Resident Mystery Shopper
Terms of Reference

Stroud District Council's Housing service is committed to listening to its tenants and leaseholders, empowering them to influence the way our services are delivered and creating opportunities for them to have their say about our services.

Purpose of Resident Mystery Shoppers

- To explore and understand residents' experiences of Stroud District Council's (SDC) housing service.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in the way information is communicated (online, written and verbal) to tenants and leaseholders.
- Identify strengths and weaknesses in the delivery of services to tenants and leaseholders.
- Measure performance against set standards.
- Contribute to the work of other tenant involvement groups (TAG & TOP***)** which scrutinise and monitor SDC's performance for the purposes of ensuring improvements to service delivery (see governance structure on page 4).
- Help identify possible staff training needs.
- Provide open, honest, objective and constructive feedback on behalf of residents in receipt of housing services.
- Mystery Shopping provides independent resident feedback on housing services and helps Stroud District Council identify improvements, recognise good practice and meet the expectations of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards.

* **TAG** = Tenant Action Group (scrutiny)
TOP = Tenant Oversight Panel

What Mystery Shoppers do

- Carry out 'shopping' activity in a variety of ways (face-to-face, by phone, by letter, by email by surfing the website and/or social media).
- Share findings with other tenant groups (TOP and TAG) to help SDC improve services for all tenants and leaseholders.
- Prepare for each mystery shopping exercise by attending meetings and training sessions.
- Work positively and in partnership with members and officers, avoiding conflict.

- Read all documents relevant to the shopping exercise (these will be kept to a minimum).
- Respect that every single suggestion made or idea that you have may not always be implemented.
- Maintain a high level of confidentiality throughout your work.
- Abide by these Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct.
- Attend meetings to prepare for each 'shopping' exercise and agree criteria. At the end of each exercise, meet to discuss results/next steps.
- There will be opportunities to carry out meetings online if members of the group agree.
- Mystery Shoppers should provide objective, evidence-based feedback based on the exercise undertaken and not allow personal experiences or opinions to influence findings.

Scope

- All service areas within SDC's Housing service.
- Fulfil mystery shopping exercises at the request of resident groups, the Housing Oversight Board, service managers or the Head of Housing.

Who can be a Mystery Shopper?

- Membership is open to all current SDC tenants and leaseholders.
- No experience is needed and training will be provided.
- Each individual mystery shopper exercise is optional.
- We welcome applications from tenants and leaseholders from all backgrounds and will make reasonable adjustments where required to ensure participation is accessible and inclusive.

How will SDC support Mystery Shoppers?

We will:

- Provide induction and training – volunteers do not need any prior knowledge.
- Ensure direct communication with a dedicated Resident Involvement Officer.
- Prepare materials for any meetings and shopping exercises.

- Provide information about potential service areas to be the focus to a mystery shopping exercise.
- Close the Feedback Loop by adopting a clear, “You Said, We Did” reporting mechanism. This will be done by maintaining an action register of improvements made as a result of your work.
- Personal information will be processed in accordance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and the Council's Privacy Notice.
- Reasonable travel and approved out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

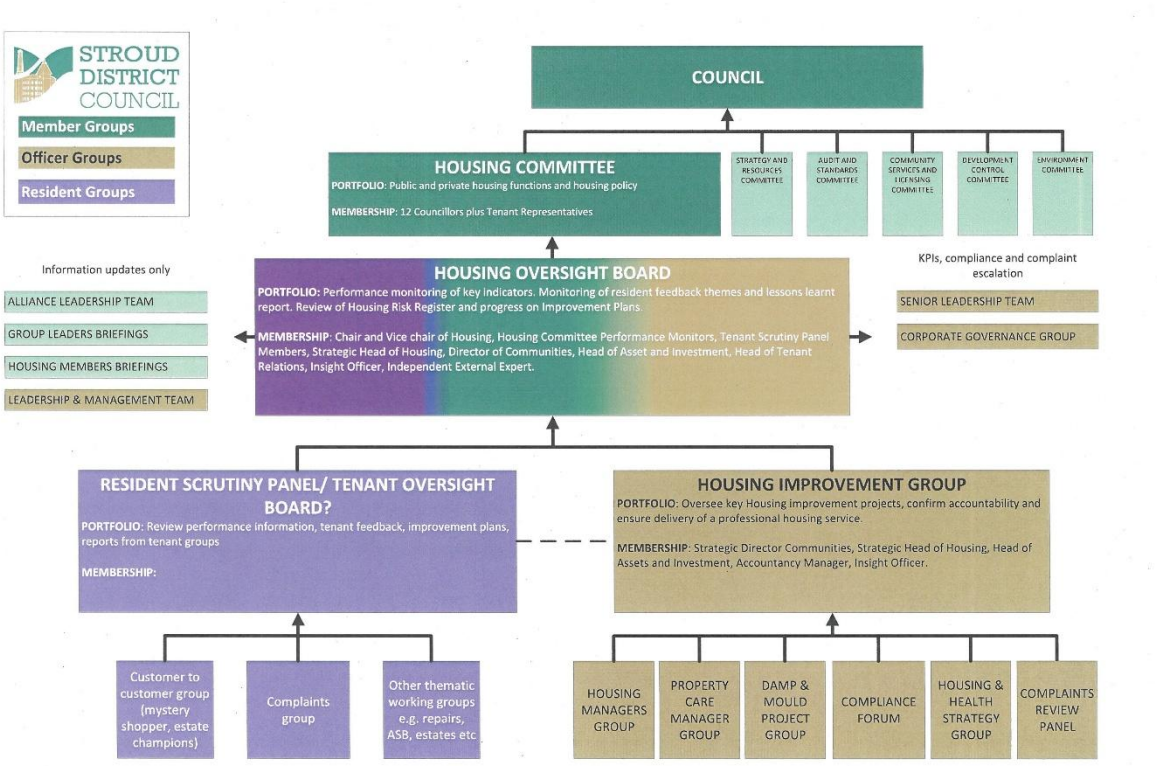
Benefits for Resident Mystery Shoppers

- Arrange mystery shopping exercises so that they ‘fit into’ your way of life, making it convenient for you and minimising the amount of time you spend on it between meetings.
- Opportunity to gain skills and develop knowledge of housing services.
- Access to appropriate assistance with any technology requirements.
- Spotlighting your findings and resulting improvements to housing services in tenant newsletters, SDC’s website and SDC Housing’s Facebook page.
- Opportunities to attend ‘Thank You’ events, focus groups and conferences (optional).

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Resident Involvement Governance Structure

This diagram shows how resident participation can lead to influencing decisions made at Housing Committee - the 'Top Table'. Mystery Shoppers' findings will go to the Resident Scrutiny Panel (now called Tenant Action Group) and the Tenant Oversight Panel. These two resident groups will use Mystery Shopper findings as evidence to underpin any recommendations they make for improvements to housing services for residents.



Confidentiality Agreement - Mystery Shoppers Copy

In the course of carrying out Mystery Shopping activity of Stroud District Council services, Mystery Shoppers will have access to a great deal of confidential and sensitive information about individuals and organisations. It is essential that they are careful not to give any third parties access to that information.
All Mystery Shoppers are required to sign the following confidentiality agreement.
Training will be provided to inspectors on data protection legislation.

Confidentiality Agreement

I.....(please print name) agree to treat as confidential all the information I see in the course of my work as a Mystery Shopper, including all the notes and reports made by the Mystery Shopper Team members.
I will not disclose any of that information in any form to anyone who is not a member of my Mystery Shopper team. At the end of each Mystery Shopping exercise, I will securely destroy or permanently delete any notes or records containing confidential information

When I stop being a Mystery Shopper, I will return to Stroud District Council any written material which I have and will delete any electronic data held on my computer. I will not keep copies of any electronic data.

Signed.....

Date.....

PLEASE SIGN AND KEEP

PTO

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PTO

Mystery Shopper - Terms of Reference

Confidentiality Agreement – Stroud District Council Copy

In the course of carrying out Mystery Shopping activity of Stroud District Council services, Mystery Shoppers will have access to a great deal of confidential and sensitive information about individuals and organisations. It is essential that they are careful not to give any third parties access to that information.

All Mystery Shoppers are required to sign the following confidentiality agreement.
Training will be provided to inspectors in the data protection legislation.

Confidentiality Agreement

I.....(please print name) agree to treat as confidential all the information I see in the course of my work as a Mystery Shopper, including all the notes and reports made by the Mystery Shopper Team members.
I will not disclose any of that information in any form to anyone who is not a member of my Mystery Shopper team. At the end of each Mystery Shopping exercise, I will return any written material to Stroud District Council and will shred or burn any notes I have made.

When I stop being a Mystery Shopper, I will return to Stroud District Council any written material which I have and will delete any electronic data held on my computer. I will not keep copies of any electronic data.

Signed.....

Date.....

PLEASE SIGN, DETACH AND RETURN TO STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL