

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

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Class act for star learners

While most local schoolchildren are poised for their summer break, some adult learners in Oldham were rewarded for getting stuck into the most difficult of all languages - English.

Residents from some of Aksa Housing Association's neighbourhoods were recognised this week. All students were women taking advantage of Aksa's encouragement to learn English.

The classes concentrate on practical applications, such as telephoning to make a doctor's appointment. They build self-confidence and are just part of the work Aksa does to improve community cohesion across its neighbourhoods in Oldham.

Students have attended the classes at the housing association's town centre offices for the last few months. The course has been led by qualified teacher Patricia Marchant and Aksa staff have supported the residents.

The Mayor of Oldham, Councillor Jim McArdle and youth mayor Mohammed (Eddy) Adil made time to meet some of the star students and award certificates and prizes. Afterwards, lunch was served.

Aksa Housing Association, part of the New Charter Group, offers homes for rent in Oldham and other districts of Greater Manchester. Steve Hodson, Head of Operations at Aksa said: "We know some residents can feel isolated because of their lack of confidence in spoken English. Our course helps people to carry out the everyday things such as ordering a taxi or getting on a bus and asking for the correct destination. Our learners have enjoyed the classes, and visit of the two Mayors has made them feel like celebrities today."

One learner, Shafina Bi from Hathershaw said: "Aksa has gathered women from different communities across Oldham, and we have made new friends at the



classes. It's made me more independent and confident. I plan to aim higher and be able to speak in English to a teacher about my child's progress."

To show their willingness to continue learning, all the women have joined the library.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. Aksa Housing Association has operated since 1990 and owns over 670 homes in Oldham, Tameside, Bury and North Manchester. Its offices are in Oldham town centre. In November 2005, it joined the New Charter Housing Trust Group based in Ashton-under-Lyne. The Group was recently named in the Sunday Times 100 best companies to work for.

2. The prizewinning students were:

Sabreen Hussain	Coppice
Nahid Ilahi	Coppice
Robina Kosar	Coppice
Kousar Nisar	Coppice
Frazana Zahoor	Coppice
Shafina Bi	Hathershaw
Shah Begum	Hathershaw
Jahanara Begum	Hathershaw
Shabina Bibi	Werneth
Nazima Bibi	Werneth
Sabia Bibi	Werneth
Mohima Yasmin	Werneth
Laila Begum	Werneth

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.

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<http://www.newcharter.co.uk/Partners/Aksa/index.asp>

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