



Mystery Shopping Evaluation

Anti-Social Behaviour

June and August
2010

Introduction

Gloucester City Homes currently gains feedback from customers in various ways including satisfaction surveys, focus groups, resident groups, block and street representatives, compliments, comments and complaints. Mystery shopping enables us to identify where our service standards and procedures need to be developed.

On this occasion, we evaluated advice given to our customers regarding anti-social behaviour when they contacted Gloucester City Homes.

Timing of Exercise

The mystery shop was conducted between 1st to 11th June 2010 and 18th to 24th August 2010.

Executive Summary

Eight trained tenant mystery shoppers carried out the exercise. There were three different scenarios based on non-urgent cases.

In summary, the Mystery Shop exercise found, on the whole, a good response. Calls were generally answered in the manner required and good advice was given on appointment times, recording of incidents and confidentiality. Areas for improvement include advice on external agencies who may be helpful, asking if the caller can be helped with anything else before the conversation ends, and reminding staff that general advice may be given over the telephone without breaching data protection. In addition, staff should be reminded about remedial actions that can be taken under the Introductory Tenancies. These issues will be addressed via staff awareness in the form of training sessions for customer services staff, co-ordinated and delivered by the Anti-Social Behaviour team. Further details of actions to be taken can be found in the corresponding Reaction Report.

Results

How the calls were answered

When the mystery shoppers contacted Gloucester City Homes, they explained a friend or relative has problems with anti-social behaviour in their neighbourhood and they would like advice on their behalf. First, the shoppers recorded how the telephone was answered.

Results of enquiry: initial telephone technique

How quickly was the call answered?	After 1 ring	2
	After 2 rings	2
	After 3 rings	1
	After 4 rings	1
	After 5 rings	1
	6 + rings	0
	(answer phone)	1
Did the staff member confirm you have got through to Gloucester City Homes?	Yes 7	No 0
Did the staff member give you their name?	Yes 7	No 2
Did the staff member ask if they can help you?	Yes 6	No 1
Was the staff member courteous?	Yes 6	No 0
Were you transferred to another team?	Yes 3	No 0

Comments

- “called first at 13:10, only given two options. 2nd call 13:14 : option 1 repairs, 2 planned home improvements. No other options available! Further questions irrelevant”
- “was courteous but who made it clear that tenant should call 396396 in first instance and report it to them”
- “was unable to put me through to ASB team, so dealt with call herself”

Scenarios 1a and 1b – Request for advice on a non-urgent case of anti-social behaviour

The mystery shoppers each described a case of non-urgent anti-social behaviour to the member of staff and asked a series of questions. The scenarios were:

- 1a:** a friend/relative is having problems with a neighbour who is persistently playing loud music late at night
- 1b:** a friend/relative has problems with the behaviour of their neighbour's children. They are knocking on the door and running away and sometimes throwing stones into the garden.
- 1c.** a friend/ relative is having problems with the neighbour's dog persistently barking during the day when they are out.

Results of enquiry: questions asked and staff responses

Question	Staff response
If your friend/relative want to discuss this in person with someone, how soon do they have to wait for an appointment?	Within 1 working day 0 Within 5 working days 3 Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I said the person was timid and didn't want to step forward so this didn't crop up • was told to contact 396396 and that a visit not really possible • 5 working days for appointment but call back next working day • Would have to register complaint in person and would be contacted by ASB team • phone this free number 0800
Should they keep a record of the incidents?	No 0 Yes 5 Yes and we can send a log sheet out 3 Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 callers were told to contact Environmental health for log
What sort of steps might Gloucester City Homes take to sort this out?	Mediation 3 Voluntary agreements 2 Legal action 2 Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letter sent to person being anti-social asking them to be considerate to their neighbours • None • Telephone Environmental Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Initially would write to dog owner advising complaint received and reminding them(if tenant) that they were in breach of tenancy, Further action would be taken if necessary contact neighbour by letter 								
What sort of legal action might possibly be taken?	<table> <tr> <td>Court injunction</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Possession proceedings</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Anti-Social Behaviour Order</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Support criminal prosecution</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </table> <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> none not sure 	Court injunction	1	Possession proceedings	2	Anti-Social Behaviour Order	3	Support criminal prosecution	1
Court injunction	1								
Possession proceedings	2								
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Is there any other agency who can help with this problem?	<table> <tr> <td>Environmental Health</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social Services</td> <td>0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Police</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table> <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAB Environmental Health (noise), RSPCA who would advise on dog training etc RSPCA 	Environmental Health	3	Social Services	0	Police	0		
Environmental Health	3								
Social Services	0								
Police	0								
Your friend/relative is concerned what might happen if their neighbour finds out they complained. Is there a possibility they will find out?	<p>No, we have a strict confidentiality policy 6</p> <p>Other:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> no, this would not happen 								
At the end of the conversation, did the staff member ask if there was anything else they could help with?	<table> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>No</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table>	Yes	3	No	2				
Yes	3								
No	2								
<p>Comments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “they didn't need to ask if there was anything else as I was given a very comprehensive list of what they would do in the circumstances which covered everything” “not a lot of joy here I'm afraid” “Advised would probably be best to contact RSPCA initially. Complainant to be aware that although confidential, if they had had 'tiff' with neighbour, they may guess who had made complaint, but not to be put off. Staff member was knowledgeable on subject and did advise that they could not deal with anonymous calls, as need for follow up” “spoke to Nattesha” 									

Results Analysis

Initial response

- Seven out of the eight calls were answered within the Service Standard of five rings.
- One caller experienced problems with the telephone system and reached the answer phone
- All staff members confirmed the caller had come through to Gloucester City Homes.
- On two occasions the staff member did not to give their name.
- Six staff members asked how they could help the customer.
- Six staff members were perceived as courteous.
- Four calls were dealt with by Customer Service Officers (CSOs).
- Two calls were put through to the Anti Social Behaviour team
- One call was put through to the Housing Officer

Staff response to questions

- **Waiting time for appointment:** the Service Standard for a non-urgent ASB case is five working days.
- **Recording of incidents:** All 7 callers were correctly advised that the complainant should record future incidents of the anti-social behaviour although only 3 added that log sheets could also be sent out. 2 callers were advised to obtain log sheets from Environmental Health to record future incidents
- **Remedial action:** 3 callers were advised GCH could offer mediation, 2 were advised of voluntary agreements, 2 were advised that legal action could be taken, 3 were advised that a letter would be sent to the alleged perpetrator and another was advised to telephone Environmental Health. These are all within
- **Type of legal action:** Low level ASB is usually resolved using alternative methods however, a variety of legal actions are available may be sought if problems persist. 1 caller was advised of court injunctions, 2 were advised that we could seek possession of the property, 3 were advised that we could seek an ASBO, 1 was advised that we may seek criminal prosecution and a member of staff advised one caller that they weren't sure.
- **Other agencies:** 4 callers were advised that they could contact Environmental health, one advised to contact CAB and 2 were advised to contact RSPCA
- **Confidentiality:** All seven callers were correctly advised that GCH has a strict confidentiality policy, which means the complainant's name would not be given to the perpetrator. One caller was advised that, although their name would not be given, if the complainant had already had a disagreement with the alleged perpetrator, they may guess their identity but not to be put off and still report the matter.
- **Offer to help with anything else:** only three of the members of staff offered to help with anything else before the call ended as prescribed by the Service Standards.
- **Other:** one mystery shopper could not obtain answers to their questions as they experienced difficulties with the telephone system and could only get through to the answer phone.

Strengths

- 87.5% of calls were answered within the Service Standard of five rings. For each call, the member of staff correctly answered the phone in regards to confirming the caller had come through to Gloucester City Homes and gave their name. Six of the seven answered asked how they could help and were perceived as being courteous.
- Three out of seven staff members assured the caller that the complainant could be seen in person promptly.
- All staff members correctly advised the complainant to record future incidents of anti-social behaviour.
- All staff members did well to assure the caller that Gloucester City Homes will treat the case with utmost confidentiality.
- Six callers were advised of other agencies that may be able to help

Positive comments include:

- “I was given a very comprehensive list of what they would do in the circumstances which covered everything”
- “Staff member was knowledgeable on subject and did advise that they could not deal with anonymous calls, as need for follow up.”

Weaknesses

- No staff mentioned possible actions under Introductory Tenancies or Demoted Tenancies.
- Only three out of the seven calls answered ended with the member of staff asking if there was anything else they could help with.
- One caller could not obtain advice over the telephone on behalf of the complainant.
- One caller could not get through to speak to anyone, due to technical fault on telephone lines.

Conclusion

In summary, the Mystery Shop exercise found, on the whole, a good response. Calls were generally answered in the manner required and good advice was given on appointment times, recording of incidents and confidentiality. Areas for improvement include advice on external agencies who may be helpful, asking if the caller can be helped with anything else before the conversation ends, and reminding staff that general advice may be given over the telephone without breaching data protection. Further details can be found in the corresponding Reaction Report.

Sharon Goode
Resident Involvement Officer
08 September 2010