



Your Homes
Newcastle

Mystery Shopping

Repairs and Maintenance

Report by Tenant Involvement Team – March - May 2007

Introduction

Your Homes Newcastle is committed to involving tenants to improve housing services. The mystery shopping programme began in November 2005 with the initial shop on the rent payment system. Since then the mystery shoppers have increased in numbers and have tested the services of the sheltered housing service and investment delivery. The mystery shoppers then decided that the next topic they would like to mystery shop was repairs and maintenance.

This report will provide an update on the results so far from March to May.

The results will then be used to help develop an action plan.

Recruitment

We have developed a pool of 15 mystery shoppers from across the city and another 2 tenants have recently expressed an interest.

The recruitment process has not been developed any further; adverts still advertise vacancies in housing offices, which is where the main number of mystery shopper applications come from. We have now put information on the website and tenants can download an application form and can read all previous reports on mystery shopping.

The tenant's panel has recently produced a survey and 130 tenants have expressed an interest in becoming a mystery shopper. In July these 130 people will be invited to attend a training event, all new recruits will take part in the repairs mystery shop.

Training

An initial training programme was developed in July 2006. Since then the process of mystery shopping has developed and the feedback process has been designed by the existing volunteers.

In July 2006 the training was delivered by the tenant involvement team. This included information about what is involved in becoming a mystery shopper, what is meant by good customer service, the importance of impartiality, the need to stick to the script, using the equipment and most importantly how the results will form an action plan for service improvements.

The new training programme will concentrate on a lot of the similar themes such as impartiality, confidentiality and customer service. However the format of how the mystery shops can take place has changed and the training will be adapted to prepare new mystery shoppers. Mystery shoppers now have the opportunity to

- ♦ complete questionnaires from home

- ◆ record individual scenarios
- ◆ and they are looking to extend the programme so mystery shoppers can visit housing offices.

Getting the most out of mystery shopping

To ensure that the questionnaires would lead to service improvements the tenant involvement team lead officer for mystery shopping met with Victoria Birchall (monitoring manager) to develop questions that would ensure service improvement. The reason for this being that repairs and maintenance already do customer surveys after the repair has been complete and this was to ensure that there was no repetition. Managers were asked to brief their staff and inform staff that the mystery shop would commence from March and would be ongoing for the year.

The questionnaires were then discussed with the mystery shopping group and changes were made to reflect what the mystery shoppers would also like to measure.

The changes were then confirmed with the repairs and maintenance section. As the mystery shoppers were only requested to complete a questionnaire when they had a genuine repair we agreed that this mystery shop would take longer to complete and that it would be ongoing for the year. To keep the repairs and maintenance team up to date with results it was agreed that a quarterly report would be developed to ensure service improvements throughout the year.

The volunteers will only report genuine repairs throughout the mystery shop. Therefore each shop will be different as all cases are individual. The mystery shoppers were reminded about the purpose of mystery shopping before each call and reminded that they needed to remain impartial when deciding on customer service levels.

The mystery shop

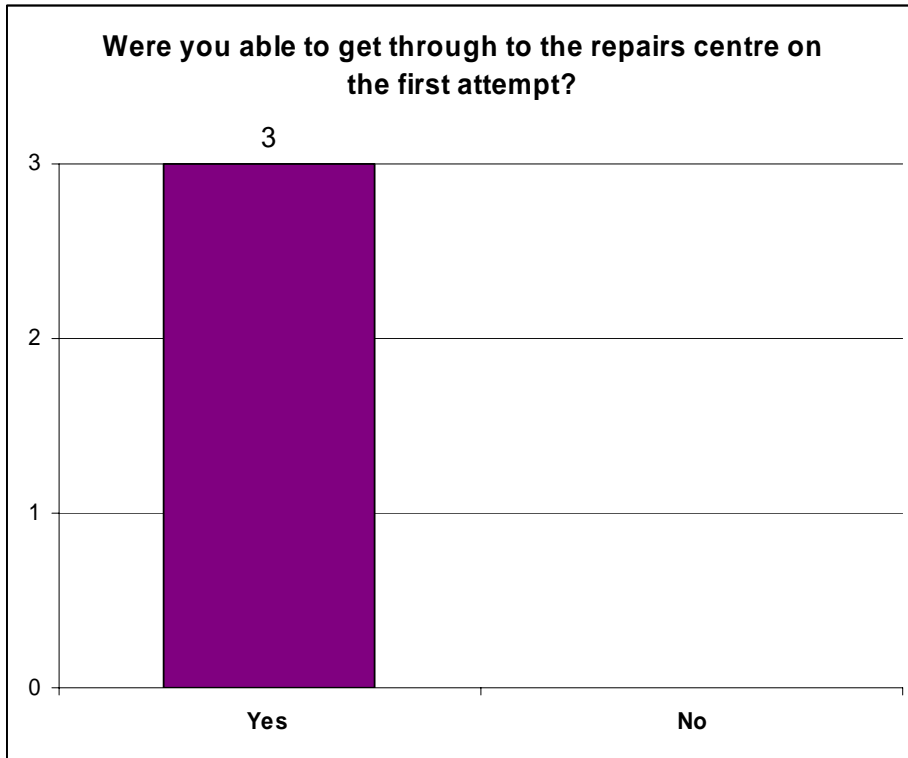
All the volunteers will complete the questionnaires from their own home. All calls will be reported through repair call and results recorded through the questionnaires. All questionnaires will be returned to the tenant involvement team.

Once the mystery shoppers have completed 4 calls they will receive £10 towards their expenses.

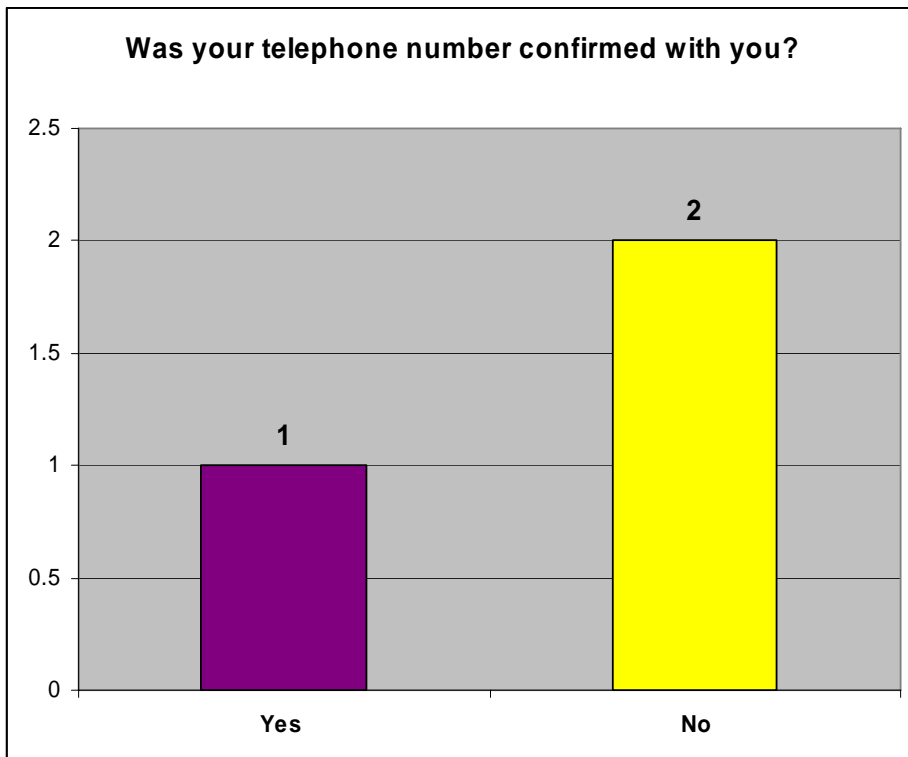
Results

So far 3 people have returned their questionnaires. The results are as follows,

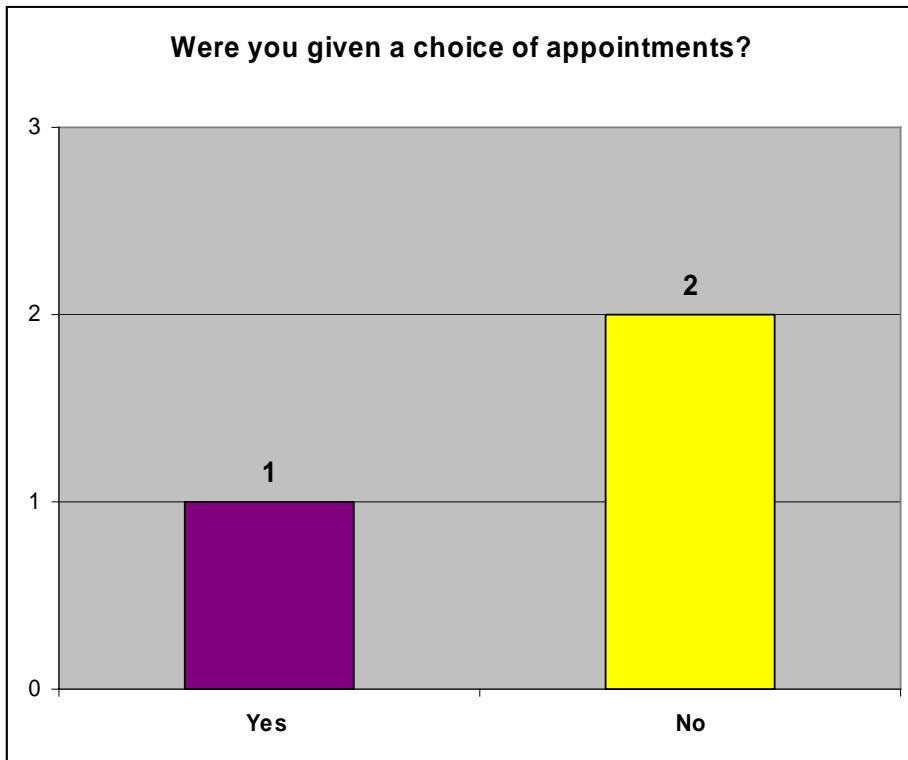
Question 1



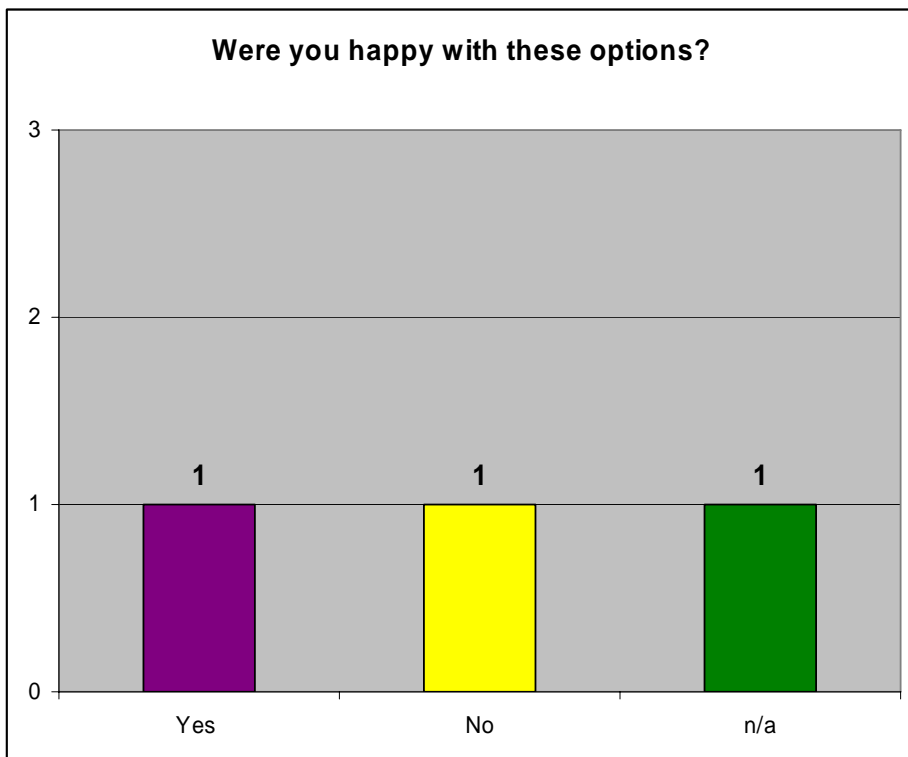
Question 2



Question 3



Question 4



The results are varied. One resident was only offered early morning or early evening which he felt was a poor service.

The second resident was not given any options. The third resident did not get asked the question as it was identified early that the repair would be done under planned maintenance.

Question 5

Did you receive a letter confirming this appointment?

- ♦ All residents received a letter confirming the appointment apart from the resident whose repair was planned maintenance. All letters were received within 2 -3 working days.
- ♦ One letter identified that the repair had been logged incorrectly.

Question 6

Did the workman complete the repair on time?

- ♦ This was only applicable to one tenant but they were happy that the repair was completed on the given appointment date.
- ♦ One tenant did not complete this question as she noticed when she received the letter that the repair had been logged incorrectly.
- ♦ Another tenant could not complete this question due to the repair being planned maintenance.

Question 7

Were you told the priority of the repair?

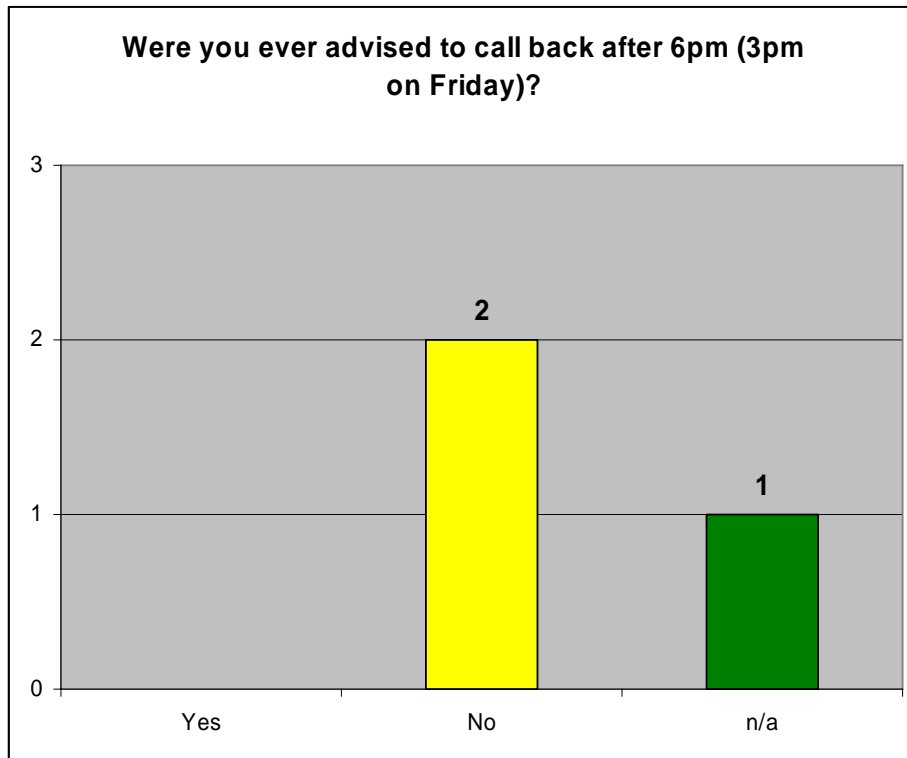
- ♦ 2 tenants were not told the priority of the repair
- ♦ 1 tenant was told the priority in the explanation about planned maintenance.

Question 8

Have you needed to contact the repairs centre after your first call to report the repair?

- ♦ Only one tenant had to contact the repairs centre after their initial contact. This was because the repair was logged incorrectly. The repair was originally logged on 03.04.07 and cancelled on 05.04.07 when the mystery shopper received her letter stating the incorrect repair. Unfortunately the workmen still arrived to complete the incorrect repair on the 12.04.07. Once the repair was logged correctly the mystery shopper was told that an inspector would need to look at the repair first. She was given a date of the 03.05.07 and received a letter on the 05.04.07 confirming the date. The inspector arrived on the 03.05.07 and the repair was then completed on the 09.05.07.

Question 9



The Repair

The results will only consider 2 questionnaires because one mystery shopper was unable to complete this section due to planned maintenance.

For the purpose of this section the repair which was logged incorrectly will report on the how the correct repair was completed.

Question 10.

Was an inspection needed before the repair was done?

yes	1
no	1

If yes did the inspector tell you what was needed?

yes	1
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Question 11

Was your repair completed in one visit?

yes	1
no	1

The no answer was due to the inspector visiting before the repair was completed.

Question 12

If the repair was your fault, were you told you would have to pay for it?

Yes	0
no	2

However no repairs that were report were the tenants fault.

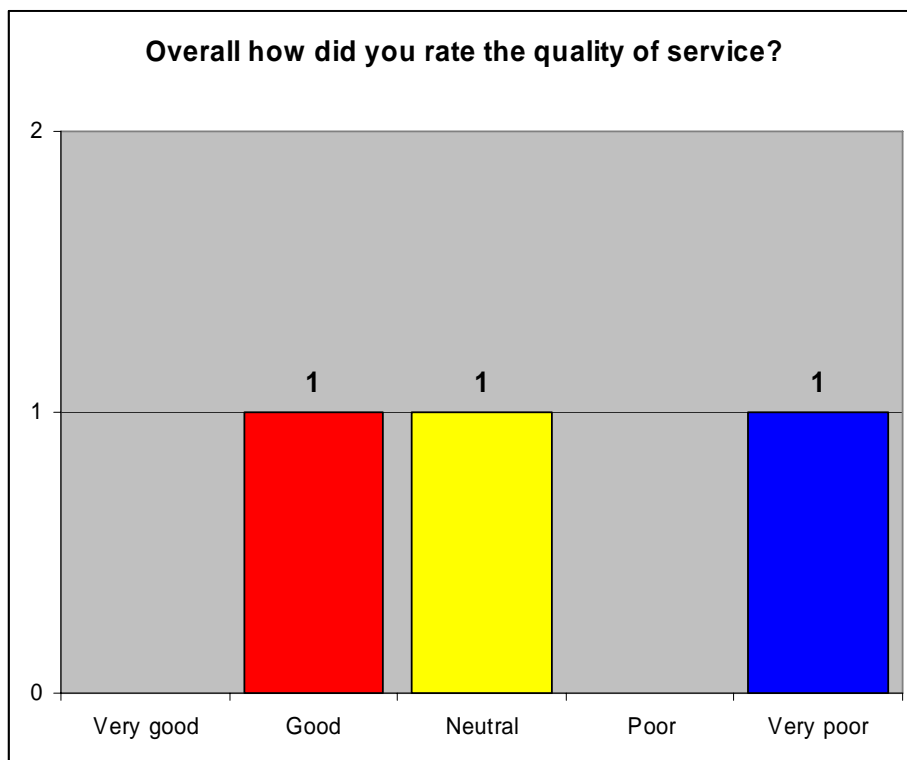
Question 12

Have you had to call the repair centre to find out what was happening with your repair?

no	2
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Question 13

Overall customer service



The mystery shopper who rated the service as good was disappointed that he was not told the priority of the repair and also he was only given the option of AM or PM. He was then cut off when he had another query at the end of the call. Although he felt the service was poor with the repair call service he scored the service overall as good as he was happy with the work done.

The mystery shopper who scored the service as neutral was frustrated with the response of planned maintenance. The fence post is loose and needed securing and he found it frustrating that this repair could prevent the fence from falling down and doing more damage at a later date. He asked the operative if it would be a repair job if the fence fell down but this question was

not answered. The mystery shopper's frustration was added to when he received his letter saying the work would be completed in two years time. The mystery shopper understands the process of planned maintenance and therefore scored the call as neutral.

Finally the last mystery shopper scored the service as very poor due to the problems experienced with repair call when reporting the initial repair. She felt it was waste of money for a workman to attend when she had already cancelled the work due to the repair being inputted incorrectly. She also felt that it would have been beneficial to be made aware of the priority but this was not given.

Service improvements

1. All operatives should confirm the telephone number with the caller.
2. All options of appointments should be made available.
3. To ensure value for money once a repair is cancelled there should be a system in place to ensure that the workmen are informed.
4. Ensure that the operatives listen to the caller; one mystery shopper had the telephone put down on him during a call.

Appendix 1



Mystery Shop Repairs and Maintenance Guidance notes to completing a questionnaire

This Scenario is about when you need a repair to your home.

You will need to complete the questionnaire over a period of time. You can start when you report the repair and you will finish when the repair has been completed.

(Before you report the repair you should read the questionnaire and familiarise yourself with the areas that you are going to be observing. It may be useful if you have a notepad to make rough notes during the process – you might find them useful.)

You can use the free phones available in community housing offices or the repairs centre number **0845 113 8888**. After completing 4 mystery shops mystery shoppers will receive £10 expenses to cover the costs of completing the calls.

You should complete your name and the first line of your address on the questionnaire then complete the date, and time, you reported the repair. You should fill in name of the office/department you contacted – you should **not** write in the name of the person you reported the repair to.

Carrying out the Mystery Shop

Repairs reported within Office Hours 8am – 6pm

You should be told, without asking, the priority the repair has been given and when it should be completed by. Tell us if you were.

You should be offered an appointment if access is needed to your home and being given a choice.

Question 6 will ask if you are asked to call back after 6 o'clock , this is only relevant if you are reporting the repair during normal working hours 8am to 6pm or 8am to 3pm on a Friday. If you are reporting the repair out of hours this question will not apply.

The repair

Getting the Work Done

Questions 10 to 13 will look at the service delivered when the work is being carried out.

If the questions do not apply please tell us.

Please let us know if the repair was completed in one visit or whether the workmen needed to come back to complete the repair.

Some repairs are tenant responsibility and you should be told if you are responsible to pay for this repair.

Finally we would like you to rate the overall service you have received from reporting the repair to the repair being completed. Please add any comments you have about this service.

You should complete the questionnaire as soon as possible after your shop

If you find the questionnaire difficult to complete and can suggest a way to improve this please contact the Tenant Involvement Team with your ideas.

Please return questionnaire in freepost envelope provided.

Repairs & maintenance Mystery Shopping questionnaire

(Please complete as soon as possible after carrying out the Mystery Shop)

Name_____

First line of Address_____

Date of Mystery Shop_____

Time of Mystery Shop_____

Department Contacted_____

Date repair completed_____

Contacting the Repairs Centre

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| 1. Were you able to get through to the Repairs Centre on the first attempt? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Was your telephone number confirmed with you? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Were you given a choice of appointments? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

What options were you given?

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|--------------------------|----|--------------------------|
| Weekends | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Early morning | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Late morning | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Early evening | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Late evening | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Were you happy with these options? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Did you receive a letter a letter confirming this appointment? | Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> | No | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Please give date you received the letter_____

6. Did the workmen complete the repair on the given appointment date? Yes No

7. Were you told the priority of the repair? Yes No

8. Have you needed to contact the repairs centre after your first call to report the repair? If yes, please give details. Yes No

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.....

9. Were you ever advised to call back after 6pm (3pm on Friday)? Yes No

If yes:
What day/time did you make your first request?

Day/Time.....

What were the reasons given for this?

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.....
.....
.....

The repair

10. Was an inspection needed before the was repair done? Yes No

If yes, did the inspector tell you what repair was needed? Yes No

11. Was your repair completed in one visit? Yes No

If not, were you informed why? Yes No
Were you informed when they would be returning? Yes No

12. If your repair was your fault, were you Yes No

told you would have to pay for it?

13. Have you had to call the repair centre to find out what is happening with your repair? Yes No

Overall, what was your assessment of the quality of service you received?

(Please tick one box)

Very good

Good

Neutral

Poor

Very Poor

Comments (You may wish to add some comments)

Thank you for completing this mystery shop. Please return your questionnaire in the freepost envelope provided.

What you said	What we need to do	How we did	Completed on
1. All operatives should confirm the telephone number with the caller.			
2. Ensure that the operatives listen to the caller; one mystery shopper had the telephone put down on him during a			
3. All options of appointments should be made available.			
4.To ensure value for money once a repair is cancelled there should be a system in place to ensure that the workmen are informed.			