



Diversity and Inclusion Panel Notes

Friday 20th March 2026

10:30 am – 12:30 pm

Staff Attendance

Annmarie Flynn – Tenant Involvement Team Leader

David Pye - Tenant Involvement Officer

Attendees

Redacted for sharing

Welcome, Introductions and Agree previous notes.

The notes from previous Diversity and Inclusion Panel meeting on 6th February 2026 were agreed. The panel agreed

they like the format, style and structure of the Diversity Panel minutes of meeting.

Recommendations Action Log update & responses

David Pye Tenant Voice Team Involvement Officer gave update on any questions raised at previous Diversity and Inclusion Panel meeting which needed further clarification or additional action. There were no outstanding questions

Declaration of Interest

Annmarie stated that declaration of interest ensures that all panels are impartial and can discuss issues in a balanced way.

Will Gill stated that he was involved with the charity Safe Harbour which offers support and advice to those suffering from domestic violence and would disclose if group applied for funding.

Panel Comments



“We are aware that when on various panels if we have an interest with a particular group or company, we declare it.”

“Declaring our interest on say the Torus community grants panel ensures our and the grant panels impartiality”

Diversity and Inclusion Panel Workplan 2026 - 2027

Annmarie led a general discussion around what the panel's priorities should be over the next twelve months, along with specific activities and processes the panel would like to know more about.

Panel Comments



"The workplan could benefit from team building training for all involved tenants"

"It may be useful if involved tenants could shadow frontline staff perhaps a Tenant Liaison Officer or Neighborhood Officer for a day to understand more fully what different roles actually involve"

"We attended an impact day with the team to undertake a recruitment promotion, it's difficult. Most people just can't commit to getting actively involved they simply don't have the time"

"It's clear that representation does tend to be older people, younger people aren't interested and people with family commitments find it difficult to get involved"

Action

The panel asked if a representative of Torus People Services could attend a future meeting to discuss staff recruitment process to assess the application and interview process. To identify any potential barriers to those from diverse backgrounds applying for post within the Torus Group.

- David to request a representative of Torus People Services attend future panel meeting

Recruitment

Annmarie enquired if the panel had any thoughts or suggestions on how Torus can increase tenant participation and representation and participation from BME / Global Ethnic Majority communities.

Panel Comments



“I think it’s important to recognize the amount of work the team put in throughout the year to actively encourage tenants to get involved there are lots of involvement opportunities.”

“The Tenant Voice team are open to new ideas; they have done everything to encourage new tenants to get involved”



“Recruitment promotions need to be free of jargon, informal whilst encouraging tenants to get involved and have their say”

“Torus need to promote, advertise its tenant involvement opportunities more effectively, posters, online post have got to be friendly and creative”

“Consider doing coffee mornings, outreach work in schools, community centers”

“The Foundation have close links with diverse communities can they assist the team promoting Tenant Voice to a wider audience.”

“BME tenants can offer a different perspective on Torus services they would be very welcome on this panel and others”

“Torus should ensure diverse perspectives are listened to”

“The panel appreciate that involved tenant participation and recruitment is an issue across the whole sector”

“Torus need to get more leaseholders actively involved on panels”

“It could be useful hearing from Torus staff who are also tenants in social housing about what their experiences are, they have perspective of both sides of coin”

“Not sure what the barriers are, and why tenants choose not to get involved.”



“Why do you keep failing, recruitment does need to be improved, whilst still recognizing what does work and doing more of that”

“I feel we as involved tenants are losing momentum, we have the same discussions, we should be concentrating on the core housing issues like ensuring homes are safe and warm”

Regulator of Social Housing (RSH)

Annmarie discussed the RSH Competence and Conduct Standard which will come into force in October 2026 and the potential for trained involved tenants to be involved in the interview process.

Panel Comments



“Managers can be technically good but not customer focussed but I’m unsure if tenants currently have the skillset to sit on an interview panel”

“With appropriate training, knowledge and support we could take part in the interview process and give a tenants perspective”

“Managers shouldn’t be disconnected from tenants; on paper some people look great but keep moving because they can’t communicate well”

“It could be an idea to test potential manager during interview with an exchange with a involved tenant to see how

they deal with a real situation to see how they respond to request for help. It could be part of a practical assessment”

“Consider using a real anonymised call during interview stage to see how the interviewee responds it would be an excellent test of communication skills”

“Use role play in interviews to test the applicant.”



“If the regulator wants to test how landlords involve trained tenants in appointment process having a tenant representation on the interview panel or in a separate marked assessment that could be a positive”

“Consider tenant input when testing skills adding there marks on to a scoring matrix”

“If we received the technical skills to interview effectively via training being involved in the interview process would be good”

“If a finance director was to be appointed as part of the interview process it would be positive if we could assess how they communicate complex subject matter to the tenants”

“Those in senior positions need to have empathy and knowledge of the customers, from our perspective”

“Managers need to be good communicators we could help measure that if we were involved in interview process”

The Panel had a discussion around the potential for the current tenant chairs representing the involved tenants during the interview process. This suggestion was not thought ideal; the panel voted on the proposal and rejected the idea.

Panel Additional Comments



“There needs to be further staff training around staff considering other people’s needs. Within HMS there seems to be a wide gap between operatives who understand protected characteristics and understanding of tenants with disabilities”

“If you apply for a position within Torus the job application form is unnecessarily complex, that could be a potential for some applying for jobs”

Any Other Business

No other business



