

PRESS RELEASE

19th March 2003

ALL-ROUND IMPROVEMENT!

Customer satisfaction with every service provided by New Charter is growing fast, according to an independent survey published this week.

New Charter is committed to finding out tenants' views and then acting on the issues raised. One of the ways we do this is by running large-scale opinion surveys. Our previous survey was conducted in September 2001.

A respected, independent firm accredited by the British Market Research Association, ph Research based in Oldham interviewed 1000 tenants by telephone in January 2003.

The results show a remarkable improvement in satisfaction ratings from our tenants. Seven out of ten tenants now consider we are doing a good job – a 23% increase in 15 months. The number of tenants who said they were delighted doubled to 26%.

Tenants gave a thumbs up to every service improvement made in the last 15 months, with particular praise for extending ways in which to pay rent. The new high street shops in Hyde, Denton and Stalybridge were also a big hit with existing customers.

The promises made at the time of transfer – the Big Switch – were also being delivered, with almost 70% of tenants saying rents were good value for money. Half of all tenants said their homes had already received improvements, and there was another increase in those who were satisfied with these.

Tenants gave a big vote of confidence to New Charter about the way they are kept informed. Four out of five rated the landlord as good, and there were similar increases in satisfaction with participation and taking tenants' views into account.

However, there is still more work for us to do. Around 15% of tenants remained concerned about the condition of their homes and the local environment. In response, 2003/4 will see our biggest home improvement programme yet, and more effort into improving environments and keeping them clean.

Commenting on the results, Chair of New Charter Housing Trust, Ged Cooney said “There has been a remarkable transformation in the last three years, and we are moving forward fast. Customers have appreciated the efforts we have made and the all-round improvement they see is satisfying. Thanks to those who took part in this valuable survey. Their views have already influenced our plans for the next year.”

ENDS

Notes for Editors

New Charter commissioned ph Research of Oldham to interview by telephone a structured sample of 1000 tenants. Fieldwork was conducted from 6th to 24th January 2003. The maximum error range of this sample is +/- 2%. Full results can be seen on the corporate pages of our website at:

www.newcharter.co.uk.

New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage nearly 16,400 properties transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. Until September 2000, it was Britain's biggest Large-Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT). With a turnover of £44 million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the twenty largest Registered Social Landlords (RSL's), and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog.

In October 1999, tenants voted two to one in favour of transfer, which took place on March 27th 2000.

New Charter inherited homes needing well over £220 million of repairs and maintenance, and a 10-year improvement programme started immediately. New bathrooms, kitchens, windows, and central heating are being installed in many homes for rent. Already thousands of tenants have benefited from this investment.

New Charter has a 5-year rent guarantee running until 30th September 2005. Tenant involvement is critical to New Charter, and tenants have a greater say on all matters that affect their homes.

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