



# Assessment Report

## CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE

St Christopher's Fellowship

1 Recertification





## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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**The assessment method used was a full remote assessment due to the current circumstances of the Covid19 Pandemic.**

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 -

**“Renewal 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:	Mr Martin Cole		
Site(s) assessed:	Remote (Covid19)	Date(s) of audit(s):	14-10-2020, 15-10-2020, 16-10-2020, 19-10-2020
Lead Assessor :	Di Smith	Additional team member(s):	
Type of Assessment:	Renewal		
Review of Certification Claims	Claims are accurate and in accordance with SGS guidance		



## 2. CONTEXT

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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 and the Isle of Man. These services include children's residential homes, fostering, 16+ semi-independent accommodation and outreach work in the community. Overall there are 303 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, young people at risk of criminal exploitation and unemployed care leavers on the Isle of Man.

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



### 3. METHOD OF ASSESSMENT

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The assessment method used was a full remote assessment due to the current circumstances of the Covid19 Pandemic. Evidence was submitted electronically via email and the assessment interviews and observations took place over the telephone and via computer. Microsoft Teams was used for the opening and closing meeting and to conduct interviews with staff and customers.

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 remotely. 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

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The remote assessment commenced with an opening meeting using Microsoft Teams.

The assessment activity and areas for improvement 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.

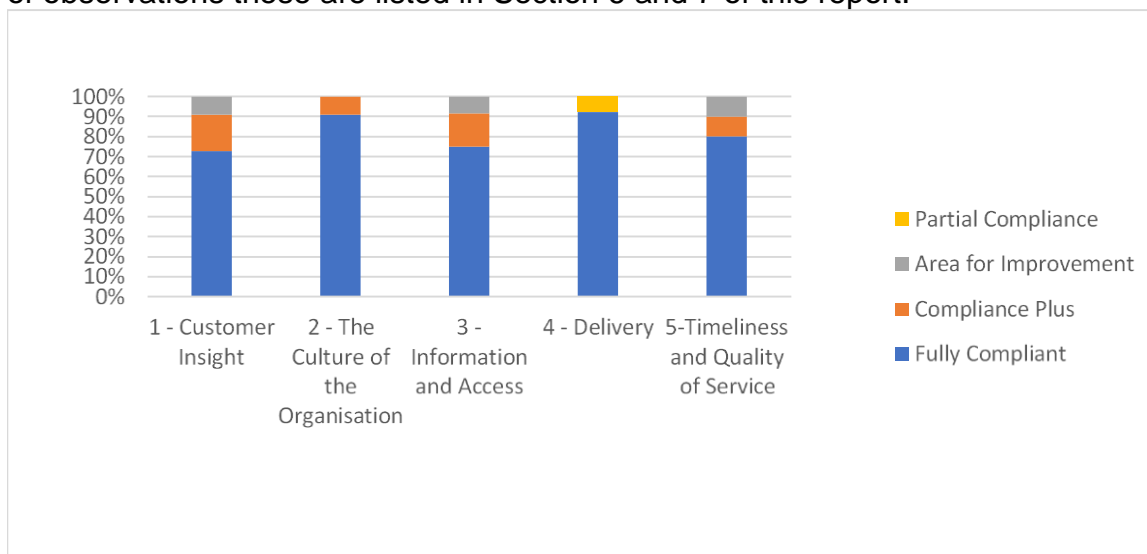
The scope of Assessment was confirmed as: St Christopher’s Fellowship

#### 5. REMOTE ASSESSMENT

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I was supported 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 one partial compliance and a number of observations these are listed in Section 6 and 7 of this report.





Number of good practices awarded during the assessment	6
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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

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### CRITERION 1

No partial compliances identified

### CRITERION 2

No partial compliances identified

### CRITERION 3

No partial compliances identified

### CRITERION 4

*4.3.4 We learn from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in formal and informal complaints and comments from customers and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken.*

It is good that you are currently reviewing the Complaints Policy. You report each quarter to QQEM, and act on trends but there is little evidence of you capturing the lessons learned and publishing them. You only capture a limited number of informal comments and 'grumbles' but this is not across all services. To be fully compliant for this criterion you would capture these informal complaints consistently and publicise learning from all comments and complaints.

### CRITERION 5

No partial compliances identified



## 7. OBSERVATIONS

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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**

You do have a range of ways of engaging and involving customers using a range of methods. In fact, there are many new initiatives for example -virtual panels, young person inspectors with Apex, Mind Of My Own (MOMO) app- and engagement is growing a pace. You may wish to consider if the current participation strategy requires review to reflect the great advances made in participation and the outputs and impacts. (1.2.3)

There is a broad range of content and good quality verbal, published and web-based information. You may wish to consider if it is all fully accessible, consistent in style where appropriate and comprehensive to meet the needs of all customers. For example, might you want to include more links from one method to another e.g. website to YouTube videos or virtual tours of homes. The information might perhaps be better 'suited' for consistency e.g. displaying the Customer Service Excellence Hallmark with pride where there is an opportunity (3.2.3)

There is some evidence of your performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service and that you compare well with similar organisations. In the main this is from Ofsted, so does not cover everything you do. You may wish to consider other ways in which you could benchmark performance inside and outside your sector with similar services. (5.3.3)

### **Areas of Good Practice**

- Your support for food deliveries with Trusted Spaces
- Your use of in-depth reviews of the customer journey to understand the customer experience. (Staying Close)
- Your dashboard to measure outputs and outcomes
- Your Framework for 16 plus to 'fill the gap' you feel is not covered by Ofsted.
- The recently rolled out Proqol monitoring for staff well being
- The Brighter Futures initiative and the sharing of best practice.



## Areas of Compliance Plus

*1.2.2. We have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advise customers of the results and action taken.*

There is good evidence here that this is integral:

- Your Continuous Improvement Plan gives a commitment to be always learning and seeking to improve. A key priority is listening to your stakeholders and taking on board their views to improve services.
- The engagement of young residents as inspectors in APEX
- The use of the MOMO app and use of children's feedback from this.
- The many Forums / Panels and participation opportunities (formal and informal).
- The Barnet Children's Services joint Mentoring Project mentors for 10-14-year olds at risk of criminal involvement. A new way of working with young people at risk of criminal exploitation.

This is compliance plus

*1.3.2 We analyse and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers for all main areas of our service and we have improved services as a result.*

The Impact Report production is innovative especially as it was developed in co-production with St Christopher's young people. They took part in the writing, designing and editing of the publication. The young people themselves had given feedback that they thought the Impact Report should be much more representative of them and you enabled this. The Impact Report contains many examples of high levels of customer satisfaction.

Your approach to quality and delivery with the Quality Assurance strategy and the quarterly monitoring is robust and used to improve service.

This is compliance plus

*2.1.6 We empower and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation.*

Your staff interviews and customers testimonies were evidence of the customer focussed culture. One stakeholder stated, 'the whole organisation is child centric'.

Further evidence of note is

- Your response to the Covid19 pandemic and making services work for your clients and staff



- The delivery of the 'solo' facility at Sapphire House and setting it up on time by adapting and achieving in challenging times. The management here went the extra mile to see this through.
- The culture around social pedagogy, reflective practice and staff training including the fast track to management experience.
- The use of blogs by the CEO dealing with relevant current affairs. e.g. the Chance to Change.
- A staff member helping a young person to get their first ever part-time job, during lockdown
- The introduction of the Staying Close Plans to help support young people when they leave your care.

This is compliance plus

### *3.3.1 We make our services easily accessible to all customers through provision of a range of alternative channels*

- All homes are designed to be fully accessible
- The Hub and Spoke model providing a range of services for varied levels of complexity of needs. This enables young people to stay with the organisation and key workers they trust, locally and they can move in and out of the levels should the need arise.
- The winning of an award '**Most Creative Mind Of My Own Comms**' for the MOMO app production

This is compliance plus

### *3.4.3 We interact within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities.*

This was an area for improvement last year and there has been a great improvement. For example

- the work on young people's bank accounts and finances is a great improvement. Lessons in Financial Education (LiFE) is helping young people to study for a digital award in personal finances and aiding their independence.
- Trusted Spaces is a government funded pilot scheme for working with young people to reduce serious youth violence in the borough of Ealing. Evidencing positive outcomes and outputs for the young people you work with.
- The joint working with the IOM Job Centre and flexible bespoke arrangements to support young people into work and work placements.
- Your partnership working with Barnet Council on the Youth Endowment Fund mentoring project.

This is compliance plus



*5.1.2 We set comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organization.*

Your Quality Assurance Strategy 'St Christopher's Quality assurance strategy and framework 2018-2023 covers operational services Isle of Man and UK. It is a structured approach to understanding trends, themes, patterns, successes and opportunities for learning. It supports and enables the effectiveness of delivery across all of services with a whole system approach.

At St Christopher's quality assurance is a central part of everyday practice measuring the best outcomes for children and young people and celebrating the positive impacts.

The Quality Assurance Strategy launched this year is monitored at Quarterly Quality Effectiveness Meeting (QQEM). The trustees and senior managers are able to actively monitor and thus provide an opportunity for service leads to review and reflect on areas of strength and those for development - the results are tangible.

This is compliance plus



## 8. ACTION PLANNING & NEXT STEPS

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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.