

Gloucester City Homes



Mystery Shopping Evaluation

Communication

June 2009

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 communication with our customers by testing the quality and efficiency of the Gloucester City Homes' website, our response to the request for information and general customer service.

Timing of Exercise

The mystery shop exercise was conducted between 28th May 2009 and 16th June 2009.

Executive Summary

Six trained tenant Mystery Shoppers carried out the mystery shop. There were two scenarios:

- **Scenario 1 – Gloucester City Homes' website**

The first scenario had two parts involving the use of on-line reporting forms on the GCH website: a) to test our response following the report of a complaint and b) to test our response following the request of a rent statement.

- **Scenario 2 – Request of information**

The second scenario was designed to test GCH's response following the request of information either by a) telephone or b) email.

Footnote: Three tenants completed scenario 1a; three tenants completed scenario 1b
Three tenants completed scenario 2a; three tenants completed scenario 2b

Key findings

Strengths: Customer service was found to be generally excellent in terms of staff contacting the mystery shoppers within the service standard time limits, telephone technique and telephone response time. Staff were noted to be friendly and professional in their approach.

Good feedback was also received regarding the website with shoppers finding it easy to use and well laid out. Furthermore, the Browseloud facility was found to be easy to understand.

All relevant service standards were adhered to in terms of time taken to receive the information and documents/rent statements were noted to be clear and easy to understand. Contact details were usually provided for further information. One shopper noted how the staff member had been particularly helpful by advising them which page number they should turn to in the document for the information they had requested.

Weaknesses: one shopper was not responded to after logging a complaint on the website and one shopper commented that there was no covering letter included with their rent statement. There were two suggestions made to improve the website.

Please refer to the corresponding Reaction Report to view remedial actions taken as a result of this report's findings.

Results

Scenario 1 - Gloucester City Homes website

Scenario 1a: Report of a complaint

The on-line reporting form was used to report a complaint and request a call back from a member of staff to discuss the issue. When the staff member telephoned the Mystery Shopper, they were told there was no longer a problem to protect the Mystery Shopper's identity.

Result of enquiry

Was the website easy to negotiate?	Yes	3	No	0
Was the on-line reporting form easy to use?	Yes	3	No	0
Did you use Browsealoud or the translation option?	Yes	1		
If yes to above, was the website easy to understand?	Yes	1		
Did you like the appearance of the website?	Yes	3	No	0
How soon did someone phone you?		1 working day		1
		2 working days		1
		Failed to contact		1
Did the staff member give their name?	Yes	2	No	0
Did the staff member give their job title?	Yes	2	No	0
Did the staff member explain the reason for contacting you?	Yes	2	No	0
Was the member of staff courteous?	Yes	2	No	0
Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff member was friendly and professional. • Very positive attitude of staff. Gave me confidence they would have dealt with a real problem in a professional manner. • I didn't receive a call back. Waited one week then made same request (9/6/09); again no call back. 				

Scenario 1b: Request of a rent statement

The on-line reporting form was used to request a rent statement to be sent to the tenant via the post.

Result of enquiry

Was the website easy to negotiate?	Yes 3	No 0
Was the on-line reporting form easy to use?	Yes 3	No 0
Did you use Browsealoud or the translation option?	N/A	
If yes to above, was the website easy to understand?	N/A	
Did you like the appearance of the website?	Yes 3	No 0
How soon did you receive your statement?	1 working day	1
	2 working days	2
Was your rent statement clear and easy to understand?	Yes 3	No 0
Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was no covering letter showing who had sent the rent statement. • When looking for info regarding rent you will automatically go to "Tenants" but there is no info there on requesting a rent statement. I wouldn't really think to go to "Get in touch on-line". • Website well laid out. Quick and easy to follow; quick response. • Why is diversity information requested when just asking for a rent statement? 		

Scenario 2 - Requesting information

Scenario 2a: Information request by telephone

The Mystery Shoppers requested information from a variety of options by telephone.

Result of enquiry

Information requested			
Anti-social behaviour policy/procedure	1		
Complaints policy/procedure	3		
Customer service			
How quickly was the call answered?	After 1 ring	0	
	After 2 rings	1	
	After 3 rings	1	
	After 4 rings	1	
Did the staff member confirm you have got through to Gloucester City Homes?	Yes 3	No 0	
Did the staff member give you their name?	Yes 3	No 0	
Did the staff member ask if they can help you?	Yes 3	No 0	
Was the staff member courteous?	Yes 3	No 0	
Were you transferred to another team?	Yes 0	No 3	
Reception of information			
How soon did the information arrive?	1 working day	2	
	2 working days	0	
	3 working days	1	
Was the information provided clear and concise?	Yes 3	No 0	
Was the wording and layout of the information professional?	Yes 3	No 0	
Were contact details provided for further information?	Yes 3	No 0	
Tenant comments			

Scenario 2b: Information request by email

The Mystery Shoppers requested information from a variety of options by email.

Result of enquiry

Information requested			
Anti-social behaviour policy/procedure		3	
Service standards		1	
Reception of information			
How soon did you get an initial response?	1 working day		3
How soon did the information arrive?	1 working day		3
Was an explanation included in the email explaining what was attached?	Yes 2	No 0	
Was the wording and layout of the email(s) professional?	Yes 2	No 0	
Was the information provided clear and concise?	Yes 3	No 0	
Was the wording and layout of the information professional?	Yes 3	No 0	
Were contact details provided for further information?	Yes 2	No 1	
Tenant comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Info received by post with compliment slip.• Email sent with info attached; I was advised of the page number so I could easily find info on repairs standards.			

Results Analysis

a) Customer service

Strengths

- Two of the mystery shoppers were contacted regarding a complaint within the service standard of five working days.
- All GCH staff members adhered to the customer service standards when speaking on the telephone e.g. by giving their name and job title, explaining why they were calling and by speaking in a courteous manner.
- All telephone calls were answered by staff within the service standard of five rings.

Positive comments made by the mystery shoppers are:

- “Staff member was friendly and professional.”
- “Very positive attitude of staff. Gave me confidence they would have dealt with a real problem in a professional manner.”

Weaknesses

- One shopper was not contacted regarding the complaint, despite reporting it on the website on two occasions.

b) Gloucester City Homes website

Strengths

- All the mystery shoppers found the website easy to negotiate, the on-line reporting forms easy to use and they liked the appearance.
- The one shopper who tried using the Browsealoud found it easy to understand.

Positive comments made by the mystery shoppers are:

- “Website well laid out. Quick and easy to follow.”

Weaknesses

Negative comments made by the mystery shoppers are:

- “When looking for info regarding rent you will automatically go to "Tenants" but there is no info there on requesting a rent statement. I wouldn't really think to go to "Get in touch on-line".”
- “Why is diversity information requested when just asking for a rent statement?”

c) Request of information

Strengths

- The rent statements and the policies or procedures were all received within the service standard of five working days.
- All the shoppers found the rent statements to be clear and easy to understand.
- The policies and procedures were found to be clear and concise and the wording and layout professional.
- Contact details were consistently provided to the tenants in the event of a request for further help and advice.
- Responses by email were very prompt with the requested information sent within one working day every time.
- The email responses were explanatory, well worded and laid out professionally.

Positive comments made by the mystery shoppers are:

- “I was advised of the page number [within the document] so I could easily find info on repairs standards.”

Weaknesses

Negative comments made by the shoppers are:

- “There was no covering letter showing who had sent the rent statement.”

Conclusion

Customer service was once again found to be generally excellent in terms of staff contacting the mystery shoppers within the service standard time limits, telephone technique and telephone response time. Customer Service Officers were noted to be friendly and professional in their approach. The one weakness identified was due to one shopper not being responded to when logging a complaint on the website.

Good feedback was also received regarding the website with shoppers finding it easy to use and well laid out. Furthermore, the Browseloud facility was found to be easy to understand. There were two suggestions made to improve the website.

Regarding the request for policies and procedures, all relevant service standards were adhered to in terms of time taken to receive the information and documents/rent statements were noted to be clear and easy to understand. Contact details were usually provided for further information although one shopper commented that there was no covering letter included with their rent statement. Conversely, another shopper noted how the staff member had been particularly helpful by advising them which page number they should turn to in the document for the information they had requested.

Please refer to the corresponding Reaction Report to view remedial actions taken as a result of this report's findings.