



Tenant Voice

Rents

Tenant Inspectors Report Summary April 2021



Aim

The Aim of this inspection was to

- Test the commitments made in the Torus offer for rents, which is, to ensure that rent and service charges are collected in a timely manner and that tenants are given assistance to enable rent to be paid on time and to avoid the build-up of any debt.
- We will provide a range of rent payment methods that are convenient, cost effective and flexible to give tenants the opportunity to pay their rent in a way that suits their needs.
- Provide you with timely information in relation to your rent and other accounts
- Provide advice, support and guidance to enable you to maximise your income.

Inspection Process

All registered Tenants Inspectors from across the 3 heartlands were emailed and asked if they would like to take part in the rents inspection and 10 tenant inspectors took up the offer, 5 from Liverpool, 3 from St Helens and 2 from Warrington.

The inspection was carried out in three sections to test the rents local offer by:

- Accessing the Torus website
- Making a telephone call to our Customer Hub
- Reviewing standard letters & looking at the rent's communication plan

Test One – Review rents information on the website

The tenant inspectors were sent a full brief that included a link to the online google forms to provide Feedback, the brief also provided a link to access the main Torus website and the inspectors were asked to visit the three heartland websites from the Landlord drop down menu and provide feedback on the following:-

Is the information on the website?

- Simple to access?
- Easy to understand?
- Does the language used show customer care and respect?
- Provide information on a range of rent payment methods?
- Provide information on advice and support available?

Test Two – Telephone the customer hub with a rent query

The inspectors were asked to call the Customer Hub and make a note of the date and time that they called.

Once answered by the advisor they were asked to note how they were greeted and ask for the name of the advisor if they were not already been given it?

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Then ask the advisor:

- How can I check my rent balance?
- What are the different options for paying my rent?
- What support is available if I am struggling to pay my rent?

The inspectors were asked to note the information and advice that they were given and to consider:

- How they felt about the call?
- Was the advisor helpful?
- Were they able to answer their questions?
- Did they feel they were treated with respect and customer care?

Test Three – Review standard rent letters

The tenant inspectors were sent two rent letters, the back page of the rent letter that gives information and advice, also a copy of the rents communication plan that is in development and asked to provide feedback on:

- Are the letters easy to understand?
- Does the tone of the letters show good customer care and respect?
- Provide feedback on reverse of letter and communication plan.

Review of Findings

Test One – Review rents information on the website

The majority of inspectors said the information was simple to access on all 3 heartland websites, easy to understand, provides information on a range of payment methods, provides information on advice and support available and the language shows customer care and respect .

“Warrington and St Helens rent information is hard to find but on the Liverpool site it’s s on the front page.”

“Found the information clear, easy to understand and helpful, particularly the contact details of agencies that can support if in difficulties with rent.”

Test Two – Telephone the customer hub with a rent query

Six tenant inspectors called the customer hub with rent queries.

The majority of inspectors said the advisor was helpful, was able to answer questions and that they felt the advisor treated them with respect and customer care.

“If you have no internet you can still get through the phone number is free, plenty of information available and open 9-5, you can be redirected to someone in an emergency welfare officer is available.”

“I was really pleased how I was dealt with about my rent and the advice I was given, I was told I can pay rent over the phone using my card or set up a direct debit, which proved really helpful to me.”

One caller felt the advisor could have been more helpful initially but once she explained the problem received all the information she needed.

Test Three – Review standard rent letters

Six tenant inspectors reviewed two rent arrears letters.

The majority of tenant inspectors found the letters easy to understand and showed customer care and respect.

Recommendations

Website

- One website for all 3 Heartlands.
- Create a tab on the homepage specifically for struggling to pay and rent arrears.
- The facility to speak to a welfare reform officer or rent officer direct from website particularly for people with a sight impediment.

Letters

- Easy read version of letters for people with disability as can be too much information on one page.
- Put marker on a person's account to show they have a disability so that any letters that go to them are in a way they can understand.