

PRESS RELEASE

31st January 2005

Late-night Thursdays



Photograph available of Ashton premises

From 3rd February 2005, our shop at the corner of Henrietta Street and Penny Meadow in Ashton-under-Lyne extends its opening hours to 7pm on Thursdays.

New Charter is trying this out to see how customers use the extra time. Over the next three months we'll be carefully monitoring caller numbers. If it's well used, we'll make it permanent.

Prospective and current tenants can already use any of our network of four Customer Advice Centres – in Ashton, Denton, Hyde and Stalybridge – no matter where they live. We aim to give the same level of service wherever customers call.

Liliane Thackrey, New Charter's Director of Organisational Development said, "Evidence from existing tenants is that we have convenient opening hours, but we want to attract new



business for neighbourhoods

tenants, and those who normally work during traditional opening hours. Many services and shops now open longer to provide improved service, convenience and choice for customers; we're part of that service culture. Testing the new opening time at our busiest location (Ashton) will help us measure the impact".

Anticipating the new late nights, several appointments are already made for the private interview rooms ranging from signing up new tenants to agreeing Acceptable Behaviour Contracts for tenants' children.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. 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. With a turnover of almost £60million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the country's largest Registered Social Landlords, and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog.
2. New Charter has four customer advice centres at Ashton (2 Henrietta Street), Denton (9 Albert Street), Hyde (12 Clarendon Street) and Stalybridge (63 Grosvenor Street). Usual opening hours are 9am – 5pm (Mon, Tues, Wed), 9am – 4.30pm (Thurs) and 9am – 4pm (Fri). These times remain unchanged at Denton, Hyde and Stalybridge.
3. Existing tenants have been told of the change in the latest tenants' newsletter delivered to all New Charter homes.
4. **iN business for neighbourhoods** is a long-term project to improve housing associations' performance, and challenge negative perceptions of the sector and its customers. The project was launched at the National Housing Federation's annual conference in 2003. To date, 75 per cent of the sector's stock – over 1.4 million homes – is managed by associations who have joined the initiative and made fresh commitments to neighbourhoods, customers and excellence.

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