



torus

ADJUSTING TO OUR **NEW NORMAL**

Annual Report
2021 – 2022



Growing Stronger Communities

Welcome

What a year we have just had; life has changed so much since COVID-19, and we are now learning to live with a 'new normal'.

At Torus, the pandemic meant it was impossible for us to be as close to our communities as we wanted to be. We had to reduce our presence at neighbourhood level to essential services only – replacing human contact with phone calls and emails to keep people safe. This restriction in our ability to visit people in their homes, meant that we did not always identify repairs in a timely way during that period.

I am proud of how our teams are working harder than ever before to support communities through the worst challenges in living memory, but we do recognise that the number of repairs rose significantly, and our customers are telling us that they are less satisfied with the services we provide. I am committed to change this and improve things. Recently, we carried out a two-week pilot in St Helens, visiting almost 750 homes to talk about any issues and to check homes are in a good state of repair.

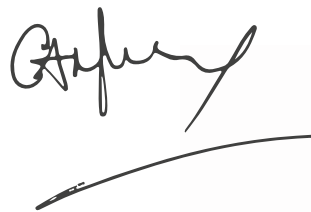
In January 2022, we invested in resource and time to put things right. The areas of repairs, complaints and how we answered calls from Torus Customer Hub were three areas of focus. Also, in this year we were proud that our colleagues in Torus Foundation, Housing and our contractor, HMS, delivered 31 Impact Days – this is where we arrive in a neighbourhood to speak to customers and act to improve what is needed in a neighbourhood in one day. Plenty of skips were filled and communal green spaces improved.

Our commitment to improve things continues, as we embed a simpler and more effective complaints handling process and we are now learning from complaints through a formal process of sharing best practice and acting to improve things. The Social Housing White Paper asks housing associations to improve services with customers and to get better at communicating with them. We wholeheartedly support the requirements and we have reviewed where we have gaps, so this year you will hear about how customers will have a louder voice and play an even bigger part in the quality of services we provide.

Each of these initiatives, and the many others you will read about in this report, gives us a chance to learn and to adapt to the challenges of today and tomorrow. Fundamentally, they also help us to make sure we listen and act in a way that always puts tenants and residents first.

I believe the 'new normal' for Torus is all about connecting with customers, getting things right first time, being out in communities more than ever and, fundamentally, listening and responding to what matters to you most. At a time when cost-of-living challenges are making life difficult for many, this close connection means we can tailor support quickly to make sure those who need it most get the help they need.

We are committed to making this happen, ensuring every Torus service and every contact reflects our priority to be truly Together with Tenants.



Catherine Murray-Howard
Chief Operating Officer



YOUR LANDLORD, YOUR SAY

Our tenants are at the heart of everything we do. Active tenant engagement makes a positive difference by helping to shape our service delivery.

"You can improve things when they go wrong and being a Tenant Inspector lets me help to put things right."

Barbara, Tenant Inspector

"Torus provided me with the opportunity and training to influence people with real power and impact within the housing sector."

Ray, Landlord Operations Committee (LOC)

"I find that being on the Community Investment Fund (CIF) panel allows me to see what other tenants experience when they apply for funding. I also see the trust they have in Torus to keep them involved with their communities."

Francis, Community Investment Fund

"If you really want to know what Torus does for you as a tenant, get involved with Tenant Voice. Being a member of LOC has afforded me the opportunity to witness first-hand the results driven by involved tenants. Also, through training and attending the meetings, I have a greater understanding of Torus' contribution to the welfare and lives of tenants and families."

James, Landlord Operations Committee (LOC)

"Becoming an involved tenant was the best move of my life. Housing Associations are expanding and need as many people as possible to get involved and help."

Angela, Scrutiny Panel Member

Find out more about how tenants have influenced our decisions on page 6.



USE YOUR TENANT VOICE

To find out more about how you can get involved and have your say, contact our Tenant Voice team on **0800 678 1894**, email tenantvoice@torus.co.uk or visit my.torus.co.uk

Involved tenants can also apply to become shareholding members of Torus after 12 months, please see page 63.

More of what matters to you



Our tenants thoroughly review the annual report, so it is shaped by the things that matter most to you. Tell us what you think. We are always looking for ways to improve.

So, if you have any suggestions, email annualreport@torus.co.uk

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TOGETHER WITH TENANTS

TENANT VOICE

In 2019, Torus became an early adopter of the 'Together with Tenants' Charter, a sector-wide initiative from the National Housing Federation (NHF), the voice of housing associations in England, which focused on strengthening the relationship between residents and housing providers to promote more valuable engagement.

The charter focuses on health and safety and customer involvement in shaping services, with the goal of improving tenant satisfaction. The charter was drawn up in consultation with social housing customers, including those from Torus.

Our vision is always to work 'Together with Tenants.' We strive to develop open relationships with our customers and get you involved in shaping the services we provide. By listening and collaborating, we gain a clearer understanding of your needs and views.

In November 2020, the Government published a White Paper called 'The Charter for Social Housing Residents', which outlined their plans for social housing in England. The White Paper underpins the National Housing Federation's 'Together with Tenants' Charter.

Torus and other Housing associations that adopt the Charter commit to:

- **Relationships** – treating residents with respect in all interactions. Relationships between residents and housing associations will be based on openness, honesty, and transparency.
- **Communication** – providing residents with clear, accessible, and timely information on the issues that matter to them, including how the organisation is working to address problems.
- **Voice and influence** – seeking out and properly analysing the views of residents and using the information to inform decisions.
- **Accountability** – working in partnership with residents so they can independently scrutinise issues affecting the quality of their homes and services.
- **Quality** – providing good quality, well maintained, safe and well managed homes.
- **When things go wrong** – providing simple and accessible routes for raising issues, making complaints, getting timely advice, and seeking redress.



WANT TO HAVE YOUR SAY?

To find out more about getting involved and giving your views contact the friendly Tenant Voice Team on **0800 678 1894**, email tenantvoice@torus.co.uk or visit www.torus.co.uk/getinvolved

Consulting tenants

Between July and December 2021, Torus consulted involved tenants about how we should adopt the Charter commitments. **This is what you told us:**

What works well?

Voice and Influence

"There are lots of opportunities for all tenants to be involved."

"We are kept well informed through policy reviews."

"I feel confident in holding Torus to account and that my opinions are listened to, I find staff are aware of personal circumstances and do their best to help. My point of view is considered."

"Torus are one of the better landlords and the Tenant Voice team offer tenants a wide range of options to get involved and have their say."

"I have received a laptop from Torus and quality digital training. The ongoing support is excellent, and I now find it much easier to attend online meetings which I enjoy very much, I'm now far more confident in raising issues with Torus."

Communication

"The websites and social media forums used by Torus are well-run and provide access to a wide range of information - including the tenant's online portal."

"Issues with repairs were dealt with in a professional manner, staff were exceptional and kept me fully informed on progress throughout."

Relationships

"Torus staff are broadly helpful and professional."

"Torus' response to Covid-19 was exceptional, residents received wellbeing phone calls and a range of support. Torus did more than other landlords to support vulnerable, isolated, and elderly residents."

When things go wrong

"Torus promote the complaints process and Housing Ombudsman service well."

"You can always get to speak to a manager or named officer if you need help."

Quality

"My home is well maintained by Torus and I accept there are some repairs that I as a tenant am responsible for. In general terms, the quality is excellent."

"Improvements, especially kitchens and bathrooms, have been carried out to a high standard."

Accountability


"The annual report highlights how tenants can contact Torus and hold them to account. I feel confident in holding Torus to account and that my opinions are listened to. I find if staff are aware of your personal circumstances they do their best to help and listen to my point of view"

Voice and Influence

You said	We did/we are doing
<p><i>“Increase Diversity & Inclusion, ensuring involved customers are representative of Torus customers”</i></p> <p><i>“More young people, including young families, need to be encouraged to get involved and have their say”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up a new Tenant Diversity & Inclusion panel • Introduced new ways to get involved and have your voice heard, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Greener Initiatives Panel • A Development Panel • Tenant Voice roadshows in community venues – libraries, FireFit Youth and Community Hub, community venues and impact days
<p><i>“Take time to listen to customers to build a strong relationship”</i></p> <p><i>“Build on the positive online engagement and use of technology”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now offering a range of ways for customers to get involved and have their voice heard • Tenants are now provided with support, training, and equipment to enable them to get involved • Customer Satisfaction surveys are now carried out to monitor satisfaction with services • Torus continues to offer digital equipment and training to involved tenants



Communication

You said	We did/we are doing
<p><i>“Improve communication with tenants”</i></p> <p><i>“Improve communication between Torus teams”</i></p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with customers to develop new Torus Service Standards, with clear timescales for staff to respond to customer queries • Delivered a focus group with tenants to discuss how we can improve communication • Worked on a new single website for all Torus tenants, developed in consultation with involved customers and launched in September 2022 • Torus receptions have reopened post Covid-19 in February 2022 to allow more face-to-face contact • Delivering impact days in communities – giving customers the opportunities to speak to Torus staff face-to-face to discuss issues • Conducted a Scrutiny Panel review of communications, recommendations then made to develop Customer Service Standards • Increased opportunities for joint working and delivered Customer First training sessions to Torus staff
<p><i>“Present complex information in a way that is easier for tenants to understand”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torus staff are encouraged to communicate using plain English and make reasonable adjustments to respond to individual requests • Tenants to be involved in evaluating the new website, which will feature the ‘ReachDeck’ accessibility panel
<p><i>“Ensure there are a range of ways to contact Torus which includes digital and face-to-face”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers can contact Torus by phone, email, online and now face to face at customer receptions, which re-opened following Covid-19 in February 2022 • Neighbourhood Teams regularly visit estates, and a programme of impact days was launched across all Torus areas

Relationship

You said	We did/we are doing
<p><i>“Ensure all tenants including those with a disability are able to hold Torus to account”</i></p> <p><i>“Ensure documents providing information on Torus performance are easy to read and less corporate and avoid jargon”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced a wider range of ways for tenants to get involved, including a new diversity panel • A Housing Diversity Network assessment has taken place to identify and gaps and areas for improvement including staff training • Tenants are now involved in reviewing and approving the Annual Report, policies, and a range of customer communications

When things go wrong

You said	We did/we are doing
<p><i>“Improve complaint handling”</i></p> <p><i>“Support tenants who may find it difficult to raise their complaint”</i></p> <p><i>“Ensure customers know how to complain”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaint Handling procedure has been reviewed • Customer satisfaction survey has been introduced • Training to be conducted for all Complaint Managers • Complaint letter now explains how customers can escalate their complaint • New Landlord Complaints Team introduced in January 2022, to support complaints management processes and improve the speed and the way in which we deal with customers • New Customer Complaints Panel introduced to improve Torus’ response to complaints and improve the mistakes learning cycle • Complaints procedure has been updated to ensure it’s accessible and compliant with the Housing Ombudsman’s Complaint Handling Code • Customers now more clearly made aware of their right to contact the Ombudsman at any stage in the complaints process • Customers now involved in reviewing the complaints page on the website • Information on how to make a complaint is now available on the website and promoted via an eNewsletter and social media. Information is also on display in supported living schemes and over the phone from the Torus Customer Hub



Quality

You said	We did/we are doing
<p><i>“Ensure customer queries get to the right person to respond”</i></p> <p><i>“Ensure customers moving into new build properties receive a good standard of service and issues are resolved”</i></p> <p><i>“Ensure properties are clean and safe when new tenants move in”</i></p> <p><i>“Ensure green spaces are well maintained”</i></p> <p><i>“Communal areas need to be clean and well maintained”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering enhanced training for the Torus Customer Hub • Processes are now in place to request call-backs from the relevant team • Torus Developments and Customer Care Managers now assist tenants moving into new properties to ensure any issues are quickly resolved • Torus has an agreed standard when letting properties. Tenant Inspectors will now review how we are meeting this standard • Torus has Service Standards for grounds maintenance. Tenant Inspectors will now review how we are meeting this standard • Torus has service standards for communal areas. Tenant inspectors will now review how we are meeting this standard

Accountability

You said	We did/we are doing
<p><i>“Ensure all tenants, including those with a disability, are able to hold Torus to account”</i></p> <p><i>“Ensure documents providing information on Torus performance are easy to read and less corporate and avoid jargon”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduced a wider range of ways for tenants to get involved, including a new diversity panel • A Housing Diversity Network assessment has taken place to identify any gaps and areas for improvement, including staff training • Tenants are now involved in reviewing and approving the Annual Report, policies, and a range of customer communications

“You said, we did” is an initiative we value immensely. It shows our commitment to putting tenants at the heart of everything we do and provides tangible impacts of your feedback driving change.



TENANT VOICE

HIGHLIGHTS 2021/22

- ✓ **6 Tenant Inspections** completed, with **2 new Tenant Inspectors recruited**, looking at Complaints, Looking After Your Home, Tenancy Management, Repairs Reporting, Customer Access and Tenant Voice
- ✓ **6 Policy review consultations** covering Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse, Empty Homes (Void) Policy, Customer Access Strategy, Electrical Safety Policy, Damp and Mould Policy
- ✓ Torus Talk Facebook group engagement continued, membership **increased to 556** members (a **3%** increase from the previous year), with **112 Posts, 457 Comments** and **615 Reactions**
- ✓ 55 tenants have engaged in formal groups, giving **443 volunteer hours**
- ✓ **13 tenants** participated in awarding **£139,500 in grant funding** from the Community Investment Fund
- ✓ Introduced **2 new customer panels** for **Diversity & Inclusion** and **Repairs**, with more planned to launch next year
- ✓ **5 new Scrutiny Panel members** recruited.
- ✓ **4 Scrutiny activities** completed looking at:
 - Dissatisfaction with repairs communications
 - Complaint Handling Code self-assessment
 - Together with Tenants Charter self-assessment
 - Customer Annual Report 2021/22



NEW TORUS CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

Launched in July 2022, following extensive consultation with tenants, our new customer service standards make clear the level and speed of service you can expect.

The standards are broken down into themes, based on what matters most to our residents: customer service, responsiveness and accessible information, neighbourhoods, letting homes, safety, rent, tackling anti-social behaviour, complaints and getting involved.

The journey to this new set of standards ran from December 2021– March 2022:



10 tenants on the Scrutiny Panel took part in a review of Torus' existing service standards and compared them with the offers from other landlords (December 2021)



Landlord Operations Committee (LOC) discussed and provided feedback on proposed service standards (January 2022)

In March 2022, a review of the draft Service Standards took place in consultation with customers. This involved:

- 50 involved customers
- 556 Torus Talk members
- 24,000 tenants invited to give views in the monthly tenants eNewsletter
- All residents living in our 35 supported living schemes invited to give views in the monthly tenants printed newsletter
- Consultation shared on Torus Facebook and Twitter feeds

The new Service Standards can be viewed here: my.torus.co.uk/service-standards

Going forward, our performance as a landlord will be monitored against these standards with the results being shared in customer updates and our annual report. Check out page 27 of this report for our new Customer Experience Principles.

“

We want to ensure that our customers receive the best service possible.

We want to make sure it is clear to customers what they should expect from us and remind all Torus colleagues what is expected of them and the standards they will be held to.

Paul Warburton,
Director of Housing

”





www.my.torus.co.uk

LAUNCHING A NEW SINGLE TORUS CUSTOMER WEBSITE

The new single customer website was launched in September 2022, following development in partnership with customers throughout 2021/22.



146 tenants consulted and provided feedback on the design, workability, and accessibility



17 tenants engaged in evaluating the new site and making suggestions for improvement

Thanks to members of the Diversity & Inclusion panel, Torus invested in the 'ReachDeck' accessibility toolbar, chosen by customers from a range of options. This gives website visitors the best possible experience and reduces barriers between content and our audiences. The 'ReachDeck' feature adds speech, reading, and translation to our website, facilitating access for people with:

- Dyslexia
- Low Literacy
- English as a Second Language
- Mild visual impairments

THE LANDLORD OPERATIONS COMMITTEE (LOC)

LOC is composed of seven tenants who work Torus Group Board members and local authority representatives. Their primary responsibility is to oversee the delivery of all landlord services and to ensure that Torus maintains ongoing and effective engagement with tenants through the Tenant Voice Strategy. On a quarterly basis they scrutinise a range of Key Performance Indicators linked to Torus' Corporate Plan.





Consultation & Engagement Event	Tenants participating	Aims & Objectives	Outcomes
Diversity and Inclusion Group	9	To discuss the framework, terms of reference, roles and timeframes for the Diversity and Inclusion group	Tenants set the priorities and agreed the terms of reference for the new Tenant Diversity and Inclusion group
Community Investment Fund meetings x 3	23	To evaluate the grants process	Tenants provided feedback on current Community Investment Fund processes. This has been processed and areas for improvement identified
Repair & Maintenance panel	5	To provide a repairs service update, performance, and tenant satisfaction information	Tenants scrutinised repairs performance, challenged staff on tenant satisfaction and received information on the actions in place to improve performance
Torus new website design	146	To consult and provide comment on the proposed new website	Tenant feedback used to inform the development of the new website
Housing White Paper tenant satisfaction measures and consumer standards	10	To gather tenant feedback on the current tenant satisfaction measures and consumer standards to report to the regulator	Torus tenants contributed to consultation on the proposed Tenant Satisfaction Measures, raising concerns about gaps in the proposed measures being considered by the regulator
Customer Access consultation	24	To get feedback on the draft Customer Access strategy	Tenants provided feedback on the Customer Access Strategy to ensure it is accessible, clear, and informative. This was incorporated before publication

Consultation & Engagement Event	Tenants participating	Aims & Objectives	Outcomes
TPAS (Tenants Participation Advisory Service) training	7	To deliver Equality & Diversity training for tenants	Tenants attended training with TPAS to improve their ability to hold Torus to account on Equality and Diversity issues
Mystery Shopping	17	To map the customer experience of reporting a repair with Torus and make recommendations for improvements	Tenants provided feedback on the customer journey and conducted a review of processes
Electrical Safety Policy review	6	To allow tenants to review the draft policy	Tenants were consulted on the draft policy and provided feedback. These were incorporated into the definitive version put forward for approval by LOC
Damp & Mould Policy review	6	To allow tenants to review the draft policy	Tenants were consulted on the draft policy and provided feedback. Input incorporated into the final version put forward for approval by LOC
Torus Customer Service Standards	5	To consult tenants and update service standards for each service area	Tenants were consulted on the draft standards and provided feedback. Input incorporated into the final version put forward for approval by LOC
Tenant Training	20	To provide bespoke training for tenants, developing their capability to become further involved	Tenants attended training with TPAS to increase their knowledge, awareness, and ability to hold Torus to account
Social Housing Quality Resident Panel	7	To gather expressions of interest from residents who wanted to join the Government's National Housing Panel	Tenants invited to apply to join the Social Housing Quality Residents Panel



Consultation & Engagement Event	Tenants participating	Aims & Objectives	Outcomes
Safeguarding	8	To promote a discussion amongst Tenants and gather feedback on Torus' approach	Tenants provided feedback and agreed good practice principles which will be integrated into staff training across the Group
Scrutiny	10	To review 2021/22 achievements and develop a forward plan for 2022/23	Tenants received feedback on how their scrutiny has changed services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customer Service standards developed • Increased resources in the central Complaints Team • New processes in place in improve learning from Complaints • Introduction of a Tenant Complaints Panel
Community Investment Fund Policy and Budget Review	6	To review changes to the CIF budget, policy and process	Tenants approved amendments to the CIF criteria and process
Tenant Inspectors	6	To run a tenant-led inspection of lettable void properties in relation to the Torus Empty Homes Standard	Assets Team have reviewed the feedback and are developing an action plan to drive service improvements
Tenant Voice Satisfaction survey - Involved tenants	32	To gather feedback from involved tenants on their experience of Tenant Voice opportunities	Feedback will be used to inform the revised Tenant Voice Strategy
Tenant Voice Satisfaction survey – Torus Talk	6	To gather feedback from Torus Talk members on their experience of Tenant Voice opportunities	Feedback will be used to improve Torus Talk and improve opportunities for engagement





TOGETHER WITH TENANTS CELEBRATING TENANT VOICE

To mark the easing of Covid-19 restrictions in October 2021, 30 involved tenant volunteers came together with Torus teams, managers, and Liverpool FC legend Robbie Fowler to celebrate tenant engagement and Tenant Voice. The event was an opportunity to update involved customers on Torus, the delivery of future projects and gather feedback.

Involved customers spent time with other tenants and found out more about the diverse ways tenants are participating across Torus Group. They met Torus staff to learn more about the services they deliver, how they were impacted by Covid-19 and what is being done to recover. Attendees were also encouraged to give their views on the recovery and what can be done to enhance services.

The event took place at Melwood, Liverpool Football Club's former training ground. Torus took ownership of Melwood in August 2019, and we now have ambitious plans to develop a mixed-use housing scheme, delivering affordable, sustainable, multi-generational living and enduring community connections.

“

I just wanted to say a big thank you for a fantastic afternoon which I really enjoyed. I had the opportunity to get all the information needed and appreciate what Torus does for tenants.

John, Tenant Inspector, Liverpool

I have had a brilliant day, learning so much and putting names to faces. Thanks so much.

Barbara, Tenant Inspector, Warrington

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www.torus.co.uk/tenant-voice-at-melwood

Our offer to you

Find out how we are recovering from the pandemic, information on our services and explore how we are performing more generally across key areas:

1
Keeping you safe

2
Customer service and getting it right

3
Supporting independence and wellbeing

4
Your community and neighbourhood

5
Repairs and investing in homes

6
Green homes and sustainable neighbourhoods

7
Building new homes

KEY HIGHLIGHTS 2021/22

Customer Hub

 **72%**
tenant satisfaction with our services

 **386,180**
calls handled by the customer hub

Home Improvements

 **£15.1m**
spend on components including
new kitchens & bathrooms

 **£8.9m**
invested into planned maintenance

 **£13.9m**
invested in modernising existing homes

Health and Safety

 **98%**
health & safety assessments complete


 **100%**
of service and remedial works completed

Social Impact

 **1,004**
individuals supported into work

 **£4.2m**
unlocked in grants and benefits

New Developments

 **346**
new homes built

 **877**
new homes started on site

Landmark Moments

→ Launched our Corporate Plan for 2021 to 2026 – “A New Day”. Stepping up support to tenants and residents, our region, and our people at a time of unprecedented socio-economic challenge

→ Completed and opened the ground-breaking Champions Court Scheme in St Helens, providing long-term pathways out of homelessness

→ Created and published Torus’ First Environmental and Sustainability Strategy, setting-out the Group approach to carbon net zero

→ Shortlisted for two TPAS awards, the “Outstanding Tenant Engagement Award” and “Excellence in Tenant Communication Award,” showing Torus’ commitment to Tenant Voices

→ Rolled out safeguarding training to 1,700 staff, creating safer communities and a safer workplace environment

→ Signed up to the Building a Safer Future (BSF) Charter, demonstrating our commitment to embedding Safety Plus standards across communities

→ Signed up to the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance, allowing Torus to work towards DAHA accreditation

Click here
to read our
Corporate Plan
www.torusnewday.co.uk



Keeping you safe

Safety underpins everything we do to grow stronger communities. There is nothing more important than safety and security – this means every home must be as safe as it can be.

Our approach to safety covers everything from essential safety checks (gas, electricity, fire, water, asbestos) to tackling anti-social behaviour (see page 43) and supporting people to live a life from neglect and abuse.

Your home, your safety

Every tenant and resident has the right to a decent and safe home. Working together we all have a responsibility to keep everyone safe.

Each year, we must conduct mandatory safety checks in your home. These regular checks and surveys are like MOTs for your home and alert us to any potential problems that might arise. These checks are not optional.



OUR SAFETY PERFORMANCE IN 2021/22



38,582
gas safety checks completed



99.9%
on target



1,108
fire risk assessments completed



100%
on target



5,049
electrical tests completed



94%
on target



83%
of our domestic lifts have had
their LOLER inspection completed



5,526
legionella inspections completed



100%
on target



5,605
asbestos surveys completed



100%
of surveys due for our
non-domestic properties
were completed

TACKLING ACCESS FOR GAS SAFETY CHECKS

Every year, Torus is legally required to complete a gas safety check in every home to comply with the Gas Safety (installation and use) regulations 1998 as amended.

A gas safety check and service can identify risks and actions we need to take to ensure your gas installation remains safe to use.

Tenants who don't allow us to complete their annual gas safety checks are putting their tenancy, families and neighbours' health and safety at risk.

A substantial amount is spent on an annual basis by Torus to not only complete the gas safety check and service, but also on the costs associated with gaining access to properties in which the tenant refuses to engage with Torus.

When all reasonable avenues have been explored and the customer has not engaged and is refusing access, Torus will look to escalate via legal injunction or Notice to Seek Possession, working with local councils under the Environmental Act, Section 79.

Failure to allow access is a breach of the tenancy agreement, legal action can result in tenants incurring court costs in excess of £1,000, losing their home or even going to prison.

To achieve access to properties, we:

- **Work in partnership with HMS**, in the evening and weekend to door knock on no access properties.
- **Cold call at properties that are overdue** or with two missed appointments – trying at different times.
- **Identify overdue safety checks** when repairs are booked by customers to gain access.
- **Customer Liaison Officers** contact customers to engage and arrange access.
- **Customer Hub call customers** who have two or more no access or overdue appointments to discuss the importance of the checks and make the booking.
- **Ensure our customers are aware** of the importance of allowing access to keep safe, via our communications channels.
- **Offer customer prize draw** for allowing access first time, where customers can win a £100 Love2Shop voucher.





HIGH RISE AND ‘SAFETY PLUS’

Since the tragic events of Grenfell Tower in June 2017, the Government has been pushing ahead with improved building safety standards, particularly for tall buildings (buildings that are at least 18 metres high or have at least seven storeys and have at least two residential homes).

Our Safety Plus commitment looks to go beyond the minimum legal and statutory requirements – being proactive, investigating homes to see what we can do to make them even safer, demonstrating our desire to meet higher safety standards, to keep improving and enhancing our homes and communities.

In November 2021, Torus signed up to the Building a Safer Future Charter, which promotes a positive safety culture and behaviour change in the safety of the built environment. It is about putting people’s safety first in how we plan, design, build and maintain the buildings we live and work in.



Becoming a Charter Registered Signatory confirms our commitment to five pledges:

- ✓ **Collaborate** to spearhead culture change and be the voice of building safety across our sector.
- ✓ **Be transparent** in the interests of safety, sharing information with residents, clients, contractors, and statutory bodies in a useful manner in the design, construction, and occupation phases of the process.
- ✓ **Make safety a key factor** of choice in who we work with, ensuring that building safety is placed at the centre of decisions without compromising quality or value for money.
- ✓ **Ensure that** the voices and safety of residents, visitors and employees are central in our decision-making process.
- ✓ **Set out** and communicate clear responsibilities within our organisation and with our partners, ensuring everyone with a stake in the building during design, construction and occupation understands their role and has the time and resources they need to achieve and maintain building safety.

Becoming a Registered Signatory is an important first step towards a cultural change in our approach to building safety. We will work to ensure we embed the principles of the Charter across our activities.



KEEPING OUR HIGH-RISE BUILDINGS SAFE

We are keen to engage customers living in these blocks on safety matters, looking at:

- **Fire safety** – Fire and Rescue home visits
- **The Building Safety Bill** and what it means for them as a tenant
- **What Torus is doing** to help keep the tenants safe in their home
- **PEEPs** (Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans)
- **Opportunities for tenants** to get involved and have your say, via the development of a new High Rise Building Safety panel

So far we have:

- ✓ **Shared building safety information** with 126 residents in the three blocks
- ✓ **Held 3 consultation events** with customers
- ✓ **Welcomed 18 customers** to our engagement events

We have also been proactively exploring what can be done to make the blocks even more safe:

- ✓ Conducting stock Condition/structural surveys - exploring the fabric of the building
- ✓ Conducting External Wall System surveys
- ✓ Improving fire safety – installing improved illuminated ‘wayfinding’ signage
- ✓ Enhancing detailed Fire Safety Risk Assessments (Type 4)



KEEPING CUSTOMERS SAFE – SAFEGUARDING AND DOMESTIC ABUSE

Torus delivers specialist support services to customers including domestic abuse, older people's services and tenancy sustainment. We have dedicated safeguarding resources and strategies in place to ensure we play our role in identifying and responding to abuse and neglect.

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding tenants, residents and colleagues means playing our role to enable people to live a safe life, free from abuse and neglect.

In 2021, Torus undertook a full safeguarding peer review with an Independent Safeguarding Consultant, to assess strengths and identifying areas for improvement in safeguarding children, young people, and adults at risk.

In response to this review, in July 2021, we launched a three-year Strategy that sets out how we will work with partners and communities to promote wellbeing and keep people safe, focusing on early intervention, prevention and continuous improvement.

To support this refreshed approach, Torus has relaunched an internal Safeguarding Operational Group and subgroups, new safeguarding policies and procedures and appointed a dedicated Safeguarding Lead. They will champion a proactive Safeguarding culture, including domestic abuse, across Torus.

We are also supporting our 1,400 colleagues and Board members to understand the critical part they play in keeping people safe, with

tailored training so no matter their role, they understand what safeguarding is, how it can affect colleagues and customers and the critical part they play in keeping people safe.

**Cath Murray-Howard,
Chief Operating Officer, said:**

“

Torus' approach to safeguarding our tenants really does change lives. A recent example is of a fiercely independent and private 78-year-old lady, who was being financially abused by a 'friend' who unwantedly moved into her home to use drugs and entertain friends, but despite this she was adamant she did not need help, even though she was missing rent payments and was struggling to feed herself.

Through the determination of the Neighbourhood Officer, the tenant finally engaged with us, and we were able to remove the unwanted visitor, maximise her income by making sure she was accessing all benefits she was entitled to and make sure she has the on-going support from Torus.”

The tenant commented:


I can't thank everybody enough for what they have done to help me. Not only do I now feel safe and happy, I know that I will get the help and support I need.

”

www.torus.co.uk/play-their-role
www.torus.co.uk/safeguarding




IN 2021/22

 **92%**
of Housing and Foundation staff
received training

 **77%**
of HMS staff received training

 **all new staff**
A rolling safeguarding training
programme was put in place
until September 2022

ABC 194
ABC respond procedure referrals

 **108**
safeguarding referrals were made
(adults and children combined)

**The ABC procedure is a reporting mechanism which enables HMS, Assets, and contractors to report any concerns about what they may witness when visiting our homes and encountering our tenants and their children.*

IMPROVING OUR RESPONSE TO DOMESTIC ABUSE

Following a delay due to the pandemic, in January 2022, we resumed our journey to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation. This will strengthen the Group's response to domestic abuse.

Like many organisations, Torus experienced an increase in reports of domestic abuse and violence during the lockdowns. Throughout the pandemic, we were committed to ensuring our customers felt supported, knew they were not alone and that they need not suffer in silence. Help is always available, and we are here to show victims how to access it.

By signing up with DAHA we aim to improve our response to domestic abuse through the introduction and adoption of an established set of standards and an accreditation process.

Accreditation means that Torus will offer a non-judgemental, safe environment where survivors feel listened to and treated as individuals. We will also work hard to ensure that the voices of survivors are shared, offering hope and help to others.

The journey of accreditation will take until Summer 2023.

www.torus.co.uk/daha



SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

St Helens Borough Council commission Torus to run its Domestic Abuse Support Service, Safe2Speak, which supports victims of domestic abuse in the St Helens area, not just Torus tenants. The service remained fully operational through the Covid-19 crisis and Independent Domestic Violence Advisors (IDVAs) and Domestic Abuse (DA) Outreach Workers offered support to residents of St Helens who are victims of domestic abuse, whatever their situation.

Safe2Speak provides support, advice, and emergency accommodation for those needing to flee. The service employs a qualified and experienced team to provide non-judgemental emotional, practical and safety support for male and female victims of domestic abuse. This includes guidance through the Criminal Justice and Civil Court systems.

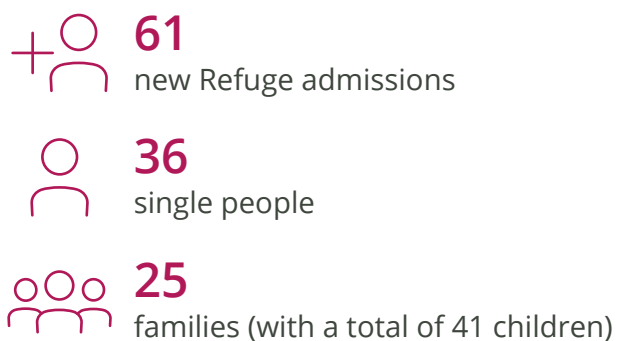
Helping GPs support victims of abuse

In March 2022, Safe2Speak, extended its support to GP surgeries thanks to extra funding from the Ministry of Justice, administered by St Helens Council's Domestic Abuse Partnership Board.

The new Primary Care IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Adviser) will assist those seeking support from their GP or Primary Care practitioner with referrals to local specialist services. They will also offer advice regarding creating safety plans, increasing home security, exploring the option of refuge accommodation, and helping clients to make an informed choice about the criminal justice process.

www.torus.co.uk/idva-gp-support

IN 2021/22 THE SERVICES DEALT WITH:



For links to national and local and domestic abuse support, visit my.torus.co.uk/domestic-abuse-support

If you, or a loved one, are a victim of domestic abuse, please reach out. If you, or someone you know, is in immediate danger, please call 999.

CUSTOMER SERVICE AND GETTING IT RIGHT

We aim to ensure that every customer interaction is effective and provides a meaningful outcome.

Our approach is driven by our customer experience principles which set out our service values and promises to you. We:

- ✓ Make sure customers can access services (at a time that is convenient for you, via appropriate channels)
- ✓ Listen and show empathy and understanding
- ✓ Recognise that every customer is an individual and respect individual needs
- ✓ Always keep our promises
- ✓ Get it right first time
- ✓ Meet our customer service standards (providing a timely response)
- ✓ Keep customers informed throughout

IN 2021/22



386,180

customer service calls were taken



1,679

calls a day received on average (20% increase on previous year)



87.3%

calls were answered (this rose to 94% at the start of 2022, as we increased staffing levels to cope with increased demand)



72%

overall satisfaction level customers reported with services

STREAMLINING OUR ONLINE SERVICES

As part of our ongoing efforts to improve, align and streamline services for all tenants, we moved to a single online self-service customer portal in September 2022. This means all Torus customers no matter where they live can access their account online via a newly upgraded single portal.

GOING FORWARD

The alignment of our online services is part of a larger programme to transform services for all our customers. The refreshed single portal was the first step in aligning our online offer in January 2022, with the new single Torus website my.torus.co.uk launched in September 2022.



COMPLAINTS AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Sometimes our services and operations are not delivered as planned and fall short of the quality you expect from us.

It is important that any incidences where this happens are raised, logged, dealt with, and learned from. To ensure this happens, we review and update our complaints procedure regularly.


Handing of complaints is one of our most vital service areas due to its impact on the overall customer relationship with Torus.

We did not get everything right in 2021/22 and as a result have spent the latter part of the year addressing issues raised. Our Customer Hub conducted a complete review of the complaints handling process, carried out full training with all staff and introduced a complaint learning circle. Results from these activities have already produced tangible changes. For example, our Customer Hub have introduced a Customer Satisfaction Survey at the end of calls to ask how satisfied or dissatisfied customers were with the service they received. Torus has also invested significantly in streamlining our 'backend' IT systems that hold customer's cases, allowing us to respond more quickly and efficiently to complaints and requests.

Additionally, we are starting to carry out routine tenancy visits to ensure homes are up to standard and identify hazardous issues such as damp and mould before they become difficult to contain.

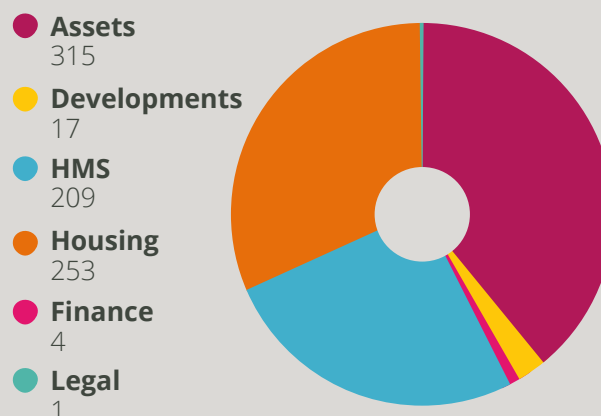
IN 2021/2022

 **807**
formal complaints were received

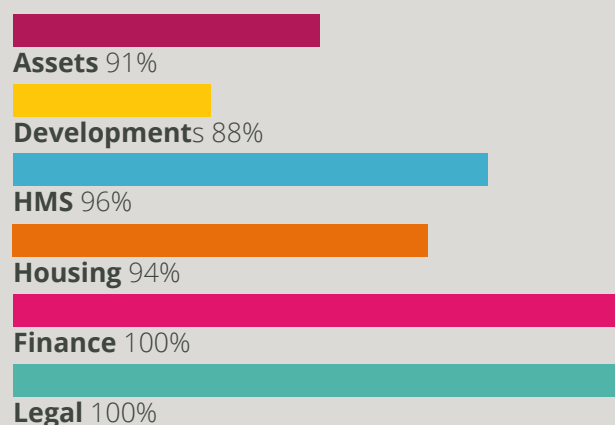
 **93%**
of formal complaints received were responded to within target

The top 3 reasons for complaints are quality, delays, and poor communication.

Number of formal complaints responded to by department



% of formal complaints responded to in target by department



OUR NEW COMPLAINTS POLICY

Following the Housing Ombudsman Code released in July 2020 and a commitment made in the Social Housing White Paper - that all social housing residents should have complaints dealt with 'promptly and fairly' - a consultation on complaint handling took place with our involved customers. Following this, we launched a new, more customer-focused Complaints Policy.

Our new policy treats complaints as a chance to put things right, genuinely address needs and strengthen relationships.

Our Complaints Learning Circle meets bi-monthly and gives managers dealing with Stage 2 complaints the opportunity to share best practice, analyse trends, review case studies, and identify opportunities for improvement.

Our Tenant Complaints Panel looks at the whole complaints journey and feeds back on ways we can improve our customer experience.



LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

The problem

Complaints are sometimes assigned to the wrong team which causes delays in resolving issues for the customer

What we did

- ✓ Introduced a daily complaints dashboard which is shared with all managers and team leaders, so everyone has visibility of open complaints
- ✓ Provided extra training to colleagues, ensuring any complaints they receive are assigned to the right team
- ✓ When reassigning a complaint to a different colleague, we make sure we speak directly to them to be sure they are aware of the situation and their role

POOR COMMUNICATION

The problem

Customers reported that they were not kept informed about the progress of their complaint

What we did

The complaints procedure has been refined:

- ✓ Customers are contacted by the officer investigating their complaint within 48 hours of their complaint being logged
- ✓ All complaints managers have attended Customer First training
- ✓ A customer satisfaction survey has been introduced to gather feedback from customers once their complaint is closed
- ✓ Additional follow-up checks have been introduced and no complaint is fully closed until all agreed actions have been delivered

COMMUNAL BIN AREAS

The problem

Bins in some areas were overflowing

What we did

- ✓ A dedicated team now completes a monthly inspection of all communal areas. If issues are found, a manager will visit the site to ensure any issues are resolved

WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY

The problem

Visitors to our website who had dyslexia, and other neurodiverse conditions, sometimes struggled to use our website

What we did

- ✓ Tested different accessibility programmes for our website and, following positive feedback, have introduced ReachDeck which offers read-aloud, translations and easy read options

LEASEHOLDER COMMUNICATION

The problem

A Housing Ombudsman case highlighted a case of poor communication with a leaseholder before works were completed on their property

What we did

- ✓ To learn from this and improve the customers' experience, a change in process was introduced

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB) CASE MANAGEMENT

The problem

An increase in ASB cases escalating through the complaints procedure and to the Housing Ombudsman

What we learned

- ✓ In early 2021 Torus reviewed the volume of ASB cases and found a correlation between complaints escalated and the quality of service. We concluded that non-statutory ASB would be more effectively handled by a specialist Safer Estates Team rather than by generic Housing Officers. (N.B. statutory ASB is regulated by the law and non-statutory ASB is not covered by the law)

What we did

- ✓ Restructured teams and introduced a new housing management system
- ✓ Increased resources for the Safer Estates Team and improved line-management oversight and support
- ✓ Training now emphasises the importance of effective interventions - including the use of informal agreements, acceptable behaviour contracts and mediation
- ✓ In response to the Social Housing White Paper, we are undertaking a project to target ASB dissatisfaction, delving deeper into causes and creating improvement actions

HOUSING OMBUDSMAN SELF ASSESMENT

We have had to assess our complaints handling procedure in line with the new Housing Ombudsman's Complaint Handling Code, which sets out good practice that will allow landlords to respond to complaints effectively and fairly.

The Code will act as a guide for residents setting out what they can and should expect from their landlord when they complain. You can find the assessment at www.torus.co.uk/feedback or copies can be requested from the Tenant Voice Team by calling **0800 678 1894** or emailing tenantvoice@torus.co.uk.





SUPPORTING INDEPENDENCE AND WELLBEING

Our teams are committed to supporting independence and wellbeing, allowing our communities to truly flourish.

We know that the last couple of years have been hard, and we are here if customers need a little extra support.

Caring for our customers is a big priority for us, especially in these tough times. Changes to benefits and the cost-of-living crisis has left many in our communities struggling.

Support is offered through **Torus Support Network**, our **Income, Tenancy Sustainment Teams** and our charitable arm, **Torus Foundation**. Services on offer include:

- Support with benefits and Universal Credit
- Support with budgeting, maximising income, and money management
- Help finding work and training
- Digital skills training
- Activities to improve health and wellbeing
- Youth engagement

We also help facilitate community events to help bring people together and reduce loneliness.

IN 2021/22 WE...

- Helped 1,004 people into employment
- Supported 552 people into training
- Ran wellbeing activities attended by 12,692 people
- Delivered 1813 Digital Inclusion training sessions to 1,898 people
- 1,086 older people engaged in wellbeing activities in our supported living schemes
- £4.2m unlocked in financial gain for 3,604 customers through our financial services



COST-OF-LIVING

The cost-of-living crisis is causing significant issues for many of us and we want to help as much as we can.

Teams across Torus have been active in helping customers access benefits or support they might need if they are struggling. This includes:

- **Benefit checks** to see if they are getting all the benefits they are entitled to
- **Help** managing a budget
- **Help** with applying for grants
- **Advice** on managing debt
- **Helping** those struggling to pay rent by finding solutions and agreeing repayment plans

We also keep customers informed regarding available external support, including how to access grants and support from partner organisations and third parties.



SUPPORT WITH MONEY

We provide support for customers struggling to navigate Universal Credit. This year:

£ **1,118**
Alternative Payment Arrangements applied for

£ **131**
Vulnerability Alternative Payment Arrangements applied for

£ **106**
Total Rent Third Party Deductions approved (315 applied for)

After losing her job to ill health, Ms T let her rent arrears get out of control, she did not ask for help and was about to lose her home.

Eviction is always the last solution and our Income Team contacted Ms T to provide support, which was accepted. The Income Team helped Ms T to ensure she was receiving the benefits she was entitled to; she was also supported with energy vouchers.

Ms T is now back on track and is no longer at risk of losing her home, her arrears are reducing, and she is getting support to manage her debts and welfare benefits.

“

I just wanted to thank you for all your help. I honestly don't know what I would have done without your support.

I feel like I can breathe, you have saved my life.

”

If you are struggling with money, find out about support available at:

www.torus.co.uk/moneyhelp

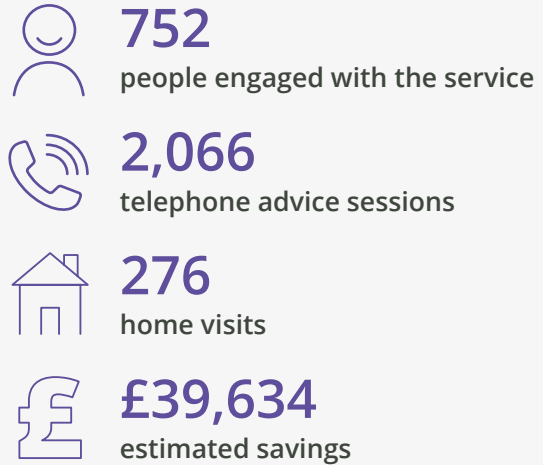


FINANCIAL INCLUSION

In 2021/22 Torus Foundation's Financial Inclusion team delivered two projects to support tenants with managing their energy costs.

Supportive Energy is delivered in partnership with the Energy Saving Trust and provides in-depth advice on energy debt, bills, and tariffs to vulnerable people in Liverpool, St Helens and Warrington. The project provides an advocacy service to contact, negotiate with and challenge energy providers – this also includes claims to the energy ombudsman.

Supportive Energy outputs:



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

As part of the wider employment offer, Torus Foundation delivers two European Social Funded (ESF) programmes that aim to get people into work: **New Leaf and Springboard Cheshire.**

Led by Torus Foundation, New Leaf exists to help people to get into work or training through an integrated approach and person-centred approach that offers 1-2-1 mentoring, money advice, access to volunteering and mental health support. The programme is open to anyone living in Warrington or Cheshire who is currently out of work.

IN 2021/22





Springboard Cheshire is also led by Torus Foundation and provides personalised wrap-around support to help individuals find long-term and sustainable employment. Springboard launched in October 2021 and so far,

249 participants have started on the programme with 76 going into work

The success of Springboard is illustrated by the case of Dylan (pictured above). Dylan, from Warrington, had been unemployed for 7 months and was struggling to gain employment. He had attended several interviews but was just getting pipped to the post and felt he needed to develop his confidence. Springboard was recommended to him by a family member who had found work with the support of the project.

Dylan's advisor at Torus Foundation spent time with him reviewing his skills, knowledge and experience, as well as reviewing his CV and previous experiences with job applications and interviews. Dylan had previously worked in the catering and hospitality industry and was keen to continue in this sector.

His advisor contacted a local employer and set up an interview for Dylan. They went through the format of the interview as well as typical questions, and answers. Dylan gave a good his interview and was offered a work trial, which led to an offer of a permanent position.



YOUNG PEOPLE

Torus Foundation operates the FireFit Youth and Community Hub in Toxteth. The Hub is a cornerstone of the Foundation's activity.

Services are designed in collaboration with our members and partners, ensuring the facility inspires and empowers members and the broader community to reach their full potential. A key stakeholder and pillar in the South Liverpool community, FireFit Hub is a place where young people feel safe and secure, have a sense of belonging, feel trusted, respected, and listened to, and do not feel judged. FireFit Hub's state of the art facilities include: 3G AstroTurf Pitches, a Sports Hall and commercial office space with meeting rooms.

The centre delivers **52 hours of activities** and interventions each week in the form of open and targeted programmes/activities that have been co-designed with young people – all of which aim to improve mental and physical health. Whether it be through an open access activity, Duke of Edinburgh Award, SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) provision, social action project or 1-2-1 support, the outcome for the young person is at the centre of the activity or intervention.

Data collected via our new youth outcomes framework, adopted in 2021/22, shows that 67% of young people improve their health & wellbeing through engagement with the centre. Centre users have also been found to express more positive sentiments towards 'interests and activities' and 'education and work'. FireFit Hub activity is aligned to the National Youth Work Curriculum and the National Occupational Standards for Youth Work.

Furthermore, FireFit Hub acts as the pivotal point for outreach and street-based work in the L8 community. **918 young people were engaged through street-based contact in 2021/22**, with many going on to receive additional 1-2-1 support and signposting to the broader suite of Torus Foundation services on offer.





HEALTH & WELLBEING

Torus Foundation's Health and Wellbeing team offer activities aiming to improve physical and mental health for all age groups and abilities. Health and Wellbeing officers work across Torus neighbourhoods and sheltered and extra care schemes with the aim of engaging residents in physical activity, mental health coaching and healthy eating programmes.

Activities typically included moving to music, holistic therapies, and mindfulness training. The tail end of 2021/22 saw many of these activities recommence in face-to-face settings, vastly improving effectiveness and resident engagement. Reverting to face-to-face sessions also meant that Torus Foundation could introduce a Personal Assessment Tool (PAT) – this allows participants to assess their physical progress between two benchmark dates. 139 PATs have been completed with 80% of participants showing an increased score. In 2021/22, 2,048 over 18s took part in Health and Wellbeing Activities.

Additionally, Health Promotion Officers operate in each heartland to act as a conduit between the local community and the Foundation team. They work to identify clear community needs and match them to the Foundation offer. This activity is possible due to strategic partnerships with local bodies, including Clinical Commissioning Groups and various schools and Children's Centres.

Hunger is a significant issue that faces communities across our heartlands and as a result our Health and Wellbeing team spend significant time and resource supporting local food banks and pantries.

Last year, we supported five foodbanks with donations worth £32,000 and provided £40,000 to assist in the establishment of eight food pantries.



Furthermore, 2021/22 saw Torus Foundation forge an initial partnership with the charity Making Space, which produced an 18-month commissioned service entitled 'Mindspace'. The service gives Torus customers access to Computerised Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (cCBT) to help improve their mental health. Modules include overcoming depression or low mood, building self-esteem, stress, problem solving, controlling anger, mindfulness, mood and anxiety, social anxiety, and work stress.

At the end of 2021/22, 2,048 over 18s had used the service as well as 912 under 18s.

Our supported living schemes are active and vibrant places over Christmas and in 2021/22 our Health and Wellbeing teams were on hand to help deliver festive activities. Over at Heald Farm Court in Newton, talented residents made a range of Christmas wreaths and other knitted goodies for their Christmas Fair, where they raised an amazing £400. Staff also organised fun and games and dressed as elves for the day. At Foundry Wharf in St Helens, residents made an absolutely whopping £1,000 at their Friends & Family Christmas Fair. The residents were also encouraged to participate in a "cosy jumper" project, which explored human connections via poetry, singing, finger and arm knitting, dance, and animation.



GOING DIGITAL

Since the pandemic has encouraged a steady integration of online-only activities into everyday life, it has never been more important for people to have the skills and equipment to stay digitally connected.

Our Digital Inclusion team work to increase the number of our tenants using digital services by providing training, support and in some cases equipment. The core offer from this team is Digital Hubs which Torus Foundation run and manage across our heartlands. These are established in various locations, such as sports and community centres, including FireFit Hub. These hubs offer one-to-one drop-in sessions where residents can get online, learn basic digital skills and deal with specific issues (such as submitting an online application for Universal Credit). **986 people utilised this service in 2021/22.**

Furthermore, Torus Foundation also ran and managed Connecting Communities. This project aimed to tackle isolation and digital exclusion in the vulnerable and elderly population, this was done by distributing tablets and educating people on how to use them for video calls and basic services. **664 internet enabled devices were distributed via this project in 2021/22.**

Torus Foundation are also delivery partners in the Include-IT Mersey project. This is a European Social Fund programme that provides targeted, personalised digital skills development and employment support to digitally excluded, unemployed people in St Helens and Liverpool. It focuses on developing basic IT skills, online navigation techniques and building confidence.

The impact of our Digital Inclusion work is best highlighted by the case of Linda. Linda is a cleaner and reached out to Torus Foundation for digital training as she became required to log working hours online. Linda had no access to an internet enabled device or understanding of how to use one.

Linda was issued with a new Tablet device and three months' worth of data courtesy of the Connecting Communities project. Linda also had a 1-2-1 session training session covering how to use the tablet and demonstrate basic functions. Linda was then offered further ICT Training from Torus Foundation but declined as the current Digital Hubs were too far away for her - she does not drive and has mobility issues. Despite this, Torus Foundation were able to accommodate Linda's needs by linking her up with a local training provider, Everton Development Trust, which is around the corner from Linda's property.

As a result of our Digital Inclusion work, Linda can continue working as a cleaner, is able to log her hours and look for further employment now she has a capable device.

OUR SUPPORT CAN MAKE A SUBSTANTIAL DIFFERENCE...

“

I cannot thank you enough, you are an amazing person. You have helped me out in so many ways I cannot describe, and you have made me feel like life is worth living again.

”

Torus customer writing to his Financial Inclusion advisor following support with utility costs and employment support

“

Springboard is a nice friendly service, which has helped me to develop confidence in my interview techniques, locate suitable work opportunities, and helped me to gain employment.

”

Dylan, after finding a permanent job through our Springboard employment project

“

You can't believe how much of a weight has been taken off my mind if it's not enough already suffering with chronic mental health problems to have them compounded by this. I can't thank you enough, my mind has been put at ease and dealt with it all so quickly and professionally.

”

A tenant having utilised our Financial Inclusion services

“

I have a lot of gratitude for New Leaf and the connections and opportunities it has introduced me to. I'm still working at plenty, but I can honestly say it works.

”

Rachel, having been supported through our New Leaf employment programme

“

I asked Torus Foundation for help with my Internet learning as I now must log my working hours online. I have been able to gain a new Tablet device with their help as well as the training to go alongside that, I'm so grateful to them, I wouldn't have known what to do without their help.

”

Jane, who requested support from our Digital Inclusion team



TACKLING HOMELESSNESS

A fresh new partnership to help support rough sleepers

As part of our commitment to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the wake of the pandemic, we appointed two new Accommodation Rescue Officers in 2021.

This was following a successful bid to the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities and Local Government from Liverpool City Council (LCC).

As part of a 12-month pilot, the Accommodation Rescue Officers will work closely with LCC and dedicated Outreach Teams on a fresh approach to addressing the underlying issues that can see a small number of people who have accommodation, such as a tenancy or a placement in a temporary accommodation service, still rough sleeping.

Accommodation Rescue Officers identify barriers rough sleepers face and develop a safe support pathway back into housing.

In the first 12 months the Officers:

- ✓ Received 168 referrals, leading to 157 investigations - 25 of these were Torus tenant referrals
- ✓ Conducted 15 successful challenges to Local Authority initial 'homeless' decisions
- ✓ Ensured 52 people are no longer sleeping rough due to intervention

Due to the success of this 12-month pilot, LCC have submitted a bid to government for a full rough sleeper's support initiative that will potentially run to 2025. Continuing the support of our Accommodation Rescue Officers is a key element of the bid as LCC feel their work in the last 12 months has been invaluable in bringing fresh impetus to rough sleeping solutions.

CHAMPIONS COURT HELPING TO BREAK THE CYCLE

In July 2021, Torus was the first Registered Provider to complete and open move-on accommodation funded by the government's Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) fund, following a successful joint bid from Torus and St Helens Borough Council.

Champions Court provides 28 apartments and offers residents a two-year fixed tenancy, acting as a stepping-stone to a permanent home. The Salvation Army provides tailored 24-hour wrap-around support, helping people to continue to overcome the complex reasons for their homelessness.

In its first year, among the countless success stories at Champions Court is a resident who was reunited with his children and a couple who welcomed their first baby.

Paul from St Helens was a successful retail manager but fell on challenging times following an addiction issue which resulted in losing his job, home, and his family. He has lived at Champions Court for the past year.

"I had the life! I had it all; a house, car, wife of ten years, a monthly, regular salary, but my addiction turned my life upside down.

Champions Court has been amazing for me, a great place to live; The Salvation Army has been amazing. The apartments are spacious and comfortable and provide me with the hope and courage to know that I will get through this and get my life back on track."

New Housing Coordinator


Torus works closely with Contact Cares, the single point of access for all social care and adult health referrals in St Helens.


We appointed a new Housing Coordinator in October 2021 to work within Contact Cares and help support St Helens residents with housing-related advice, including ASB, repairs, rehousing, home conditions and homelessness.

The project is funded until July 2023.

From October 2021 to July 2022, there were 268 referrals to the Contact Cares Housing Coordinator. As a result:

 **37** people secured accommodation

 **64** people are now accessing support

 **23** preventions of homelessness were made

CASE STUDY

Helping a tenant to move on

Welfare concerns were raised to Social Services and the Police by a neighbour regarding a lady living in poor conditions in private rented accommodation.

The Ms W could not open her front door and the back yard and house was full of waste.

After being referred to the Housing Coordinator, a home visit was conducted with Social Services. The property was in a hazardous state due to waste stockpiling.

- ✓ Ms W agreed to accept support, moving into temporary accommodation whilst their home was made safe
- ✓ The case was referred to the local authority Safeguarding team due to self-neglect and a Social Worker was allocated
- ✓ The private landlord was contacted to ensure the urgent repairs were completed and the waste cleared. This included new double-glazed windows and central heating
- ✓ The Housing Coordinator liaised with the Fire Service to provide fire alarms and housing advice
- ✓ Environmental Health checked the property met legal requirements

Support was provided to complete housing applications and help Ms W move on from the property into a new, safe home.

CASE STUDY

Supporting care and independence

A over 55s tenant with learning difficulties was referred for support with housing from Social Services after they were placed in an intermediate care facility, and it became clear they were unable to live independently.

- ✓ The Housing Coordinator liaised with their family to present the housing options available, helping them all to understand the Under One Roof application process and gathering evidence to ensure the client received the appropriate banding (priority for housing)
- ✓ The client has now moved into supported Extra Care accommodation that supports his needs whilst also promoting independent living

The Housing Coordinator ensured that the client could move into suitable accommodation without delay, as any additional time spent in the intermediate care facility would be at a cost to the public purse and using a bed that could have been used for other people in need.

“

This isn't my first time in supported housing as I was in temporary accommodation previously, but my time in Refuge has changed my whole life.

I came in here a different person - guarded and not trusting anyone. All the staff have been there for me supporting me and guiding me, helping me achieve a level 1 and 2 in Health and Social Care. Staff are there for you and help you every way they can.

”

Torus Refuge Resident



YOUR COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBOURHOOD

Creating a healthy neighbourhood is all about bringing people together as a community and running projects that help support one another.

Tackling Anti-social behaviour (ASB) - working together to keep you and our communities safe

We want our neighbourhoods to be thriving, safe places that people are proud to live in.

We are committed to tackling ASB and have a specialist Safer Estates Team who deal with issues to ensure that our communities are safe.

Delivery of an effective, efficient, and responsive ASB Service is a major customer and regulatory priority for Torus, as inferior performance can lead to potential loss of customer confidence and both regulatory and safeguarding shortcomings.

To meet this priority, it is important that Torus maximises its partnership approach, working with agencies such as the Police, local Fire & Rescue Services and Local Authority community safety partnerships/support agencies.






Torus seeks to develop best practice in service delivery and aims to influence the national regulatory agenda for tackling crime, nuisance and ASB.

As part of Community Safety Partnerships, we expect individuals and groups to behave with respect and in a manner which does not interfere with the comfort or wellbeing of other individuals or groups in our communities.

We recognise that if left unchallenged, ASB can have a significant effect on quality of life and can impact on the welfare of communities. Accordingly, we aim to tackle what are often diverse and complex issues around ASB using a range of tools, including prevention, support and flexible yet proportional enforcement.



IN 2021/22

-  **2,020**
ASB cases were opened
-  **8**
Possession Notices were served
-  **4**
Outright Possession Orders issued
-  **11**
Injunctions issued
-  **3**
Evictions related to ASB

RESPONDING TO OUR COMMUNITIES – ASB AWARENESS WEEK 2021

In July 2021 we joined a national campaign that is bringing people and organisations together to take a stand against ASB and make communities safer.

Over the week, our Safer Estates Compliance Officers were out supporting the Safer Community Teams in areas which are known to have higher levels of ASB. They conducted Estate Inspections and worked with partners to engage residents and discuss local concerns and resident rights in relation to ASB.

- Safer Estates Compliance Officer, Helen, was out in Sutton Heath with St Helens Council's Safer Community Team, St Helens Police and local councillors identifying issues related to ASB
- Safer Estates Compliance Team Leader, Karen, joined partners from Liverpool City Council, Merseyside Police, Onward Homes, and Merseyside Fire & Rescue, on County Ward to engage with tenants and discuss local issues
- Tenancy Compliance Officer, Shelley, visited Moss Bank with St Helens Council, local police and Moss Bank Councillors Trisha Long and Tracy Dickinson who were raising awareness on reporting ASB & tackling local issues



OUR APPROACH TO DEALING WITH ASB

In August 2021, a community in Wigan was given respite from a Torus tenant who had been targeting neighbours with a series of threats and abuse over a 12-month period. With support from the victims, who provided witness statements, we secured an emergency injunction against the offender with power of arrest. This was followed by a final anti-social behaviour injunction and power of arrest for 12 months.

Despite the injunction, being arrested for breaching the injunction and appearing in court again, the perpetrator continued to threaten neighbours. He ignored bail conditions, resulting in an arrest warrant being issued.

Collaborating directly with Police and the courts, an arrest was executed which resulted in the perpetrator being brought before the court again. This time, the court refused bail and remanded him into prison until a further hearing, thanks in part to the witness statements from his neighbours.

“

There's a lot of work that goes into stopping ASB. Things can take time. But if you report it to us, you can be sure we'll do everything we can to stop it and we won't give up. To get this result required multiple hearings and partnership working between the Torus Enforcement and the in-house Legal Team, working in partnership with the Police and the Court.

”

Ian Larkins, Lead Solicitor at Torus



PARR-TICIPATE

In December 2021, Torus contributed £10,000 to a £38,000 fund for Parr-Ticipate, a community project aimed at tackling ASB.

www.torus.co.uk/parr-ticipate



ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT DAYS

31 Environmental Impact Days in Liverpool, St Helens and Warrington helped to increase engagement and support in our neighbourhoods.

Residents were provided with skips to remove any rubbish. Tonnes of rubbish was removed, thanks to support from HMS Green Space operatives, many of which were young people on the Government's Kickstart programme which gave people ages 16-24 a chance to earn while they learn.

- ✓ Over 100 skips have been filled
- ✓ Over 1,000 tonnes of waste collected to help improve Torus Neighbourhoods

As well as clearing away bulky household waste and fly-tipped items, Torus teams worked to tidy hedges and lawns for residents who may have been struggling, improving communal outdoor areas, and helping communities to safely remove waste.

The days were also a terrific opportunity for teams from Torus Landlord services, Torus Foundation and key partnering organisations to speak to tenants and residents about the issues impacting them and provide support and signposting where possible.

“

We want our neighbourhoods to be safe, thriving places, a community that people are proud to call home. We were keen to get back out into our communities, talk to residents face-to-face and most importantly reassure them that we are here for them. Impact Days are a fantastic opportunity for engagement and for Torus to listen and respond to our tenant voice about important local issues and needs.

”

Jan Calland, Regional Director

“

Wonderful to see a growing pride in the neighbourhood, I love the new windows.

It's pouring down, but it doesn't stop them working creating that garden space, I've managed to get rid of some old chairs too.

”

Westminster Impact Day – residents

SCOUSE FLOWERHOUSE

In May 2021, Torus joined the Scouse Flowerhouse movement. Born out of work by Liverpool City Council and the National Wildflower Centre, it aims to connect areas across Liverpool using wildflowers and create a mosaic of colour across the city.

Small sites in Everton and Kirkdale became gateways to flagship sites, such as Everton Park, near Northumberland Terrace, the largest urban meadow in the country.

Our Neighbourhoods, Assets and Torus Foundation teams worked with community groups at the sites to sow the wildflower seeds.

In addition to strengthening community bonds, the project is also supporting Torus and the Liverpool City Region's net-zero ambitions; wildflowers improve biodiversity and are scientifically proven to capture greater volumes of carbon when compared to standard grasses and shrubs.

“

It is great to see an area that was once used for bonfires be a lovely scene and help our environment. Children are also getting to learn more about the wildflowers in school.

Elaine Doolan, WETRA (Residents Group)

”

www.torus.co.uk/scouse-flowerhouse

BONFIRE NIGHT AND HALLOWEEN SAFETY

Torus works hard to ensure that nobody feels dread each Bonfire Night and Halloween. In St Helens, the Neighbourhood Team support Operation Good Guy with the Safer St Helens Team and the Liverpool Neighbourhood Team are part of Operation Banger, a joint initiative with Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire Rescue Service and Liverpool City Council looking to combat illegal bonfires and ASB.

Additionally, throughout October and November, Torus Neighbourhoods and Safer Estates Teams joined Torus Foundation to go out to communities and deliver special Bonfire Night Impact Days. These focused on safety around Bonfire Night, encouraging tenants and residents to dispose of their unwanted rubbish before it can be used for a fire.



COMMUNITY INVESTMENT FUND

One of our key tools for direct community support is Torus Foundation's Community Investment Fund (CIF). CIF is allocated to develop projects that will benefit Torus tenants and their surrounding neighbourhoods. Constituted community or resident groups are invited to apply, along with organisations that deliver services within a Torus neighbourhood.

IN 2021/22

- ✓ 94 Projects were awarded funds
- ✓ Liverpool - 46 awards
- ✓ St Helens - 24 awards
- ✓ Warrington - 24 awards

The type of projects funded were

£	Health and Wellbeing £82,067.63
	Financial Inclusion £29,768.83
	Employment and Skills £17,956

These projects collectively attracted £144,286.33 in match funding and £130,708.58 value in-kind.

As can be seen in the following examples, the projects funded make a real difference to our partners and people.

The Apex Charitable Trust in St Helens help ex-offenders reintegrate into communities. They were awarded £1,365 to support their foodbank provision. As a result of funding, they have been able to deliver homemade main meals, desserts and drinks directly to homes. Services users have been incredible grateful:

“

I am disabled with limited opportunities to access the outside world. I also have arthritis and it is very difficult to prepare food myself. The homemade meals from the Trust have made a huge difference. ”

Tuebrook Hope Group are a community charity helping people throughout Tuebrook and adjoining communities improve their wellbeing. They wanted to make sure local people on low incomes were able to enjoy a traditional Christmas dinner with their family. As a result, they applied for £750 from CIF in order to procure 30 meat hampers which were distributed within the community.















REPAIRS AND INVESTING IN EXISTING HOMES

We are always working to keep our properties in tip-top condition. It is part of how we make it possible for you to have a place you are proud to call home. Because of lockdowns, we had a considerable number of repairs in our backlog.

In 2021/22, our Repairs and Maintenance activity produced the following:

-  **87,046** repairs (21,315 emergency repairs) performed
-  **100%** emergency repairs completed on time
-  **99.91%** of non-emergency repairs completed on time
-  **99.94%** of all repairs resolved on target
-  **69.47%** of customers satisfied with the repairs service
-  **248** average number of responsive repairs completed per day
-  **£7.423m** spend on routine responsive minor repairs – on average £96 per job
-  **£5.623m** spend on major responsive repairs

-  **£13.913m** invested in modernising and refurbishing existing homes
-  **£8.966m** invested in planned maintenance
-  **£15.156m** spend on components – including new kitchens and bathrooms
-  **£37.627m** set aside to invest in existing homes in 2022/23
-  **£9.2m** spent refurbishing empty properties ready for new tenants
-  **599** new bathrooms
-  **877** new kitchens
-  **1,472** new boilers
-  **8,071** smoke and heat alarms
-  **378** new windows
-  **136** new roofs
-  **739** electrical rewires

In addition to our continued investment in kitchens, bathrooms, heating, windows, doors, and roofs, we delivered a range of improvement projects across our heartlands including energy efficiency improvements to reduce fuel bills, external works to improve the appearance of homes, waste management improvements to reduce fly-tipping and increase recycling and improvements to reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour.

In response to feedback from staff and customers, we have added significant funds to our investment plan and started consultation to improve communal areas, specialist schemes, fencing, paving, and waste management provision.

MAXIMISING INDEPENDENCE AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS

Adapting homes to become more accessible allows customers to live independently for longer, improves quality of life and reduces the risk of having an accident at home.

Throughout the year, we spent £2m on:



247

major works - wet rooms, stair lifts, hoisting equipment, extensions, ramps (Occupational Therapy (OT) assessment required)



1,350

minor works - grab rails, handrails, lever taps, flashing doorbells/smoke alarms. (No OT assessment required)

ALIGNED REPAIRS SERVICE

In September 2021, following consultation with customers, we launched our new Aids and Adaptation, Responsive Repairs and Maintenance Policy and aligned services. This means that all residents receive the same service, regardless of location.

Under the new policy, all repairs are now prioritised as either Emergency, by Arrangement or Programmed Repair:

- **Emergency Repairs** - affecting the safety or security of the property or potentially affecting the health of those within
- **By Arrangement (appointable) Repairs** - issues that can wait without causing major inconvenience e.g. a leaking gutter, they are either Priority or Routine repairs:
 - **Priority Appointment Repairs** - these are not emergencies, but repairs, which need to be conducted quickly to prevent further damage to the property and improve customer's quality of life. Relating to issues that do not pose an immediate risk to the security of the tenants or third parties
 - **Routine Appointable Repairs** - These works can be conducted at a scheduled appointment to suit the customer's availability. These repairs normally require the procurement of materials to complete the repair
- **Programmed Repairs** - these are repairs that are non-urgent but complex, such as structural or those that can be combined to be delivered in a more efficient way. These repairs may also require a higher degree of customer consultation or planning

We have also aligned the response times for repairs, as shown below:

- **Emergency** - within 4 hours
- **Priority** - within 48 hours
- **Routine** - up to 20 calendar days



NEW DAMP AND MOULD POLICY DEVELOPED WITH TENANTS

The new repairs policy was developed following consultation with tenants. An online survey received 36 responses, with tenants giving feedback on the options to report a repair, operating hours, repairs prioritisation and comprehensibility. Five tenants were also involved in a virtual session to review the proposals. Following the consultation, the Landlord Operations Committee (LOC) approved the policy. However, rollout of the new policy had been delayed due to the impact of Covid-19.

Our new Damp and Mould Policy was also developed in partnership with tenants and published last year. It ensures we provide and maintain dry, warm, healthy homes for our tenants, and that we ensure the fabric of our property is protected from deterioration and damage resulting from damp and mould. It also outlines pathways to engagement with tenants regarding damp and mould issues.

Furthermore, following feedback from customers, we are ringfencing significant investments to improve the quality of communal spaces and waste management areas in multiple-occupancy schemes – spaces often cited in cases of dissatisfaction. Consultation regarding these improvements is now underway.





Coming up in 2022 / 23

We have developed a new Asset Management Strategy focused on improving the quality of our homes, neighbourhoods, and maintenance services. Consultation on our new home and neighbourhood standards will start in 2022/23 with opportunities for customers to help design them.

We are commissioning surveys on 10,000+ of our homes to improve the accuracy and range of information we hold on them. This will help us to ensure we plan the right investment and understand the work required to meet our new standards and improve the energy efficiency of our homes.

We are continuing to invest in improvements to homes and neighbourhoods across the heartlands, including energy efficiency improvement programmes designed to reduce the cost of heating and hot water for our customers. We will invest £21m in new kitchens, bathrooms, heating, windows, doors, roofs and other major works and a further £15m on projects that go beyond the Decent Homes Standard and deliver improvements that enhance the quality of our homes and neighbourhoods.



GREEN HOMES AND SUSTAINABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS'

At Torus we know the transition to low-carbon, sustainable housing is clearly linked to improving our customers lives. Therefore, we are committed to investing in homes and making them as energy efficient as possible.

It is vital that we create 'futureproofed,' energy efficient homes so our customers are warm and protected to a greater extent from energy market volatility. This also mitigates the risk of fuel poverty.

In addition to reduced bills, greener homes also improve health and general wellbeing by improving local air quality.

OUR DECARBONISATION JOURNEY

October 2021 saw Torus create and publish the Group's first Environmental and Sustainability Strategy. This document sets out a clear approach and pathway towards achieving carbon net zero in the long-term. In the short-term, the publication of the Strategy was followed by a Year One Action Plan, setting out the activity needed to kickstart Torus' decarbonisation journey.

Throughout July – September 2021, Torus worked closely with SHIFT, the organisation providing sustainability standards for the housing sector, to create an initial carbon footprint. This baseline data has been used to inform the long and short-term targets set out in the Strategy. The quality and collection of our baseline and performance data will be reviewed and updated year-on-year.



Additionally, the Environmental and Sustainability Strategy itself will also receive an annual update and be published alongside a new action plan.

Although Torus' environmental plans have an emphasis on reducing carbon emissions, waste and pollutants, there is also a focus on increasing green spaces and biodiversity in our communities. We are also working hard to make residents partners in our decarbonisation journey so that they can truly realise the benefits of healthier estates and lower utility bills.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY IN OUR HOMES

In 2021/22 we spent
£9 million
on improving energy efficiency
in our homes, of which £5.3m
was on heating and windows

We also invested
£3.9 million
to improve energy efficiency
and reduce customer's fuel bills
in 331 homes in Liverpool

There have been several large-scale projects as well as investment into energy efficiency improvement in most of the major projects. Here is a snapshot of some of our recent projects completed in 2021/22:

RUMNEY WHITEHALL AND NORTHUMBERLAND TERRACE

Torus invested £3.5m to make improvements to 292 homes in two neighbourhoods in Liverpool. The areas, which are made up of blocks of flats, received improvements to roofs, windows, external painting to render and railings. Flats on the Rumney Whitehall estate also benefitted from new External Wall Insulation (EWI), which not only looks great, but helps keep properties warm, which helps with rising heating bills and reduces the carbon footprint of the property too.

Works were completed in 2021 and customers fed back, that the works improved the visual appearance of the blocks and measures to resolve fly tipping problems.

KINGSWAY HOUSE REFURBISHMENT

Work commenced on a £5m project to renovate Kingsway House in Warrington, transforming the 1960s block with new windows, kitchens, bathrooms, front doors, lifts, and balconies. Storage areas will be converted into two additional residential apartments and asbestos removal, improved insulation, landscaping and improvements to the entrance area will take place.

Though already fully compliant, the refurbishment will also include enhanced safety features, featuring a full sprinkler system, apartment front doors replaced with fire doors, increasing fire detection and, though not required by law, Torus is also installing a Fire and Rescue Service evacuation alert system.

The exterior of the building will benefit from new external wall insulation, with external walls finished with non-combustible render, incorporating stone wool insulation which will improve the energy efficiency of the building and reduce carbon emissions.



“

The plans look brilliant. I am looking forward to my new apartment, especially the balcony, it will be nice to have some outside space.

”

Maureen, Kingsway House resident

RETROFIT FOR THE FUTURE

2021 saw the end of RetroFIT for the Future, a two-year project in which **Torus invested £3.7m into helping 337** of our homes become more environmentally friendly.

Retrofit measures installed included:

underfloor insulation installed by robots to suitable properties, Neighbourhood External Wall Insulation (EWI), and window upgrades and an entire heating retrofit project to the Portland Gardens independent living scheme, near to Liverpool city centre.

“

The RetroFIT for the Future project is just one part of our ongoing commitment to invest in our existing homes. Projects like these will ensure that our residents will benefit from living in warmer, more energy efficient homes.

”

Margaret Goddard, Torus Assets Director

Established by the European Union, ERDF helps local areas stimulate their economic development by investing in projects which will support innovation, businesses, create jobs and local community regenerations. For more information visit www.gov.uk/european-growth-funding.

NEIGHBOURHOOD EWI

✓ Total investment: **£2,031,751**

✓ **107 houses** received works

The project was to install external wall insulation on houses with narrow cavities, structural repairs were also be completed where required. Among those properties, 18 received window renewals.

The work reduces carbon emissions, increases comfort levels, reduces the risk of fuel poverty, and improved the street's visual appeal.

✓ **Carbon savings:** 125 tonnes per annum

BEECHWOOD GARDENS EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION

✓ Total investment: **£717,208**

✓ **36 flats** received works

The project was to install external wall insulation, modern double glazing, and a new roof to two blocks of maisonettes. The work was specified in line with the new regulations for buildings of 11m in height.

✓ **Carbon savings:** 32 tonnes per annum

CHERRY LANE EXTERNAL WALL INSULATION

✓ Total investment: **£1,070,234**

✓ **54 flats** received works

The project was to install external wall insulation, modern double glazing, and a new entrance porch roof on six low rise blocks of flats.

✓ **Carbon savings:** 19 tonnes per annum

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Retrofit works only deliver their full potential if residents fully adopt and understand the technologies. To support this engagement process, Torus has created specific behaviour change literature relating to works - explaining how tenants can make the most of their new installations, for example by recalibrating the thermostat.

“

The house is much warmer, and it looks a lot nicer.

”

Lynn, Quatra Estate (EWI)

“

It looks lovely, it feels warmer, and the drafts have reduced.

”

Mrs R, Cherry Lane

£2.2M REFURBISHMENT TO TRANSFORM FLATS*

Torus has redeveloped three flat blocks in Peasley Cross, St Helens. The £2.2m project has transformed three flat blocks, which over the years have proved increasingly difficult to let, into much needed supported housing.

With a view to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the Borough, two of the blocks have been transformed into Champions Court, providing 28 quality homes with a 24-hour support team on-site for people who have been assessed as able to live independently and who might otherwise be at risk of returning to the streets.

Champions Court opened in summer 2021, find out the difference it has made on page 39.

The third block, due to open late 2022, is now Stadium View, providing 14 homes for people who are living with low-level mental health issues and two units for people in need of short-term urgent support. The urgent support units will benefit from 24/7 onsite support and are designed to deliver a homely, but safe and welcoming space.

**in St Helens*



Coming up...

In February 2022, Torus was awarded £2.6m from the government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) and is investing a further £9m of its own money.

A total of 189 properties will receive a combination of eco improvement measures including external wall and loft insulation, solar panels, replacement doors, windows, and roofs along with space being left for future solar battery storage.

The project will improve:

- **132 homes** in Walton
- **6 homes** in Kensington
- **51 apartments** of Kingsway House, Warrington (see page 53)

Once completed, the properties will surpass an Energy Performance Certificate C rating and evaluations will be carried out by Torus to assess the true impacts of the work on tenants.

Bid for via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, which was awarded **£11.1m** from Wave One of the SHDF to work with nine housing associations, Torus' was the single biggest grant in the region. The work at all three schemes is due to finish in 2023.

The SHDF is overseen by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy and is a **£3.8b** government commitment over a 10 year period to improve the energy performance of socially rented homes.




PROVIDING NEW HOMES

It is well acknowledged that the Northwest has an increasingly critical lack of affordable housing. It is why Torus has an ongoing commitment to building high quality, modern and affordable homes across our heartlands and beyond. In August, our ability to deliver on these commitments was bolstered when grant funding was awarded to extend our affordable homes programme across the Northwest.

This fund was part of the largest single investment in affordable housing in a decade and being a recipient has allowed Torus to continue our successful strategic partnership with Homes England.

In 2021/22 we invested £95.4m on new homes, £21.5m of this was on 346 New Build and 28 conversions (Champions Court) which completed during the year and £73.9m was spent on homes under construction, land purchases and future homes to be built.

Our profile of new build in 2021/22 was:

 **95**
for affordable rent (general needs)

 **81**
for Shared Ownership

 **170**
Rent to Buy units

 **877**
new homes started on site in 2021/22

 **1,200**
new homes are projected to start on site in 2022/23

 **1,100**
new homes are projected for completion in 2022/23

We plan to build **9,490 new homes** by 2030, **investing £1.56billion** in the region.

As of 31 March 2022, the total number of Torus homes was **38,224**, including:

 **32,971**
Social and General Needs
Affordable Housing

 **3,897**
Homes for Older People

 **992**
Shared Ownership Homes

 **1,177**
Leaseholders

 **311**
Intermediate Rents





Looking ahead...

Torus Developments has a strong record of delivering traditional house types and multiple-occupancy schemes; however, the recent drive to build faster with minimal environmental impact has encouraged the adoption of new innovations and technologies.

2021/22 saw Torus Developments further integrate Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) and deliver what are increasingly being seen as 'homes of the future' – modular builds.

An affordable modular housing scheme at Pennine Close, St Helens, was completed in late May. The scheme was delivered in partnership with local partner, OSCO Homes, as part of an ongoing drive to adopt more sustainable construction practices. In addition to being modular and innovation specialists, OSCO Homes also work with first time offenders at HMP Hindley to give them the opportunity to learn new skills and gain employment.

Each of the 10 homes now in situ at Pennie Close started life as a series of partially finished rooms, or 'modules' constructed in a warehouse off-site. These components were then assembled onsite using new construction techniques to create a finished home. Working in this way creates less waste and is more time efficient when compared with traditional construction techniques and trades.

Following the success of this scheme, Torus will again work with OSCO Homes to build a further 13 modular homes at Egerton Street in Sutton, as part of a further £1.6m investment in St Helens. 2022/23 will also see a modular factory-built bungalow scheme complete at Oakdale Road in Wallasey.

HOW WE'RE PERFORMING*

Comparing ourselves against fellow housing providers is important as it allows us to identify our strengths and weaknesses, ensuring that we provide maximum value for customers.

The Regulator for Social Housing produces a range of industry performance metrics and we have benchmarked our 2021/22 performance against the performance of a peer group of other housing providers in 2020/21 - this is because published peer data is not available until much later in the year.

Of the indicators assessed, Torus performed above the peer group median in four.

Including:



11.3%

reinvestment in improvements and new developments as a percentage of property value, compared to the peer group average of 6.1%



25%

overall operating margin, compared to the peer group average of 24.6%

**against peers' comparisons (sector scorecard)*



VALUE FOR MONEY (VFM)

Delivering value for money is a key consideration across Torus, especially in such turbulent times. Our Board leads our approach by setting robust goals and scrutinising key spending decisions.

Running Torus in a cost-effective manner ensures we have a healthy balance between delivering customer satisfaction, maintaining high quality, energy efficient homes, increasing the supply of new housing, and creating a suitable place for employees to work.

A key measure of Torus' financial health is an annual stability check undertaken by the Regulator for Social Housing. In December, Torus was awarded G1/V1 status. This means that Torus continues to fully meet the regulator's governance requirements and has the financial flexibility to deal with adversities. The stability check also allows the regulator to assess Torus' ability to meet the requirements of the VFM Standard, which includes demonstrating a detailed approach to achieving value for money across the whole business.

Torus complete financial statements for 2021/22, including full income, expenditure, and balance sheet details, can be found here: www.torus.co.uk/explore-torus/publications

Value for money highlights



71.8%

of customers feel their rent provides good value for money



£6.1m

invested directly into community focused activity

How every £1 of rent is spent



33%

Developments



21%

Housing Management



19%

Repairs & Maintenance



12%

Other



7%

Interest



5%

Home Improvements



2%

Social Investment





becoming a Shareholder

Torus operates a policy of Open Membership, which allows tenants and leaseholders to apply to become shareholders. Becoming a shareholder is a fantastic opportunity to get more involved and to help Torus to promote tenant engagement and retain strong links with the communities it serves, across the three heartlands of Liverpool, St Helens, and Warrington.

As a shareholder, you will be invited to attend the Annual General Meeting and to vote on policy decisions. You will also be invited to attend shareholder briefings and other engagement events.

If you are an involved tenant, interested in becoming a shareholder and you satisfy the criteria set out in the Shareholding Membership Policy, please contact the Torus Governance Team to find out more and obtain an application form - **0800 678 1894** or via email **info@torus.co.uk**

BUILDING STRONGER COMMUNITIES 2022/23

2022/23 is shaping up to be a year of big, transformational projects. We are focused on stepping up where needed in response to the Social Housing White Paper and making our customer offer even better, from home repairs and maintenance to customer service and complaints handling.

OUR FOCUSES INCLUDE:

White Paper ready
- looking at Health & Safety, the Customer Offer and Tenancy Standards

Carrying out a full 'census' style survey of Torus tenants and residents

Environmental Sustainability and moving towards low & zero carbon

An ambitious £86 million investment programme in Torus homes

Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, including rolling out D&I (Diversity & Inclusion) training to colleagues

Further developing the new Torus family of websites, created in partnership with customers



Find out more about our five-year Corporate Plan www.torusnewday.co.uk



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