



## ‘Project Fear’ authors discussed when to ‘deploy’ new Covid variant

### Description

Matt Hancock wanted to “deploy” a new Covid variant to “frighten the pants off” the public and ensure they complied with lockdown, leaked messages seen by The Telegraph have revealed.

The Lockdown Files – more than 100,000 WhatsApp messages sent between ministers, officials and others – show how the Government used scare tactics to force compliance and push through lockdowns.

In another message Simon Case, the Cabinet Secretary, said that “the fear/ guilt factor” was “vital” in “ramping up the messaging” during the third national lockdown in Jan 2021.

The previous month, Matt Hancock, the then health secretary, appeared to suggest in one message that a new strain of Covid that had recently emerged would be helpful in preparing the ground for the looming lockdown, by scaring people into compliance.

In a WhatsApp conversation on Dec 13, obtained by The Telegraph, Damon Poole – one of Mr Hancock’s media advisers – informed his boss that Tory MPs were “furious already about the prospect” of stricter Covid measures and suggested “we can roll pitch with the new strain”.

The comment suggested that they believed the strain could be helpful in preparing the ground for a future lockdown and tougher restrictions in the run-up to Christmas 2020.

Mr Hancock then replied: “We frighten the pants off everyone with the new strain.”

Mr Poole agreed, saying: “Yep that’s what will get proper bahviour [sic] change.”

The discussion came two days after Mr Hancock was informed of the emergence of a new variant – known as alpha or the Kent variant, in Dec 2020. A surge in cases later led to the effective cancellation of Christmas on Dec 19.

Mr Hancock expressed his worry that talks over Brexit would dominate headlines and reduce the impact, and probed Mr Poole for his media advice. “When do we deploy the new variant,” asked Mr

Hancock.

During the pandemic, the Government was accused of scaremongering but it was denied, with Mr Hancock's department saying such accusations were "misleading".

Among the latest Lockdown Files' disclosures, The Telegraph can reveal messages that suggest Boris Johnson veering between lockdown sceptic and zealot, with the then prime minister wondering out loud two days after the introduction of the second national lockdown in Nov 2020: "What's the data like today? Tory narrative that we panicked too soon etc."

The messages also show the behind-the-scenes animosity shown towards Lord Stevens of Birmingham, the then chief executive of NHS England. Mr Hancock declared in one message to an adviser: "He needs to know he is massively f—g up."

### **Category**

1. Crime-Justice-Terrorism-Corruption
2. Disasters-Crisis-Depopulation-Genocide
3. Health-Wellness-Healing-Nutrition & Fitness
4. Main
5. NWO-Deep State-Dictatorship-Tyrrany

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