**Residents urged to download the new COVID-19 app**

The Leader of Cheshire West Council Councillor Louise Gittins is urging all residents to play their part to protect family and friends by downloading the new NHS COVID-19 app.

The app launched nationwide 24th September it could be downloaded onto smartphones from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

It is designed to notify its users if they have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, complementing the Test and Trace Service and halting the spread of the virus.

It needs to be downloaded by as many people as possible in the borough to track the virus and stop its spread.

Councillor Louise Gittins said: “The COVID-19 app will help you tackle the virus by providing you with important information about where the virus is, how to avoid it and what to do if you have come into contact with someone who has it.

“I will be downloading it on 24 September, and I encourage everyone to do the same. By doing this, it will be a constructive way for you to play your part to protect your friends, family and others in your community.

“This is one of a number of actions you can take to help stop the increasing spread of infections in our borough. We have all done so much to fight this virus by wearing face coverings, keeping our distance from others, washing our hands and seeking a test if we have symptoms.

“With infections rising and the prospect of a second wave on the horizon, we now need to refocus our efforts and continue to follow these public health guidelines.”

The app works by enabling you to tell the app securely if you test positive for COVID-19 and the app will then send an anonymous alert to other app users that you've been in close contact with over the past few days, even before you had symptoms.

This anonymous alert (using a random identification number known as a ‘random ID’) means that interactions with other app users remain completely private. Users’ privacy and identity are protected. No personal details about the users are revealed and the app will not hold users’ personal information.

The app does not track users or their location and does not have access to phone contacts or any personal information held on a phone. Nobody, including the government, will know the identity or location of users. The National Cyber Security Centre also checks that the app is safe and secure.

Users can delete the app and all the data it stores, whenever they choose.

From 24 September, businesses will also be legally required to display an official NHS QR code poster ahead of the launch of the COVID-19 app.

By scanning the QR code poster when visiting venues using their smartphone, residents will be able to check in quickly and easily to the venue. Customer contact details will need to be collected by the venue for those people that have not checked-in using the QR poster and this will be a legal requirement from 24September.

**Notes to editors:**

Further information about the app is available at: <https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/pdf/introducing-the-app.pdf>

Information on how businesses can create a QR code poster for their building: <https://www.covid19.nhs.uk/pdf/businesses-qr-guide.pdf>

**Social Media posts:**

* Download the COVID-19 app to play your part to protect your community from coronavirus
* The COVID-19 app does not hold personal information and protects your privacy. Download it now to keep a track of where the virus is spreading to protect you and your family