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REUTERS FACT CHECK JANUARY 20, 2022 / 11:43 AM / UPDATED 2 DAYS AGO

Fact Check-The Metropolitan Police has not opened a criminal investigation into Britain's COVID-19 vaccine rollout

By Reuters Fact Check

5 MIN READ



The Metropolitan Police has not launched a criminal investigation into Britain's COVID-19 vaccine rollout, nor are officers shutting down vaccination centres as a result.

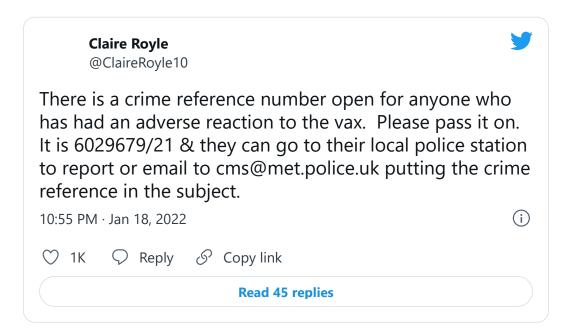
Claims about such police activity have spread rapidly online and appear to be based on a branch in west London issuing a crime reference number (CRN) after a report was submitted of an alleged vaccine-related crime.

"There is a criminal investigation now ongoing," said one blogger writing on Facebook on Jan. 18. "Any adverse reactions [to COVID-19 vaccines] should be reported to your local police station. Referencing crime no. 6029679/21. This is not about anti anything this is a criminal investigation" (here).

In a video, also posted to Facebook, a woman in an Asda supermarket is heard telling staff that the investigation was launched by the Hammersmith and lham branch of London's Metropolitan Police.

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Similar posts can be seen on Facebook (<u>here</u>, <u>here</u>, <u>here</u>, <u>here</u> and <u>here</u>) and Twitter (here, here and here).



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The report of the alleged crime was submitted in December to Hammersmith and Fulham Police by a group of individuals known for their scepticism around COVID-19 vaccines (see more details (here).

According to an announcement from the group, multiple British government ministers, civil servants and "heads of news networks" have committed a litany of alleged crimes in relation to vaccine rollouts, starting with misfeasance and misconduct in public office.

The list also includes grievous bodily harm, murder, "terrorism", "torture", "genocide", "war crimes" and "treason".

Such claims are outside the scope of this check.

However, the Metropolitan Police told Reuters that no such criminal investigation has been launched related to COVID-19 vaccines and confirmed that "no vaccine centres have been shut down" as part of a non-existent probe.

A spokesman explained via email that a CRN being issued does not automatically indicate an investigation has been opened – nor does it mean at a crime has indeed been committed.

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"On 20 December, a number of documents were submitted at a west London police station in support of allegations of criminality in relation to the UK's vaccine programme," the spokesman told Reuters on Jan. 19.

"Officers have been tasked with reviewing the documents. This process is time consuming and has been prolonged by the submission of further documents by people encouraged to do so online.

"While the assessment continues, to date there is nothing to indicate that a

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Missing context. The Metropolitan Police says it has not launched a criminal investigation into Britain's rollout of COVID-19 vaccines. A crime reference number can be issued after a person reports an alleged crime – but this does not automatically mean an investigation has been opened.

This article was produced by the Reuters Fact Check team. Read more about our fact-checking work here .