

Gloucester City Homes



Mystery Shopping Evaluation

Aids and Adaptations

Introduction

Gloucester City Homes currently gains feedback from customers in various ways such as 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 our aids and adaptations advice given to our customers. We did this by testing the advice provided to customers when they contacted Gloucester City Homes.

Timing of Exercise

The mystery shop exercise was conducted between 26th November 2007 and 6th December 2007.

Executive Summary

Five trained tenant mystery shoppers carried out the mystery shop.

There were three scenarios:

- Scenario 1 – Request of advice on a minor adaptation
- Scenario 2 – Request of advice on a standard adaptation
- Scenario 3 – Request of advice on a major adaptation

Footnote: One tenant completed Scenario 1
Two tenants completed Scenario 2
Two tenants completed Scenario 3

In summary, customer service was on the whole good, with phones answered promptly and in the correct manner as required by the Service Standards and staff were polite, helpful and informative.

There were two occasions when the staff member did not ask if they could help with anything else before the call ended and one occasion when they were perceived to speak too quickly when answering the telephone. Advice provided was generally found to be accurate although there appears to be a knowledge gap regarding the Service Standard for waiting times and regarding the situation when a customer may move house within two years.

The areas of weakness identified will be actioned via staff awareness. This will be in the form of training sessions to be attended by customer services staff and co-ordinated and delivered by the Asset Management Team.

Results

Scenario 1 - Request of advice on a minor adaptation

When the mystery shopper contacted Gloucester City Homes, they explained that a friend or relative, who is a Gloucester City Homes tenant, is elderly and requires a grab bar by their front door to help them with the steps. The staff member was then asked a series of questions.

Results of enquiry: initial telephone technique

How quickly was the call answered?	After 1 ring	0		
	After 2 rings	1		
	After 3 rings	0		
	After 4 rings	0		
Did the staff member confirm you have got through to Gloucester City Homes?	Yes	1	No	0
Did the staff member give you their name?	Yes	1	No	0
Did the staff member ask if they can help you?	Yes	1	No	0
Was the staff member courteous?	Yes	1	No	0
Were you transferred to another team?	Yes	0	No	1
Tenant comments				
None				

Scenario 1 results continued on next page.

Results of enquiry: questions asked and staff responses

What is the application procedure for your friend/relative to have the work completed?	A surveyor will be sent out to assess the work required 1
How long will it take for the work to be completed?	Within 7 calendar days of request or recommendation 0 Other: a) "It depends"
How much will it cost your friend/relative?	Nothing – Gloucestershire County Council or Gloucester City Homes will pay 1
Can your friend/relative arrange for the grab bar to be installed themselves?	Yes 1 No 0 They will need to send a written request to their Neighbourhood Management Officer stating what adaptation they wish to carry out. 1
Your friend/relative may be moving house within the next couple of years – does this affect the application?	Yes 0 No 1
Your friend/relative also requires a toilet frame. Can Gloucester City Homes provide this also?	Yes 0 No 1 They will need to contact Glos County Council 0
At the end of the conversation, did the staff member ask if there was anything else they could help with?	Yes 0 No 1
Tenant comments a) None	

Scenario 2 - Request of advice on a standard adaptation

When the mystery shopper contacted Gloucester City Homes they explained that a friend or relative, who is a Gloucester City Homes tenant, is elderly and requires an over-bath shower as they are having difficulty getting in and out of the bath. The staff member was then asked a series of questions.

Results of enquiry: initial telephone technique

How quickly was the call answered?	After 1 ring	1		
	After 2 rings	1		
	After 3 rings	0		
	After 4 rings	0		
Did the staff member confirm you have got through to Gloucester City Homes?	Yes	2	No	0
Did the staff member give you their name?	Yes	2	No	0
Did the staff member ask if they can help you?	Yes	2	No	0
Was the staff member courteous?	Yes	2	No	0
Were you transferred to another team?	Yes	0	No	2
Tenant comments				
a) CSO needs to answer phone slower and clearer as I did not hear their name.				

Scenario 2 results continued on next page.

Results of enquiry: questions asked and staff responses

What is the application procedure for your friend/relative to have the work completed?	They will need to be assessed by an occupational therapist 2
How long will it take for the work to be completed?	Within 28 calendar days of the occupational therapist's recommendation 0 Other: a) 4-6 weeks to get assessment; not known how long after the assessment. b) not possible to be precise-quicker if urgent
How much will it cost your friend/relative?	Nothing – Gloucestershire County Council or Gloucester City Homes will pay 2
Can your friend/relative arrange for the shower to be installed themselves?	Yes 0 No 0 They will need to send a written request to their Neighbourhood Management Officer stating what adaptation they wish to carry out. 2
If it is possible for the shower to be installed themselves, ask if Gloucester City Homes will still be responsible for maintaining the equipment.	Yes 0 No 2
Your friend/relative may be moving house within the next couple of years – does this affect the application?	Yes 1 No 1 – see a) Other: a) Depends on circumstances-if OT reports several needs, customer may be offered a more suitable property.
Your friend/relative also requires a shower chair. Can Gloucester City Homes provide this also?	Yes 0 No 2 They will need to contact Glos County Council 2
At the end of the conversation, did the staff member ask if there was anything else they could help with?	Yes 2 No 0
<p>Tenant comments</p> <p>a) Very competent staff member.</p> <p>b) Staff extremely helpful and informative.</p>	

Scenario 3 - Request of advice on a major adaptation

When the mystery shopper contacted Gloucester City Homes they explained that a friend or relative, who is a Gloucester City Homes tenant, is elderly and requires a stair lift as they are having difficulty climbing the stairs. The staff member was then asked a series of questions.

Results of enquiry: initial telephone technique

How quickly was the call answered?	After 1 ring	1		
	After 2 rings	1		
	After 3 rings	0		
	After 4 rings	0		
Did the staff member confirm you have got through to Gloucester City Homes?	Yes	2	No	0
Did the staff member give you their name?	Yes	2	No	0
Did the staff member ask if they can help you?	Yes	2	No	0
Was the staff member courteous?	Yes	2	No	0
Were you transferred to another team?	Yes	0	No	2
Tenant comments				
None				

Scenario 3 results continued on next page.

Results of enquiry: questions asked and staff responses

What is the application procedure for your friend/relative to have the work completed?	They will need to be assessed by an occupational therapist 2 Other: a) Phone no. of Social Services given
How long will it take for the work to be completed?	Within 42 calendar days of the occupational therapist's recommendation 0 Other: a) Time can vary-could be 2 months b) Contact OT on 426868. Long list of referrals; work done ASAP after visit.
How much will it cost your friend/relative?	Nothing – Glos County Council or Gloucester City Homes will pay 2
Can your friend/relative arrange for the stair lift to be installed themselves?	Yes 2 No 0 They will need to send a written request to their Neighbourhood Management Officer stating what adaptation they wish to carry out. 2 Other: a) Surveyor also needed to assess if property suitable.
If it is possible for the stair lift to be installed themselves, ask if Gloucester City Homes will still be responsible for maintaining the equipment.	Yes 0 No 2 Other: a) No responsibility by GCH unless lift could be used by subsequent tenant.
Your friend/relative may be moving house within the next couple of years – does this affect the application?	Yes 0 No 2 Other: a) Only effect would be cost to tenant for removal if lift installed themselves unless GCH uses for next tenant.
Your friend/relative also requires a bed lever. Can Gloucester City Homes provide this also?	Yes 0 No 2 They will need to contact Glos County Council 2
At the end of the conversation, did the staff member ask if there was anything else they could help with?	Yes 1 No 1
Tenant comments a) CSO very polite and helpful; took time in explaining everything; nice manner. b) Staff very helpful; knowledgeable about subject; very courteous.	

Results Analysis

Scenario 1: Request of advice on a minor adaptation

Initial telephone technique: the Customer Services Officer (CSO) answered the telephone in the manner required by the Service Standards by responding within five rings, confirming the caller had got through to Gloucester City Homes, providing their name and asking how they could help.

Staff response to questions: the CSO correctly advised that a surveyor would visit the property to arrange for the adaptation although the time span was not clearly given in the response "it depends". The Service Standard should have been provided which states the work should be completed within seven days from the date of request or recommendation. The following questions were answered correctly: the adaptation would be fitted free of charge to the customer; the customer may fit the grab bar themselves providing the request is put in writing; the customer moving house with two years would not affect the application; and Gloucester City Homes do not provide toilet frames. However the CSO failed to mention that the toilet frame aid may be obtained from the County Council free of charge and they did not ask the caller if there was anything else they could help with at the end of the conversation.

Scenario 2 – Request of advice on a standard adaptation

Initial telephone technique: both telephone calls were responded to within the Service Standard and they were both answered in the manner required. However, one comment was made that the CSO spoke rather quickly when they answered the telephone so that the caller did not catch their name.

Staff response to questions: both CSOs correctly advised that the applicant would require an assessment by an occupational therapist (OT). Regarding waiting time for the work, one CSO answered 4-6 weeks wait for an assessment, however, the time span for the work to be completed as indicated in the Service Standard was not given (28 days within the OT's recommendation). The following questions were answered correctly: the adaptation would be fitted free of charge to the customer; the customer may fit the shower themselves providing the request is put in writing; Gloucester City Homes would not be responsible for maintenance should the customer fit the equipment; and Gloucester City Homes do not provide shower chairs but they can be obtained from the County Council. The CSOs also asked the callers if there was anything else they could help with at the end of the conversation. One question answered incorrectly was regarding the customer possibly moving within two years. One CSO said this could be a problem but did not explain why. In actual fact, the customer moving home would only be considered a problem if this was within five years of the equipment being fitted and if it was a major adaptation. Both mystery shoppers found the staff members to be helpful and informative.

Scenario 3 – Request of advice on a major adaptation

Initial telephone technique: both telephone calls were responded to within the Service Standard and they were both answered in the manner required.

Staff response to questions: both CSOs correctly advised that the applicant would require an assessment by an OT and one provided a contact number to arrange this. Regarding waiting time for the work, one CSO estimated 2 months, however, as above, the time span for the work to be completed as indicated in the Service Standard was not given (42 days within the OT's recommendation). The following questions were answered correctly: the adaptation would be fitted free of charge to the customer; the customer may fit the stair lift themselves providing the request is put in writing; Gloucester City Homes would not be responsible for maintenance

should the customer fit the equipment; and Gloucester City Homes do not provide bed levers – they can be obtained from the County Council. One question answered incorrectly, as above, was regarding the customer possibly moving within two years. The CSOs said this would not be a problem. However, the correct answer is that when a major adaptation is fitted by Gloucester City Homes, it is normally expected the customer should live at the property for at least five years following the fitting. In addition, one of the CSOs failed to ask if they could help with anything else at the end of the conversation. Both mystery shoppers found the staff members to be polite, helpful and knowledgeable.

Remedial Action

Scenario 1: Request of advice on a minor adaptation

Weakness: the time span for the work to be completed was not clearly given by the CSO; there was no mention the toilet frame aid may be obtained from the County Council free of charge and the caller was not asked if there was anything else they could be helped with at the end of the conversation.

Action: training/awareness sessions to be attended by Customer Services team.

Responsibility: Asset Management Team

Scenario 2: Request of advice on a standard adaptation

Weakness: one mystery shopper found the CSO answered the telephone too quickly; the time span for the work to be completed as detailed in the Service Standard was not given; regarding the customer possibly moving within two years, one CSO incorrectly said this could be a problem.

Action: training/awareness sessions to be attended by Customer Services team.

Responsibility: Asset Management Team

Scenario 3: Request of advice on a major adaptation

Weakness: the time span for the work to be completed as detailed in the Service Standard was not given; regarding the customer possibly moving within two years the CSOs incorrectly said this would not be a problem when it would be an issue following major adaptation work; and one of the CSOs failed to ask if they could help with anything else at the end of the conversation.

Action: training/awareness sessions to be attended by Customer Services team.

Responsibility: Asset Management Team

Conclusion

Customer service was on the whole good, with phones answered promptly and in the correct manner as required by the Service Standards and staff were polite, helpful and informative. There were two occasions when the staff member did not ask if they could help with anything else before the call ended and one occasion when they were perceived to speak too quickly when answering the telephone. Advice provided was generally found to be accurate although there appears to be a knowledge gap regarding the Service Standard for waiting times and regarding the situation when a customer may move house within two years.

The areas of weakness identified will be actioned via staff awareness. This will be in the form of training sessions to be attended by customer services staff and co-ordinated and delivered by the Asset Management Team.