



news release

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VODAFONE UK TO PARTNER WITH TINDER FOUNDATION TO BEGIN BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

- Vodafone UK signs national partnership with Tinder Foundation to build wider confidence in the mobile internet
- Publication of an independent report highlights the important role mobile internet can play in helping to bridge the digital divide
- Supports Vodafone UK's recent commitment to the Government's Digital Inclusion Charter

Vodafone UK has launched a national partnership with Tinder Foundation, a not-for-profit organisation which supports 5,000 local community partners to be smarter in how they use digital technology and has helped more than one million people gain the skills they need to use the internet confidently.

The partnership will see Vodafone provide Tinder Foundation with a range of practical and pragmatic solutions to support the Foundation's objective of allowing millions more people to benefit from being online. Initiatives which are to be launched in communities across the UK later this year will include:

- Provision of Vodafone smartphones, tablets, SIMs and Mobile Wifi hotspots to 20 Tinder centres across the UK
- Distribution of 10,000 copies of Vodafone's new Smartphone Guide via Tinder Foundation to UK online centres. The Guide is specifically targeted at those who are new to or are investigating smartphones and helps them to better understand a range of issues which can alienate novices. Online versions of the Guide will also be made available at all UK online centres.
- A Vodafone sponsored course will be launched to the public via Tinder Foundation's Learn My Way.com website to promote the benefits of using mobile devices and how to use them to access the internet.

Vodafone will release a second report detailing the consumer experience of triallists at UK online centres towards the end of the year. The partnership with Tinder Foundation supports Vodafone UK's recent commitment to the Government's Digital Inclusion Charter.

The partnership with Tinder Foundation coincides with the publication of an independent report, funded by Vodafone UK, called "[Mobile : A powerful tool for Digital Inclusion](#)" which highlights:

- 6.7 million people across the UK (13.8% of the population) have never used the internet
- Another 4 million of those notionally online may lack the basic digital skills to make the most of their internet access
- Almost 60% of those offline say that they are not interested or do not need to be online which suggest that current pc-related inclusion programmes are only converting the willing
- Approximately two-thirds of non-users said that lack of a computer or lack of skills were also reasons.

There is good reason to be concerned about digital exclusion, as there are significant benefits to having access to the internet for: social connectivity; social inclusion; good deals and comparison shopping; home delivery; employment; and engagement with government. Such benefits are generally well able to be delivered by mobile devices and mobile networks and with over 60% of UK homes now having access to a mobile device, whether a smartphone or a tablet, the importance of mobile in increasing digital inclusion is clear.

The report, commissioned by Vodafone and written by Rob Kenny and Claire Milne from Communications Chambers, has reviewed papers and reports into digital exclusion and makes a number of wide ranging recommendations to mobile operators and retailers, local government and community groups and central government, including:

- Wider availability and greater prominence of mobile handsets and software interfaces designed specifically for the elderly, those with disabilities or simply those seeking a less complex interface
- Online Centres should provide mobile training as part of their service
- Government could fund a study to compare the efficiency of fixed and mobile solutions in helping different groups of people to make the transition online

Jeroen Hoencamp, Chief Executive Officer, Vodafone UK, commented: *"This report highlights that the digital world can seem quite daunting to those who don't use it on a regular*

basis. So we are delighted to be partnering Tinder Foundation in their efforts to help people get online and live bolder lives. We look forward to working with their teams across the country to show the benefits mobile brings in bridging the digital divide, in terms of ease, cost and availability.

Helen Milner, CEO of Tinder Foundation said: *"We are very pleased to welcome Vodafone as a key partner as it believes, as we do, that technology is well placed to make significant improvements to the way we live – but that it is at its most effective when it's put to use in communities every day - and we believe mobile technology, due to its ubiquity, is an excellent way to achieve this aim".*

Minister for Civil Society, Nick Hurd said: *"A more digitally-skilled nation will help us to boost our economy and strengthen communities. We want to reduce the number of people offline so that by 2020 everyone who can be online, will be. We welcome Vodafone's support of our Digital Inclusion Charter and this report highlighting the important part smartphones and tablets can play in tackling the digital divide, and we will watch the progress of this new partnership with interest."*

Rob Kenny, the author of the Digital Inclusion report said: *"Our report concludes people need the means and the motive to get online. As the task of helping people move online becomes more challenging, it makes sense to use all tools that are at our disposal and - mobile is a tool well suited to addressing this problem and will be the best option to help an increasing number of individuals transitioning online."*

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