

PRESS RELEASE

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Sparkling safety!



Photographs of award available after May 20th on application

Commitment to health and safety at work has won New Charter a coveted Silver award from the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA).

Our application leapfrogged the customary progression through the categories to attract the second highest accolade. It was only our relative youth - which meant we could not provide sufficient data from previous years – which may have stopped us from being among the UK's top performers.

RoSPA is one of the world's leading health and safety organisations. To win this award, we had to show a first class safety management system, and evidence of a consistently good or continuously improving accident injury performance. Although our number of employees increased by 10%, New Charter had a year-on-year accident reduction of over 27%.



business for neighbourhoods

Health and safety at work has become more of a news item since such tragedies as the Hatfield Train Disaster, but New Charter saw managing the risks as essential to our operation when formed in 2000. The judges' eyes were especially attracted to our comprehensive approach which promotes the health and well-being of our 800-strong workforce as well as more traditional measures such as safety workwear and policies.

New Charter is unusual in directly employing over 300 people in the building construction area, via our own building company. New Charter Building Company's Director, Andy Stafford said: "We have good policies that our managers put into practice because they see the productive return on performance and customer satisfaction. It's not an add-on, but part of our key tasks. Nationally, construction has always been a high risk area, but we prove this can be managed well. We did over £26million worth of building work, but reduced accidents of all sorts to just 55 last year. I believe it gives us an advantage when tendering for other clients' work."

The RoSPA awards are not just about reducing the number of accidents and cases of ill-health at work; they are also about ensuring organisations have good health and safety management systems in place.

Group Director of Organisational Development, Liliane Thackrey said: "This is the first time we have put our health and safety record under the microscope of RoSPA, although we constantly monitor our own performance. Our work spans an immense area of potential



risk from lone working of staff through manual handling to construction. It's excellent news that our group-wide approach to managing risk has been recognised with the Silver award. Good health and safety is good business; for New Charter, it is fundamental to our growing success."

The award is testament to New Charter's commitment to health and safety. It provides solid evidence of our willingness to raise health and safety standards across the business.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter took the whole council housing stock of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester on 27th March 2000. 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. It now owns 14,600 homes.
2. The RoSPA Occupational Health and Safety awards, sponsored by CEMAX, are being presented on 18th and 19th May at the Hilton Birmingham Metropole Hotel.
3. Regular monthly sampling, as well as compulsory recording of accidents and near misses means the whole organisation is monitored and improved practices are shared. The Group Management Team reviews performance every month.
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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