



# Parliamentary and Scientific Committee



Bringing Science and Parliament together

Established 1939

## Fake News and the Science behind it

### Prevention, not Treatment.

From hoaxes and tweets from Donald Trump to potentially harmful lies spread about vaccinations, over the past few years Fake News has made a huge impact on society. The growth of social media has made it easier than ever to spread false information to a wide range of people across the world, but how can we stop this? This is the question posed at the discussion meeting.

With social media and the internet being vital parts in the lives of young people today, educating students on critical thinking is more important than ever. The internet can be a great educational tool, so there is a major worry that students will completely lose trust or doubt the validity of what is being posted. Therefore, how to identify and fact check articles and news stories, with access to trustworthy fact checking websites, should be a must in the classrooms today.

Even with critical thinking skills, spotting fake news can be challenging when articles riddled with false information are being advertised on the websites of reputable companies and charities. To prevent this from continuing more

legislation and control is required to suppress Fake News.

Motives for creating fake news are often for personal or political gain, however for some the main driving force is simply money. If there was no revenue for articles filled with false information, would the websites continue to publish them? Rather than allowing those who spread lies to benefit, perhaps we could reward those who report it instead.

Fake News is a serious issue which must be tackled not only within the UK, but also globally. New legislation and regulations need to be implemented worldwide. Looking forward, a deeper knowledge and understanding of Fake News Algorithms is required for us to become one step ahead of the creators of false information. Fake News needs to stop being treated as a symptom and instead be prevented from being posted.

*Charlotte Hall*

*P&SC Discussion Meeting, 'Fake News and the Science Behind it', 17<sup>th</sup> June 2019*