

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

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Watch New Charter's neighbours on BBC1

Pictures available

A new observational documentary series on BBC1 is to feature the work of three north-west landlords.

"Neighbourhood Watched" is a series of four 40-minute programmes which shows the work of housing officers from New Charter (Ashton-under-Lyne), Housing Pendle and Community Gateway (Preston).

The series follows staff as they deal with the variety of tasks and customers they encounter daily. Waiting lists are growing dramatically, partly because of the economic downturn, and programmes show the human consequences as applicants try to get a home. Staff get in touch with current tenants for reasons good and bad, and one tenant ends up swapping her home for prison...

The series was filmed by independent production company Raw Television between June and November last year. The landlords gave access to their work provided tenants and applicants agreed, and the results should make compulsive viewing.

New Charter took over former council housing in Greater Manchester in 2000. It agreed to participate in the series as it believes many people are unaware of the variety of work an excellent housing provider does. The series will showcase the routine and extraordinary job of housing officers and is sure to surprise viewers.

New Charter's Group Chief Executive Ian Munro said: "Housing has become topical, with the recession increasing repossessions and pressures on some owner-occupiers. Our tenants are feeling the pinch too. But we've experienced a massive increase in demand for our homes since 2007. Despite



our own local investment of £300m, good affordable homes are in short supply nationally.

“The programmes capture the commitment and dedication of staff working in housing, and their empathy with customers. They are all a credit to our business. I suspect some of the staff featured will become minor celebrities during the series, but I doubt they are planning alternative careers in the media.”

Each programme in the series is self-contained, but a few staff appear in more than one. The first programme is broadcast on BBC1 on Tuesday 4th August at 10.35pm.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1. New Charter formed in 1999 as the new landlords to own and manage homes transferred from Tameside council in Greater Manchester. With a turnover of £70million a year, New Charter is one of the north west's largest registered providers of social housing, and is regulated by the Tenant Services Authority, a Government watchdog. By incorporating Gedling Homes in Nottinghamshire, the Group owns 18,600 homes. It was named in the Sunday Times best 100 companies to work for in 2009.
2. **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:

David Rigby - New Charter 0161 331 2130

www.newcharter.co.uk

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