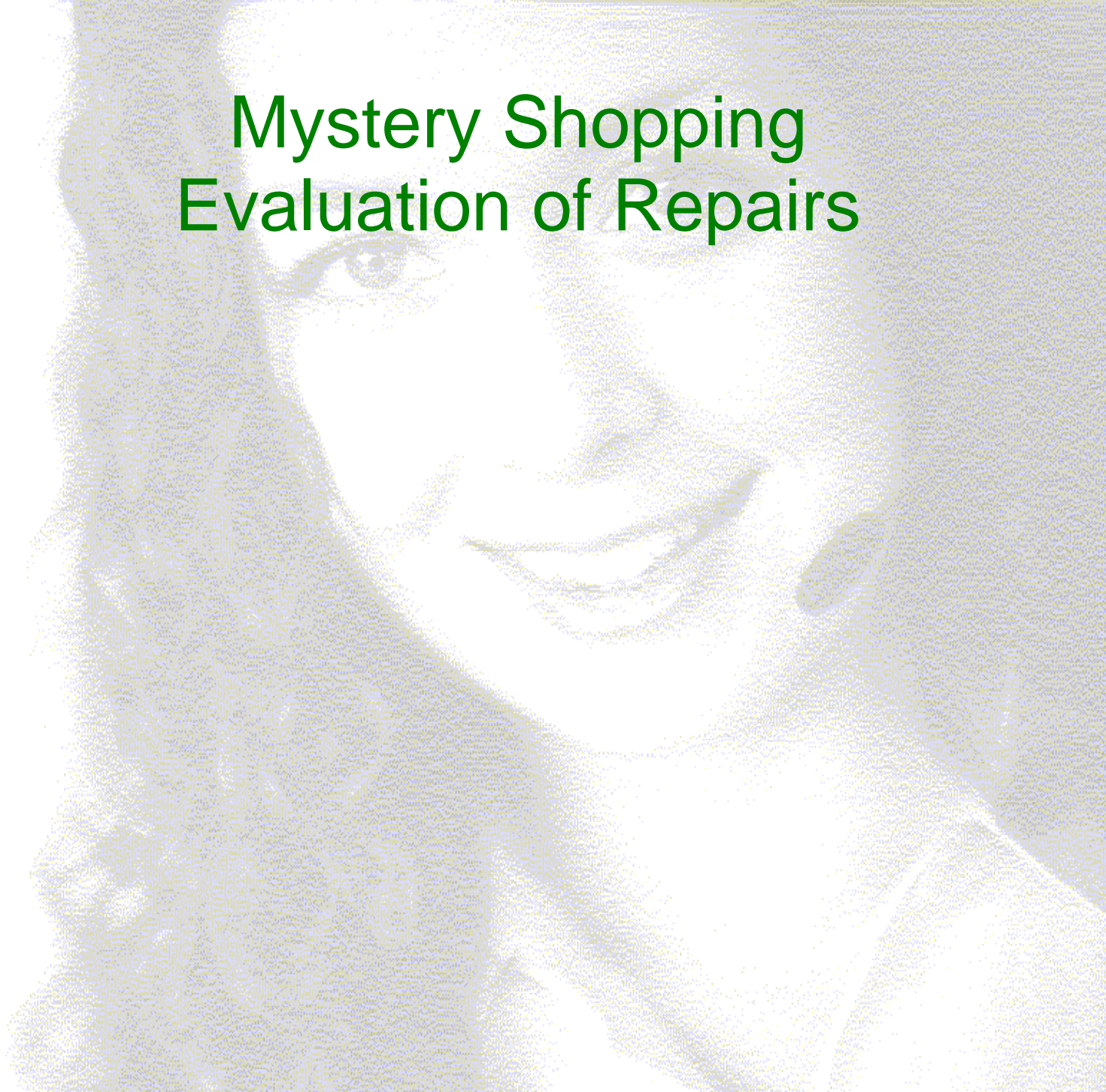


Gloucester City Homes



Mystery Shopping Evaluation of Repairs



Gloucester City Homes Mystery Shopping - Repairs

Introduction

Four trained tenant mystery shoppers carried out the mystery shop as part of our ongoing mystery shop of services.

Timing of Exercise

The mystery shopping exercise was completed between the 23rd March 2007 and 2nd April 2007.

Executive Summary

Along with other forms of feedback from customers, such as satisfaction surveys, focus groups, resident groups, block and street representatives, compliments, comments & complaints etc. mystery shopping helps us to identify where our practice needs improvement to conform to our policies and procedures, or where our policies and procedures can be improved.

On this occasion we wanted to test not only the quality of the repairs service, but also how very recent changes to our rechargeable repairs policy and procedure (implemented 23.3.07) were bedding in. As with all changes, GCH recognise that it sometimes takes a little time before staff and the organisation in general have adapted to the change.

We wanted to use the mystery shopping to ensure that early issues were picked up promptly and dealt with quickly so that the improved policy and procedure benefited our customers as soon as possible. A further mystery shop is scheduled for the end of April to ensure that any introductory issues have been picked up and dealt with.

The main change to recent policy & procedure is that we have simplified the rechargeable repairs service and introduced a menu of rechargeable repairs to allow staff to instantly quote costs of common rechargeable repairs and arrange them more quickly if the customer wants us to complete them.

There were two scenarios:

- **Scenario 1 – Rechargeable Repairs**

The first was designed to test our response to the need for a rechargeable repair and to see if recent enhancements to our rechargeable repairs policy & procedure were being implemented by our repairs partner Morrison.

- **Scenario 2 – General Repair Request**

The second scenario was designed to test our response to the need for an ordinary repair request and to see if Morrison are complying with our policy and procedure.

Footnote: Two Tenants completed both Scenarios 1 and 2
One Tenant completed Scenario 1
One Tenant completed Scenario 2

Results

Scenario 1 - Requesting a rechargeable repair

Questions Asked:

Call centre

Which Morrison call centre was contacted (Gloucester – working hours; Birmingham – outside working hours)	Gloucester 3 Birmingham 0
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Nature of problem presented

The chain and plug in the bath is broken, can you fix it for us?	
I have a blocked drain, can you unblock it?	1
I have lost my keys, can you get me into my property	
My light bulb has gone out – I am disabled – can you send someone around to replace it	
Someone has broken a pane of glass in my front door* (see question 6 below)	
Broken safety chain on the front door	1
Replacing a lock on the door	1

Result of enquiry

1	They simply said they don't do that repair	Yes 1	No 1
2	They took the time to explain that this repair is actually the responsibility of the tenant <u>Tenant Comments</u> As per the Handbook	Yes 2	No 1

3	<p>They explained how you could arrange to fix the problem</p> <p><u>Tenant Comments</u></p> <p>Advised I can contact GCH and speak to a Housing Officer. If they authorised the repair at my expense I would have to pay and Morrison would undertake the repair.</p> <p>Need to refer me to GCH</p>	Yes 2	No 1
4	They offered to carry out the repair and explained exactly how much it would cost and how quickly they could do it	Yes 0	No 2
5	Did they give you the option of paying up front or after the event either in full or by instalments	Yes 0	No 1
6*	Did they advise you to report any damage caused by an unknown person to the Police and ask for a Crime report number (not an incident number)	Yes 0	No 1
7	None of the above	Yes 1	No 0
8	Was the member of staff courteous	Yes 3	No 0
9	<p>Was the member of staff helpful?</p> <p><u>Tenant Comments</u></p> <p>Was told they could come and fix it and make an appointment for the next day.</p>	Yes 3	No 0

Scenario 2 General repair request

Call centre

Did they explain to you what you had done and how to get straight through to the Morrison call centre next time?	Yes 2	No 0
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Potential questions posed

My kitchen tap is dripping	
My central heating is not working	1
My lights have gone out	
My fencing has fallen down	
My path is breaking up and is causing me to trip over	
Blocked bathroom sink	1
High level cistern flush not working properly and making a lot of noise	1

Result of enquiry

1.	They confirmed that they do that repair	Yes 3	No 0
2.	They took the time to ask questions about your address	Yes 3	No 0
3.	They asked a series of questions to help identify what the problem is	Yes 2	No 1
4.	They referred you to the Repairs handbook to help diagnose the problem or give you handy hint advice.	Yes 0	No 2
5.	They identified what category of repair your request falls into (i.e. emergency, urgent or routine)	Yes 1	No 2

6.	They advised you of the likely timescale for completing the work	Yes 0	No 1
7.	If an emergency repair did they confirm that they should be there within 2 hours and find a temporary solution within 4 hours	Yes 1	No 1
8.	If an urgent repair did they confirm that they should be there within 5 working days (7 calendar days) <u>Tenant Comments</u> Urgent repair will be dealt with within 2 days	Yes 1	No 1
9.	If a routine repair did they confirm that they should be there within 20 working days (28 calendar days)	Yes 0	No 1
10.	They offered you an appointment	Yes 2	No
11.	If you said you are not available during the day did they ask whether you could arrange for a friend or neighbour could wait in for you and did they state this person must be someone over 16 years of age? <u>Tenant Comments</u> Stated person must be over 18 years old	Yes 1	No 1
12.	If a neighbour etc is not available did they offer you a Saturday morning appointment? <u>Tenant Comments</u> Told it could be arranged out of hours, to discuss with neighbour and call back	Yes 0	No 1
13.	Did they give you a job number	This section was not completed as the mystery shopper identified themselves before the job was officially ordered	
14.	Was the member of staff courteous	Yes 3	No 0
15.	Was the member of staff helpful? <u>Tenant Comments</u> Told if on first visit job could not be completed they would issue another appointment for the repair to take place	Yes 3	No 0

Evaluation

Outcomes

Scenario 1 – Rechargeable Repairs

Three of the four mystery shoppers completed a mystery shop of this service area. All phone calls were made during the day and so tested the GCH call centre and the Morrison call centre in Gloucester. The out of hours Morrison call centre in Birmingham was not tested.

Test 1 – Mystery shopper speaks to GCH call centre rather than Morrison call centre.

All three were required to go through to GCH's call centre rather than Morrison's call centre to see how GCH staff responded to a repair request.

Only one did so and GCH staff responded correctly by putting the mystery shopper through to Morrison and gave an explanation to the mystery shopper on how in future to get through direct to Morrison by ringing the free phone number and selecting option 1.

Test 2 – Mystery shoppers asks for a repair, which is rechargeable to see if call centre operator can recognise a rechargeable repair and follow the correct policy & procedure for dealing with rechargeable repairs.

One mystery shopper found that that Morrison did not identify a blocked drain as a possible rechargeable repair; offered to fix the problem and offered an appointment for the next day.

The second mystery shopper asked for a broken chain on their front door to be fixed. Morrison did recognise it as a possible rechargeable repair and explained this in accordance with what is outlined in the Repairs Handbook.

However Morrison then referred the matter back to GCH for a quote, which was the old policy. The repair requested is on our new standard list of rechargeable repairs, which have already been pre-costed. Morrison staff could have, under the newly introduced enhanced policy, given an instant quote and found out if the tenant wanted the repair carrying out.

The third mystery shopper asked for a lock to be replaced on a door. Morrison did recognise it as a possible rechargeable repair and explained this in accordance with what is outlined in the Repairs Handbook.

However Morrison then referred the matter back to GCH for a quote, which was the old policy. The repair requested is on our standard list of rechargeable repairs, which have already been pre-costed. Morrison staff could have, under the newly introduced enhanced policy, given an instant quote and found out if the tenant wanted the repair carrying out.

In all three cases the staff were considered both courteous and helpful.

Scenario 2 – General Repair Request

Three of the four mystery shoppers completed a mystery shop on this service area.

Test 1 – Mystery shopper speaks to GCH call centre rather than Morrison call centre.

All three were required to go through to GCH's call centre rather than Morrison's call centre to see how GCH staff responded to a repair request.

Only two did so and GCH staff responded correctly by putting the mystery shopper through to Morrison and gave an explanation to the mystery shopper on how in future to get through direct to Morrison by ringing the freephone number and selecting option 1.

Test 2 – Mystery shoppers asked for a general repair to see what sort of service they received.

The first mystery shopper asked for a sink to be unblocked, which in fact is a possible rechargeable repair. Morrison agreed to do the work and did not identify it as a possible rechargeable repair – Again, as the new rechargeable repairs system went live on the 23rd March 2007 and this will be reviewed again once the further training has been completed – see remedial action below.

The two other mystery shoppers asked for general repairs – one asked for a repair to a high-level toilet cistern and the other for a repair to central heating that was not working.

All three were asked questions to identify their address.

Two out of three mystery shoppers were asked further questions to identify the problem more accurately.

None of the mystery shoppers were referred to their Repair Handbooks to help them help the call centre operator identify the problem more accurately. This is **not essential** as Morrison's staff have access to an on-line repair diagnostic toolkit but it is desirable to encourage customers to get into the habit of referring to their handbooks to help accurately identify faults.

One of the mystery shoppers was immediately given the category for their repair.

One mystery shopper answered the question about whether Morrison gave a timescale for the repair and in that one case Morrison did not immediately give the timescale, although timescales were given later as can be seen below.

In relation to the blocked sink, which should have been an urgent rechargeable repair, Morrison treated it as a non-chargeable emergency and confirmed they should be there within 2 hours (the correct timescale for an emergency but not for an urgent).

In relation to the high level cistern, it was correctly treated as an urgent repair and the mystery shopper was advised the job should be completed within 2 days (well within the 5 working day category).

In relation to the central heating no category of repair or timescale was given for completion because the nature of the fault was not immediately obvious.

The mystery shoppers asking for repairs to the sink and cistern were both offered an appointment. The mystery shopper asking for a central heating repair was not and was told that the specialist officer was on leave and was offered a ring back in 2 days (when he was due to return). This was acceptable to the mystery shopper and the call back did occur.

Only one mystery shopper was informed that if they were out that they could choose to leave a key with a neighbour / friend or if someone was in the house that they should be 16 or over, before the workmen could carry work out in their home. This was because the other mystery shoppers were saying that access was available during normal working hours and they would be there.

One mystery shopper did advise the Morrison staff that they would not be available during normal working hours and was advised about friends / neighbours but was told that Morrison would not work in a house unless there was an adult of 18 present.

One mystery shopper was offered a Saturday morning appointment if other times were proving difficult and a friend / neighbour couldn't give access.

All mystery shoppers considered the staff to be courteous and helpful.

Remedial Action

Scenario 1 – Rechargeable Repairs

Morrison have received the results of the mystery shop and are providing further training and guidance to their staff on dealing with rechargeable repairs. The mystery shop will be carried out again in approximately two / three weeks time to check if the correct policy & procedure is now being followed in every case.

Scenario 2 – General Repair Request

Morrison have received the results of the mystery shop and are providing further training and guidance to their staff on dealing with general repairs. The mystery shop will be carried out again in approximately two / three weeks time to check if the correct policy & procedure is now being followed in every case.

Conclusion

This was overall a reasonably pleasing result. New policies and procedures inevitably take time to bed in and this mystery shop took place literally at a time of change to an improved policy.

Unblocking sinks and drains has always been a grey area of recharge and further research will be undertaken to identify the current proportion of such work, which is attributable to customer misuse and how much to a failure of drainage.

Morrison are already taking steps to re-enforce the new policy & procedure. This will be tested again shortly.