

PRESS RELEASE

Immediate release

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At home with the homeless

Pictures available

Residents persuaded a secure homeless refuge to throw its doors open as part of Supported Housing Month in the North.

SHOUT (Supported Housing Our United Team) comprises current and former residents in what is believed to be a unique residents' association working alongside New Charter Housing Trust staff.

Normally, the homeless persons reception centre at Gibson Terrace in Ashton-under-Lyne prides itself on the security it offers residents. But on Tuesday, partner agencies and past residents were invited to see and hear the work New Charter does to provide a supported housing service to homeless people in Tameside.

Joanne Whitehead (35) is the chair of SHOUT. She admits to having made some bad decisions in her past, but is looking forward to the new year. Together with baby daughter Sophie (3 months), she hopes to move into her own tenancy after Christmas. "The support I've had from staff makes a real difference," she said. "I've regained my confidence through SHOUT and the staff encourage us to comment and influence the service. I'm really proud to have been trained to take part in recruitment interviews for Gibson Terrace staff. I've also completed a positive parenting course run here, which I believe will help me bring up Sophie successfully."

Visitors from other agencies including Barnardo's, Connexions, Supporting People and Creative Support were shown round the building by residents, and saw how their support for clients fitted in to the bigger picture. The integral children's play scheme was a popular stopping off point on the tour.

Jenny Ford (18) had moved from hostel to hostel until arriving at Gibson Terrace four months ago. She said: "I feel safe here, really safe. I lived in Denton originally, and hope to move back there after the birth of my child next month. The staff have supported me,



and put me in touch with the right agencies. I feel in control of my life now. I've also made some good friends here; residents like me who didn't expect to be homeless but who have some hope for the future."

New Charter has provided homelessness services and advice under contract to Tameside council in Greater Manchester since 2000.

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 and a workforce of 840, New Charter is one of the region's largest registered providers of social housing, and is regulated by the Tenant Services Authority, a Government watchdog. By incorporating Gedling Homes, the Group owns 18,600 homes. It was named in the Sunday Times best 100 companies to work for in 2009.
2. Supported Housing Month in the North is promoted throughout November 2009 by the National Housing Federation. It aims to shout out about the difference housing associations are making through working with over 165,000 people across the North of England.
3. Supported housing services delivered by housing associations help people live more independent and fulfilled lifestyles. Across the North, over 180 housing associations provide supported housing personalised services, tailoring them to meet individual needs. Every pound spent on Supporting People saves £1.79 on other public services. Nationally, this vital sector is saving mainstream services £1.22 billion by supporting the client groups we work with.
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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