

COMPUTERS OPEN UP NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR HOMELESS

The Big Issue in the North's Manchester and Liverpool centres have received £20,000 worth of computing equipment to help magazine vendors access new skills.

Thanks to a new partnership with UK online centres, vendors at Manchester and Liverpool will be able to have full use of the internet as a drop-in service plus the chance to take a computing for beginner's course.

The new computer suites at Liverpool and Manchester will house 10 computers each, iBook, digital cameras, projectors and wide screen monitors.

Big Issue in the North Director Caroline Price said: "We're delighted with the new IT suites; they will really help our vendors pick up new skills. The beginner's computer course can lead on to a variety of other courses so this will open up many new opportunities."

The IT suites will be manned by co-ordinators, with help from volunteers. At Manchester the area for the IT suite has been prepared with help from volunteers from NatWest who cleared and painted the offices ready for the suite to be installed.

The new UK online centre facilities will also be open for the general public, who will be able to use the suites on a drop in basis for internet access.

Notes to Editors:

Every vendor signs up to a code of conduct when they start to sell *The Big Issue in the North* which governs the way vendors sell the magazine.

Vendors must only sell on authorised pitches. All vendors wear an ID badge. Please only buy the magazine from badged vendors.

UK online centres provide millions of people with access to technology and support in using it. They offer free or low cost access to the internet and email, deliver online courses and encourage people to progress onto further learning. For more information please visit www.ukonlinecentres.com.

For further information please contact Dawn Bunnell, Communications Officer on 0161 227 0205, 07723997113 or email dawn.bunnell@thebiglifecompany.com