



Making a

Meaningful Difference

Tenant Voice Strategy 2024 – 2027



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Tenant Voice Framework:

- *Period covered 2024 - 2027*
- *Group Strategy - approved by Responsible Officer - Group Housing Director*
- *Review in 3 years (2027)*



1. Foreword

Hannah Shaw, Involved Tenant, St Helens

As an involved tenant I see the meaningful difference we make every day. From making the Torus website more accessible using Reachdeck, to changes in the gas servicing process, we are helping change things for the better.

As the cost-of-living crisis continues, it is even more important that tenants, leaseholders, and other customers can influence the decisions that impact on our lives.

I welcome this new Tenant Voice Strategy which embeds fairness, courtesy and respect for tenants and shows a commitment to listening to tenants, to build trust. I look forward to the challenge of the next three years delivering the commitments within this strategy together with officers and the Board.



Chair of Board – Mike Emmerich

As Chair of the Torus Group Board my primary concern is that we make real, positive changes to people's lives. That means growing stronger communities, delivering effective services, and providing good quality, affordable homes for people in housing need. We can't do this alone. We are committed to working collaboratively with our tenants, leaseholders, and other customers deliver the best services.

That is why we are sharing this strategy. It sets out that the mechanisms in place to ensure our tenants, leaseholders and other customers are listened to, treated with respect, and can hold us to account. We would welcome your feedback both on the strategy and our performance against it.



2. Executive Summary

The principal objective of this strategy is to amplify the voice of Torus customers and to use their feedback to shape improvements that they will benefit from.

Our commitment is a partnership of equals with tenants, leaseholders and other Torus customers influencing the design of their homes and services.

This three-year strategy explains how we will empower our tenants, leaseholders, and customers to shape, improve and scrutinise our services. It provides a framework to ensure we meet our regulatory and statutory obligations and are responsive to the changing environment and new legislation.

Our approach is to:

- Empower and support tenants, leaseholders, and other customers to scrutinise, challenge and inform through training, mentorship, and feedback.
- Provide a wide range of opportunities to get involved at a time, frequency and level that suits.
- Understand and respond to individual needs and preferences, removing potential barriers for confidence, and ensuring representation of the communities we serve.
- Strengthen the focus on customer needs and expectations so that all colleagues see the value of hearing and acting upon the views of tenants, leaseholders and other customers when designing, reviewing, and delivering services.

Several Torus strategies and policies support this strategy. These must be read in conjunction with this document and comprise:

- Corporate Plan 2024-2027
- Communications and Engagement Strategy
- Customer Experience Strategy
- Inclusion Strategy
- Vulnerability and Reasonable Adjustments Policy

Supporting strategies include:

- Business & Customer Intelligence Strategy
- ICT Strategy

3. Introduction

This strategy provides a three-year vision to build on outcomes delivered to date, based on three priority areas Listening, Learning and Changing informed by:

- Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs)
- Transactional surveys (Delighted)
- Feedback from engagement activities throughout the year

Each of the above forms of feedback provide a different perspective on how well Torus is meeting customer needs and expectations. Torus is determined to identify those things that drive satisfaction and to build on them, and we will seek to remove those practices that cause dissatisfaction.

We will adopt this strategy by:

Listening

Every contact with a customer is an opportunity to listen, learn and change. Torus use a range of methods to engage our customers to ensure they are heard. These include:

- We gather TSMs quarterly and ask additional questions over and above those required by the Regulator for Social Housing (RSH). This helps us to understand issues and act to address dissatisfaction quickly.
- A menu of opportunities to be involved at a level and location that suits their individual needs.
- Our complaints process offers an opportunity for us to put things right when we have failed to meet our stated standards.
- At each key contact point, each repair report, each anti-social behaviour (ASB) case registered, each complaint, we offer the opportunity for customers to feedback what their experience is/has been in a real time transactional text survey we call 'Delighted.'

The TSMs reflect our tenant's perceptions of services, while 'Delighted' Surveys measure their satisfaction shortly after they have received a service. 'Delighted' surveys typically reflect higher levels of satisfaction. We will work to understand why perceptions are less favourable and address these through well targeted actions.

The recently (July 2024) restructured Neighbourhood Service is designed to provide greater visibility and active presence in communities, something our Tenants, leaseholders, and other customers told us they want. We intend that this improves local accessibility, monitoring of our service standards and ultimately, perceptions of our services.

Torus processes require tenant, leaseholder, and other customer voices to be heard through engagement in Customer Panels, Scrutiny Group, Tenant Inspection and the Landlord Operations Committee. This makes us accountable to tenants for our actions.

We will adopt this strategy by:

Learning

Torus use customer feedback to identify trends and improvement themes and plan improvement actions.

To facilitate this learning, we:

- Are testing the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) to further interrogate TSM results to better understand the drivers of dissatisfaction.
- Have appointed a Complaints Learning Officer to help turn feedback into service improvement.
- Host multidisciplinary Learning Circles to learn from practice and improve our actions and responses.

Changing

Torus will use this learning to prioritise areas of improvement for better outcomes for customers.

We will:

- Use customer feedback, data gathered, and learning identified to influence service development, design, and delivery.
- Build our customers voices into our continuous improvement practices. Our newly revised Strategy & Policy Process and reporting mechanisms require us to demonstrate how and when tenants, leaseholders, and other customers have been involved and what changes resulted from their feedback.
- Ensure that our tenant, leaseholder, and other customer contributions are recorded, recognised, and celebrated using the 'You Said, We Did' pages on our website, and Annual Report.



5. Where are we now?

As an early adopter of the Together with Tenants Charter Torus launched a three-year Tenant Voice Strategy in 2019.

In February 2023, Torus commissioned an independent review of Tenant Involvement by David Tolson Partners Ltd (DTP).

Improvements followed which included:

- A new involvement structure reflecting the need to engage and involve tenants, leaseholders, and other customers across a range of specialist areas. These included a proposal for new forums for Leaseholders and Extra Care & Sheltered residents.
- Revised Terms of Reference for all panels and forums making clear their purpose, responsibilities and role in Governance.
- A recruitment drive to increase the numbers of involved tenants, leaseholders, and other customers to ensure involvement structures are reflective of the diverse Torus customer base.

Building on this, the Tenant Voice Team has been refreshed, with a new Team Leader and resources targeted to ensure both geographical coverage and specialist responsibility for core functions.

The new Tenant Voice Team structure links resources to the new neighbourhood delivery model for local, accountable, visible support for those wishing to get involved.



Recruitment is gaining pace across all involvement channels but more needs to be done to ensure the diversity of involved customers offers authenticity and representation of all customers views.

There remains an over-reliance on digital channels, but progress has been made in offering face to face engagement where this is preferred by customers.

We will use TSMs to identify issues and potential barriers to involvement and develop an action plan to address these.

In most areas our teams have embraced the partnership of equals ethos, but we can strengthen this to make customer involvement a consistent and embedded behaviour.

We aim to strengthen the links between local, community-based engagement activity such as Impact Days, Coffee Mornings and Drop-In Sessions, and formal involvement to ensure customers can interact with us and share their views in the way that best suits them.



6. Where do we want to be?

Torus's vision is to collaborate with our customers providing involvement opportunities which are easy to access, reflect the diversity of our customers, and empower them to be involved at levels and frequencies which suit them.

Principles:	Outcomes:	Principles:	Outcomes:
Informed by Data Torus will analyse TSMs, Complaints and Delighted feedback, sharing this with customers and using it to tailor services in localities. We will monitor the impact this has at a local level and enable customers to hold us to account based on the difference we make. A true partnership of equals.	Improvements in customer satisfaction demonstrating: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Torus listens to and acts on customer views • How well Torus compares to similar providers. 	Diverse Torus represents a broad range of customers across a wide area of operation. Our involvement structures must reflect this diversity to ensure that our services are informed by and developed with their different needs in mind.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involvement structures reflect the diversity of our customer base. • Local opportunities that reflect our diverse communities and support the growth of stronger communities
Easy to Use Our involvement opportunities will be easy to access, engaging and delivered at a time, place and frequency which fits customers' needs.	Information will be easy to understand and enable tenants, leaseholders, and other customers to hold us to account. Increasing numbers of involved tenants, leaseholders, and other customers. A variety of opportunities to get involved in ways that suit the individual.	Consistent Customers will be involved in and influence all parts of the organisation in different ways, but with consistent outcomes.	An involvement structure which encourages views to be shared from those gathered in local consultations, to strategic input through formal Panels, Scrutiny Group or Landlord Operations Committee.
Meaningful With impact adjudged by tenants, leaseholders, and other customers, our commitments aim to make a meaningful difference to the services they and their fellow customers receive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear link between involvement activities and improvements in policies, services, and satisfaction. • Our involved customers can articulate the difference they have made. • Torus can evidence the meaningful difference customer involvement has made. 	Accountable We will ensure involved customers can hold us to account by providing training and mentorship, accessible information and involvement structures that invite and welcome constructive challenge.	Empowered tenants, leaseholders and other customers with evidence of transparent reporting and change following challenge

7. How will we get there?

Following independent review of our involvement structures by DTP, we have revised Torus involvement structures to reflect the recommendations.

Using this structure as our foundation and building on the successful recruitment of new involved customers we will:

- Ensure accountability by providing training and mentorship for new and existing involved customers.
- Learn from best practice by measuring our performance against peer organisations, attending local, regional and national learning events along with our involved customers.
- Amplify tenant, leaseholder, and other customer voices in our internal and external communications, advertising their successes.
- Evidence the outcomes from feedback and involvement for tenants, leaseholders, and other customers.
- Deliver Corporate Customer Excellence Training, developed with our involved customers, to all 1,600 colleagues, to embed the principles of this strategy across the organisation making engagement a core part of every colleague job.
- Seek Tenant Participatory Advisory Service (TPAS) accreditation within the lifetime of this strategy.



8. Strategic Links

Internal drivers

The Torus Group Corporate Plan 2024 – 2029 sets out core focuses that relate to involvement outputs. These are:



- Understand customer needs from first contact
- Use data, colleague and customer feedback to design and improve inclusive services

Performance Indicators

- Satisfaction that Torus listens to views and acts upon them.
- Annual perception surveys and case studies to understand the impact of our work on people's lives
- Vulnerability data and protected characteristic data available and current.



- Work with tenants to improve satisfaction with homes, neighbourhoods, and communal areas

Performance Indicators

- Satisfaction that the landlord provides a home that is well maintained.
- Satisfaction that the landlord provides a home that is safe.
- Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.



- Ensure systems and processes are fit for purpose, so that colleagues have the tools they need to deliver

Performance Indicators

- Maintaining compliant, Governance (G) and Viability (V) ratings and achieving a compliant Consumer (C) rating from the Regulator for Social Housing.

8. Strategic Links

External drivers

This Strategy responds to the Better Social Housing Review 2022 (BSHR) and revised Consumer Standards, and a new Code of Practice launched in April 2024.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are key to the successful implementation of this strategy and will be driven by a commitment to quarterly insight reporting, tied to the Government's TSMs.

Progress with the strategy will be measured in eight separate ways:

1. Implementation and outcomes relating to each section of the Strategy.
2. Strategic performance measures linked to Corporate Plan:
 - Quarterly perception surveys and case studies to understand the impact of our work on people's lives
 - Satisfaction that the landlord provides a home that is well maintained.
 - Satisfaction that the landlord provides a home that is safe.
3. Satisfaction scores relating to the TSMs.
4. Adherence to the RSH Consumer Standards particularly:
 - Transparency, Influence and Accountability:
 - Neighbourhood and Community Standard: requirement to work cooperatively with tenants, other landlords and relevant organisations to ensure the safety of shared spaces (not communal areas).
5. Annual Tenant Voice Report developed in partnership with tenants, leaseholders, and other customers, reported to Landlord Operations Committee and Board.
 - Satisfaction that the landlord makes a positive contribution to neighbourhoods.
 - Maintaining compliant Consumer (C), Governance (G) and Viability (V) ratings from the Regulator for Social Housing.
6. Self-assessment against TIA Consumer Standard
7. Achieving TPAS accreditation for Torus's Tenant Voice bringing further independent assurance that this framework and the structures to deliver it achieve the intended outcomes.
8. Increased numbers of tenants, leaseholders and other customers involved and improved reflection of the diverse communities we represent:
 - Individual Involved Tenants
 - Tenant & Resident Associations
 - Panel Membership
 - Torus Talk Members
 - Consultation respondents
 - Shareholders