‘Give us an app for a seamless journey say blind young people to transport providers’

Thursday 28 November, 2013

Vision impaired (VI) young people working with RLSB, a leading charity that supports blind young people in London and the South East, are calling on transport providers to help make independent travel easier at their first youth conference on Saturday 30th November. The Future Exchange which takes place in Central London, is open to all VI young people aged 14-25 and will discuss more accessible employment, transport, and leadership.

Speaking at the conference are inspirational figures including Judo Paralympian Ben Quilter and Tim Campbell, the first winner of Lord Alan Sugar’s The Apprentice, as well as representatives from Transport for London, Goldman Sachs, Blind in Business and the entertainment industry.

Ashar Smith aged 23, is blind and from Stoke Newington; he is speaking at the conference and said:
“If transport providers want to make travel accessible for all, they need to prioritise technology that enables VI people to use public transport independently. It would be wonderful if an app could be developed that allows VI people to make a seamless journey between bus, tube and rail on their own”

Chief Executive of RLSB Dr. Tom Pey, who is also VI said:
“We know that being VI in the modern world can sometimes be tough, and that often we have to work twice as hard as sighted people to have the life we want. And a big part of this battle is the barriers we come across in daily life – like the struggle to find work, inaccessible transport and the frustrations of technology. We want VI young people to share their experiences so we can start building practical, long-lasting solutions.”

“We’re dealing with two really big issues at the Future Exchange. How we can get employers to open up their organisation to this talented pool of young people and secondly how we can make sure the transport network offers an outstanding service to VI people so commuting is no longer a barrier to employment for them.”

Sophie Achillini, from TfL, who is also speaking at the event, said:
“London now has one of the most accessible public transport networks in the world, with extensive accessible bus and taxi fleets, free door-to-door services, all DLR stations and many Tube and rail stations step-free. We also offer travel training so that visually impaired people can get familiar with their route and build their confidence.

"But the situation is clearly not perfect. That’s why we are now investing in imaginative solutions and making a wide range of improvements to make it easier for all of our customers to get around. This includes better signage, online information and staff training, making 27 more Underground and London Overground stations step-free over the next eight years, and supporting the development of apps specifically aimed at making life easier for disabled and visually impaired customers.

“We’re very happy to be able to work with these young people and hear their ideas for how we can improve things even further.”
Lianna Edkind from Transport for All said:
“VI people have the right to travel independently and safely but 86% of VI people say that inaccessible transport has restricted their choice of jobs[i]. This compares with 46% of disabled people generally. Transport has improved a lot over the last 20 years and we should be encouraging people to give it a go, travel training (run by TfL) opens things up. I love the idea of a phone app that VI young people can use and I hope that TfL will seriously consider this.”

Nine out of 10 people who lose their sight in their youth will never work more than six months in their lives[ii] and this is a statistic that RLSB is determined to change. They want to see the amount of vision impaired young people who are out of work, halved within a generation.

Within London and the South East, there are 7,000 children and young people under 24 years of age who are blind or partially sighted.

More information about the conference including workshops and a marketplace with ‘Tech Zone’, a vision impaired fashion stylist, cocktail bar, DJ booth and freebies from The Body Shop can be found at

Related Sectors:

Charities & non-profits :: Transport & Logistics ::

Related Keywords:

Eliza Doolittle :: Blind :: Transport For All :: Londoners :: Disability :: Apprentice ::

Scan Me:

http://www.rlsb.org.uk/future-exchange
ENDS.

Notes to editors
1. For further information please contact Ana Granger on 07789 069591 or Nancy Platts on 07789 069704
2. People quoted in the press release are available to interview and photograph on the day. We can also supply photographs after the event.
3. RLSB exists to empower blind and partially sighted young people to live life without limits. Through an expert blend of education, sports, creative and developmental services, we help the people we work with live and learn for the life they want.
4. RLSB works with blind young people in communities across London, Sussex and Kent, offering community services ranging from Parents as experts workshops, a nursery in Kent; pan London sport groups and social and peer groups. They also offer Access Tech, Employability training and a Further Education College in Bromley.
[i] Leonard Cheshire, ‘Mind the Gap’ 2008
[ii] Understanding the Needs of Blind and Partially Sighted People: their experiences, perspectives, and expectations - Literature Review. RNIB, May 2009

Company Contact:

The Royal London Society for Blind People

T. 02078086172
E. media@rlsb.org.uk
W. https://www.rlsb.org.uk

Additional Contact(s):
Emma.thompson@rlsb.org.uk

View Online

Newsroom: Visit our Newsroom for all the latest stories:
https://www.rlsb.pressat.co.uk