

MEDIA RELEASE

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Swapping telecoms for teaching in Nepal

Photographs available from www.unicomimages.co.uk

A WYTHENSHAWE telecoms worker has swapped technology for teaching as part of an aid trip to Nepal.

Jayde Maguire, 23, spent three months in Nepal as part of the Platform2 programme – a global volunteering scheme for 18 to 25 year olds to visit a developing country.

During her trip, she stayed with a Nepalese host family and helped build the foundations of a school, taught children English at Sirutar Primary School and spent time at Maiti Nepal – an organisation which helps the victims of sex trafficking.

Jayde was given time off from her role as customer service agent at Unicom to pursue this dream.

Peter White, Unicom's Head of Customer Service said: "When Jayde approached us with her plans to visit Nepal, we were happy to support her.

"We pride ourselves on making corporate social responsibility a priority and encourage our employees to approach us with charitable pursuits they would like us to support. Jayde had been an inspiration to us all."

Jayde said: "It was an unbelievable experience which gave me a real insight into what needed changing and how individuals can make this happen. These people have nothing at all. It makes you appreciate how lucky we are.

"I grew very close to my host family and it was hard to leave them. I hope to return in the future and help make a difference."

Unicom, which was founded in 1998, has helped more than 300,000 businesses save more than £500 million off their utility bills.

It currently employs 500 staff at its Manchester headquarters and offices in Birmingham, Crawley, Ipswich, Leeds, Milton Keynes, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Nottingham, Sheffield and Stoke-on-Trent.

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About Unicom

www.switchingon.com

Unicom, a trading name of Universal Utilities PLC, is a telecommunications service provider specialising in the small business market. It currently provides telecom, broadband and website services to 80,000 small businesses throughout the UK. Unicom has an annual turnover of over £45m, and employs 500 people at its 10 regional offices situated around the UK.

Unicom has attracted its business customers by offering discounts of up to 60% off BT's prices, at the same time as keeping customers on the BT network. Unicom currently supplies in excess of 450 million minutes of call time to its customers each year. Unicom differentiates itself by offering a high standard of personal customer service, with no premium rate 0845 or 0870 numbers, no recorded messages or menus, and no overseas call centres. Unicom boasts one of the highest customer retention rates in the industry.

Unicom has a directory enquiry service, 118 777. Based on calls from a BT or Unicom telephone line, 118 777 is 28% cheaper than 118 118, and 53% cheaper than 118 500. Calls from other networks may vary.

Unicom was ranked 26th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2006, 89th in the Sunday Times Fast Track 100 index in December 2006 and 96th in the Sunday Times Profit Track 100 listings in April 2007. In September 2007 it achieved a ranking of 95th, and in September 2008 a ranking of 88th, in the Sunday Times Microsoft Tech Track 100 index.

In October 2009 Unicom became ISO 9001:2008 certified and was also awarded the Customer Service Excellence, the Customer First and the Investors in People certification by independent assessors.

For the year ending April 2009, Unicom reported pre-tax profits of £11.2m on a turnover of £44.5m (with profits up 14.3% and turnover up 7% from April 2008). Unicom expects profits to be in excess of £12m on a turnover of more than £48m for the current year.

Unicom is a patron company of The Outward Bound Trust.

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