

# Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework 2024 to 2027

# Thirteen Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Framework: 2024-2027

## INTRODUCTION

### About Thirteen

At Thirteen, we are more than just a landlord. We believe everyone is an individual. That is why we do not just provide properties; we offer a home to suit each person's needs. We just don't offer a home; our range of extra services means we can give people a helping hand specifically tailored to them if they need it. Our strength, capacity and ambition to deliver what our customers need means that we can change things for the better. We started business as Thirteen in 2014, and we are still the largest Housing Association in the North East. Currently, we own and manage some 36,000 properties.

### Thirteen's Visions, Values, and Strategic Priorities

Thirteen's vision is to provide homes, support and opportunities to grow. We are here for anyone who needs a home and maybe a helping hand too. We are a caring landlord and housing developer. We are about investing in neighbourhoods and making a major contribution to the regeneration of the Tees Valley. The values that we promote in Thirteen are:

- Considerate in our behaviour.
- Smart in the way we do things.
- Progressive we move things on.

These values help us to demonstrate how we care about the people and communities we serve and the partnerships we develop. To fulfil our vision, 3 strategic priorities (SP) have been established:

- **Great Customer Experience** - We want to ensure our customers see us as the Housing Association of choice. We believe that everyone should get the same quality of service, no matter where and how they encounter us.
- **Delivering Quality Places to Live and Improving Neighbourhoods** – The quality of neighbourhoods is as important as the quality of the housing and contributes to quality of life. We will continue to maintain and invest in our houses

and estates, ensuring that we work with partners to deliver exactly what is right to help communities thrive.

- **Being Team Thirteen** - Team Thirteen is about being high-performing, collaborative and efficient. To be an employer of choice, focused on the continued development of Board Directors and colleagues with the necessary skills and experience to deliver this Strategy. To deliver high quality services depends critically on attracting and retaining the right people with the right skills who are ambassadors for Thirteen.

Thirteen has built strong working relationships with other organisations and partners and will continue to work effectively in this way to meet our objectives.

## **Purpose of the Equality Framework**

This framework aims to address inequalities and promote equality and inclusion across Thirteen. It also sets out our commitment and approach to social inclusion and supports the development of services by identifying gaps in the application of equality across all protected characteristics and other groups that may experience exclusion. It also allows us to summarise our key achievements and areas where we have found fresh ways of promoting equality and diversity. At Thirteen, we pride ourselves on avoiding staid thinking; therefore, we value innovative approaches to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Organisations such as Thirteen have a responsibility to promote inclusivity for everyone, and particularly for all protected characteristics. We have proactively developed this Framework to build equality into practices and Procedures. We aspire to have an inclusive working culture and embrace diversity across the Group. Our Equality Framework includes an Action Plan, which shows how we will meet our key objectives.

## **Equality, Diversity and Inclusion: What Is It About?**

**Equality** is about creating a fairer society, where everyone can participate and can fulfil their potential. Therefore, at Thirteen, equality is about breaking down barriers which currently limit opportunities for certain groups of people within society. As a Registered Provider of Social Housing, we believe in fairness for tenants; prospective tenants; colleagues; Board and Committee members and volunteers. We also recognise the importance of reducing discrimination to achieve this goal; as discrimination is the unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people based upon attributes such as gender, race, and sex. Discrimination can present in ways of working, stereotypes and attitudes which are detrimental to equality. As such, we recognise that to truly achieve equality we need to consider more than just the physical environment and our Policies.

**Diversity:** as everyone is different, we know that it is essential to recognise these differences so that we can consider the needs and aspirations of individuals. If we treat everybody the same, we could indirectly cause inequality and unfairness. Diversity is a given, not a choice. That is why Thirteen Group celebrates differences and respects, values, and harnesses individual potential.

**Inclusion** aims to recognise, respect and value people's differences, to contribute to and realise their full potential by promoting an inclusive culture for everyone. It is about providing an environment where customers and colleagues feel respected, considered, and listened to, and are able to share their views and influence the way we do things. It is also about ensuring equal access to opportunities and resources for those who might be excluded due to their specific circumstances. This gives everybody the opportunity to live and work in the way which is most suitable for them.

## **Equality and Diversity: the Legal and Regulatory framework**

Thirteen recognises the various legal and regulatory requirements relating to equality and diversity, though we always aim to exceed the expectations of these wherever we can to the benefit of our colleagues, board and committee members, volunteers, customers and partners.

- **Equality Act 2010**

The Equality Act 2010 consolidated previous equality legislation with the aim of making it more accessible and easier to understand. It refers to nine protected characteristics, for which discrimination, harassment and victimisation are prohibited. Our Equality Framework recognises the following 'protected characteristics' contained within this Act:

- **Race**

Race is defined as a coalition of people united by a common history or language. Race relates to:

- Ethnic group, which may influence culture such as food, music or dress, and values and beliefs;
- Nationality – place of birth;
- Colour of skin.

- **Gender**

Sex or gender is defined in the Act as whether a person is a man or a woman of any age.

- **Age**

This refers to a person belonging to a particular age or range of ages.

- **Disability**

Disability is defined as a person who has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

- **Gender Reassignment**

Gender reassignment is the process of transitioning from one gender to another. Gender reassignment is also described as transsexual. It relates to people who intend to undergo, are undergoing or have undergone a process of gender reassignment to live permanently in their acquired gender.

- **Sexual Orientation**

Sexual orientation is defined as whether a person's sexual attraction is towards the same sex, the opposite sex or to both sexes.

- **Religious Belief**

Religion and belief includes religious and philosophical beliefs including lack of belief (e.g., atheism).

- **Pregnancy and Maternity**

This characteristic defines pregnancy as the period of expecting a baby. Maternity refers to the period after the birth and is linked to maternity leave in the employment context. In the non-work context, protection against maternity discrimination is for 26 weeks after giving birth, and this includes treating a woman unfavourably because she is breastfeeding.

- **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

This refers to a person who is married or in a civil partnership

The [Equality Act 2010](#) recommends that organisations should avoid rigid, bureaucratic ‘tick-box’ approaches. We apply these ‘protected characteristics’ in a holistic manner, recognising that all individuals will be represented by several characteristics as opposed to one.

Additionally, Thirteen goes beyond these nine characteristics, considering socio-economic status; vulnerability; dependent children; carers; spent convictions; and any other characteristic which may impact upon an individual’s life.

All these characteristics are interlinked and impact each other in different ways. It is essential that we are conscious of this when thinking about what equality, diversity and inclusion means and how it should be managed.

### [Human Rights Act 1998](#)

Human rights are the basic rights and freedoms that belong to every person in the world. Human rights are based on core principles of dignity, fairness, equality, respect and autonomy. Registered Social Housing providers must comply with the Human Rights Act 1998 because although not public authorities, they carry out public functions. The Human Rights Act 1998 gives people several human rights that are particularly relevant to housing and property. These are:

- **Article 6:** Right to a fair trial.
- **Article 8:** Right to respect for private life, family life, and the home.
- **Article 14:** Prohibition of discrimination

We must take particular care to adhere to these Articles of the Human Rights Act 1998, when dealing with an applicant for housing; a tenant; any other occupier; or, in some circumstances, a former resident. These Articles of the Human Rights Act 1998 may impact our services from allocation of accommodation to termination and eviction. Conducting Equality Impact Assessments ensures adherence, fairness, and enables us to avoid discrimination.

### [Equality and Human Rights Commission Guidance – Human Rights at Home](#)

The principles of human rights have special significance in relation to Social Housing, especially the impact of quality housing and the effect this can have on wellbeing. Inadequate housing can increase the risk of severe ill health and disability; this can also lead to poor mental health, lower

educational attainment, unemployment, and poverty. For this reason, the right to respect for a person's home is included within the Human Rights Act 1998.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission provides practical guidance which builds understanding and confidence in how an individual's human rights can be affected by poor decisions and actions relating to housing. This guidance has been developed in close consultation with key stakeholders in the Social Housing sector across Britain. The Equality and Human Rights Commission argues that if we provide Social Housing in a way that is compatible with human rights laws, our organisation can make a positive difference to people's lives. For this reason, Thirteen Group fully endorses this guidance and the principles of the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **Public Sector Equality Duty**

The Public Sector Equality Duty came into force in April 2011, and requires that public bodies have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity;
- Foster good relations.

In practice, this means that the duty will require public bodies to consider how their Policies and services affect disadvantaged groups in the community. Although Thirteen is not a public body, while developing our Policies and delivering services, we recognise the need to adopt the principles of these duties in the provision and allocation of Social Housing and other services, for the purpose of this Framework.

### **Regulator for Social Housing**

Thirteen is regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing. Although there is not a separate equality and diversity standard within the Regulatory Standards, the [Transparency, influence and accountability standard](#) of the [Consumer Standards](#) includes a specific expectation that Registered Providers understand and respond to diverse needs. The [Neighbourhood and Community Standard](#) also includes a requirement to promote social and economic wellbeing. The Regulator expects Registered Providers of Social Housing to maintain standards through co-regulation, to ensure that all tenants are treated with fairness and respect.

### **Together with Tenants**

Together with Tenants is a sector-wide initiative by the National Housing Federation, which focuses on strengthening the relationship between residents and Housing Association landlords. We are committed to involving residents to scrutinise our services and performance at all levels; consult on Policy and Strategy development; and provide assurance of compliance with the regulatory consumer standards to the Board.

## [The Social Housing Equality Framework \(SHEF\)](#)

The Social Housing Equality Framework (SHEF) is a performance and improvement tool to help self-regulate equality practice. The SHEF aims to help organisations integrate their commitments to promote equality and diversity into their day-to-day work. The current framework headings within the revised SHEF are:

- Knowing your customers.
- Leadership, partnership, and organisational commitment.
- Involving your customers.
- Responsive services, access, and customer care.
- A skilled and committed workforce.

Though we are not currently seeking accreditation via the SHEF, we recognise the merits of this approach in helping us to ensure that we effectively manage our own performance and areas for improvement, in addition to integrating equality, diversity and inclusion into our daily work. We will, therefore, implement this framework across Thirteen.

## **HQN – Embedding Equality and Diversity Toolkit**

The toolkit aims to help Registered Providers respond to these and other challenges, and to ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion remain part of all they do. It focuses on five areas:

- Leadership.
- Policy development and implementation, including collecting and using data.
- Modernising the workforce.
- Training, advice and support.
- Promoting cohesion and tackling prejudice.



The toolkit looks at each of these in more detail below and sets out some checklists that should help Registered Providers make progress. Not every question in the checklists will be relevant to every Registered Housing Provider. It will depend on various factors including their size, location and the services they provide.

We have assessed ourselves against these standards, and the overall conclusion is that we have made a positive start along the journey of ensuring that equality, diversity and inclusion is integral in everything we do. There are areas that require improvement, such as how we collect and use data to ensure that our services do meet the needs of the diverse range of people within our communities. Meeting the objectives we have set ourselves in this framework will help us ensure that our culture truly allows equality, diversity and inclusion to be at the forefront of our business.

### [National Housing Federation Code of Governance 2020](#)

The first principle of the Code is that the Board sets and actively drives the organisation's social purpose, mission, values and ambitions, and through these embeds within the organisation resident focus, inclusion, integrity, openness and accountability.

The Board is required to demonstrate a clear and active commitment to achieve equality of opportunity, diversity and inclusion in all of the organisation's activities, as well as in its own composition. It has Policies and statements which meaningfully demonstrate this commitment and sets priorities and objectives for the organisation to achieve.

The Thirteen Board seeks regular assurance about how these commitments and objectives are being delivered in practice, and tracks progress against the priorities it has set. We publish information annually about our work to deliver these commitments and objectives, and the progress we have made. Progress against the objectives and actions within this Framework will be reported to the Board annually.

### **Our Customers' and Communities' Demographic Data**

We believe that statistical information should be gathered and discussed in a meaningful way; therefore, within **Appendix A**, we have collated and analysed information relating to the demographics nationally, Tees Valley wide and within our operating area. This statistical information has been enhanced with qualitative analysis.

The purpose of providing and discussing this data is to give a clear indication of the population within the regions where we have homes. As a social business, it is essential that we are aware of who our existing and potential customers and communities are, and whether our workforce reflects the communities we serve. These statistics help us to understand which potential needs must be taken into consideration when developing and establishing our equality objectives and services.

We have aimed to provide statistics that are up-to-date and derived from reliable sources. However, it should be noted that all statistics are socially constructed and therefore subjective; as these are also collected and analysed using different techniques, we need to exercise caution when making comparisons. We have adopted the [National Housing Federation's EDI Data Tool](#), which draws data from all relevant sources and analyses Thirteen's demographic information with the national and regional data. The information is gathered during sign-ups and is stored on our various software systems. The information collected focuses on characteristics such as age; ethnicity; gender; religion; sexual orientation; and disability. These figures represent tenants only, excluding all other members of the household. The information is based on what customers have chosen to tell us – for example, we have complete information regarding age, but we lack knowledge about the sexual orientation of our tenants. We currently collect these statistics on an inconsistent basis, and we rely on customers actively updating their information. It is vital that we gather this information on a regular and consistent basis so that we can understand how the characteristics of our customer population might change, and how service requirements and provision might need to be adjusted. Customers are at the heart of our business; we strive to provide customer-led services across the Group.

Workforce data is collected at the time of employment and relies on colleagues updating their own data should their circumstances change. In 2021, the People Team undertook a piece of work to gather information from the workforce around the protected characteristics. This identified that we need to consider the relevance of gathering data around religious beliefs, marital status and caring responsibilities. As the organisation moves forward with flexible ways of working, the need to understand the makeup of our workforce and areas of their lives that need to be considered will enable us to ensure that the Policies and Procedures that affect the workforce have been informed by the data gathered and by surveys undertaken to seek the views and continued involvement of the workforce.

## **Our Progress to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion**

The next section provides a flavour of our achievements and collaboration with others in encouraging, promoting and celebrating equality, diversity and inclusion.

- [Customer Involvement Framework](#)

Our customers are involved in scrutinising our services and performance; consulting on Policy and Strategy development; and providing assurance of compliance with the Regulatory Consumer Standards to the Thirteen Board. Our Customer Involvement Framework gives customers a wide range of opportunities to influence our services, Policies and Strategic priorities; our setting of service standards; and to monitor and review performance and complaints.

- **Employability Service**

We offer a range of free employability services for our tenants and the wider public across the Tees Valley. We support people who are not in employment, education or training, but also anyone looking to gain a new job or more hours. This service offers customers a wide range of supporting, including one-to-one support with a dedicated employability caseworker for up to nine months, who can help with CVs, job applications and interview skills, as well as access to education and training opportunities and a volunteering and peer mentor service that offers volunteering placements within Thirteen. We also have a team of employer engagement specialists who have exclusive vacancies from supply chain providers, external employers and internal teams. Our Thirteen Academy programme offers customers and their families a fantastic opportunity to get financial support to enable them to study for a degree to help them onto a career path.

- **Support for Young People**

We offer support to young people aged 16-25, in getting their own tenancy, learning the skills needed to manage and keep their homes. We work with them to develop a support plan, which is personal to them and will set them on the right path to achieving their goals, as well as helping overcome barriers so they can develop relationships that are important to them. We give practical help such as budgeting and money management, offering the chance to get into education, training and even paid employment.

- **Housing for Vulnerable and Older People**

Our Independent Living Service, which includes adaptations, is underpinned by a holistic approach to meet the needs of our most vulnerable clients in an appropriate and timely manner, offering a comprehensive range of bespoke services to meet current and long-term housing needs.

The services include identifying the housing requirements of our vulnerable clients and signposting to relevant agencies, both internal and external, to enhance / prolong the opportunities for independent living.

We also offer specialist home adaptations, and customers have been provided with amenities such as walk-in showers; stairlifts; ramps; and other bespoke access solutions and minor works. We also offer assessment opportunities from our dedicated Occupational Therapist to speed up the assessment service.

Our customer base covers all aspects of vulnerability, including older persons and age-related mobility; physical disability; social isolation; mental health; addiction; paediatrics; and learning disabilities. We work in partnership with external agencies such as Social Care; Local Authorities; health services; probation; mental health services; and educational welfare.

- **Resettle North-East**

This new service is part of Ministry of Justice contracts to provide advice and support to people leaving custody. These services will support people across the region to find and sustain new homes, and the Liberate service provides personal wellbeing help and advice to people as they rebuild their lives after leaving prison.

- **Translation and Interpretation Service**

We continue to offer a translation and interpretation service to ensure effective communication and support for all our customers. We also provide information in a range of accessible formats.

- **[Women in Social Housing \(WISH\)](#)**

We are active members of WISH, with colleagues being on the Board. WISH is a networking and support group for women working in the affordable housing sector, which provides opportunities to network with women at all stages of their careers and across a range of organisations operating in the housing sector – both private and public. Wish are working to develop a Careers Advice Programme for female school and college leavers explaining all about the exciting job opportunities within the Social Housing sector.

- **[The Girls Network](#)**

This award-winning charity believes that all girls, regardless of where they are from, should have a right to access the best opportunities available; set high aspirations to recognise their self-worth; and develop their capacity to shape their

world. Thirteen has partnered with the charity, The Girls' Network, to take part in its award-winning mentoring programme for girls aged between 14-19. Over 50 female colleagues from a wide range of roles across Thirteen participated in a special training session as their first step towards becoming mentors for girls in the Tees Valley.

- **LGBT+ group**

The LGBT+ Group is an open colleague network group run by colleagues for colleagues. Our name, like Thirteen, is a signal that we challenge set assumptions and take a fresh look to create opportunities and seek out the potential in everyone. All colleagues, including LGBT+ colleagues, can only be their best at work when they feel supported and included and work in an environment that's safe and free from harassment. We exist to provide support and empowerment to LGBT+ colleagues and to support and help Thirteen become fully inclusive of LGBT+ diversity.

#### **Accreditations:**

- **Stonewall Diversity Champion**

Following the launch of our new LGBT+ networking group in June 2020, we have joined Stonewall's Diversity Champions programme, the UK's leading employers' programme for ensuring all LGBT+ colleagues, customers, clients and service users are accepted without exception.

- **Customer Service Excellence**

Thirteen has Customer Service Excellence accreditation. This accreditation demonstrates that we always have customers at the heart of service provision, with particular focus on delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and excellent colleague attitude.

- **Investors in People**

Having achieved Silver award accreditation for Investors in People, we are showing our continued commitment to high performance through good people management by going for the Gold Award standard.

- **Telecare Services Association**

The personal alarm service delivered by Thirteen includes a 24/7, 365 days a year response service to customers' homes. Colleagues are trained in First Aid and moving and handling people. We have the latest equipment to help customers back on your feet should have a fall. Colleagues also carry defibrillators in their vehicles.

- **Employability**

Our Employability services have achieved 3 accreditations for the services on offer. We support people who are not in employment, education or training but also anyone looking to gain a new job or more hours. The three accreditations are:

- Matrix Accreditation for quality Information Advice and Guidance.
- NOCN Level 1 & 2 Award in Skills for Employment, Training and Personal Development.
- Developing & Applying Mentoring and Befriending Skills.
- **Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA)**

DAHA accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse. It is part of the Government's 'Ending Violence Against Women And Girls' Strategy: 2016 to 2020'. By achieving the accreditation, we will be helping to ensure those customers and colleagues affected by domestic abuse are treated in a fair, compassionate and effective way.

- **Dementia Friendly**

We made a commitment to become a Dementia Friendly organisation. As part of that commitment, we have been accredited by both Middlesbrough and Stockton Dementia Friendly Communities. With support from our external Dementia Friendly partners, we have over 45 Dementia Friends colleagues, who have been trained in the awareness of dementia and the effects it has on the individual and their families. Our Living Well project has incorporated a key work stream around dementia so that when developing properties, consideration is given to those who are living with dementia.

## **What Do We Want To Achieve?**

### **Equality Objectives**

To ensure transparency, the Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011 requires that public authorities need to publish their equality objectives at least every four years. Though the Group is not a public authority, we have chosen to comply with the principles of the Public Sector Equality Duty and will therefore publish our equality objectives. These objectives, which have been agreed by the Board, have taken into consideration our role as a housing provider and as an employer.

**Objective 1:**

Demonstrate through actions that Thirteen is an organisation which embraces diversity; is demonstrably fair; reflects the community we serve; and enables all employees to achieve their potential, irrespective of their background.

**Objective 2:**

Make equality a part of our decision-making process; assess the impact of our services; train our workforce; and take action to respond to changing communities.

**Objective 3:**

Ensuring our services reflect and meet the needs of our customers and communities. Considering the nine protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

**Objective 4:**

Work with partners to tackle hate crime and domestic violence. Take swift action to prevent repeat incidents and support victims and survivors.

The Thirteen Board has approved an Action Plan to ensure the delivery of these objectives, and this is provided at **Appendix B**. This is a living document and will be further enhanced to reflect the following areas for improvement:

**Increase Customer Profile Information**

We have reviewed our approach to gathering, storing and using customer profile information to improve the way we collect and use this data to help us shape and tailor services to the needs of customers.

**Diversity Profiling Information for Boards, Committees and Colleagues**

We will develop a standardised system so that we can collect accurate and up-to-date information relating to the characteristics of our Board and Committee members and colleagues, so that we can measure our progress in embracing and reflecting diversity.

**Service Delivery**

We want to ensure that diverse groups of customers can access the services they want and are satisfied with them. In carrying out repairs, maintenance, investment and development services, we can consider the cultural and/or specific needs of minority groups and those customers with disabilities. Priority will also be given where a repair is required to maintain the safety or security of a vulnerable customer. We will also ensure that our adaptations service is accessible to all groups of customers.

### **Information and Advice**

We will ensure that all current and potential customers have equal access, considering their individual needs. We will respond to all queries professionally and efficiently.

### **Lettings**

We will ensure that all members of the community understand and have fair and equal access to housing and housing options.

### **Dealing with Harassment**

We will endeavour to reduce or remove the risk of harm to an individual, community or environment. We want customers to feel that their neighbourhoods are safe places where people from different backgrounds can get on well together. This will also help to enhance community cohesion.

### **Social Investment**

We want to help increase jobs, training, and opportunities within our communities, and be able to demonstrate that we have successfully achieved this, to show that we have had a direct and positive impact upon levels of employment. Social integration and community cohesion will be fully considered within all investment Strategies.



## Our customers and communities' demographic data

## Appendix A

(Sources: Office for National Statistics (ONS); Tees Valley Unlimited; the Equalities Review)

### Population

Based on a mid-2018 estimate, according to ONS the total population for England is 56.3 million. The population of the UK has increased by 2.6% since 2015. Projections estimate that by 2034 the population in the Tees Valley could increase by 4.7%. The projected increase between 2024 and 2034 is 2.1%<sup>1</sup>.

By 2034, 1 in 4 of the Tees Valley population is projected to be aged 65+. The considerable increase seen in the number of over 65s is projected to continue by an average of 2,600 per annum, reaching 173,700 by 2034 (increase of 43%). Within Thirteen's operating area 27.9% customers are aged over 65.<sup>2</sup>

The number of 16-64, year olds is projected to continue decreasing by an average of 1,200 per annum, down from 417,000 in 2014 to 393,500 in 2034 (-6%).

### Gender

It is essential to identify and understand the gender split as males and females tend to experience different inequalities which are associated with living as a male or female within society. Within Thirteen's operating area females account for 61.4% of the customer base and males 38.6%. Our workforce reflects this split with 44% women, 51% men and 5% identifying as another gender being employed by Thirteen<sup>3</sup>.

Around one in four women (27%) and around one in six men (15%) have experienced domestic abuse since reaching the age of sixteen in England and Wales.

Since April 2019 there has been 398 domestic abuse cases raised through Thirteen's safeguarding process, with female victims making up 88% of these cases. The age range mostly affected by domestic abuse in these cases is the 26-44 (42%).<sup>4</sup> As a result, objective four of our Action Plan is focused on tackling domestic violence, taking swift action to prevent repeat incidents and supporting victims and survivors. Based on these statistics, we are aware that most domestic violence victims could be female, meaning that we need to target our services towards women without incidentally ignoring male victims of domestic violence who also require our services.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics' Subnational Population Projections: 2014-based - Tees Valley Report

<sup>2</sup> Source: Person \_ Equality and Diversity Power BI Dashboard report from Orchard Management System

<sup>3</sup> National Housing Federation Workforce Toolkit

<sup>4</sup> Source: Safeguarding Power Bi Dashboard report from Orchard Management system

We also recognise the importance of identifying the proportion of people who are transgender; we are currently making a conscious effort to ensure that we collect this data for both customers and the workforce. Currently no robust data on the UK trans population exists. The Government tentatively estimate that there are approximately 200,000-500,000 trans people in the UK. The Government Equalities Office report 2018 points to the following statistics, 41% of trans men and trans women responding to a Stonewall survey said they had experienced a hate crime or incident because of their gender identity in the last 12 months.<sup>5</sup> They also found that 25% of trans people had experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. Stonewalls national LGBT survey found similar results, with 67% of trans respondents saying they had avoided being open about their gender identity for fear of a negative reaction from others.<sup>6</sup> Therefore we must be especially careful to consider the provision of transgender people within the Group's Action Plan, service delivery, and other Policies, Strategies, and Procedures.

## **Age**

Within the Tees Valley, 2019 population projections indicated that there are 21.7% people aged 0-17; 59% people aged 18-64 and 19.3% people aged 65+.

Young people have distinguished needs and are more likely to face specific inequalities. For example, young people aged 16-24 are three times more likely to be victims of violence at 4.1% compared to total adult victims at 1.7%. On the other hand, young people are also more likely to be perpetrators of crime; the peak age range for committing a crime is 14-25. In 2019, overall, there were 60,028 arrests made of young people between the ages of 10-17 in England and Wales. In Cleveland force, young people arrested or cautioned accounted for 25% of the regional figure. As Thirteen Group primarily supply homes within urban areas, this is particularly relevant to the way in which we think about equality, diversity and inclusion with regards to young people.

Life expectancy at birth in the Tees Valley was among the lowest in the region at 79.3 years compared with 79.8 regionally and 81.1 nationally. Middlesbrough has the lowest life expectancy at 77.6 in the Tees Valley. The ONS predicts that the proportion of the Tees Valley population over the age of 65 will rise by 19% by 2024<sup>7</sup>. This will require a diverse range of Policy responses to address the future housing needs of older people, including the provision of more specific elderly accommodation of all types, more assistance for people to stay in their own homes and Policy measures to ensure new homes built today are capable of being adapted to meet the future needs of elderly people.

## **Religion and Belief**

In the Tees Valley, the Census 2011 showed that 68% of residents define themselves as Christian, 0.3% as Hindu, 2.4% as Muslim, 0.3% as Sikh, and 0.4% as other. Almost 23% of residents define themselves as having no religion and 6% of people in the Tees Valley did not state

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<sup>5</sup> The Government Equalities Office Report 2018

<sup>6</sup> Stonewall – LGBT in Britain, Home and Communities 2018

<sup>7</sup> Source: 2011 Census, ONS

their religion - a lower rate than that observed nationally<sup>8</sup>. Analysis of Thirteen's customer data shows that we have no data around religion or belief for over 96% of our customers. This is an area that requires consideration, as in 2018 to 2019, 8% of hate crimes were related to religion, an increase of 3% on the previous year (to 8,566 offences), with most hate crimes related to race 76%; (78,991 offences).<sup>9</sup> Without having this data we are unable to ensure that the services and products that we deliver are meeting the needs of a diverse community and possibly masking incidences of religious or hate crime that may be categorised as Anti-Social Behaviour.

## **Race and Ethnicity**

In England and Wales 86% of people describe themselves as of White ethnic origin. Based on Census results from Office for National Statistics (ONS), the majority, 94.9% of the Tees Valleys population are white, with 1.6% of the population being Pakistani, Mixed race 1.0%, Indian 0.6%, 'Other' Asian 0.5%, Black African 0.4%, Chinese 0.4%, and the remainder of the population 0.6% being from other backgrounds.<sup>10</sup> Public Health England estimated that in 2016 the % of the Tees Valley population aged 16+ that were from ethnic minorities was 4.3% compared to the national figure for England of 13.6%<sup>11</sup>. This would suggest that there is less ethnic diversity in the Tees Valley compared to England and Wales as a whole. Within Thirteen's operating area we only know 1.4% of our customers ethnic origin.<sup>12</sup>

Comparing our workforce data with that of the Tees Valley, our representation amongst ethnic groups are similar and therefore reflective of the operating environment. This does not mean that we consider ourselves ethnically diverse; there is still the need to encourage representation from our ethnic communities to consider joining the company at all levels - board, executive team and workforce.

We need to consider improving how to gather data around race and ethnicity particularly within our customer base, in order to understand the ways in which ethnic and racial minorities might be vulnerable, and what we can do to support customers and colleagues.

## **Sexual Orientation**

The current information relating to sexual orientation from ONS in 2018, estimates that 94.6% of the population in England categorise themselves as Heterosexual/Straight and that 3 - 4% of the population is lesbian, gay, bisexual or other.<sup>13</sup> The data held by Thirteen indicates that we need to gather more information regarding sexual orientation about customers. This in comparison to our workforce data where 64.3% have identified

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<sup>8</sup> Source: 2011 Census, ONS

<sup>9</sup> Source: Police recorded crime, Home Office.

<sup>10</sup> Source: 2011 Census, ONS

<sup>11</sup> Source: Public Health England – Local Authority Health Profiles, Counties & UA's (4/19-3/20) in North-East Region

<sup>12</sup> Source: Person \_ Equality and Diversity Power BI Dashboard report from Orchard Management System

<sup>13</sup> Source: Sexual Orientation, UK 2018 ONS

as heterosexual/straight, 2% as Gay/Lesbian, 0.25% as Bisexual, 0.065 as Other. The remaining 33.4% of the workforce have not indicated as to what their sexual orientation was. The creation of the LGBTQ group in Thirteen has shown that as an organisation we are trying to create a culture of inclusion. However we must make every effort to ensure that our Policies and Procedures do not unfairly impact on people of minority sexual orientation.

Stonewall, a professional lobbying group, published a report in 2018 (LGBT – Home and Communities) which highlighted issues that the LGBT community face. Only half of lesbian, gay and bi people (46 per cent) and trans people (47 per cent) feel able to be open about their sexual orientation and/or gender identity to their whole family. A third of bi people (32 per cent) say they cannot be open about their sexual orientation with anyone in their family.

Stonewall also found that almost one in five LGBT people (18 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. This number increases to almost three in ten LGBT disabled people (28 per cent) compared to more than one in ten LGBT people who are not disabled (11 per cent). One in four trans people (25 per cent) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives, compared to one in six LGBT people who are not trans (16 per cent). Coming to terms with their sexuality and withdrawal of emotional support and love from family and friends can also lead to emotional or mental health difficulties, as well as drug and alcohol addictions.<sup>14</sup>

## Health and Disability

The 2011 Census looks at self-certified limiting long-term illness. The Tees Valley has a higher percentage of people who consider themselves to have a limiting long-term illness 20.8% compared to the national average for England & Wales which is 17.9%.<sup>15</sup> The life expectancy in all parts of the Tees Valley is less than the England average, with the average male life expectancy to be 77.4 compared with the national average for England at 79.5, female life expectancy is also lower in the Tees Valley from an average of 81.3 compared with 83.1 nationally.<sup>16</sup>

Among the Tees Valley population, hospital admission due to alcohol-related conditions in 2018/19 were higher than the England average by 31.6%.<sup>17</sup> The suicide rate per 100,000 people is higher in the Tees Valley than in England, with Middlesbrough being 43.5% higher than the national figure per 100,000.<sup>18</sup> The percentage of people (18+) who are classed as being overweight or obese is higher in the Tees Valley at 69.7% compared with the rest of England at 62.8%. There are 3 areas, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland where the rates are higher than the England and Tees Valley figures.<sup>19</sup> Within Thirteen's operating area we know that 5,540 (15.1%) of our customer base has indicated that they have a disability or work limiting disability, however we have no data for the remaining 30,920 customers.<sup>20</sup> 4.93% of the workforce have

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<sup>14</sup> Source: Stonewall – LGBT, Home and Communities 2018

<sup>15</sup> Source: Tees Valley Combined Authority - Equality Framework December 2016

<sup>16</sup> Source: Public Health England – Local Authority Health Profiles, Counties & UA's (4/19-3/20) in North East Region

<sup>17</sup> Source: Public Health England – Local Authority Health Profiles, Counties & UA's (4/19-3/20) in North East Region

<sup>18</sup> Source: Public Health England – Local Authority Health Profiles, Counties & UA's (4/19-3/20) in North East Region

<sup>19</sup> Source: Public Health England – Local Authority Health Profiles, Counties & UA's (4/19-3/20) in North East Region

<sup>20</sup> Source: Person \_ Equality and Diversity Power BI Dashboard report from Orchard Management System

reported having a limiting long term illness, we provide reasonable adjustments and support, where necessary, to help these colleagues continue to work.

## Tees Valley Socio Economic Profile

Socio-economic status refers to the total measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on income (and unemployment), education, and occupation. Another variable which can be included when measuring socio-economic status is wealth – this encompasses further factors such as marital status and family size. Understanding these variables helps us to appreciate the complexity of interlinked factors and characteristics, and the impact these can have upon a person's overall quality of life. For example, low levels of income and education have proved to be a strong predictor of physical and mental health problems. Though it is not possible to provide a measure of socio-economic status for specific individuals or families within the Thirteen operating area, statistical data can give us an impression of how the Tees Valley fares with regards to socio-economic status:<sup>21</sup>

- 18.4% of the Tees Valley working age population are in receipt of Key Benefits, including Jobseekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit, Lone Parent Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Disabled allowances, Bereavement Benefit and others on income related benefits.
- In August 2020, 10.4% of 16-64, year old Tees Valley residents were claiming unemployment benefits i.e. Job Seekers Allowance, Universal Credit and were available for work.
- 26.5% Working age population are categorised as being Economically Inactive as of 2019
- 4.6% of young people (16-17) are classed as Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETS)
- 5.7% of 16–17-year-olds are on an Apprenticeship programme
- 1.6% of adults over 30 are participating in Higher Education
- 10% of households were classed to be in fuel poverty in 2018
- Percentage of Primary School and Secondary school pupils eligible for school meals in 2020 were 25.1% and 23.9% respectively.

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<sup>21</sup> Source: Tees Valley Combined Authority – Tees Valley Data Insights

## Action Plan

## Appendix B

Equality Objective	What will success look like?	Actions	Timescale	Lead	Progress
1. Demonstrate through actions that Thirteen is an organisation which: embraces diversity; is	A culture of equality, diversity and inclusion is being promoted and championed with a plan to embed at the end of the long-term plan.	1. Ensure diversity at board through recruitment and development	Ongoing	Head of Governance & Compliance	Recruitment targeted at under-represented groups

<p>demonstrably fair; reflects the community we serve; and where all employees can achieve their potential, irrespective of their background</p>	<p>Board directors and senior leaders are aware of the Group's equality, diversity and inclusion objectives. The objectives are monitored, and progress can be challenged in an appropriate forum, i.e. REMCO.</p> <p>Colleagues have the necessary awareness and understanding for promoting equality and diversity and challenging inappropriate behaviour.</p>	<p>2. Undertake TIDE self-assessment, and in consultation with leadership team develop a long term (3-5 years) equality, diversity &amp; inclusion culture change plan internally relating to colleagues.</p> <p>3. Referring to the detailed ED&amp;I culture change plan (resulting from the TIDE assessment), prioritise actions associated with the "our workforce" section to develop and embed ED&amp;I information and monitoring within the workplace, taking us from the "mobilise" to the "realise" stage.</p> <p>4. In addition to e-learning. Consider what more in-depth awareness training we should offer (board and colleagues)</p> <p>5. Consider a campaign of colleagues sharing their own stories and experiences, to raise awareness and promote difference.</p>	<p>October 2021</p> <p>October 2022</p> <p>December 2022</p> <p>December 2022</p>	<p>Head of HRBP &amp; Head of HR Services (HR Services Manager)</p> <p>Head of HRBP &amp; Head of HR Services (HR Services Manager)</p> <p>Head of OD</p> <p>Head of Comms</p>	<p>TIDE self-assessment is complete, and presentation planned for LT in December 2021</p>
<p>2. Make equality a part of our decision-making process; assessing the impact of our services, training our workforce and taking action to respond to changing communities</p>	<p>We will have a well-defined EDI Strategy and plan which is reviewed and discussed at board level.</p> <p>We'll have comprehensive (90%+) customer profiles that help us tailor and deliver services in accordance with customer needs.</p>	<p>1. Referring to the detailed ED&amp;I culture change plan (resulting from the TIDE assessment), prioritise actions associated with the "Strategy and plan" and "leadership and accountability" sections to develop and embed our Strategy, values and behaviours taking us from the "prepare" to the "realise" stage, which is an ambitious move of two steps along the maturity matrix.</p>	<p>December 2024</p> <p>6 monthly</p>	<p>Head of HRBP Head of HR Services Head of OD Board &amp; Exec Champion</p>	

	<p>Develop services and Strategies for the future that reflect the existing and future needs of vulnerable customers, including older, LGBT+, BAME and those with disabilities.</p>	<p>2. ED&amp;I update, including progress against the equality Action Plan, to be presented to Board on an annual basis</p> <p>3. Maintain register of Strategies and Policies and monitor to ensure all relevant elements completed as appropriate</p> <p>4. Carry out research as appropriate to inform the development of Strategies</p> <p>5. Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on all Policies, Procedures and systems</p> <p>6. ED&amp;I guidance included on intranet</p> <p>7. Develop customer profiling data by;</p> <p>    Consider contacting customers who have already registered on MyThirteen to update their information. Currently 20k customer registered on My Thirteen.</p> <p>    Create page on My Thirteen that would gather data around protected characteristics.</p> <p>    Incentivise customers through My Rewards to update data on annual basis.</p> <p>    <i>(Development required to MyThirteen and MyRewards, costs to be evaluated)</i></p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Oct 2022</p> <p>Oct 2022</p> <p>Oct 2023</p> <p>Oct 2023</p>	<p>Head of Governance &amp; Compliance</p> <p>Head of Governance &amp; Compliance</p> <p>Head of Research &amp; Policy</p> <p>Authors and project leads</p> <p>Compliance Business Partner - Safeguarding</p> <p>Head of Touchpoints</p> <p>Head of Touchpoints</p> <p>Head of Touchpoints</p>	
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		<p>Continuous Recording of Lettings form (CoRe) to be developed to gather the protected characteristics information.</p> <p>Develop customer satisfaction survey questionnaires to include protected characteristic data</p> <p>8. Offer advice, guidance and support to customers who may not have the technical, physical abilities or wish to use the MY Thirteen app</p> <p>9. Research and data on customers and potential customer demographics ensuring that Thirteen offers, product and services that allows inclusion from all sections of our communities</p> <p>10. Our approach to EDI is included on all of our platforms, i.e. intranet, website, job pages.</p>	<p>Oct 2023</p> <p>Oct 2023</p> <p>Oct 2024</p> <p>Oct 2023</p>	<p>Head of Housing Services</p> <p>Head of Touchpoints</p> <p>Head of Touchpoints</p> <p>Head of Innovation &amp; Marketing</p> <p>Head of Comms</p>	
<p>3. Ensuring our services reflect and meet the needs of our customers and communities. Considering the nine protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010</p>	<p>The services we deliver are influenced by customer engagement.</p> <p>Every customer has equality of access and opportunity, and our Policies do not knowingly discriminate against any section of the community.</p> <p>All colleagues / prospective colleagues have equality of access and opportunity, and our Policies and Procedures</p>	<p>1. Develop performance reports to include profiling data to allow analysis of services by diversity to identify barriers or good practice</p> <p>2. Develop community impact assessment tool</p> <p>3. Develop links to improve engagement with minority groups, including new and emerging communities.</p> <p>4. Provide advice and guidance to make the choice of home ownership products Exploring the untapped markets for such a product. Offering the opportunity of financial inclusion.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Oct 2022</p> <p>Oct 2022</p> <p>Oct 2022</p>	<p>Director of Business Change</p> <p>Head of Community Resilience</p> <p>Head of Innovation &amp; Marketing</p>	

	do not knowingly discriminate.	<p>5. Work with partners both internal and external to increase the uptake within our sheltered accommodation properties.</p> <p>6. The Living Well project will develop a new, modern vision for our approach that challenges our thinking around the wants and needs of our customers and how best to support those who are older, fit and healthy through to those who require additional support to live fulfilling lives.</p> <p>7. Undertaking research with customers and potential customers to establish their ideas and vision for creating community spaces that encourages inclusion and promote a sense of community spirit for all.</p> <p>8. Develop a Procedure to reduce timescales for repairs to those customers identified to have a vulnerability.</p> <p>9. 1<sup>st</sup> time tenants aged 16-30 offered support to help them maintain their tenancy.</p> <p>10. Develop a community engagement Strategy and approach which takes into account our diverse communities regardless of geographical location</p> <p>11. Referring to the detailed ED&amp;I culture change plan (resulting from the TIDE assessment), prioritise actions associated with the "recruitment and attraction section to develop an approach that encourages a diverse range of candidates to come and work at thirteen, taking us from the</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Oct 2022</p> <p>Oct 2021</p> <p>Oct 2022</p> <p>Dec 2023</p>	<p>Head of Innovation &amp; Marketing</p> <p>Head of Innovation &amp; Marketing</p> <p>Head of Community Resilience</p> <p>Head of Repairs</p> <p>Head of Care &amp; Support</p> <p>Head of Community Resilience</p> <p>Head of HR Services Talent Acquisition role (not yet appointed)</p>	
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		“prepare” to the “realise” stage, which is an ambitious move of two steps along the maturity matrix.			
4. Work with partners to tackle hate crime and domestic violence, taking swift action to prevent repeat incidents and supporting victims and survivors	<p>Perpetrators have appropriate action taken against them.</p> <p>Hate crime is reported and colleagues have the necessary skills and training to deal with cases and support victims.</p> <p>Appropriate support is provided to vulnerable people with specific requirements.</p> <p>Existing partnerships are sustained, and new partnerships developed, to ensure a co-ordinated and cohesive approach to tackling hate crime and supporting victims</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure the provision of adequate and appropriate support to victims</li> <li>2. Work with and learn from specialist groups and develop partnership working and links to other sectors</li> <li>3 Measure and monitor the effectiveness and impact of the service</li> <li>4. Analyse data from repair scheduling for customers within a protected characteristic requiring repairs that can indicate they may be victims of, Domestic Abuse ASB, hate crime etc.</li> </ol>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Oct 2022</p>	<p>Head of Care and Support</p> <p>Head of Care and Support</p> <p>Head of Care and Support</p> <p>Head of Repairs</p>	

## Monitoring and Scrutinising Our Approach

Thirteen has devised systems to ensure that we are properly managing equality across the organisation. We have established the following to ensure that we continue to deliver our key objectives and actions outlined within the Action Plan. Progress against the Action Plan will be monitored and reported to Board on an annual basis.

## Equality Assessments

We conduct Equality Impact Assessments (EIA) which are a thorough and systematic analysis of a Strategy, Policy or Procedure, whether formal or informal, and irrespective of the scope of that document. Conducting EIAs reinforce our second equality objective within the Group's Action Plan, as EIAs enable us to make equality part of our decision-making process.

The primary function of an EIA is to determine the extent of any impact of a Policy upon the nine protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010, and anticipating and identifying the discriminatory or negative consequences for a particular group or sector of the community. It is also an opportunity to demonstrate the likely positive outcomes of a Policy and to seek ways to promote equality of opportunity and good relations more effectively.

Once a document is screened, we will carry out any reasonable action to rectify issues where people might be disadvantaged. The EIA will be carried out as part of the Policy development process before the Policy is implemented.

Carrying out EIAs demonstrates our commitment to embracing equality and diversity, representing good practice in several respects:

- Helping us to identify how we can make our services more accessible and appropriate;
- Embedding and promoting equality throughout all our services;
- Encouraging us to think about alternative and innovative ways in which we can achieve the aims of our Policies, which will not lead to inequalities;
- Helping us to identify the existing and potential inequalities people will experience if the company goes ahead with new Policies and Procedures without considering issues of equality; and
- Increasing transparency in all that we do and improving customers' confidence in the fairness of our Policies.

### **Our Complaints, Compliments, and Feedback Procedure**

We pride ourselves on our transparency. That is why we believe that everyone should be aware that we have a Complaints Procedure in place, so that anyone can communicate issues relating to the ways in which we promote and ensure equality and fairness, and respect diversity.

We are responsive to the views of members of the public and value any feedback, positive or negative, with regards to equality and diversity, because this information can help us to celebrate our successes and improve our services and culture.

We will accept complaints, compliments, and feedback in any form, for example, over the telephone or in person. We are committed to first contact resolution, meaning that we will attempt to resolve any issues which are raised at the first possible opportunity. We have a Customer Relations Team who investigate and respond to complaints, ensuring independence and fairness.

### **Board and Committee Member and Colleagues Training**

We appreciate that a commitment to providing appropriate Board/Committee member and colleagues training can play a crucial role in the effective application of our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Framework and Action Plan. As a result, all Board and Committee members and colleagues undertake Equality and Diversity e-learning which is renewed on an annual basis.

### **Publicising our Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Framework and Action Plan**

We will ensure that:

- All colleagues will be aware of the ED&I framework and Action Plan and will receive training on equality, diversity and inclusion;
- The Framework and Policy is promoted on the Group's websites, intranet and at induction;
- Updates on the scheme will be fed back to customers through forum groups and residents' newsletters;
- Board members will receive training and annual update reports on progress against the Action Plan;
- The Framework will be made available in other formats including Braille, large print and variety of languages on request to ensure it is accessible to all customers;
- The Action Plan will be monitored regularly and updated and reported on a 6 monthly basis.

### **Appendices / Supporting Documents**

The Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Action Plan and local profiles are available on the Group's intranet and internet. Copies are also available upon request.

## Glossary

Comms – Communications

DAHA – Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance

ED&I – Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

EIA – Equality Impact Assessment

HQN – Housing Quality Network

HR- Human Resources

HRBP – Human Resources Business Partners

LT – Leadership Team

LGBT – Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender

NEET – Not in Employment, Education or Training

NOCN – National Open College Network

OD – Organisation Development

ONS – Office of National Statistics

REMCO – Remuneration Committee

SHEF – Social Housing Equality Framework

TIDE – Talent Inclusion and Diversity Evaluation