

# Mystery Shopping Report

**Service Area:**  
Contact Centre  
(Repairs & Customer Experience Teams)

**Quarter 3:** October/November 2018

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## Background

Rosebery Housing Association is committed to continuous appraisal of its frontline customer services. A key activity used by Rosebery to provide customer insight and test the standards of our customer services is our mystery shopping programme. This is our second mystery shopping exercise, following the launch of the programme in June 2018. This exercise was focused on testing our Contact Centre, to evaluate the customer experience at the 'first point' of contact. Our Contact Centre consists of staff from our Repairs and Customer Experience Teams.

The main reason for choosing this service area is that we are in the process of implementing a new multi-channel telephony system for our Contact Centre which we plan to launch in January 2019. We believe the new telephony system will offer a better customer experience at first point of contact in terms of ease of access, speed and effort to raise a service request/query. We therefore wanted to test the present service, so we can have a better insight on what works well and where we need to make improvements, as this is the first time that this service has been tested in this way.

At the time of starting this mystery shopping exercise we anticipated a higher volume of inbound calls/enquiries to our Contact Centre as we distributed the quarterly rent and service statements to all residents. Normally when this occurs we receive a higher volume of income queries. The impact of this saw the service being tested at one of the busiest times of the year.

## Introduction

On Wednesday 10 October 2018, we held a training session with the residents who expressed an interest in being a Rosebery mystery shopper. In total, eight residents agreed to take part.

All mystery shoppers were asked to complete standard feedback forms online, using Survey Monkey. Each shopper was asked to complete a maximum of 10 shops and record their feedback once they completed their shop. In order to compare and quantify their experiences, each shopper was given specific questions to ask from a list of pre-prepared scenarios/enquiries that could be used. All shoppers were provided with an information pack with clear guidelines on the service standards that they should expect to receive during their telephone/web chat call from a Contact Centre agent (CCA). Specific guidance was provided to the shoppers to pay special attention to and provide constructive feedback of their experience on the following areas:

- **Length of time taken to answer the phone/web chat**
- **Was the agent knowledgeable and able to answer their query at first point of contact?**
- **Did you feel that your telephone call/web chat was rushed?**
- **Were you left feeling assured at the end of your conversation?**

## **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS – CONTACT CENTRE**

- The quality and content of the advice provided by the CCA's to resolve issues was generally very good with some examples of outstanding good practice of reassurance, empathy and offering other routes to access information.
- Shoppers liked using our web chat facility and were impressed with the service, especially the spelling and grammar used. However, there were times when there were long gaps in waiting for a response and when this occurred it did not feel interactive. Shoppers said they were not always kept informed and at times didn't know what was happening with their query.
- Shoppers were very impressed with the service offered by the repairs agents, especially when helping to diagnose the required repair and clarifying their repairs responsibilities.
- Shoppers expressed concern that at times they could not access the web chat service as it was offline when it should have been online, during office hours (10am – 4pm).
- Shoppers liked the fact that they were always kept informed about what was happening throughout their telephone calls – particularly when there were times when they had to be placed on hold.
- Shoppers were very impressed that telephone calls were generally answered quickly with over 50% of calls answered in less than one minute.

On Tuesday 13 November 2018 a debrief session was held and mystery shoppers were asked:

### **"How satisfied were you with the overall experience following all the completed shops"**

The following comments were received:

"I found the mystery shop of the contact centre a lot better than when I did the last mystery shop. The officers that I spoke to were absolutely brilliant. They were knowledgeable, confident and you could tell by their attitude that they were going to do all they could to help and willing to go the extra mile".

"Very friendly and professional, I was impressed with their patience as a lot of my calls were shortly before close of business as I wanted to test how this would be managed"

"You should be very proud of the service that you are providing and my overall experience compared positively with some of my best customer experiences".

## 1.0 MYSTERY SHOPPING - RESULTS

- 1.1 The mystery shopping exercise was carried out over four weeks from: **Monday 15 October to Friday 9 November 2018.**
- 1.2 It was agreed that telephone calls/web chats should be made at specific times of the day when the Contact Centre received the highest volume of calls, in order to test the service during its busy times. The hours were:
- 9.00am to 11.30am
  - 1.00pm to 2.00pm
  - 4.00pm to 5.00pm

Shoppers were advised that web chat was only available from 10am to 4pm for live chat, but offline messages can be left outside of these hours.

- 1.3 In total **62 shops** were completed. This includes a combination of telephone calls and web chats.
- 1.4 As more than 30 shops were completed, and given our overall size, statistically this is a viable sample size for results to be reliable and used for service improvements.

## 2.0 CONTACT CENTRE – KEY RESPONSES

- 2.1 How did you contact Rosebery?

Contact method/ Telephone No. used	Responses
01372 814000	43% (27)
0800 687664	10% (6)
Web Chat	47 % (29)

- 2.1a **84%** (52) of contacts made were answered at first attempt.
- 2.1b **11%** (7) of attempted contacts made were not answered at first attempt and were abandoned.
- 2.2 Length of time taken to answer calls

Time taken	Responses
Less than one minute	56% (35)
More than one minute	18% (11)
Over two minutes	26% (16)

### 3.0 EASE OF REPORTING AND DEALING WITH ENQUIRY

Shoppers were asked to record how they were greeted and did the contact centre agent (CCA) follow the 'corporate welcome when they answered your call.

3.1 Were you offered a corporate greeting?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> point of contact	60% (37)	13% (8)	27% (17)

3.2 Did you find the CCA helpful?

	<b>Helpful</b>	<b>Unhelpful</b>	<b>Did not answer</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> point of contact	89% (55)	11% (7)	0%

3.3 Did the CCA offer you appropriate advice and able to resolve your issue?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> point of contact	42% (26)	40% (25)	21% (13)

3.4 During your telephone conversation with the CCA did you feel reassured?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> point of contact	66% (41)	20% (13)	14% (9)

3.5 Were you kept informed throughout on what was happening during your contact?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> point of contact	81% (50)	6% (4)	13% (8)

3.6 Did you feel the CCA was engaging throughout your conversation?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>No</b>
1st point of contact	66% (41)	24% (15)	7% (6)

Shoppers were asked to pay particular attention to this question and in their rating consider whether the CCA's tone of voice was warm, friendly and appropriate throughout.

### 4.0 HOW SATISFIED WERE YOU WITH THE OVERALL EXPERIENCE WITH YOUR CONTACT?

Shoppers were asked to confirm their overall experience in terms of the quality and content of the information provided by the CCA during their contact and whether they felt the contact was rushed.

#### 4.1 How satisfied were you?

	<b>Very Satisfied</b>	<b>Fairly Satisfied</b>	<b>Fairly Dissatisfied</b>	<b>Very Dissatisfied</b>
1st point of contact	47% (29)	34% (21)	11% (7)	8% (5)

#### 4.2 Were you offered other routes to access your information available across Rosebery and other organisation's?

	<b>Yes</b>	<b>Partially</b>	<b>N/A</b>
1 <sup>st</sup> point of contact	34% (21)	6% (4)	60% (37)

### 5.0 SUMMARY – SHOPPERS' WRITTEN COMMENTS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE

- "The contact centre agent (CCA) was excellent, despite calling at 4.58pm. I was not rushed and did not feel the CCA was at all impatient"
- "Very friendly, helpful and I felt like the CCA seemed keen to help and resolve my issue"
- "The CCA was very friendly and happy to help. The web chat did take 10 minutes in total, but it was not a problem, as I was able to do other things whilst waiting"
- "Disappointing – the web chat was showing 'off-line' at 10.40am therefore I was unable to communicate 'live' with Rosebery. I would have expected the web chat to be available at this time"
- "The CCA was able to answer all my questions the entire telephone conversation took 16 minutes. I was satisfied with the content and she was very polite"
- "I decided to test Rosebery by completing two web chats at the same time. Both chats were answered by the same CCA. Although they were a bit slow, I think the CCA did a remarkable job"
- "I thought the CCA in the repairs team was great on the phone. Friendly and efficient and advised me what would happen next and the timescale"
- "Very pleasant and we actually had a laugh during the phone conversation. She gave me the details of the website and told me how to get the report and what sort of information would be on the website. Brilliant!"

- "As the web chat was off-line my question generated an auto response. Whilst the email offers various places to gain more information or to ring a number for repairs I do feel that advising that a response will be received within five working days is excessive"
- "Very professional, empathetic and willing to help. Didn't allow being call to be dragged into a political conversation about the government. Calmed me down "we don't want people to lose their home because of a change in circumstances". I thought this was brilliant!"
- "Got the answer I needed – very fast!"
- "I felt the CCA was listening and caring. Very understanding and told me other routes I could take to get help, even though the CCA was not able to help me".

## **6.0 LESSONS LEARNT – MYSTERY SHOPPING**

6.1 During this mystery shop we have learnt the following:

- Once again the training session worked well in preparing shoppers to carryout the scenarios. A number of the mystery shoppers that took part were new, so it was useful having the shoppers that participated in the first exercise doing the training again, as they were able to share experiences.
- All the shoppers that took part enjoyed doing this exercise and are excited to be engaged with Rosebery. They see the benefits that the mystery shopping programme can offer to improve services and all are keen to participate in future exercises
- Extending the mystery period from three to four weeks, worked a lot better and offered a more accurate reflection of the existing service
- The use of more technical questions/scenarios helped to offer more of a test of the accuracy/ knowledge of contact centre staff.
- Shoppers have gained added confidence from doing the first shopping exercise. This has led to more detail and constructive feedback, on their experiences and suggested service improvements.
- The programme has exceeded our expectations in terms of feedback received and we need to recruit more residents to be mystery shoppers, so for each exercise we can 'refresh' the pool of shoppers used.

## **7.0 KEY FINDINGS – CONTACT CENTRE**

7.1 The exercise offered a good insight on the standard of service currently provided by Rosebery's Contact Centre. During the period of this exercise compared to the volume of inbound calls the Contact Centre received in September, call volumes were up by 35%. In total the Contact Centre received **3,769 calls**; this is well above the average number of calls normally received each month. This supports that the Contact Centre was tested during a period of high inbound communications.

7.2 Despite the challenges the service was experiencing during this period, there were many good examples of elementary customer service. This is supported by the fact that 82% of all enquiries/issues raised were either fully or partially resolved at first point of contact.

### **7.3 Following this exercise the key areas where service improvements can be made are:**

- Our web chat proved to be a popular and growing method of accessing our service for service requests and enquires. However, the feedback received from our shoppers expressed some concerns about the reliability of the service in terms of it being 'offline' at times when it should have been 'online'.
- When the web chat is offline, there is an auto generated reply message. This informs customers that they will receive a response to their query within five working days. They are offered the opportunity to ring or email immediately. Given that customers that decide to use web chat are doing so for ease of effort and a speedy response, is this reasonable?
- Whilst the majority of shoppers that used the web chat found it to be a good experience. At times, they did find it to be 'disjointed' with long gaps waiting for a response.
- Shopper suggested that, better use of the 'corporate closing' to include "is there anything else I can help you with" and "thank you for calling", would have added to their experience
- 56% of all calls received were answered in less than one minute; this is disappointing as we have a monthly key performance indicator (KPI) to answer 70% of all calls in less than one minute.
- On average shoppers waited for over two minutes for web chats to be answered by a CCA.
- Better use of the customer's name throughout the telephone call to reassure and better relate to the caller, was also suggested as an area for improvement.