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Northumbria University is first in Europe to roll out free safety app

Northumbria University, Newcastle is launching a pioneering new safety app to give staff and students peace of mind in an era of 24/7 access on campus.

Following Newcastle being rated as one of the safest cities to study in England and Wales in recent years, the app provides the University with new ways to further ensure the safety of staff and students.

Damon Kent, Director of Campus Services said: "We are committed to ensuring the best student experience at Northumbria. It was clear that the

SafeZone solution, in conjunction with other control measures, could enhance safety on campus ensuring the fastest possible response to any incident. Being the first University in Europe to adopt SafeZone, we are excited about the extensive capabilities of the solution and are confident that it meets the needs of our students.”

The app, SafeZone, works within defined boundaries, set by the University and is connected directly to Security. Boundaries can be altered, providing the flexibility to be used at off-site events and in other locations outside of the UK.

It has three main features which can be accessed at the tap of a button: emergency assistance, first aid and general help. Security officers are dispatched for all emergency and first aid requests, whilst the general help button connects directly to the Campus Services Helpdesk. Users can also check in, to make Security aware of their location.

Using the app, the University is able to access data on the move and benefit from more agile decision-making, due to the wireless nature of the software. Currently it works within the boundaries of the University’s Newcastle City Campus, Coach Lane Campus, Trinity Square, the Northern Design Centre in Gateshead, and Bullocksteads sports facilities.

John Anderson, Head of Security, said: “We needed to consider what resources we had available to us to support initiatives like 24/7 access. When we investigated using SafeZone, we were impressed with the features, its cost effectiveness and how it can adapt to meet the needs of the University and the community.

“Introducing the app sets us apart from other universities and demonstrates our commitment to health and safety, making Northumbria a secure and safe place to study and work.”

Outside the defined boundaries, users can still have peace of mind as the app connects directly to the local emergency services.

The app, developed by CriticalArc, has a successful track record in Australia where approximately 300,000 students and staff across several universities, have access to the app.

Darren Chalmers-Stevens, EMEA Director, CriticalArc, added, “Northumbria University’s decision to implement SafeZone demonstrates their commitment to ensuring a safe learning environment for students and staff. This is a strategic win for CriticalArc with more to follow as we continue to educate the market and work with universities across Europe, the Middle East and Africa.”

The fully integrated app is available from January 2015 for iOS, Android and Windows devices.

Northumbria University staff and students interested in finding out more may do so by visiting www.safezoneapp.com.

More information on the University’s security services can be found at <https://www.northumbria.ac.uk/sd/central/campus/fmsecurity/>

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