

Leave a light on!

With winter now upon us and dark nights here, we are encouraging you to leave a light on...

Leaving your home during hours of darkness, without putting a light on or drawing the curtains, is an open invitation to the opportunist criminal that there is no-one at home.

The advice

Use an automatic time switch on an indoor light, either in a room that cannot be peered into from the road, or upstairs. Regularly change the timing on the switch.

Save energy and money in the long term by fitting low energy light bulbs.

Put a time switch on a radio that has been tuned to a chat station, this will give the impression that the house is occupied. Regularly change the timing on the switch.

Fit security lighting, either dusk to dawn energy efficient lighting that will come on automatically as dusk sets in, or brighter passive infrared activated lighting drawing attention to movement.

Ensure that gates or access to the rear of the house are locked and secure. Don't forget to lock your shed - your tools can be used to break in. Trim overgrown plants - don't give burglars a hiding place.

Secure windows, paying particular attention to those on the ground floor and above flat roof areas. Use locks and bolts and keep all your keys, including car keys, out of sight and out of reach.

Property mark your valuables by using your postcode and your house number or name. Some articles are unsuitable for marking so photograph them - with a ruler in view to show scale.

Intruder alarms are an effective deterrent against burglars. Before choosing a system, ensure it is the one most suitable for your needs.

Trust your instincts. If you think a crime is about to happen or is in progress dial 999.

Join a Home Watch Scheme. For details of a local scheme or to start a scheme, phone the Home Watch Administrator; Dave Clawley, on 856 9566.

Community Lettings on Crowswood

Our lettings team took a different approach to letting properties on Crowswood last year. There had been issues on the estate with anti social behaviour leading to many tenants accepting this as normal behaviour.

The lettings team decided to bring in seven new families all at the same time in order to fill the seven void properties that were on the estate.

An open day was held one Saturday morning and all the prospective tenants were invited to come and view their property and meet their new neighbours. The new tenants were able to forge friendships even before they had moved in.

The process was so successful it was used again when another four flats became available to let.

The open day was a great success and the new tenants really have injected a new lease of life into the estate.

A new tenants group has been formed and they are working hard to make further changes to the estate and to build the community spirit.

CCTV has been installed on the estate to make residents feel safer. Tameside Sports Trust have organised youth activities.

The once run down shop on the estate has been renovated and is now used regularly by the Housing Officer to hold surgeries, Tenant Participation for meetings, and events and by Tameside patrollers. The shop has also hosted a Halloween party for the children and was turned into Santa's grotto at Christmas.



& Neighbourhoods Communities

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 new charter
HOUSING TRUST GROUP

Welcome

I am delighted to welcome you to the first edition of Neighbourhoods & Communities, the twice yearly newsletter dedicated to matters around anti-social behaviour. For this edition we aim to give you an overview of our current initiatives and working practices. We hope you find this informative.

Remember, this is your newsletter so do please let us know if there is anything in particular you would like to see covered in future editions.

If you wish to learn more about the Respect Standard for Housing Management please visit the Respect website at www.communities.gov.uk or contact us.



Tony Powell
Director of
Tenancy Services

Tackling Anti-Social and Hate Behaviour

New Charter expects tenants to be good neighbours. This doesn't mean you have to be good friends, but we do expect all tenants to act reasonably and considerately and to respect the different life styles and values reflected in our communities. We also recognise the misery that anti-social behaviour can cause. We have made a public commitment to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour by signing up to the Government's Respect Standard. We will take action where it is proved that a tenant's behaviour or the behaviour of anyone living with them or visiting them is causing problems.

We also have a zero tolerance policy towards hate incidents. These are any form of offensive or objectionable behaviour, deliberate or otherwise, aimed at an individual or group to intimidate and frighten by making the victim feel threatened and unsafe in their home or neighbourhood.

Hate behaviour is motivated by hatred or prejudice and is usually based on the fact that the perpetrator knows (or thinks they know) the race, colour, religion, nationality or ethnic origin, sexual orientation, gender or gender reassignment, disability or age of an individual or group and does not like that difference.

We will always fully investigate any incidents of anti-social or hate behaviour reported to us.

If you or anyone you know is a victim of these, then do not suffer in silence, report every incident to us.

You can report any nuisance or hate incidents on our free 24 hour Helpline number 0800 027 0522. Callers are asked to supply their name & address but can report information anonymously if they wish. Where crime is involved you should always contact Greater Manchester Police on 872 5050 or 999 if it is an emergency.

It's good to talk

After a fairly long neighbour dispute about dogs barking, one of our Housing Officers decided to refer the case to mediation. Both parties were sceptical but agreed to give it a go.

A few weeks later we received a call from one of the neighbours thanking us for persuading him to give mediation a go. He said that he and the other party had managed to sort out their differences through mediation. He also said that **"he was surprised at how effective it turned out to be and that more people should give it a chance"**.

They started off with 'shuttle' mediation which is where the mediator meets with each party separately and shuttles between them. They eventually met round a table and began to understand each others points of view.

Both parties are now on amicable terms. What a great result!

Intervention and Prevention: *It's the future*

Over the last 12 months, we have been looking at alternative ways to reduce anti-social behaviour on our estates by using preventative and intervention measures as an alternative to enforcement. We will still use enforcement action where necessary, but hopefully these activities will prevent some ASB before it starts.

Here are just some of the activities we have been involved in over the last 12 months:-

Delivered our specially adapted 'who wants to be a millionaire' quiz about Anti-Social Behaviour to over 500 primary school children. (see Back to School).

Delivered inputs to schools with the Police, Fire Service, Trading Standards, Patrollers and the Behavioural and Educational Support Team about the Respect programme.

Accompanied 300 children to Robinwood Activity Camp in Cumbria.

Implemented an innovative award scheme in Hartshead School to reduce ASB and improve attendance and academic achievement.

Set up 'Dream Schemes' on our estates to give children some diversionary activities.

Installed CCTV on some of our estates to make residents feel safer. Attended 'Crucial Crew' and spoke to over 3000 primary school children about ASB on our estates. 'Crucial Crew' is an event where workshops are delivered by the Police, Fire Service, Trading Standards, Countryside Wardens, Patrollers, Domestic Violence Unit and British Transport Police.

Implemented 'Community Lettings Policies' in areas with high levels of ASB.

Carried out joint walkabouts on our estates with the Police and Patrollers to reduce ASB.

These activities have really had a positive impact on our neighbourhoods in helping to reduce Anti-Social Behaviour so we will be continuing with these initiatives over the next year.

Prevention really is better than cure.



Things are looking Rosy on Rose Hill

Rose Hill estate in Denton was given a wake up call by Dolores Lewis when she took over as Neighbourhood Management Officer.

The estate had fallen foul to criminal damage, anti-social behaviour and criminal activities and was attracting some very undesirable characters.

Dolores immediately had CCTV installed to capture evidence of the criminal goings on and to act as a deterrent to those up to no good. She also intervened in the normal lettings process to ensure that void properties went to those willing to respect the estate and their neighbours and to those that were willing to live within the terms of their tenancy agreement. Those that continued to breach the terms of their tenancy agreement were evicted.

Properties were given new fencing and residents set up a local Home Watch Scheme. Due to the generosity of Denton District Assembly and New Charter, the Home Watch Scheme were provided with packs full of useful information.

The estate benefited from a multi agency approach by New Charter, Greater Manchester Police, local Councillors, Tameside Patrollers, Denton Town Manager, Andrew Gwynne (Denton MP) and residents to make the estate one where people want to live again.

A new Residents Forum has been established and they will help carry on the good work into the future. Cheri Burns has now taken over from Dolores and she will also be striving for more improvements.

Now things really do look rosy for the future.

If you can't come to us we'll come to you

On a cold night in November, New Charter and the Police conducted a joint operation on Kinder Avenue, Old Road and Hazelhurst Road in an attempt to gather evidence of Anti-Social Behaviour.

Prior to the operation, all residents were written to and advised that the two agencies would visit tenants at home between 6.00pm and 9.00pm, to discuss any concerns they had about Anti-Social Behaviour. Residents were also invited to call into the Sure Start shop to report any issues and all information received was kept confidential.

We received some excellent information and local residents were very receptive to us. One resident said **"it's great to see the Police working with New Charter; they are doing a great job getting out there, knocking on doors"**.

This was a great example of joint working between New Charter and the Police and one that we hope to see more of this year.

Back to school

Our Tenancy Enforcement team is a dedicated section dealing with all aspects of anti-social behaviour.

The team not only deals with enforcement issues, but also in prevention and intervention. We recognise a twin-track approach to problems can often be more effective.

We were finding it difficult to find a way to work with young people in schools on issues of anti-social behaviour, as there didn't seem to be much material out there. Undeterred, we put together an anti-social behaviour quiz in the style of 'Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?' Like the original, the quiz has 15 questions and leads to the class winning a plastic million pound banknote printed with the school's name.

The questions cover measures available to tackle anti-social behaviour and explain what can happen to the perpetrators. As the quiz nears the climax, pupils' excitement is intense! The quiz is adaptable and can be delivered in several ways. We found it was best aimed at years 5 and 6, and feedback has been very positive from both teachers and pupils.

The underlying message is one of RESPECT. The quiz has already generated good discussions in the classrooms.



Sanctuary Scheme

Victims of domestic violence may be men or women, although women are more commonly victimised.

One woman in four reports experiencing domestic violence at some time in her life. The Home Office have concluded that approximately every three days one woman dies as a result of domestic violence.

Domestic violence includes physical, sexual, emotional or financial abuse between family members, or people who are or have been partners, and includes same sex relationships. Domestic violence is experienced regardless of social group, class, age, race, disability, sexuality or lifestyle. The abuse can begin at any time, in new relationships or after many years spent together.

On average a victim will break up with the perpetrator seven times before finally ending the relationship. They are at most risk when they do this. In many instances the victims are those who have to flee their homes to escape the harassment and abuse, which often means uprooting themselves and their children from their friends, family and support networks.

To support victims, New Charter in conjunction with Tameside Council and the Police, have developed the Sanctuary Scheme. The scheme provides security for victims of domestic abuse who have left their abuser but who want to stay in their own homes, rather than being relocated. If a victim is deemed at risk from the abuser, any agency such as the police or women's refuge can refer into the scheme. It

covers any type of property within Tameside including Housing Associations, private rented, or privately owned.

Using our Building Company's expertise, we fit security enhancements to enable a victim to feel safe within their home. Since the scheme started in October 2005 we have helped over 140 victims.

This is what one of the people who used the service said; "I cannot begin to tell you what a difference Sanctuary has made to my life. I feel safer and at last I've got peace of mind. I would like to say a big thank you for all the help and support."

If you want more information please call in at our shops, log in at our website:

www.newcharter.co.uk

or call us on:

0161 331 2000

All information is also available in large print on request