

Gloucester City Homes



Mystery Shopping Evaluation

Communication

July 2008

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 8th July 2008 and 17th July 2008.

Executive Summary

Four 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 our 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 our response following the request of information either by a) telephone or b) email.

Footnote: Two tenants completed scenario 1a; two tenants completed scenario 1b
Two tenants completed scenario 2a; two tenants completed scenario 2b

Customer service was found to be generally good, with staff perceived as courteous and professional. Response to calls and requests via the website or email was usually prompt, although on two occasions the complaints submitted via the website were either not responded to satisfactorily, or the shopper did not receive any response. Furthermore, the request for a copy of personal information was put in writing, as requested by staff, but this was not received by the shopper.

Information sent out, i.e., rent statements or policies, was received within the Service Standard of five working days and was considered clear and easy to understand. In addition, explanatory letters or emails, complete with contact details for further advice, were included which marks an improvement from the previous year's mystery shop.

As per the previous Communication mystery shop, the website received good feedback with shoppers liking its appearance and finding it easy to negotiate and to use the on-line forms.

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 2	No 0
Was the on-line reporting form easy to use?	Yes 2	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 2	No 0
How soon did someone phone you?	<1 working day	1*
	Noone called back	1**
Did the staff member give their name?	Yes 0	No 1
Did the staff member give their job title?	Yes 0	No 1
Did the staff member explain the reason for contacting you?	Yes 1	No 0
Was the member of staff courteous?	Yes 1	No 0
Comments		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Submitted complaint 7/7 and received letter 8/7 acknowledging receipt of the complaint. Re-sent 11/7 and had a call 15 min later from a Customer Services Officer. **No response even after 5 working days; lack of response is poor. 		

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	2	No	0
Was the on-line reporting form easy to use?	Yes	2	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	2	No	0
How soon did you receive your statement?	1 working day		1	
	2 working days		0	
	3 working days		0	
	4 working days		1	
Was your rent statement clear and easy to understand?	Yes	2	No	0
Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none">I found the process easy and clear.				

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			
Copy of personal information	Yes	1	No 0
Complaints policy/procedure	Yes	1	No 0
Customer service			
How quickly was the call answered?	After 1 ring		1
	After 5 rings		1 (6 rings)
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
Reception of information			
How soon did the information arrive?	1 working day		0
	2 working days		0
	3 working days		0
	4 working days		1
	Did not arrive		1*
Was a letter included with the information explaining what was enclosed?	Yes	1	No 0
Was the information provided clear and concise?	Yes	1	No 0
Was the wording and layout of the information professional?	Yes	1	No 0
Were contact details provided for further information?	Yes	1	No 0
Tenant comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I was told I needed to request my personal information in writing but the staff member was unsure if there would be a charge for this. I sent an email requesting the information but I had no response even after two weeks. 			

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	Yes	2	No 0
Reception of information			
How soon did you get an initial response?	1 working day		2
How soon did the information arrive?	2 working days		2
Was an explanation included in the email explaining what was attached?	Yes	1*	No 0**
Was the wording and layout of the email(s) professional?	Yes	2	No 0
Was the information provided clear and concise?	Yes	2	No 0
Was the wording and layout of the information professional?	Yes	2	No 0
Were contact details provided for further information?	Yes	2	No 0
Tenant comments			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *The phone number of the ASB officer was also provided for further help. • ** In the initial response I was asked for more details and was told the policy could be found on the GCH website but I was not given the link. However, the information still arrived in the post. 			

Results Analysis

a) Customer service

Strengths

- One shopper had a response following the report of a complaint within one working day.
- On both occasions when the shoppers telephoned GCH, the staff answered in the manner required.
- All members of staff were perceived as courteous and polite.

Weaknesses

- Report of complaint: one shopper was not contacted by any member of staff following the report of a complaint on-line. The other did receive a letter acknowledging the receipt of the complaint but had no phone call. However, after re-submitting the complaint, they were called within 15 minutes by a member of staff.
- On one occasion the member of staff did not give their name or job title when they called the shopper.

b) Gloucester City Homes website

Strengths

- All four shoppers found the website and on-line forms easy to use and were impressed with the appearance.
- One shopper commented, "I found the process easy and clear".

Weaknesses

- None identified.

c) Request of information

Strengths

- Rent statements: both statements were received within the Service Standard of 5 working days and were found to be clear and easy to understand.
- Information requested by telephone: the information received did arrive within the target of 5 working days and included an explanatory letter and contact details for further information. In addition, the policies/procedures were perceived to be clear and professional.
- Information requested by email: both policies were received within 5 working days and the email responses from staff were clear and professional. Contact details for further information were provided, including, on one occasion, the contact details for the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer. As above, the information provided was considered to be clear and professional.

Weaknesses

- Request for personal information: the shopper was initially told to put the request in writing, which was done, but the information was not sent out.

Conclusion

Customer service was found to be generally good, with staff perceived as courteous and professional. Response to calls and requests via the website or email was usually prompt, although on two occasions the complaints submitted via the website were either not responded to satisfactorily, or the shopper did not receive any response. Furthermore, the request for a copy of personal information was put in writing, as requested by staff, but this was not received by the shopper.

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As per the previous Communication mystery shop, the website received good feedback with shoppers liking its appearance and finding it easy to negotiate and to use the on-line forms.

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