



Press Release For Immediate Release

UNICOM STAFF CELEBRATE APPRENTICESHIPS WHILE PREGNANT Damar Training helps Unicom employees achieve Apprenticeship in Team Leading Photography available at www.unicomimages.co.uk

Unicom is celebrating the achievements of two members of staff who have successfully completed apprenticeship qualifications while pregnant.

Customer Service Team Manager Jemma Galley, 22, from Macclesfield and Contract Enquiries Supervisor Helen Skinner, 29, from Wythenshawe have both successfully completed their Apprenticeships in Team Leading.

As part of its commitment to staff and the Investors in People standard, Manchester-based telecommunications company Unicom launched an apprenticeship programme last year in partnership with Stockport-based Damar Training.

Jemma and Helen are among the first members of staff to complete their Apprenticeships with Damar, with many more expected to follow in the coming months.

Charlotte McHale, Head of Training and Development at Unicom, said "I am very proud of both Jemma and Helen. As the first members of staff to complete the course they have not only shown their willingness to develop as key members of the team, but have also set an example for other staff members to follow.

"They have gained this qualification while carrying out their day-to-day jobs as well as preparing for the arrival of new members of their family. We have now rolled the Damar scheme out to all members of staff and the take up has been fantastic, we now have 19 people completing a range of qualifications."

Jonathan Bourne, Damar's Managing Director, said: "We are delighted to see the success of the apprenticeship programme at Unicom. Helen and Jemma have both done really well - so much so that Helen was also chosen by our training team as Damar's Learner of the Month.

“Unicom is committed to investing in staff development for the benefit of their people and their customers. All good apprenticeship programmes depend on the employer, the apprentices and the training provider working in partnership and our relationship with Unicom neatly illustrates that.”

Stockport-based Damar works with a wide range of clients including some of the North-West's largest organisations in both the private and public sectors as well as many professional and owner-managed businesses.

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Editors Notes

About Damar Training

Damar Training is a specialist provider of business skills training and recruitment, matching employers with quality employees, with the aim of helping employers and their staff realise their full potential.

Most of Damar's learners are working towards National Vocational Qualifications or Apprenticeships and work in areas such as administration, accounts, customer service and contact centre operations. Employers that Damar works with include some of the North-West's largest organisations in both the private and public sectors as well as many professional and owner-managed businesses. The company is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young and vulnerable learners and the employers with who they work share that commitment.

For employers Damar offers:

- Apprenticeship opportunities to new or recent recruits
- Staff skills development and productivity
- Improved staff retention
- Skills and competence assessment

For learner employers Damar offers:

- A job opportunity where the employee will receive training
- Development of work-related skills and on-going learning
- Award of a nationally recognised qualification
- Recognition for the skills the learner has developed at work

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About Unicom

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 90,000 small businesses throughout the UK. Unicom has an annual turnover of over £50m, 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 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 2010, Universal Utilities plc, which trades as Unicom, reported pre-tax profits of £12.8m on a turnover of £50.5m (with profits up 13% and turnover up 14% from April 2009). Unicom expects profits to be in excess of £15m on a turnover of more than £55m for the current year.

Unicom is a patron company of The Outward Bound Trust.

For further information and photographs contact Mark via press@switchingon.com.