



**STANDING COMMITTEE
OF
TYNWALD COURT
OFFICIAL REPORT**

**RECORTYS OIKOIL
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**PROCEEDINGS
DAALTYN**

**SOCIAL AFFAIRS
POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

Child Abuse

HANSARD

Douglas, Thursday, 22nd February 2018

PP2018/0044

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Members Present:

Chairman: Mr D C Cretney MLC
Ms J M Edge MHK

Clerk:
Mr J D C King

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Standing Committee of Tynwald on Social Affairs Policy Review

Child Abuse

*The Committee sat in public at 4 p.m.
in the Legislative Council Chamber,
Legislative Buildings, Douglas*

[MR CRETNEY *in the Chair*]

Procedural

The Chairman (Mr Cretney): Welcome to this public meeting of the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee, which is a Standing Committee of Tynwald. I am David Cretney MLC and I chair this Committee. With me is Julie Edge MHK. The third Committee member is Martyn Perkins MHK; he is not taking part in this inquiry for reasons which I explained to Tynwald in
5 December.

Could we all please ensure our mobile phones are off or on silent, as we do not want to have any interruptions.

The Social Affairs Policy Review Committee is one of three Standing Committees of Tynwald the Court established in October 2011 with a wide scrutiny remit. We have three Departments
10 to cover: the Department of Home Affairs, the Department of Education, Sport and Culture and the Department of Health and Social Care.

It was resolved on 18th July 2017: 'That Tynwald notes with concern reports of historical child abuse at the former Knottfield Children's Home, which closed in 1983, and refers the matter to the Social Affairs Policy Review Committee to report by December 2017; and further
15 instructs the Committee to investigate the adequacy of current procedures to protect from abuse children in care (looked after children) in the Isle of Man and to report in March 2018.'

EVIDENCE OF Mrs Anne Seed, Head of Operational Services (IOM), St Christopher's Fellowship

Q1. The Chairman: The first part of this inquiry has been suspended for reasons which I explained in the Statement to Tynwald in December. Today we are concerned with the second part and we welcome a representative of St Christopher's. You are very welcome. We have
20 before us a submission from you which was sent to us earlier and by the Department of Health and Social Care – I thank you.

Would you first like to state your name and job title and give us a brief outline of your professional background, please.

Mrs Seed: My name is Mrs Anne Seed. I am Head of Operational Services for St Christopher's on the Isle of Man. I have over 40 years' experience in the social care environment. I have
25 worked in local authorities, for private companies and for the voluntary sector in the UK. I

moved to the Isle of Man in 2001, so I have been here a few years now, and I started working for St Christopher's in 2006. I am also a qualified social worker.

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Q2. The Chairman: Thank you very much. Would you like to make any opening statement?

Mrs Seed: I think really I would just like to make the statement that safeguarding children is everybody's business, it is not just the organisations that care for children, because we all have a corporate parenting responsibility. I think with St Christopher's, because we are also affiliated to our UK parent company, we do a lot of dissemination and learning with the UK and with the Isle of Man, so we use experience that we have built up in working in different areas in the UK and here to develop our own practice.

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Q3. The Chairman: Okay, thank you. How would you describe the adequacy of current procedures to protect from abuse children in care, looked-after children on the Isle of Man?

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Mrs Seed: I feel that our current procedures are very good. Obviously you may think I am biased because that is my area of work, but in St Christopher's we do put children as the centre of our work and our vision in the organisation is for every child and young person to be happy, safe, achieve their potential and have a bright future – and I know they could sound just like words but actually what we do in our organisation is we train staff to live those values every day whilst they are at work and to put young people and the interests of young people as the core of our work. So child protection, which we now call safeguarding, and protecting from abuse is actually a very central element of our work, and all of our policies, procedures and working practices are based around keeping young people safe.

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I think one of the things is that we cannot eliminate risk, we cannot eradicate risk. The young people we work with often have very risky lifestyles and have had risky lifestyles before they have come into the care system, so we try to do whatever we can whilst we are working with them to help them take risks – because children have to learn by taking risks – but we put safety nets in place to help protect them when they are taking the risks. So we have policies, procedures, we train staff. We actually do a lot of participation work with the young people as well because we want them to feel safe with us. We want the young people to feel that they can trust the staff enough to actually tell us when they do not feel safe, because we cannot always tell when they are safe or when they are not. There are indicators that we know will actually identify that, but there are times when we actually do not know when children are safe or that they are keeping themselves safe. Therefore we have to be always vigilant and alert around those areas of work.

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Q4. The Chairman: We have spoken to the Department of Health and Social Care in the past. There was an issue at that stage in terms of the stability of the workforce, in terms of them being present on the Isle of Man or coming and going. Do you have a stable workforce?

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Mrs Seed: Yes. I think that was a historical issue and I think over the years we have worked very hard to have staff who are based on the Isle of Man, so all of the staff that we have working for St Christopher's, and we have 120 staff in total, live and work on the Isle of Man. I think we have one agency worker who works with us at the minute, who actually does come from Liverpool, because we have a staff vacancy. We are actually interviewing today to fill that staff vacancy, but he has been a consistent worker with us and he is actually being interviewed today to work for us.

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So we have to build stable teams of staff that work consistently together and are able to form relationships with the young people, because all of the work that we do is based on building good relationships with young people. If you have not got that, you cannot protect them.

80 **Q5. Ms Edge:** Just before, when you were talking about the risk and trying to keep them safe and that they would have the trust in the staff to come and say they did not feel safe, is that something you see quite often, or is that minimal? And is that something you keep records of?

85 **Mrs Seed:** We keep records. We do record things on young people every single day. We have an electronic recording system that we use because we have to record about young people. Obviously we follow all the data protection regulations and protect that information.

I think it depends on the young person. Every young person is an individual and has different needs and different risks. We have had some young people who will actually come and tell you that they do not feel safe. We have some young people who would never come and tell you and you sometimes have to ask them. And you will see it. If you have built up this trusting relationship with the young people, which the staff teams are trained to do, then they will be able to see some little indicators in terms of the behaviour of that young person changing slightly. It could be that they are going missing on a regular basis. It could be that they are associating with different young people than they normally associate with, and we may know that those young people are not in a good place and there are issues with them. Or you may just see different things in their behaviour, in the way they present. When you work with young people and you work on a shift basis you are working quite consistently with those young people and you see them. You see these things. You are trained to observe those characteristics in their behaviour and notice any differences, and that is part of the safeguarding training that we do with staff because observation is one of the biggest things that you can do.

100 I said before we cannot eradicate risk, but when you work with children and young people in a care setting they become part of your care family and therefore if you go home at night and you go to bed, the person you think about before you go to sleep or wake up in the morning might not be your own child, it might be the child you are looking after, because you are concerned about them. That is why we call it the caring profession, because we do care, and I think in St Christopher's ... I have just been doing some work at the minute with my colleagues in London around looking at the vision and strategy of our organisation and one of the things we have always feared away from all of these years in social care is that we do not say we love the children – because people think different things when you say you love the children. But actually we are now talking about starting to put in our mission statement and our vision statement that we actually love the children we work with, because we do. We care about them and they become part of our family.

105 **Q6. The Chairman:** Do you think, despite the present situation, it is still possible for a child in care to be abused today?

115 **Mrs Seed:** Yes, definitely. I am not saying that would be a regular occurrence – hopefully – but there is still a potential that a child could be abused. Myself, with being in social care for over 40 years, have seen this happen – not on the Isle of Man whilst I have been here, but certainly in the UK I have seen it happen and I have had first-hand experience of having a manager myself who did not behave appropriately. I actually left that organisation in the UK because I did not like the way they had handled their child protection procedure and did not follow it through. I was disappointed in the way it was handled. So I will not work for an organisation that I do not feel puts everything they can into protecting young people and keeping them safe.

125 As I said before, we cannot eradicate risk and a lot of these children behave in very risky ways, so we have just got to protect them as much as we possibly can with the systems we have in place, but that does not say that somebody will never slip through the net or that somebody will not abuse them when they are out and about. I think if we did say that we would be highly criticised if something happened, to be fair.

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Q7. The Chairman: In terms of your staff, are they encouraged, if they believed there was something that was amiss, to come to their line manager or whatever?

135 **Mrs Seed:** Yes. We have a number of policies in place and they are quite robust. One of them is the whistleblowing policy. I know in a lot of organisations you have whistleblowing policies and people are not really encouraged to whistle blow because they are frightened of the repercussions. Actually, we have used the whistleblowing policy on a number of occasions where staff have actually seen what they thought was inappropriate practice or poor
140 performance or just something that a staff member has said that they felt, 'Oh, no, you shouldn't really be saying that to that young person,' that they have actually come and reported. We have a very robust disciplinary process as well and we have disciplined people. We are very proactive, and even more so now, in dealing with poor performance because that is not the way we want our staff to work or look after the children.

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Q8. Ms Edge: How often do you review your policies? Do you have a set regime for that and good governance around that?

Mrs Seed: Our policies are reviewed every two years and it is normally a group of senior
150 managers who sit and review the policy, but one of the things we do now ... We have an interim chief executive who was an operational director previously and he is very much a hands-on chief executive and very committed to the children and young people. What we do now is we do a lot more staff consultation as well. So, recently, in the last six months we have been following a process – we have called it Vision and Strategy – about the organisation, where we have
155 involved staff and consulted with them and asked them things like why is St Christopher's a good place to come and work, how do you think we are good at keeping children safe, how would you change things, if you need to, and they are involved in us reviewing our policies and changing our policies if need be as well.

160 **Q9. Ms Edge:** Do you involve any of the children in that?

Mrs Seed: We do, because young people's participation ... It has taken a lot of work here in the Isle of Man and we have some young people who are part of the VIP Council, but the VIP Council does not represent every child that is in the looked-after system so we have systems in
165 place where we try and involve the young people in all aspects of their care. It is about the home that they live in, so it is down to menus, activities, do they want to come shopping with you – all of those basic things that you would probably do with your own family, but also we ask them to help us look at the way we work as well and look at our policies, what we have written, do they understand what we are saying, how do they think we could change it for the better, and I think that is becoming much more an accepted process than it has been in the past. I think we have
170 still got a long way to go, I think we could be better at it, but we have started that process.

Q10. The Chairman: In the Department's submission to us from October it said the Island has 85 looked-after children and young people. More than 70% of them live with friends and family,
175 in foster care or are in the process of returning to their parent or parents. The remainder live in small children's homes. How many small children's homes do you operate?

Mrs Seed: We have five small children's homes which take three young people and we have a six-bedded admission and assessment home which is mainly used for young people who come
180 into care for the first time, and we also have the secure care home.

On our other side as well, our aftercare, which is our 16-plus work, we have two homes, one six bed and one three bed, for young people who are 16 to 18 to help prepare them to live in the community.

The Chairman: Thank you.

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Q11. The Clerk: How big is the secure facility?

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Mrs Seed: The secure facility takes up to seven young people. We are contracted for three with the Isle of Man Government but obviously if we get more than three young people in then we renegotiate the terms with them. We do not turn young people away, obviously. We get a lot of young people at the minute on custody and remand. We get very few welfare cases now.

The Clerk: Thank you.

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Q12. Ms Edge: And is the procedure for admitting them to the secure home different to the procedure for going into your smaller homes? And is handover different for each home or is there one process?

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Mrs Seed: If a child is admitted to the secure care home, if they come under welfare ... There are three routes they can come into the secure care home. One is welfare and that is usually through our secure care panel, and they are often young people who are already in the care system that we know of, who are presenting a very high risk and for one reason or another it is agreed that maybe a settling-down period or a time to help them get to grips with what is going on in their life would be better spent in the secure care home. But those are very strict criteria. We do not just put anybody in through welfare.

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For custody and remand they come through the legal route from the courts and we work quite closely with the Isle of Man Prison because once they reach the age of 18 they will transfer to the Isle of Man Prison.

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So we run two different schemes, really, there: we run welfare, which is about looked-after children, and then remand and custody is more about the criminal route. We still call it the secure care home because we care about those children and young people. No matter what age they are we care, but we have to run different regimes for remand in custody because of their status and we have to prepare them to move to prison as well, and that is quite a traumatic move for somebody on their 18th birthday, to move to the Isle of Man Prison.

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Q13. The Chairman: You may have answered this already: how many people do you employ?

Mrs Seed: A hundred and twenty.

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Q14. The Chairman: Okay, thank you. And where does your funding come from? Do you have core funding or are you wholly reliant on payments for services under contract?

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Mrs Seed: We have funding from the Isle of Man Government. We have three contracts, which we won through the tendering process.

We have the children's residential contract, which includes all of our children's residential homes and the secure care home, and we also have an education support team that is part of that contract.

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We have an aftercare contract, so they work with 16-plus young people who are leaving care. We have two semi-independent living homes. We have a team of seven staff, personal advisers, who work in the community with young people who are living in their own accommodation, or they may be sofa surfing or living with friends. We also have a drop-in centre at Hope Street, where young people can come and seek advice.

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Our third contract is a wraparound contract, which is a therapeutic contract. We have a team of therapists who will come from different areas of therapy – psychotherapy, play therapy, art therapy, counselling. They provide a therapeutic service, a Tier 2 therapeutic service because

CAMHS is Tier 3, so we provide a Tier 2 service to help young people with their emotional and behavioural difficulties in the looked-after system. They work with foster children, looked-after children in residential care and also children in the secure care home, and we are just going to start working with adopted children as well and adopted parents.

240 We have got quite a lot of work but it is all contracted with the Isle of Man Government, so it is all core funding from the Government.

The Chairman: Thank you.

245 **Q15. The Clerk:** May I just come in on the funding briefly: St Christopher's Isle of Man, is that part of St Christopher's in the UK, or is it independent?

250 **Mrs Seed:** We are a registered charity on the Isle of Man. When St Christopher's first came to work on the Isle of Man, when they got their first contract in 2004, part of the tendering agreement was that we became a registered charity here. We are obviously still part of our parent company in the UK, which is St Christopher's – we are dropping the Fellowship title because that is historical. So we are still part of the parent company, which is how we are able to swap ideas, work together –

255 **Q16. The Clerk:** But in terms of financial stability of the organisation, if those Isle of Man Government contracts were not renewed you would have to make 120 people redundant overnight – is that right?

260 **Mrs Seed:** In theory yes, but what has happened in practice in the Isle of Man in the past – and it has happened to me three times since I have been on the Isle of Man – is that if a company does not get the contract back through the tendering process, the company that takes over normally transfers the staff. I think senior management are more at risk because any company that comes in wants to bring their own senior management with them and their own policies and procedures and ethos, but certainly most of our frontline staff are transferred and some of the staff we have working with us now actually have been transferred three times, like I have, because they have moved from different companies.

270 **Q17. The Clerk:** Okay, and just on funding which is not through the contract, does St Christopher's have any financial resource to do things which are not in a contract?

275 **Mrs Seed:** I can give you an example from our Isle of Man work. When we had the previous contract in aftercare we identified there was a need ... Housing for young people on the Isle of Man is poor. They cannot access commissioner houses, local authority housing, so mostly they have to go for private housing – and a lot of the landlords are fairly unscrupulous, I do have to say. So we identified with the Isle of Man that there was a need for some interim more stable housing for young people, where they could feel safe and where they could learn the skills before they actually moved into the community. So St Christopher's bought two move-on properties. There were two two-bedded properties in the community – one is at Governor's Hill and one is in the Anagh Coar area – and we bought those to move young people into. So they were bought out of contract; St Christopher's financed that themselves and put the staffing in ourselves.

285 **Q18. The Clerk:** So where does the money come from for that?

Mrs Seed: Well, St Christopher's obviously have reserves in the UK that they have ... What happens as well is if we have any surplus money on the Isle of Man at the end of our year, that stays on the Isle of Man so we use that as well. So the money that stays on the Isle of Man ... We

are not allowed to move money back to the UK – that is part of the contract – so whatever money we have left over here for our work here is then ploughed back into the work we do here, so that helps build up some of those extra resources. So when we went for contract the next time, which is the contract we have now, because that had been successful and had worked, the Isle of Man Government included that in the contract this time.

Sometimes it is about ... you take the initial risk and the organisation puts the money in to fund it to actually give the evidence that is needed, and then the Isle of Man Government work with us to include that.

The Clerk: Thank you very much.

Q19. Ms Edge: When the young people go into those homes, are they classed as independent and they then get benefits to live independently, so they would then pay St Christopher's for living in that facility?

Mrs Seed: Yes, for those two houses we act as responsible landlords and they claim housing benefit or they work. We have two care leavers as apprentices now that work for us and one of those young people, who is our IT apprentice, actually lives in one of those houses. So he is working, and when we have a young person who works we reduce the rent for them because that is more of an incentive to make things happen, and then we will give them a good reference to move into a tenancy of their own that is better than they would normally get.

Q20. The Chairman: You said things are difficult in terms of public sector housing. It never used to be the case but it now is the case that people of 18 can go on the housing list. Is it a problem because they do not get round to getting housed because of other people on the list? Is that what the problem is?

Mrs Seed: They can go on when they are 18, but unfortunately they do not often meet the criteria – because isn't it that you have to have lived in the area for five years? Young people in care are often transient, so they have not lived in that same area for five years – so they do not meet the criteria. If they have been lucky enough to get on the list for a particular reason, they often wait quite a few years after that before they are even considered for housing.

Q21. Ms Edge: The Department's minimum standards for children's home and child in secure that was issued in 2015 – do you think that has made a difference?

Mrs Seed: Most definitely. I think when St Christopher's first came to the Isle of Man in 2004 there was not any inspection of children's homes. I would not say it was a free-for-all but obviously there were not any controls around how you should be operating, the standards that you were expected to work by.

I think the thing about St Christopher's – and I did not work for them in 2004 but I know that when they came they were already doing inspections in their homes in the UK, so they transferred their internal inspection process over to the homes that they had taken over on the Isle of Man, so we have done internal inspections of our homes since 2004.

When the minimum standards were brought in and the Registration and Inspections Unit was set up, that formalised the process and the minimum standards – and they are called minimum for a reason because obviously we want to do better than minimum and that is what we always aspire to ... they set the standard that you are expected to attain. They do unannounced inspections once every year. If you do not meet the standards they will come back quicker than that. I do have to say we have been lucky and we have been compliant but you are working all of the time at ensuring that those standards are met. It is not something like you think the inspector has been in and you can sit back and have a sigh of relief and think that it is another 12

340 months before it happens again. It does not work like that. We employ an independent visitor
ourselves who goes and does our internal inspection and we do that every month in every single
home that we have.

So managers and staff always have to be on their toes, really, with maintaining standards.
Every year you have to do a self-assessment for the Registration and Inspections Unit, so every
345 manager we have in our homes is a registered manager with Inspections. They have to self-
assess their own home based on the standards, so when Inspections come they actually assess
you on your self-assessment. So if you have said something that you are not actually doing, they
will find you out. There is no way out of this.

You need to have standards in this type of work. It gives you the framework for your control
350 mechanism and for keeping people safe. That includes staff as well. That is not just about
keeping young people safe; that is about keeping the staff safe who work for us.

Q22. The Chairman: I was just going to ask you about staff. You said there are policies and
stuff in place in relation ... How about if there were unfounded allegations made about staff? Is
355 there a process where you can determine ...?

Mrs Seed: Obviously the safeguarding procedures are very clear and they were actually
reinforced by the Safeguarding Board when they were set up. It is about a very robust reporting
process. That would come to the manager, the manager would then report it to the social
360 worker, to the DHSC, and then the Police would become involved if necessary. So there is a very
clear process about how that works and we train all of our staff.

Safeguarding procedures are one of the things we train from the very beginning because we
get a lot of staff on the Isle of Man who have not actually worked in this arena before, which is
quite different from when I worked in the UK, so we have a very strict training programme and
365 as soon as they walk through the door they have mandatory training that they have to complete,
which includes safeguarding. We send them on the Safeguarding Board preliminary level 2
training as part of the probationary period. Managers do work with them in their induction
process and the probationary period because that lasts for six months, so it is an ongoing
process for six months. Then we do annual refresher training for all of our staff, and this year in
370 our safeguarding training refresher we are actually including child sexual exploitation as well
because that has come on the agenda for everybody.

So the processes are very clear. If people do not follow them, then they are disciplined. We
have a very clear disciplinary process around that because we say keeping young people safe is
paramount to our work, so if people are not abiding by that and abusing that process then we
375 have to take very firm action. We have disciplined people because we are now much more
proactive in our approach to this type of work. There are three of us on the Isle of Man who are
senior managers and our job is that we are always proactive in keeping an eye on these things
and making sure all of those processes are followed.

Q23. Ms Edge: You mentioned just before, when we were talking about your self-assessment
process ... I was not quite clear as to whether it was your internal monthly inspector that did the
380 review of the self-assessment or whether it was the independent –

Mrs Seed: It is the Registration and Inspections Unit.

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Ms Edge: Thank you.

Q24. The Clerk: Can I ask a question about standards. Just to take an illustration of what you
are talking about, in the minimum standards, under the heading of 'Safeguarding' it says, 'The
390 service has the following policies in place' and there is a list of policies, for example
whistleblowing, which you have mentioned, photographs, social media, lone working. So, in

order to meet the minimum standards you have to have a policy on lone working. (*Mrs Seed:* Yes.) That does not really tell me what the rules are for lone working in children's homes. Is it something which is possible at all?

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Mrs Seed: As much as possible we avoid lone working in our children's homes because obviously that is a risky procedure to put in place. We always have two members of staff on shift and if we have a member of staff that goes sick, they phone one of the managers and then we find somebody else to go in there – because we run a care bank as well, so we have a care bank, a group of people who are not actually linked to a particular home but they go in and work in the homes where they are needed. So we always have spare staff to fill the gaps. To protect the young people and to protect the staff we do not do lone working in homes. It is a very risky business to be in.

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Q25. The Clerk: Yes, well, it is, and allied to that, then, is people working in groups if the same two or three people are working together for a long period of time. Is that something which you ... you shuffle the pack?

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Mrs Seed: We do. Obviously we try to have stable staff teams in a home, because that is the only way you can build meaningful relationships with young people. If we keep moving staff around into different homes all of the time it is inconstant for young people and they are not given the opportunity to know each other. We have six staff in a home. We have five and a half staff and a manager and the manager works 50% of their time on shift. They actually work two on shift but the manager every six months changes those shift lines around so that you get the opportunity to work with everybody in the home at some stage. There is always an opportunity for staff to do overtime as well, so if you are working overtime you obviously work with one of your other colleagues, or you can go to another home and work overtime. What we say is all of our staff work for St Christopher's Isle of Man, so if we need to move them we have to move them, but wherever we can we keep stable staff teams because that is the best way to work with the young people.

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Sometimes young people do not like some of the staff. We all have to work with people sometimes that we do not like, don't we!

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The Chairman: Not in our job – it never happens in our job! (*Laughter*)

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Mrs Seed: Young people are very clear in telling you when they do not like a certain member of staff, and obviously if that situation is going to be difficult or problematic, particularly for the young person, we will move that member of staff. We do not just do it on the basis that a young person says, 'I don't like them.' It has got to be something much more than that, because very often if you say no to a young person – you know if you say no to your own children you are not flavour of the month, are you? – they will say, 'Well, I don't like you,' but it is probably because you said no to them or have given them an answer that they did not really want.

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So we have to be clear about when we move people, but we do listen to young people. One of the big things we say is – and this is part of our participation work – we do listen to young people, we will take them seriously, and that is whether they are telling the truth or not. We will listen to them and we will look into it, and if there is something behind that and there is a real reason why they cannot work with that member of staff, or if sometimes a member of staff just cannot work with that young person, they just have not gelled with that young person, then we will take it seriously and move them. It happens. It is human nature, isn't it? That happens all of the time.

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Q26. Ms Edge: You said that you always have two staff on. How does that operate particularly over a night shift? Does one have to be awake and one asleep? How?

445 **Mrs Seed:** No, in the smallest homes we have two staff sleeping in. In the six-bedded home, which is our admissions and assessment unit, we have a waking night staff because obviously they cater for young people who are first coming into the care system, so we do not know anything about those young people and we have not had a chance to prepare a very good risk assessment on them because we do not actually have a lot of information, and the Department of Social Care might not have much information on them if they have just come into care. So we always have a waking night staff there and we have a waking night staff in the secure home.

450 If we have a home that is in crisis – if we have a small home and we have got a couple of young people living there who are having a difficult time for one reason or another, or the home is in crisis for a particular reason – as managers we will make a decision where to put the night staff. So if we feel that we need to have a waking night ... Say we have a young person who self-harms and they are having a difficult time and their self-harming has increased and we are concerned about their care and welfare through the night, then either one of the staff members will volunteer to stay up and do regular checks on them, or if the other homes are quiet we will move one of the waking nights to do that and then put another sleep in there. And then if we have a staff member who volunteers to stay up that night, then we would send them home then next day and put another staff member in their place, because we cannot expect a staff member to be up all night and then work a shift until three o'clock in the afternoon.

460 **Q27. Ms Edge:** Before, you said that there was still the possibility of abuse that could not be eliminated, so from what you have just said, from a risk element, if there are two people sleeping in and they both can be sleeping because it is not a crisis home, how can you ensure there is not a risk there to the young if one of them is a heavy sleeper and one is not? How do you do that?

470 **Mrs Seed:** To be fair, I could not 100% say there was not a risk, but in my experience we have never had a situation through the night that I can think of in the time that I have worked for St Christopher's on the Isle of Man where we have had an incident in the night in that way, where somebody has been put at risk. Sometimes young people put themselves at risk – we have had several young people who sneak out at night and there have been a couple of occasions when we have not actually known they have been missing until the Police have rung and said, 'We've got your young person,' which is not good, I do have to say. That does not happen very often but we have had one or two young people who do that.

475 So, in fairness, hand on heart I could not honestly say that there is not a risk there, and it may be something we need to think about –

480 **Q28. Ms Edge:** To eliminate that (**Mrs Seed:** Yes.) because historically we are hearing of all sorts, aren't we?

485 **Mrs Seed:** No, don't worry, I agree. There is a risk element there, that if everybody is in bed and a staff member or whatever wanted to go and abuse a young person, it would be easy to do.

Ms Edge: Thank you.

490 **Q29. The Chairman:** You said you are one of the three senior management team – and there is a board of trustees?

Mrs Seed: We have a board of trustees, yes.

Q30. The Chairman: So who are they and what is their role?

495 **Mrs Seed:** We have Isle of Man based trustees: Hazel Hannan, who has been a trustee for
quite some time; Jane Poole-Wilson is now a trustee; and we have Peter Killey, who is a trustee,
who actually is an ex-fireman but he used to work with us in one of our homes and he has come
back and said, 'I really want to continue being a part of St Christopher's, I'd like to be a trustee.'
So they are our three Isle of Man based trustees. Obviously our Chief Executive is a trustee, or
500 he is a director. St Christopher's in the UK have their own board of trustees as well, who oversee
St Christopher's and a couple of them actually come on our board as well. We meet with them
every three months, but in the meantime they go round and visit homes and talk to staff and
young people as well.

505 **Q31. The Chairman:** Good. When it comes to leaving care and the aftercare, how do things
work around those kind of areas?

Mrs Seed: It is quite a difficult one, actually, in terms of protecting them from abuse, because
once they reach the age of 16, unless they are on a care order, young people can discharge
510 themselves from care, but we will still work with them.

Often our aftercare team are working with young people who do not have a social worker
anymore, so our personal advisers carry the risk for those young people, and it is risky living in
the community because a lot of them are very vulnerable and they are not prepared. It is very
different when they move into the community. Despite the fact that our staff try to prepare
515 them as much as possible, it is not the same as when you actually move into the community and
you have to experience it yourself, paying your rent, buying your food, keeping undesirable
people from your door, not having parties in the house and upsetting the landlord. All those
things that most young people do, because they are teenagers, seem to be an added problem
for looked-after children because they are also carrying the issues with them about being in care
520 as well and the emotional distress some of them have had that they have carried through their
care history. Sometimes that is some of the things they have experienced before they have
come into care, it is not just about being in care, and I think that is one of the reasons why the
DHSC set up the wraparound team, because we knew that there was a gap there for providing
therapeutic support to children who had been through the care system and were going through
525 the care system, to help them deal with the issues and the trauma that they had suffered in
their lives. So we were playing catch-up with our 16-plus young people and wraparound have
done a lot of work with several of them now, but they are very open to abuse when they move
into the community; there are lots of people who can abuse them in lots of different ways. We
have unscrupulous landlords. I do have to say the aftercare team have got good relationships
530 with at least four or five landlords now that they trust, but that has taken quite a few years to
achieve that. But we still have unscrupulous landlords around.

The reputation of some of the young people does not help. Moving to the Isle of Man from
the UK, I found it was a very insular environment. I was quite lucky because I moved from a
colliery village, but if you have moved from an urban area it is very difficult to get used to the
535 lifestyle – everybody knows everybody else, everything gets reported in the media and it is a
very public arena in the Isle of Man, and if a young person reaches the age of 17 and they
commit an offence they get named and shamed in the newspaper, so it does not help with their
reputation either in trying to become accepted in the community. I know from experience when
we have tried to open homes in various parts of the Island and we have been vindicated ... public
540 meetings where there were some awful comments made by people who live on the Isle of Man
about children in care, so I know how some people think. There are a lot of very socially
conscious people as well, I do have to say, but there are a lot of people who have very strong
views about teenagers and young people who have been in care and what should happen to
people.

545 So it is very hard for a young person to move into the community when they are 16. If you
think, most of us do not turn our own children out at 16, and these are children who have had

probably quite disruptive lifestyles anyway and all of the obstacles that are in the way make it extremely difficult for them. Personally, I think they are extremely open to various forms of abuse by living in the community. The aftercare team get quite anxious about this because they often feel that they are carrying that responsibility on their own, because if they do not have a social worker anymore there is nobody you can go to. Sometimes when you are 16 or 17 you fall into a gap. We have young people up to 16, who are classed as children; when you are 18 you become an adult. But what happens to you when you are 16 and 17? You fall into that grey area where not many people want to work with you or help you, or you do not meet the criteria to work with those people. The aftercare team are working with 55 young people living in the community at the minute. It is a lot of young people and they are carrying that responsibility for all of those young people. Sometimes their aftercare worker is the only person those young people will see every week, because if they do not have family support or any other positive networks in their lives they do not see anybody else, so then they still have the issues of loneliness, isolation, meeting the wrong people, being abused. It sounds quite scary. They do a really good job, I do have to say, and the young people become very resilient in their own way because I think they have had to learn to be resilient, and a lot of the preparation work we do with them is to try and teach them to be resilient and try to actually ... We know they are going to have to face risks, but how do you deal with those risks, how is it they can deal with it, who do they need to go to if they need help. That is why we have the drop-in at Hope Street, because that is open five days a week, every day, and we get a lot of our young people who live in the community just coming to Hope Street for company, for advice, to have something to eat, to watch the TV – because it is tough living on your own when you are a young person.

570 **Q32. Ms Edge:** How do you work with the Police? Obviously, we know that sometimes children go missing: how does that work?

Mrs Seed: Relationships with the Police have certainly improved over the years, but that is because we have all put the effort in, and sometimes that is based on personalities as well and people's views. If you find the right people, you hang on to those people and you work with them. The Police are very good, the police officers we have worked with who have been very understanding about the needs of young people and work with us.

I think developing the missings protocol has been a massive piece of work that we have done between ourselves, the Police and the Department of Health and Social Care. That has just changed recently because it used to be based on what time a young person is expected to come in on a night and that did not really work that well because 16-year-olds were saying to us, 'Why do I need to come in at 10 o'clock at night?' and then you got into this stage of you were reporting them missing every night and the Police were getting irritated and everybody was running around looking for them and it became a big problem. So we all sat down again and reviewed the protocol. It is this thing about reviewing things, isn't it? You cannot just expect them to work forever. We now do it on an assessment of risk. There is sometimes disagreement between the carer's risk assessment and the police risk assessment but we have to come to a decision, and what we normally do now is always have an on-call manager every night, every weekend, and they have a conversation with the duty social worker and those two people decide is the risk any different to what the risk is normally for this young person; if it is, these are the reasons why and there we will report them missing. So it has become a much more controlled process in terms of what we consider.

All the young people have risk management plans. I hate the word 'management' because it looks as if we are controlling, we are doing it to them, and actually we do not do it to them, we do it with them. But we have these management plans where every week that is reviewed. Certainly for the high-risk young people we work with that is renewed every week with the care home and the social worker and that is updated every single week, so we know the sort of

people they are associating with, what they are doing when they go out, where they are visiting. If that changes in any way and that risk heightens, then obviously we look at it differently.

600 In TT, which is a difficult time for everybody, we run our own Streetwise project, so we have staff who volunteer to base themselves down on the prom or around Douglas and they look for our young people, which eases some of the pressure off the Police, and that works really well. On a lot of occasions when we do report young people missing, because we provide stats and data to the Government every three months we realised last time that on most occasions when
605 young people go missing now either they bring themselves back or our staff find them and bring them back, so it is not as much pressure on the Police.

So the new protocol is working much better than what we have had in the past. We do have little blips with it, I do have to say, but that certainly, we feel, is working much better. I think because we have built much better working relationships with the Department of Health and
610 Social Care and the Police we can have those types of conversations with each other. It is not a problem if you think it is not working and you want to go and challenge somebody; we can easily do that now.

Q33. The Clerk: Can I ask a different angle on it, please, because finding people and bringing
615 them back is one role of the Police but another is investigating crime, and one of the things that the Committee has heard is that some young people who have been in the care system come out of it with a deep distrust of the Police. This is older cases, but is there anything ...? Do you think the young people that you work with would trust the Police? You may say it is no business of yours, but is there anything that you can say about that?

Mrs Seed: If you wanted me to be truly honest about this, I do not think any of our young
620 people trust the Police. I think that will be for various reasons, because I think they see the Police as an authority figure. It may not be because of the Police; it is because they see them as an authority figure and somebody who is probably going to control them and tell them what to do. We do those types of things but we do not do it in a way where the young people think it is control and telling them what to do; we work with them. I think they have a different view of the
625 Police and I think probably most of their experience of the Police has been if they have been missing and the Police have brought them back or if they have committed an offence and the Police have had to deal with them, so most of their experience of the Police has actually been a
630 negative one anyway. And they all talk to each other.

We used to have, a few years ago, the bobbies on the beat, and if they were in an area where a children's home was they used to call in and they used to have a cuppa and a sit down and have a sandwich, and actually that was more of an informal way of the young people getting to
635 know the Police. Then, if there was an issue in that area – say the neighbours were complaining about young people and we were thinking, 'Well, actually, it is not our young people; it's other young people but we are getting the blame,' – the Police would come in and help sort that, the bobby, because everybody knew them. I think because we do not seem to have that facility anymore, that has gone, those relationships that we were able to form to help the young people have a more positive view of authority have disappeared, I think probably because of cost
640 cutting or whatever the Police have needed to do, but that did work very well.

Q34. The Chairman: I think it is exactly that. We have had a conversation with the Chief
645 Constable and I think he would love to have the ability to go back to the community policing as it was, and I think we would too.

Mrs Seed: It certainly worked very well for us.

650 **Q35. The Chairman:** Yes. You have been doing this job, social work and everything, even longer than I have been a Member of Tynwald, so how would you say things compare with how they were in the 1970s and 1980s?

655 **Mrs Seed:** I qualified as a social worker in 1979, which seems an awful long time ago, and one of the things I have learnt over the years is that this job is not a job, it is a vocation, because if you do not believe in what you are doing or what you are trying to do ... or you care and love the young people that you work with and that you have respect for them – and that is not always reciprocal, I do have to say, but you have to become quite hardened to that as well ... It is a job that you really have to want to do, and if you make it your vocation then it is a vocation for life.

660 When I qualified as a social worker, I went into the residential route and I spent 10 years working in residential in the UK. I then changed into other areas of social care because I then had a young family of my own and shift work did not suit me anymore, but I still stayed in social care, I just went into different areas of social care. When I think back, because I had this conversation with one my colleagues the other day, 30 years ago we did not have any of these policies and procedures in place, we did not have the standards in place. It feels quite scary to think back, that it was a bit of a free-for-all.

665 I ran a family group home, which was two council houses knocked into one – I lived in the house next door – but there was only ever one of us on shift with eight young people. The youngest was four, the oldest was 18, so it was a wide range of young people. It was a local authority children's home. You went in and you worked three days solid on shift. So you moved in there for three days and you worked solidly. I had a lady who came in at teatime to help me do the tea and do the school uniforms for the next day and she worked for three hours at teatime. The rest of the time you were on your own. If you think about the potential for abuse and the risks we were taking, it scares me to death now to think about that.

675 I saw inappropriate things happening. Even in my career I have seen inappropriate things happening, but because we did not have the systems in place not a great deal was done about it, and that is really scary. Now that everybody is starting to disclose historically, that does not surprise me, to be fair, because things were completely different 30 years ago. Obviously, as things changed and I worked for different companies and organisations all of these things were starting to be put into place, and that is probably one of the best things that ever happened because, as I said before, that does not just protect the young people, it protects all of the staff as well. I think probably we are in the best place now that we have ever been. We still have things to learn. We say in St Christopher's that we are a learning organisation and we learn from every mistake we make, because we do make mistakes but we have learnt that if we make a mistake we hold our hands up and then we look at it and say, 'Right, what have we learnt from this? How can we prevent it happening again? What can we do better the next time?' That is the way we work now. We did not work like that years ago. You just lived one day to the next. If you got through the day in that home on your own with those kids you were lucky. So I am not surprised and I can understand why there is so much disclosure now, to be fair, from the past. Because we have got all of these things in place now, the robust procedures policies, the training schemes, our monitoring, supervising staff, observing staff, all the things we do now, I am hoping that does not happen now or it is a very rare occasion that it happens. I am not saying it will never happen. I am hoping that that has gone a long way to preventing that from happening now. I think you are one of the lucky ones if you have survived from that era when you worked in residential care and nobody has made a disclosure about you in one way or another – and I am not saying we did inappropriate practice, because I am one of the people who have stood up over the years and shouted about inappropriate practice and got on my soapbox, but I think there are many people who are still out there now, who practised in residential work in that era, who should be very scared because they did work inappropriately. One of the things I have always said is for me the way I have survived in this work is I learn something every single day,

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700 and if you do not continue learning and moving on with the way things have changed, then you should not be in this work.

Q36. Ms Edge: That leads on really nicely – I was going to ask you how do you work with looked-after children education on the Island? Do you feel that is working well?

705 **Mrs Seed:** It is a tricky one. I do not think education for looked-after children works very well on the Isle of Man. I know residential staff have been criticised recently about not getting young people to school – it is all our fault that the young people are not going to school. However, I think what we are saying is everybody has to accept responsibility for this. This is a corporate responsibility. Yes, we are responsible for trying to encourage young people to go to school and
710 encourage education and lifelong learning, but the Education Department have a responsibility here as well; they cannot just wash their hands of young people. I can understand sometimes why it works that way, because if you have got a classroom of 32 young people and you have got a young person who is creating absolute mayhem in the classroom you just want rid of that one young person so you can work with those other young people. Unfortunately, some of our
715 young people that we look after are that one young person, and that is because they cannot cope in classroom situations. They cannot cope with the intensity of sitting in that classroom with everything that has happened to them, because a lot of the young people we take into care – and this is something that I think we have had to point out to people – have not actually gone to school before they have come into care, so why do you think it is our fault that we are
720 actually struggling to get them to go to school as well? We have had several young people who have not been to school for two years before they have come into care, so how do you think we are going to actually create a miracle overnight and get them to school? They are school averse.

That is why in our residential contract we have our education support service. We have a team of teachers and support workers who actually deliver education in a very creative way. We
725 do not call it education, because education to young people ... they have got a view and if they have had a bad experience, that is a bad view of education. We believe in young people having an education because they need the skills when they are older, but they do it in I think some whacky ways sometimes, doing education with the young people without them realising they are actually doing education – even just down to playing a game of darts or a board game. I will
730 often say to them, ‘Tell me what the purpose of that is.’ Well, actually, they have got maths because they are counting up, they are having to do English because they are reading, if they do cooking they are going to have to read the recipe and they are going to have to weigh all the ingredients out. So it is a very creative way of doing it and their idea is that they find something that a young person is really interested in and then they build a whole package of education
735 around that. They have the facilities to be able to do that – I know the Education Service do not, they cannot do it in that way, but that has proved very successful for us. And yes, we might not get the young people back to school, but they are getting some education and skills; they are getting some life skills and skills that will help them as they are older.

What we have found as well is a lot of our 16-plus young people are now coming back and
740 asking to work with that team because the lightbulb has gone on and they have thought, ‘Oh, no, I wish I’d done something now; I can’t get a job because I haven’t got any GCSEs.’ So they are actually coming back and working with the team now and doing functional skills, maths and English, which are equivalent to GCSEs, and they are getting some skills now, but sometimes it takes ... Aftercare have told me it sometimes takes two years of working with the young person
745 before they get to that stage where they think, ‘Oh, I wish I’d done something,’ and it is never too late to do it. So, yes, education in the sense of what we want to call formal education is not really very successful for our looked-after children.

Q37. The Chairman: I was interested in what you were saying before about the age – 16 and
750 18 and stuff. Do you think it would help if there was a more consistent approach? For example,

young people on the Isle of Man can vote at 16 now. Would it be easier if it was a more consistent across-the-board approach to that kind of thing?

755 **Mrs Seed:** It is interesting that, isn't it, because we are giving them responsibility to vote but we are not giving them responsibility to act as adults in the big wide world? So I think there certainly needs to be some more work around what that means for the young people, and I think doing that with the young people would be a very good exercise because sometimes if you ask young people 'What do you think about this?' they will actually come up with something and you think, 'Wow, that's great, I would never ever have thought of that.'

760 Sometimes, as professionals, as years have gone by, we have always thought we know best, we know what is right for young people. That is not the case anymore and I think we have learnt a great deal by asking the young people about things, asking them what their views are and how they think things could be changed for the better. So I think this grey area of being 16 and 17, if you went and asked all of those young people who are 16 and 17 now, or ones who have been
765 16 and 17 and have moved on, what had been their experiences and what have they learned from it, what would they advise us, they would have a mine of information to tell us.

Q38. The Chairman: Is there anything that Tynwald could do, in your opinion, to improve the situation for the future?

770 **Mrs Seed:** In terms of ...?

The Chairman: I do not know – legislation ...

775 **Mrs Seed:** There is a Safeguarding Bill going through Tynwald, isn't there? (**The Chairman:** Yes.) I think that is really good and it is great having the legislation to underpin things, because I know at some stage there is a leaving care Bill going to come through Tynwald as well, because we have no legislation underpinning leaving care on the Isle of Man, so everything is done through goodwill.

780 The Safeguarding Bill, which obviously is about protection from abuse, is great but any legislation that comes in needs to support the action, so there needs to be an understanding of what action needs to happen and supporting those people who have to put the action in place, and not criticise when it goes wrong. We do work in a very risky business and often things do go wrong, but it is always the negatives that people concentrate on. Sometimes you have to
785 because some of them are quite serious – there have been serious things that have happened on the Isle of Man – but we do not have to keep bringing that back up every single time something goes wrong. We have to learn from that and move on and put things in place, and I think that is the bit about ... Tynwald needs to make sure that things are put into place so that we stop becoming a talking shop and become more of an action ... I am not saying Tynwald have
790 to do the action, but you have to have the right people to follow up with the action and hold them accountable because I think accountability is a big thing nowadays. I am accountable to somebody, you are probably accountable to somebody. (**Mr Cretney:** The electorate.) (*Laughter*) Accountability is a massive thing. Responsibility and accountability are important, but I think to be able to put things in action we have got to trust the people to do it but then monitor it and
795 give them a kick up the backside if they are not doing it because I think sometimes we do need a little reminder. You can get a little bit complacent sometimes and think things are going okay, that's fine, and then something happens and 'Oh, no, why didn't we think about that?' – because we do not have all of the answers, we are learning all of the time. I think legislation is great for underpinning things, but it is about what happens after that that is the important thing
800 and allowing people to be able to do that.

I think the main thing as well is about forming relationships. We say we work in a social pedagogic way in our company, which is all about building positive, stable relationships with

805 people. That is not just about with the young people; that is about with any person you work
with, all of the other agencies, social workers, Government. So I think those relationships are
important as well, that people can trust each other enough to be able to say things to each other
and challenge each other and not feel as if they are going to be made the scapegoat for it. Time
and time again I sometimes read things and I cringe when social work is mentioned because I am
810 thinking, 'Well, I'm a social worker.' You feel as if you are all tarred with the same brush, but we
do not all operate in the same way. It is like you are all put under the one umbrella, and we
should not be because we are not all the same.

Q39. The Chairman: I think one of the points you have made which I think is most relevant is
embracing change and change is something that is ongoing, and in your career that is
something –

815 **Mrs Seed:** Change is hard. Nobody likes change. We all shy back from change, don't we,
because you have to put a lot of work into it? You have to learn new things. I have had to learn
lots of new things over the years. I did not know about attachment and things like that when I
started off, and as there have become different ways of working I have had to learn about them
820 and bring them into my practice to help other people to learn about it. You have to do that
because if you stagnate then you just get left behind and you are not really then very good at
your practice. You have always got to be questioning yourself with your own practice as well. I
think that is a role of social workers. Whatever you do you question yourself. You sometimes
double-think yourself and you think, 'Did I make the right decision there, what if ...?' We are
825 always thinking about the implications of what might happen, because it is going to affect
somebody's life.

Q40. The Chairman: Yes, awesome responsibility.

830 **Mrs Seed:** Yes. You do become a little bit hardened to it, I do have to say. I do not do the
direct practice now, but I still go to bed some nights and know that somebody is missing, and
they are the last person I am thinking about when I go to bed and when I get up the next
morning the first thing I am thinking is, 'I wonder if they have got back safely.' That is what we
do. That is your social conscience.

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Q41. The Chairman: And your vocation, isn't it?

Mrs Seed: Yes, and your vocation.

840 **The Chairman:** Did you have anything?

Ms Edge: No, I think we have covered everything, thank you.

845 **Q42. The Chairman:** Is there anything else you would like to say to us? In the last little while,
however long we have been here, we have gone round in circles. Is there anything you would
like to say further, or do you think we have covered all the –?

Mrs Seed: Just let me check in my notes, because I did write a few things.

850 I think the main thing that I just really want to emphasise again is the fact that safeguarding
and protection from abuse is all of our responsibility. I remember going to the first Safeguarding
Forum in 2013 and that was the first thing that came up, that everybody said that safeguarding
was everybody's business: it is not just staff who look after children in children's homes, it is not
just teachers who work in schools; everybody should be responsible for this and everybody
should be aware of it.

855 And the fact that sometimes we do make mistakes, but I think as long as we can stand up and
be counted for our mistakes and learn from them and improve on that, that is the best we can
do.

And we cannot always eradicate risk. Risk is always there; we just have to deal with it in the
best way we possibly can with the tools we have got.

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Q43. The Chairman: And the other thing you said was that if things do go wrong, hold your
hands up and learn from that.

Mrs Seed: I have found that, because obviously we had a little blip with the Government a
couple of years ago – and it started over something really simple, I do have to say, but it
snowballed into a question about our standards of care. We then had to work really hard to
justify and prove to people that actually our standards of care were really good; this was just
one mistake which had been snowballed really out of proportion. It was not actually putting a
young person at risk; it was about the standard of a bedroom, and it was a teenager's bedroom.
865 That just snowballed into people questioning our standards of care. We were saying, 'How have
we got here from there?' and spending two years working on this to make sure it never happens
again.
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They are the types of things we have to learn from and I am thinking I still cannot understand
how we got to that situation from that one little incident, but I think some of that was down to
personalities as well and people just wanting to shift blame a little bit, but that is my personal
view.
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Q44. The Chairman: I was just going to say we live in a blame culture, don't we?

Mrs Seed: We do, and it is not a nice place to be when you are the person that is being
blamed.
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Q45. Ms Edge: Can I just ask with regard to your contracts, are they all running for the same
length of time at the same time?
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Mrs Seed: The contracts that we have we got for a three-year period. That finished in January
but we have been extended for two years because they can go up to five years. So ours run out
in January 2020, is it, 2019 ...? No, hang on, we are into the fourth year now, so it will be January
2020, yes.
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Q46. Ms Edge: And is that standard practice anywhere else, that you are on a three-year
extended up to five, or is that something ...?
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Mrs Seed: It has been in my experience and certainly here on the Isle of Man. In the UK –
obviously I have done a lot of work there in the past and they vary. I have had contracts in the
UK where they have only been for a year, and that is hard to make anything happen. We
struggle to make big improvements in five years, never mind in a year. I know it is a much more
difficult environment to work in in the UK – we are very lucky here, to be fair, because we have
three quite stable contracts and unless we mess up big time we are okay, but I think five years is
really good for a contract nowadays, to be fair.
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And it is tough because then you have to go through a tendering process again and
everybody gets anxious. The one thing we try to do – and as I say, I have been in this three
times – is always protect the young people. No matter how the staff feel or how we feel about it,
the one thing we always do is continue working with the young people the way we always have,
905 and if they have to transfer to another organisation we try to do that in the most seamless way
possible without damaging them and how they feel. To be honest, the staff come secondary to
that; the young people come first.

Ms Edge: Thank you.

910 **The Chairman:** I think we have probably come to the conclusion of today's meeting. I would
like to thank you very much, first of all, for your written presentation and for being so open and
honest today and letting us listen to your experience in this field, which has been very helpful for
the Committee. I was going to say you have been on the Island ... I hope you like the Isle of Man.
It sounds to me like you have got a northeast accent.

915

Mrs Seed: I am from Durham. I have been here since 2001, but you never lose your accent,
do you!

The Chairman: Thank you once more and we wish you and the organisation all the best for
920 the future. That brings our session to a conclusion. Thank you.

The Committee sat in private at 5.18 p.m.