

# PRESS RELEASE

DRAFT

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## Flying start jobs offer

### Pictures available

Fifteen of the region's top landlords will highlight the job opportunities of 400,000 people across the North of England to the House of Commons tomorrow (Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June).

The Airport Group of stock transfer housing associations owns homes across the city regions of Liverpool, Manchester and Leeds. All believe the recession is hitting their customers hard, and over half of all social housing tenants do not work in paid employment.

Worklessness – a dependency on benefits accompanied by a self belief of being unemployable – is a major government priority, and the Airport Group wants government to support their role in tackling this.

Group members were tackling worklessness before the downturn, and commissioned independent research to review effectiveness and promote their willingness to improve job prospects in the future. "Giving neighbourhoods a flying start" is a summary of the success of past initiatives, and a call for government departments to support social and economic regeneration. Authored by Helen Cope, an expert in tackling worklessness in the social housing sector, the Group's offer covers five key areas: frontline housing services, employment and enterprise, employability, working with young people and adopting strategic approaches.

Minister of State for Employment and Welfare Reform Jim Knight MP has agreed to hear the Airport Group's case at the launch. "I know from my previous position as schools minister that many housing associations are concerned to improve the employability of our young people. I'll be interested to hear the successes of past initiatives and what teh



Airport Group can offer on worklessness. Tackling benefit dependency and giving self confidence to jobseekers are important priorities for this government.”

New Charter’s Group Chief Executive Ian Munro said government should recognise and support the Airport Group to become an even more significant part of the regions’ recovery. “Collectively we have spent £1.9billion since 2007 on improving homes and neighbourhoods, generating substantial jobs in the construction sector especially. We plan to spend £237million on new homes over the next four years, and last year invested £3million in projects promoting employment and job prospects. With our influence on procurement, we are uniquely placed to tackle worklessness and create improved job opportunities for residents.”

Helena Partnerships Chief Executive Rob Young is particularly motivated by the alarming rise in unemployment in the under 25s. “Each year over 450 apprentices are employed by the Airport Group, and we all run education and skills projects which target young people. But the fact remains that worklessness for new tenants under 25 is over 80%. We’re telling government we can deliver the right initiatives but that it needs to recognise and provide funding specifically for housing associations to maintain the momentum.”

The Group plans to lobby ministers in Communities and Local Government and in the Department for Work and Pensions, and has already won support from MPs across the North for its case.

## **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

1. The Airport Group is a partnership of housing associations that work together on issues that affect them and the neighbourhoods in which they work. They own over 170,000 homes across the North of England. With over 400,000 tenants between them, the Airport Group has an unparalleled knowledge of their residents’ needs.
2. The 15 members of the Airport Group are:

Cheshire Peaks and Plains Housing Trust  
City West Housing Trust  
Community Gateway Association  
Eastlands Homes Partnership  
Helena Partnerships  
Incommunities Group  
New Charter Housing Trust  
One Vision Housing  
Parkway Green  
Prospect Homes Group  
Trafford Housing Trust  
Transpennine Housing  
Weaver Vale Housing Trust



Willow Park Housing Trust  
Wirral Partnership Homes

3. The Airport Group publication "Giving neighbourhoods a flying start" (June 2009) is available electronically from [airportgroup@helenapartnerships.co.uk](mailto:airportgroup@helenapartnerships.co.uk)
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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**ENDS**



**business for neighbourhoods**