

Telephone Mystery Shop Report - Customer Contact Centre Inspection

Introduction

Adactus have a newly implemented customer contact centre which is the first point of call for residents. The contact centre was implemented for the following reasons:

- Help the repairs service make changes to improve efficiency,
- Ensure that we are more professional at the form of contact most important to customers
- Resolve customers' queries and requests at the first point of contact.

Methods

Mystery Shoppers were commissioned by the Group to carry out a telephone consultation to provide a reality check on the progress of the newly implemented customer contact centre. In order to do this, participants used simple telephone scenarios which provided evidence on speed and quality of call handling; ability of contact centre staff to provide information to resolve queries and transfer calls effectively. *Seven Mystery Shoppers took part in this particular project, and 16 completed questionnaires were returned.*

The areas tested were:

- How quickly the call was answered
- Whether the member of staff gave their name the name of the company and their own name
- Whether the member of staff was able to deal with the call at the first point of contact
- If the call was transferred how quickly the call was answered by the second member of staff, and how from this point the enquiry was handled
- How helpful and polite the members of staff were
- The answer given to the enquiry

Findings

How quickly were calls answered after the automated message

The majority of calls 64% were answered within 4 rings.

Initial Greetings Turner House

Seven calls (**44%**) were answered with hello good morning and the member of staff providing their own name. (Please see attached report for further information).

Initial Greetings CCH

Three calls in total were answered by CCH. The initial greeting for each call differed slightly. One call was initially greeted with just CCH, one call was greeted with CCH how can I help you and the member of staff giving their own name, and one call was answered with Hello Good Morning CCH.

Information provided by first member of staff.

The information provided by the first member of staff is obviously varied dependent on the nature of the enquiry. (For further information please see individual scenarios).

Action of 1st member of staff on receipt of enquiry

63% of mystery shoppers said the first member of staff dealt with the enquiry themselves.

- Out of the 16 Scenarios, 8 (50%) should have been dealt with.
- 4 (25%) were dealt with.
- 2 (12.5%) should have been dealt with but were not.
- 2 (12.5%) said they were not dealt with by the first member of staff, but after reading the information provided by the participants the first member of staff did technically deal with the enquiry themselves by providing relevant emergency numbers etc.

- Out of the 16 Scenarios 8 (50%) should not have been dealt with.
- 6 (38%) said they had been dealt with, but after reading the information provided by participants, it is evident that the actual enquiry was not finalised.
- 2(12%) said they had not been dealt with and they should not have been dealt with by the first member of staff.

56% said that the first member of staff did not explain that they could not answer the enquiry themselves.

- Out of the 56% who were not told why their query could not be answered:
- 44% were dealt with at first point of contact
- 12% were transferred

56% were put on hold by the first member of staff and it took between 30secs – 1 min for two calls, and 1-2 mins for the third call.

Did the first member of staff transfer any of the participants to another member of staff.

- 75% (12) not transferred
- 25% (4) transferred.
- (12.5%) should have been transferred.

75 % were not offered a call back option by the first member of staff.
Did the member of staff offer to call you back? Yes x 3 (19%). No x 12(75%). No answer x 1(6%) **None of the participants requested a call back as part of the scenario process.**

- Of these 31% should have been offered a call back. (5 participants)

The Scenarios which should have been offered a call back but were not and the reasons why are stated below.:

Advice for sister re housing benefit, this scenario would have been offered a call back but due to the fact that it was a mystery shop, the participant refused to give telephone number/ address details.

Housing list enquiry (Shared Ownership): Again mystery shopper had to decline the option of a call back as they could not provide any address to allow the member of staff to forward housing application.

Security gate this enquiry was dealt with by the CCO themselves at the first point of contact.

Housing benefit advice for sister. The participant was provided with the number of the financial inclusion officer by the first member of staff.

I'm a gay man scenario. This call was transferred to a second member of staff.

If the call was transferred what was the action of the first member of staff prior to transferring the call

Of the 4 calls that were transferred, 3 mystery shoppers said they were given the name of the member of staff they were being transferred to. (Three mystery shoppers who were transferred failed to provide this information). None of the participants said that the first member of staff asked them if they would like to leave a message instead of being transferred.

Time taken between transfer of call from first member of staff to second member of staff

Three mystery shoppers answered this question and it took between 30 secs to 1 min for two calls, and 1-2 mins for another call to be transferred.

Handling of call by first member of staff

Participants were asked the following questions in relation to the handling of the call by the first member of staff:

Was the first member of staff was quick and efficient.
44% Yes

19% No
38% No answer provided

Was the first member of staff polite and courteous.

56% Yes
19% No
25% No Answer provided

Did the first member of staff come across as mechanical like you were just another customer?

Yes: (25%).
No: (25%).
No answer provided: (50%)

Did the member of staff appear rude and disinterested?

Yes x 2 (13%). No x 6 (37%). No answer provided x 8 (50%)

Positive and negative comments made by participants in relation to how the call was handled by the first member of staff:

Positive Comments

The first member of staff was very polite and courteous, she did not know the area I was referring to but was able to find out details for me. (Estate walkabout scenario)

The first member of staff was excellent and tried her best, but was tied down by protocol and could not be as helpful as she wanted to be

Negative Comments

I think with the system being so slow the operator could have explained what she was doing. I also think that when a caller asks for a member of staff by name, having to then give address details is surplus to requirements.

When I first spoke I said I had a problem where I lived, I'm a gay man, every time I go out I get verbal abuse from both adults and kids. The member of staff just answered with "I will transfer you" but she sounded shocked and I feel she didn't know what to say and just came out with I will transfer you.

How were the mystery shoppers greeted by 2nd member of staff

The majority of mystery shoppers were greeted by the 2nd member of staff with hello good morning/afternoon.

Did the member of staff who dealt with the enquiry ask the mystery shoppers any further questions in relation to your enquiry

50% of mystery shoppers said they were asked further questions by the member of staff who dealt with the enquiry. *(For details of further questions asked and final result of enquiries please see individual scenario reports attached).*

Did the member of staff offer to send out any information in relation to the enquiry

Yes x 2 (13%). No x 9 (56%). No answer provided x 4. **None of the participants requested information to be sent out to them as part of the scenario process.**

Quality of Information provided

There was an even balance between scenarios responded to with high quality information provided and those where there is scope for improvement in the information available.

Scenarios where good quality information was provided

- Follow up call to HO re security gate
- 2 Enquiries about housing benefit on behalf of relative: "The member of staff told me about the financial inclusion officer and said this service may be available" "She pointed towards making an appointment with a financial inclusion officer. I asked for the number for Miles Platting, she was very quick to supply this. She seemed concerned that my sister was going to be made redundant"
- Information about applying for sheltered housing: "The first member of staff explained that there are schemes all over Manchester, and that I would need to complete a form. They then explained that this form would be given points and if suitable my mum would be offered sheltered accommodation"
- Reporting ASB (own scenario): The member of staff gave me information from the ASB standard procedure, they also told me where to get emotional help and provided me with a web address
- Reporting ASB none Adactus tenancy:" The member of staff gave me information from the ASB standard procedure, they also told me to contact my housing officer promptly so the problem could be dealt with. They advised me to go on line to the Direct Gov website for further info on ASB"
- Repair progress:" I was told that the parts for my job had been ordered, and the relevant member of staff would ring me back" (call back received)

Scenarios where information could be improved

- Advice on shower over bath : "I still don't know the answer to my simple question"
- Removal of bulky refuse: "I was told that my father would have to remove bulky items himself. I was also told that the member of staff could not provide me with any further information in relation to recommending a removal company".

- Report of harassment: Advised me to phone the police. I said I've been into my local police station. They said until I have been assaulted there is nothing they can do. He advised me the best thing would be to ask my housing officer for a transfer. He also said I should not have to live like this"
- Information about whereabouts and availability of sheltered schemes.
- Different ways to report a repair "I was informed that there were emergency and out of hours provisions but no further information about them"
- Anonymous complaint: "The member of staff said it was possible to make an anonymous complaint but it would need to be done through my housing officer" "I was left on hold for 90 seconds so they could find out the standard procedure"
- Estate inspections:" The member of staff did not know where the estate was that I was referring to as she lived in Chester. She said the person I would need to speak to in order to find out when the estate inspection was due to take place was not in the office." " She managed to tell me where the next estate walkabout was, but could not tell me where it would start"
- Pest control (cockroaches):" The member of staff said there was nothing that she could do, as it was not in our re-mit as a landlord. I was advised to phone Manchester City Council and told it was the tenants own responsibility. She also advised me that I could try going to the Hard Ware store and asking them about poison. I asked for the number of MCC or pest control, the member of staff said she did not have the numbers"

What was your overall impression of the member of staff who dealt with your enquiry

69% said that the member of staff seemed interested in them and their enquiry.

50% said the member of staff wanted to help them.

56% said the member of staff came across as mechanical, like they were just another customer.

56% said the member of staff came across as being professional.

63% said the member of staff did all they could do to answer my enquiry.

75% said the member of staff who dealt with their enquiry did not use any jargon that they could not understand.

69% said they were quick and efficient.

Could the mystery shoppers hear the member of staff clearly during the call

The majority of mystery shoppers said they could hear the member of staff clearly during the call. Three mystery shoppers said they could not hear the member clearly, and one mystery shopper who suffers from hearing impairment said that during one particular call it was very difficult to hear the member of staff.

What did the member of staff say at the end of the call

63% said that the member of staff did not check to ensure that they had answered the enquiry satisfactorily.

54% said they were not asked for contact details at the end of the call.

44% said the call was not ended with thank you by the member of staff.

44% said the call was ended with a thank you by staff.
88% said the call was ended with good bye.
0% of calls were terminated with the member of staff just hanging up.

Any further comments made by the mystery shoppers in relation to the call

Negative Comments

I felt that the member of staff was not bothered, and didn't know how to help me with my enquiry of abuse. He offered no advice, except go to the police and speak to my housing officer. I feel he was not sympathetic and that he kind of rushed me off the call. I feel he did not have the knowledge to be able to help me.

Overall what would have been a quick call to my H.O. taking around 3mins was turned into a call that lasted 10mins, not good if a caller was ringing from a mobile.

I found the contact centre procedures in obtaining personal details some what rigid and persistent at times. Even though you clearly explained you want to remain anonymous and only want details and procedures

It was a very unhelpful call, and I had the impression that she decided that she could not help me and that was that.

Positive Comments

The member of staff was very polite but seemed a bit rushed, but did offer to call me back.

She seemed to understand my enquiry and gave me information quickly. She handled the call well

The first member of staff was very polite and courteous, she did not know the area I was referring to but was able to find out details for me. (Estate walkabout scenario)

The first member of staff was excellent and tried her best, but was tied down by protocol and could not be as helpful as she wanted to be

Recommendations

- designate one manager to a 'Quality' role to: carry out call monitoring of a sample of all CSOs' calls each month; develop scripts to ensure consistent advice is provided; prepare for quality accreditation (timescale: from July 10)
- provide reminder briefing to all CSO staff taking housing management calls on: ASB handling; pests (timescale: April 10)
- provide reminder to all staff on standard elements of greeting and call closure (timescale: April 10 – completed)
- agree forward programme of mystery shopping – focusing on fewer topics at a time in order to monitor the consistency with which issues are handled (timescale – to be agreed).