



CICRA media release

20 March 2014

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Battery back-up units provided to vulnerable customers

Vulnerable customers will be provided with free battery back-up units as part of the roll-out of the new fibre telecoms network in Jersey, under an agreement reached between the telecoms regulator, various community groups and JT.

The battery back-up unit will ensure that these customers continue to have an operating landline connection during power cuts.

CICRA has worked with a number of local groups, notably Jersey Consumer Council, Age Concern and Citizens Advice Bureau, together with Jersey Trading Standards Service and the Departments of Social Security, Health and Social Services, to ensure safety for vulnerable consumers who need constant access to a landline.

JT is currently replacing its existing telecoms network, based on copper wires, with a fibre network. Customers connected to JT's fibre network will find that their landline and community alarms won't work in the event of a power cut. On the copper network corded landlines and community alarms will continue to operate even if there is an outage in the electricity supply.

JT has agreed to provide battery back-up units, free of charge, for vulnerable customers. In the event of a power cut the battery unit will activate and ensure the phone will work for at least four hours. JT will also maintain the units free of charge.

The local groups will be working with JT to ensure the unit is installed in appropriate homes. Free units will be provided to those receiving certain types of income support and those with community alarms.

Customers do not need to do anything at this stage. Those who are eligible for a free unit will be contacted at an appropriate time before their existing service is moved from copper to fibre. Other customers who are not eligible for free units but are interested in obtaining a battery back-up unit should either consult the engineers installing their fibre service or speak to their telecoms provider.

CICRA director of finance and operations, Louise Read, said: “We are pleased that JT has agreed to offer this service free of charge to the most vulnerable customers. CICRA will continue to work with them to ensure that their decision to move from a copper to fibre network does not leave vulnerable customers at risk.

“This is a good example of CICRA and community groups working well together to protect the interests of the most vulnerable members of society.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS:

All enquiries should be directed in writing to CICRA chief executive, Andrew Riseley, in Guernsey at the Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority, Suites B1 & B2, Hirzel Court, St Peter Port, Guernsey GY1 2NH or in Jersey at the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority, 2nd Floor, Salisbury House, 1 - 9 Union Street, St Helier, Jersey JE2 3RF. Alternatively email info@bicra.gg.

About CICRA:

The Channel Islands Competition and Regulatory Authorities or 'CICRA' is the name given to the Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (JCRA) and the Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority (GCRA) (formerly the Office of Utility Regulation). The JCRA was established under the Competition Regulatory Authority (Jersey) Law, 2001, and the GCRA was established under The Guernsey Competition and Regulatory Authority Ordinance, 2012. In Jersey, the telecoms and postal sectors are regulated by the JCRA, which is also responsible for administering and enforcing the Competition (Jersey) Law 2005. In Guernsey the telecoms, postal and electricity sectors are regulated by the GCRA, which is also responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Guernsey competition law since it came into force on 1 August 2012.

By working together and sharing resources and expertise between the islands, CICRA strives to ensure that consumers in all the Channel Islands receive best value, choice and access to high quality services.