

PRESS RELEASE

14th August 2006

Let us in – or you're out!

A tenant's failure to let New Charter do the annual service and safety check could see them evicted.

Despite many letters and visits, we have been unable to get into the home on Hitchen Drive in Dukinfield. In a first for New Charter, we successfully applied to Tameside County Court to obtain a possession order suspended for 28 days. If the tenant now fails to let us in, we will apply for an eviction.

But the tenant's disregard of their own safety and defiance of our attempts to get in has already meant a price to pay. The Court also awarded New Charter costs of £400.

Like every landlord in the country, New Charter is under a duty to undertake a safety check of all gas appliances it has installed in its homes. When burning properly, gas is a safe fuel but we are determined to assure the safety of customers. Almost all 15,000 homes have gas, and so get an annual visit from our own CORGI-registered gas fitters. However, and



despite exhaustive attempts to agree access times, some tenants are putting themselves at risk by failing to let the landlord in.

Danny McLoughlin, New Charter's Director of Legal Services was pleased with the judgement. "We have been forced into this action by the wilful refusal of a tenant to give us access for the safety test. New Charter extended working hours on gas safety until 6.00pm each day and on Saturday mornings, so there is no excuse for not letting us in. It's a clear message from the Court that, as well as rights, tenants have responsibilities."

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage homes transferred from Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of £48million 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. By incorporating Aksa Housing Association recently, the Group owns over 15,000 homes.
2. The duty to check gas fittings and flues annually is contained in the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998.
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, 80 per cent of the sector's stock – over 1.5 million homes – is managed by associations who have joined the initiative and made fresh commitments to neighbourhoods, customers and excellence.

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business for neighbourhoods