



torch

A helping hand from local churches

2024 Impact Report

Torch Help Hub is a local Reading based Christian charity, with volunteers from 20+ churches across the town, who want to offer friendly help and support to people when they need it most.

In 2024 the demand for our services increased by 10% and we found imaginative ways to help a higher proportion of our clients in partnership with the local church.



"I pray that the Lord will bless and protect you, and that he will show you mercy and kindness. May the Lord be good to you and give you peace." Numbers 6:24-26

Welcome

2024 has been full and dynamic for Torch, and I believe we've made a positive and valuable impact on many lives. I hope you agree this summary is both interesting and inspiring.

The many highlights wouldn't have been possible without our team of volunteers, coordinators and operations team, plus of course all our referrers. Thank you everyone.

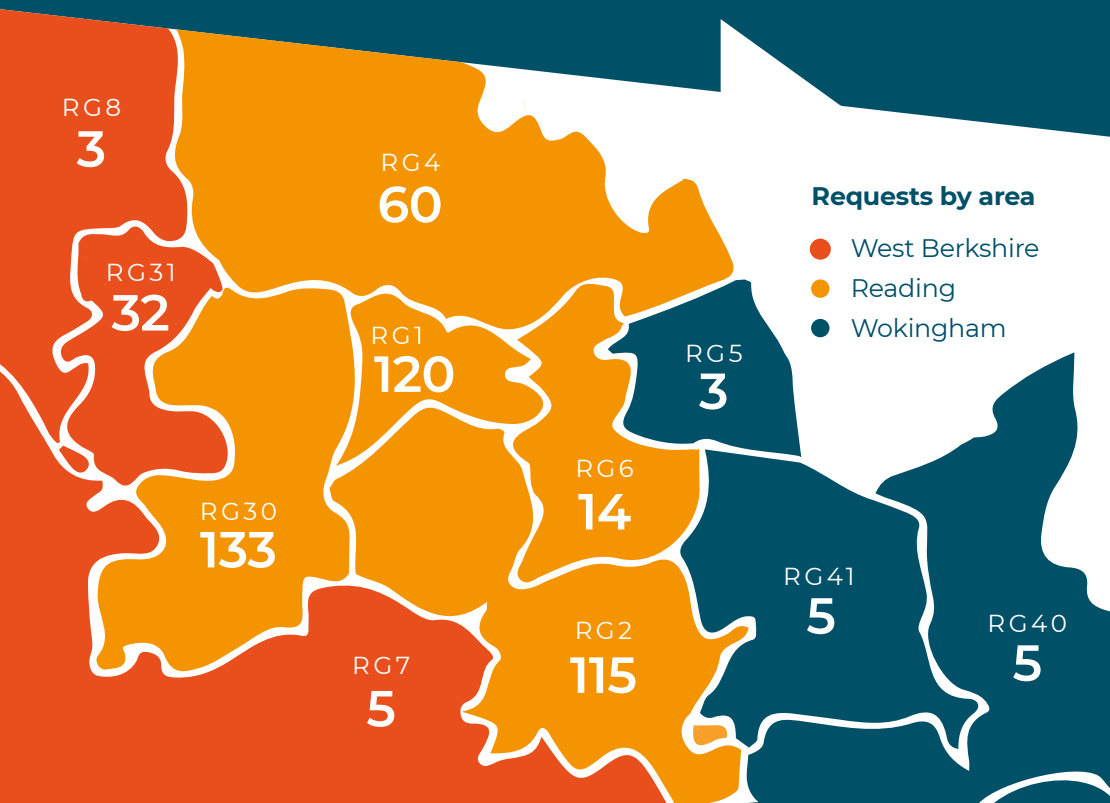
2025 is very exciting – we're starting a new neighbourhood Parish Nursing service and are looking at expanding more into Wokingham Borough.

We continue to believe in the local church serving local people and are incredibly grateful to God for his grace and favour.

Jon Salmon Chair of Torch & Vicar of Trinity Church

Our demographics

85% of our referrals came from Reading Borough and the remainder were evenly split between Wokingham Borough and West Berkshire. Our mix of clients are representative of the diverse cultural mix in Reading, coming from a wide range of backgrounds, with a higher percentage from the more deprived areas in South and West Reading. Clients were split 50:50 either side of age 55.



517
requests

10
requests per
week (average)

330
individuals/families
requested help

76%
received help

33%
returning clients

67%
were female

20%
signposted or
referred on

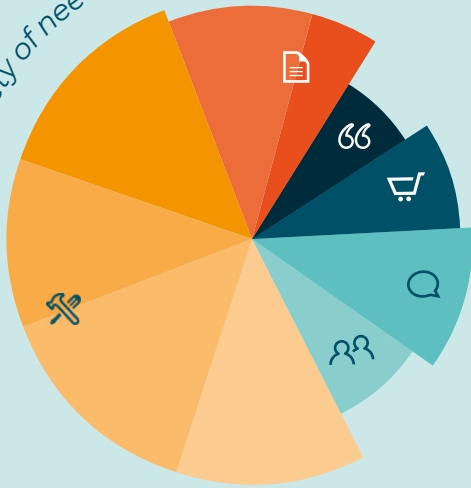
33
people taken
to medical
appointments

41
people received
food

39
gardens cleared
or tidied

70+
rooms painted

Fig. 1 Variety of needs



-  **145 Practical tasks**
35 DIY / 40 transporting / 31 cleaning / 39 outside
-  **41 Personal help**
28 paperwork
13 general assistance
-  **19 Advocacy**
support at appointments
-  **24 Urgent help**
-  **29 Enhanced wellbeing**
-  **22 Confidence building**

Our impact

We met a wide **variety of needs** (Fig. 1) and offered practical support. Once again health and wellbeing were the biggest underlying drivers for referrals, often due to the limitations of poor mental and physical health. Not surprisingly, **client surveys** (Fig. 2) showed that these areas of wellbeing benefited greatly from our work.

With thanks to our partners

We value greatly our partnerships with local organisations who make referrals and those who receive onward referrals or a signposting. Whilst local councils became our largest source of referrals, churches were increasingly a part of the solution as they took onward referrals for gardening and DIY requests.

Professional referrals

- 19% Reading Borough Council**
Social Services, Brighter Futures and Sheltered Housing
- 11% Social prescribers**
- 5% Health**
- 4% Charities**

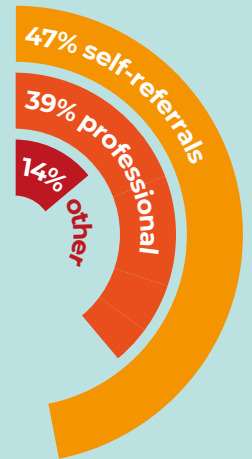
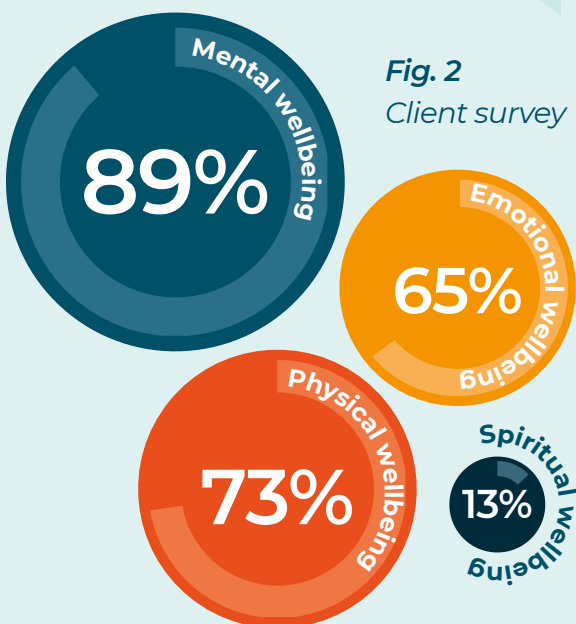


Fig. 2 Client survey



Percentage of people helped by volunteers who reported wellbeing improvements. None reported no change. (Based on a 30% sample.)

42% of referrals came via Joy Marketplace



Better Care Fund



WOKINGHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL



Our challenges

The complexity and scale of requests has increased, as people continue to struggle with the cost-of-living crisis, family breakdowns, poor mental and physical health, and the impact of ageing. Finding solutions requires a multi-faceted partnership approach to identify a way forward for each situation. We continue to adapt and develop our approach in order to be a part of that solution.



Full story



“

Looking back, I don't know how I would have managed without Torch. Their volunteers went above and beyond to make sure my daughter and I had a safe, comfortable home. More than just practical help, they gave me a sense of community, support, and hope. I feel extremely grateful and blessed. I was reminded that I wasn't alone and that God answers prayers – He sends faithful servants who are willing to use their gifts to bless others. – Client

70

active volunteers

7000+

hours freely given

40+

churches connections

Our resources

We are thankful for Christian volunteers who are at the heart of all we do. From a wide variety of churches and traditions, they 'stand in the gap' to bring help and hope in Jesus' name. We've seen an increase in referrals to churches and faith charities, who share our vision for community transformation. Torch has evolved to become a conduit to channel the resources of the Church to meet local needs, particularly for those who have nowhere to turn. We seek to follow Jesus' direction to 'love our neighbour' and 'go and do likewise', like the good Samaritan.



Website



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