Statement of Purpose

**Mercy Gold Limited**

**Supported Living 16+**

*“Helping young people to become fulfilled through empowerment,*

*nurturing, care and support in their transition to independence.”*

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**Legal Status:** Private Limited Company

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### Our Mission

To empower vulnerable young people in the community to build resilience and life skills to enhance their live prospects. Mercy Gold provides excellent quality accommodation and support to Children Looked After and Care Leavers aged 16+ and 18+ offering both 24 hour support and floating support in shared accommodation.

### Aims

* Provide a homely, nurturing and caring environment where young people feel belonged, listened to and empowered.
* Mercy gold limited primary interest and responsibility is the safety, protection wellbeing and development of young people we work with. We believe that in order to offer an outstanding service, the needs of the individual must lie at the centre of everything we do.
* To provide support with new or existing educational, apprentice and trade pathways
* To develop clients confidence and independence through basic life skills
* Supporting young people to fulfill their potentials and promote their social, psychological and emotional wellbeing
* We provide focused, high quality support alongside accommodation for young people including unaccompanied minors with complex and diverse backgrounds.

Research shows that managing the web of transition for young people can be challenging and without the right support, the young people are likely to struggle even when they start living on their own. Therefore, we aim to provide young people with skills and opportunities to help them make the right choices and equipped them to succeed without the worry of the future.

### Overview of the Service

Mercy Gold is specifically tailored to support young people from the age of 16years old moving from a highly supported environment where decisions are made in their best interest to a less supported environment in the community, where they are supported to make informed decisions and think about what they want to achieve for the future. We offer a bespoke service completely designed to meet the needs of eachyoung person. This involves consultation with the young person, giving advice with the freedom to make their choices. Through effective communication the young person’s wishes, feelings and views are taken into consideration and enshrined in the support plan drawn up with them and their key worker.

**Individuality and Positive Group Living:** Mercy Gold is committed to the provision of the highest quality support and recognises the importance of individuality, diversity and difference. To guard against institutionalisation, the staff team and young people living in the home regularly review care practice, to ensure that it accurately reflects the home’s Statement of Purpose and the needs of the young people who live there. Many of the young people referred to us will have poorly developed social and life skills. These are often typified by negative peer relationships and an inability or unwillingness to share, compromise or display tolerance towards others. Those who are under-skilled socially often find themselves in a cycle of negativity and rejection. Not only are they poorly skilled, but by virtue of their poor skills they can often find themselves socially isolated, leading to a lack of social learning opportunities where peer modelling, reinforcement and recognition can take place. Through the delivery of structured social skills programmes the use of positive reinforcement and rewards.

Support Workers can provide help and advice in many areas including:

* Assessing the young person’s baseline support needs and create an Individual Support Plan to assist their development
* Working with the young person’s social worker to develop a pathway plan
* Setting clear behavioral boundaries to ensure that young people are kept safe.
* Setting boundaries and ensuring house rules are followed in order to safeguard the needs of all young people
* Offering young people the chance to achieve accredited life skills
* Supporting with budgeting and financial management
* Providing housing management and maintaining health and safety
* Training, education, and employment
* Living independently, moving on and staying safe, using public transport, completing forms and dealing with correspondences
* Supporting and guiding during times of difficulty or change
* Accessing healthcare, social services or local authority services
* Managing a tenancy – your rights and obligations
* Housing issues, such as rent arrears as they move on and anti- social behavior
* Claiming welfare benefits
* Legal issues – signposting and accompanying the young people for immigration advice to appropriate accredited immigtion solicitors or legal

# Admissions and Eligibility

A service will be offered to young people aged between 16 – 24years who meet the following criteria:

* Where a need has been identified that the young person needs support to start developing skills to live independently and ‘not to be cared for’
* In need of emotional Support
* In need of practical guidance
* In need of preparation for leaving care
* In need for support and accommodation

Mercy Gold is of the view that any successful placement is a combination of good quality information received about potential residents, and the recognition that the process of introducing a new resident to the unit, should be carried out quickly and effectively. We are aware of the need to minimise delays, which can cause/create stress, anxiety, and un-certainty; and the need to promote stability and security for young person to aid their transition. Therefore, for a successful placement, we will require;

* A detailed referral completed at point of placement with a detailed background history into the family, any risk factors and behaviour concerns as well as strengths and reasons for the referral
* Pathway plan where it has been completed

We will welcome planned moves as this better facilitates how well a young person settles into the placement. We will also accommodate emergency referrals in crisis following a risk assessment. As part of this initial assessment the manager will have to establish that the new referral can be placed with minimum disruption to the other placements. Consequently, if it is felt that the new referral would be too disruptive and/or that their needs could not be met according to the eligibility criteria then the emergency placement would not be proceeded with.

Referrals are usually received from placement teams prior to placement and it should include any relevant facts about the young person, the purpose and reason for the placement request. We may also ask that copies of recent reports be copied and forwarded to us if the referral is agreed, an initial introductory meeting with the young person is held to discuss about the placement and seek their views. This is then followed by a placement planning meeting with the allocated Social Worker or Personal Advisor, held within five working days of the young person being placed.

The placement plan is drawn up with the Social Worker or Personal Advisor. This plan then forms the basis of the work carried out during the time the young person is placed at Mercy Gold.

On arrival at the placement young person will be introduced to the unit Manager Support Worker on shift and will be given an induction into the service. They will be issued with a young person’s Handbook, which will we go through with them on their first day. They will be taken round the unit with attention to Fire Exits and Evacuation locations.

House expectations will be explained, along with Health & Safety systems. Within 2-3 days the young person will have a further induction, which will give details of the local community, cultural links, language courses; subsistence, job seekers allowance payments and their first one to one as an opportunity to discuss their personal needs.

The Accommodation

### Property 1:18+ shared accommodation (floating support)

### Chafford Way, RM16 3EJ Thurrock Borough

### 3 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, separate w/c, kitchen lounge/ dining room, garden

### Property 2:16+ shared accommodation (24 hour support)

### Chafford Way, RM16 3EJ Thurrock Borough

### 5 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, separate w/c, kitchen lounge/ dining room, garden and on-site office

Both units have CCTV coverage of entrance and exit points and hallways to enable the security of young people and staff. Staff also provides a 24-hour out of hours telephone service to young people available all through the year covered by our experienced staff.

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# How Mercy Gold helps young people

* Support to develop the emotional and practical skills needed to manage their lives and live independently
* Support with accessing education, training, and employment
* Support to learn essential skills needed to live independently including shopping, cooking, budgeting, making appointments and managing a tenancy
* Support to develop self-confidence and self-belief in their ability to succeed
* Support to understand their housing options, tenancy rights and obligations
* Encouragement to maintain good physical, emotional and sexual health
* Works with local agencies, including the Police and health services, to continue to promote the welfare of young people
* Work within the ecological/systemic model to support young people to return home where appropriate and if it is their wishes.

# Bullying

Our service is committed to providing a safe, caring and supportive environment where it is known that instances of bullying are unacceptable for all children and young people.

From what we have learnt over the years, bullying it is the misuse of power in order to inflict pain, fear or distress upon the victim. Bullying can manifest itself in a physical, verbal, emotional, racist, ageist or sexual, homophobic, or cyber way.

All concerns, observations or reported incidents of actual bullying must be addressed immediately. Where possible we aim at reconciliation. However, bullying, in any of its forms, is not acceptable and we aim to confront and address it in the following ways:

* During induction, care staff are given an insight into the susceptibility of young person becoming involved in bullying behaviour, as the person bullying, victim, witness, or accomplice. This insight is reinforced through line supervision, team consultation and specialist training.
* All young people must be advised clearly and explained the definition of bullying and that it is not acceptable. It must be reinforced that any concerns or worries a young person may have should be reported to staff immediately, to enable the issue to be addressed.
* Staff must, always, role-model appropriate relationships to enhance the young people’s understanding and respect of others.
* Staff must aim to be aware of the whereabouts of the young people in the home always, to assess the interactions of the young person and the dynamics of the group. This awareness aids early detection of any inappropriate communication that could lead to bullying and aids the monitoring of young person’s safety.
* It is the responsibility of all staff to address any incident where a young person’s behaviour, communication or intentions towards her peers are inappropriate. Such incidents must be addressed in a sensitive manner, appropriate to the young person’s understanding. The outcome, and why the behaviour was inappropriate, must be made clear to the young person. It needs to be reinforced that such behaviour is not acceptable and that it must not be repeated.
* Serious incidents of bullying are recorded on an incident report, or if more minor in nature on the young person’s daily log/weekly update, so these can be effectively monitored regarding level and persistence. The key worker of the person bullying, and victim and the manager must be informed, who must undertake a fuller assessment to decide how best to manage this behaviour.
* Where a pattern of bullying appears, meetings will be held with the victim and young person bullying separately to address the seriousness of the behaviour. Staff will use a relationship based questioning approach in order to firstly help them and the young people better understand the situation and behaviour presented including its impact on themselves and others. Secondly to explore what could be done to improve or repair the situation and relationship between the young people.
* In the event of a more serious incident occurring, or the frequency or severity of bullying increasing, urgent action will be taken to protect the victim in consultation with the placing Authority, which will result in the young person being taken for time out by carers or moving to an alternate time-out placement which could be within the home or elsewhere pending further planning.
* The above action will enable time for a stability meeting, with relevant professionals, where an action plan will be formulated. This meeting will identify whether the young person’s placement is to continue or to end.
* The unit manager will monitor records about incidents of bullying. Where incidents occur, a risk assessment must be completed stating times, places, and circumstances where risk of bullying is greatest. An action plan must be developed to reduce or counteract the risk of bullying.
* Any concerns regarding a young person at risk of significant harm will be referred to the Local Authority Team

**Risk Assessment**

The Supported Living Service recognises that risk taking is a vital and often enjoyable part of life and of social activity and that some young people will wish to take certain risks. We therefore know it is impossible to provide a totally risk-free environment. However, we do, as far as practicable, ensure that clients are not subjected to any unnecessary hazards. If an individual wishes to be included and take part in an activity that involves risk, the service will ensure that the he or she has information available to them, in a format that they understand in order that they can make an informed decision about the risk, and carry out a thorough risk assessment with the individual. Such risk assessments will be regularly reviewed, with the participation of all parties, in the light of experience. Within the first six weeks of admission, each new person has a full risk assessment completed by their key worker. This risk assessment will then be updated at a minimum of every 4 weeks, if new risks are identified, or if there is a change in any of their existing risk factors.

# Unauthorised absences

We have a robust policy on the prevention and management of unauthorised absences which adheres to the joint protocols for all professionals working in the London Boroughs. This protocol provides clear procedures for all professionals regarding children who go missing from home and this is set out in our full missing person policy. Our specific procedures and practice support this to prevent and manage absences from the unit as outlined below.

The protocol and Mercy Gold procedure clearly defines the action that should be taken when a young person goes or is discovered to be absent, including following or attempting to locate and return the young person, undertaking an initial and ongoing risk assessment, notifying appropriate people including Local Authority social workers, family and professionals and reporting the young person absent or missing to the police. The risk assessment will identify when the police should be involved in line with the protocol, but this does not lessen the responsibility of staff to continue to try and locate and return the young person themselves.

We will develop a positive working relationship with the local police missing person team and works closely with them in order to effectively manage the incidences of young people going missing.

Our staff are well trained to undertake return interviews for all young person when they have been missing. These return visits are provided by workers from the team who have also received training on Child Sexual exploitation (CSE)

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### The Director

# Mercy Gold Limited is owned by sole Director Mercy Shittu

Mercy Shittu is the Director and Safeguarding Lead, with more than 12 years post qualification experience working with in children and families. Mercy has worked in various Social Care teams including Child in Need, Child Protection, children with disabilities, children looked after, transition team and unaccompanied asylum seeker children (UASC) and has a real passion for empowering young people to become the best versions of themselves. Mercy has carried out roles in the capacity Senior/ Advanced Practitioner, DTM and Consultant Social Worker within the frameworks of the 1989 Children Act, Adoption and Children Act 2002, Children Act 2004 and Working together to safeguard children.

# Education:

* PAMS Trained Assessor (November 2020)
* Master of Arts (MA)in Social Work,Tavistock & Portman

Social Work and Emotional Well-being (2015 – 2017)

* Post Qualifying Award in Child Care, Anglia Ruskin University (April 2012)
* Postgraduate Certificate in Health and Social Care Management, Open University (2010)
* Bachelor of Art Degree (BA) in Social Work, London Southbank University (2007)

Mercy will bring her experience, knowledge and skills gained over the years to Mercy Gold Semi Independent Living to improve young people’s potential and outcomes.

# The Staff

Our staff team consists of student Social Workers and key workers with NVQ level 3 in Health and Social Care.

All staff are subject to six months probationary period and our performance appraisal system. Staff receive monthly supervision sessions where training and support needs are identified and addressed to ensure they are able to deliver support that is outcome focussed.

The multidisciplinary nature of the team in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, experience, skill, and qualification provides the opportunity to promote a positive view of difference to all young people placed in our charge. We recognise the need to have trained and experience staff in order to provide high quality service. We undertake enhanced DBS checks on all staff before their commencement of duties. Two written references covering a 5 year employment history are obtained following a successful interview. Where there are gaps in employment history, explanations are required, and a character reference obtained. In line with Safer Recruitment, we will obtain proof of right to work in the UK, proof of ID and proof of address.

All staff members will possess specific qualities and skills, which combine with their genuine desire to work with children and young people with complex needs.

### Our fees

We are committed to ensure every young person’s needs are assessed individually and a bespoke intervention package put in place. This is usually discussed and agreed with the commissioning department. The weekly cost of each placement is therefore based on the referral and support package agreed.

### Additional Support Packages

* 24-hour 2:1 support
* Waking nights and/ or Sleep ins
* Community based supervision
* Appropriate Adult services
* Resettlement support

# Complaints and Compliments

We have a robust complaints procedure to ensure good quality service and to encourage empathetic and responsive attitude to people who complain or make representation. Implicit in this is recognition of the need to protect vulnerable young people and improve service quality. To assist the effectiveness of the procedure, the initial response to representation/complaints will take place within day to day service delivery systems and will be operated in this way by management and staff. In this way, it is hoped that dealing with these issues is part of the 'norm', not separated from it. If issues cannot be resolved in this way, then the home manager or service manager will investigate the matter, acknowledge the complaint in writing within 5 days and issue a formal response within 28 days.

It is the belief that being able to complain/challenge serves to promote a working environment where issues of safety are paramount. We will always support a young person to access the services of an advocate via their local authority or independently or to contact the Children’s Rights officer, their Social Worker where they wish to do so. The young people are also encouraged to use, an online self-advocacy service to express their wishes and views, raise concerns or make a complaint about the services and support they are receiving.

Any complaints that give rise to safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in accordance with the safeguarding and child protection procedures.

Young people are advised that they can also complain to;

* Their Social Worker/ Personal Advisor
* The Local Authority
* Children’s Commission for England (020 7783 8330)
* Childline (0800 1111)
* NSPCC (nspcc.org.uk)

Further details are outlined in our Complaints Policy

### Supporting Religious and Cultural and linguistic needs of young person

We aim to ascertain the views and wishes of all young people regarding religion belief, observance and practice as well as establishing and taking into account the wishes of the parent/s where appropriate. It will be the link workers role to ensure the young person’s identified needs are met for example by making practical arrangements and by providing support. The latter includes hair, food, clothing and products that pertain to worship. The link worker will identify where the young person feels their community is and who they are, promoting any visits, contact or trips to places of worship that may support this. Equally any items that will help them manage their religious beliefs such as prayer mats or using their own personal space to observe any festivity or celebration within that culture.

### Anti-discriminatory practice and promoting rights

We are committed to achieving equality of opportunity both the service it provides and the employment of its staff, and expect all employees to promote this policy in their work. To achieve equal opportunity and anti-discriminatory practicethe following guidance has been formed and is actively promoted:

Adults must not negatively discriminate in their interactions with other adults and this includes adults being proactive in seeking an understanding of religious and cultural preferences so that appropriate choices of food, manner of eating and dress are observed. The relevant religious days and festivals should be known about and observed in an appropriate way. Racial, religious, or sexual harassment by adults or young people living in our home is not tolerated. If observed, or suffered, the instances should be bought to the attention of a member of the management team and appropriate action will be taken immediately.

The maintenance and development of cultural identities of the young person in our care is viewed as being crucial to their overall development. Therefore, it is up to all adults to promote the cultural identities of each young person in an integrated and positive manner, and where possible create the conditions that allow this to occur.

All policy relating to equal opportunity is formulated and agreed for implementation at managers Meetings, team meetings and discussed at house meetings. All staff and young people are positively encouraged to bring forward views and ideas for promoting equal opportunities and Anti-discriminatory practice. These are given an understanding and positive response.

We have a strong commitment to ensure that an atmosphere of respect prevails where a young person can openly practice their religion and cultural rights as they wish to do so and as requested by parents and the referring Local Authority.

### Arrangements and Response to safeguarding

Safeguarding the young people is central to everything we aim to achieve with and for the young people placed. The young people referred to us as well as subsequently placed are particularly vulnerable to a whole range of issues and threats due to their history and background. We therefore endeavour to make sure our policies and procedures promote and protect their safety and wellbeing. We aim to do this by:

* Promoting a warm nurturing and secure environment where the young people feel safe, cared for, belong, contained, and invested in and where they therefore want to be. We encourage safe space to express any concerns or worries they may have which may compromise their safety in and out of the premises.
* By taking appropriate action to protect the young people from potential and actual risks.

To this end Mercy gold limited has a wide range of policies and procedures to promote these aims will be provided on request to the unit manager or service manager.

These include:

* Safeguarding and child protection procedure. Any suspicions or incidences of child abuse or neglect are dealt with in accordance with our Safeguarding Children procedure and with reference to the relevant safeguarding board procedures and guidance i.e. those of the placing Authority and Local area. These procedures provide clear guidance about reporting and recording requirements and promote the need for staff to work together with Local Authorities and police and other relevant people. All staff receive safeguarding and child protection training. The procedure contains detailed guidance on the management of allegations against staff.
* All staff are trained in understanding sexual exploitation and peer violence and in undertaking stay safe work.
* Managing Bullying and anti-discrimination procedure. All staff receive training on this.
* Staff selection, recruitment, and vetting procedure. Thorough procedures are operated with an emphasis on the safety and suitability of staff to work with vulnerable children.
* Young people who go missing procedure.
* Placements are not offered to young people with a history of fire setting
* Additional staffing is provided where there is an assessed need in the short term and longer term intensive support packages can be devised and provided by negotiation and agreement with the Local Authority.
* Careful placement matching is undertaken through a thorough referral, assessment, and admission process to maximise safety and placement stability.
* Placement plans all include detailed risk assessments identifying risks and risk management plans.
* Contact with family and friends is supported where appropriate and consistent with the young person’s safety needs and care plan. Supervised contact is provided where required.
* We have a Whistle Blowing policy and Complaints Procedure for young people, staff, parents and professionals.
* Young people are asked to complete regular feedback forms regarding their care and wellbeing, which help young people raise issues of concern.

Given the range of issues presented by the young people looked after and their ages there is often a fine balance between managing risk and enabling normal adolescent exploration and increasing independence. Constantly reviewing and updating risk assessments in conjunction with social workers and young people is an important part of doing this. Young people are encouraged to understand the connection between trust and responsibility and increased independence.

### Contact us

To arrange a visit or discuss to our service or discuss a referral please contact us:

**Email:**[referrals@mercygold.com](mailto:referrals@mercygold.com)

**Telephone** 01375406450 | **Mobile:** 07830255144

**Written by:** Mercy Shittu

**Date:** March 2021