

# thirteen

Thirteen

## Case study

Directors of Finance



# About the client

- Thirteen is the largest landlord in the North East, owning and managing almost 34,000 homes from an area spanning North Tyneside to York, with the majority in the Tees Valley area.
- Its 1,500 colleagues provide homes and services for more than 70,000 customers, offering a vast range of properties for rent and sale, including affordable options to get onto the property ladder.
- By 2022, Thirteen has plans to build at least 2,000 new homes and invest over £100m to improve its current properties.
- It also offers a range of housing support services including money advice, supported housing, adaptations to homes and help to boost skills, training and employment opportunities.





# Background

- Until July 2017, Thirteen was the Thirteen Group, made up of a parent company, four individual landlords and a care and support arm, which retained their own identities until they were consolidated to become one landlord as Thirteen.
- Thirteen's Executive Director of Resources, a role that includes responsibility for ICT, people and governance, is one of four leadership team members tasked with leading cultural change and introducing commercial thinking at Thirteen.
- In revisiting the operating model of the resources directorate during the restructure, she identified an opportunity to improve service delivery by splitting finance between transactions and planning and treasury and investment.
- Two finance director roles were created in the new structure, each with specific strengths that would complement each other and lead to faster, more collaborative, high performing and efficient service delivery.





## The challenge

- Funding caps in the social housing sector have proved challenging for organisations like Thirteen.
- To continue delivering great customer service while growing amid an uncertain environment, Thirteen requires people with commercial skills who can lead cultural change, while bringing their colleagues along on the journey.
- Although experience of working in the housing sector wasn't compulsory, getting the culture fit right was essential.
- Ideal candidates had to demonstrate the ability to drive the right behaviours in their teams and ultimately improve delivery of financial services.





# Nigel Wright Solution

- Two experienced consultants were selected to deliver assignments within the expected timeframes – an associate director and managing consultant with a combined 21 years' experience recruiting finance positions for third sector organisations in the North East.
- They met with Thirteen's Executive Director of Resources and took the time to understand the objectives of this appointment; the skills required and the personal qualities needed to fit into Thirteen's culture, while offering their thoughts around the growth of the business.
- They conducted a full search and assessment of the North East and wider UK housing sector, as well as within other relevant organisations such as those with large asset bases and treasury functions.
- They provided regular communication and ensured openness and transparency by giving clear and pertinent updates to Thirteen, as well as the candidates, throughout the process.
- Searches were supported with tailored candidate packs and branded advertising campaigns, which helped educate the market outside the region about opportunities at Thirteen, as well as its transformation and culture.
- The consultants delivered a long list of individuals, including a written assessment of who could be the best fit for each role.
- Further conversations took place with Thirteen, during which a shortlist of candidates that would be brought into the interview process was collectively agreed.





## The outcome

- Shortlists were achieved three weeks after the initial briefing and two successful appointments were made — one from the housing sector and one with a background in investment banking.
- The recruitment was completed within six weeks, which included Thirteen's internal interview and assessment process.





## Client testimonial



Nigel Wright's consultants understood what I was looking for, not just in terms the skills, but also personality and culture fit. Translating that understanding into an effective national search, they matched my expectations by delivering the right candidates for the jobs.

"They showed expertise by sharing market insight which tested my thinking on certain aspects of the assignment. Significantly they recognised that none of us has time to waste these days and, as promised, delivered two strong shortlists which made our final decision difficult.

"Communication wasn't too much or too little. Weekly updates were complemented with additional calls, only when something needed confirming. Messages were always concise and clear. The result? We appointed two great people."

**Heather Ashton, Executive Director of Resources at Thirteen**

