



7 July 2016

VODAFONE UNVEILS PROGRAMME TO GIVE INDOOR MOBILE COVERAGE TO RURAL COMMUNITIES CENTRES

- Vodafone UK launches new scheme for up to 100 rural community hubs, from pubs to village halls and community run shops, in mobile coverage 'not-spots' across the UK
- The Bear and Ragged Staff pub in Bransford, Worcester, first hub to go live
- Community Indoor Sure Signal (CISS) builds on the success of Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal (ROSS) which provides mobile coverage to almost 100 rural communities

A new programme designed to inject lifeblood into rural community hubs by providing reliable, indoor 3G mobile coverage and internet access has been launched by Vodafone UK. The Community Indoor Sure Signal (CISS) programme, which will be open to up to 100 rural community hubs, builds on the success of Vodafone's Rural Open Sure Signal (ROSS) which provides 3G mobile coverage to almost 100 rural communities from the Shetland Islands to Cornwall.

Following a successful pilot at The Bear and Ragged Staff pub in Bransford, near Worcester, Vodafone is calling for applications from rural community centres, such as independent or community run pubs and shops, village halls, scout huts, doctor's surgeries or visitor centres, that do not have reliable mobile coverage, to apply for the programme. Coverage will bring both 3G voice and data ensuring both employees and visitors at the community hubs will be able to make both calls and use data on their Vodafone mobile phones or tablets. The application process will be open until 1 September 2016 with the first selected communities being announced in the autumn.

Vodafone Community Indoor Sure Signal uses 'femtocell' technology similar to that being deployed by Vodafone to connect UK rural communities through its Rural Open Sure Signal (ROSS) programme. Vodafone's 'femtocell' schemes, such as its successful ROSS programme and Rural Community Pub pilot, have helped bring reliable 3G mobile coverage to rural communities across the UK without the need for a traditional mast.

Successful applicants will need an unlimited broadband package, download speeds of at least 4Mbps and upload speeds of 2Mbps and a domestic plug-in power point. The CISS unit simply plugs into a standard fixed broadband router to provide mobile coverage throughout a building, hall or shop. No bigger than a broadband router, the unit called Sure Signal + has been used successfully by large businesses to ensure visitors and employees receive good quality indoor mobile coverage.

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news release



Vodafone continues to increase its network coverage across the UK and has recently launched a 30 day network guarantee to give new and upgrading customers the chance to try out Vodafone's network before committing to a contract. It is the only mobile company to offer such terms. Vodafone has also introduced High Definition (HD) Voice nationwide and WiFi Calling to a number of its leading smartphones.

However, many rural communities can struggle to receive decent quality mobile coverage via traditional means. This can be due to a number of factors, including the extreme geographic nature of an area or difficulties with local planning permission.

Lynda Williams from The Bear and Ragged Staff commented: "We are absolutely delighted with our Vodafone Sure Signal+ unit which is providing our business with excellent Vodafone mobile coverage. Being located in a rural area, this is something we have struggled with but Vodafone have provided us with a solution. It was extremely easy to install and within minutes we were connected to the world!"

Jorge Fernandes, Vodafone UK Chief Technology Officer, said: "Reliable mobile coverage and mobile internet are vital to the economic and social well-being of rural communities. By installing our units, we can ensure that rural hotspots continue to play an important role in rural community life."

Further information and application details are available at <http://mediacentre.vodafone.co.uk/>

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For more information please contact

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NOTES TO EDITORS

- Vodafone's rural community pub pilot was run in partnership with Pub is The Hub, a not-for-profit organisation and inspired by HRH the Prince of Wales in 2001. Pub is The Hub offers independent specialist advice on rural services diversification or community ownership of pubs, so they can provide viable local services at the heart of the community. For more information visit www.pubisthehub.org.uk

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