

[Press release: Charity Commission opens inquiry into care charity following Coroner's report](#)

The Charity Commission has opened a statutory inquiry into Richmond Psychosocial Foundation International ([registered charity number 1116206](#)), a charity with objects to provide therapeutic care for adults suffering from mental health and other problems. Its activities include the provision of residential care.

Following the death in May 2016 of Sophie Bennett, a young woman in the charity's care, an inquest was opened. In February 2019, that inquest found that leadership and oversight of the charity's board was "grossly inadequate". The Coroner identified serious failings by the trustees to keep their beneficiaries safe from harm.

After the publication of the Coroner's report, the charity regulator swiftly opened a statutory inquiry on 5 March 2019. Whilst other statutory agencies lead on the safety and quality of care activities provided by the charity, the Charity Commission's focus is on governance and compliance under charity law.

The inquiry is considering:

- the trustees' compliance with their duties and responsibilities under charity law; in particular their oversight and governance of safeguarding arrangements
- the trustees' response to the Coroner's report into the death of Sophie Bennett and the governance changes that are necessary as a result.

The Charity Commission has worked closely with the Adult Social Services team at the London Boroughs of Richmond upon Thames and Wandsworth and the Care Quality Commission. As the relevant statutory agencies on safeguarding and the quality of care provision respectively, they are overseeing the safety and wellbeing of the vulnerable people who are using the charity's services. The Charity Commission inquiry will continue to liaise closely with these bodies as necessary.

Michelle Russell, Director of Investigations, Monitoring and Enforcement at the Charity Commission said:

This Coroner's report made for highly distressing reading. Those that run charities must put the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable people in their care first at all times.

The Coroner found that governance failings at the charity directly contributed to Sophie's death. We want to see the charity address

those failings as a matter of urgency.

The opening of this inquiry reflects the seriousness of the Coroner's findings and our concerns.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries are available on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).

Ends.

Notes to editors

1. The Commission has been engaging with the charity on a number of matters since 2016, however scrutiny of the trustees' safeguarding governance and decision-making had to be placed on hold pending action by other agencies, including the inquest.
2. Sophie Bennett died at Lancaster Lodge, a residential home run by Richmond Psychosocial Foundation International. The last resident moved out during the summer of 2016.
3. The charity currently runs a residential home and supported living service collectively known as the 'White House'. At its last inspection of this service, the Care Quality Commission, found that the service was "good" in each of the 5 key outcomes. The inquiry is liaising with relevant authorities who are responsible for ensuring that there are no current risks to the charity's beneficiaries.
4. The Commission is not a statutory safeguarding agency. Further information on the Commission's remit in relation to safeguarding can be found on [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk).
5. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the Commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
6. The Charity Commission is the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales. To find out more about our work, see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
7. The Care Quality Commission is the independent regulator of all health and social care services in England. For more information please contact their press office on: 020 7448 9401.
8. For more information from London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Adult Social Services please contact their press office on: 020 8487 5182.

[News story: Operational Honours and](#)

Awards List: April 2019

The latest Operational Honours and Awards List has been published today. The list recognises the bravery, commitment and commendable service of service personnel within the military.

The serving personnel who have won from the array of awards and decorations have shown outstanding examples of courage and dedication to their work while on operation.

The service they have given to the country ensures that Britain remains ready to face intensifying threats at home and abroad.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

The Operational Honours and Awards show how our armed forces personnel go above and beyond the call of duty to keep this country safe.

The breadth of achievement is testament to the bravery and commitment of our service personnel. They make us proud.

I congratulate all those who have been awarded.

The full list is below:

Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)

Acting Captain (now Captain) Donald James MACKINNON, Royal Navy

Lieutenant Colonel James Maccoll CHRISTIE, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Wing Commander Matthew John BRESSANI, Royal Air Force

Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

Lance Corporal Lewis STATON, Corps of Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers

Squadron Leader Benjamin David DURHAM, Royal Air Force

Distinguished Flying Cross

Flight Lieutenant (now Squadron Leader) Alex Fraser VAUGHAN, Royal Air Force

Mentioned in Dispatches

Flight Lieutenant Jonathan Blakelock MEADOWS, Royal Air Force

Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service

Commander Elaine Marie BOYD, Royal Navy

Captain Frances Marie BYRNE, Intelligence Corps

Acting Lance Corporal Jacob Francis Campbell FISHER, Royal Army Medical Corps

Lieutenant Colonel Robert Sholto James HEDDERWICK, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Lieutenant Colonel Samuel David HUGHES, Corps of Royal Engineers

Brigadier Mark Peter KENYON OBE

Major Lucy Diana KIRKPATRICK MBE, Intelligence Corps

Staff Sergeant Patrick Robert Jean LIA, Corps of Royal Engineers

Lieutenant Colonel Owain David LUKE MBE, The Royal Welsh

Colonel Richard Thomas MAUNDRELL MVO

Acting Lieutenant Colonel (now Major) Francis Simon PARKE-ROBINSON, Intelligence Corps

Acting Major Frazer Murray STARK, The Royal Regiment of Scotland

Colonel Sion Duncan WALKER, Army Reserve

Acting Air Commodore (now Air Commodore) Roderick John DENNIS OBE, Royal Air Force

Dr Gregory Benjamin FREMONT-BARNES, Ministry of Defence Civil Servant

Queen's Gallantry Medal

Sergeant Stuart Michael GRIFFITHS, Royal Tank Regiment

Corporal Saimone Matasarasara QASENIVALU, Royal Tank Regiment

Queen's Commendation for Bravery

Lieutenant Colonel Craig PALMER, Royal Regiment of Artillery

[Press release: CMA to investigate](#)

online gaming companies' roll-over contracts

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) is concerned about whether some of these companies' business practices are legal, such as their use of auto-renewals for online gaming contracts, their cancellation and refund policies, and their terms and conditions.

As well as buying consoles and games, people can pay for online services, such as playing against other gamers, communicating with other players, and extra games.

These services can involve a membership which is often entered into on an auto-renewal basis. This means that money will be automatically taken from a person's account as the membership rolls over.

The CMA has written to Nintendo Switch, PlayStation and Xbox requesting information about their online gaming contracts to help better understand their practices. It is also calling on customers who use these services to [get in touch with the CMA and share their experiences](#) in order to assist the investigation, which will examine several issues, including:

- are the contract terms unfair? – do the companies' terms give them wide discretion to change the quality of the deal, for example, by reducing the number of games included or increasing the price?
- how easy it is to cancel or obtain a refund? – are there any factors that make it difficult for people to cancel their contract or get their money back?
- how fair is the auto-renewal process? – are customers clearly told that their membership will be rolled over, are they regularly reminded that they are on a roll-over contract before further payments are taken, and is auto-renewal set as the default option?

At this early stage, the CMA has not reached a view as to whether or not companies have broken consumer protection law. However, if the CMA thinks the companies' practices are misleading or their terms are unfair, such that they are breaking consumer protection law, it could take enforcement action.

Andrea Coscelli, Chief Executive of the CMA, said:

Roll-over contracts are becoming more and more commonplace and its essential that they work well for customers.

Our investigation will look into whether the biggest online gaming companies are being fair with their customers when they automatically renew their contracts, and whether people can easily cancel or get a refund.

Should we find that the firms aren't treating people fairly under consumer protection law, we are fully prepared to take action.

This announcement is the second in a series of actions taken by the CMA in response to the Citizens Advice 'super-complaint' on the [loyalty penalty](#). The CMA identified a number of damaging practices relating to the loyalty penalty, including costly exit fees; time-consuming and difficult processes to cancel contracts or switch to new providers; requiring customers to auto-renew; and not giving sufficient warning that their contract will be rolled over.

All information relating to this investigation can be found on [the case page](#). This also sets out how people can get in touch with information on the concerns identified above.

1. The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer law.
2. The key pieces of consumer protection legislation relevant to the CMA's investigation are: the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 (CPRs); Part 2 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 (CRA); and the Consumer Contracts (Information, Cancellation and Additional Charges) Regulations 2013 (CCRs). The CPRs contain a general prohibition against unfair commercial practices and specific prohibitions against misleading actions, misleading omissions and aggressive commercial practices. Part 2 of the CRA aims to protect consumers against unfair contract terms and notices, and requires contract terms to be fair and transparent. The CCRs regulate the information that should be provided to consumers before they make a purchase, cancellation rights for certain contracts and the use of pre-ticked boxes for additional payments.
3. Enquiries should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk or 020 3738 6460.
4. Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). [Sign up to our email alerts](#) to receive updates on the markets cases.

[Press release: Funding boost for aviation security innovation](#)

The Defence and Security Accelerator (DASA) is making more funding available

for innovations that enhance aviation security measures, courtesy of the Future Aviation Security Solutions (FASS) programme.

FASS – a joint initiative between the Department for Transport (DfT) and Home Office which was set up to improve aviation security by funding and supporting the development of innovative science and technology solutions – will provide up to £1 million for innovative solutions that can boost the screening of passengers and cargo at airports.

This substantial funding will build on existing aviation threat detection capabilities by encouraging industry and academia to come up with novel ideas that reinforce screening processes at UK and international airports.

Cutting-edge science and technology developed with this funding could mean passengers see shorter queues and experience faster screening while benefiting from more effective security measures.

Security Minister, Ben Wallace, said:

Ensuring that the UK is a world leader in aviation security is a key objective of the government's counter-terrorism strategy, CONTEST.

This is another example of bringing together government, industry and experts to ensure that the UK remains on the front foot and a global leader in the development of technologies that keep the public safe.

I look forward to seeing new ideas which improve security and make for a better experience at airports for passengers.

This funding will be made available to experts from industry and academia through DASA's Open Call for Innovation focus areas – many of which focus exclusively on aviation. Alongside ideas that could improve the airport screening process for passengers, DASA is also seeking novel proposals that can boost the screening of aviation cargo.

Around 80% of air cargo is carried on passenger aircraft so it is important that it is robustly screened to ensure that prohibited items are not part of flown cargo. Identifying and investing in the latest screening solutions will help keep passengers – and those who work at airports – safe and secure.

DASA is requesting proposals from industry and academia through its Open Call for Innovation focus areas as follows:

Finding suspected threats on passengers during airport screening:

We are interested in receiving proposals for the development of hand-held solutions that will help detect both metallic and non-metallic threats on the body while reducing the need for person-person contact, particularly in harder-to-search areas of the body.

Matching passengers with their x-ray trays during airport screening:

We're looking for innovative solutions to ensure airport passengers are correctly linked to the x-ray trays they are using to put their personal effects through scanners.

Improving aviation cargo screening speed

We're looking for novel ideas that would help increase the speed, accuracy and volume at which cargo is screened.

The next deadline to submit proposals for this security funding is 2 May 2019. Full details of these areas of interest can be found [on our website](#).

[Press release: Environment Agency flood scheme for Starcross and Cockwood officially opened](#)

The new coastal defences include 4 new flood gates, newly raised ground, slipway improvements and nearly 600 metres of raised and refurbished flood walls.

Alongside the project's flood defence benefits, the project has included work to enhance habitats for local wildlife and to improve walkways for residents around Cockwood Harbour.

The scheme significantly reduces the risk of tidal flooding to the communities of Starcross and Cockwood, taking into account the impacts of climate change and rising sea levels until 2050.

Sir James Bevan, Chief Executive of the Environment Agency, said:

I am delighted to see this important project completed. These new flood defences will see 650 homes and businesses in Starcross and Cockwood better protected from coastal flooding and the effects of climate change for decades to come.

We have worked closely with the local community to design and build a scheme which blends into the local environment whilst also creating additional habitats for marine wildlife and improving walkways along the seafront.

The scheme was officially opened today by Philip Rees, Chair of the South West Flood and Coastal Committee, in a ceremony with local representatives. He said:

It is an honour to cut the ribbon on this new scheme, that sees over 600 properties better protected from the worst effects of flooding. This is a unique location and it is very satisfying to see that the character of the area has been maintained whilst bringing peace of mind to many residents.

The scheme also includes a unique contingency plan. In the event that all usual forms of communication fail, the 18th and 19th-century bells in St Paul's Church will be used to alert residents to flood risk.

The chances of tried and tested traditional electronic methods failing are remote but every flood plan has a contingency so the Environment Agency worked with Starcross Flood Group, St Paul's Church and flood wardens on this unique solution. The bells were restored earlier this year thanks to community fundraisers and funding from the Environment Agency.

The local community also identified a need for improvements to pedestrian and road safety around Cockwood Harbour. The Environment Agency included these improvements in addition to the direct flood risk benefits of the scheme. Other features include habitat niches on the harbour wall, improved public amenity, surface water drainage and landscape finishes.

The Environment Agency is making a number of improvements to increase the level of flood protection in the local area. Across England the Environment Agency is investing £2.6 billion in flood and coastal defence schemes between 2015-2021 to better protect 300,000 homes from flooding.