



DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION PANEL - TERMS OF REFERENCE

Purpose

These Terms of Reference (TOR) set out the role, rights and responsibilities of the Torus Diversity and Inclusion Panel. The Diversity and Inclusion Panel has the primary purpose of ensuring Torus services are inclusive and accessible where every tenant can feel included and their voices are heard regardless of whether they have protected characteristics under relevant law.

The Panel is also established to review and, where appropriate, challenge how Torus services are responding to the diverse needs of Torus customers and communities, making recommendations for improvement ensuring the services Torus meet the needs of its diverse communities.

The Diversity and Inclusion Panel has an important function which helps to ensure that customers receive high quality services that are relevant to their needs and demonstrate value for money. It adds a new dimension to the Torus decision-making process and supports existing assurance structures by examining and questioning performance and decisions made by the organisation from a diversity and inclusion perspective.

Torus place the tenant voice at the heart of everything it does and believe that tenants thoughts, opinions and ideas help shape the business, improve services, strengthen communities and create places and opportunities everyone can be proud of. Torus believe diversity of skills and thinking, as well as diversity of gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, disability and any other aspect of diversity is essential.

Torus has a commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion is therefore central to this Panel's purpose.

Role of the Panel

- To ensure that Torus provides tailored services which provide choice, information and communication appropriate to the diverse needs of tenants, including those with additional support needs.
- To support the aim to ensure compliance with all aspects of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) legislations including, but not limited to The Equality Act 2010.
- To support Torus in meeting specific requirements of the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH) Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard related to diversity which currently state:

1.1 Customer Service, Choice and Complaints

1.1.1 Registered providers shall:

- a) Provide choices, information and communication that is appropriate to the diverse needs of their tenants in the delivery of all standards.*

1.3 Understanding and responding to the diverse needs of the tenants

1.3.1 Registered providers shall:

- a) Treat all tenants with fairness and respect*
- b) Demonstrate that they understand the different needs of their tenants, including in relation to the equality strands and tenants with additional support needs*

2.3.1 Registered providers shall demonstrate how they respond to tenants needs in the way they provide services and communicate with tenants

- To identify any no-compliance with the EDI requirements as a key risk
- To monitor EDI performance quarterly
- To support how EDI is built into Torus' service delivery policy and procedure to enable wider understanding of differences and cultures so that our services remain relevant and accessible to all
- To work with service leads on any new service delivery model to ensure that Tours does not lose sight of its commitment to diversity and inclusion when implementing new service offers
- To support colleagues to ensure that there are no barriers to services for our customers or staff
- To work with colleagues to carry out reviews of how Torus has positively promoted equality, diversity, and inclusion, in order to support learning
- To review reports on how Torus provides services which meet the diverse needs of tenants and in doing so, where appropriate, challenge how these services are responding to diverse needs, making recommendations for improvement and overseeing progress against agreed action plans
- Provide a reality check against EDI performance information by suggesting relevant tenant inspections

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- Undertake a critical review of Torus communications and marketing material to ensure they are diverse and inclusive
 - Provide an Annual Report to the Landlord Operations Committee on the outcomes of the Panel's work, findings, and recommendations
 - To act as a critical friend in order to shape, influence and drive-up standards, performance and service delivery in the work on diversity and inclusion, providing constructive, evidenced feedback
 - To involve and inform the wider tenant body in the activities of the Panel
 - Supporting the delivery of EDI events throughout the year, promoting, championing and celebrating EDI opportunities and related activities
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Membership

The Diversity and Inclusion Panel will comprise of a maximum of 12 members with no fewer than 6 tenant members always maintaining the majority membership. The Chair will preferably be a tenant representative sourced from Torus' underrepresented communities, where this is not possible, it will be a Torus Tenant Voice team member.

- The Chair's role will include:
 - Agreeing the agenda for all meetings, in advance of the meeting date
 - Chairing meetings
 - Proposing discussion items
 - Identifying any training needs

The profile of the Panel aims to reflect the tenant base of Torus and include tenants with lived experience and understanding of the barriers and challenges of accessing services. Torus would particularly welcome tenants who have experience of working with underrepresented groups in a professional capacity. The tenants ideally will comprise of:

- 4 members from Liverpool
- 4 members from St Helens
- 4 members from Warrington

Membership will be for 3 years but can be extended. Where a member leaves the group before the end of the term, a recruitment process will be undertaken. All terms are subject to an annual review.

Membership of the Diversity and Inclusion Panel is only open to those who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Current tenants within Torus: or
- Current customers of Torus, ie, are currently in receipt of, and pay for, regular or periodic ongoing services from Torus, eg, leaseholder, or share owners

Exclusions apply to the following groups: whom may not be eligible to apply:

- Members of staff within Torus; or
 - Customers in material or serious breach of their tenancy or lease agreements
 - Anyone under 18
 - All vacancies are publicised, and anyone who is interested and eligible can express an interest. Every individual who does so will be invited to find out more, and supported to complete an application form
 - New members to the Diversity and Inclusion Panel through a selection process
 - New members of the Panel will participate in an induction training programme to help them fulfil their role. They will also participate in further training as and when required to support them with their role
 - Members will be expected to act as individuals and not represent any interested group, area or political party
 - New and continuing membership will be subject to an annual appraisal and personal development process, which will take account of attendance, contribution to reviews and how members work as part of a team
 - Any member who is in breach of their tenancy conditions or becomes involved in any activity which brings the name of the Diversity and Inclusion Panel and/or Torus into disrepute will be suspended, pending investigation, and may be asked to resign
 - If a Panel member wishes to resign, they should inform the Tenant Voice team in writing or by e-mail
 - All members must sign the code of conduct and confidentiality agreement. Any Group member who breaches the code of conduct will be asked to leave the Panel
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Meetings

The Panel will meet on a bi-monthly basis and meet up to a maximum of 12 times a year. Some of these meetings may be set to cover training and development, Torus will provide reasonable travel expenses and electronic equipment in order for members to participate in meetings.

- Members of the Diversity and Inclusion Panel should make every effort to attend meetings. If a member is unable to attend, apologies should be sent to the Tenant Voice team
- Any member missing a meeting without giving prior apologies may be contacted by the chair and/or a representative from the Tenant Voice Team
- If a Diversity and Inclusion Panel member fails to attend three meetings in any rolling 12-month period without giving prior apologies, it will be assumed they no longer wish to be a member of the Panel and their membership will be terminated
- Torus recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances preventing a Panel member from attending training and/or meetings eg ill health. Such circumstances will be discussed confidentially and an agreement regarding involvement will be reached by both parties

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- An attendance register is to be kept for all meetings (to include apologies and authorised absences) and Torys will provide support to ensure the effective running and smooth administration of the Panel
 - The Tenant Voice Team will support the Panel to obtain supporting information such as but not limited to data, reports and good practice from internal and external sources in a timely manner
 - The quorum of the Group will be 4 members plus the Chair
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Safeguards

Members must:

- Adopt and abide by the code of conduct; and
- Agree to undertake a mandatory induction and training programme;
- Uphold Torus' high standards of conduct and probity by adhering to the code of conduct and respecting confidentiality of information; and
- Remain objective and not bring personal issues into their work with the Diversity and Inclusion Panel
- Diversity and Inclusion Panel members must not disclose confidential information to anyone else outside the group. Members who breach confidentiality will be removed from the Panel
- The Diversity and Inclusion Panel shall conduct an annual review of its work and effectiveness, with the support of a Tenant Voice team member. This annual review will include a review of the terms of reference.