



28 May 2020

Baroness Harding of Winscombe
House of Lords

Dear Lady Harding,

Re: COVID-19 Test and Trace

The National Pensioners Convention is the largest campaigning organisation for older people in the UK. We exist to promote the welfare and interests of all pensioners, as a way of securing dignity, respect and financial security in retirement. Our policies cover pensions, health and care, transport, housing, and digital inclusion/exclusion.

We are somewhat concerned about the communication around the expected test and trace app that is intended to be an indicator of when an individual may have come into contact with another individual testing positive for the virus.

One of the worries the NPC has is that 60% of those over 65 years of age do not have smartphones (*ONS). The percentage is higher among over 75's, those most at risk from the virus.

Using myself as an example, I have a computer, a laptop and a tablet. However, my mobile phone is a 'pay as you go' for use in an emergency and for texts to family and friends. Like many other pensioners I cannot afford a smart phone and the payments for data usage.

We are wondering if you have made (or will be making) any provision for older people who do not have a smart phone (or in lots of cases not even a mobile phone), given that we are in the 'high risk' category.

Technology is a wonderful thing, but to many older people it brings worries of fraud, hacking and other elements they have little or no understanding of and therefore if the government is to rely on test and trace, it has to be across the board in different forms to keep everyone safe.

We look forward to hearing from you and hope that older people will not be forgotten in the drive to suppress and hopefully eliminate this awful virus.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Jan Shortt', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Jan Shortt
General Secretary