

Successful first tram trials of wearable biometrics technology

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A pioneering project using biometric monitoring technology to further boost light rail safety has taken a major step forward with sector-wide trials of a new prototype wearable device.

Developed as part of the Driver Innovation Safety Challenge (DISC), FOCUS+ uses ground-breaking technology to monitor fatigue levels of key employees and alert operators of other wellbeing issues that may impact on safety.

Led by Edinburgh Trams with the support of UKTram and a partnership of public and private sector organisations, a number of networks across the UK have already signed up to the initiative, with more set to take part in the coming months.

Dan Hill, Technical Officer at UK Tram, explained: "The project has already demonstrated its potential to make a huge contribution to further improving light rail safety, and the initial trials provided a wealth of useful data.

"This has enabled our commercial partner, IHF Ltd, to make further improvements to the wearable device

and the FOCUS+ algorithms. This will help us to better understand the data captured and to identify overall trends.”

Now the project is preparing for the next phase of trials, with light rail networks in Blackpool, Sheffield and Manchester set to roll out the devices amongst volunteers, building on the work already done in Edinburgh and by UKTram. Other systems are also set to join the project over the next few weeks.

Feedback from the preliminary trials has already been collated and used to improve the design of the wearable device, making the chassis more robust and ergonomic for the next phase of delivery.

Dan added: “As we prepare for the next stage of this exciting project, we would like to thank all the participants for their valued input and continued support. We’re also looking forward to working with even more systems as we strive to ensure light rail remains one of the safest forms of transport by embracing innovation, including the very latest wearable, biometric technology.”

Other FOCUS+ project partners include City of Edinburgh Council, Transport for Edinburgh and Scotland Can Do Fund, and further details about FOCUS+ can be found on the project website at <https://discinnovation.com>

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