



NEWS RELEASE

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Regulator recommends significant penalties for emergency call failures

The Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority (the **Authority**) has announced it will fine both JT (Jersey) Limited (**JT**) and Sure (Jersey) Limited (**Sure**) for serious breaches of their licence obligations, which led to several repeated failures of Jersey's 999 emergency call service between January and April 2020.

Following its Final Decision issued on 19 November 2020, the Authority has now decided on the scale of fines due from JT and Sure following the six incidents during early 2020, in which the 999 emergency call services were not available to the citizens of Jersey.

Jersey's licensed telecoms companies (**Operators**) are obliged by their licences to provide the emergency call service, which enables Islanders and visitors to contact the appropriate service in an emergency using 999 or 112. The service is required to be provided, "...at all times."

The Authority has concluded that JT and Sure both (1) failed to manage and provide the public emergency call service with respect to their own customers; and (2) failed to notify the Authority of all the failures and the network issues that led to the failures.

As a result, the Authority has decided to issue a fine of £675,000 to JT, and £135,000 to Sure. The fines levied are then passed to the Government of Jersey through the Treasury and Exchequer Department.

The cause of most of the failures was JT's Call Handling Agent infrastructure. On two occasions this caused a complete outage where no-one could call 999, and on the other four occasions the States of Jersey Police had to step in and field emergency calls (a pre-determined fall back procedure).

These failures affected all Operators. Separately, an issue relating to an interconnection link between JT and Sure led to a further problem affecting Sure customers.

The Authority has worked closely with the Justice and Home Affairs Department and the Chief Officer, States of Jersey Police throughout its investigation, with the co-operation of both affected Operators. JT and Sure have undertaken planned works throughout 2020 to stabilise the 999 service and the Authority is reassured that a recurrence of the failures is unlikely.

Tim Ringsdore, Chief Executive of the Authority said, "We take these failures very seriously indeed, which is why the Board of the Authority has decided to issue significant fines. These fines are appropriate given the seriousness of the the failures, despite the operators having knowledge of the problem. I am confident that our investigations have been thorough and robust. I would like to thank the Operators for their co-operation, the Minister for Home Affairs and the Minister for Economic Development for their support and the emergency services for their contribution."

The Authority has proposed that the fines levied in response to these incidents are ringfenced for the Justice & Home Affairs Department to be reinvested in the Island's emergency call system to make sure it performs to the highest possible modern standards.

The Minister for Home Affairs, Constable Len Norman said, “Everyone who lives in, or visits Jersey, relies on the 999/112 services being available if they need to get help in an emergency. These failures fell far short of the required standard that we expect. Fortunately no loss of life is known to have resulted as a consequence of any of the six incidents that were the subject of this investigation.

“I would like to congratulate the Authority for its swift response to this issue and its diligence in carrying out a root and branch investigation of the breaches. I cannot stress enough the seriousness of the failures and the possible consequences that were, thankfully, avoided.”

Graeme Millar, CEO of JT added, “On behalf of JT, I would like to re-affirm my apology for our part in the problems in the early part of 2020 which led to this fine. JT has played a key role in providing those services on behalf of the Island for more than a century, and we take our responsibilities in this area very seriously indeed.

“JT has worked hand-in-hand with the Authority, and the Justice and Home Affairs Department, throughout this process. I would like to reassure Islanders that the relevant problems have now been identified and resolved, and the circumstances which led to last year’s incidents have not been repeated.

“We accept the Authority’s decision on this matter and will now be focused on making sure these important services are delivered in the best possible way.”

Graham Hughes, Chief Executive of Sure Jersey, added, “We recognise the seriousness of these failures and are sorry that there was an issue with Sure’s handover process for emergency calls. As a result of this incident we have reviewed our procedures and made immediate changes to ensure the process is smooth and reliable. Having initially raised this issue with the JCRA we are pleased to have cooperated with them to bring this matter to its conclusion.”

All of the documents relating to this case are published on the Authority’s website www.jcra.je. **Ends**

NOTES TO EDITORS:

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NB No further comment will be made by the Authority in relation to this matter. However, if clarification only of any part of this Media Statement is required, questions should be addressed to Tim Ringsdore, CEO Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority through ORCHID.

About The Jersey Competition Regulatory Authority:

The Authority was established under the Competition Regulatory Authority (Jersey) Law, 2001. It is responsible for administering and enforcing the Competition (Jersey) Law 2005 and also regulates the Ports of Jersey, the postal and telecoms sectors.

The Authority strives to ensure that the markets work well for the benefit of all stakeholders, including Government, business, citizens and consumers facilitating best value, choice and access to high quality services.