

# PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

21st May 2007

## Wai Yin provides way in for women in construction



Photographs of Liz Saxby and Emily Ngai fitting a kitchen available

Women are significantly under-represented in construction trades. And with the boom in construction across the region, more opportunities exist for those with practical skills.

Wai Yin is a Chinese Women's Society based in Manchester. New Charter Building Company has partnered with Wai Yin's 'Women Construction Solutions' project to provide work placements for women.

The project is funded by the Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council with European Social Fund Co-financing.

New Charter welcomed twelve enthusiastic women to an induction before Easter, and Liz Saxby and Emily Ngai are the latest learners to be placed with us. Both are learning to be kitchen fitters. They are working with our voids team, turning round empty properties to a high standard.

We have also donated a kitchen to Wai Yin's Training Workshop in Beswick for students to work on.

The Women Construction Solutions Project finds practical solutions to the issue of construction skills being "non-traditional" for women, especially women from ethnic minority communities. It has enjoyed success because it is a project created by women from the Chinese community, who faced added barriers to learning, including confidence as well as language. Their success story has encouraged others.

Sheila Standard, Trainer and Project Coordinator at Wai Yin said: "We have over 90 learners from six different ethnic backgrounds. They can progress from ASET level 1 multi-skills, to specialist skills in joinery and plumbing, and then to Level 2 in Kitchen



Fitting. I'm delighted with our partnership with New Charter Building Company. This gives valuable experience to women so they may develop their skills and get employment or set up in business."

Managing Director of New Charter Building Company Andy Stafford said: "I've been impressed with the skills and enthusiasm the women learners bring. We can see the pioneering spirit which will make a difference to the traditionally male dominated trades. Whether in future employment with contractors like us or self-employed, women can achieve in this industry and I'm pleased we've been able to offer this encouragement."

## 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 15,000 homes.
2. Wai Yin Chinese Women Society is a registered charity, providing services to help the North West's Chinese community since 1988. It employs around 35 full- and part-time staff across its projects with an extra 30 sessional and contract based staff. More than 35 active volunteers support its work. While services are targeted at the Chinese community, Wai Yin welcomes people of all communities to be service users, volunteers and staff.
3. ASET is a National Awarding body recognised by Department for Education & Skills, the Learning and Skills Council and all relevant government departments and agencies.
4. **iN business for neighbourhoods** is a long-term project highlighting housing associations' performance. As social businesses, housing associations do not make profit. They offer homes for rent and sale at prices local people can afford. Housing associations provide more than homes - they help create places where people want to live. Wherever you see the **iN business for Neighbourhoods** sign, something great is happening in the area. Housing Associations who display this logo are committed to their customers, the neighbourhoods they work in and strive for excellence in everything they do.

## CONTACTS:

David Rigby or Paula Thomas - New Charter 0161 331 2000

Sheila Standard – Wai Yin 0161 231 1114

[www.newcharter.co.uk](http://www.newcharter.co.uk)

[www.waiyin.org.uk](http://www.waiyin.org.uk)

ENDS



**business for neighbourhoods**