

# PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

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## Downing Street drinks dashed by surveillance success



### Surveillance picture available

Underage drinkers in a famous location found there was no hiding place from New Charter's cameras.

And the adult who bought cans of lager on their behalf was also caught on camera and arrested.

Concerned neighbours had reported problems in the area around Downing Street in Ashton-under-Lyne. Young people had been seen drinking alcohol in the neighbourhood, causing minor damage to property and being abusive to passers-by.

New Charter's tenancy enforcement team realised that restricting supply could improve behaviour and restore peace in the area. Acting on neighbours' tip-offs, secret surveillance cameras recorded youths repeatedly approaching adults as they entered a local off-licence. When one man got out of his car and appeared to take money from the youths before going into the shop, the filming caught the drinks being handed over, and the registration number of his VW Golf.

With the evidence gathered, staff immediately contacted police officers in the area who traced the youths, confiscated drinks and informed parents.

Greater Manchester Police then viewed the evidence collected by New Charter. As a result, the driver was traced and arrested, and accepted an £80 fixed penalty fine for supplying alcohol to the youths.

New Charter Homes' Managing Director Tony Powell said: "The positive news is that many adults approached outside the premises while we were filming refused to assist. And we and the police need help like this from the community if we are to change behaviour of some young people."



**iN business for neighbourhoods**

"Drink was clearly at the root of some of the neighbourhood nuisance. Using our technology, we supplied the police with what they needed to take successful action."

Neighbourhood Beat Manager Neil Coulson said: "The driver was helping underage drinking, and his action could have led to an evening of misery for those living nearby. The shock of the arrest and the £80 it cost him should be a warning to others to say "no". We work closely with New Charter but this was a 'first' for our work tackling underage drinking. I can promise residents there is no hiding place from our combined efforts to tackle underage drinking and the problems it brings in 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 £59million a year and a workforce of 840, New Charter is one of the region's largest Registered Social Landlords, and is regulated by The Housing Corporation, a Government watchdog. By incorporating Gedling Homes this month, the Group owns 18,600 homes.
2. New Charter has invested in high-quality surveillance training and equipment, which is used covertly and overtly to deter and detect criminal and anti-social behaviour. The expertise of our trained staff is bought by other landlords in the North West. This particular surveillance action took place under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.
3. **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.

### **CONTACT:**

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