UK contact tracing app cost £11 million

Midlothian MP, Owen Thompson asked a parliamentary question about the cost of the UK tracing app which has now been abandoned.

He says that almost £11 million has been wasted on the technology.

The UK Government spent £10.8million on developing the NHSX contact tracing app that was ditched after trial on the Isle of Wight.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson promised the UK would have a "world-beating" contact tracing system in place by 1 June 2020 with the centralised contact tracing app central to the strategy. Health Secretary Matt Hancock even declared it would be a "civic duty" to download the app before the plans were quietly abandoned.

After months in development, the NHSX app was first due to be rolled out across England in mid-May before it was delayed and then scrapped in favour of using Google and Apple's technology. The app had been found on trial to detect only four per cent of iPhones it came into contact with and had difficulties detecting how far away another phone was.

Mr Thompson said: "We were promised a 'world-beating' track and trace system but yet again the Prime Minister squandered money and failed to deliver. This is another example of the mis-management from the UK Government of the Covid19 response.

"Scientists and researchers flagged many issues with the UK Government's home-grown system, both with security concerns and the technicalities. People warned it wouldn't work but we know this government prefers to ignore the experts.

"At a time of national emergency it's a great pity that so much time, effort and money was wasted on this botched project before it was abandoned."

Written question from Owen below:-
https://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2020-06-19/61736/

To ask the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, what was the cost to the public purse of the development of the original centralised covid-19 contact-tracing app.

Answered by: Ms Nadine Dorries Answered on: 02 July 2020
To date, the cost of developing the National Health Service COVID-19 app is £10.8 million. Our investment in the Isle of Wight phase has provided us with valuable information that we can combine with Google and Apple's technology in a new solution to support the entire NHS Test and Trace service in a product that is right for the British public.

Our ICNN colleagues at On the Wight also have some information in their article about the number of downloads as well as some questions they asked a month ago which remain unanswered. [You can read their article here.](#)