

# Coronavirus V contact tracing

*Every week, Maddyness curates articles from other outlets on a topic that is driving the headlines. This week, we tell you what you need to know about the new coronavirus contact tracing app.*

Temps de lecture : minute

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8 May 2020

As part of the next phase of the government's test, track, trace and isolate approach to help stop the spread of COVID-19, the new NHS contact-tracing app is being trialled with healthcare workers on the Isle of Wight and is set to be rolled out to the public in the coming weeks.

What is the new NHS contact-tracing app? It's designed to let people know if they have been in close contact with someone who later reports positive for COVID-19. It could pinpoint exactly who needs to be in quarantine and who doesn't, easing up social distancing measures. It aims to track contaminated people and alert them of the need to self-isolate faster than traditional methods. Users who download the app to their phone can voluntarily opt-in to record details of their symptoms when they start to feel unwell.

How does the tech behind contact-tracing work? The technology the NHS has built will allow smartphones to track every other device they have come into contact with in the 28 days using Bluetooth signals.

[Read more about the contact tracing app on the NHSX official website](#)

## Concerns about data privacy

Recently there have been some questions related to the safety of the

app, as The Guardian said in an article. The NHS team developing the official tracing app rejected the “decentralised” model approach - where all the relevant contact information is held only on users’ phones -, and instead insisted on holding a central database of those who say they have been infected. But this has raised concerns over privacy. [Read the full article here.](#)

## SkyNews gets exclusive access to the "contract-tracing nerve centre" in Oxfordshire

Sky has spoken exclusively to Trish Mannes, deputy director for health protection at Public Health England South East leading tracing teams in the south-east of England, who describes how data from the app will be combined with human expertise to contain the spread of the virus.

*"We absolutely have to go through a really detailed timeline of every day, each bit of the day, who you work with, who you live with, who you might socialise with outside of work." - Trish Mannes, deputy director for health protection at Public Health England South East*

► [Watch the video on SkyNews YouTube channel](#) (or below)

## Potential problems of the app raised by an Oxford University professor

An Oxford University professor who worked on the app said 60% of the population will need to download it for it to be effective. There are also worries over the fact it relies on self-reporting of symptoms, which may be unreliable, and could potentially contravene the UK's data laws. [Read the full article on the MIT Tech Review](#)

## Without Apple and Google, the UK's contact-tracing app is in trouble

The UK is one of the few countries that has chosen to create a contact-tracing app that is incompatible with the contact-tracing API currently being developed by Google and Apple. Instead of decentralizing the data across devices, the UK will [pool the information it collects](#) in a single database operated by the National Health Service, or NHS. [Read the full article on The Verge](#)

## Tech policy researcher from University College London comments on not choosing the Apple-Google API

*"By choosing not to use the Apple-Google API, which does not permit the type of centralized data collection the U.K. is seeking, it means that two or more users of iPhones who are meeting with their devices locked in their pocket will not trigger each other as contacts," Michael Veale, a technology*

*policy researcher at University College London*

[Read the full article on VICE](#)

## Scotland refuses to join the NHS contact tracing app

The Scottish government dealt a potential hammer blow to Health Secretary Matt Hancock's app after saying it will only commit to the technology if it is shown to work and is secure. Nicola Sturgeon has said she is 'cautious' about the app and has stressed Scotland's approach to stopping the spread of the disease will be more 'old fashioned'.

Meanwhile, Professor Jason Leitch, Scotland's national clinical director, said he will only download the app 'once I'm confident that it works' and the 'security is good'. [Read the story on Daily Mail](#)

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