Torus Website Feedback Report

July 2022 (updated September 2022)

Reason for the feedback session(s)

To meet the requirements of the Housing Regulator's "Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard", the Government's Social Housing White Paper, and the National Housing Federation's "Tenants Charter".

Objectives

1. To give tenants a clear and direct opportunity to influence design of the new Torus website via comments and feedback.

2. To present the draft website design having taken into account the previous consultation with tenants and their suggestions.

3. To provide assurance to the Landlord Operations Committee (LOC) that tenants have been able to provide feedback on the proposed website design.

Methodology

To consult with our dedicated involved tenants, providing opportunity to comment, feedback and voice an opinion on the draft website, via:

- Survey link to questions relating to the existing/proposed website (8 survey responses) – See APPENDIX 1, SURVEY FEEDBACK
- MS Teams meeting 22 July 2022 (9 tenant attendees) – See APPENDIX 2, MICROSOFT TEAMS MEETING FEEDBACK 22 JULY 2022

Earlier consultation – website concept:

Prior to the development of the new website, Torus tenants were asked to give their views on the existing Torus website(s) and concept for the new site:

- Surveys: two near-identical surveys, took place in May 2021 and February 2022, with 53 and 142 responses respectively, to gain an understanding of how customers used the current site, what they liked/disliked/what they would like to see in the new site.
- MS Teams meeting (4 tenant different levels of digital skills and dependencies in attendance) – discuss was based on an agenda derived from similar themes to the survey questions. An early-stage design concept of the website was shared at this meeting.

These views were also considered – see APPENDIX 3 New Torus Website Concept Collated Customer Feedback (05/21 – 02/22) for transcript and notes from the focus group.

Recommendation – You Said, We Did

Website concept survey – May 2021 and February 2022

You Said	We did
The language used on the old site could be complicated.	The language on the new website has been kept free of jargon and has been customer approved. Users can raise issues directly with the Torus Communications team if they have suggestions for improvement.
Easier access to support for those struggling to pay rent.	There are several new specialist sections that signpost customers directly to support available.
Chat to someone	Due to limited staff resources, at this time we have introduced an interactive virtual assistant that provides a more natural way of interacting with our website and services, taking advantage of machine learning to provide visitors and customers with an experience that is tailored to them.

At launch the virtual assistant will be able to answer questions based on the information available on the website, but over time we will be enabling more tailored services to customers to access our services in a more personalised way. |
| **Clearer contact information** | Contact information is clear and easier to find. |
| **More details of planned works** | A new planned works section has been added to the new website. |

MS Teams website concept meeting – February 2022

You Said	We did
The refreshed website will need to work just as well on mobile phones and tablets.	The new site has been fully visually optimised for mobile devices and there should be no loss of functionality between devices.
Key services and contact details should be easy to find.	There are several ways for users to find information – allowing users to search in a variety of ways, including a mega menu, large navigation buttons for key services and we have introduced an intelligent and adaptive search does more than just search for specific words but uses powerful natural language processing to understand what it is you are looking for, helping you find more relevant information quickly.
To make it clear what is and isn't the responsibility of Torus, the new website should have a clearly marked section that defines and signposts council issues.	Although this information was available on the previous website(s), it has been made easier to find for users, with sections re. pests, bins, fly-tipping etc.

The new website should be accessible as possible for as many customers as possible.	The new website features improved accessibility. To make sure everyone can access the information they need we have invested £12,000 into ReachDeck, a digital inclusion toolbar, formerly Browsealoud, which adds speech, reading, and translation tools to the page, making content more accessible for people with dyslexia, literacy challenges, English as a second language, and mild visual impairments.

MS Teams Meeting and survey – 22 July 2022

You Said	We did
I like the way you change the colour to help people read better, there does seem to be a shadow using the program though.	We were not able to replicate this issue internally and have therefore been unable to create a 'fix'.
I noticed we are staying with the Maroon shades? Slightly Civil Service/Military? Why not yellows and" sunshiney" hues!	The colour palette used is the Torus corporate colour palette to aid brand recognition.
ReachDeck icon might not be universally understood.	This is used by other organisations without further signposting. We have also included and accessibility link in the footer to direct.
Consider alternatives to white backgrounds for computer and visual aids.	ReachDeck gives users a choice of colour to help with visual needs.
Tenant Voice slideshow under 'Important Information' animated slides, dark pink and teal combination does not work.	We have changed the dark pink background on this slide.
Explore Torus - the animated diagram has text that appears at 8 point on mobile phones.	We are looking at ways to address this.
Torus Developments - About Us page, there are huge white spaces that require a scroll down.	This has been fixed.
I'd like if possible, for person rent to be added on in program.	This is done in the portal – login / register and is not covered in the scope of this project.
Torus Foundation page is an issue as green on green doesn't work for lots of people	This has been fixed.

ONLINE PORTAL: Please note that the scope of this project was the new single Torus website, and did not include the transactional online portal for reporting repairs online etc. The portal was aligned, and functionality was upgraded in September 2021. However, comments and suggestions made in regards to this have been recorded for a future projects to make improvements to the portal.

APPENDIX 1: Survey Feedback

1. What was your first impression when you entered the website ?

More Details

🔵	Really liked it	4
🟠	liked it	1
🟢	No opinion	3
🔴	Didn't like it	0
🟣	Really didn't like it	0

2. Any other comments in regards to your first impression ?

I like the way you change the colour to help people read better , there does seem to be a shadow using the program though over some of the words the writting in the white seems to a problem however , the program itself is going to open up endless oppunuties for people with additional needs and there is audible format so excellent job guys I cant thank you enough.

The Website of any Company/Produce has to "pack a Punch ". I noticed we are staying with the Maroon shades? Slightly Civil Service/Military? Why not yellows and" sunshiney" hues! Quite officious but easier reading than previously and the Website is the first step to understanding Torus HA and what is on offer First impressions Last Longer?

I liked the website and layout looking at the reach deck icon of the little man having tried the app previously i was able to understand what it represented and had some idea on how to navigate the reach deck app. How ever if you have a learning disability it may not at first be quite as illustrative for your assistance. And as easy to follow the signposts.

I also enjoyed the pictogram icon and the illustrative and voice over of word definitions the one point i would like to make with reference to the colours is use of text is that the use of dark coloured text on alight (not white) background. Avoid green and red/pink ,as these colours are difficult for those who have colour vision deficiencies(colour blindness).Consider alternatives to white backgrounds for paper computer and visual aids.

The site works really well.

Landing Page Pink/white/yellow thin lines on pink background merge the white lettering. The hot pink is an overpowering colour and should be supported with text and images with thicker lines as thin lined images are 'lost'. Tenant Voice slideshow Under Important information animated slides, dark pink and teal combination does not work. I have raised this before because both colours are harsh on the eye when placed together.

Any text done in either colour is 'lost' in the background. Explore Torus The animated diagram has text that appears at 8 point on mobile phones. Even Able bodied individuals will have a hard time reading that text. It's one of the reasons why business cards are limited to 10pt text. Any smaller then the advertising/ information has defied it's own purpose.
May I also note, a majority of users are using handheld devices so that's a large portion of your audience challenged.

3. **How easy did you find it to move (navigate) around the site ?**

More Details

🔵	Extremely easy	2
🟠	Somewhat easy	3
🟢	Neutral	2
🔴	Somewhat not easy	1
🟣	Extremely not easy	0

4. **Any other comments regarding the navigation of the site ?**

Because I haven't seen this program it does take a bit of getting used to, but you could train staff up and put-up training programs for tenants to help if they would like to access it.

No, I just read the Website page and noted the items and detail of the page set-up. I am also aware of the selling power of the content on the website, first impressions last longest? Websites are the first Introduction and selling power of any product? Impact and Information of the product has to be noted? There is still a touch of military/governmental style, old council house feeling though? No really negative comments at all from me except I am hoping for face-to-face contact via online/visit the office etc can be re-established? There are quite a few situations whereby face-to face is helpful e.g. disabilities are limiting also people feel more comfortable/confident receiving live interaction- much better than any chat bot?

I found it reasonably navigable and think once the reach deck app is launched on to the website properly any small discrepancies will be ironed out and it will become an indispensable tool for inclusivity for tenants and learning. the only issue I would comment on at this stage is the inclusion of innumeracy and tenants with dyscalculia example easy explanation on rent and debt readout.

Torus Developments; About us page. There are huge white spaces that require a scroll down to reach the information needed in between each section on Apple mobile. Review layout. ReachDeck is severely limited and doesn't work on linked menus on a mobile device (Apple.) How is a service user meant to navigate if they can't use ReachDeck on menu options? Also, the voice option drops sometimes on mobile devices leaving just a highlighted area not being read.

I have managed to locate the sites okay.

5. Are there any pages or information missing that you would expect to find ?

More Details

● Yes	2
● No	6

6. If Yes please give more details

I'd like if possible for person rent to be added on in program , it can reduce the cost of paperwork and easily accessible it would remove barriers and also tenancy contract I'm pretty sure it can be done.

The website told me all a wanted to know about my Landlord Support and Torus HA.

I think a simple page on a maths/and English tutorials for tenants who may be either be excluded through dyslexia, or dyscalculia, and any other reasons for not being able to access the website i.e. being a migrant and English not being a first language.

The developments on the edge of each heartland.

7. How did you find the accessibility tool bar ?

More Details

● Very helpful	2
● Helpful	4
● Didn't try it	1
● Unhelpful	1
● Very unhelpful	0

8. Any other comments regarding accessibility ?

I think the tool bar use will improve once it works with the portal. As it is now it is a vast improvement in attaining real inclusion for all torus tenants in the torus heart land. I think and know this will make a real difference to tenants lives and to help them feel less isolated.

Easy to navigate.
Very accessible and much content to view.
I think this is amazing.
Very accessible

9. **What did you like about the website ?**

I like the adaptability of the website in general and the lay out of the information pages. I would suggest having a simple budgeting and basic maths page to assist tenants in learning; (example) addition - subtraction and multiplication and tables. Also % percentages as well, and to learn from Reachdeck in text, use and colour back grounds .for tenants with visual impairments, dyslexia, autism, and Asperger's syndrome. Not forgetting tenants with numeracy blindness (dyscalculia). Let's not forget a percentage of tenants may very well just be illiterate and through exclusion from school have received no learning whatsoever.

Liked all of it.

The way you access it.

Layout, descriptive and easy to read, customers are easily informed and directed to individuals requests?

Works well.

10. **What didn't you like about the website ?**

Shadowing over some of the writing.

I accepted the layout and was satisfied that there is easy access and easy reading displayed. Not anything I didn't like. Occasionally some down to earth/realistic displays are easier to understand. Not everyone is a Diagnostics/Digital expert, basic use of Computer is enough for me, easy reading/easy understanding. I've never had a problem with our website.

Everything was easy to use.

On the colour I find the pink in the text usually directing you to another site not clear enough. Could another colour be used instead or the letters made larger. On websites like these I find a coloured background with a coloured lettering hard to read if you are not careful.

11. **Have you any other comments that you would like to add ?**

I respect the technological experience, design/layout required to display/update Torus website. I have never or had a need to query/comment about our websites because our websites are so well prepared and displayed. No doubt continuous checks are made throughout the getting it together process and regularly updated. I do think Torus provide very professional and highest standards to their website. Perhaps a more grass roots talk-style could be increased to enable easy reading? Whichever level of accommodation, tenants have accessibility to all departments and the website is first port of call for information about Torus HA.

Once again it shows how torus truly have an interest and genuine concern for the wellbeing and inclusivity of all torus tenants in the heartland. And the time Torus leads and involved tenant officers commit themselves to by honestly listening and acting on tenants behalf.

1. Background - the new website / rationale
Jacquie gave background and updated tenants on the changes taken into account from the previous consultation. She presented to the attendees, took questions, and explained the access to the draft website and survey for their testing of the website.

Main Tenant Comments

James Heneghan

Has looked at Reachdeck through the Diversity & Inclusion group. Asked if Reachdeck can be used to read letters sent via email to tenants.

Also has consideration been given to inclusion in Reachdeck for people with Dyscalculia.

Rebecca Smith

Anything that supports visual impairment should cover Dyscalculia.

Katrina Henshaw

I struggle with digits i.e. numbers with rents etc so I fully agree that something needs to be included to support that on the website.

I struggle to read white type against any coloured background.

Jacquie – this can be changed by the user to suit their needs.

James Heneghan

Does it include County Lines?

Jacquie – Yes has been added

Pam Woodward

I struggle with a coloured background and coloured writing**.**

Rebecca Smith

Torus Foundation page is an issue as green on green doesn't work for lots of people. Reachdeck icon disappears in certain circumstances especially with certain colour combinations. If the text or lines are thin they are swallowed up by the pink background.

Also too much information on a page is not good. It doesn't appeal to a person and they cannot find what they are looking for so end up picking up the telephone.

People that have carers for example are not the tenant and are not familiar with Torus but could be asked to search for information by the people that they support.

APPENDIX 3 New Torus Website Concept Collated Customer Feedback (05/21 – 02/22)

1. Data Context

- Responses to two near-identical surveys – one closed in May 2021 and the other in February 2022. 53 and 142 responses respectively; however, this is not fully representative as individual questions across both surveys had highly variable answer rates. Questions required mostly quantitative answers with some offering the chance to elaborate qualitatively.

- Transcript and notes from one focus group held with tenants on 03.02.22. Four tenants with different levels of digital skills and dependencies in attendance. Discussion based on an agenda derived from similar themes to the survey questions. An early-stage design concept of the website was shared at this meeting.

2. Core Themes and Learnings

2.1 Compatibility/Optimisation

Across all sample groups, it is apparent that most tenants (circa 40%-50%) use a smartphone as their primary means of accessing the internet and therefore Torus websites. Tablets and laptops are the second most popular options, with both sitting at around 25%. The key takeaway from these responses at the refreshed website will need to be visually optimised for mobile devices and there should be no loss of functionality between devices.

2.2 Purpose of Website Usage

Across all sample groups, visits to Torus webpages served three primary purposes: To pay rent; report a repair; and make a complaint. "To find information on other services" and "To find contact details" were also prominent reasons.

It should be noted; however, that the need to find contact details is clearly intertwined with the need to report a repair, complain or utilise wider services – as contact details are being sought to raise issues or gain clarity on these services. As a result of these findings, primary services need to be easy to find and efficient to use on the new website. Relevant contact details should also be clearly visible on each page.

2.3 Ease of Use

Interestingly, the number of tenants finding the current website easy to use varied greatly between groups 75% of the first survey group found the current website easy to use, whereas around 70% of the second survey group found the website difficult to use.

From the positive responses, format, colours, simple navigation and language were all cited as reasons the website was easy to use. On the other hand, the negative response often cited: a lack of visible contact details; being unable to find services (repairs being the most common);and there being too many steps when paying rent and reporting a repair.

The focus group expanded on these difficulties, and it was found that traceability was key underlying issue. I.e., when transacting or utilising a service on the site, no reference number or unique identifier was provided. This made following up on repairs and ASB reports a difficult task.

With this feedback in mind: the rent payment process should be a streamlined as possible going forward; relevant contact details should be visible on all service pages and all service/transactional elements should provide tenants with a unique reference number when they are utilised.

2.4 New Features

All groups had suggestions for new features. Again, the ability to make contact more easily largely underpinned these. The most frequent suggestion or 'ask' was for the inclusion of a live FAQ or chat bot to deal with all queries. The focus group also put forward the idea of an app to deal with transactional elements, with a similar format to online banking where one click or tap gives you direct access to a service. The was echoed by further comments in the surveys asking for "instant pay" and "instant report" tabs on the website.

Whilst not strictly a new feature, a salient point was raised in the focus group regarding accountability. Some tenants have difficulty defining which services Torus is responsible for and which services fall under the council's jurisdiction. It was suggested that the "My Torus" section of the new website should have a clearly marked section that defines and signposts council issues.

2.5 Website Avoidance

The focus group were all active website users. However, many of the first survey respondents avoided utilising the current webpages – with around 35% of tenants only visiting 2-3 times a year. The primary reason for lack of use was, again, contact – with the most common justification for website avoidance following the sentiment of "don't get a reply". As with much of the feedback, the learning should be that that relevant contact details need to be present on each page to ensure valid messages are going to the right contact. Having a reference number or contact ID will also give tenants confidence that their issue is traceable and can be followed up.

The second survey presented different data, with the majority of tenants saying they would visit the website daily or weekly to check their rent account or access services.

2.6 Contact Method

Currently the vast majority of tenants, around 60 – 70% use the phone as their primary method of contacting Torus. This is because tenants feel like they are more likely to get a response and have their request actioned. Having more tenants satisfied with their experience of making contact via the website is likely to alleviate current pressures on the call centre and improve the customer experience. As a result, clearly sign-posted and efficient to use digital contact details should be visible on all tenant facing webpages.

2.7 New Website Design Draft

The design draft of the new Torus website was only shared with the focus group. Apart from one comment regarding the colouration of text making it difficult to read, feedback regarding design, form and function was largely positive.

2.8 Accessibility

Accessibility was a recurring theme across both the survey responses and focus group. This was relating to both visual impairment and those that might be lacking in digital skills. The focus group was assured the that the new website will comply with the Web Accessibility Initiative guidelines set out by the W3C organisation and that digital training is available through Torus Foundation for those that need it.

3. Summary

Across all feedback, the ask to **contact and transact more easily** was never far away. These two principles should therefore be the key factors to influence and guide to creation of all tenant-facing webpages.