Scottish Government plans contact tracing app

A contact tracing app to support NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system is now in development.

The Scottish Government is working towards having a proximity tracing app available in the autumn via Apple and Google app stores.

It will focus on using Bluetooth technology to anonymously alert users if they have been in close contact with another user who has tested positive for coronavirus.

This will complement existing person to person contact tracing which will remain the main component of NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system.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 traced.The software is voluntary and does not ask users for any personal information at any time. The app will use the same software as the Republic of Ireland app, which has been adapted for use in Northern Ireland. It will work with those apps to support movement across the common travel area.

The Scottish Government remains in discussion with the UK Government on its proximity app.

Health Secretary Jeane Freeman said:"This new app will offer an additional level of protection, supporting NHS Scotland's Test and Protect system to continue to drive down the spread of COVID-19 across the country.

"It builds on existing person to person contact tracing which remains the most robust method of contacting those who have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive.

"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 will however, allow contacts unknown to the positive individual to be traced — for example fellow passengers on a train or bus.

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