



torch

A helping hand from local churches

2025 Impact Report

Torch is a local charity of last resort supporting those with nowhere else to turn by drawing upon the resources of local churches across the area.

We offer friendly help and support for a wide range of practical, personal and health related needs to people when they need it most.

Our holistic approach to supporting the whole person seeks to follow Jesus' model of caring for the vulnerable in our communities.



"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

2025 was a pivotal year for Torch and hopefully for many of our clients as this report highlights.

Not only did we see a growing demand for our services and positive indicators all around, but we welcomed our first Parish Nurse on staff enabling the charity to offer a more holistic service to our clients alongside the practical support offered by our wonderful volunteers.

The new Parish Nurse service is already making a significant and measurable difference. Lives are stabilized. Crises are averted. Health outcomes improved. People feel valued. And our communities are becoming stronger through the presence of consistent, skilled, and compassionate care.

Grounded in Christian values and delivered in partnership with local churches and statutory services, Torch now offers practical help, health advocacy, emotional support, and signposting to essential services.

I hope you will agree that the work of Torch highlighted here reflects the love of Christ in action as it continues to meet a growing need within our town.

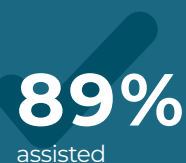
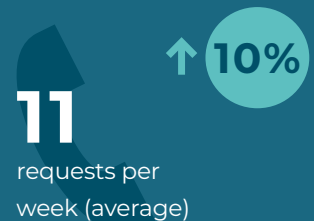
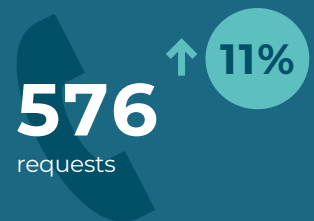
Jon Salmon *Chair of Torch & Vicar of Trinity Church*

Our demographics

87% of our referrals came from Reading Borough, 10% from Wokingham Borough and the remainder from West Berkshire and Oxfordshire. Our 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 60.

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.





“

'I am beginning to become myself again & have hope' – T

T and her young daughter M connected with the Torch Parish Nursing service after they fled domestic violence.

The positive changes for M, including her improved ability to communicate her needs in school, her increased stability, and the thoughtful planning around her SEND pathway, are a testament to your efforts.

– Assistant Team Manager at RBC Directorate of Social Services

 [Full story](#)



Parish Nursing Service

Launched in July 2025, the Torch Parish Nurse service provides holistic, compassionate, and community-based nursing support to individuals and families facing crisis, disadvantage, or isolation in Southcote and Coley, two areas of deprivation in Reading.

Key areas of Impact:

Holistic Care addressing physical, emotional, social, and—where welcomed—spiritual needs with dignity and respect.

Health Advocacy & Navigation to access, understand and attend services

Improved Wellbeing offering emotional support, building and helping to regain stability.

Crisis Support providing calm, skilled intervention at times of severe instability

Partnership Working by acting as a vital link between clients and care professionals

Strengthening Community by enabling churches to serve the unseen in their neighbourhood.



601

Contacts

60

Liver Screens

7

Health Checks

(July – Dec 2025)

2026 Plans...

The Bereavement Journey® Course in partnership with Ataloss

Food Coaching in the community in partnership with FAITH ReadCook

Welcome Home in partnership with Christian Community Action Ministries

Seated Exercise in partnership with Get Berkshire Active

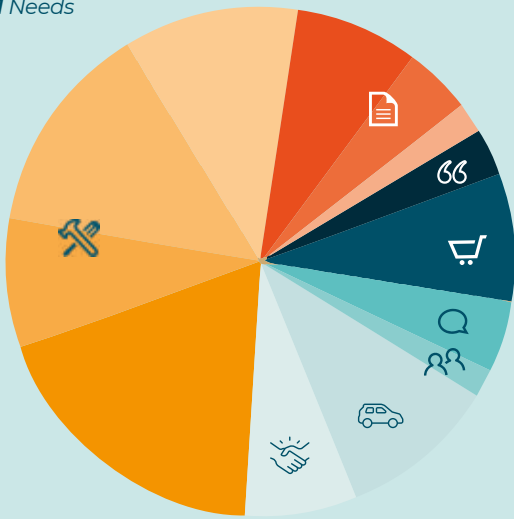
Health Education and screening in partnership with RVA, the NHS and local FAITH Pantries

All events are hosted by local church partners.

 [Project details](#)

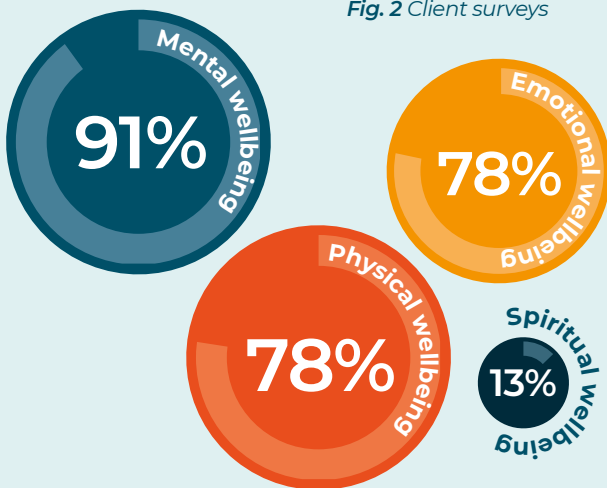


Fig. 1 Needs



-  **296 Practical tasks**
107 DIY / 47 transporting / 78 cleaning / 64 outside
-  **81 Personal help**
45 paperwork
25 general assistance
11 technology
-  **17 Advocacy**
support at appointments
-  **47 Urgent help**
-  **26 Enhanced wellbeing**
-  **10 Confidence building**
-  **58 Driving clients**
-  **41 Others**

Fig. 2 Client surveys



Percentage of people helped by volunteers who reported wellbeing improvements. 3% reported no change. (Based on 100 surveys.)

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 made referrals plus those who accepted onward referrals and signposting from Torch. Whilst local councils became our largest source of referrals, churches were increasingly a part of the solution as they accepted onward referrals for gardening and DIY requests.

Professional referrals

- 29% Reading Borough Council**
Social Services, Brighter Futures and Sheltered Housing, British Red Cross
- 9% Social prescribers**
- 7% Charities**
- 2% Health**



49% of referrals came via Joy Marketplace



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', just like in the story of the good Samaritan.

8675+

hours freely given

↑ **23%**
increase

89

active volunteers

40

churches
connections



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 Website



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