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VODAFONE UK AND TINDER FOUNDATION COMPLETE NATIONWIDE PROJECT TO BRIDGE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE THROUGH MOBILE TECHNOLOGY

- 88% of the people who took part improved their digital skills, with their motivations for using the internet also changing dramatically.
- 78% of participants felt more encouraged to get online using a tablet or smartphone, which they found to be more intuitive and easier to use than a laptop or desktop.
- 65% of participants reported improvements to confidence and self-esteem.
- The project helped people to overcome loneliness and isolation, with 67% reporting better quality and more communication with friends and family.
- Results of the project were launched at an event hosted by Vodafone and Tinder Foundation at the House of Lords

In July 2014, Vodafone UK commissioned Tinder Foundation, a not-for-profit social enterprise which has helped more than a million people in the UK improve their lives through digital inclusion, to deliver a six-month study into the benefits of mobile data and devices for digitally excluded people. The Tinder Foundation deployed the project to a selection of its UK online centres network to test how mobile connectivity could improve the lives of people lacking basic digital skills, and who met at least one criterion of social exclusion. The project not only led to a rapid increase in participants' online skills, but also had a significant impact on their personal health and wellbeing, enabling many to better manage their physical and mental health.

Vodafone and Tinder Foundation launched a report today "Mobile: helping to close the digital divide?", which details the findings of this project. Tinder Foundation selected seventeen of its centres to take part in the project targeting people from severely excluded and hard-to-reach demographics. Over sixty participants were loaned devices - tablets, smartphones, or wi-fi hotspots - by Vodafone to improve their online skills. Each UK online centre delivered a range of learning programmes, as well as in-depth, one-to-one support to 80% of participants.

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news release



Whilst the results of the project include strong examples of how mobile can be used for more effective digital inclusion, it also highlights further work Tinder Foundation and Vodafone can do together at a national level. The report identifies the cost of broadband being a significant barrier for many people getting online, with 70% of participants agreeing that mobile has greater flexibility and cost advantages.

Helen Lamprell, Corporate & External Affairs Director, Vodafone UK said: "Our aim of working with Tinder Foundation, as part of our commitment to the government's digital inclusion charter, is simple: we want to put the power of the internet into the hands of everyone through mobile technology. We are delighted to have worked with Tinder Foundation and their local partners around the UK to have started the process of empowering a digitally-skilled nation."

Helen Milner, CEO of Tinder Foundation said: "The findings of the report are just the beginning; we're keen to explore these barriers further to ensure everyone - and anyone - can experience the benefits of being online. Tinder foundation looks forward to working with Vodafone to further support the brilliant work our UK online centres do to continue breaking down the barriers of digital exclusion."

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