



torus

Playing our Role
Think Family

Safeguarding Strategy 2024 – 2027

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Document control

Period covered 2024-2027

Group strategy – approved by Board

Responsible officer – Group Finance Director

Review in 2 years (2026)

1. Executive Summary

It is the fundamental right of every adult, child and young person to live a life that is free from harm, neglect and abuse. This includes physical, sexual, emotional, neglect, domestic abuse, financial abuse, discrimination, organisational abuse, modern slavery and self-neglect. Torus has a statutory obligation to safeguard people and takes this commitment extremely seriously.

This strategy sets out Torus' approach to safeguarding the adults, children and young people who live in our homes and access our services. It also covers colleagues, contractors and other partners that deliver services to Torus tenants and leaseholders.

Our approach is to:

- Comply with legal and regulatory requirements
- Maintain robust safeguarding arrangements across all relevant aspects of service delivery
- Work in partnership with other agencies to reduce the risk of harm and abuse for Torus customers and their families, and Torus colleagues
- Understand unique circumstances and individual differences, enabling us always to act in the individual's best interests
- Make safeguarding the responsibility of all Torus colleagues

A number of Safeguarding policies and procedures support this strategy. These must always be read in conjunction with this document and comprise:

- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Procedures
- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Safeguarding Children Procedures
- ABC Respond+ Procedure
- Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices Policy – Employees
- Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices Procedure - Employees
- Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices Policy – Tenants and Service Users
- Domestic Abuse and Harmful Practices Procedure - Tenants and Service Users
- Prevent Policy and Procedure
- Managing Allegations Against Staff Policy and Procedure

2. Introduction

Torus recognises that we have a significant role to play in safeguarding adults, children, and young people at risk as part of our day-to-day work in communities.

The Group owns and manages more than 40,000 homes across 11 local authority areas in the Northwest, including properties for social and affordable rent, leasehold, and shared ownership. Homes for older people, supported accommodation for people with additional care needs and hostels are also an important part of the Group's housing portfolio.

Community-based activities also take place across Torus geographies, including at the FireFit Youth and Community Hub in South Liverpool. Owned and managed by Group charity Torus Foundation, the hub supports local young people to access and participate in positive youth activities and programmes, as well as offering public access facilities for wider community benefit.

As a landlord and social purpose organisation operating in communities, we recognise we can get 'behind the door' where other agencies may struggle. This ability to identify safeguarding concerns, allegations or evidence concerning the abuse or neglect of children or adults at risk, across all points of contact with tenants and their families, means we can make a positive and sometimes life-changing difference.

The primary objective of this strategy is to build upon safeguarding activities undertaken, and outcomes delivered, over the last three years. The previous strategy was entitled 'Playing our Role' and set out how Torus would 'work in partnership with statutory bodies, provider organisations and other relevant stakeholders to deliver effective multi-agency safeguarding services across Torus communities'. Progress made between 2021 and 2024 is shown in Section 4.

3. Strategic Links

Internal Drivers

The Torus Group Corporate Plan 2021-2026 sets out four goals that directly relate to safeguarding outputs. These are:

- **Investment** Embed exemplar standards of safety across living and working environments.
- **Resilience** Foster partnerships that develop communities where people thrive
- **Intelligence** Provide tailored solutions based on an understanding of need and aspiration
Embed a culture of evidence-based improvement and learning from experience
- **Influence** Influence people, networks, and markets to unlock opportunity

At the time of writing this strategy, a new Group Corporate Plan is being developed and will launch in April 2024. This will comprise three key themes: People and Services; Homes and Communities; and Viability and Sustainability. This section of the Safeguarding Strategy will therefore be updated at the time when linkages to the 2024 to 2029 Corporate Plan have been established.

External drivers

All social landlords are expected to have appropriate arrangements in place to provide for the safeguarding of adults, children, and young people. Our obligations are set out within a national legal framework, which includes:

- The Care Act 2014
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Health & Social Care Act 2008 (Regulated activities) Regulations 2014
- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards 2007
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Equality Act 2010
- Modern Slavery Act 2015
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012
- The Children Act 1989 and 2004, including Section 11 duties

Additionally, our safeguarding activities align to the good practice principles of the Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) and are working to achieve accreditation in 2024.

4. Where are we now?

In 2021, Torus launched 'Playing our Role', a three-year Safeguarding Strategy designed to put the foundations of effective all-organisational safeguarding approaches in place. The approach was broken down into four priorities: Collaborative; Responsive; High Performing; and Choice and Control. Key activities and outcomes against each priority are shown below, together with priorities for further service improvement.

1. Collaborative

Activities and outcomes	Priorities for further improvement
<p>Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Safeguarding training rolled out: as of January 2024, overall compliance stands at 78%, with over 2,000 colleagues trained over the last three years. Training is delivered on a quarterly basis and content is reviewed in line with internal and external change• Domestic abuse training launched in Oct. 2023• Groupwide Communications Plan established and rolled out, including 7-minute briefing, news updates and awareness raising events <p>Partnerships and external reviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Contributed to domestic homicide reviews and safeguarding adults review, bringing back learnings and agreeing actions to improve processes and practices• Continued to represent customers and colleagues on the Safeguarding Adults Board in Liverpool, St Helens and Warrington, contributing to the work of the Board's subgroups• Improved partnership working with Early Help, which is now co-located within two Torus offices• Continued to partner with St Helens Borough Council around domestic abuse services. We delivered S2S specialist Domestic Abuse Services, recruited MASH, Court and complex needs IDVA, as well as multi-agency training for professionals in St Helens• Took part in a Section 11 audit in St Helens, contributing to audits of partner agencies, and completed a multi-agency audit for the St Helens Safeguarding Children's partnership• Used surveys and safeguarding 'walkabout' events to gather key information from colleagues on safeguarding and domestic abuse concerns• Worked with safeguarding boards and partnerships to deliver awareness raising and marketplace events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review the nature of current and potential new multi-agency partnerships to determine strategically where Torus' safeguarding resources can deliver maximum value• Establish an agreed and consistent partnership approach with Early Help, using specialist tools to assess need and risk• Develop training plans for those people who work directly with children, young people, and vulnerable adults (EHAT/Graded Care)• Based on themes arising at Torus learning circles, design and roll out training and/or communications for colleagues to take a 'whole household' approach, focusing not only on the adult, but also on 'seeing the child'.• Focus current and future training on both knowledge building and on building a consistent culture of empathy and understanding for those experiencing domestic abuse. This will ensure all colleagues are fully supportive and do not engage in victim blaming language• Continue to work to connect frontline teams into one cohesive safeguarding response, using the same language and approaches to describe need, safeguarding and mental health

2. Responsive

Activities and outcomes	Priorities for further improvement
<p>Resourcing and service structures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Recruited a dedicated Safeguarding Officer in 2021, initially on a fixed term contract. This role has since been made permanentLaunched an internal Domestic Abuse Steering Group in November 2021Continued to work towards accreditation with DAHA, which aims to improve the organisation's response to domestic abuse. This has involved reviewing policy, processes, case management and communicationsInvested additional resources to respond to domestic abuse, creating a new Domestic Abuse team as part of the Safer Estates serviceReviewed the safeguarding governance structure, creating a safeguarding subcommittee and ensuring this body works closely with Torus' BoardLaunched a children's subgroup to improve service delivery on behalf of children and young people <p>Representation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Actively contributed to multi-agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) across Liverpool, Warrington, and St Helens	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Review housing processes (for example, exceptional lets and tenancy amendments) from a safeguarding perspective. This will ensure quality in Torus practices and minimise the risk of key information not being collected or sharedExplore how resources can be best utilised to ensure all services are able to deliver at least basic safeguarding servicesDevelop a 'whole household' approach, focused on colleague training, to identify risk at a household level and offer appropriate supportEnhance data availability and data sharing so that those delivering safeguarding services have access to accurate information on household need and support requirements. This needs to focus on getting key information to the right frontline teams and services consistently

3. High performing

Activities and outcomes	Priorities for further improvement
<p>Processes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reviewed and extended ABC Respond procedures to make it easier for tenants and customers to escalate concerns. This resulted in an increase in the average number of escalations from 16 in 2021 to 120 in 2023 Introduced new case management processes to make internal safeguarding reporting more consistent. As a result, teams are better able to identify concerns for adults and children, as well as the type of abuse and whether a referral to social care was made. The number of reports continues to increase, rising from 123 (adults and children) in the first half of 2022/23 to 165 in the first half of 2023/24 <p>Oversight and auditing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launched a safeguarding dashboard, which continues to be developed Introduced management oversight within case management processes to enhance the quality and accountability of safeguarding concerns Completed a series of safeguarding audits, aiming to identify examples of particularly good practice as well as opportunities to improve Launched the analysis of near misses, completing case reviews and significant event analysis (SEA). These are considered at Torus' safeguarding learning circles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a detailed and consistent approach to case management Train all relevant colleagues on effective case management Design and embed a supervision model for colleagues to support their development and mitigate risk

4. Choice and control

Activities and outcomes	Priorities for further improvement
<p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consulted with tenants via Torus' Tenant Voice panel and Youth Panel about Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse policies Delivered sessions at Torus' extra care schemes around safeguarding and how to access support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore ways to improve how teams listen to tenants and record intervention outcomes Work to build a better understanding of issues around people's mental capacity, and how this relates to service delivery and effective support

5. Where do we want to be?

Effectively and empathetically safeguarding adults, children and young people at risk will always be a core part of our day-to-day work in communities. Building on 'Playing our Role 2021 - 2024', our 2024 to 2027 strategy will work to streamline what we do and how we do it. The focus therefore is on high quality services that make the best possible use of Torus' internal resources as well as external partner working with service commissioners and relevant agencies.

The 'Playing Our Role 2024 - 2027' safeguarding strategy vision is as follows:

We will effectively respond to risk and need at the right time. Our offer will be safety-led and non-judgemental. Our skilled colleagues will be professionally curious and confident to escalate concerns and deliver direct support to an individual, not a case number. We will continue to play our role and work with partner agencies, ensuring that our contribution to safeguarding processes is consistently excellent and results in life-changing interventions.

Four new key priorities have been developed to achieve this vision. These are shown below:

1. The Right Response

We know that we are in a unique position to get 'behind the front door' where other services struggle. Equally, we have frequent contact with tenants and customers, providing multiple opportunities to identify risk and provide the links to the right support at the right time. If we can offer early assistance and support consistently, we can contribute significantly to the reduction or prevention of abuse and neglect.

Right Response aims	Activities to deliver these aims
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All colleagues will use a shared language in relation to safeguarding, vulnerability, need and support2. All colleagues will have access to the relevant training and resources relevant to their role3. The use of multi-agency assessment tools used to identify abuse and neglect will be consistent across teams4. Meaningful awareness events will support the continual development of an all-Group safeguarding culture, based on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empathy and understanding• Non-judgemental behaviours• People's individual lived experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop, launch and embed an internal threshold of need guidance resource• Create service-specific toolkits that link to job roles and required training levels• Agree if Early Help Assessment Tools or Graded Care Profile Assessments will be used• Hold at least three awareness events per year, tailoring content to meet specific colleague needs and responsibilities

2. Think Family

We aim to champion the voices of children and young people living in our homes and communities. Our service will continue to develop so that it proactively works to establish the needs of the whole household, rather than the tenant or the property in isolation. The ultimate ambition is that safeguarding considerations will form part of all key Torus interactions with tenants and their families.

Think Family aims	Activities to deliver these aims
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The voices of children and young people living in Torus households or accessing our services will be championed 2. Safeguarding considerations will be designed into core housing management processes so that whole household needs are consistently considered and acted upon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the terms of reference and membership of the Children’s Subgroup and instruct this group to explore ways to identify and support needs that exist across the whole household within available resources • Establish internal projects with relevant teams to ensure core systems and processes are developed with a safeguarding lens, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management transfers • Code of conduct • Case management

3. Collaboration

We will develop new and strengthen existing relationships with key partners, using these to deliver more effective and joined-up solutions to safeguard the adults, children and young people who live in our homes and access our services. By fostering greater understanding and information sharing between agencies, we will play our part to develop multi-agency procedures. This will benefit those who access safeguarding support whenever we make referrals.

Collaboration aims	Activities to deliver these aims
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Partnership working efforts will target the multi-agency forums at which we can contribute meaningfully and bring learnings back into the organisation 2. Collaboration between internal teams will be joined up, driven by effective information sharing between service areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake regular reviews of partnerships and presence at external forums and networking groups. This will establish where Torus resources can make a meaningful contribution to local and national initiatives, or to address needs and risks of individuals or families • Continue to attend safeguarding boards and contribute to local and national goals and initiatives focused on reducing neglect through board workstreams and subgroups • Audit current information sharing processes and systems and work with key enabling teams to design a seamless customer experience from identifying risk/need to receiving the right support – regardless of the frontline team that has initial contact with the tenant or family member

4. Learning

We will improve case management processes to ensure quality and consistency in how we record and maintain safeguarding information. Colleagues will consistently update systems with up-to-date case notes in a professional and accurate way. Training and support will be made available so that all relevant colleagues within Torus are clear on what is expected of them in terms of recording safeguarding interactions. We will also use learning circles, testing and audits to make sure continual improvements are being achieved.

Learning aims	Activities to deliver these aims
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Case management processes and systems will be enhanced on an ongoing basis 2. Learnings from serious case reviews, near misses and national best practice will be embedded into the safeguarding service 3. These learnings will be shared with all Torus colleagues to build understanding and a 'one Torus' safeguarding culture 4. Methods to gather feedback from tenants and service users will be enhanced so their voices directly inform the development of services, policies and processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce a supervision model to monitor performance of internal teams, and identify training and support needs • Develop the safeguarding dashboard as a tool for effective performance management, increasing the quality of data and of 1-2-1s with managers. All discussion will be evidence-based and grounded in samples of work undertaken • Contribute to multi-agency audits and reviews, taking an open and honest approach to learning and using best practice findings to inform service changes • Monitor serious case reviews and near misses, via the safeguarding committee • Continue to test the effectiveness of our safeguarding approach through audits, case reviews and data analysis, providing reports via the established safeguarding governance structure • Develop and roll out a schedule of 7-minute briefings, lunch and learn events, and awareness raising initiatives • Collaborate with Tenant Voice and frontline teams to design effective tenant and service user feedback mechanisms, and to incorporate key learnings into service change

6. How we will get there

The following 16 core actions will collectively deliver the future state set out in Section 5:

	Project	Owned by
1	Develop, launch and embed an internal threshold of need guidance resource	Practice and Quality Assurance Sub-group
2	Create service-specific toolkits that link to job roles and required training levels	Practice and Quality Assurance Sub-group
3	Agree how teams will contribute to Early Help Assessment Tools and training requirements	Children's Subgroup
4	Hold at least 3 internal awareness events per year, tailoring content to meet specific colleague needs and responsibilities	Practice and Quality Assurance Sub-group
5	Review the terms of reference and membership for the children's subgroup	Children's Subgroup
6	Partner with relevant internal teams to ensure core housing systems and processes embed safeguarding considerations	Practice and Quality Assurance Sub-group
7	Commence regular reviews of partnerships and Torus' presence at external forums and networking groups	Group Housing Director
8	Continue to attend safeguarding boards and contribute to local and national goals and initiatives focused on reducing neglect through board workstreams and subgroups	Group Head of Support Network
9	Audit information sharing processes and systems and work with key enabling teams to design a seamless customer experience from identifying risk/need to receiving the right support	Practice and Quality Assurance Sub-group
10	Develop the supervision model to monitor the performance of internal teams, and identify training and support needs	Group Head of People Services
11	Develop the safeguarding dashboard as a tool for effective performance management, increasing the quality of data and of 1-2-1s with managers	Data and Dashboard Subgroup
12	Contribute to multi-agency audits and reviews, taking an open and honest approach to learning and using best practice findings to inform service changes	Training and Learning Subgroup
13	Monitor serious case reviews and near misses via the safeguarding committee	Safeguarding Officer
14	Continually test our safeguarding approach through audits, case reviews and data analysis, providing reports via the established safeguarding governance structure	Practice and Quality Assurance Sub-group
15	Develop and roll out a schedule of 7-minute briefings, lunch and learn events, and awareness raising initiatives	Training and Learning Subgroup
16	Collaborate with Tenant Voice and frontline teams to design effective tenant and service user feedback mechanisms, and to design key learnings into service change	Tenant Voice Team Leader

Implications of Business Areas

- HMS and its subcontractors will be expected to continue to use the ABC Respond Procedure to escalate concerns. This procedure has been well embedded, and this is evidenced in an increase in reporting. Colleagues are expected to attend Safeguarding training, which is delivered via online learning management systems, reducing impact on service delivery.
- Torus Developments colleagues are expected to implement the ABC Respond Procedure to escalate concerns and attend training relevant to job roles.
- Torus Foundation and Housing colleagues understand they all have a role to play in the identification and escalation of safeguarding concerns. Colleagues will be expected to take a multi-agency approach to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk and work in partnership with statutory and voluntary agencies to keep people safe. All colleagues will access relevant training tailored to their roles and responsibilities.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation will be key to the implementing this strategy and will be driven by a commitment to quarterly insight reporting. The primary methods use to implement, monitor and evaluate will include:

1. Safeguarding subgroups will meet monthly to progress actions required to deliver the strategy.
2. Monitoring of Safeguarding performance data on a quarterly basis, with reports presented to Safeguarding subcommittee.
3. Production of an annual Safeguarding Report, approved by Torus Board.
4. Risk and controls managed via the development of a safeguarding risk framework and reported to the Safeguarding Security and Challenge Group.