



torch

A helping hand from local churches

2023 Impact Report

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

In 2023 we were there to 'stand in the gap' almost every day for people who had nowhere else to turn.





“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms.” – 1 Peter 4:10

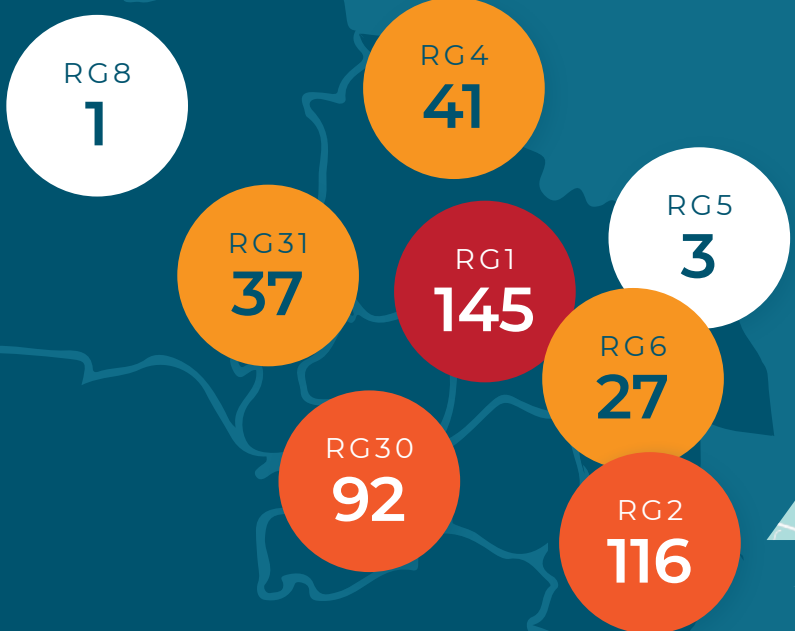
Welcome

Becoming a charity in January 2024 reflects our intention to keep serving those who really need a hand. Helping to shape Torch and seeing so many people likewise commit to this has been a real privilege. Significant thanks go to our growing team of volunteers, coordinators and operations team. We’ve sought to trust God for His helping hand and been amazed at the opportunities He’s graciously given. We’re passionate to keep trusting God for the future and are excited to see where this may lead and with whom we may partner.

Jon Salmon Chair of Torch and Vicar of Trinity Church, Lower Earley

Where we worked

Our requests and referrals came from all over Reading and the surrounding area. Our clients are very 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.

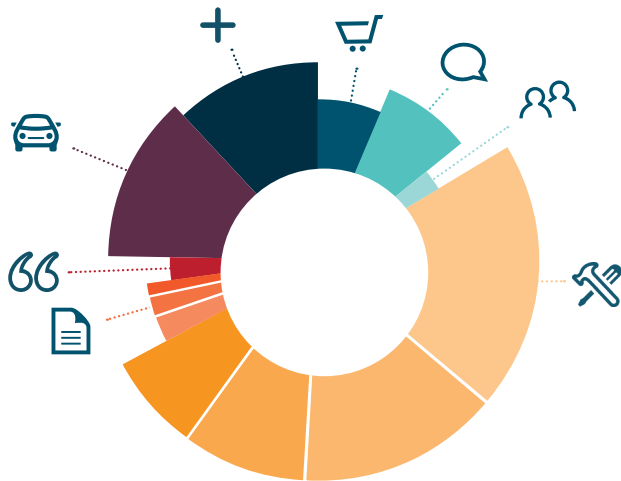


Requests by Reading postcode areas. We have also accepted a few requests outside of Reading.



What we did

We met a variety of needs and offered practical support. Health and wellbeing were the biggest underlying drivers for referrals in 2023, often due to poor mental health, hospital discharge, or inability to care for homes and gardens.



- 31** Urgent help
- 37** Enhanced wellbeing
- 10** Confidence building
- 241** Practical tasks
94 DIY / 69 transporting / 44 cleaning / 34 outside
- 26** Personal help
11 paperwork / 9 general assistance / 6 IT
- 12** Advocacy
support at appointments
- 60** Driving clients to appointments
- 56** More



473

requests

339

individuals/families requested help

92%

of requests completed

9

requests per week (average)

55%

of requests used volunteers. 45% handled by coordinators.

Referrers

A big thank you to all the organisations who have made referrals or accepted signposted referrals from us. Social prescribers and local councils made up nearly a third of our referrals.



56% referrals

17.1% social prescribers / 12.3% Reading Borough Council / 8% close contacts / 7.2% charities / 4.9% health / 4.2% other / 2.1% family members

44% self-referrals





Complex requests

We have seen an increase in the complexity and scale of requests, but in response we have developed several partnerships with local churches to whom we can refer projects. One project in Whitley involved removing a large amount of overgrown vegetation to allow daylight into a house. This was achieved with the help of volunteers from Reading Family Church, the Parish Nurse and a local fireman. The client was overwhelmed by the effort and final result.



“

My life has changed for the better ... my load is lighter and my world is brighter.
Sally-Anne, client

“

Thank you for helping me with some gas and food. I really appreciate it.
Torch client



“

As a professional I am beyond grateful for the help you have provided to my client. Anna, Social Prescriber

“

Not only did you provide us with your professional expertise, but you also brought a positive and friendly energy to the project. It was a pleasure working alongside each of you, and your teamwork and cooperation were truly remarkable. Dudi, client

74

active volunteers

5000+

hours freely given

14

local church partners

Volunteers and partners

Our volunteers are Christians from a wide variety of churches across Reading. We are very grateful to the 14 local churches who provide funding to Torch alongside grants from Oxford Diocese and Transform Reading.

We also appreciate the wider support from other churches and organisations who endorse our work and pray with us.



 Website



 Donate



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