



AN INTRODUCTION TO MYSTERY SHOPPING

This leaflet will give you a brief introduction to “mystery shopping” and the role of the “mystery shopper”.

What is mystery shopping?

“Mystery shopping” is a form of market research where people are trained to observe, experience and evaluate the customer service process of an organisation.

What does a mystery shopper do?

A mystery shopper acts as a customer and carries out a series of agreed tasks, which monitor the quality of customer service of an organisation. This could be any organisation which deals with the public – for example a supermarket, a hairdresser, a solicitor, or a landlord such as a local authority or a housing association.

If a mystery shopper was asked to monitor their landlord, they could, for example, be asked to phone and request a repair. They would have to monitor how long it took to answer the phone, assess how they were greeted and how efficiently and effectively their enquiry was handled. As a Chevin mystery shopper, we may ask you to carry out “shops” by emailing or writing to one of our offices or visiting an area office in person.

The mystery shopper would then have to report back their findings accurately and objectively by completing a questionnaire.

What is the purpose of mystery shopping research?

The purpose of the mystery shopper research is to provide feedback on the quality of service provided by the organisation. This is intended to assist the organisation to focus on customer service improvements by providing them with information on the quality of their current service.

How long will it take?

We expect tenants to take about 10 minutes to carry out each mystery shop (plus travelling time if it involves visiting one of our offices). It should take about 20 minutes to complete the

questionnaire, making a total of half an hour to complete one mystery shop.

We will agree specific times with each tenant when they will carry out their mystery shops. They will normally be done over a period of a few days, making one mystery shop a day, so as not to attract too much attention.

Will staff know that a mystery shop is taking place?

All staff at Chevin will have been informed that their organisation intends to carry out customer research, but they will not be told when it will happen, or by whom.

Will Chevin's staff be able to identify me?

Mystery shoppers will be trained to carry out their mystery shopping exercises without identifying themselves. Neither mystery shoppers nor individual members of staff are identified at any stage in the process.

How does Chevin ensure support and training for the mystery shoppers?

We will assess the level of training required by each individual mystery shopper prior to them starting on a project. We will tailor our training to match people's skills and abilities and will provide ongoing support.

What skills do I need to become a mystery shopper?

You will need to be:

- Able to use the phone
- Able to read and follow the questionnaire and fill it in clearly and accurately – either typed or handwritten.
- Available to carry out the mystery shops during our office hours: 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday.

More details on the essential requirements for mystery shopping are available on our enclosed fact-sheet ; "Mystery Shopper – Person Specification".

How much will I earn for doing the mystery shops?

Each mystery shopper will be asked to complete the training (provided free of charge by Chevin) and do five mystery shops.

When those shops have been successfully completed, you will receive £50 worth of shopping vouchers (for a shop(s) of your

choice) and we will pay your postage and travelling costs. We cannot, for tax purposes, pay mystery shoppers in cash, as this would have tax implications and might affect some people's benefits.

Any additional expenses such as childcare will be reimbursed and food and refreshments will be provided free of charge on the training day that you attend.

How do I become a mystery shopper?

If you are interested in becoming a mystery shopper, please complete the enclosed application form and return it to us. If you are accepted for training, then you will have to complete a more detailed questionnaire that will assist us to develop your skills and use your experience.

Applicants will need to complete our one-day training course before they can conduct their first shop.

Could mystery shopping help my future job prospects?

We believe that the training, support and experience you receive working as a mystery shopper will help you to develop skills and abilities which could assist you in your future career development and will:

- Build your confidence
- Develop organisational skills
- Improve communication skills
- Develop interviewing techniques

If you are interested, please take a look at the person specification and complete the application form. You complete the application form on-line and e-mail it back to us, or print it out and post it back to Gill Welch, Chevin Housing Association, Harrison Street, Wakefield, WF1 1PS.