

PRESS RELEASE

23rd May 2005

Brain food for lunch!



Photo opportunity:
Cavendish 249, Cavendish Street, Ashton-under-Lyne
on Thursday May 26th between 12 and 2pm

The “Weakest Link”, a chance to play table tennis and a demonstration of wallpapering are set to make a bizarre lunchtime for New Charter employees.

They are just some of the wackier events for Learning at Work Day on Thursday 26th May. The Greater Manchester landlord is taking part in Learning at Work Day, an annual awareness and activity day pioneered and co-ordinated by Campaign for Learning, an independent charity, championing workplace learning for all UK employees.

Up and down the country, organisations will show their commitment to staff development and give their workforce the opportunity to break from routine and learn something new.



business for neighbourhoods

But it's not just novelty events on offer at New Charter. More than ever, proficiency with computers is essential for modern jobs, and there'll be taster sessions on different IT applications, as well as sign-language, electrical safety and business quizzes.

New Charter already has massive investment in employee training, with over 4700 training days last year – an average of 5.8 days per worker. Last year it was also successful in partnership with Trades Unions in winning over £130,000 from the Learning and Skills Council. This provided and supports an in-house learning centre for employees and their families, STEP (Skills, Training, Education and Personal development).

Liliane Thackrey, New Charters' Group Director of Organisational Development said: "Employing staff who are continually developing their skill and knowledge saves us money. Our performance improvements rely on increased skills and knowledge levels. We're using Learning at Work Day as an opportunity to further increase learning motivation among employees. Making things fun is effective in grabbing their attention."

Linda Siegle, Chief Executive of the Campaign for Learning said: "Every year's Learning at Work Day reaches more and more employees, giving them the chance to break from routine and learn new skills that will help them at work and in their own lives. The energy, enthusiasm and excitement for learning generated on the day is exceptional."

Nationally, only one in three jobs in the next ten years will be filled by young people entering the workforce. So it will become even more important for employers to invest in their staff. Siegle explains: "Hidden talents exist throughout organisations. Learning is the way to tap into it and use it for the best advantage of the business. Recruitment from within

might not just be the most cost effective solution to skills gap - it could soon be the only solution.”

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 Campaign for Learning is an independent charity promoting workplace learning for all employees and to all employers, regardless of company size or budget. Learning at Work Day is co-ordinated by the Campaign. Last year, over 6,000 businesses and a million employees took part.
3. **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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