



Appointment brief

# Head of housing services

February 2024

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# An introduction

**Thank you for taking the time to look at Thirteen's head of housing services role.**

Thirteen is a medium-sized housing association whose 1,500 employees look after 35,000 homes, help communities and support people through our services, like extra care for the elderly, employability, and homelessness. Our core operation is across the Tees Valley, and our HQ is by the water in Middlesbrough, but we operate across an area that stretches from the Humber in the South to the Tyne in the North.

We do awesome things. We house 73,000 people, equal to a town the size of Carlisle. We carry out 140,000 yearly repairs, field 400,000 phone calls, and look after 1.6 million square meters of grass, trees, shrubs, and hedgerows. We even keep bees. Thirteen makes a difference to the communities it serves.

As you'll be working as part of my team, I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you a little about what I'm looking for in a colleague and give you an insight into working at Thirteen.

We're an ambitious team that continues to look at how we can do things differently. We're not afraid to embrace new technology and try new things, such as using AI, behavioural insight, and data science to be more effective at what we do for customers.

So, I'm looking for a person who is passionate about customer service to join us as head of housing services. If you are looking for a challenging, exciting and varied role that will enable you to use your housing expertise and people skills to deliver excellent services, we'd love to hear from you.

Everyone knows I'm driven and competitive, doing my best for our customers. I'm also known for my coaching leadership style, which empowers colleagues, so I'm looking forward to welcoming someone who is keen to learn and grow, step out of their comfort zones, and try new things.

I am passionate about housing as a profession and a real advocate for equality, diversity, and inclusion. I want all my team to bring their very best authentic self to the workplace, as diversity and understanding of differences can broaden experience and deliver more for customers as a more diverse team.

So, we want you to make a difference, to go home at night knowing that each day makes our residents' homes, communities, and the places they live a little bit better. We're on a brilliant journey, and we'd love you to come along.

**Kay Glew**  
**Director of Operations**





## Dixon Walter

Thirteen has appointed executive search firm Dixon Walter to support the appointment of the head of housing services. If you would like to discuss this opportunity further or have any questions about the role, please contact Jim Allcroft at [jim@dixonwalter.co.uk](mailto:jim@dixonwalter.co.uk) or **07388 642 631**.

You can also visit this microsite to find out more about the role: <https://www.dixonwalter.co.uk/opportunities/head-housing-services-thirteen/>



**Jim Allcroft**

[jim@dixonwalter.co.uk](mailto:jim@dixonwalter.co.uk)

# Who we are and what we do?



# About Thirteen

**At Thirteen, we're all about providing homes, support and opportunities to grow. With a vision to provide safe, quality homes and services to the environmental standards that matter to our customers, we understand that everyone is an individual.**

We work to improve the fabric of places where our customers live and are here for anyone who needs a home and a helping hand. We provide support and opportunities to encourage resilient communities.

Thirteen has a history of growth. Thirteen was created in 2017. This was through merging and consolidating four housing companies and a care organisation to create a strong social-purpose housing association.

Most of our homes are in our Tees Valley heartland. We're committed to expanding our presence throughout the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber region. We'll achieve this through a growing development programme to meet housing needs.

**We're committed to being a great housing association and landlord. Customers have recently told us that is what we're living up to, with 84.4% saying they are satisfied with our services.**





Overall satisfaction shows that customers recommend us. This is great news, as it demonstrates that our operating model puts neighbourhoods at the heart of our business. It means we can develop closer relationships, creating an even bigger impact in our communities and giving customers a greater voice.

But we're not just about rental properties. We build new homes for rent and shared ownership to help people get onto the property ladder. As a Homes England Strategic Partner, we have an ambitious development programme. That includes building 2,281 new affordable homes over the next five years.

We support communities, work to prevent homelessness, help residents gain employment and apprenticeships, assist with money management, provide volunteering opportunities, domestic abuse support, refugee resettlement and much more.

We place emphasis on developing and delivering accommodation and services for older people or those who need a helping hand to live independent lives.

**We also go beyond bricks and mortar to develop targeted help and support for our customers. This helps people to live more successfully and become the best they can be.**

We currently work with over 3,000 customers in these settings, including extra care for older people, homes for people with learning disabilities, children leaving care, schemes to prevent homelessness and helping those leaving prison to find accommodation. These include commissioned services from local authorities, health trusts and other government bodies, bringing additional income into Thirteen.

**Whilst we are financially strong and resilient to deal with challenges that constantly face us, we still know we need to remain flexible, with a clear focus on our role in helping address housing needs and improving what we do for the people in our areas.**

We work with partners, investing time to understand their drivers and priorities and where we can help deliver their ambitions. Local authorities are key partners, and our close relationships enable us to work together to develop new homes, regenerate communities and tackle common issues such as environmental problems and anti-social behaviour.

We're committed to becoming a much greener organisation, reducing our environmental impact with clear targets, and empowering our customers, colleagues and partners to take control of their impacts. To ensure we do this, we've set our ambition as an organisation to reach net zero on direct emissions by 2035, and this vital agenda has become one of our key priorities.

## Why we exist

We're a housing association that believes every relationship matters, choices can make a difference, and we can change things for the better.

## Our vision

We provide safe, quality homes and services to the best environmental standards that matter to our customers.

## Our mission

As a charitable housing association, Thirteen exists to provide housing and support services across the North East of England, Yorkshire and the Humber region. We are here for anyone needing a home and maybe a helping hand. We work to improve the fabric of places where our customers live.

Whilst we're financially strong and resilient to deal with challenges that constantly face us, we still know we need to remain flexible, with a clear focus on our role in helping address housing needs.



# Our values



## Our values

Thirteen is a housing association that believes every relationship matters. Choices can make a difference, and we can change things for the better. We're clear that our ambition, energy, and passion for making a difference should be what attracts people to work for Thirteen, and we want to attract colleagues who help others thrive.

Our people are the driving force behind everything we do. Without them, we couldn't meet our customer's needs and aspirations. That's why we've been working hard to create an environment where it's easy for our colleagues to be the best versions of themselves at work and deliver great services for our customers.

We want them to feel energised to deliver high performance, live the values, and reach the high standards we've set for ourselves, and we want our colleagues to feel proud, valued, and happy to work for Thirteen. We also want them to feel connected, informed, challenged, yet in control, so they can play their part in continuing to raise our impact and reach in the Tees Valley and beyond to ensure we continue to grow and succeed. We don't just want co-workers. We want everyone to be an ambassador. And we want everyone to feel this, from the moment they want to come to work for Thirteen to the moment they leave us and move on to new challenges.

### We expect colleagues to be:

<p><b>Considerate</b> (in their behaviour) – valuing diversity, engaging with stakeholders, making actions count and displaying our values</p>	<p><b>Smart</b> (in the way they do things) – focused, reliable, productive, and adaptable</p>	<p><b>Progressive</b> (they move things on) – high performing, commercially minded, work flexibly and collaboratively and resilient</p>
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Our value-based behaviours guide us towards what we need to do to make sure we're living the values every single day, so we feel:

**Proud** - A sense of achievement from our ability to positively impact our colleagues, customers, and region.

**Energised and in control** - Taking personal ownership for bringing our best self to work and the impact that has on the work we do.

**Connected and informed** - Taking a proactive approach to collaborating with others and understanding the wider context and goals we operate within.

**Challenged** - Contributing to the progression and improvement of our business.

**Valued** - Feeling recognised and appreciated for the effort we make and the impact we deliver to others.

# Our priorities

## Priority one

### Delivering great customer service

- Renting, repairing, and re-letting will be operationally excellent, and customers will experience clear and prompt responses to all service requests, both online, by phone and in person. We believe everyone should get the same quality of service, no matter where they come into contact with us - and we'll work with partners to create better customer outcomes.

## Priority two

### Delivering quality places to live and improving neighbourhoods

- We'll continue to maintain and invest in customers' homes and estates and provide a range of new homes and tenures to address the housing needs in our operating area. By being more efficient, we'll invest in neighbourhoods to improve the housing offer and the place and provide employment opportunities to make a major contribution to the regeneration of the communities we work in.

## Priority three

### Being Team Thirteen

- We will be an employer of choice, high performing and structured so that collaboration is second nature for everyone - board and committee members and colleagues. There will be smarter working with transferable skills, more in teams than individual roles and a supportive and motivating environment for our 1,500 skilled and talented employees.

## Priority four

### Net zero and reducing environmental impacts

- As a large business, employer and landlord, we are responsible for doing what we can to protect the local environment, improve our performance and reduce carbon emissions. Improving our environmental sustainability cuts across everything we do. We're taking action to reduce our carbon footprint and deliver on our commitments to be net zero on our direct carbon emissions by 2035 and all emissions by 2050.
- Our Take Control campaign will see the organisation achieve its goals of becoming much greener. To reduce our environmental impacts, we need to think of the bigger picture and develop our approach to understand the effects on our customers, homes and business. We'll be working across our business to understand what action needs to be taken to reduce emissions and improve environmental impacts.



## Our essentials

- Everything safe
- Our digital journey
- Have clear communication
- We understand customers' needs
- Simplify the way we work
- ESG and social value

## Services

Homes for rent, shared ownership, construction services, care and support, jobs and advice.

As well as our core services, we also deliver a myriad of projects and support to customers across our many different areas. We believe it's important to offer people the right extra help at the right point in life's journey - and we aim to do just that.

### A helping hand

- Preventing homelessness
- Apprenticeships
- Support to stay
- Domestic abuse support
- Resettling refugees
- Gaining employment, skills and training
- Money management
- Volunteering
- Domestic abuse refuges and support

### Independent living services

- For younger people
- Teenage parents and young families
- Older people
- Sheltered housing
- Leaving care
- Profound learning disabilities
- Supported living
- Extra care housing

## Our geographic focus

We operate across the North East, Yorkshire and the Humber region. Our regeneration and social value work is focused on the Tees Valley.

## Colleague promise

Be the best you can be at Thirteen, and we'll do our best to create an experience that helps you feel proud, valued, energised and challenged, as well as connected and informed.

# Package and benefits



## Salary

Circa **£77,175**  
(plus pay award pending)



## Annual leave

starting at **28 days** and rising to **31 days** after three years **plus eight bank holidays**



## Birthday

Birthday leave



## Health plan

Health cash plan cover with a range of options alongside retail discount benefits scheme

## Pension scheme



Thirteen DC pension scheme, administered by Standard Life, with flexible contribution rates starting from 2.5% employee contributions and 5.5% employer contributions, increasing up to 7% employee and 10% employer. If you're a current member of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS), you may be able to continue with the LGPS.

## Remote working



A hybrid working approach - we'll ask you to spend appropriate amounts of time at our offices in the Tees Valley but will provide equipment to support remote working.



## Car salary sacrifice

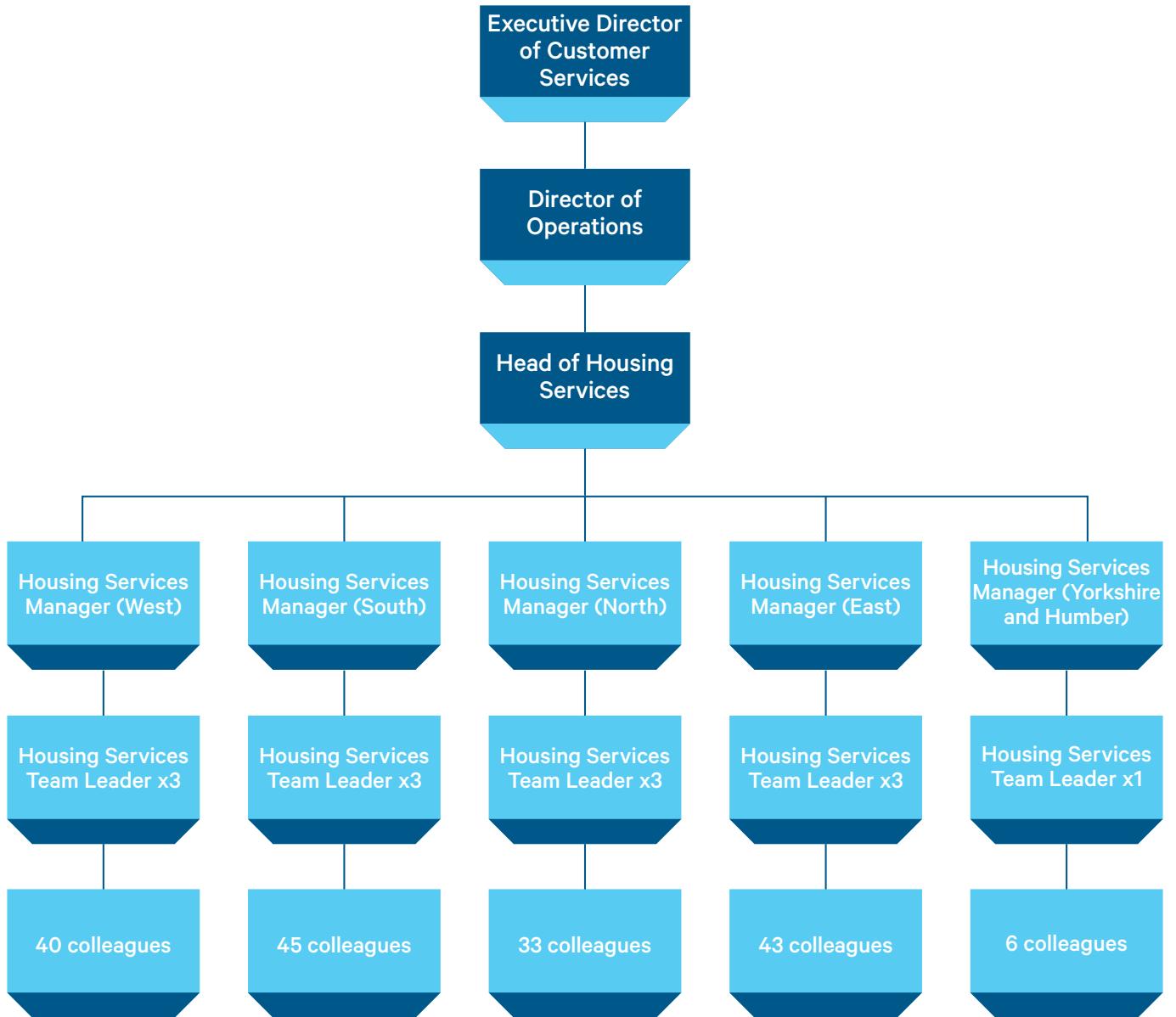
Salary sacrifice ULEV car scheme available to colleagues (upon completion of probation period).



## T'dar

T'dar gives you shopping and leisure discounts on a range of grocery, electronic, clothing and beauty products. An easy saver card offers discounts at around 40 high street stores. You can also access discounts at cinemas, hotels, accommodation and flights.

## Housing Services Directorate



# Role summary and key responsibilities

## Role summary

- The head of housing services will provide the operational lead and oversight in planning and effectively delivering housing and community safety services.
- They will also ensure our customers are highly satisfied, our assets are protected, and customers and colleagues are safe.

## Key responsibilities

- Contribute to leading and delivering on our customer service priorities in Thirteen's Strategic Plan.
- Develop and nurture a values-led, high-performing, commercially driven culture, ensuring colleagues bring the best version of themselves to work and deliver great services to customers.
- Oversee the delivery of Thirteen's housing services, ensuring they comply with statutory and regulatory requirements while meeting our performance targets and aspirations.
- Drive and lead the objectives for housing services, providing the highest quality standards and ensuring excellent customer experience while keeping colleagues and customers safe.
- Implement and embed a viable performance culture that sees the service recognised as top quartile for operational metrics.
- Develop and maintain relationships with key partners, stakeholders, and other organisations to promote Thirteen as the housing organisation of choice.
- Manage and support a cultural health and safety change, delivering policies and procedures that ensure customers' safety, including safeguarding.
- Ensure we achieve high standards of performance in all areas of responsibility (including but not limited to debt, re-lets, community safety, and satisfaction) in line with the achievement of the business plan and corporate objectives and ensure an excellent level of customer-focused services.
- Evaluate service demand requests and prioritise, recommending solutions.
- Manage the annual operational plan and budget to ensure a downward direction of travel around management costs.



- Work collaboratively across customer services and the wider business to deliver a great service. Ensure the voice of tenants, customers, leaseholders, and colleagues continues to be used actively in service delivery, design and evaluation.



# Person specification

## **We are looking for someone for this role who meets all or most of the following criteria:**

- A relevant degree or professional qualification, such as the Chartered Institute of Housing, or the willingness to work towards this. Equivalent demonstrable work experience and evidence of continuing professional development is also required.
- Proven experience in successful strategic leadership, direct management and development of senior professional colleagues within a housing context, and knowledge of developing and managing a customer-driven service. Relevant experience in leading a diverse team with a holistic approach to service delivery, managing people and change.
- A proven track record in performance management and the ability to drive improvements and efficiencies.
- Strong customer focus with the ability to drive improvements and efficiencies at a service and local level to enhance customer loyalty.
- A skilled influencer and negotiator able to communicate effectively with external stakeholders, customers, colleagues, and Board members, including report writing and presentations.
- Well-developed business management skills and understanding of delivering an excellent customer based service in a complex organisation with social and commercial activities.
- Excellent programme and project management skills.
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills.
- Ability to build, lead and inspire colleagues at all levels who are committed to working with others to achieve Thirteen's vision, values, and priorities.
- Ability to interpret information, carry out research, analyse complex data, make sound judgements, appraise performance, and manage risk.
- Ability to produce clear, concise, and well-written reports on complex issues.
- A confident, independent, energetic, and visible leader and effective decision-maker
- Capacity to deliver results to tight deadlines and under pressure.

# Equality, diversity and inclusion

At Thirteen, 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 are responsible for promoting inclusivity for everyone, particularly people from underrepresented or marginalised groups.

We aspire to have an inclusive working culture and embrace diversity across the Group.

If you have a disability, a learning difficulty such as dyslexia, a medical condition or an individual need which you believe may affect your performance at selection, we'll be happy to adjust our processes to enable you to perform at your best.



# Application process

Having had the chance to speak with Jim and read the above, if you'd like to make an application, we ask that you provide the following:

- A current and up-to-date CV.
- Contact details for you and suitable times that you would be available to chat.

If you have any questions or queries, please don't hesitate to contact Jim on **07388 642 631** or **Jim@dixonwalter.com**

# Recruitment timetable

Please see below the timeline and dates surrounding the application, interviews and feedback.

Closing Date:

**Tuesday, 26 March (midnight)**

First stage interviews (virtually on Microsoft teams with Thirteen and Dixon Walter):

**By 15 April**

Final stage interviews and assessments (in person at Thirteen's Hudson Quay Office):

**Week commencing 29 April**

Please note that dates are as agreed but subject to change.