

# Resident involvement options

## Mystery shopping

*As a mystery shopper, you and other residents will carry out checks on some of our services.*

At Croydon Council, we constantly strive to improve the services we deliver to our customers.

Mystery shoppers check some of these services and the feedback from their checks will then help us to improve the services.

Mystery shopping is used by many organisations to improve services, especially the way that customers are dealt with.

Being a mystery shopper is quite easy and you will get plenty of support to help you carry out the role.



**James Fraser** lives in Upper Norwood and has taken part in mystery shopping.

James says "Where improvements have been made, it's satisfying to know you have played a part in making those changes."

### How does mystery shopping work?

1

Once you have registered as a mystery shopper, we will invite you to a short briefing where we will make sure you know what to do and answer any questions. You can choose which contact method(s) you want to shop – face-to-face visits, telephone enquiries, e.mail, or looking for information on the website. You will then be given four or five "scenarios", which are a bit like scripts.

2

We will give you a simple record sheet to help you record a few important points about each shop, such as:-

- how long it took for the phone to be answered;
- what information was provided; and
- was the person you spoke to polite and helpful?

3

You will be given a two week period in which to carry out your shops but the time you do them is up to you. When they are all complete you return the record sheets to us. Council officers collate the findings from all the shops and feed back any issues to the service managers, so your involvement really does make a difference.



## Who can become a mystery shopper?

Anyone who lives in Croydon can become a mystery shopper, as the majority of the shops we carry out are designed to examine the services the council provides to all residents.

## What's in it for me?

The reason most people join this scheme is because they want to improve the standard of services the council provides to residents.

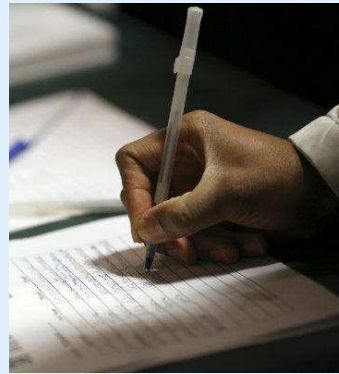
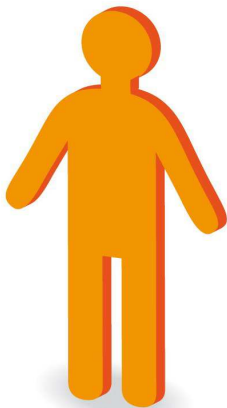
Previous mystery shopping exercises have led to:



- additional training being provided to customer service advisers in the contact centre;
- improvements in the way responsive repair calls are handled; and
- changes to the information shown on the council website, about anti social behaviour and the support available to vulnerable people.

You will also develop and practice essential life and work skills.

- You will work as part of a team and will learn effective team-working skills.
- As a mystery shopper you will develop your communication skills, for example through meeting and speaking with lots of different people.
- You will also gain valuable experience to help improve your organisational skills and the ability to meet deadlines.
- The experience could help you apply for employment in market research or similar work.



**Eric Tshibamba** from Waddon is a mystery shopper.

He says "I think the mystery shopping scheme is important because it gives residents the chance to assess, evaluate and improve council."

**Mystery shoppers are paid for any out of pocket expenses, such as travel, parking and use of their home phone, upon production of valid receipts.**

## If you would like to become a mystery shopper, you must:

- be a resident of Croydon;
- have enough spare time to attend an initial training session and the briefings before each shop and have time to carry out the shops;
- be able to work as part of a small team, in which everyone takes an active part in planning and carrying out the mystery shops;
- be committed to improving council services; and
- be able to complete and return the record sheets for each shop, usually within two or three weeks.

**If you would like to become a mystery shopper, please contact the resident involvement team on ☎ 020 8726 6100 or email ✉ [housing@croydon.gov.uk](mailto:housing@croydon.gov.uk)**