

# Full Fact update on work to tackle Covid-19 misinformation

Full Fact is the UK's independent fact checking organisation. You can find all our latest fact checks [here](#), and access resources about how to fact check information about Covid-19 [here](#). This is the **second** in a series of briefings keeping you up to date on our work.

## What we are seeing

Since the outbreak of Covid-19 we've published over 80 fact checks on claims about the virus or its effects, including 25 since the start of April.

Much of the misinformation circulating online has been conspiracy theories, particularly on the origin of the virus. We've also looked at [claims on testing](#) and whether or not the government is meeting its targets. And we've seen an increase in audio clips like [this one](#) being shared on private messaging apps such as WhatsApp.

From what we have seen, the mainstream media appear to have reported fewer false claims relating to Covid-19 than earlier in the outbreak, with some exceptions such as the [Daily Mail](#) misrepresenting a survey of doctors on the most effective treatment, which they later clarified after we contacted them. Ofcom also announced this week that they were reviewing comments made by Eamonn Holmes on ITV's This Morning about 5G and Covid-19.

## 5G and Covid-19

We've seen a range of claims continue to surface and spread on social media about a link between 5G and the outbreak of Covid-19, with amplification from a range of public figures, celebrities and some media outlets.

These include the claim circulating on social media [that the design of the new £20 note contains a symbol representing a "5G tower" and the coronavirus](#). The '5G tower' is Margate Lighthouse and the 'coronavirus' is based on a famous staircase at the Tate Britain art gallery. We have also challenged reporting in the mainstream media that links 5G and the new coronavirus, including asking the Daily Star to change [this headline that suggested 5G might be accelerating the spread of the disease](#).

We've also produced [an article that looks more deeply at the theories around 5G and where they come from](#) which has had over 80,000 views since it was published on 9 April.

### **The small details on help for victims of domestic violence matter**

We've seen a wide range of reporting in the media, by politicians and on social media of the police's domestic violence 'silent solution' system which allows people to alert a 999 call handler that they are in danger without speaking. The system has received more attention in the press as there have been reports of domestic abuse charities receiving an increasing number of calls.

But this potentially lifesaving service is being reported with varying accuracy, with some media outlets, politicians and public figures saying 'just dial 999, then 55' and others telling users to 'hang up' once they've pressed 55. These miss out crucial messages that make the service work, including:

- You should wait until you are prompted before pressing 55 (the operator should also transfer your call to the police if they hear suspicious noises like a cough or tapping on the handset)
- You should **not** hang up immediately once you have done so
- The service is only available on mobile phones, not landlines
- Pressing 55 does **not** necessarily allow the police to track your exact location or guarantee they will be dispatched

Our fact check on this with more detail as well as information about calling from a landline can be [found here](#).

### **What the public are worried about**

Since we launched our [online form](#) on 16 March we have received over 2,300 questions, claims or concerns about misinformation from members of the public, including questions about social distancing rules, medical conditions and treatments, and how the virus spreads. We also get sent numerous posts and claims via email and on social media.

Claims we've been able to address from our readers in the last few weeks include:

- [Do face masks protect against the new coronavirus?](#)
- [How does the new coronavirus affect pregnancy?](#)
- [What counts as essential travel during the Covid-19 lockdown?](#)
- A [video that claimed to show patients with Covid-19 lying on the floor of St Mary's Hospital](#) in London, but was actually filmed in Spain.

### **How we can help you and your constituents**

We know that your constituents may be worried at this time and may be sharing information that could be harmful to people's health. We are here to help. You can refer your constituents to our [website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#) accounts to check information they may see. If you see information which could be false or misleading, and could cause harm to people's health or wellbeing, you can send that to us through the google form on our website, or report content directly on social media. Any questions, **email our Policy Manager:** [cassie.staines@fullfact.org](mailto:cassie.staines@fullfact.org).