

yOUTH Service – LGBT Young People

Mystery Shopping Project Report

April 2019



The Brunswick Centre would like to thank all involved in the project, especially the young people who have given their time, shared their experiences and contributed to the project. Without them it wouldn't have been possible.

We would like to thank all the organisations who have been involved in the project for being mystery shopped and for being supportive of our young people.

We would also like to thank Kate Ribchester, who was the lead youth worker throughout the project who worked tirelessly and supported the young people throughout the process.

Thank you to all the staff and youth workers who have been involved in the sessions, giving ideas and being great role models for young people.

Finally, thank you to the funders, Youth Social Action Fund via One Community Kirklees who have made this possible.

The term LGBT is used throughout this report. LGBT refers to those identifying as lesbian, gay, bisexual and/or transgendered as well as those identifying as other gender and sexual minorities.

Contents Page

Introduction	4
Ethics and Health and Safety	5
Session Delivery	6
Mystery Shop 1	7
Mystery Shop 2	8
Mystery Shop 3	9
Mystery Shop 4	9
Outcomes of Mystery Shopping and Feedback to Services	10
Young People’s Feedback on their Experience of Taking Part	12
Conclusion and Recommendations.....	13
References	15
Appendix 1 - Session Activity Details	16
Appendix 2 - Assessment Criteria for the Mystery Shopper Visits	18
Appendix 3: Young People’s Questionnaire	24

Introduction

The mystery shopper project was delivered by the Brunswick Centre through the yOUTH (Youth Out) Service. The yOUTH Service works with young people across Kirklees aged 11 - 24 who identify as LGBT. The current provision involves a weekly youth group, a monthly trans group for young people and parents, and 1-2-1 support as well as supporting local schools and colleges. The mystery shopper project was funded to see how accessible local services are for LGBT young people, what barriers may exist and what could be done to improve access for LGBT young people. Nationally, there is evidence that health services aren't necessarily meeting the needs of the LGBT population (Formby, 2011). In addition, Gayles and Garofalo (2019) state that creating an environment in support agencies that LGBT young people deem to be user-friendly and welcoming is the first step to overcoming barriers to care. In 2018 Stonewall commissioned YouGov to survey LGBT respondents about LGBT health in Britain. The study highlighted that 'one in seven LGBT people (14 per cent) avoid seeking healthcare for fear of discrimination from staff'.

We employed an independent youth worker to deliver the project and no yOUTH staff were involved in the delivery of the mystery shopper project – this was to ensure transparency and a completely independent review with no bias. To get a sense of what things are like for LGBT young people in Kirklees we recruited young people from the current youth provision as well as opened the offer up to young people not currently engaged in the service. Emails were sent to all schools/colleges where we were aware that an LGBT youth group was running. We also advertised the project through our social media channels. Young people who wanted to take part were invited to attend an information session to gain a thorough understanding of the process and commitment needed. This was followed by ten weekly sessions where young people were trained in how to undertake a mystery shop. They also took the lead in identifying which services they wanted to visit.

The average attendance was 17 young people who either directly mystery shopped, got involved in planning or gave feedback on GP experiences (reported separately).

Ethics and Health and Safety

The health and safety of all involved was paramount. Each mystery shop was risk assessed, including its venue and the potential for things to go wrong or cause potential harm to young people.

We also looked at the ethics and made sure that the young people were aware of these before any shop. We looked at 'what if' scenarios (for example, what if you don't feel comfortable during the shop or what if you don't get given the information you think you should) and how these could be managed by the young people and we planned-in ongoing support and debriefings. We wanted to ensure that young people felt supported, confident in what they were doing and to build on their resilience so they could undertake the task to get an authentic experience of the services they were mystery shopping. This was vital as no member of staff would be with them during the mystery shop. Furthermore, services were not informed directly that they were being mystery shopped, although those services which attend the yOUTH advisory group were aware that the project was being developed and there was a possibility that they may get shopped.

Our safeguarding, risk management and confidentiality policies were adhered to and we ensured that we were mystery shopping locations that were also accountable for the safeguarding and confidentiality of young people.

We did not expect any young person who was undertaking mystery shopping to:

- Undergo any physical examinations (e.g. STI tests, cervical smear tests, physical examinations);
- Have/receive any treatment, such as coils, blood tests, injections;
- Take any medication. Young people were not to accept any prescriptions for oral or other medication. The only items they could take were condoms, dental dams, lube and leaflets if they were to shop a sexual health service;
- Be put in a dangerous situation (such as locations that were unknown to them, doing tasks that we felt made them vulnerable);
- Visit unsafe premises (buildings that were old and in poor state of repair);
- Go into a scenario that they felt uncomfortable doing/ were not prepared for.

We also made it clear to young people that they could withdraw from a mystery shop at any point throughout the process. During each mystery shop, the youth worker delivering the project accompanied them and remained close by (but did not go into the service with the young person). Young people had the contact details of the worker and we ensured their phones were charged and had enough credit to call or text the worker if needed.

Each mystery shop was done in pairs, where possible, so that young people could support each other. Young people reported that this put them at ease and helped their confidence as well as building positive relationships with the training sessions.

We ensured we had full parental consent for the young people to participate in the project, ensuring that parents and carers understood the nature of the work and why it was important.

Session Delivery

Young people told us when the most convenient time for them to get involved in the project was and how long they wanted the sessions to last. It was agreed that we set aside an hour each week during the existing youth group on a Wednesday evening.

The session timetable is listed in the User Handbook which can be found in Appendix 1. The sessions and timetable were flexible, allowing for changes if necessary.

The Handbook also supported the learning process which young people could use to record notes and information and use to reflect on their learning and contribution to the project.

We also took the opportunity to use sessions to support young people develop their confidence and understanding of why looking after health and emotional wellbeing was important. It was an excellent opportunity to 'make every contact count', allowing us to use a variety of informal education methods such as quizzes, role play, flip chart and discussion-based activities, not only to prepare the young people to be mystery shoppers but to get information and learning on their emotional health and wellbeing.

The Mystery Shops

Prior to commencing the shops, a discussion was had about services most young people used. Although they were happy to mystery shop most services, there was some reluctance to go to GP practices. Given what the young people were saying, they agreed to spend one session discussing their experiences of going to the GP. The young people made suggestions on what the practitioners could do to improve services to support LGBT young people and why they felt reluctant to seek the care and support from a GP. This is written up separately.

The young people decided and agreed on four different services to mystery shop. The services in this instance were not notified of the mystery shop happening to ensure an authentic visit. One of the mystery shop visits included the yOUTH provision, to ensure that we were meeting the standards we expected from other services; this was the choice of the young people involved in the project. yOUTH staff had no knowledge of the mystery shop taking place.

The shops were planned a week in advance and included the young people researching the opening times, booking appointments and then attending the booked appointment.

Mystery Shop 1

The young people undertook a mystery shop on a Wednesday afternoon at 5pm to find that the 'drop in' that was advertised as being open until 6pm was already full when they arrived, which meant the shop couldn't be completed.

A further shop was completed the week after, this time getting to the drop in at 4pm. The young people were asked to complete an initial questionnaire. Both of the young people who attended this shop identified as transgender. When there was an issue on the system and a name wasn't found (due to the young person transitioning) the receptionist was very discrete and politely asked the young person over and wrote the name recorded on their system on a piece of paper. The young person involved really appreciated this and found that it showed respect and dignity for their gender identity.

The waiting room was small but had lots of information. The young people who were mystery shopping waited over 70 minutes to be seen. This meant that one of them had to leave to get home.

The young people found the service website unclear and not easy to use. They noted there was nothing on the website regarding LGBT young people. They felt it was important to have some LGBT information given the numbers of LGBT young people who may need this service. The website didn't have an 'exit now' function which the young people felt might be needed.

The young person had asked for advice for themselves and their partner and had previously explained they were transgender. Unfortunately, the advice given wasn't LGBT specific and the young person left feeling quite disheartened, especially as the professional was wearing a rainbow lanyard.

Young people felt positive about the confidentiality policy of the service and they were also given signposting to other relevant agencies and resources.

Mystery Shop 2

This mystery shop took place on a Wednesday afternoon over two weeks. The first Wednesday involved going through the website and making initial contact with the service. The young person booked the appointment for the following week. The first point of contact was reported as very positive. The worker was polite, friendly, asked lots of relevant questions and then offered advice regarding the scenario which the young person had given them.

Two young people attended the appointment the following week; the young people did not have to wait and were seen straight away. The staff were positive and friendly and immediately started the session with their confidentiality statement, also stating that they were a non-judgemental organisation. The young people stated that they felt comfortable and at ease with the worker. The worker asked them many questions and gave them lots of advice on the scenario which the young people presented. They received several leaflets, including self-assessments, which they could take away with them. The young people also noted that there was lots of information on the wall and that the space was young-person friendly. The young people noted that there was nothing on the website regarding LGBT young people and felt it important given the

numbers of LGBT young people who may need this service. The website also does not have an 'exit now' function which the young people felt might be needed. The young people reported that the workers may want to wear rainbow lanyards or a small rainbow pin badge, if they felt comfortable, to show that they are understanding of the needs of LGBT young people.

Mystery Shop 3

One young person went to mystery shop this service, attending for support already identified by the service as part of their support needs. It was ethical for this shop to be conducted using just one young person. They booked an appointment and attended. They didn't have to wait long to be seen at their appointment as they had used the service before; however, this may differ for a new referral.

The young person saw a worker and discussed their gender identity and the impact of this on their health. The discussion focused on gender. The young person said that they felt that 'some staff came across as rude' and dismissive of their gender identity due to their age. They also said they were concerned as no one explained their rights or confidentiality policy. The young person also noted that there were 'rude parents' of other service users in the waiting area who made them feel uncomfortable. They noted that there were no posters on display relating to LGBT issues.

The young people noted that there was nothing on the website regarding LGBT young people - important given the rates of LGBT young people who may need to use this service. The website also does not have an 'exit now' function which the young people felt might be needed. The young people reported that the website was accessible for those with disabilities and there was a translation service on the website.

Mystery Shop 4 – Brunswick Centre yOUTH – LGBT Youth Group

The young people mystery shopped the Wednesday evening youth group. They didn't mystery shop any other element of the service and perhaps unsurprisingly they rated the group highly. Nevertheless, it's good to know that they highlighted the strengths of the service, such as having a warm and welcoming atmosphere, it being a safe space and that advice was always available. They really liked the opening round at each

group when people are asked to introduce themselves and to say their preferred pronouns. The young people say they like the fact that the toilets are gender neutral. They said that they felt respected and safe and liked the fact that it wasn't 'open' access and that young people had to meet a worker prior to coming. The only negative aspect young people commented on was the lack of knowledge around knowing what activities were taking place each week. The young people said that they were aware that their opinion may be biased but felt that the group did well under their inspection process, and it made them feel more comfortable with their reviews of other services.

Outcomes of Mystery Shopping and Feedback to Services

Services received feedback on the positive experiences noted during the mystery shopper project, including:

- Staff being warm, welcoming and friendly;
- The information the young people received was precise and several services gave young people information to take away;
- Services which were phoned were answered in a timely manner, the person who answered was friendly and asked questions to ensure the safety of the young person;
- One service was very clear on being non-judgemental in their practice;
- Some websites were easy to navigate;
- Staff were seen wearing rainbow lanyards which showed support to the LGBT community;
- Reception staff in one service were discrete and understanding of gender identity;
- One service had gender-neutral toilets;
- Travelling and getting to all venues was easy on public transport;
- Some young people were seen in a timely manner.

Young people were keen to ensure that services were informed of their positive experiences but also in areas where they felt the services could improve. This included:

- Waiting times for some services were long and drop-ins were often full, meaning young people couldn't wait or be seen for an appointment;

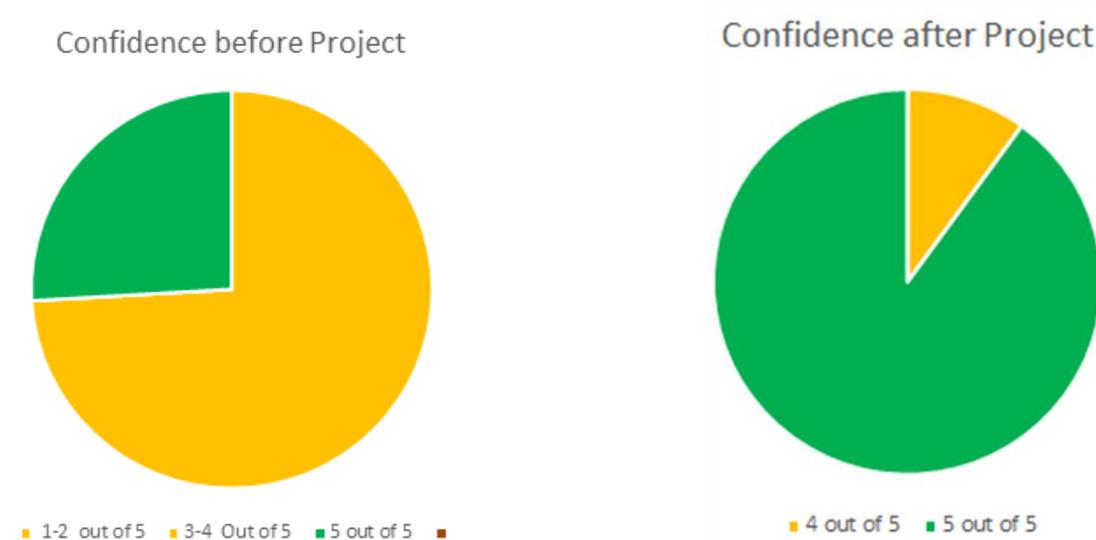
- Some trans young people were misgendered by workers. The young people reported that they found this difficult and uncomfortable (misgendered is when a name/pronoun is used that does not correctly reflect the gender with which someone identifies);
- Websites: some websites were informative and useful for young people to navigate; others were vague or not easy to navigate, not showing specific service times and did not have specific LGBT content available;
- Young people felt that some practitioners were not up to date on gender and current LGBT issues;
- Some practitioners did not explain or make young people aware of their rights and confidentiality policy;
- Where services had literature and posters there was no specific LGBT information displayed;
- Some waiting areas were cramped and uncomfortable;
- Where a young person was not already a client of a service, young people may have a longer wait for a referral or to be seen by a practitioner.

Services that were shopped all welcomed feedback from the young people involved and were committed to taking on board what they had to say so they could improve their services for LGBT young people. Services reported they would consider:

- Feedback from the mystery shop to all sites and staff;
- A review of their websites, including LGBT specific information being displayed and maybe introducing an 'exit site quickly' button.

Young People's Feedback on their Experience of Taking Part in the Mystery Shopper Project

In order to gain an understanding of the success of the project and gauge the impact on young people, they were asked about their levels of confidence prior to starting the project and then again after they had completed the project. Young people said that they gained confidence or that their confidence stayed the same whilst completing the project.



(1 confidence is low (amber) – 5 confidence is high (green))

Prior to the programme, all but one young person said their overall confidence was between 1 and 2 out of 5. After the project, 90% stated that their confidence had improved and was 5 out of 5. 10% of young people said that it had gone to 4 out of 5. No young people stated that their confidence was lower. We are pleased to see an improvement in confidence amongst those young people who took part in the mystery shopper programme.

When asked what skills the young people had gained from the project, they stated:

'Learnt some acting skills and what was out there to help'

'I learnt to get better at acting'

'I learnt how to speak to people more, gained confidence and how to meet new people'

When asked what the young people enjoyed about the project they stated:

'I have enjoyed helping to make things better for other people'

'I am proud of myself for doing it'

'Talking to my advisor about my problems'

'Working with other people and getting learning about their experiences'

When asked what they would change about the project the young people responded:

'Nothing'

'Nothing, I really enjoyed it'

'The questionnaire could have been easier'

Other comments left by the young people included:

'A very good idea'

'It was great and lovely, and they were totally understanding about what I was talking about'

'It's given me good experience to know the truth about places'

Conclusion and recommendations

The mystery shopper project identified several areas for further development across a range of services offering interventions. There were excellent examples where services take time to listen and engage young people in assessing and supporting their needs. Young people have designed an 'LGBT Friendly' service sticker which services in Kirklees can display to highlight they support LGBT young people.

Recommendations

- Training - services should consider LGBT awareness training for all staff which includes the unique issues that LGBT young people face.
- LGBT resources - services should include LGBT identities within resources and be inclusive with their posters and displays.
- Liaise with LGBT youth groups - services should engage LGBT young people, consider visiting youth groups, have open days for young people, and undertake consultations with LGBT young people to get to know their needs.
- Flexible accessibility and opening times - ensure that service opening times meet the needs of young people, taking into consideration effective

appointment scheduling and that a service is not over-subscribed, so vulnerable young people have to be turned away.

- Websites - ensure organisations or services' websites are regularly kept up to date and accurately reflects what the service provides and to who. Think about how youth friendly and LGBT friendly and engaging websites are and consider adding a 'hide me' button.
- Confidentiality Policies - ensure young people are informed of the service confidentiality policy. Where possible have this on display.

References

Bachmann, C. L. and Gooch, B. (2018) LGBT in Britain: Health Report, Stonewall.

Formby, E., 2011. Sex and relationships education, sexual health, and lesbian, gay and bisexual sexual cultures: views from young people. *Sex education*, 11(3), pp.255-266.

Gayles, T.A. and Garofalo, R., 2019. Exploring the Health Issues of LGBT Adolescents. *The GLMA Handbook on LGBT Health*, p.133.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Session Activity Details

Week Beginning:	Training Element/Activity
24 th September	Talk at the Wednesday youth group, detailing what the project involves, why people should get involved and what difference it can make. Distribute application forms.
1 st October	Expectations and rewards for mystery shoppers, mind mapping services we could visit. Discussion on what venue, day, time, food young people will want each week. Discuss rewards for participation.
8 th October	Katey on residential until Friday this week.
15 th October	Ground rules. Hopes and fears of the project. Primary Care discussion - feelings around mystery shopping and GPs.
22 nd October	How are we going to keep safe as a mystery shopper? Mystery shopper skills.
29 th October	Half Term.
5 th November	Criteria - what exactly are we looking for, what should we expect? Making a checklist/report form as a group.
12 th November	Role plays/drama/scenarios – give the young people a mystery shopper situation and see how they do. Review this and get young people to self-assess how they feel about mystery shopping. What would make the young people feel more confident? What are they good at? What can we offer to build on areas that may need support?
19 th November	Dealing with challenges whilst mystery shopping. What issues could arise? How are we going to deal with them? Being prepared!
26 th November	Planning and designing a sticker to go in the window/up on display when services have 'passed' our mystery shop.
3 rd November	Qualification: What does it entail, writing folders/ providing evidence.
10 th December	Quiz day- reflecting on the last few weeks' learning, qualities of a mystery shopper, what to do in an emergency, dealing with difficult staff, self-assessment of progress as a mystery shopper.
17 th December	Christmas celebration.
Christmas Break	
7 th January	Preparing to shop. Going through the plan, support available and writing up the information afterwards. What is constructive criticism? Revisiting expectations?
14 th January	Mystery shop 1
21 st January	Reflection on mystery shop 1, what went well? What did we struggle with? How did the service do?

28 th January	Writing a good report, looking at previous examples, providing accurate information. Finalizing findings. Did the location pass the inspection?
4 th February	Reward trip - bowling/laser zone/food/outdoor activity- young people to decide.
11 th February	Katey on residential this week.
18 th February	Preparing to shop. Going through the plan, support available and writing up the information afterwards. What is constructive criticism? What are our expectations? What are we going to do differently for this shop?
25 th February	Mystery shop 2.
4 th March	Evaluation of the mystery shops, writing reports.
11 th March	Mystery shop 3.
18 th March	Evaluation of the mystery shops, writing reports.
25 th March	Planning celebration event, presenting our findings.
1 st April	Inviting organisations who were mystery shopped to come to a feedback session to hear about the feedback. Press release. Celebration event.

Appendix 2 - Assessment Criteria for the Mystery Shopper Visits

Name of Service	
Location	
Type of service (Drop-In/Appointment, Telephone/Email Enquiry)	
Date and time of visit	
Names of Mystery Shoppers	
Summary of visit/enquiry	

VISIT RECORD

Section 1 – Service Access

How easy is it to find information about the service online?	Please comment:
Does the website give information about what to expect when you go to the service?	YES NO Please comment:
Does the organisation have a supporting up-to-date Facebook page/twitter account/other social media site?	YES NO Please comment:
If contacted by email or phone, how long did staff take to respond to enquiries?	

5. Does the website have:		
a) Information available in other languages?	YES	NO
b) A particular section or information for LGBT people?	YES	NO
c) A 'Hide Me' option?	YES	NO
6. Is the website designed so that people with a visual impairment can access it?	YES	NO
Any comments		
7. How easy is it to get to the service by public transport or by foot?	Please comment	
8. How easy is it to find the entrance?	Please comment	
9. What are the service opening times?	Comments: e.g. Do the opening times different needs of young people?	
10. Is car parking available? If so, are there designated spaces for disabled service users?	YES NO Please comment:	
11. If the building can only be accessed by an intercom system. Are there alternatives for people who are unable to use the intercom due to sight or hearing impairment?	YES NO Please comment:	
12. If direct access to the service is by stairs, can it also be accessed by	YES NO Please comment:	

means of a lift or alternative entrance?	
13. Are there any other structural or access features in the building that might make it difficult for someone to navigate their way around the building safely and easily? e.g. heavy doors, small consultation rooms or narrow corridors?	Please comment:

Do you have any other feedback about service access?

Section 2 – The Waiting Area

1. How would you rate the information about what was available within the service?	Poor Okay Good Please comment:
2. How would you rate the information about your rights and responsibilities in the service?	Poor Okay Good Please comment:
3. If accessing the drop-in, how long did you have to wait before you were seen? Do you feel like that was an acceptable time to wait?	Please comment:
4. If you made an appointment, how long did you have to wait? Do you feel like this was an acceptable time to wait?	Please comment:

5. Were there any activities or additional staff to speak to before you went in to your consultation?	Please comment:	
6. Were information leaflets available in the waiting area?	YES	NO
7. Was information available for:	YES	NO
a. LGBT people		
b. People who don't speak English		
c. People who need resources in large print/picture format?		

8. Please rate the following (1 = poor, 5 = very good)	1	2	3	4	5
a. How 'youth friendly' was the waiting area?					
b. How welcoming was the space?					
c. How private was the waiting area?					

9. Were there any visual signs of them being an LGBT-friendly organisation? e.g. presence of LGBT Youth logo, LGBT Charter Mark, Pride Flag, Posters etc.	YES	NO	Please comment:
10. Were there any facilities for tea or coffee or water?	YES	NO	Please comment:
11. What waiting system was used? E.g. names called out or a ticket system.	YES	NO	Please comment:
12. Where there accessible toilets or access to gender neutral toilets?	YES	NO	Please comment:

Do you have any other feedback about the waiting area?	

Section 3 – Talking to Staff

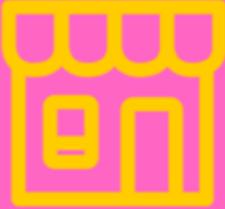
How would you rate staff in the following areas? (1 being poor, 5 being very good)	1	2	3	4	5
1. Making you feel at ease?					
2. Listening to you?					
3. Using open and inclusive language?					
4. Was the service's confidentiality policy made clear to you?	YES NO Please explain:				
5. Did the staff show a good level of awareness for the issues you were discussing in the consultation?	YES NO Please explain:				
6. If they couldn't give you specific advice, were they able to signpost you to other relevant services or resources?	YES NO Please explain:				
Do you have any other feedback about talking to staff?					

Section 4 – Access to Resources and Supplies

1. Were supplies and resources offered or on display to service users before you had to ask for them?	YES NO Please comment:
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2. What was offered?	Please list everything offered:
3. Did the staff go through all the options that were relevant to your needs?	YES NO Please comment:
4. Did the range of supplies on offer cater to your needs?	YES NO Please comment:
5. Did they properly explain how to use the supplies or let you open or handle the products?	YES NO Please comment:
Do you have any other feedback about supplies/handouts?	

Appendix 3: Young People's Questionnaire



**MYSTERY SHOPPER PROJECT
REVIEW**



Name:

Where did you do your Mystery shop?

What skills have you learnt/developed through being involved in the Mystery Shopper Project?

What was the thing you most enjoyed from the mystery shopper work?

What is the one thing you would change about the project?

Before my involvement in the project I would rate my confidence: (1 being low)



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MYSTERY SHOPPER PROJECT
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After my involvement in the project I would rate my confidence: (1 being low)



Any other comments about the mystery shopper project?

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