Protect Scotland app launches
Additional protection against coronavirus.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon has urged smartphone users across Scotland to download NHS Scotland's new contact tracing app to help suppress the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

The Protect Scotland app is now available to download for free via Apple and Google stores.

Supported by a dedicated Protect Scotland website, the app is an extra tool complementing existing person-to-person contact tracing which remains the main component of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system.

Individuals privacy will be protected as the app uses Bluetooth technology to anonymously alert users if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and advises them to self-isolate. Users of the app who test positive will still get a call from a contact tracer to confirm their details and who they have been in close contact with.

The app does not store details on an individual or their location but uses encrypted, anonymised codes exchanged between smartphones to determine all close contacts. Close contacts are defined as people who have been within two metres of someone who has tested positive for 15 minutes.

Designed by software developers NearForm for NHS Scotland, the app uses the same technology as the Republic of Ireland and Northern Irish proximity tracing apps.

Sign up is entirely voluntary but strongly recommended for those with compatible smartphones.

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said:

"The launch of the app is a welcome development which will offer an additional level of protection – supporting NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system as it works to drive down the spread of COVID-19 across the country.

"I would encourage everyone to download the free app if they have a compatible smartphone, and help slow the spread of COVID-19. This will support the work of NHS Scotland and has the potential to help avoid local lockdowns.

"The more people who download and use the app, the more effective it can be in helping to make connections that may otherwise have been missed. This will allow people to self-isolate quickly if they are exposed to the virus, reducing the risk of them infecting others.

St Andrew's House, Regent Road, Edinburgh EH1 3DG

www.gov.scot

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE
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"We all have a part to play in suppressing the virus, and downloading the app - alongside other vital measures such as following hygiene and physical distancing guidance - will help protect you, your family and your community.

"We also know that not everyone uses a smartphone or will be able to or want to access the app, which is why this software is very much there to complement existing contact tracing methods."

Cian Ó Maidín, CEO, NearForm said:

"We're delighted to partner with NHS Scotland on the Protect Scotland app which puts power in citizens' pockets to join the fight against COVID-19.

"This open source technology was built with privacy and data protection at its core and, through anonymous keys, allows Scottish citizens to engage, protect each other and break transmission chains.

"The Scottish Government has taken a great approach, using open source software, that has been peer reviewed and rolled out successfully in Ireland and Northern Ireland."

Background

For more information on the Protect Scotland app visit www.protect.scot

The app focuses solely on proximity tracing. If an individual tests positive for COVID-19, they will be sent a unique code to their mobile. If they give permission, the data will then be sent to a server so close contacts also using the app can be notified by text and advised to self-isolate. It will not include additional functionality such as QR code software to allow for venue check in/outs. It also will not include symptom checking as this is available via the NHS 24 COVID-19 app.

The app signposts to existing guidance on NHS Inform, Ready Scotland and the Scottish Government website, including on what to do if you receive an alert and are advised to self-isolate.

The Protect Scotland app is compatible with iPhones 6S and above and Android 6.0 and above.

Detailed information about the features, functionality, security and data privacy elements of the base technology is available online.

The Scottish Government remains in discussion with the UK Government regarding their planned contact tracing app.

Test and Protect was rolled out across Scotland on 28 May 2020.

People with any of the following symptoms should book a test at nhsinform.scot/test-and-protect or call 0800 028 2816 if they are unable to access the online service:

a high temperature or fever
a new continuous cough
a loss of, or change in sense of smell or taste

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The UK Government has confirmed that individuals who are be eligible for Statutory Sick Pay will receive it if they are isolating. Statutory Sick Pay will not be given to members of the individual's household who have not had contact but who may have to isolate. Those members will need to access the benefits system for financial support if they are unable to work and would lose income as a result.