

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

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Homeless voice

A unique survey shows New Charter's housing advice is second to none.

Two young people who experienced homelessness measured the satisfaction of service users who contacted Tameside Housing Options based at Old Street in Ashton-under-Lyne. Their survey ran in tandem with the regular quarterly telephone sampling which is conducted by a market research company. And both surveys agreed – overall, customers were “very satisfied” with the service.

The results arrive just as the government announced a major cash boost for homeless services across the country.

The idea for the user survey came from the first Tameside Homeless Conference last month. Among the delegates were young people from a housing project in Chapel Street Hyde which is run by NACRO, the crime reduction charity. They undertook training to help prepare them for the survey which was done by face-to-face interviews with visitors to the Housing Options Centre last week.

As well as the training, the young people met the staff and were given guided tours behind the scenes of local housing advice services. The volunteer surveyors were paid travel expenses and walked away with some Asda vouchers as a thank you.

Patsy Davis, Area Manager for NACRO Housing said “Young people can sometimes have a different point of view to other service users. In this instance, we were delighted the staff of the Housing Options Centre openly welcomed their involvement and the personal perspective they bring. In return, the surveyors heard from other users how they felt helped by a professional service.”

New Charter's Director of Tenancy Services Tony Powell said: “I'm pleased but not surprised at the satisfaction recorded. We will use the results to measure our effectiveness, and to influence how we may deliver the service in future.”



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 £53million a year and a workforce of 800, New Charter is one of the region's largest Registered Social Landlords, and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog. By incorporating Aksa Housing Association, the Group owns 15,000 homes.
2. New Charter provides homelessness and housing aid services at Tameside Housing Options Centre on behalf of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council.
3. The Government announced on 5th December that Councils in the North West will receive at least £11.7 million over three years to help them prevent and tackle homelessness in their areas and will receive £3.9 million in homelessness grants next year - a £100,000 increase on last year. Tameside will receive £52,000 in each of the next three years.
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.

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