

What you need to know about the NHS Test and Trace App

Every Monday, Maddyness curates articles from other outlets on a topic that is driving the headlines. This week, we look at the much-anticipated NHS Test and Trace app, which launched last Thursday.

How England and Wales' contact-tracing service works

It has been a long time coming but England and Wales' COVID-19 app launched on Thursday. It follows in the footsteps of Scotland and Northern Ireland's own efforts but has more features. Apple and Google's automated contact-tracing technology will be used to tell people to self-isolate if their phone detects they were near someone later determined to have the virus. [Read about how the app works in the full BBC news article.](#)

Take-up of NHS contact-tracing app could be only 10%

Pilot studies show low download rate as app launches in England and Wales. International examples show take-up rates of similar apps at between 10% and

30%, a far cry from the NHS app target in April of 80% of smartphone users. Oxford University's Big Data unit, which advised the government on its development, said that would be the equivalent of 56% of the population. [Read the full article in the Guardian.](#)

The NHS Test and Trace app has two flaws: QR codes and people

The concerns raised by early adopters in Newham aren't focused on the technology itself. Instead, it's a people problem: some people can't or won't download and install the app, while others have been confused by the QR code system. [Read the full article on Wired.](#)

Contact tracing apps struggle to be both effective and private

The United Kingdom initially spent millions developing an app that would collect data and send it to a centralised data storage system run by the National Health Service. But privacy advocates raised concern about the system, and in June the government announced that it would abandon that effort and switch to a less-centralised alternative built on technology from the tech giants Apple and Google. The UK's indecision shows how the choice of strategy revolves around privacy trade-offs. [Read more on IEEE Spectrum.](#)

Test and trace app a key part in jobs effort, says Boris Johnson

The Prime Minister has pinned hopes on the new test and trace app, along with the measures announced by the chancellor [Rishi Sunak](#), as a key driver in preserving jobs. Speaking in Northamptonshire, Boris Johnson said that downloading the new track and trace app "was the best way to stop the spread of the virus and would be backed up by fines for people who don't follow the guidance". [Read the full article on Personnel Today](#)

Revamped NHS tracing app gets off to promising start

High level of downloads raises hopes that troubled project has overcome

problems. The free NHS app launched on Thursday after a four month delay and a complete overhaul of its design. According to its information page on the Google Play Store, it was installed more than a million times on its first day on Android devices alone. [Read the full article on the Financial Times.](#)

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