

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

9th July 2007

A Grand place to work



Pictures available

New Charter is a 'grand' place to work – according to an incredible **1,000** applications we received for our modern apprenticeships!

The staggering response came from advertising our modern apprentice opportunities in spring this year. We had so much interest that we invited around 400 of the hopefuls to sit assessment tests over last weekend.

Modern Apprenticeships are a high quality work-based training programme. They give the opportunity to earn and learn – collecting a pay packet while learning new skills, and gaining knowledge and qualifications. The apprenticeship scheme will lead to a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ), Key Skills and a technical certificate. But apprentices will need to successfully juggle work and study.

Each year we've seen increases in the number of people who want to secure an apprenticeship. This year, we have 9 great opportunities - in building trades (gas fitting, plastering and plumbing), as well as in clerical, administration and housing careers.

Director of Organisational Development at New Charter, Christine Amyes said: "This is an unprecedented response, and we are delighted to have caused such interest.

"The picture on recruitment and retention in the housing sector shows challenges ahead. Nationally, over 40% of the current skilled workforce will be lost over the next decade. But this level of interest suggests that companies like us with strong reputations who offer flexible benefits and a lifelong commitment to training and development will always attract jobseekers."

The written assessments will help reduce the numbers to the best who will be interviewed. We expect to offer apprenticeships to the successful applicants in early August and they will start in September.



business for neighbourhoods

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. We've recruited 50 apprentices in last 6 years. This year we advertised for modern apprentices under the banner: New Skills, New Knowledge, New Options. We had posters advertising the modern apprenticeships in many locations, including our Shops, Neighbourhood Management Offices, Connexions Centres and Job Centres. We made efforts to encourage applications from our tenants and their families through our Tenants' Associations and our regular newsletter.
3. In their first year, apprentices are paid a salary of £6,195. This is reviewed in line with statutory rates recommended by government. Core benefits include:
 - Generous holiday entitlement of 22 days per year, plus 8 bank holidays
 - A final salary pension scheme
 - An occupational sick pay scheme
 - Well developed procedures to provide for equality of opportunity, and a working environment where all are treated with respect
 - Flexible benefits package.
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

www.newcharter.co.uk

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