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Southampton becomes first city on the South Coast to benefit from free ultrafast wi-fi and phone calls

InLinkUK from BT: Innovative digital street units go live in Southampton

Southampton has become the first city on the South Coast to benefit from the free InLinkUK from BT service, which already has over 120,000 subscribers across the UK. It offers the UK's fastest free public wi-fi plus a range of digital services, including local council and community information.

The first 14 InLinks being installed in central Southampton provide ultrafast wi-fi speeds of up to one gigabit per second (1Gbps), the fastest free public wi-fi service available in the UK. The InLinks also provide free phone calls to UK landlines and mobiles, rapid mobile device charging, the BT Phone Book app, as well as easy access to charity helplines. Southampton is the third city outside of London to benefit from the new service, joining Leeds and Glasgow.

InLinks mean more space on pavements, as on average, each InLink replaces two BT payphones, with nearly 30 set to be removed in Southampton. BT's iconic red phone boxes will remain.

The first of the fully-accessible InLinks have already gone live on Hanover Buildings and London Road. Further locations are expected to join them in the coming weeks, including Southampton Central railway station and areas within the town walls.

With Southampton Dock being known as the 'Cruise Capital of the UK', the city is a key hub for visitors and tourists. This new communications service in the heart of the city will help cement Southampton as one of the UK's most digitally connected cities.

Southampton City Council and the local community are also benefiting from the digital displays on the InLinks that display real-time information, including the weather forecast and other local information. Each InLink provides more than 1,000 hours of local messaging a year, acting as a community notice board for the local area. These services are provided to the community at no public cost, as the project is funded by advertising revenue.

Councillor Chris Hammond, leader - clean growth & development, Southampton City Council, unveiled the first Southampton InLink. He said: "As an innovative city, Southampton is proud to be the first city on the South Coast to welcome these state of the art InLinks. By providing facilities for people to make free calls, access free wi-fi and information and charge their phones, we move one step closer to becoming an attractive modern city where people are proud to live and work."

Stacey King, BT's regional director for London and South East England, said: "Today's launch in Southampton brings the fastest free public wi-fi in the UK to the South Coast. Residents and visitors alike are set to benefit from this new state-of-the-art 'phone box', where they can also make calls for free, access local information and even charge their 'phone when out and about."

Matt Bird, general manager for InLinkUK, added: "Our national rollout is gathering speed, and with the introduction of the InLinks in Southampton, we are pleased to be a part of the city's efforts to improve public digital infrastructure. We are making great progress in our journey of creating smart communities, and with the InLinks offering a host of free digital services, we are well on our way to achieving this in key UK cities."

The UK rollout has so far seen more than 160 InLinks installed in eight London boroughs, Leeds city centre and most-recently in Glasgow; with hundreds more to be installed in major towns and cities across the UK. Since the first InLink was installed in June last year, more than 120,000 people have subscribed to the service's free wi-fi, using enough data to download the equivalent of over 16 million songs. The InLinks have also saved people more than £442,000 in free calls, with 40,000 calls being made on average every week across the UK.

One of the InLink's newest features is its free one-touch lifelines to four national charities.

Free calls can be made via the tablet to Childline, End Youth Homelessness, Runaway Helpline and Samaritans. The InLinks are also accessible, offering additional digital services, including for those who have sight and visual impairments.

InLinkUK from BT is a partnership between BT and tech start up InLinkUK.

Enquiries:

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Notes to Editors

About InLinkUK

InLinkUK is a new communications network that will replace over 1,000 pay phones in major cities across the UK, with new units called InLinks.

Each InLink provides ultrafast, free public wi-fi, phone calls, device charging and a tablet for access to city services, maps and directions, connecting those who visit, live and work in urban hubs across the UK.

Hundreds of users within range of an InLink will be able to access free ultrafast wi-fi on the move, with speeds of up to 1Gbps - the fastest free public wi-fi service available.

InLinkUK from BT is being brought to the UK through a joint venture between Intersection, the urban innovation company behind LinkNYC, and Primesight, a leading UK out-of-home media company, in partnership with BT.

Learn more at <http://www.inlinkuk.com>

BT's wi-fi network in the UK:

BT already operates the biggest network in the UK, giving customers unlimited access to the most extensive wi-fi coverage with more than five million hotspots.

Images:

For images, see [The BT Media Image library](#) and [Telefocus - historical images from BT Archives](#).

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For the year ended 31 March 2018, BT Group's reported revenue was £23,723m with reported profit before taxation of £2,616m.

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