

Tech start-up secures major contract with HS2 to supply wearable COVID social distancing technology

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A technology start-up that joined the HS2 COVID-19 Innovation Challenge last Spring has secured a major deal to supply work site social distancing technology to one of HS2's main works civil contractors.

Area Central contractor, Eiffage Kier Ferroviaire BAM (EKFB), has awarded PLINX a contract to supply 1,500 helmet-mounted devices to be used by site workers across its route section, which runs from the Chiltern Hills' northern edge to near Kenilworth in Warwickshire.

The technology will first be deployed at a cutting for Britain's new high-speed railway at Boddington in Warwickshire, before being rolled out across the entire central area.

PLINX founder, Tommy Williams, who featured on BBC One's *The One Show* to demonstrate the effectiveness of the social distancing technology, responded to HS2's COVID Innovation Challenge and set about refining its technology to help workers to continue working safely on site by helping them to maintain social distancing rules.

The PLINX devices use cutting-edge wireless technology to accurately monitor how close workers are to each other; if they are within two metres of another person, the devices will beep, vibrate and flash, notifying the users to keep their distance.

The anonymous data from these devices will provide Health and Safety managers with valuable insights to manage population density, monitor pinch points on sites and collate data to enable effective contact tracing. This innovative solution will provide an extra level of safety by alerting, monitoring and managing people and their adherence to social distancing guidelines on site, as well as gathering data to prevent further incursions.

Beyond the main COVID-19 use case, the PLINX solution was selected as it offered longer term use that would continue to help EKFB to maintain Health & Safety on sites post COVID. PLINX social distancing technology will anonymously monitor proximity to hazards such as exclusion zones and machines and allow users to SOS alert in emergency situations or activate timeout sessions if permitted to do so.

Commenting on EKFB's decision to award, Glenn Christiansen, Safety, Health, Wellbeing, Assurance & Compliance Director said: "The safety, health and wellbeing of our people is EKFB's highest priority, so we are excited to introduce a technology that both supports and improves this.

"During the current situation with Coronavirus, where we are striving to make our workplaces safe for those that continue to come to work, it is especially important to ensure that distancing rules on site are understood, observed, and monitored. PLINX technology gives us an unrivalled ability to manage this, not only technically but also by showing people that we care enough about them to invest in new technology that helps."

PLINX Founder Tommy Williams said: "It is refreshing to see how well HS2 and EKFB adopt new technologies, such as ours, to address their biggest challenges. We look forward to continuing to help improve safety, security and efficiency on their sites for the duration of the project."

HS2's head of innovation Howard Mitchell said: "This is a great example of how teamwork and collaboration across the HS2 supply chain creates an environment for innovation to flourish. Tommy and team have shown that being agile and quick to act can create great solutions to fast moving situations."

Photo credit: PLINX