

Your neighbourhood

Need to know more about Universal Credit?

There has been an increase in customers in Hartlepool transferring to the new benefits system called Universal Credit. We have had calls from people telling us that they are concerned about how it works, so we'd like to give you a few details about the benefit.

Briefly, as part of Universal Credit (UC), customers receive any help with their housing costs along with other benefits as one UC payment. UC is paid to you monthly and in arrears.

This means that if you have received Housing Benefit in the past, it might take time to get used to budgeting for

these monthly payments. If you receive UC, you will be responsible for budgeting for your rental payments within this new system.

You should also bear in mind that you will need internet access and an email address to apply for UC.

If you have made a claim or you need more details about Universal Credit, you should contact Thirteen immediately on **0300 111 1000**.

We are here to help and can arrange for you to receive support from our money advice team or tell you how you can get more information.

Neighbourhood walkabouts

Louise Smith, the neighbourhood officer for your area, is regularly out and about in your neighbourhood. Louise carries out walkabouts on your estate, and you're welcome to join her.

The walkabouts, also known as estate inspections, involve walking around the areas where our homes are located and identifying issues that might need to be addressed.

The dates, times and meeting places of walkabouts in your area are:

Area	Time	Meeting point	Dates
Belle Vue	1.30pm	Belle Vue Community Centre	13 December 2017

Please come along and tell us what you think about your neighbourhood. If you can't make it to one of the walkabouts and there's something you'd like us to look at, please contact Louise using the details below.

Online self-service website

Last year, we introduced a self-service website for customers. This helps tenants carry out a range of tasks 24 hours a day, 7 days a week without the need to visit an office or call us.

It's a really useful system so I'm encouraging tenants to register onto the self-service website and sign-up. The site allows customers to request a home repair, view rent accounts, update personal information and tell us about a range of issues. For more details and to register, please visit www.thirteengroup.co.uk/SelfService.

Would you like to swap and move?

Thirteen is now registered with the national home swap website called Swap & Move. This helps customers to find a suitable mutual exchange with another tenant online.

Swap & Move is based online and allows current tenants to set up their own account where they can upload information about their home, view home swaps and apply to exchange their home with other tenants across the country. The website is free to use and can be a quicker way to downsize, find a larger home, move closer to family or move for a new job. Customers who are currently registered for mutual exchange within Compass have been contacted via email about the new Swap & Move website and an account has been set up on their behalf. For details, visit www.swapandmove.co.uk

Get in touch

If you'd like more information about anything in this update or if you have any issues you'd like to discuss about your neighbourhood, please contact Louise at:

- email: louise.smith@thirteengroup.co.uk
- tel: **0300 111 1000** or **01642 947 222**

Alternatively, visit the website for information about Thirteen or the self-service site to contact us:

- website: www.thirteengroup.co.uk
- self-service: www.thirteengroup.co.uk/SelfService