

Full Fact: Covid-19 misinformation update #3

Full Fact is the UK's independent fact checking organisation. This is the **third** in a series of briefings keeping you up to date on our work. You can read update #1 [here](#) and #2 [here](#).

You can find all our latest fact checks [here](#), and access resources about how to fact check information about Covid-19 [here](#).

Full Fact report 2020: Fighting the causes and consequences of bad information

Yesterday we published [our first annual report](#) which assesses the causes and consequences of bad information in public life based on evidence from a decade of fact checking.

We believe urgent action is needed to rebuild trust in our society and foster honest public debate. As such, we make a set of concrete proposals, built around our three core principles: get your facts right, back up what you say with evidence, and correct your mistakes. We also make recommendations for policy changes from the government, public bodies and internet companies.

You can read the summary and full report [here](#).

Latest Covid-19 claims we have fact checked

Over the past few weeks we've continued to see claims about [how to prevent or treat Covid-19 infection](#), claims about the [causes of the pandemic](#) and claims about the [lockdown measures and government response](#). Increasingly we are also seeing false or misleading claims about vaccines, something which is only likely to become more widespread as vaccine trials develop and make progress in the UK and around the world.

Some of claims we have seen in the last few weeks include:

There is no evidence supporting claims about a government-run network of fake NHS Twitter accounts

There is no publicly available evidence to support the high-profile social media claim that the [Department of Health and Social Care \(or a marketing firm linked to them\) was running a network of fake Twitter accounts](#) created to post pro-government messages. The originator of the claim says that he has identified a network of 128 Twitter accounts, largely impersonating NHS staff members, sharing pro-government messages.

At the time of writing, we are only aware of one account that has been publicly identified. That account has since been deleted and there is as yet no public evidence it has any connection to the DHSC. We asked the individual who made the claim to share his evidence, but he told us that he is not ready to do so at this time.

False claims about the vaccine trials

We [checked fake stories](#) that wrongly claimed Dr Elisa Granato, one of the UK's first Covid-19 vaccine trial participants, had died. Dr Granato is not dead, and the reports have been confirmed to be false by the BBC, the Department of Health and Social Care and Dr Granato herself.

Viral image of a dog vaccine for a different coronavirus

We've seen a number of posts on Facebook, each shared thousands of times, [claiming that there was a vaccine for coronavirus created back in 2001](#). The vaccine pictured in the post is one for dogs for canine coronavirus, which is a gastrointestinal disease, not a respiratory one. The vaccine in question does not protect against Covid-19 and is not for humans.

Context for the claims that Romanian seasonal workers are taking UK workers' jobs

We saw a number of questions from people on social media and were asked by Full Fact readers about [why flights have been chartered to bring migrant workers into the UK](#) to pick fruit despite popular local recruitment drives for workers. Farmers and produce companies say although there has been high interest and some roles are filled, experienced farmworkers are still needed to train and supervise new recruits and volunteers.

Claims about Matt Hancock owning the NHS supply chain open to misinterpretation

A range of posts on social media [claimed that Matt Hancock owns the company responsible for supplying the NHS](#) with the equipment it needs, with some saying this is a conflict of interest. However, Mr Hancock does not personally own the company in a private capacity; it is owned by the government, through whoever is the Secretary of State for Health at the time.

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 Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

We encourage everyone to be responsible about the information they share online. **If you have any questions you can email our Policy Manager:** cassie.staines@fullfact.org.