

SOCIAL IMPACT

Report 2022/23

 torus
foundation



Helping to improve lives and build stronger communities

That's what we work hard to achieve here at Torus Foundation. We're the charitable part of the Torus Group, the North West's largest affordable homes provider.

Working with a wide range of partners, we invest group profits in health and wellbeing, education, social and economic initiatives that improve the lives of local people and help to build stronger communities.

This means we can:



Build work-readiness and opening job opportunities, to unlock **Employment & Skills**



Empower people in a practical way, to improve their **Health & Wellbeing**



Help people access benefits to get through tough times, through **Financial Inclusion**



Provide safe, engaging and empowering environments for **Young People** to thrive

Welcome

Welcome to our 2022/23 Social Impact Report, which showcases our work to make a difference in communities over the last 12 months.

We know that having a safe, secure and well-maintained home is the bedrock on which people can build strong futures. As a business for social purpose, we also believe in changing lives for the better. That's why our charitable foundation exists, and why I'm so proud to introduce our project highlights for 2022/23.

Every year we support thousands of Torus tenants and neighbourhoods to access training and find work, manage their money, improve their digital skills as well as their health and wellbeing, and play a part in the life of their community.

For many, these are critical interventions at any time. In 2022/23, increased life pressures caused by the cost-of-living crisis meant that our work was more needed than ever.

We needed to step forward, adapt and keep services moving.

Unlocking new funding and launching new partnerships played a critical role in this, enabling us to make the biggest impacts where they were most needed, and to deliver a spectrum of services designed to make transformational changes to people's lives.

The passion and commitment of our teams and partners shines out in every chapter of this report. Their unsparing approach to delivery in the face of difficult new realities has been inspirational.

I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and dedication.

Kate Shone
Managing Director



Our purpose

Supporting Torus tenants, their families and the communities they live in is central to our social purpose. We understand that we are in a unique position to make positive differences to people's lives and to make a meaningful contribution at a wider, neighbourhood level.

Our work is focused, but holistic. Rather than working on one specific strand of support (such as only working to help older and vulnerable people stay independent in their home), our teams deliver multiple interventions, for young and older alike, based on actual need.

Some are the result of direct referrals from other parts of the Torus Group; others are open to all. All are developed in partnership with our service users.

This report summarises our social impact in terms of the outcomes that our services and projects delivered for residents, service users and the wider community. It includes many examples of the tangible differences our work has made to people's lives, broken down into the four Focus Areas where we believe our impacts are greatest: **Employment & Skills, Health & Wellbeing, Financial Inclusion** and **Young People**.



2022/23 Highlights



1,331
people supported
into work



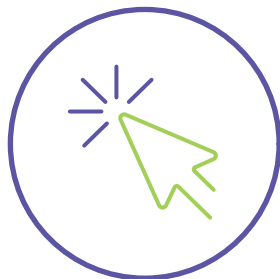
90%
of participants said this
improved skills & confidence



£4.78 million
unlocked in financial gains
for 2,874 Torus tenants



2,796
people attended Health
& Wellbeing sessions



766
people benefited from
our Digital Inclusion service



100%
said their skills &
confidence had improved



Community Investment Fund

Every year, we invest funds to support community-based, locally-led organisations that nurture positive social change on the ground. This model is designed to empower communities to develop locally-determined solutions to challenges and opportunities.

All applications to the Community Investment Fund (CIF) must support one or more of our focus areas and awards are decided by a tenant-led panel.

2022/23 at a glance



64 Projects

were awarded funds totalling **£59,550**



Liverpool 35 awards
St Helens 19 awards
Warrington 10 awards



The majority of awards were focused on tackling:

Health and Wellbeing

47 awards totalling **£46,914**



Financial Inclusion

11 awards totalling **£6,859**

Beyond the numbers

A CIF award of **£760 to Norris Green Community Alliance** funded packs for hard-hit local families, filled with life necessities including hygiene and sanitary products, and deodorants.

In nearby **West Derby, Rejuvenate Wellbeing CIC** used their **£620 award** to engage a yoga teacher and hire a venue for older person's health and wellbeing sessions.



The funding has been invaluable as it has given us the opportunity to help and strengthen the community and address their needs and welfare.



We have seen friendships established over the weeks. The session helps combat isolation and loneliness.



Employment & Skills

Unlocking workplace opportunities for all

Context

The North West's training and employment landscape has experienced multiple challenges in the last couple of years. Economic uncertainty has affected the availability of jobs and the types of skills in demand. This, in turn, has led to a volatile recruitment market.

Our services focus on unlocking practical training and job opportunities for local people and families, many of which face significant barriers to employment.

Hands-on, personal support is essential to build confidence and to inspire people to take their first or next step in the workplace.

Our response

In 2022/23, the Foundation's Employment & Skills team worked harder than ever to build close relationships with key local and regional businesses, helping to:

- ✓ Better understand changing business requirements for new employees
- ✓ Use this knowledge and experience to open practical pathways for people to move into employment, focusing on up-and-coming roles
- ✓ Unlock specific opportunities, including training and interviews for people to become forklift truck drivers



Employment & Skills

2022/23 at a glance



1,331 people
supported into
employment



249 Torus tenants
took advantage of the
wraparound support from
New Leaf and Springboard



574 people
gained new skills
through training



**We retained the
Matrix Standard,**
a nationally recognised
Information, Advice and
Guidance standard.



40 people
were supported into
apprenticeships



new leaf

a torus foundation service

Spotlight Project

Established in 2016, New Leaf brought Torus Foundation together with 34 other partners from across Warrington and Cheshire to change lives, create opportunities and make a positive contribution to local communities and the regional economy.

New Leaf specifically focused on supporting people who face many complex challenges in their journey to become job market ready – it's a full 'wraparound' service, blending mentoring, training and learning with job and volunteering opportunities.



new leaf

a torus foundation service

Since inception, highlights include:



6,111 people

helped to find work
or become job ready



1,149 people

moved into employment



955 people

took on training



900+ people

were supported with
their mental health



768 people

were moved from
'economically inactive'
to 'active' job searchers

Funding for New Leaf via the Building Better Opportunities programme, funded by the European Social Fund, with match funding from the National Lottery Community Fund – came to an end in Summer 2023.

The continued huge success of New Leaf's 'not one size fits all approach' over eight years proved the model works – and delivers positive benefits for those furthest away from the job market. Torus Foundation remains committed to keep the momentum of engagement going forward and will continue to help communities take vital steps closer to the work environment.



Beyond the numbers Josephine's Journey

Josephine contacted New Leaf via Facebook. She had come to the UK from Hong Kong was keen to find work. But she worried that, because she was not confident speaking English, she would struggle to find a job.

She decided that she would look for cleaning work, as she could fit this around caring for her children and making sure that they were settling into their new schools and lifestyles that were very different to what they had been used to in Hong Kong.

Josephine was supported with the job search and applied for several jobs. She began a new cleaning job, but as it only provided a few hours, the job search to find something more substantial continued. Within a few weeks, another cleaning role was found with additional hours.

New Leaf also referred Josephine to a training course designed to help her achieve her goal of improving her confidence and English skills.



Bounce back into work

Spotlight Project

Springboard sprung into life in the aftermath of Covid-19 lockdowns. Shockwaves in the job market left local job-ready people looking for a new opportunity. By directing support at those who were recently out of work (0-3 months), Springboard therefore became the catalyst, enabling quick returns to employment.

The programme provided an immediate, flexible offer for people to be successful in the current climate. The focus was on upskilling, career change, growth sectors and stable employment, and linking people to other support programmes.



springboard
cheshire





During the project's lifespan* the partnership led by Torus Foundation:



1,508 people
were supported



568 people
returned to employment



40 people
accessed training



61 people
moved from 'economically
inactive' to active job-seeking

Beyond the numbers Amy's Journey

Amy had just completed a training programme as a Marketing Assistant and was ready to look for her next opportunity.

Applying for lots of jobs, Amy became disheartened with progress and began to feel unmotivated. After a meeting at her local job centre, she was referred to Springboard.

She met up with her mentor and immediately got to work writing cover letters for applications. Together, they spoke about what employers were looking for and then they were able to produce examples of relevant experience she already had to show she could do the job she was applying for.

As a result of the help and support Amy received from Springboard, she was able to land herself a Marketing Executive role within Torus Foundation working for the New Leaf programme and help maximise engagement to the project.



“

The mentor really supported me. She helped me feel confident searching and applying for jobs and I cannot thank her enough.

”

* (October 21 to March 23)

Bridging the 'digital divide'

We live in an increasingly online world and yet digital inclusion remains a big issue across the communities we serve. One in 10 adults nationwide has never used the internet. Many more have basic skills, but lack the confidence and knowledge to take advantage of digital pathways into employment.

Projects like Include-IT Mersey are helping to bridge the 'digital divide', helping people living across St Helens to learn essential online skills. From computer basics to finding training and work, participants are offered a friendly environment to learn at their own pace.

Include-IT Mersey is funded by the UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority as the lead authority.

In 2022/23,



82 people
completed the course



20 people
moved into work



34 people
completed formal
training

**Include-IT
Mersey** 

Health & Wellbeing

Thriving together

Context

Physical and emotional wellness are critical for healthy households. Our ultimate Health & Wellbeing objectives are to help older and vulnerable people to stay independent at home, and to make sure families in crisis have the support they need to overcome short and longer-term challenges.

We've seen the number of people experiencing food and fuel hardship rise in 2022/23. Stepping in when needed has made a massive difference.

Our response

Torus Foundation has worked with key partners to provide free health and wellbeing activities across Torus neighbourhoods and the wider community that support good mental and physical health.

Our work is intended to help communities feel healthier and more positive, boost self-confidence and resilience, working towards reducing stress and anxiety and making people feel less isolated.

The many strands of our Health & Wellbeing work are highlighted on the following pages.



Healthy, affordable food security

As the cost-of-living continues to bite local families, people are having to juggle their household income and make difficult decisions about what to prioritise.

Our response has seen teams build partnerships with local organisations to ensure families have access to healthy and affordable food. The 'Your Local Pantry' model has been successful in supporting local food banks and food pantries across Liverpool and St Helens.

In 2022/23, Torus Foundation helped



2,796 people to improve their health and wellbeing at physical sessions



Fund 9 foodbanks and food pantries



Local schools and community groups to provide further support for local families

Build skills around healthy, low-cost meals, including:



Cooking classes for young people and wider family members, focusing on money saving tips and providing free slow cookers



515 people attended food security/ cooking on a budget workshops



Launched in 2022, Healthy Neighbours is a community-led project that looks at Health & Wellbeing in a practical, wraparound way. Rather than tackle one focus, it works to tackle issues like food poverty, loneliness, obesity, physical inactivity and mental health in combination – and to make an even bigger positive difference.

Earlier this year, Healthy Neighbours received a major boost from the National Lottery through its Community Partnerships Fund. The amazing award of £494,000 over two years will ensure Healthy Neighbours does not just continue, but grows and develops – with local people firmly in the driving seat.



ST HELENS
WELLBEING



Local organisations have been commissioned to deliver targeted activities:

- Each area has a designated Volunteer Co-coordinator and Healthy Neighbour Volunteers, who have a trusted position within their community
- The Co-ordinator and Volunteers consult local people to find out what their priorities are and to empower community members to work together both to meet local needs and promote community cohesion
- Sessions have included writing clubs, coffee and chat, breath and meditation, litter picking, community clean-up days, community gardens, uniform/coat swap shops, get active, walk and talk groups, baby and parent play, and sessions for young people



Beyond the numbers Jim's Journey

Jim was referred for support after experiencing depression. More than anything, he wanted a safe space to connect with others.

While he received individual support, Jim was encouraged to consider ways in which he might want to help others. After completing a range of appropriate and related short courses, including First Aid for Mental Health and Safeguarding, Jim got involved in the development of a men's mental health group.

As a Befriender, he is now helping to signpost others to support, while continuing to be supported and supervised by qualified and experienced mental health staff as part of the Healthy Neighbours Project.

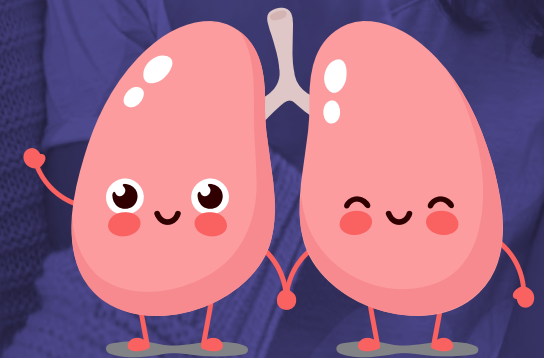
Healthy Neighbours, Healthy Lungs

With support from the Beyond CYP Transformation Programme (Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership) hosted by Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust, our Healthy Neighbours, Healthy Lungs initiative is helping parents to get a better understanding of child respiratory problems.

Having a child with breathing problems can be a very difficult time for families, parents and guardians.

We worked to:

- Recruit 14 Volunteers to become Parent Champions
- Encourage people with experience of respiratory problems in children to sign up as Volunteers
- Deliver 96 community sessions across Warrington to share key information with families, helping them to access essential advice and support



Wellbeing resilience training for families

In Summer 2022, Public Health Liverpool and The Life Rooms at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust commissioned our Foundation to deliver family wellbeing and resilience first aid training with local partners, through the initiative Look Ahead.

The project recognises that the need for non-judgemental, reassuring mental health support for those looking after young people in Liverpool is growing year-on-year.

First Person Project CIC soon joined Look Ahead as a critical partner. Their strong connection with the local community has helped the project to support over 300 families across Liverpool:

- Parents, carers and others looking after children led the wellbeing and resilience first aid training, offering people the opportunity to learn and work towards their own personal targets
- Community organisations provided safe spaces for reflection and experience sharing



Without the tools I gained from the project, I wouldn't have the confidence to speak and listen to my children. I think it's a great project for the community.



Indoor Air Quality

The air we breathe can have a significant impact on our health. Indoor air quality is just as (if not more) important as outdoor air quality.

Children, in particular, are spending more time indoors than ever before. If their air quality is poor, outcomes include breathing problems, chest infections, wheezing, allergies, eczema and skin problems, as well as hyperactivity, inattention, difficulty sleeping and not doing well at school.

In 2022, we launched an Indoor Air Quality Project to focus on this issue in partnership with Torus Group's Assets team and supported by funding from the Beyond Children and Young Person's Transformation Programme, which is hosted by Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.

To date the project has,

- Installed 200 indoor air quality monitoring devices from AirThings in Torus homes where there are children and young people
- Helped to raise awareness about the importance of indoor air quality and its impacts
- Raised understanding of lifestyle impacts, as well as identify any issues with damp and humidity inside the home
- Referred cases where families were struggling to heat their homes to a safe temperature to our Energy Advice Officers

Full data from the project will be available later in 2023 and will be shared as part of a wider study to improve indoor air quality in social housing.



Beyond the numbers Taking Practical Steps

Whilst installing an indoor air quality monitor, a Torus tenant mentioned issues with damp and mould in their bedroom. The initial air quality measurement revealed higher than expected levels of carbon dioxide and humidity, and very low average temperatures.

We immediately referred the case to Torus' Assets team for support, which fixed a brickwork issue and replastered and painted the damaged bedroom walls.

Whilst property condition was one priority area to address, the Foundation team also helped the tenant with practical advice about how to make changes for the health of their family.

I feel confident now about indoor air quality, I didn't realise how using things like different sprays can cause issues and the things I can do instead now to help.



Financial Inclusion

Maximising household incomes

Context

Households are facing the highest inflation in 40 years and the poorest households have been most affected because they spend a larger fraction of their budgets on energy and food. In 2022, energy costs continued their steep rise and food prices were 14.3% higher than 2021.

Our response

In the face of the cost-of-living crisis, guidance and support from Torus Foundation has played a significant role in helping people maximise their household income.

Tailored support has helped families to navigate their budgets, unlock financial gains, access debt advice and get help with rising energy costs and more.

Our interventions have helped hard-hit families to meet their financial commitments and work towards being in a stronger financial position.



In 2022/23, our Financial Inclusion team:

- Issued 4,279 energy vouchers to people with pre-payment meters who were at risk of self-disconnection, with funding from the Energy Saving Trust, at a total value of £210,000
- Continued to partner with Central Liverpool Credit Union as a socially conscious, responsible lender. 1,036 loans were granted at a total value of £1.23 million
- Enabled 1,286 hard-hit tenants to access Torus' Tenant Support Fund at a total value of £933,000

**energy
saving
trust**

Supportive Energy

This project targeted Torus tenants and families in financial hardship and worked to help them build more certain futures and, by managing their utilities bills, to keep up-to-date with other essential home costs (including rent and food payments).

The team provided in-depth advocacy service on energy debt, bills, and tariffs to vulnerable people across Liverpool, St Helens and Warrington, supporting people to contact, negotiate with and challenge energy providers. It also included claims to the energy ombudsman (Ofgem).

2022/23 at a glance

Supportive Energy initially ran from April until October 2022.

Phase 1 key outcomes:



471 people
received practical support



£66,400 achieved
in estimated savings

A range of advocacy and advice interventions, including

- 140 home visits
- 264 email contacts
- 984 telephone advice calls
- 234 referrals to other services
- 2 light-touch advice sessions

Following a successful application for funding for 'Phase 2', we relaunched support in January 23. The figures below show key information from January until the end of the Financial Year. Phase 2 funding will ensure continued delivery until December 2024.

Phase 2 key outcomes:



213 people
received practical support



£13,100 achieved
in estimated savings

A range of advocacy and advice interventions, including

- 78 home visits and 2 face-to-face appointments outside the home
- 395 telephone advice calls
- 3 light-touch advice sessions
- 12 people reported improved health and wellbeing
- 54 people signposted for additional support

Young People

Inspiring and empowering young lives

Context

Located in Toxteth, one of Liverpool's most diverse but deprived communities, our FireFit Youth and Community Hub is a proven and trusted service. It's where we strive to tackle some of the biggest challenges facing local young people.

Some 48% of children who access FireFit live in low income households. Across Liverpool, 12% of 16 to 17 year-olds are not in education, employment or training (NEET); this is the fifth highest NEET rate of any Local Authority in England.

Additionally, 1 in 6 children aged 5-16 in England have a probable mental health problem according to the NHS Digital Mental Health of Children and Young People in England, 2021.

Our response

The FireFit Youth and Community Hub is a space where young people are inspired and empowered to reach their full potential through a range of sporting, digital, creative and informal learning activities.

Our approach centres on services that help young people to feel safe and secure, have a sense of belonging, feel trusted, respected and listened to, and not judged.

Delivering 52 hours of activities and interventions each week, the Hub provides a range of open access and targeted programmes that are co-designed with young people, helping to foster ownership and empowerment. Whether it be through an open access activity, Duke of Edinburgh Award, Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) provision, social action project or one-to-one support, the outcome for the young people is at the centre of what we do.

Facilities are accessible to all. A 'family' approach means that all generations can benefit from activities. Through adult offers such as our Community Gym, Sister Hub fitness classes and Restart health initiatives, we provide a positive, affirming environment for the whole-community.





In 2022/23, FireFit Youth and Community Hub:



1,932 members
supported with 60% coming
from BAME communities



Young people
were given the chance to
reflect on their personal
journeys and celebrate their
achievements, which included:



114,574 visits
including 63,749 visits by
children and young people



87% of those
over the year evidenced
progress in one outcome
area and 74% of young are
making progress in two
outcome areas; interest
and activities, hopes and
dreams, health and wellbeing,
education, communicating
or choices and behaviour.



Provided 8,700
free or subsidised meals
to children and young people



Helped 22
young people engage in the
Duke of Edinburgh award

Getting Social

Following the pandemic, the impact on mental health services rose at an alarming rate for young people. Initiatives like Getting Social were created to help build confidence and improve wellbeing for the young community across Liverpool.

Thanks to funding from NHS Charities Together, Getting Social's goal has been to relieve even part of the pressure on vital services and enable the young community to make improvements to their emotional wellbeing and mental health.

Youth providers, schools, GPs and other local organisations have referred young people aged 11 to 18 years-old to Getting Social.

Outcomes included:



260 young people successfully completed the project with an improved outcome



1,412 one-to-one support sessions provided



323 group activities provided



After a diagnosis of autism, Getting Social has been the best thing my son has been offered. He benefits massively from this structured environment. He feels he finally fits in.

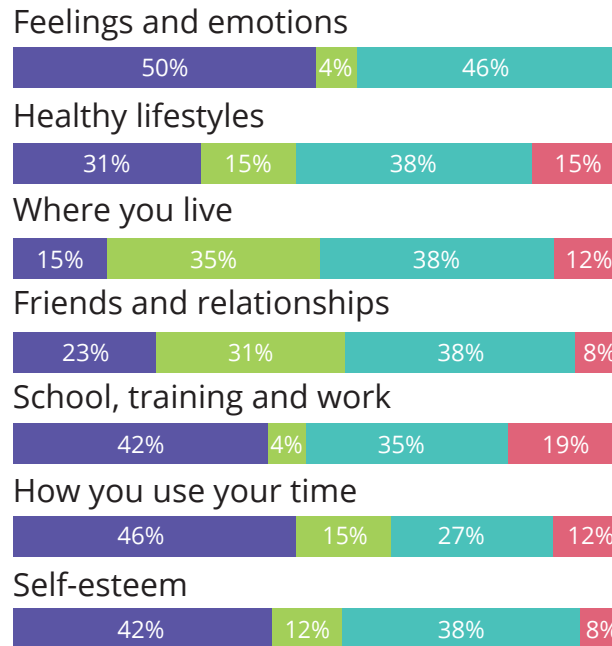


One-to-one sessions and support activities

Young people have also been invited to one-to-one sessions with a dedicated Wellbeing Youth Worker to increase mental health literacy, confidence and resilience, and to support young people to build positive, healthy, and sustainable networks.

Participants were then invited to take part in two activities each week during the programme including: arts, sports, digital and the outdoors.

Progress in each outcome area



Key

- Made progress
- Dropped back
- Maintained (at end point)
- Maintained (not at end point)



Supporting families

Even with hundreds of visits to FireFit each week, the team wanted to look at how they could support young members and their families to overcome challenges.

In early Autumn 2022, the team introduced the offer of free entry to young members who were up-to-date with their yearly memberships. They were able to access a range of activities, plus hot food on arrival before the fun sessions got underway.

It began as a pilot to see if people were interested, but with the Hub buzzing with young people each night, FireFit soon realised this was an important scheme that needed to continue. Additional funding from corporate donations has enabled young people to benefit and the team is looking at options to ensure this support continues.

Outcomes included:



1,286 individual
children and young people
engaged in activities



8,700 free
or subsidised meals provided
to children and young people



85%
of young people showed
progression in one
outcomes area



65%
of young people made
progress in two or more
outcome areas

Our Income

Funding from Torus Group and from external sources underpinned all the positive outcomes showcased in this report. In 2022/23, our total income was £7.5 million. This 12.8% decrease on our income in 2021/22 (£8.6 million) reflects the challenging operating conditions that faced charitable organisations across the UK during the last financial year.

Income received from Torus remains the lifeblood of Torus Foundation. The group's operating model is designed to release Gift Aid for social initiatives based on profits achieved through commercial operations, and these were inevitably affected by the combination of high inflation and rising costs.

Diversifying the funding we receive has been part of the answer to fluctuations in Gift Aid. In 2022/23, we set a target of securing £250,000 in grant income and, thanks to our fundraising team's hard work, achieved a total of £920,000.

2022/23 at a glance

£7.5 million income, including:



£3.7 million
in Gift Aid



£3.6 million
in income from
charitable activities*



£200,000
other income

* includes income from Torus for the delivery of commissioned services, New Leaf, Springboard, FireFit Youth & Community Hub membership fees, hire charges and grant income.



Looking ahead

We are optimistic about the future and ambitious in our year-ahead planning.

In the coming year, we will look to expand our impacts across our three main spheres of operation – St Helens, Warrington and Liverpool.

We'll take a place-shaping approach and use our regional influence and partner networks to make sure communities have the right resources to thrive and to flourish. We will focus increasingly on acting as an enabler and coordinator (where needed) to create places people want to live, work and do business.

Where possible, we will seek to work in collaboration, utilising the strengths of partners across Liverpool, St Helens and Warrington, promoting co-investment models to make the biggest possible positive change happen.

Whilst the current financial environment for UK charities, including Torus Foundation, remains challenging, we will work on behalf of communities to:

- Secure additional grant funding
- Pursue options for corporate fundraising
- Optimising value through match funding and in-kind funding
- Explore new opportunities, including new tenders
- Work to expand the reach and delivery of our Young Services model

Finally, we will actively look for opportunities to work alongside other organisations where an opportunity exists to add value in combination.

If you would like to help Torus Foundation strengthen the support across Torus communities, let's see how together we can increase opportunities and reach more people. To find out more get in touch via partnerships@torusfoundation.org.uk





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