

Editorial

Get the app and Protect Scotland from coronavirus

People across Scotland are being urged to download the new Protect Scotland app to help suppress the spread of coronavirus.

The free app, available now on Apple and Google stores, will enhance existing Test and Protect contact tracing measures, offering an additional layer of protection to break the chains of transmission faster.

Once downloaded, the app works in the background, using Bluetooth technology to anonymously alert people if they have been within two metres for at least 15 minutes with another app user who has tested positive for coronavirus.

It also quickly alerts those you have been in close contact with if you test positive, even if those contacts are unknown to you.

People's privacy will be protected, as the app uses encrypted anonymised codes to determine close contacts, which are deleted after 14 days. It doesn't store details on an individual, or their location.

Designed to complement the Test and Protect person-to-person contact tracing system, the app will allow people to self-isolate far quicker if they are exposed to the virus, reducing the risk of them infecting others - and the more people who use the app, the better it will work.

However, people are being reminded that following FACTS remains vital - face coverings, avoid crowded places, clean hands and surfaces, two metre physical distancing and self-isolate immediately and book a test if you have symptoms.

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 to continue 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."

Download the free app today at protect.scot and protect yourself, your family, and Scotland against coronavirus.