

MEDIA RELEASE

May 2010

BIRMINGHAM ST MARY'S HOSPICE BENEFITS FROM UNICOM DONATION

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BIRMINGHAM St Mary's Hospice has been able to purchase much-needed overbed tables for its inpatient unit thanks to a donation from telecoms provider Unicom.

Birmingham St Mary's is the only independent hospice serving adults in Birmingham and Sandwell and cares for 1,000 people each year suffering from life-limiting illnesses.

The hospice recently purchased new hydraulic beds but needed overbed tables to work alongside these to allow patients to dine or read on a stable surface without having to leave their beds. The new tables also adjust downwards and can be positioned at an angle, giving patients sitting in upright chairs greater comfort when eating or reading.

Unicom, the small business telecoms provider, granted the donation to Birmingham St Mary's as part of its Community Support Scheme. The scheme offers funding for community groups around its 10 regional offices.

Ward Sister at Birmingham St Mary's, Kim Tonks, said: "Very often for people with life-limiting illnesses being able to remain in a comfortable bed while eating a meal or surfing the net can make a big difference to life quality, so you can imagine how invaluable these tables are going to be.

"We're really grateful to Unicom for the donation as it enables us to continue providing the best possible quality care to our patients."

Unicom's scheme invites applications from community groups which help disadvantaged people, promote sport and the arts, support education and help the environment.

Unicom operations director Chris Earle said: "At Unicom we are committed to giving back to the communities in which we work. It is great to see businesses and charities successfully work together to meet the needs of local people.

"We want to hear from organisations in the Birmingham area which could benefit from our Community Support Scheme, if you would like to apply log onto www.switchingon.com/communitysupport and fill in the online application form."

Unicom is based on Newhall Street, Birmingham and provides telecoms services to local businesses.

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Photo caption: Nurses Zoe Nock, Hayley Kerrigan and Ward Sister Kim Tonk with the hospice's new hydraulic beds. The overbed tables provided by Unicom will help improve patients comfort ever more.

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, mobile 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's mobile customers only pay for the calls and services they actually use, the package also offers one complete bill and one contact number for all telecoms services.

Unicom has a directory enquiry service, 118 777. Based on calls from a BT or Unicom telephone line, 118 777 is 35% 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 in 2009 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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