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## EDITORIAL PANEL - TERMS OF REFERENCE

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### Purpose

These Terms of Reference (TOR) set out the role, rights and responsibilities of the Torus Editorial Panel.

The Editorial Panel is established to ensure that all tenant communication including website content meets the needs of Torus' customers in terms of content, tone, style and language. The Panel also ensure that all material demonstrates Torus' core values that put people first, working as one team to focus on solutions that lead to great work for the benefit of customers grown Torus and each other.

Th Panel is also set up to ensure that the Torus brand guidelines, that help to convey a strong, unified image and raise the profile of the organisation, are adhered to in all tenant facing communications.

Torus want the tenants voice at the heart of everything it does and through this Panel, tenants thoughts, opinions and ideas can help shape all landlord communications that everyone can be proud of.

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### Role of the Panel

The role of the Panel will be:

- To work with Torus to scrutinise Torus publications providing valuable feedback with tenant's best interest in mind
- To support and influence Torus tenant communications including printed materials, leaflets, promotional material, website, and social media content
- To generate ideas for the tenants' newsletters
- To oversee the content for the tenant's annual report and the annual scrutiny report to Board.
- To meet the requirements of the Housing Regulator's "Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard", the Government's Social Housing (Regulation) Bill, and the

National Housing Federation's "Tenants Charter" (and any successor regulation or guidance)

- To ensure the Torus Brand guidelines are used including ensuring that the corporate colour palette, logo and typeface are adhered to aid brand recognition.
  - To give tenants a clear and direct opportunity to influence the design of the Torus website via comments and feedback
  - To ensure that language used on the website and in all written material is kept free of jargon and is customer approved and customer friendly
  - To provide assurance to the landlord operations Committee (LOC) that tenants have been able to provide feedback on tenant communications and the ongoing website content and any redesign.
  - To ensure that equality, diversity and inclusion considerations are paramount when reviewing communications including the use of real tenant images
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## Membership

The Editorial Panel will comprise of a maximum of 12 tenants selected and recruited based on their skills. The Chair will be a Torus tenant representative if possible and if this is not possible, a Torus Communications team member. The Chair will receive additional appropriate training supported by the Tenant Voice Team and will be responsible for agreeing the meeting agendas, identifying any training needs and proposing discussion items. It is anticipated that a considerable amount of this Panel's work can be conducted virtually.

The profile of the Panel should, where possible, reflect the tenant base of Torus and represent the 3 heartlands.

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

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

- Current tenants of 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

Other considerations:

- All vacancies are publicised, and anyone who is interested and eligible can express an interest
- New members to the Editorial Panel will be appointed through a selection process

Approved @ LOC 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023

- New members of the Panel will participate in training when required
  - Members will be expected to act as individuals and not represent any interested group, area or political party
  - All information will be provided to the Panel in an anonymised format. The role of the Panel will not be to deal with individual repairs
  - 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 Repairs and Maintenance Panel and/or Torus into disrepute will be suspended, pending investigation, and may be asked to resign
  - If a group 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 Group will meet monthly online, additional meetings may be set to cover training and development.

Torus will provide reasonable travel expenses and electronic equipment for members to participate in meetings.

- Members of the Editorial Panel should make every effort to attend meetings. If a member is unable to attend, apologies should be sent to the Communications team in advance of the meeting to avoid unnecessary costs
  - 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 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
  - An attendance register is to be kept for all meetings (to include apologies and authorised absences) and Torus will provide support to ensure the effective running and smooth administration of the Panel
  - The quorum of the Group will be 2 members plus the Chair
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## Safeguards

Members must:

- Adopt and abide by the code of conduct; and
- Attend appropriate training
- 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 Editorial Panel
- The Editorial 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.