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Free coronavirus messaging service launched by Government

The Government has launched a new WhatsApp information service today (Mar 25) to inform the public on the most recent coronavirus developments.

Launched by the Department for Health and Social Care and Public Health England, the free service aims to dispel the spreading of 'fake news' and give information and advice on the best way to tackle the virus as a population.

It is hoped that this new service will reduce NHS stress by restricting the spread, through clear information and ensuring people stay home and protect the NHS.

Part of the service will be an GOV.UK Coronavirus Information Service 'chatbot', giving immediate answers to the public on their most common questions directly from government.

Clarity around symptoms and prevention will be given as well as up to date information on UK cases, travel advice and staying at home.

Prof Yvonne Doyle, Medical Director, Public Health England, said:

"This service will help us ensure the public has a trusted source for the right information about coronavirus, updated with the latest public health guidance and providing assurance that they are not misled by any of the false information circulating."

To use the service, people are being encouraged to add 07860064422 and message the word 'hi' within WhatsApp.

It comes the same week as government used text messages to UK citizens who are considered vulnerable and give them advice on staying protected.