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Portsmouth becomes latest city in the South of England to benefit from free ultrafast wi-fi and phone calls

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

Portsmouth has become the latest city in South of England to benefit from the free InLinkUK from BT service, which already has over 183,000 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 12 InLinks being installed in central Portsmouth 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. Portsmouth joins London, Southampton, Leeds, Glasgow, Swansea, Sheffield, Gateshead and Newcastle as the latest city to benefit from the new service.

InLinks mean more space on pavements, as on average, each InLink replaces two BT payphones, with 24 set to be removed in Portsmouth. BT's iconic red phone boxes will remain. The project has so far seen 245m² of pavement space given back to communities.

The first of the fully-accessible InLinks have already gone live on Commercial Road. Further locations, including Kingston Street, are expected to join them in the coming weeks.

Home to Portsmouth Harbour and Docks, the city hosts a huge part of the Royal Navy. It's also a key location for visitors and tourists in Hampshire. This new communications service in the heart of the city will help cement Portsmouth as one of the UK's most digitally connected cities.

Portsmouth 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.

Mark Baulch, Head of Policy & Representation at Hampshire Chamber of Commerce, welcomed the news: "I am pleased that Portsmouth joins Southampton in welcoming the InLinks. We have always been a city with an eye for opportunity and believe the range of free services the InLinks provide adds to the city's offering to businesses and visitors. We welcome and support digital innovation which strengthens businesses and investment."

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

Matt Bird, general manager for InLinkUK, added: "Our network is currently in a period of rapid growth and we're excited that Portsmouth has joined us on this journey to creating smart communities, supporting their digital innovation ambitions. With Portsmouth being such a core hub for workers, tourists and residents alike, the range of free digital services provided by the InLinks is a great asset."

The UK rollout has so far seen more than 260 InLinks installed in eight UK cities, most recently in Swansea, 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 183,000 people have subscribed to the service's free wi-fi, using enough data to download the equivalent of over 27 million songs. The InLinks have also saved people more than £830,000 in free calls, with 50,000 calls being made on average every week across the UK.

The InLinkUK from BT service is dedicated to providing all-inclusive digital services, one of which is their charity icon on the tablet. A free one-touch lifeline to four national charities, which provides free calls 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.