

Epsom Hospital added to app helping visually impaired bus users

10 October 2026



Epsom Hospital has been added to a Surrey scheme using smartphone technology to help blind and partially sighted people travel more independently by public transport.

Surrey County Council has expanded free access to the Aira Explorer app to 13 hospitals and healthcare sites across the county, including Epsom Hospital.

The move follows earlier stages of the scheme reported by the Epsom & Ewell Times. Surrey became the first UK local authority to introduce the service at bus stations in June 2025, before it was subsequently extended to Epsom Station and other rail and bus interchanges later that year.

A helping eye on the journey

Aira Explorer allows a visually impaired traveller to make a video call from their smartphone to a trained visual interpreter.

The interpreter can see through the phone's camera and give spoken guidance to the user. At the newly included healthcare locations, the service is intended to help people navigate between nearby bus stops and hospital entrances.

Use of the app at the designated Surrey locations is free, with the scheme funded by Surrey County Council from its allocation under the Government's Bus Service Improvement Fund.

Alongside Epsom Hospital, the healthcare locations covered are Royal Surrey County Hospital, Frimley Park Hospital, Ashford Hospital, St Peter's Hospital, East Surrey Hospital, Farnham Hospital, Woking Community Hospital, Molesey Hospital, Walton Community Hospital, Sunbury Health Centre, Leatherhead Community Hospital and Cranleigh Village Hospital.

The app also remains available at major bus stations and interchanges in Guildford, Redhill, Staines and Woking and at bus stops serving railway stations including Epsom, Caterham, Dorking, Oxted, Leatherhead, Reigate and Horley.

From Epsom Station to Epsom Hospital

EET reported in June 2025 on the introduction of Aira at Guildford, Redhill, Staines and Woking bus stations.

The scheme was expanded later in the year, with Epsom Station among the locations added. The latest development therefore extends the same type of assistance to another important destination for local residents.

Cllr Matt Furniss, Surrey County Council Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Economic Growth, said the council was aware that using buses and navigating transport facilities could be difficult for people with visual impairments.

He said the hospital expansion was designed to assist passengers travelling by bus for important appointments and added: "We're keen to make bus travel accessible for everyone and hope this expansion will support people to travel confidently and independently."

The council says the initiative forms part of wider spending on bus services, including £6.3 million for additional ultra-low and zero-emission community transport minibuses, £9 million for bus priority measures and £1.4 million for improved passenger information at bus stops.

Disability groups welcome expansion

Nikki Roberts, chief executive of Surrey Coalition of Disabled People, welcomed the extension, saying free access to the service at key locations would be "hugely beneficial" to members with sight loss travelling around Surrey.

Dave Smith, Engagement Manager for South East England at sight-loss charity Thomas Pocklington Trust, said the app was particularly useful if a traveller became disorientated or encountered unexpected roadworks or obstructions.

Clare Burgess, chief executive of Sensory Services by Sight for Surrey, also welcomed the expansion, describing Aira as a

useful tool for blind and partially sighted people travelling around the county.

Related reports

- Epsom Station joins app helping visually impaired bus users – 8 November 2025. Epsom & Ewell Times
- Bus station app for visually impaired a first in Surrey – 20 June 2025. Epsom & Ewell Times
- Support for independent travel – 14 May 2026. Epsom & Ewell Times

Image: Idealised representation of app user at a bus stop near Epsom Hospital