

NHS COVID-19 contact tracing app Q&A: Isle of Wight

The Isle of Wight will be leading the way to take the country into the next phase of tackling this pandemic. This is a key part of the government's plans to control coronavirus, ensuring we minimise the spread of the virus and can be used to keep our community as safe as possible.

Lockdown is not being lifted on the Isle of Wight as a part of this phase.

Downloading the app is entirely voluntary, but the government is calling on as many people on the Island as possible to download the app. The more people get involved, the safer our community will be.

When someone reports symptoms through the app, it will detect any other app users that the person has been in significant contact with over the past few days, including unknown contacts, such as someone they may have sat next to on public transport. The app will be able to anonymously alert these people and provide advice, including how to get a test to confirm whether or not they do have COVID-19.

As part of a new test and trace programme, the app will work together with enhanced contact tracing services and swab testing for those with potential COVID-19 symptoms to help minimise the spread of COVID-19.

FAQ

What's happening on the Isle of Wight?

The government is launching the first part of an integrated testing and contact tracing programme which will play an important role in how the UK manages the rate of COVID-19 transmission.

There are three elements to this programme:

- The NHS COVID-19 app. An automated system for rapid symptom reporting, ordering of swab tests, and alerting app users who have had close contact with someone showing symptoms.
- Sending swab testing kits to people who report symptoms to identify if someone has the virus.
- Tracing people who have been near someone with COVID-19 – referred to as 'contact tracing' and done online and over the phone.

Why is this happening on the Isle of Wight?

Because it is an island with a population size that will enable the government to evaluate the new programme effectively.

The Island has a single NHS Trust that delivers ambulance, community, mental health and hospital services, and a single local authority providing services across the whole island. This makes it easier to coordinate the first phase of rollout.

A large number of Island people and organisations have said that they are supportive and keen to help.

Why is there a phased approach?

It is important for the app to be used so that we can see how it works. This step is essential ahead of a full roll-out nationwide.

On the Isle of Wight the app will be integrated with virology swab testing via a call centre. A user will enter their symptoms on the app. It will notify their contacts. Suspected cases will be offered a test. If they accept, they will be asked to call the call centre to get tested.

The NHS is working to integrate arranging testing into the app digitally for the next phase of the roll out.

Is lockdown being relaxed on the Island?

No. Current measures will remain in place.

How can you tell if the app is working and effective if the social distancing measures are still in place?

The model has been adjusted for the low levels of movement on the Island under the current measures. As new data comes in, modelling will improve. For some groups such as key workers, social distancing is not always possible.

Are we putting people on the Isle of Wight at extra risk?

No. We are not asking anyone on the Island to do anything different from anyone else in the UK. We are asking residents to download and use an app which will soon be available to the whole of the UK.

What is the mechanism for people to download the app on the Island?

Every household on the Island will receive a leaflet from Ruth May, England's Chief Nursing Officer, on or after the morning of Thursday 7 May as the app is made available. This will include a link to a webpage and details of how to join.

The NHS COVID-19 app webpage will guide residents to the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store, where it can be downloaded.

Why is the army involved?

The armed forces are providing logistical support to the NHS.

Are people being forced to download the app on the Isle of Wight?

No. Downloading the NHS COVID-19 App is voluntary but we want as many people as possible to download it to help understand the user experience ahead of a full roll-out nationwide.

How much battery will it use on people's phones?

The app uses Bluetooth Low Energy, which should ensure that the battery use is as minimal as possible. NHSx has tested the app's use of battery and will continue to monitor its impact on battery life.

Does the app store my personal data or identify me?

No. The app uses Bluetooth which gives the phone a unique code – it does not identify the person. The app can then tell if a unique code has been near another unique code that has reported COVID-19 symptoms. It does not identify the person or store any personal data.

You say that the app does not track location so why do Android phones require users to turn on location?

The NHS COVID-19 app does not access or record a user's location, only their proximity to other phones with the app installed. It does so using only Bluetooth Low Energy. Locations cannot be tracked on this application, and GPS data is not used.

On iPhones the user must enable Bluetooth in order for the app to work. iPhone users are not asked to enable location services since the app does not use or record location.

On Android phones the user must likewise enable Bluetooth in order for the app to work. However, in order to turn on Bluetooth Low Energy scanning in Android, the Android operating system (not the NHS) insists that location services must also be switched on. The app does not use or record location for any users (Android or iOS).

How does the NHS COVID-19 App work?

The app logs the distance between your phone and other phones nearby that also have the app installed. It measures this distance using Bluetooth. This log of anonymous proximity information will be stored securely on your phone.

If you become unwell with symptoms of COVID-19, you should inform the NHS COVID-19 app. The app then informs the NHS and triggers an anonymous notification to other app users with whom you came into significant contact over the previous few days.

Precisely which other app users are notified will be determined by a contact risk model. NHS doctors and scientists will continuously update this to make it as accurate as possible.

Which versions of Android and iOS will work with the app?

The NHS COVID-19 app is supported on Android and Apple (iOS) phones. Support for the Huawei AppGallery is coming soon. The app currently supports Apple iOS versions 11 and higher, and Android versions 8 and higher. We are looking to support earlier versions of these operating systems in future where possible.

Why are you asking people to self-report symptoms within the NHS COVID-19 App?

To help keep transmission of COVID-19 at low levels. It will mean health experts can trace contacts of those who have developed symptoms and provide advice to help protect them and others.

The app does this at speed, and will help trace contacts that may not be known to the app user.

The latest science suggests that a proportion of infections are transmitted by people who are not yet showing any symptoms. Contact tracing is a race against time and this needs to be done as fast as possible. The app will help to do this because it is automated and fast.

Will the NHS COVID-19 App alert users if they are near someone who is infected? How quickly can users expect an alert?

There is no instant alerting. During the daytime, users should expect an alert within a few hours of another app user with whom they had significant contact reporting symptoms of COVID-19. The precise details will depend on the number and length of contacts.

Will people need to self-isolate as soon as they get an alert that they have been close to someone with the virus?

The NHS COVID-19 App alerts you if you have been near someone who has self-reported symptoms of COVID-19. You can then take action to protect family, friends and the NHS. Everyone alerted will get advice on what to do next.

Public Health England keeps under review the advice to contacts who have been near to a person who has symptoms of COVID-19. The current advice for such contacts is to [adhere to the Government's general guidance to the public](#).

The telephone service will be available to give further advice to people who have been in contact with confirmed cases.

How does the NHS COVID-19 App decide who to alert?

The decision of which NHS COVID-19 App users should be notified is determined by a contact risk model. It considers how long and how close you have been to someone. NHS doctors and scientists will update this contact risk model to make it as accurate as possible.

Will everyone alerted by the app have to self-isolate?

Not necessarily. Advice will be given based on the individual and the details of their contact. This will not always include self-isolation.

What if you haven't got a smart phone?

The NHS COVID-19 app is part of a wider approach that involves contact tracing via a call centre and tracing experts and testing.

Whether or not you have a smart phone, everyone will benefit from the NHS COVID-19 app. If enough people with smartphones do download it - it will help slow the epidemic and protect the NHS.

The government is supporting the [DevicesDotNow campaign](#). This aims to get internet-enabled devices and support to vulnerable people isolated in their homes without internet access. Devices are being distributed through community organisations that are also providing support to help people to use the devices and access the internet and online services. The campaign is prioritising

people who are digitally excluded and shielding or vulnerable due to age, disability, health conditions and social isolation.

The government is working on ways for people to access tests through other routes if they cannot or choose not to use the app on the Isle of Wight. Essential workers and others who are already eligible for tests can continue to access them via established routes.

What is the minimum age for installing the app? What is the guidance for parents/guardians?

The minimum age is age 16 or 17 depending on Apple/Google app store specifications.

The Government is assessing the effectiveness and usability of the NHS COVID-19 App for young people.

What kind of test will be used?

This will be a swab test, to test if you have the virus. This is the same test that is being rolled out across the country.

Who can get a test?

Anyone living on the Isle of Wight who is symptomatic.

Are Island residents guaranteed a swab test?

All Island residents who are symptomatic can apply for a swab test. Only app users will be guaranteed a swab test delivered to their home, with a limited stockpile allocated to support this phase.

Those who book tests via Gov.uk will have home delivery of swab tests as an option, if they are available. Otherwise they can book a test via the local test centre by telephoning 03333 218865. This is due to the unique way the testing programme has been set up to service phase one of the app roll out.

How do I get access to a test?

The primary route is via the app. Once a user informs the app they have COVID-19 symptoms, they will be connected to a call centre to order a swab test. They will receive their results by email.

If they show symptoms, non-app users on the Isle of Wight will still be able to access tests through other routes. They can book a test via the local test centre by telephoning 03333 218865

Essential workers and those who are eligible for tests can access them via established routes. They are encouraged to use the app wherever possible.

How many tests do you envisage will be done a day?

Given the size of the local population we estimate 50-100 a day. This may be higher for the first few days of opening out eligibility for testing to a new group - any symptomatic member of the population.

Which lab/s will do the testing, will it be the Lighthouse labs?

No, we are intending to use the Randox system and the lab in County Antrim for the Isle of Wight phase of work.