

WPP Acquires Finsbury
24 February 2001

WPP Group plc ("WPP") announces that it has acquired 100% of the issued share capital of Finsbury Limited ("Finsbury"), the leading European financial communications company. Founded in 1994 in London, Finsbury has established a reputation as one of the most admired companies in its field, advising international companies on their communications with the global financial communities. It specialises in financial communications, investor relations and public affairs.

Finsbury represents UK-listed companies worth in excess of £100 billion, including 12 FTSE 100 clients, as well as leading Euro 300 and Fortune 500 companies. Clients include Cable & Wireless, Centrica, Hilton Group, J Sainsbury, Great Universal Stores, Lloyds TSB, London Stock Exchange and Pilkington.

The consultancy, which employs 60 professionals, has been one of the fastest growing in its sector. In the first quarter of 2001, it was second in the M&A advisory tables, measured by transaction value, according to Mergermarket.com.

Recent high profile corporate projects have included Lloyds TSB's bid for Abbey National, Innogy's acquisition of Yorkshire Electricity, TI's merger with Smiths Industries, Thames Water's acquisition by RWE and Cable & Wireless' disposal of Optus.

In the past year, Finsbury has also handled the demerger of National Power and subsequent listings of International Power and Innogy, the demerger of Williams to form Chubb and Kidde and the listing of RTL.

Finsbury's public affairs unit numbers Reed Elsevier, Lloyds TSB, Innogy and Capital Radio among its clients. Since its inception a year ago it has worked on several major transactions including Western Power Distribution's bid for Hyder, the sale of the Belfast Telegraph by Trinity Mirror to Independent News & Media, the acquisition of a joint controlling stake in Telewest by Microsoft and General Electric's bid for Honeywell. Finsbury also has a Brussels office which operates as the centre of a pan-European regulatory affairs network.

Finsbury reported revenues of £8.2 million in the year to 31 October 2000 and had net assets of £411,000 at that date.

Finsbury will operate independently within WPP and will benefit from access to one of the world's leading advertising and marketing services networks. Following the transaction, Finsbury will open an office in New York, serving European and US clients.

The acquisition of Finsbury further strengthens WPP's resources in the financial services sector and continues the Group's strategy of building leadership positions in fast-growing functional and geographical areas of the communications services market.