



Medway LINK – Pool of ‘Mystery Shoppers’

Introduction

‘Mystery shopping’ is a technique used by marketing companies and the commercial retail sector to test products and to gauge the true quality of services from the customer’s perspective. ‘Mystery shoppers’ pose as normal customers to use a service, or buy a product or register a complaint or exhibit certain behaviours in order to test the service under review. The LINK plans to use this technique to evaluate the quality of certain areas of adult social care services provided by or commissioned by Medway Council. If successful the intention would be to use the technique in areas of health care services.

The role of a LINK ‘Mystery Shopper’

The LINK ‘mystery shopper’ may be called upon to use questionnaires, audio and video methods of collecting evidence and visiting adult social care services that are either directly provided by Medway Council or commissioned by them. As the LINK’s ‘mystery shoppers’ will not be required to enter and view residential premises, they will not need to undergo Criminal Record Bureau checks and authorisation. Some ‘mystery shopping’ may be performed over the internet.

Commitment

1. Being a ‘mystery shopper’ will involve being available to make and carry out such surveys as may be necessary but reasonable notice of a proposed activity will be given. As a general guide the following level of commitment is anticipated:
 - a) Activity - ie being used as a ‘mystery shopper’ may involve 10 hours a month. It is likely that certain aspects of work may require a concentrated period of time and a number of visits will be needed in quick succession
 - b) Numbers of times of use of a ‘mystery shopper’ will vary according to the LINK work programme
 - c) Appropriate training will need to be undertaken - this could be twice a year - for a whole or half day.
2. The use of ‘mystery shopper’ may be limited initially until a full LINK work programme is underway.

Central Office

KMN, Unit 24 Folkestone Enterprise Centre,
Shearway Road, Folkestone, Kent, CT19 4RH
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E-mail: info@kmn-ltd.co.uk
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Local Office

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17 New Road Avenue, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6BA
Tel: 01634 821135
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Office Hours: Monday – Thursday 8.30am – 4.00pm

Desirable Background Experience

3. To have experience / knowledge and interest in aspects of:
 - a. Social care in the community
 - b. Social care in residential settings.

Personal Competencies

4. Beneficial skills include:
 - a. Good powers of observation
 - b. A good listener
 - c. Able to communicate (with support where needed)
 - d. Open to the views of others
 - e. Able to make a short presentation (with support where needed)
 - f. Able to objectively interpret situations and information
 - g. Able to prepare a concise and accurate report by typewriter, word-processor or with secretarial support. If this is not possible the LINK Work Leader will work with the person appointed to develop an appropriate system of communication.

Personal Attributes

5. Ability to set aside personal interests or concerns when making observations on behalf of the Medway LINK, including:
 - a. Preparedness to support the results of visits, however unusual or unexpected
 - b. A commitment to the diversity and equality principles of the LINK.

Standards in public life

6. LINK 'mystery shoppers' are expected to observe the LINK's code of conduct and to observe the seven principles of public life (known as the Nolan Principles). These are a useful basis for understanding the role of LINK Visitors:

- **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their families or their friends.

- **Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

- **Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

- **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

- **Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest demands.

- **Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

- **Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

*Quoted from Centre for Excellence in Leadership
http://www.fegovernance.org/nolan_committee.html