



Tenant Voice

Torus Empty Homes Maintenance

Tenant Inspectors Report

May 2022



Aim

The Aim of this inspection was to

- Test and review the commitments made within the Torus Empty Homes Maintenance Policy September 2021 which the standard states that Torus will only let homes which meet this published minimum lettable standard. We will let all our homes quickly and Torus will offer a private viewing of any property offered as early as possible
- Test that prospective tenants on viewing a property are made aware of the Empty Homes Maintenance standard at which we re-let properties
- Provide feedback on service, policy, quality of lettable void and the customer experience, identifying high and low quality service provision.
- Make recommendations for service improvements

Inspection Process

Test One

Tenant Inspectors will undertake a site visit to a void property which has been completed ready for letting.

Undertake a tenant inspection and complete an inspection report making a note of general condition of property including floors and stairs, windows, doors and security, bathrooms, kitchens, bedrooms, decorative condition, general cleanliness and condition of gardens.

Torus officer to provide a survey to complete see appendix 1 for copy of tenant inspection form

The tenant inspectors will compare the minimum lettable standard to condition of an inspected completed vacant property

Tenant Inspectors Report

Tenant Inspectors complete inspect Torus available for lettings void property at 2 Charterhouse Close, Woolton, Liverpool, L25 on 23rd May 2022



Test Two

Tenant Inspectors views sought on the Torus Empty Homes Maintenance Policy document.

Torus officer to ask questions Is it easy to read, are there additional information you would like included, is it available on the Torus website? Is it comprehensive does it meet tenants needs ? Is it available in an appropriate format. Is there a need for additional standards ?

Test Three –

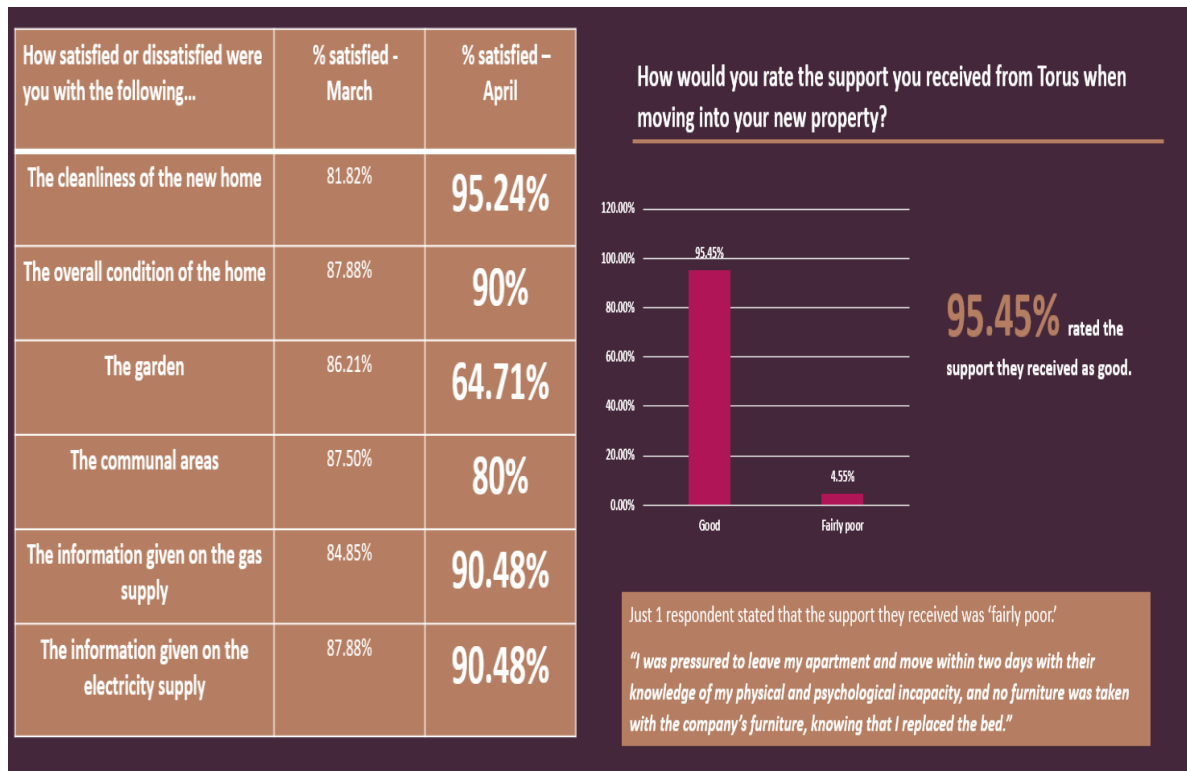
Since March 2022 the Torus Performance Team have conducted a monthly survey requesting all new tenants to complete a Allocations and Lettings survey.

The statistical information for March and April 2022 was shared with the 29 registered tenant inspectors from all three heartlands for their views on its findings.

Tenant Inspectors were asked if they found the report useful, was there a requirement to obtain further statistical information, if it was in an easy to understand format and their views on the results of the survey itself.

See Appendix 2 for full copy of report

Performance Team Allocations & Lettings Satisfaction Survey Layout



Review of Findings

Test One –

The four tenant inspectors who completed an inspection at 2 Charterhouse Close, Woolton, Liverpool, L25, an ready to let one bedroomed flat and one tenant inspector completed a survey on two bedroom flat in Cyprian Place, Edge Lane, Liverpool, L7 survey forms provided by the Tenant Voice team.

Tenant Inspectors Report

5. On a scale of one to five. One being poor Five being Excellent how would you rate the condition of the entrance area or Garden ?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

★★★★★
4.80 Average Rating

The general consensus with regards to the communal areas was largely positive inspectors comments include

“ Yes, green communal space looks clean, tidy, well maintained, internal communal space clean and bright as well”

“Well maintained green space, clean paths, tidy environment, looks pleasant “

“ Yes lovely entrance area to flats very impressed with grounds feels safe, well lit, great view from flat window “

“ Spotless, no rubbish or debris, looks very pleasant and well maintained, good visual approach to flats”

“ For those with a disability especially wheelchair users, gravel should never be used around flats or in communal areas and all new build properties should be wheelchair accessible”

7. On a scale of one to five. One being poor, Five being Excellent how would you rate the cleanliness of the new home ?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

★★★★★
4.60 Average Rating

8. On a scale of one to five. One being poor, Five being Excellent how would you rate the condition of floors and ceilings ?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

★★★★★
4.40 Average Rating

Tenant Inspectors Report

The tenant inspectors were pleased that the property had been painted in neutral colour and to a good standard however they were disappointed that the rear of the walk-in cupboard door had not been painted and the walk-in cupboard space looked “grubby”

The tenant inspectors also stated

“ If the new tenant was disabled or elderly they may not be able to do this additional painting work, just seems odd not to paint both sides of a door”

“ It wouldn’t cost that much more to paint both sides of door and the skirting board in walk in storage space, the rest of the painting is excellent mostly a good finish, this area looks dirty”



Tenant Inspectors Report

The tenant inspectors commented “ The floors are in good condition but could do with being mopped before new tenant moves in”

“ Plaster dust on floors not ideal it gets walked out to the communal areas to”



The tenant inspectors were all impressed with bathroom standard comments included

“ Big spacious, clean, functional, wheelchair users with minor adaptations can use it fine”

“ Bathroom has been fitted to a very high specification, looks great, however definitely needs a bathroom mirror pre fitted so new tenant doesn’t damage paintwork or tiles”

“Bathroom so lovely, high quality fixtures and fittings”

“ New tenant will be delighted with quality of bathroom”

“ Nice to have shower and bath the supplied white shower curtain finishes of bathroom, clean ad bright”

“ Perfect bathroom, excellent lighting nice and bright”

“ Perhaps fit or supply a toilet roll holder, just wouldn’t want new tenant drilling into the new bathroom tiles causing damage”

Tenant Inspectors Report

10. On a scale of one to five. One being poor, Five being Excellent how would you rate the standard of the Bathroom ?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses



5.00 Average Rating

11. Any comments regarding the Bathrooms condition, fittings and decoration

[More Details](#)

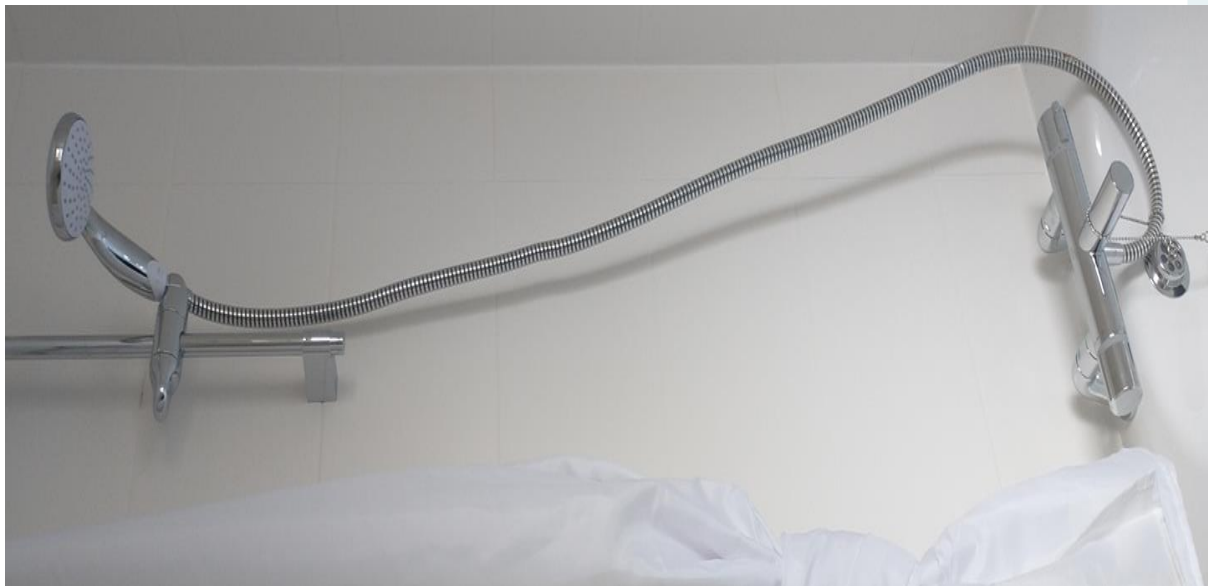
5
Responses

Latest Responses

"Bathroom all nicely done, clean, bright, well lit, high quality fittings, tiling a...

"Bathroom has been fitted to a quality finish looks great however definitely ...

"Lovely and clean bathroom, well tiled, good decoration, excellent lighting, p...



Feedback regarding the kitchens were also all positive, tenant inspector comments included

“ Kitchen looks great, I like it a lot, excellent quality units and worktops”

“Everything just ready for tenant to move in, clean tidy and plenty of power sockets”

“ Makes good use of space, excellent quality units, love layout and colour scheme”



12. On a scale of one to five. One being poor, five being Excellent how would you rate standard of the Kitchen ?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

★★★★★
4.80 Average Rating

13. Any comments regarding the Kitchen units, worktops, sink and fittings ?

[More Details](#)

5
Responses

Latest Responses

"Kitchen is nicely laid out, all great quality fittings, this would be perfect for ...

"Kitchen looks great I like it a lot, excellent quality units and worktops, every...

"Nice work tops, great kitchen units, plenty of plugs, really clean and tidy, pe...

Other general comments included

" Would be good to receive a new tenants handbook when moving into new home"

" A New tenants Manual would be good"

" Good to see fire alarms fitted, I like the notice boards in communal area, good communal doors, and with the intercoms and Rockdoor fitted to flat makes me feel secure here"

9.

Tenant Inspectors Report

“ Everything generally good, just need a little bit more painting done to those walk-in cupboards and rear doors”

“Could not find TV aerial point”

“ The flat seems warm, I presume its well-insulated, the windows are excellent”

“ Good amount of electrical sockets would it be possible to have one with a usb charging point, lots of tenants now have USB chargeable devices”

“ Perhaps consider fitting a curtain rail in rooms”

“ Magnolia offers good neutral décor”

“ Rooms including the bedrooms are of a good size”

“ All Torus properties offered should have a accessibility document that highlights door size, any adaptations, level access shower, hoist installed”

“ Could a video of properties be made available online, may reduce the need for some viewings, tenants especially those with disability will see if property suitable”

A third tenant inspection was completed on 8th June 2022 at the one bedroom flat 19 Newhaven Road, Warrington, WA2 0NP



On the scale of 1 to 5, the entrance area/garden, level of cleanliness, condition of walls and ceiling, condition of windows, condition of bathroom, kitchen area and bedrooms all received a score of four for very good.

The condition of entrance area and garden was given three an average score

The tenant inspector made the following comments regarding the bathroom.

“ Tiling excellent looks really nice, however would have preferred a more completed tiling finish”

Bathroom floor tiles nice quality, standards have risen”

“Plumbing and heating pipework should be boxed in for a quality finish”

Tenant Inspectors Report

“ A redundant extractor fan not removed”

“ Shower head / rail fitted to high would not be suitable for a small person should be lowered or a longer rail supplied”

“ Bathroom fittings good quality”



The tenant inspector commented

“The standard of decoration was good but some finishes needed attention fill gaps around plug sockets, paint any scuff marks prior to handover, snagging would ensure quality finish”



Tenant Inspectors Report

The kitchen was described as providing

“Really high quality units and work tops, however in a small kitchens space is limited, properties in Warrington seem smaller than in other areas”

“ Kitchen units make best use of this limited space”

“ Good provision of double sockets, but a big concern for me is there isn’t a socket near the washing machine place, a new tenant would struggle to put in machine with plug socket being on opposite wall”

“ All brand new, clean, bright”

“ Could boiler have a cover over the controls for a neater finish”

“ A fridge freezer wouldn’t fit in this space”



Test Two –

Tenant Inspectors views sought on the Torus Empty Homes Maintenance Policy document. Feedback from tenant inspectors included

- “ The minor adaptations section could be more detailed, the policy should have an additional section to cover works required to support those with a disability those in a wheelchair have additional requirements”
- “ The minimum lettable standards are clearly set out, easy to understand and free from jargon”
- “ Great, clear, concise standards.”
- “ The specifications have risen since I moved into my new home 18 months ago, that’s a big improvement”
- “ I’m aware that painting is completed now as part of the package however it doesn’t say that in the decoration specification, I think it’s better that Torus do decoration rather than supplying decoration vouchers which some tenants may not spend on new home”
- “ This policy document should be made available in other languages and audio similar to the Reach deck software available on websites”
- “ Should be available in Easy Read as these documents can be overwhelming for people with autism or other neurological issues”
- “ Could not find the Empty Homes Maintenance Policy document on the Torus website”
- “ The standards document really useful give a perspective new tenant a clear indication of what work will be carried out before they move in”
- “ Perhaps the standard should include the removal of any ivy from near or growing on the home, ivy can be very destructive to buildings”
- “ Listed in the General section along with the removal of rodents, fleas ect it should also include the removal of woodworm”
- “ Its good to see as part of standard fire alarms being fitted”
- “ Should be an additional section related to disabled works for example the standard for electric socket and height of kitchen units may need to be modified, I can’t reach some electric sockets in my new home”

Test Three –

Since March 2022 the Torus Performance Team have conducted a monthly survey requesting all new tenants to complete a Allocations and Lettings survey.

The survey results were shared with the tenant inspectors and their views sought on findings and report format.

Feedback from tenants included

- “ Brilliant, well written, well presented”
- “ Ideal way to obtain immediate satisfaction rates from new tenants”

“ Torus are now one company with same standards across the region should now stop recording satisfaction rates separately for Warrington, St Helens and Liverpool. The phrase 3 heartlands should be dropped Torus have properties everywhere in North West now”

“ Torus ask how satisfied the new tenant is with the overall condition of the home, there should be two additional questions asked along with this how satisfied are you with bathroom and how satisfied are you with kitchen. These are often the rooms which Torus have spent the most money on.”

“ I noticed condition of gardens satisfaction rates had fallen from 86% in March to 64% in April this is worrying especially if you are elderly or have a disability and cannot clear a garden of rubbish”

“I noticed in the empty homes standard that gardens are now cleared of all rubbish and shrubs / grass are getting cut which is good. However when I moved into my new home 18 months ago the garden was a mess overgrown worse still it had bits of old metal and rubbish which posed a hazard to my children when discovered months later”

“ The information given regarding electric and gas supply has improved its now at over 90% when I moved into my new home this was not case at one point I was paying two utility suppliers”

“ The most important statistic here is the question Did your new home meet your expectations on moving in ? Torus got 100% tenants saying there home met their expectations”

“ At sign up, tenants should be advised to complete survey and have their say hopefully that would encourage more tenants to complete the survey”

“ Any tenant related surveys and documents should be available to those who require it in different formats including on yellow paper”

“ The performance team have created a really good tenant survey it should be available on website in a prominent position and hopefully it can later be included in the annual report”

Recommendations

- In the Performance Teams monthly Allocations and Lettings satisfaction survey should Include specific questions relating to tenant satisfaction with regards to standard of bathroom and kitchen.
- Further improve Empty Homes Standard

- Supply and fit a mirror and toilet roll holder in bathroom
- Box in any heating / water pipework
- If door is to be painted ensure both sides painted along with all skirting boards
- Supply at least one electrical socket with a incorporated USB charger
- Remove any redundant extractor fans
- Final work task in vacant property should be a mopping of floors to remove any plaster dust
- Place the Torus Empty Homes standard on the website
- Supply new tenants with a “ New Home Manual”
- All Torus properties should have a accessibility document that highlights door size, steps within property, any adaptations, level access shower or hoist installed