

BABERGH DISTRICT COUNCIL and MID SUFFOLK DISTRICT COUNCIL

From: Improvement and Involvement Officer	Report Number: JHB/18/16
To: Joint Housing Board	Date of meeting: 18 July 2016

OUTCOMES OF MYSTERY SHOPPING PROGRAMME

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To bring to the attention of the Board the outcomes of the recent Mystery Shoppers activity.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That the contents of Paper JHB/18/16 be noted.
The Board is able to resolve this matter.

3. Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Mystery Shopper programme expenses are covered within existing budgets in the Housing Revenue Account.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 There are no legal implications.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 There are no risks to the report.

6. Consultations

- 6.1 Consultation has taken place with the Mystery Shopper team on preparing this report.

7. Equality Analysis

- 7.1 No equality analysis is needed for this report.

8. Shared Service / Partnership Implications

- 8.1 The shopper team have an equal split of Babergh and Mid Suffolk residents and therefore both councils are being 'shopped'.

9. Links to Joint Strategic Plan

- 9.1 Links to making best use of our existing assets.

10. Key Information

- 10.1 Seven tenants have been recruited as Mystery Shoppers to shop the Housing Service up to three times a year. Over a five week period, shoppers test a range of services provided by the Housing Department and rate their customer service.
- 10.2 For this programme, Shoppers were asked to shop the Repairs service at both Babergh and Mid Suffolk. 28 different shops took place the shopping period.
- 10.3 Shoppers were equipped with a range of forms to report back on their experiences. The forms contained a range of questions which the shoppers completed after each shopping contact.

Telephone Mystery Shop

- 10.4 The most popular method of contact was the telephone shop. 11 shops were completed over the five weeks.
- 10.5 Two thirds of the calls made were to our Hadleigh Office number; 01473 825757. Shoppers contacted the offices on a number of different days/times.
- 10.6 8 of the calls were answered in six rings, 2 were answered after six rings and 1 was not answered and 1 shopper had to try three times before getting a response.
- 10.7 Shoppers found that not all staff are giving their name when answering the phone and in some cases, don't say the name of the council or department.
- 10.8 Of the eight shoppers who left a message for a call back, six received that within one working day.
- 10.9 6 of the forms told us that shoppers felt it was 'excellent' in the length of time it had taken to speak to the right person. One shopper rated it as 'poor'. This shopper felt that the officer rushed her, didn't get a name or the department name they needed to contact, just a telephone number even though the individual wouldn't be back for a few weeks.
- 10.10 5 of the shoppers found staff to either be unhelpful, unfriendly or unknowledgeable when contacting the councils. 5 of the shops said they were very satisfied with the response we gave, with 3 shoppers either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

Website Mystery Shop

- 10.11 There were six website visits carried out during the shopping period covering a range of scenarios.
- 10.12 Four out of six shoppers found our website clearly laid out. Three shoppers had to complete a query form as they could not find the information they were looking for on our websites.

10.13 The Councils are now starting work on a new website. The feedback from shoppers will be used to help shape the website and shoppers will also be invited to test the site before it goes live.

Visits to the Council Offices Mystery Shop

10.14 There were two shops carried out via a visit to the council offices; one in Hadleigh and one in Needham Market.

10.15 The average time taken to be seen for a query to be dealt with (which includes seeing another officer) was around 2 minutes.

Email Mystery Shop

10.16 There were four emails submitted during the mystery shoppers' period. Three had received a full response to their query and one had received an acknowledgement. Of those who completed the form, three of the four were very satisfied with the response they received on email.

Letter shopping results

10.17 There were five letters sent in during the mystery shoppers' period. When the forms were sent in by the shoppers, two had not received an acknowledgement or a full response. The three that had received a response, had received something within the 14 day period in which we set within our customer service standards. Two of the responses received were sent via a letter and the other via a telephone call.

Next steps

10.18 Results from the Mystery Shops have been shared with the relevant Corporate Managers for action.

10.19 Outcomes as a result of the Shops so far include better links from the homepage of both websites to reporting a repair, start of a review on existing website content ready for move to new website and to explore better public access arrangements as part of the DLO review, due to conclude in April 2017.

11. Appendices

11.1 None.

12. Background Documents

12.1 None.

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