Portsmouth first in UK to launch wheelchair navigation

Tuesday 8 October, 2019

A new app is being launched in Portsmouth to help people with limited mobility plan their travel routes with ease.

The free Route4U app is a handy pavement navigation app and information system which will benefit wheelchair and pram users, allowing them to discover safer, more accessible routes across the city.

Portsmouth is the first city in the UK to introduce the new technology, following a successful pilot scheme. Route4U, which is available on Apple and Android, was commissioned by the Portsmouth City Council. The developers have worked closely with the council to map out the city's pathways.

Users can easily plan their journeys using a route map and navigation system. The app also indicates pavement obstacles, surface quality, kerb heights, widths, inclines and travel distances. It provides route planning and turn-by-turn navigation for wheelchair users, and it can be customised to each person's own abilities.

Pam Turton, Assistant Director of Transport for the Portsmouth City Council, said, 'I'm delighted that we can support people with limited mobility by introducing Route4U to the city. This new technology will have many benefits for people who visit, work and live here. The app gives people more flexibility over their journeys, saving them time and enabling them to live fuller, more productive lives. I hope that this free app will give people the confidence to travel independently and make them less reliant on their cars for short distances, saving them money and improving their wellbeing.'

Volunteers, including members of the Portsmouth Disability Forum, have been travelling around the city to inform the developers about pavement conditions and potential obstacles. Volunteers are either able-bodied people who report obstacles through the app or wheelchair users using their phone's auto-survey function to collect data.

Tamas Szekely, CMO of Route4U, said, 'The infrastructure in Portsmouth is surprisingly well-built compared with other European cities, but temporary obstacles and pavement defects over time are simply unavoidable. Users can upload a report in less than 30 seconds, saving a lot of struggling for wheelchair users.'

The system can also help the council's transport planners better design, maintain and improve pavement accessibility. Using the analysis and decision support tool, council officers can access information about the most problematic bottlenecks, enabling them to prioritise pavement maintenance work.

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Additional Assets:
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