



Assessment Report

CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE





1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following the assessment St Christopher's Fellowship were found to have a deep understanding of, and commitment to, Customer Service Excellence. The commitment was displayed from Senior Management levels through to operations and front-line staff.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank those people involved in the overall assessment process. It has been a pleasure meeting with your team and having the opportunity to observe your service in action.

The outcome of the assessment was -

“Continued award of the Customer Service Excellence Standard has been recommended”

Address:	1 Putney High Street London SW15 1SZ		
Standard(s):	Customer Service Excellence	Accreditation Body(s)	UKAS
Representative:	Martin Cole		
Site(s) assessed:	1 Putney High Street; Westside Young People's Centre, Churchfield Road, West Ealing, W13 9NF	Date(s) of audit(s):	30-09-2019, 01-10-2019, 02-10-2019
Lead Assessor:	Tom Banks	Additional team member(s):	N/A
Type of Assessment:	Annual Review		
Review of Certification Claims	Claims are accurate and in accordance with SGS guidance		

2. CONTEXT

St Christopher's Fellowship is a charity and registered provider of social housing, delivering services for vulnerable children and young people in London and the home counties, the West Midlands, Bedfordshire, and the Isle of Man. These services include children's residential homes, fostering, 16+ accommodation and support. Overall there are 320 staff on a full-time equivalent basis.

St Christopher's two principal customer groups are its commissioners and the young people who use its services. The commissioners might be regarded as the "real" customers, in that they are the ones who exercise the decision as to whether or not to buy from St Christopher's. In a shrinking market place, it is essential to demonstrate to commissioners that the services deliver the outcomes they are looking for, at a competitive price.

However, the consumers of the services that St Christopher's provides are the young people, who experience on a daily basis the quality of St Christopher's services. The full implementation of the Brighter Futures programme means that another key group falling under the organisation's duty of care is that of the staff who are fully included in St Christopher's aspirations in terms of Lifelong Learning and Emotional Wellbeing.

The environment in which St Christopher's operates continues to be increasingly challenging. Financial restrictions within local authorities are exacerbating, resulting in changes to the type of services they commission and how they commission them. Spot purchase of placements continues to be popular as authorities try to manage their costs, and St Christopher's is continuing to develop its services in order to meet the changing needs of commissioners.

In addition, several commissioners are involving themselves in the improvement and development work St Christopher's undertakes among identified customer groups in particular areas such as runaway children and those leaving residential care at 16+.

These were included in the Customer Journeys addressed in this year's Annual Review visit, with the Commissioners from Barnet clearly expressing the that St Christopher's successful bid for the 3-year contract to operate the Borough's entire Return Home Interview service was due to their sharp focus on the needs of the young people involved and the basis of the approach on the principles of Social Pedagogy which informs all project development in the organisation.

Being at the forefront of such initiatives helps St Christopher's to win central government funding to develop projects such as Staying Close and Ealing Trusted Spaces.



St Christopher's new five-year strategy launched in 2018 with its three strategic aims:

- To create more excellent homes, fostering and support for children and young people
- To improve emotional wellbeing
- To promote lifelong learning and thriving

The challenging nature of the tasks noted above has also been reflected in St Christopher's growing awareness of the importance of the strands of Improved Emotional Wellbeing and Lifelong Learning and Thriving to the maintenance of a committed professional workforce. These perceptions are acknowledged in the body of this report.

Progress measured against each of the headings is developing:

More excellent homes, fostering and support for children and young people:

- St Christopher's are now supporting many more children and young people; over a 1,000 children and young people each month, compared to just under 1,000 for the whole of 2018.
- St Christopher's are refining data collection in order to demonstrate impact and shape service delivery.
- Two new children's homes, one in London and one in the West Midlands.
- A grading of 'Good' was achieved in the first Ofsted inspection of the residential school in North London.
- The Trusted Spaces pilot working to reduce serious knife violence in West London is established and is currently providing intensive 1:1 work with 41 young people, five families and is reaching 640 young people a month.
- St Christopher's have opened a new regional hub in the Midlands.
- St Christopher's have secured a new property in Dudley for an additional new children's home to be opened in 2020.



Improving emotional wellbeing

- The Isle of Man Wraparound therapeutic service is well established and is currently working with 86 children, young people, families and care staff. The team has reduced the number of placement breakdowns on the island which means that young people are having a less disrupted childhood.
- The project to launch a similar therapeutic service in England is ahead of schedule. St Christopher's have recently recruited to a new therapeutic lead post in England and it is planned that therapeutic services will be offered across London homes in October, before being expanded to the fostering and Midlands services.

Promoting lifelong learning and thriving

- The Support Into Employment scheme on the Isle of Man is established and is providing support for 29 young people.
- The life skills team supported young people to complete 422 AQAs. They delivered over 200 cooking sessions and 200 sports activities, 50 employability sessions and 43 sessions on mental health and self-esteem.
- The Diamond Fund provided grants that enabled young people to succeed in their education, including providing extra tutoring and funding for young people to purchase college essentials. The fund also provided opportunities for young people to broaden their horizons, funding a number of trips and activities.
- St Christopher's continue to offer in-house apprenticeship and traineeship roles to care leavers within the London and Isle of Man offices.
- St Christopher's have hosted conferences for all foster carers as part of their training and development.
- Work is underway to deliver a 150th anniversary fundraising appeal in 2020 which will provide funding for additional services and support for young people.



3. METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

The assessment was undertaken in two stages; the first was a review of your self-assessment submission. This review enabled the assessor to gain an understanding of how the organisation has met the requirements of the Customer Service Excellence standard.

The next stage was to review the actual service delivered on-site. This was conducted through reviewing practice as well as speaking to staff, partners and customers. This included following customer journeys through your processes and how these aligned with customer insight.

During the assessment process the criteria are scored on a four-band scale:

COMPLIANCE PLUS - Behaviours or practices which exceed the requirements of the standard and are viewed as exceptional or as exemplar to others, either within the applicant's organisation or the wider customer service arena.

COMPLIANT - Your organisation has a variety of good quality evidence which demonstrates that you comply fully with this element. The evidence which reflects compliance is consistent throughout and is embedded in the culture of the organisation.

PARTIAL COMPLIANCE - Your organisation has some evidence but there are significant gaps. The gaps could include:

- Parts of the applicant's organisation which are currently not compliant and/or
- Areas where the quality of the evidence is poor or incomplete and/or
- Areas which have begun to be addressed and are subject to significant further development and/or
- Areas where compliance has only been evident for a very short period of time

NON-COMPLIANT - Your organisation has little or no evidence of compliance or what evidence you do have refers solely to a small (minor) part of your organisation.

The current scheme allows applicants a maximum number of partial compliances, equating to a pass mark of 80% for all criteria.



4. OPENING MEETING

The on-site assessment commenced with an opening meeting.

The assessment activity and the partial compliances were discussed. The itinerary had been agreed with St Christopher’s Fellowship in advance. The organisation was informed that all information obtained during the assessment would be treated as strictly confidential.

The scope of Assessment was confirmed as: St Christopher’s Fellowship

5. ON-SITE ASSESSMENT

The Assessor was accompanied throughout the assessment by Martin Cole and other personnel within the organisation were involved when assessing activities within their responsibility.

The assessment resulted in the raising of no partial compliances. A number of observations are listed in Section 7 of this report.

	Criterion	Maximum number of partial compliances	Actual number of non-compliances	Actual number of partial compliances	Actual number of Areas for Improvement	Fully Compliant
1	Customer Insight	2	0	0	0	11
2	The Culture of the Organisation	2	0	0	0	11
3	Information and Access	2	0	0	0	12
4	Delivery	3	0	0	1	12
5	Timeliness and Quality of Service	2	0	0	0	10





Number of good practices awarded during the assessment	12 – includes 1 Compliance Plus
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Have the partial compliance(s) raised at the last assessment been closed?	N/A
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6. AREAS OF PARTIAL COMPLIANCE

CRITERION 1

No areas of Partial Compliance were identified.

CRITERION 2

No areas of Partial Compliance were identified.

CRITERION 3

No areas of Partial Compliance were identified.

CRITERION 4

No areas of Partial Compliance were identified.

CRITERION 5

No areas of Partial Compliance were identified.

7. OBSERVATIONS

During the site assessment the following general observations were made. These include: positive areas scored as Compliance Plus; areas of good practice; areas for improvement identified throughout the entire assessment process, as listed below.



Areas for improvement

- The issue of IT support which was raised in the 2018 report has been addressed by the appointment of a new contractor. While this has largely been successful there are still issues specific to the Trusted Spaces project – these are largely due to conflicts with Ealing Council software. Steps are in hand to address this issue. (3.4.2)

Areas of Good Practice

- The depth of data analysis used in the planning of new projects such as the proposal for the Ealing Trusted Spaces programme is detailed and specific in identifying its target audience and their specific characteristics. It also identifies methodologies to incorporate end user preferences in the implementation plan. (1.1.1)
- The Ealing Trusted Spaces programme has been developed in close consultation with Ealing Borough Council (the commissioners) and Ealing young people to provide a new way of working with those at risk of involvement in serious youth violence, gang affiliation and criminal or sexual exploitation. (1.2.2)
- In response to findings from previous Young Persons' survey the service has changed the way this information gathering exercise is conducted. The consultation now operates on a home by home basis. This provides the starting point for individualised change programmes at each site. These projects share a common name - "Ideas for Change". Examples from one home include a 3-month cooking course and the introduction of a text alert to the young people of upcoming activities as the previous use of posters failed to raise awareness. (1.2.3)
- Examples from 3 sites were provided to demonstrate service improvements as a result of dissatisfaction expressed by young people. These included provision of additional washing machines; altering the timing of the home's annual holiday and the whole development of the Ealing Staying Close project whereby former looked after young people maintain lifetime contact with St Christopher's when they feel they are in need of support or guidance. (1.3.2)

- As each project or home is developed in response to individual contracts with commissioning authorities the satisfaction requirements are embedded in the Returning Home Interview record which is a statutory requirement. (1.3.4)
- Based on staff consultation on their experience of working with challenging young people the UK Wraparound Therapeutic service is being developed to meet the demand for therapeutic and clinical psychological support to assist in this work. (1.3.5; 2.2.4 also refers)
- Staff empowerment is an integral element of the Creating Brighter Futures strategy's focus on Improved Emotional Wellbeing as is the Lifelong Learning and Thriving strand. (2.1.6; 2.2.3 also refers)
- St Christopher's successful approach to Return Home Interviews is built on Social Pedagogy principles. There is much more focus on follow-up support and activities than in most RHI services. Interviews typically take place in locations which suit the young people so that they feel at ease in the location rather than the more traditional institutional or administrative situation. (3.2.1)
- The introduction of the "Mind of My Own" app for fostered children allows them to raise matters regarding their placement which may be causing them concern. (3.3.2)
- Incident reports are logged on a dedicated recording system. Practice was amended so that staff commentary did not prejudice judgemental perceptions on the part of responsible social workers. For post -16 semi-independent homes a finding of external inspectors regarding challenging behaviours of some residents were addressed through site-specific consultation on how to deal with such situations. Key workers were also briefed to enquire about relationships between flat sharers. (4.3.1)
- At a management meeting focused on complaints handling a recent resident of one of the homes described his experience of complaining to staff and of how their attitude improved as a result of their taking his views into account. A consultation identified a lack of awareness of the process among young people and a concern that it was too lengthy and



formalised. Working with a group of young people a leaflet has been produced to improve awareness and to indicate that informal complaints can be resolved by frontline staff without further escalation, but that more formal issues can be addressed by managers or senior staff. (4.3.4)

Areas of Compliance Plus

- The 2018 Customer Service Excellence report noted the achievement of Compliance Plus status for the Support Into Employment scheme on the Isle of Man. The project has continued to develop, and its success has led to greater involvement and flexibility of approach from the local Jobcentres – one of the key partners in guaranteeing the sustainability and ongoing positive achievements of the project together with a growing pool of employers prepared to participate in the initiative. (3.4.3)



8. ACTION PLANNING & NEXT STEPS

The achievement of Customer Service Excellence is an ongoing activity and it is important that St Christopher's Fellowship continues to meet the elements of the criteria throughout the three years the hallmark is awarded for. Efforts must be made by Customer Service Excellence holders to continually improve their service.

We recommend that you develop an action plan based on the findings of this report. The action plan does not need to be a separate document and is likely to be more effective if the actions are embedded in your normal improvement and service developments plans.

We will undertake an annual review that will look at your continued compliance with the Customer Service Excellence. As part of the review we will also look at progress on any findings of the previous assessments.

In addition to reviewing progress outlined above, we will also review the services delivery, done so by following customer journeys.

For more information on the annual review please refer to our document "Building on your Customer Service Excellence success – Preparing for the annual review".

Holders must inform SGS of any major changes in the service provision covered by the scope of the certificate. This includes reorganisation or mergers.

In addition, SGS must be informed should the certified service experience a significant increase in customer complaints or critical press coverage.

If you are in doubt at any stage, we strongly recommend contacting the Customer Service Team for advice on the significance of any service or organisational change, or issues surrounding customer complaints.

SGS will visit within the next 12 months for the annual review.

SGS recommends that St Christopher's Fellowship retains a copy of this report to aid continuous improvement, and as a reference document for future assessment reviews.