death of Awaab Ishak in Rochdale, and we must be tireless in ensuring this doesn't happen again.

We have produced this edition of our customer magazine with a slightly updated design and layout. Hopefully you find it easier to read, and the information inside is useful to you.

Take care.

**Matt Forrest**  
Chief executive officer

# We're looking for more customers to get involved

**It gives me great pleasure to welcome you to Thirteen's customer magazine for 2023.**



Without customers, Thirteen would not exist. The group of customers who dedicate their time to challenging and scrutinising Thirteen work very hard to ensure it provides services that meet customers' needs. We don't get paid. We give up our time to make sure customers are at the heart of Thirteen's decision making.

The voice of Thirteen's customers is more important than ever. Everyone can make a difference if they wish. Is this something you would like to help with?

My aim this year is to get more customers involved. It can be in any way you like. Having more customers involved means Thirteen hears from a wider range of voices. We are lucky that Thirteen takes feedback from customers on board. But we must not stop giving feedback. I understand this may lead to complaints and dissatisfaction, but if we do not tell them how we feel, they will not be able to improve.

That's why I am pleased Thirteen has introduced a new Customer Committee. The committee reports into the Thirteen Board. Its purpose is to hear all customer feedback and insight. It also has an overview of all services that impact customers. I'm delighted to be a member of this committee, and to work alongside Dawn, Russell, Ryan, and Yadaam. They are all Thirteen customers and have been appointed as members of the committee. You can read more about the committee on pages 24-25.

I would like to thank all the customers who got involved during 2022 and made such a difference. Let's continue with this positive progress in 2023. If you are interested in getting involved please get in touch with the customer engagement team and they'll be happy to help. You can email [customer.engagement@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@thirteengroup.co.uk) or call 0300 111 1000.

I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Matt on his role. One of the things I have admired about Matt early on in his time as chief executive is the interest he has taken in speaking to me and other Thirteen customers and clearly listening to what we have to say. I hope this is a sign of things to come, and if so, Thirteen is in safe hands.

**Val Scollen**  
Thirteen customer and chair of  
Thirteen's Customer Involvement Framework

# We've made changes to your rent

## We have increased the cost of rent for most customers by a minimum of 7%.

### Reducing the impact of very high inflation on you

The government announced that housing associations could not increase rents for general needs properties by more than 7% this year. The decision followed consultation with housing associations, including Thirteen. The cap protects customers from very high inflation and the cost of living crisis.

Inflation means the general cost of things we all buy is going up. The level of inflation is worked out using the Consumer Price Index (CPI). CPI works out the average increase in the cost of household goods and services, like food, electricity, gas, and fuel.

### Shared Ownership customers

If you are a Shared Ownership customer, your rent will have also increased by 7%.

### Service charges

The government cap does not cover service charges, sheltered, extra care or supported housing. But we have worked hard to minimise the increase for customers living in these types of accommodation.

### Why we are increasing your rent

We haven't taken this decision lightly. We appreciate that there will be a range of feelings about the increase.

The cost of buying almost everything has gone up a lot over the last 12 months, for you, as well as for Thirteen. Some of our costs have increased by up to 38%.

Our priority is to keep providing the same level of services and improving them for you. Unfortunately, to do this we have had to increase our rent.

Increasing rent means we can keep improving existing homes and building new ones. We can play our part in looking after neighbourhoods and working with partners to keep them clean and tidy too.

### If you live in sheltered, extra care, or supported housing

The cost of providing services in our supported homes has also increased.

Unfortunately for these types of accommodation our rents have increased by 11.1%. This is in line with customers' tenancy agreements in these buildings.

This increase will help us to continue to offer a full range of support services.

**Most rents have increased by a minimum of 7%**



**We need to increase your rent to:**

- repair homes
- build new homes
- look after neighbourhoods and keep them clean and tidy.

We know that these services are vital to customers wellbeing. We want to continue supporting customers who need it most.

### We are also increasing service charges

Due to inflation going up, we have also increased service charges.

Your tenancy agreement will detail if you pay a service charge and how much it is.

The amount we have increased a service charge by depends on the building you live in.

You will have received this information in your rent letter at the end of February.

We do not make any money on service charges; we only aim to recover the costs we must pay to deliver the service.

### Help and support for you

We understand the increase in the cost of living is causing concern to a lot of people. If you are worried about an increase in costs, please speak to us. There are lots of things we can do to help.

We also have a cost of living support page on our website, with guidance and advice. Visit [www.thirteengroup.co.uk/costofliving](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk/costofliving) to find out more.

You may also be eligible to get help with your housing costs. To check if you qualify, visit [www.gov.uk/housing-and-universal-credit](http://www.gov.uk/housing-and-universal-credit)

### The government is increasing benefits in line with inflation

If you are eligible for state benefit support, the government is increasing benefits in line with inflation, as it was at the end of September 2022. Benefits will rise by 10.1% in April 2023.

If you receive benefits such as Universal Credit, Housing Benefit, and State Pension, the rise will help you cover the cost of the rent increase.

If you are unsure if you are eligible for benefit support, please call us on **0300 111 1000**. We can see what support we could provide to you.

### What will happen next

You will have already received your rent increase letter at the end of February.

This letter set out your new rent and service charge cost. The letter also let you know the next steps you needed to take. Please make sure you have followed the information in the letter.

If you feel worried, need support or have any questions you can reach out to talk to us. We're here to help.

# Cost of living support

## COST of LIVING

**There are a number of things we can do to help you.**

### What is the cost of living?

The cost of living is the amount of money needed to cover basic daily needs such as food, fuel, energy, rent, and taxes, in a certain place and at a specific time.

A big increase in the cost of these things, particularly over the last year, is causing concern to lots of people.

We understand customers are finding it hard to pay for things they need to live their lives.

### What can Thirteen do to help you?

We want to reassure you that we are here to provide support, and can point you in the direction of other organisations who can help you in ways we cannot.

We can do a range of things to help you with the cost of living.

checking to see if you can receive certain benefits

helping you apply for one off payments, such as a Discretionary Housing Payment from your local council

providing practical advice to help you use less energy at home

putting you in touch with a credit union

access to financial support through our own Landlord Discretionary Housing Fund

helping you to find or prepare for a job



### If you are struggling to pay your rent

If you are struggling to pay your rent, get in touch with us. We can provide you with help and support.

### Check to see if you are eligible for any benefits

We help customers every year claim thousands of pounds in benefits they are eligible to receive, but have not claimed.

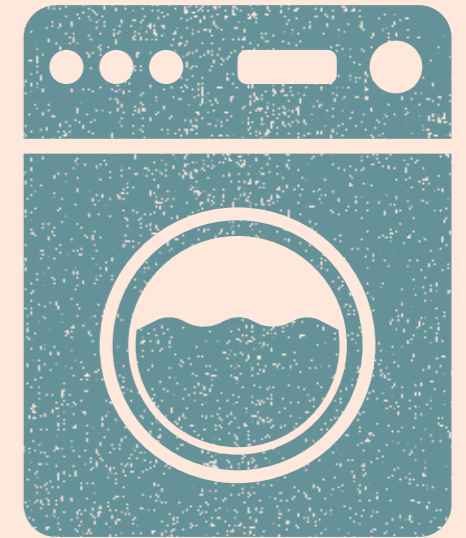
We can help you to check if you can receive certain benefits that you don't already receive.

#### Talk to us

You can talk to us about the cost of living by:

- calling us on 0300 111 1000
- visiting one of our Touchpoint stores
- or visiting our website for more information.

Scan me 



# Cost of living support

## Support available to you from others

### Government cost of living support

The government is providing a lot of support to people with the cost of living.

The package will see millions of the most vulnerable households receive at least £1,200 of support in total to help with the cost of living.

The main support includes:

- Energy Bill Support Scheme
- £650 Cost of Living Payment for those on benefits
- £150 Disability Cost of Living Payment
- £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment
- £150 Council Tax rebate for homes in bands A-D
- Household Support Fund via your local council
- Winter Fuel Payments of £200 or £300
- £25 per week Cold Weather Payments

To find out more, visit the government website at:

[www.gov.uk/cost-of-living](http://www.gov.uk/cost-of-living)

### Cost of Living Payments 2023

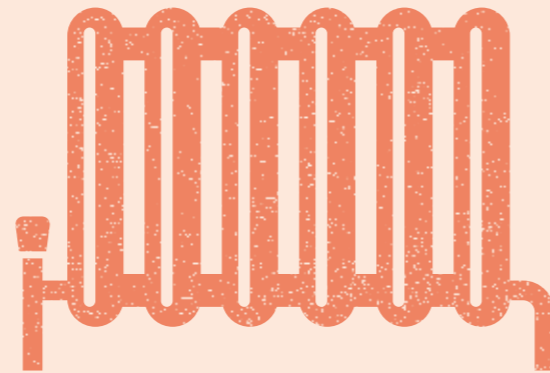
The government announced more cost of living payments will be made between spring 2023 and spring 2024.

If you get a low income benefit, you will receive up to £900 in support payments. This will be broken down into three payments:

- £301 in spring 2023
- £300 in autumn 2023
- £299 in spring 2024

There will also be other support payments including:

- £150 payment in summer 2023 for people who get an eligible disability benefit
- £300 payment in winter 2023/2024 for people who qualify for the winter fuel payment.



### Local councils

Local councils are providing support to people living in their area.

To find out more, visit your local council's website for its cost of living support.

### Your energy company

If you need help with your energy bill, we recommend speaking to your energy company.

### Money advice

There are lots of organisations that can help you with money advice. This includes:

- Money Helper
- Citizen's Advice
- Step Change.

We also work with Turn2us - a national charity that helps people who may be struggling with money. It can provide advice, support and grants. You can find out more on the Turn2us website.

### Help with food

The cost of food has also gone up a lot. Food banks are community organisations and places that can help you get food.

You can find your local food bank on the Trussell Trust website:

[www.trusselltrust.org](http://www.trusselltrust.org)

### Broadband and telephone social tariffs

Broadband and telephone providers offer cheaper social tariffs for people who claim Universal Credit, Pension Credit, and some other benefits. Some providers call them basic or essential packages.

Talk to your provider to make sure you are on the most appropriate tariff.

### Help with paying your water bill

If you have a low income or receive benefits, your water supplier may be able to reduce your bill, or provide you with financial support.

Check with your water supplier to see if you are eligible for financial help.

### Credit unions

Credit unions are community organisations that help you save money and provide loans at low interest rates. To benefit from a credit union, you must join as a member.

To find a local credit union, visit: [www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk](http://www.findyourcreditunion.co.uk)

**COST  
of  
LIVING**



# Sammy saved my life

**Thirteen customer Audrey Morris finally got the chance to thank housing support coordinator, Sammy Parker, in person for her fast-thinking actions and for helping to save her life.**

After feeling poorly at her home in one of our supported living schemes in Billingham, Audrey, 85, drifted into unconsciousness.

Thankfully, Sammy was carrying out morning check-in calls to residents in the building.

After several calls to Audrey with no answer, Sammy checked with Audrey's son, Ian, to ask if she was with him. When Ian said no, Sammy immediately called for an ambulance.

The emergency crew discovered Audrey was unconscious and very ill. She was transported to North Tees General Hospital. Audrey was diagnosed with a virus and given emergency treatment over a nine-day stay.

Audrey said: "I remember lying on my sofa and feeling too ill to do anything. Apparently, Sammy was doing morning calls and rang several times, and I didn't reply. When my son said I wasn't with him, the alarm bells rang.

"It was then that Sammy called for the ambulance that would save my life. I was admitted to hospital with a virus. I was incredibly ill and had to have an antibodies transfusion - I was in hospital for nine days.

"After coming home, I discovered how Sammy had saved me. We have several wardens here and I asked everyone if they knew where Sammy was, but I couldn't find her.

"Then, out of the blue, one of our residents had a 90th birthday tea party and some wardens came to help her celebrate. I was delighted to learn that one of them was Sammy. Of course, I thanked her for ringing the ambulance. Without her actions, I would have died.

"My family and I will always be grateful to Sammy for her quick actions."

Sammy supports customers like Audrey who live in our supported schemes. These schemes help people live independently and offer support for customers if needed.

Sammy said: "We went along to celebrate a resident's birthday in Billingham. But it was me who received the gift of a lovely hug and thank you from Audrey. I was only doing my job, but it's amazing to think that I helped save her life.

“  
**My family and I will always be grateful to Sammy and Thirteen for their quick actions**”



Sammy, support coordinator, reunited with Audrey at her home in Billingham after helping to save her life

"We have important processes to follow to ensure the safety of residents. This meant we could reach Audrey quickly."

Suzanne Halliwell, head of care and support, said: "We are all relieved and delighted to see Audrey back home and recovering well from her ordeal.

"Sammy's response was both rapid and decisive. She did exactly the correct thing, in what must have been incredibly pressured circumstances, and helped save Audrey's life. I would like to thank Sammy for the excellent care she provides our residents. I'm delighted that Audrey also got to thank her in person."



Visit our **website** for more information about supported housing.

**[www.thirteengroup.co.uk/supportedliving](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk/supportedliving)**

If you have a smartphone, you can scan the QR code to visit the page too.

Scan me 

*thank you*

# A snapshot of how we performed last year



**88.4%**  
customer satisfaction  
with overall services



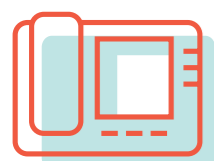
**89.2%**  
customer satisfaction  
with repairs



**121,705**  
emergency repairs  
completed



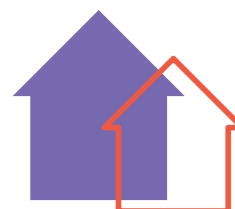
**296,254**  
calls answered



**98.4%**  
of emergency calls  
answered within 60  
seconds



**97.6%**  
of repairs completed  
at first visit



**97.6%**  
of customers felt safe  
and secure in our  
supported housing



**2,471**  
fly tipping jobs  
completed

# Your feedback: you said, we listened

We're here to listen to customers about what matters to you, and we're grateful to all who tell us what they think. This helps to create a great experience.

“

**You said:** when you call us, you wanted the message to be clear and easy to understand. You wanted to save time too.

**We listened:** we've got a new message on our phone lines, making it easier to know which option to press. While you wait, we let you know important information, which may save you time. There's an option for a call back too.

“

**You said:** you wanted a single point of contact, rather than having to contact many different people.

**We listened:** we've created a holistic tenancy support service, so people have one point of contact and aren't passed between teams.

“

**You said:** build more affordable homes and offer affordable options.

**We listened:** last year, we built 437 new homes. 349 for affordable rent, 70 for Shared Ownership and 18 for outright sale.

“

**You said:** customers in Hull said you wanted to be able to find out about homes available and other support services on offer, closer to home.

**We listened:** we opened our second Touchpoint store in Hull. The store offers customers the chance to learn more about Thirteen by popping in for a coffee and a chat.

To share your feedback visit: [www.thirteengroup.co.uk/complimentsandcomplaints](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk/complimentsandcomplaints)

# Damp, mould and condensation in your home

**We take reports of damp and mould extremely seriously.**

**Since the coroner's verdict into the tragic death of Awaab Ishak in November 2022, we have seen a big increase in the number of customers reporting damp and mould to us. We are working very hard to respond to reports and assess them.**

**These pages explain how damp and mould is created, how to prevent it, and how to report it.**

## Damp in your home

Damp is the build-up of too much moisture inside a property.

Damp in your home is likely to happen when there is a lot of condensation built up, or when water comes into your home.

## Cause of damp

Damp is normally caused when moisture in the air hits a cold surface. The moist air turns back into water, creating dampness.

Damp can be caused by:

- moisture from condensation
- water coming into your home
- issues with your water or plumbing system
- not having enough heat in your home
- a building fault, such as damp proofing that has stopped working.

## Condensation

Condensation is the most common cause of damp.

It happens when moist air inside a home touches a colder surface. When this occurs, it causes the surface to be wet.

Condensation is more likely to happen in areas of your home that are colder, or where fresh air cannot get to. This includes:

- windows
- windowsills
- kitchen
- bathroom
- cold corners of rooms
- rooms that have no way of letting fresh air inside e.g. no windows that can open
- built-in or fitted cupboards and wardrobes
- behind furniture that is directly against a wall.

## Reducing condensation

There are ways to stop condensation from building up in your home.

This includes:

- letting air inside your home from the outside which will let condensation out
- you should not block any vents you might have in walls or on windows
- if you are drying clothes indoors, keep a window open close by to allow ventilation
- keep your home warm.

## Mould in your home

Damp can cause mould. This is a stale smell, with wet patches on your walls or ceilings.

Any sign of condensation dampness or mould growth could mean the air in your home is too wet.

You can regularly wipe moisture away from your windows and windowsills to help reduce mould.

Mould will need to be removed safely from your home by a qualified tradesperson.

Never use bleach to clean surfaces that have mould on them. This can be dangerous and cause mould to grow even more.

## How to report

You can report damp or mould by going to our website and completing the form.

You can also upload images with your form to help us better understand the problem.

To submit a report, visit: [www.thirteengroup.co.uk/dampandmould](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk/dampandmould)

You can also call us or visit one of our Touchpoint stores.



Scan me 

## Preventing and dealing with pests

In the colder months bugs, mice and rats will search for food and shelter.

It's your responsibility to prevent pests. Don't attract them into your home.

To keep pests away:

- keep your floor clean
- take rubbish out of your home
- store food in air-tight containers
- clear away clutter
- if you have a garden, keep it tidy.

If you have a problem with pests in your home, please call us on **0300 111 1000**.



# Your housing services coordinator

**Your housing services coordinator can offer you advice and guidance about your home and neighbourhood.**

All our customers have support from a dedicated housing services coordinator.

They cover neighbourhoods, estates and buildings. They know these areas well and visit regularly, so they can help you with:

- managing your rent
- answering any questions about your property or building
- improving the neighbourhood and making sure it's maintained
- finding, moving or swapping your home.

If there's something they can't help you with, they will put you in touch with people who can.

We want our customers to be proud of the area they live in and have a safe and welcoming place to call home.

## Your neighbourhood

We know how important your local neighbourhood is to you. That's why we host regular drop-in meetings to hear your thoughts.

We publish information about these meetings on our social media. Search for @thirteengroup.

Our coordinators also keep in touch with customers about upcoming dates too.

If there isn't a regular drop-in in your area or building, then get in touch. Our housing coordinators are happy to visit you in your home too.

## Get in touch

Housing coordinators can help you with lots of queries and questions. Our Touchpoint team can also support you if you need help raising a repair or paying rent.

To speak to your housing coordinator, or to find out who they are, call us on **0300 111 1000**.



## Swapping your home

**Did you know you can swap your home with another customer? It's called mutual exchange.**

**If your current property doesn't meet your needs, you can apply to swap it.**

**There's also an option to swap with a customer from another housing association or local council nationally.**

**Visit our website for more information and to check if you are eligible at [www.thirteengroup.co.uk/swapyourhome](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk/swapyourhome)**

## Request an estate walkabout

**An estate walkabout is a great opportunity for customers to meet with our housing coordinators. Together you will visit an area and identify any issues. You can request an estate walkabout and you can speak to your housing coordinator to help set one up.**

# Anti-social behaviour

**Keeping you safe at home and in your community.**

We want to make all our customers and communities feel safe and secure at home.

However, we realise anti-social behaviour (ASB) can happen and make customers feel unsafe.

ASB is anything that causes or is likely to cause you to feel alarmed, distressed, intimidated or harassed.

We take ASB seriously and are here to support you if you have an ASB issue. We have a clear way of dealing with it when customers report it to us.

## What you can expect when reporting ASB

If you're reporting a one-off party, or everyday household noise, we may ask you to have a friendly word with the person causing the problem.

If you feel comfortable, you can explain what is troubling you, and ask if they can change or stop what they're doing.

If you're worried or afraid of approaching the person, or the problem continues, please contact us. Our housing services coordinators are there to help with most incidents of ASB. We also have specialists who can give support based on the needs of the people involved and the seriousness of the incidents.

This includes:

- prevention work
- gathering evidence
- mediation
- acceptable behaviour agreements
- liaison with other agencies, such as the police.

As a last resort we can take legal action.

## Resolving ASB with our partners

**Sometimes we have to work with partner organisations when trying to resolve ASB. This could be the police or local council. This may take a little longer than if we were dealing with the report on our own.**

**You should contact the police to report incidents of criminal behaviour. Call the non-emergency police number on 101 or 999 for emergencies.**



## How can I report anti-social behaviour?

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

Call us on **0300 111 1000**

You can report noise issues directly to us through 'The Noise App'. Download the app from Google Play or the App Store.



# Get help with finding a job, new skills and training



## Our employability team provides a free service for people looking to get into work, learn new skills, do some training or gain a qualification.

Our dedicated team can help you to prepare for finding a job, including help with your CV, and support you with preparing for an interview.

We will work with anyone who is looking to find a job, or looking to gain some education or training. The service is open to anyone – you do not need to be a Thirteen customer.

Our employer engagement specialists have access to exclusive jobs from a wide range of employers, including Thirteen's supply chain partners.

If you get a job through our service, we will support you while you're in the role for six months. This is to help give you the best chance of keeping the job.

## Thirteen Academies

Our employability service also offers people the chance to become employed by Thirteen through our academies. Academies allow you to get a feel for Thirteen and what it's like to work for us.

They normally involve job opportunities in focused areas of our business. They give you a chance to learn about the roles available, and what it's like to work in the team where the roles will be.

We recently gave jobs to eight people in our Touchpoint team, as advisors. We helped them with their job application and interview techniques to get them started with a career at Thirteen.

Speaking about her experience, customer advisor Jenna Coles-Wright said: "It had been a while since I'd worked in a contact centre after having my son, but the employability team were really helpful and they built my confidence.

"I found the recruitment academy interesting and it made me feel much more prepared and positive about applying for the role. I feel lucky to have taken part."

## Upcoming trade opportunities with our Thirteen Academy

We are working on an upcoming academy that will allow people the chance to join our repairs and maintenance team. The roles include plumbers, joiners and building operatives.

You can register your interest by getting in touch with our employability team using the details opposite.



Our employer engagement specialists can offer you personalised advice and guidance to help you find a job

We can help you today.  
Get in touch with us by:

- Calling 01642 947 840
- Emailing [employability@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:employability@thirteengroup.co.uk)
- Follow the Hot Jobs & Training Facebook page
- Visit one of our Touchpoint stores.



Scan me

to visit the Hot Jobs and Training Facebook page and find out more!

# We're dealing with more repairs than normal

**We are currently dealing with a high number of repairs from customers - much higher than normal.**

This is causing delays in carrying out repairs. Thank you for your patience if you are currently waiting.

We want to assure you that we are doing everything we can to fix repairs as quickly as possible. Our trade operatives are working hard, and we have drafted in extra help so that we can get to more customers quicker.

## **Rearrange your appointment if it does not work for you**

If you have an appointment booked for a repair, a gas safety check, or an electrical safety check, do not miss your appointment.

It is important you let us know if it does not work for you.

We will rearrange your appointment for a time that works better. This means a neighbour, or another Thirteen customer can take your slot.

If you do not rearrange your appointment, it adds more pressure to our service, which will cause delays for others.

It does not cost you to rearrange your appointment.

## **To rearrange your appointment, get in touch with us by:**

Telephone: **0300 111 1000**

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

Or visit one of our **Touchpoint stores**.

**Remember, our colleagues will always wear ID badges if they are visiting your home.**

**If you have any concerns about a visit to your home from Thirteen, or a sub-contractor working on behalf of us, please call us on 0300 111 1000.**



## **You must have your gas or electrical safety check appointment.**

We are legally required to carry out gas and electrical safety checks to your home.

This is to make sure you and your neighbours are kept safe and secure.

If the time of the appointment is not suitable for you, we can easily rearrange it for you.

You are not able to cancel this kind of appointment.

# Hundreds of new homes being built

**We're continuing to build homes for new and existing customers and we've got a number of exciting developments taking shape.**

We're bringing hundreds of high quality, affordable homes for rent and Shared Ownership to the market this year.

## **Union Village**

We're building 145 beautiful new homes at Gresham in Middlesbrough, with excellent access links to the town centre.

We have a mix of two, three and four-bedroom houses plus apartments and bungalows. These homes will help to continue our regeneration of Gresham, and address the demand for affordable housing in Middlesbrough, while creating a legacy for years to come. You can find out more and register your interest at [www.unionvillage.co.uk](http://www.unionvillage.co.uk).

## **Westdale Road**

37 new homes are being built on the site of the former Anson House and Hudson House in Thornaby. Following the demolition of the two tower blocks, work on the new homes started earlier this year.

All homes will be for affordable rent, and the site includes a mix of two, three and four bedroom houses as well as bungalows.

## **Kedward Road**

We've recently started work on 105 new homes at Brambles Farm in Middlesbrough.

The new homes will replace the Milford, Portland, and Jupiter tower blocks, which we demolished last year. The Jupiter site will include 15 bungalows, while the land where the Milford and Portland blocks stood will have 90 new homes. This includes a mix of bungalows and two, three and four bedroom houses.

## **South Bank**

Work is now complete on 28 new bungalows in South Bank, with the affordable homes for rent scheme improving the Redcar Road area of South Bank. These bungalows are helping us meet the needs of our ageing population and supporting people to live independently.



**To hear more about our developments, visit [www.thirteengroup.co.uk](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk) or keep your eye on social media.**

# Community grants available



**Our community fund offers grants of up to £500 for community organisations. We support people and groups who want to make a positive contribution in their neighbourhood.**

We welcome applications from voluntary and community groups working in our communities. We help:

- charities
- residents associations
- public sector bodies
- local authorities.

Groups looking to get a grant should have match funding in place, equal to the amount of money being bid for. This should be in the form of either cash, materials or volunteer time. By supporting and promoting joint working, our fund aims to make a difference and improve the local area for customers and residents.

We will consider applications for grants for projects that involve:

- social and personal development
- health and wellbeing
- community involvement or resident engagement
- community safety
- the environment and sustainability
- financial or digital inclusion.

Over the last six months, the fund has helped more than 50 projects, with just over £23,000 in grants being awarded.

**Up to £500 available per grant**

Children's playgroup, Lets Pretend and Play CIC received a £500 grant to help it continue to provide after school and holiday imaginative play and craft sessions for children.

Project lead at Lets Pretend and Play, Tracey Bromley said: "When I found out we'd secured the funding from Thirteen, I was over the moon. It means we can continue to deliver the project for longer. We are doing our bit during what we know is a challenging time for lots of people in our area."

To get an application form for the fund, visit [www.thirteengroup.co.uk/communityfund](http://www.thirteengroup.co.uk/communityfund)

Scan me



# Nominate your neighbour of the year

**We all have those neighbours who are just great people.**

**They are always there to help, nothing is a bother to them, they are there to brighten up your day, doing great things for their neighbourhood and a true inspiration to the rest of us.**

Well, we are on the search for those neighbours. And we need you to tell us who they are.

We have worked with some amazing customers on some brilliant projects this year, from transforming alleyways to setting up eco shops, as well as recycling football boots for young people.

But we realise that we may not know about all our fantastic neighbours who do some of these thankless and kind things in our communities.

This is your chance to tell us all about them so we can say a big thank you! And give them the appreciation they deserve.

## Nominate your neighbour of the year

To nominate your neighbour of the year, you must complete our nomination form online. Scan the QR code to access the form by:

- opening the camera on your smartphone
- hovering over the top of the code
- it will show a link to a website
- click the link and complete the form to make your nomination.

Alternatively, you can email us with your nomination at [community.resilience@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:community.resilience@thirteengroup.co.uk). In the email please tell us your name, your contact details, who you are nominating, where they live, and why you are nominating them.

A judging panel of Thirteen customers will make the final decision on our top three neighbours.



## There will be prizes

**We will be offering prizes to the people who finish in the top three:**

- 1st prize, £100
- 2nd prize, £50
- 3rd prize, £25

**The deadline for nominations is Monday 1st May 2023. Winners will be contacted by Monday 22nd May.**



Scan me



# Meet the customers helping to shape Thirteen

**Five Thirteen customers have joined our newly formed Customer Committee. The committee will help improve, shape and influence our services.**



## Val Scollen

**Val Scollen is our current chair of the Thirteen Customer Involvement Framework.**

Val has spent 22 years in a voluntary role to challenge and hold Thirteen to account for the services it delivers to customers. Val is also joined on the Customer Committee by existing Thirteen board member, Katy Wilburn and Winsome Small, member of Thirteen's audit and risk committee. Katy is the overall chair of the committee, and is responsible for reporting the committee's feedback to the Thirteen Board.



## Ryan Davis

**Ryan, 22, has lived most of his life in Teesside and lives with his dog, Toby.**

Ryan was successful in applying for a scholarship from Thirteen for the last two years of his studies at Teesside University, which he was very proud of. Joining our customer committee is a way for Ryan to give back.

Ryan works for the Department for Education in the children's social care reform directorate, as a policy adviser.

Ryan's personal experience allows him to understand the challenges faced by young people in Teesside. He wants to make a difference by helping people who are in a similar position as he was as a young person.



## Russell Jameson

**Russell lives in the Whinney Banks area of Middlesbrough, with his wife and three children.**

Russell is Teesside born and bred. He is a hardworking firefighter and has spent the last 22 years serving the people of the Tees Valley.

Being a family man, Russell cares about the opportunities available to young people. He knows how challenging it can be for them to get a good break in life. He is keen to do what he can to help young people living in Thirteen properties.

Naturally, Russell is interested in fire safety and keeping customers safe. Russell wants to help make a positive impact on local communities.



## Yaadam Sarr

**Yaadam has been a Thirteen customer for two years after moving to the UK from Calgary, Canada, in 2017.**

As a mother of three young children, Yaadam felt encouraged to get involved in the customer committee as an opportunity to give back.

She has a masters degree in business administration and has worked in customer service, accounting and finance.

Yaadam is passionate about activities that will improve the welfare of people and communities. She hopes that her insight and ideas will have a positive impact on the lives of other customers.

Yaadam believes that it is important for customers to have a voice in decision making at Thirteen.



## Dawn Keogh

**Dawn is a mother of four daughters who is passionate about making a positive difference for the future generation.**

Dawn first got involved with Thirteen when she joined the Social Housing Tenants' Climate Jury, a customer group looking at ways to tackle climate change in homes and neighbourhoods.

Climate change is still a big interest of Dawn's, and she hopes to promote the benefits of making homes more sustainable.

Dawn is a believer in equal opportunities for everyone, and as a customer committee member, she hopes to make sure that people know where to turn to for support when they need it.

# Creating a sense of community in our sheltered schemes

**As one of the very first residents at Tai Hua Court, one of our sheltered schemes, 82-year-old King Ting moved in when it opened in 2005. She says it helped her build a new life.**

After separating from her husband, King Ting was looking for a home that would provide security and a place to make new friends.

Seventeen years on, she continues to make memories at the scheme. She says that the sense of community is her favourite thing about living there.

She said: "Since moving to Tai Hua Court, I'm much happier. Everyone looks out for each other and if you need any help, you just have to ask. We all have huge pride in living here."

Residents often come together for parties, including Chinese New Year celebrations. The scheme is a short walk away from a Chinese community centre, which runs weekly activities such as dancing and tai chi. There is also a space for gardening in the communal area.

"My neighbours are Chinese and we enjoy spending time together, sharing good food with good friends.

"Staff really help with communication. They translate important documents, like letters from the GP. Every morning residents get a call in Chinese to check in, which is reassuring.

"In my flat, there's lots of space and it's comfortable. I'm happy here and I couldn't imagine my life any other way."

We understand how important freedom, flexibility and having a home to call your own is.

We manage a number of sheltered housing schemes to help people over 55 live independently for longer.



**“ I’m happy here and I couldn’t imagine my life any other way. ”**

To find out more about supported living visit our **website** or scan the QR code.

**www.thirteengroup.co.uk/ supportedliving**

Scan me



# Just for fun

**Grab a pen and spend some time relaxing with these puzzles.**

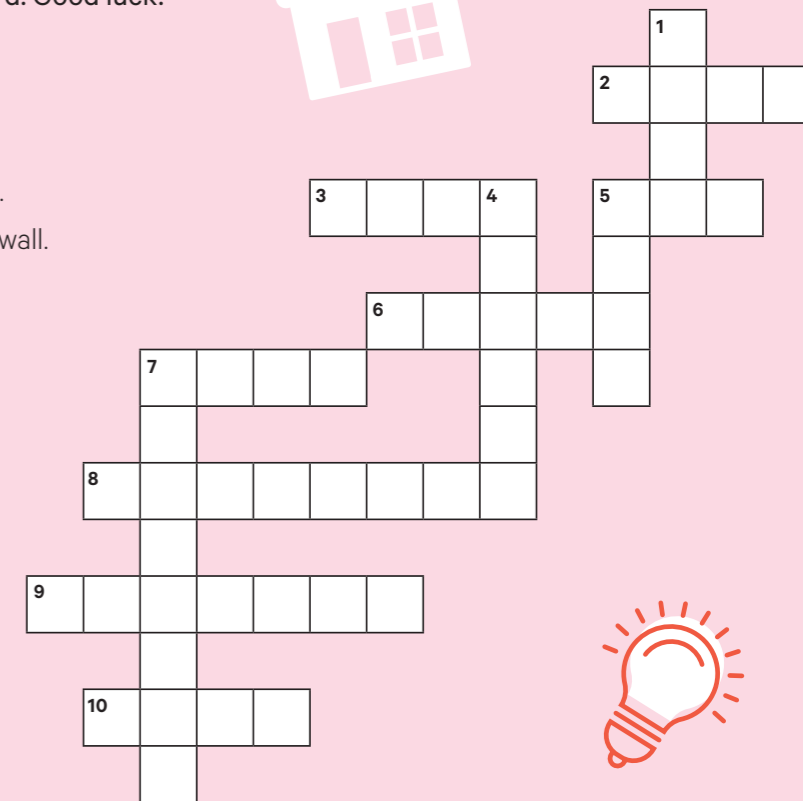
Solve the clues to find the answers to the crossword. Good luck!

### Across

- [2] Found at both an entrance and an exit.
- [3] The top of a building or a car.
- [5] A place you can rest your head or plant flowers.
- [6] Colourful liquid that can be used to decorate a wall.
- [7] Heavy objects do this in water.
- [8] The entrance to Narnia.
- [9] This happens at the end of a stage performance - ( ) call.
- [10] Michael Jackson album - Off the ( ) .

### Down

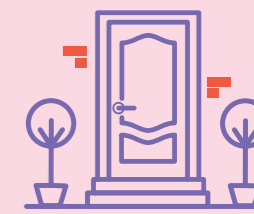
- [1] They say its where the heart is.
- [4] Keeps your food cold.
- [5] A city in the south of England or a container filled with water.
- [7] Led Zeppelin song ( ) to heaven.



D	H	W	I	N	D	O	W	M	K
V	A	H	D	D	N	K	O	G	E
B	T	A	D	Y	S	O	F	A	T
E	R	L	L	A	M	P	S	R	T
D	A	L	T	C	R	V	H	D	L
R	C	W	S	H	Z	K	E	E	E
O	K	A	U	A	Y	E	L	N	V
O	J	Y	T	I	X	V	V	F	U
M	F	Y	H	R	O	V	E	N	N
H	F	R	I	D	G	E	S	Q	V

- LAMP
- OVEN
- SOFA
- CHAIR
- FRIDGE
- GARDEN
- KETTLE
- WINDOW
- BEDROOM
- HALLWAY
- HATRACK
- SHELVES

Can you find all the homely words in this puzzle? They are hidden vertically or horizontally in the wordsearch.



Wordsearch Answers

Down 1. Home, 4. Fridge, 5. Bath, 7. Stairway  
9. Curtain, 10. Wall  
Across 2. Door, 3. Roof, 5. Bed, 6. Paint, 7. Sink, 8. Wardrobe.

Crossword Answers

# Do you need Together in a different language?

Please get in touch with us if you would like our magazine translated.

✉ [customer.engagement@thirteengroup.co.uk](mailto:customer.engagement@thirteengroup.co.uk)

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