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Manchester becomes the first city in North West England to benefit from free ultrafast wi-fi and phone calls

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

Manchester has become the first city in North West England to benefit from the free InLinkUK from BT service, which already has over 200,000 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 17 InLinks being installed in central Manchester 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. Manchester 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 34 set to be removed in Manchester. BT's iconic red phone boxes will remain.

The first of the fully-accessible InLinks have already gone live on Portland Street. Further locations, including High Street and Peter Street are expected to join them in the coming weeks.

Home to the Manchester Arena, one of the biggest indoor arenas in the world, and the world's oldest library, Manchester is a key location for visitors and tourists. This new communications service in the heart of the city will help cement Manchester as one of the UK's most digitally connected cities.

Manchester 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.

Sir Richard Leese, Leader of Manchester City Council welcome the news: “I am pleased that Manchester is the first city in the North West to welcome the InLinks. We have always been a city with an eye for opportunity and believe the range of free services the InLinks provide is a significant contribution to the Greater Manchester Digital Strategy. As a city, we plan to continue to encourage and support digital innovation which strengthens businesses and investment.”

Kieran Charleson, BT regional director for the North of England, said “Today’s launch in Manchester brings the fastest free public wi-fi in the UK to the North West. 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 Manchester has joined us on this journey to creating smart communities, supporting their digital innovation ambitions. With Manchester 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 300 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 200,000 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 £660,000 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.

Enquiries:

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**For InLinkUK: See the media pack (including image library):
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Notes to Editors

About InLinkUK

InLinkUK is a tech start up providing 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](#).

About BT

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local, national and international telecommunications services to its customers for use at home, at work and on the move; broadband, TV and internet products and services; and converged fixed-mobile products and services. BT consists of four customer-facing units: Consumer, Enterprise, Global Services and Openreach.

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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