

Coronavirus – Protect Scotland App now available for download

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon is encouraging all smartphone users in Scotland to download NHS Scotland's new contact tracing app to help suppress the spread of coronavirus.

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

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

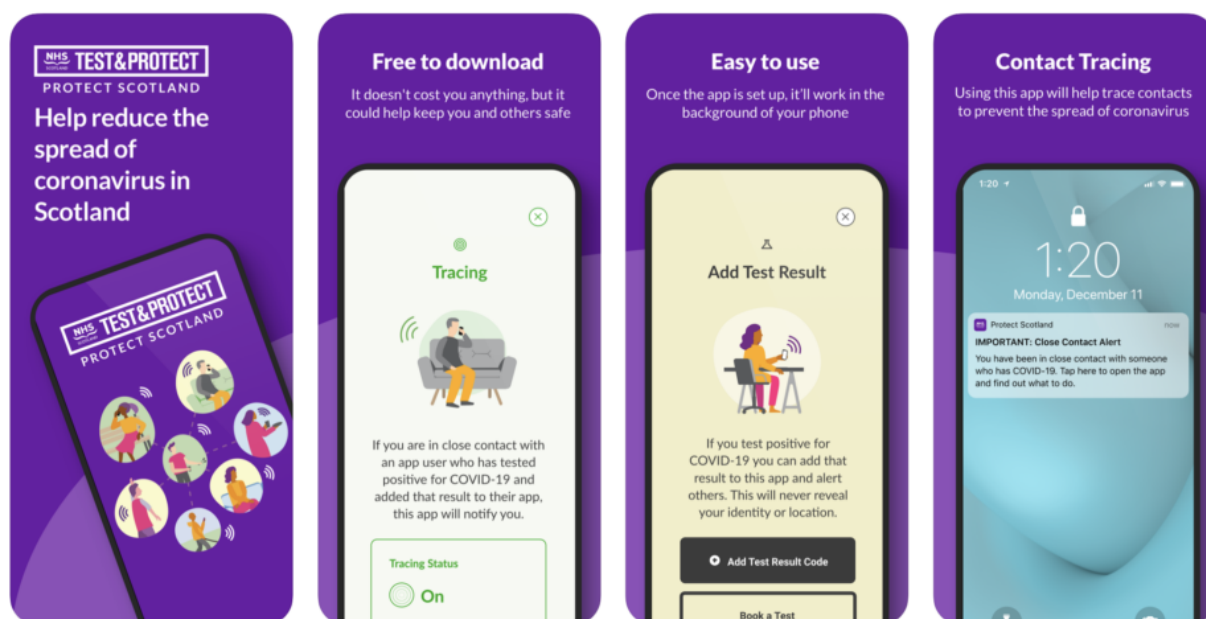
Individuals' privacy will be protected as the app uses Bluetooth technology to anonymously alert users if they have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, and advises them to self-isolate. App users who test positive will still get a call from a contact tracer to confirm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

The government says 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 the government strongly recommends it for those with compatible smartphones.

iPhone Screenshots



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.

“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.”