



# Tenant Voice Communal Spaces

Tenant Inspectors Report  
June 2022



### Aim

The Aim of this inspection was to

- Test and review the commitments made within the Torus Facilities Management Policy 2020 and the Torus Communal Cleaning Specification 2022. The Policy is to ensure effective facilities management and compliance is provided it applies to all properties owned by Torus.
- The Torus Communal Cleaning Specification 2022 indicates the defined cleaning task and the frequency they are completed
- Test tenants views on both the Torus Facilities Management Policy 2020 and the Torus Communal Cleaning Specification 2022
- Provide feedback on service, policy, standard, condition and cleanliness of communal spaces identifying both high and low quality service provision
- Make recommendations for service improvement

### Inspection Process

#### Test One –

Tenant Inspectors will inspect Torus communal spaces in the three heartlands, they will rate the general cleanliness of internal communal spaces in general needs blocks of flats, supported living schemes and extra care schemes.

They will report on condition of walls, floors, lighting, paving, communal doors, intercoms, entrance areas, external communal spaces adjacent to buildings including enclosed garden spaces, bin storage areas, landings, hallways, shared communal space.

Tenant Inspectors will report on any clutter, litter, debris and note any particular health risk noting any potential risk, trip hazards or ill stored materials in internal communal spaces  
Tenant inspectors will note any graffiti, damaged or vandalised facilities within communal space

#### Test Two –

Tenant Voice team will complete communal spaces questionnaire face to face with tenants in general needs stock, supported living schemes and extra care schemes completing an online Microsoft Form.

## Review of Findings

### Test One –

Seven Tenant Inspectors completed a communal spaces tenant inspection in Beechwood Gardens, Cressington, Liverpool, L19, Charterhouse Close, Liverpool, L25 and Newhaven Road, Warrington, WA2 ONP both general needs block flats and The Maples an extra care scheme in Kirkby

### Beechwood Road Ground Floor Communal and Rear enclosed garden



The Tenant Inspector at Beechwood Gardens observations

#### Internal Communal Space Comments



“The entrance areas including the doors, walls, floors, lighting and intercoms are all fine and in good condition “

“Lighting is fine haven’t had any issues, bright enough”

“Communal doors are secure and intercoms work fine”



“The rear communal gardens here are a mess, overgrown”

“Notice boards are good idea but seldom have up to date information there still have LMH logos”

“Nowhere to store valuable bikes or prams”



### External Communal Space Comments



“Major problems here at Beechwood with dog fouling especially in rear communal gardens which have not been cut for months”

“Front communal areas mostly fine but rear gardens are generally in poor condition”

“The bin stores located to front of flats are in very poor condition, I have reported it many times the bin store is not secure, fob entry system broken”

“The bins are constantly being contaminated so city council don’t empty them”

“All the ongoing external cladding work has generated a lot of dust in communal areas”

“The unkempt rear gardens can only encourage rodent problems”

### Newhaven Road, Warrington ground floor communal hall, rear garden and secure storage



*The Tenant Inspector at Newhaven Road stated that the entrance area to flats/garden, level of cleanliness, condition of walls, floors, ceilings were all “Very Good”*

### Internal Communal Space Comments



“The lighting seems fine, it does look well maintained, entrance areas and landings seem bright”

“The block does smell nice and clean unlike some blocks”

“The communal doors, intercoms all look in good condition and appear functional and clean”

“The secure storage next to front door is a good idea for prams, bikes, general storage”

“The flagging around edge of flats is excellent it ensures area doesn’t get muddy in winter and tenants can clean windows without bringing in mud”

“The landings on first floor all clear and offer a good view of rear garden and fields beyond”

“No graffiti or damaged features”



“The communal doors are heavy, could be a problem when bringing wheely bin back in”

“The communal areas do look a little dated just bare brickwork but that’s a minor issue as space is clean, tidy and functional”

### External Communal Space Comments



“In general terms communal spaces all tidy, no trip hazards.

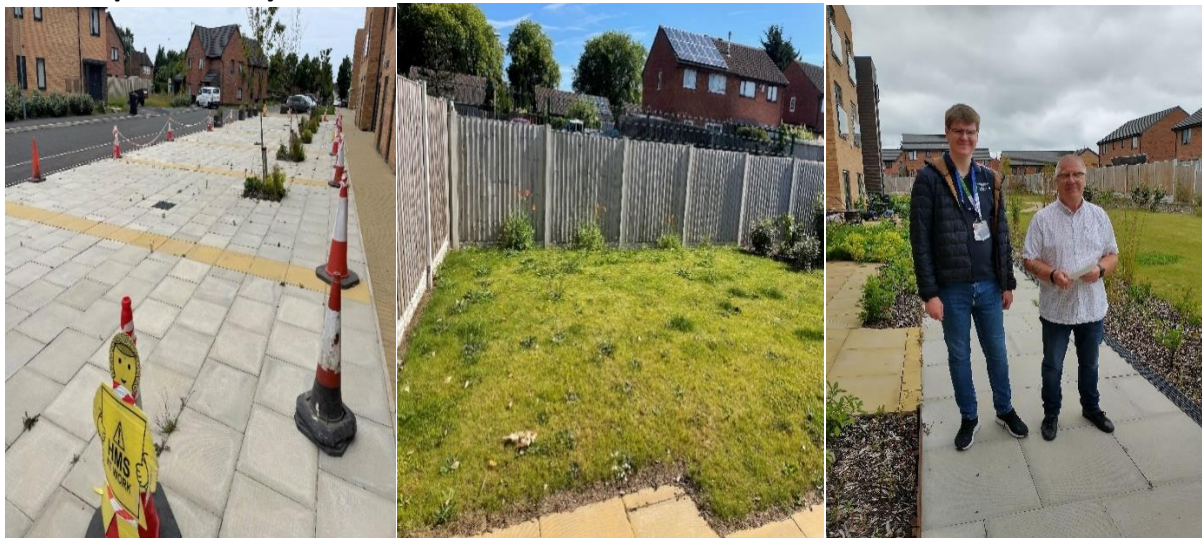
“Grassed areas plain but neat and tidy”



“There are some crisp packets cigarettes stubs and general litter on front lawn blown in by wind”

“Not suitable storing wheelie bins at back of block tenants have to bring them out to front of property through clean communal spaces”

### The Maples, Kirkby, Extra Care Scheme



The tenant inspectors whilst inspecting The Maples reported that the general standard cleanliness of the communal space was “Very Good”

The condition of the communal walls and floors was “Excellent”

### Internal Communal Space Comments



“The lighting in communal space is well maintained throughout the Maples”

“The communal reception area is bright, clean, inviting, the notice board is useful tells tenants of upcoming events and important news”

“Caretaker and cleaner here at Maples good, but could do with more support”

“Communal doors work fine”



"Does look inviting but could do with a lick of paint"

"Netting and glazed areas within block have not been cleaned for years look faded"



"Consider plastic or protective corners on areas of wall spaces which are prone to get marked when especially new tenants move big items through the communal spaces"

### External Communal Spaces



"Solar panels fitted on roof of block help keep service charge down and good for the environment."



"The flagged areas to front of maples, has weeds growing through flags"

"Some loose flags if they got worse could be a tripping hazard"

"Ensure that any damaged or diseased Maple trees are replaced, the trees look nice now and will look even better as they mature"

"The communal gardens adjacent to building is in need of weeding, the lawn is full of weeds, it looks terrible, the lawn at Charterhouse Close, L25 was perfect that's done by HMS, HMS needs to improve lawn maintenance here to same standard"



"Inside communal areas especially those with heavy footfall should be painted in darker colours so scuff marks don't show as quickly"

"Consider setting up or encourage tenants to form a gardening club to utilise the big communal gardens"

"I know No Ball Games signs not enforceable but it may remind parents to stop kicking ball at our fences"

"Some of the external lighting is solar panel and with British weather solar lights not suitable, would prefer a connected motion sensor lights to be fitted"

"Fence panels should be secured at base to stop kids and adults lifting them to get in and retrieve footballs or just to cause a nuisance"

"The front flagged area needs to have bollards installed to stop vehicles damaging flags and causing a potential risk to tenants"



### Test Two

In total twenty communal surveys were completed by the Tenant Inspectors and the Tenant Voice team who held face-to-face meeting with tenants in Foundry Wharf, St Helens, Marwood Towers and Beechwood Gardens, L19.

#### Foundry Wharf, St Helens tenants and entrance area



The general cleanliness of the internal communal spaces and condition of walls and floors were both rated on average as Very Good

4. On a scale of one to five, one being very poor, four being poor, three being average four being good and five stars being Excellent. How would you rate the general cleanliness of the internal communal space

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[Insights](#)

20

Responses



4.05 Average Rating

5. On a scale of one being very poor and five stars being Excellent how would you rate the condition and cleanliness of communal walls and floors ?

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Responses



4.25 Average Rating

No tenants expressed any concerns with the communal lighting all stating it was adequate and well maintained.



“Fairly free from litter does get cleaned on a regular basis”

“Lovely tidy, well maintained by grounds staff, no rubbish on floors including bin areas”

“Block clean looks tidy, no rubbish or graffiti”

“Always free of debris, no trip hazards, clean and tidy”

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## Tenant Inspectors Report

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“Cleaners excellent”

“Communal spaces halls, landings within block mostly good.”

*Tenants made the following comments concerning clutter, debris, litter and trip hazards within communal spaces*



“Occasionally a bike will be left in hallway”

“Nowhere safe or secure to store my children’s expensive bikes”

“Rear communal areas often filled with tenants dumped rubbish potential trip hazard especially for children”

“When I moved in two years ago the communal space was immaculate, and we had three cleaners now we have only one cleaner in this huge building, large glass screens have never been cleaned, curtains nets not cleaned and coffee stains on floors. We need more cleaning staff. I have never seen any trip hazards”

“In general, yes clean, the one cleaner we have works so hard but she works only 4 hours a day an extra care scheme as big as Foundry Wharf needs more cleaners or give cleaner more hours. Cleaning staff should have industrial cleaning equipment, no trip hazards but floors do need to be polished”

“The bistro floor here at Foundry Wharf is a little messy could pose a trip hazard though I know Bistro not Torus responsibility”

Beechwood Road tenant “communal gardens disgraceful, huge amounts of dog waste, the gardeners, window cleaners refuse to work here because of it, it’s a major health risk. Torus have to do something about dog ownership in blocks of flats”

*Tenants were also asked for their views on the condition and cleanliness of the communal bin provision on average it received a Very Good standard*

9. On a scale of one being very poor and five being Excellent how would you rate the condition and cleanliness of the communal bins provision ?

[More Details](#)

Insights

20

Responses



4.00 Average Rating

*General Comments made by tenants included*



“The notice boards useful especially when updated on regular basis”



“Dog ownership in shared spaces not ideal, it’s unfair we can’t use some communal spaces”

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“Would like additional seating in communal spaces, pleased that air conditioning is now being installed here at Foundry Wharf. The path leading to entrance area is too steep some older residents find it difficult and slippery in winter”

“Need clarity on when gritting is completed around blocks in winter”

“Would like some artwork in communal areas to brighten up space, would like the railed fences to be boarded for security and privacy”

“Extra care schemes or blocks with older residents should be fitted with CCTV”

“Why not develop a tenants suggestion scheme”

## Conclusions

In general, the inspectors’ feedback was positive with the standard of internal communal areas inspected rated as ‘very good’. Some improvements to cleaning of glazing have been suggested and review of time allocated for cleaning spaces.

Tenants also identified that the decor in some communal areas would benefit from being refreshed. Bin stores were also rated ‘very good’ however concerns were reported with bin stores at Beechwood Gardens and the location of bin stores isn’t always suitable.

Notice Boards are useful but not always kept up to date with relevant information. Some concerns have been identified with items being left in communal areas and limited storage facilities for larger items e.g., bikes, mobility scooters and prams. As part of the inspection tenants identified some concerns with the cleanliness of external areas e.g., litter, dog fouling and poor maintenance of greenspace in some areas.

## Recommendations

The recommendations of the Tenant Inspectors following the inspections are

- Provide information to tenants on the service they can expect by publishing the Facilities Management Policy and Cleaning Specification 2022 on Torus website and on request form the Customer Hub.
- Increase the number of inspections of external communal gardens and take action to address any concerns.
- Consider options to improve external storage options in general needs blocks and extra care schemes.
- Review whether cleaning hours allocated to communal blocks are sufficient.
- Review the process for updating notice boards to ensure they contain up to date, useful information.
- Torus to consider and respond to all suggestion made in this report.