

Debunks and deep dives: the latest from Full Fact on the good, the bad (and the ugly) information

Full Fact fights bad information. We're a team of independent fact checkers who find, expose and counter the harm it does. Bad information can damage public debate, pose risks to public health and erode public trust.

This is the **fifth** in a [series of briefings](#) keeping you up to date on our work during the pandemic. Full Fact has [now written over 200 articles](#) on claims about Covid-19, the lockdown and the government's response.

Recent fact checks:

- [There is no evidence that suicides have increased 200% under lockdown.](#) A number of users on Twitter shared posts that claimed that suicides have supposedly increased 200% under lockdown. However, we could find no evidence at the time of writing to support this claim (we spoke to charities and the ONS).
- [Coronavirus cures: debunked.](#) Since the start of the pandemic, readers have been asking us whether alleged cures or treatments for the coronavirus - including mouthwash, vitamins, cannabis, bleach and alcohol - are real or not.
- We checked [a claim on Facebook that the Covid-19 track and trace app had been automatically downloaded onto people's phones.](#) This is incorrect. What has been added is an API, which can help Covid-19 tracking apps function.

Deep dive articles: *Where we identify a pattern of claims, or an issue is of particular public interest, we've been taking a deeper look at what is going on behind claims:*

[What do we know about Covid-19 inequalities among people from minority ethnic groups?](#)

Following the publication of a review by Public Health England (PHE) which found that people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to get severely ill and die from Covid-19 compared to the majority White population in the UK, [we looked](#) at what we do (and don't) know about inequalities in Covid-19 outcomes.

[We believe the public deserves a better debate on poverty.](#) Full Fact has been checking poverty claims since we first began fact checking ten years ago. We've [written a piece](#) that explains why current exchanges on this topic in parliament and in the media end up being confusing for everyone and do little to serve anyone who wants to learn about what's happening to poverty in the UK.

[Medical staff at the centre of an information battle:](#) As the pandemic has gripped the country, medical staff have found themselves – often unwillingly – at the centre of a parallel

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information crisis. False or exaggerated posts that attribute their claims to doctors, nurses, and medical professionals, as well as real professionals being unsure about whether to, or facing backlash for, sharing information online whilst trying to do their jobs, [our article](#) hears from the people on the front line.

Tracking misinformation across five countries: a report

Full Fact has contributed to a new visual analysis [report](#) which was produced in collaboration with fact checking organisations in Germany, France, Spain and Italy.

Using over 600 fact checks from the pandemic, the report examines common themes in Covid-19 misinformation that have emerged across all five European countries, including ‘cures and remedies’, ‘5G misinformation’, and ‘claims about the virus being man made’.



Timeline showing spread of claims about the virus being man made in 5 countries

We all have a duty to promote good information

The current crisis is ongoing and we don't know how long it will last. Good information that has the public's trust has never been so important: it will be critical to getting out of the crisis with as little harm to people's health and livelihoods as possible.

At Full Fact we have frequently been unable to find published sources of information or have seen data that has been presented misleadingly about coronavirus claims. This has been particularly true of data around testing, where there are numerous examples of [inaccurate claims](#), unpublished information and [misleading claims on targets](#). We believe that much more can be done to improve the presentation and communication of data, and there must be a willingness to correct inaccurate claims once they are identified, no matter who said them.

The Office for Statistics Regulation has [called](#) on government organisations to publish data that is used in public debate or to inform parliament. It said that if information is not shared with the public in a way that promotes transparency and clarity, then it 'has the potential to cause confusion and undermine confidence in the statistics'.