

**Mystery Shopping Report**

**Service Area:**

Contact Centre

(Customer Experience & Repairs Teams)

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**Author:**

Theo Scott

Customer Experience Team Leader

**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 fourth mystery shopping exercise, following the re-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.

**Background information**

On Tuesday 10 March 2020, we held a training session with the residents who expressed an interest to be a Rosebery mystery shopper. In total, 5 residents agreed to take part, although only 3 were able to attend the training session and online training was provided for the other shoppers. This was a lower number than expected, however, at the time there was an emerging issue with the coronavirus crisis (COVID-19) and this may have impacted the level of interest.

All shoppers were asked to complete standard online feedback forms, using Survey Monkey. Each shopper was asked to complete a maximum of 12 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.

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 and provide constructive feedback of their experience on the follow areas:

* **Length of time taken to answer the telephone/web chat**
* **Whether the agent was knowledgeable and able to answer their query at first point of contact**
* **If they felt the telephone call/web chat was rushed**
* **How easy was it use and raise a service query on the resident portal ‘My Rosebery’?**
* **Whether they left feeling assured at the end of their conversation**
1. **MYSTERY SHOPPING - RESULTS**

1.1 The mystery shopping exercise was carried out over 4 weeks from: **Monday 16 March to Thursday 9 April 2020.** The exercise was originally scheduled for 3 weeks, it was agreed with shoppers to extend for a further week, as some were experiencing issues finding the time to complete shops following the introduction of the ‘lockdown’ restrictions.

1.2 It was agreed that mystery shops 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 also 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 **26 shops** were completed. Given that less than 30 shops were completed, statistically this is not a sufficient sample size for the number of homes that we managed, for the results to be considered as reliable and used for service improvement. However, the feedback received provides a useful insight on our contact centre service, particularly during the time we mobilised all staff to remote working.

1.4 The impact of COVID-19, contributed considerably to the lower number of completed shops. During this period the Government introduced the ‘stay at home’ restrictions, to reduce the spread of the virus. This had a significant impact on the lives of all shoppers and their ability to carry out the required number of shops. Sadly, two shoppers were unable to take part, so we expected a smaller sample of completed shops from the outset.

1.5 We decided to continue with the exercise despite Rosebery’s decision to close its office from 18 March with all contact centre staff mobilised to work from home and only an emergency repairs service available due to social distancing requirements. We thought it would still be useful to continue with this exercise to test this transition and note our performance at ‘first point of contact’.

1. **CONTACT CENTRE – KEY RESPONSES**

2.1 How did you contact Rosebery?

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contact method** | **Responses** |
| Telephone - 01372 814000 | 11.54% (3) |
| Web Chat | 23.08 % (6) |
| Resident Portal - My Rosebery | 46.15% (12) |
| Email - customerexperience@rosebery.org.uk  | 15.38% (4) |
| Email – repairs@rosebery.org.uk | 3.85% (1) |

2.1a **80.77%** (21) of contacts made were answered at first attempt

2.1b 19.23% (5) of attempted contacts a mix of telephone and webchat were not answered at first attempt and were abandoned.

2.1c All attempted telephone calls were answered under 1 minute. calls

2.3 During this exercise 46.15%- (12 shops) were carried out by using the resident portal ‘My Rosebery’. Of the shoppers that used this method 50.0% received a response within 2 working days.

1. **EASE OF REPORTING AND RESPONSE**

Shoppers were asked to record how they were greeted and did the contact centre agent follow the ‘corporate welcome when they answered the call.

3.1 Were you offered a corporate greeting?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **Partially** | **No** |
| 1st point of contact | 53.85% (14) | 7.69% (2) | 38.46% (10) |

Shoppers responded with ‘no’, mentioned that staff only used their team or did not say their full name and some did not use a formal opening, when receiving a response via our digital channels, such as ‘Dear, Good morning or afternoon.

3.2 Did you find the contact centre agent (CCA) helpful?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  **Helpful** | **Unhelpful** | **Did not answered** |
| 1st point of contact | 69.23% (18) | 30.77% (8) | 0% |

Shoppers that responded with ‘no’ were mainly related to income queries and had to be transferred to the income team and were not assisted at first point of contact.

3.3 Did the CCA offer you appropriate advise and able to resolve your issue at first point of contact?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **Partially** | **No** |
| 1st point of contact | 42% (26) | 40% (25) | 21% (13) |

Shoppers that responded with ‘partially’ or ‘no’, had to be transferred to another team, these were mainly linked to queries about COVID-19 and difficulties to make rent payments, universal credit and leasehold management queries.

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **Partially** | **No** |
| 1st point of contact | 50% (13) | 23.08% (6) |  26.92% (7) |

Shoppers offered a mixed response to this question and from the data provided it’s difficult to fully understand what the issue with the responses received for ‘partially and ‘no’.

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

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **Partially** | **No** |
| 1st point of contact | 57.69% (15) | 11.54% (3) | 30.77% (8) |

3.5 Did you feel the CCA was helpful throughout your conversation?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Helpful** | **Unhelpful** |
| 1st point of contact | 69.23% (18) | 30.77% (8) |

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. Also, during their contact and how does this compare with experiences of using contact centres within the commercial sector, like British Gas, Virgin Media etc.

4.1 How satisfied were you?

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Very** **Satisfied**  | **Fairly Satisfied**  | **Fairly****Dissatisfied**  | **Very****Dissatisfied**  |
| 1st point of contact | 30.77% (8) | 34.62% (9) | 15.38% (5) | 15.38% (4) |

4.2 Were you offered other routes to access your information across Rosebery and other organisation’s, if a full response was not possible?

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Yes** | **Partially** | **N/A** |
| 1st point of contact | 26.92% (7) | 3.85% (1) | 69.23% (18) |

**5.0** **SUMMARY – SHOPPERS WRITTEN COMMENTS ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE**

* “The issue that I raised on My Rosebery was straightforward and I quickly got a straightforward answer, so I was happy”
* “I was not totally happy, I felt I was being passed on to another team, without my questions being fully understood”.
* “I used the resident portal, I quickly got a response and felt reassured that this matter has been passed on to the relevant department, but I have received no further details”
* **“**I called to find out want income support is available in the current situation the first person that I spoke did not have the update support available, so I was transferred to the Income Team and they were very helpful”
* “I raised a query on My Rosebery, about fly-tipping, I was satisfied with the quick response, which was kind and gave me the impression that we are encouraged to ask”
* **“**I used the webchat and I was impressed with the prompt response; the agent spoke excellently through the chat. I thought the agent was thorough and professional”
* **“**I was impressed with the prompt response received when I used the repairs email address, it was plain and simple and quickly dealt with my issue”.
* **“**I tried to raise a query on the webchat about COVID-19, unfortunately I didn’t get an answer. I didn’t actually mind that this was not answered, as it was asked over the lunchtime and I appreciate that the workforce is quite stretched at the moment”

**6.0 CONCLUSION**

**Lessons learnt**

Due to the small sample size, we need to err on the side of caution as there are some results where a high dissatisfaction level actually amounts to only a few shops. Where this is the case, taking forward service improvement could not be recommended and therefore is not included. COVID-19 has had a huge impact on this exercise, but the results still offer a useful insight into the service provided by our contact centre, during this worrying time.

We can conclude from the mystery shopper exercise undertaken during March/April 2020, the following:

* We need greater volume of shopping to enable the exercise to influence service improvement.
* Where possible, questions need to be clear in terms of achievement and have pre-defined measures as it was difficult to ascertain the issues for the mixed response received for; “did you feel reassured”?
* Our new resident portal ‘My Rosebery’ is popular and shoppers received a quick response to their queries.
* Shoppers were also happy to use our webchat and the experience was positive.
* It was interesting to note that the majority of the contact made was using our digital channels, despite the choice to use the telephone.
* Although all contact centre staff were working remotely, this transition did not result in a negative impact on service or staff performance, across the completed shops.
* Due to COVID-19, we were unable to hold a debrief session, these have proven to be useful sessions to ‘unpack’ some of the issues experience which are not clearly defined on the online question. Going forward we will be making more use of digital channels to communicate with residents during mystery shopping exercises.