



MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

22 September 2021

Competition Authority enables fibre pilot

The Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority (the Authority) has approved a temporary licence modification that will enable Sure (Guernsey) Ltd (Sure) to carry out a pilot test of fibre optic broadband in selected areas of the Island.

The modification is required to exempt Sure from its Licence Obligation to provide an uninterrupted public emergency call service. Currently in Guernsey, voice calls are carried over copper wires, which are powered by local telephone exchanges. In the event of a power outage, Islanders would still be able to make 999 calls to the emergency services.

When the network is converted to optical fibre, the power source is at the customer's premises and, in the event of a power failure, the customer would not be able to make an emergency call, unless they have a backup battery installed.

Sure wants to carry out a pilot project to test the economic and technical viability of installing a fibre network in Guernsey, but would be in violation of its licence if the exemption were not granted by the Authority.

The pilot will be based on an 'opt-in. opt-out' basis at premises in a mix of rural and urban areas: the Admiral Park exchange area, Marina Court (St Peter Port), portions of Hauteville (St Peter Port and areas surrounding Rue du Gele (Castel).

Michael Byrne, CEO of the Authority, said, "We consider this temporary modification is appropriate and proportionate. It allows Sure to test the economic and technical viability of installing a fibre network, while at the same time protecting those who volunteer to participate in the project. Fibre networks are increasingly the norm in developed countries, and it is important that Guernsey is able to explore this technological progress."

The Authority publicised the proposed licence modification in *La Gazette Officielle* and on its website for public comment or objection, of which there were none.

There are conditions attached to the modification including:

- The pilot must be carried out over a limited time and area

- Those taking part must be furnished with an alternative means (ie, a free mobile phone) of contacting the emergency services in a power outage during the period of the pilot
- Excluding those whose wellbeing is most at risk from not being able to call 112/999
- That the choice whether to participate is clearly explained, and the consequences of taking part

The pilot will run for six months from a start date (on or after the 27 September) to be decided by the Authority.

Ends

NOTES TO EDITORS:

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More details about the proposed pilot can be found on the Authority's website: www.gcra.gg

About the Guernsey Competition & Regulatory Authority:

The Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority (GCRA) (formerly the Office of Utility Regulation) was established under The Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2012. The GCRA is responsible for regulating the telecoms, postal and electricity sectors and for the administration and enforcement of the Guernsey competition law.