

## Kremlin-backed Russian hacker spies tried to steal vaccine research

The UK's National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) said [hackers targeting coronavirus vaccine information] “almost certainly” operated as “part of Russian intelligence services”.

It did not specify which organisations had been targeted, or whether any information had been stolen.

But it said vaccine research had not been hindered by the hackers.

Russia has denied responsibility.

“We do not have information about who may have hacked into pharmaceutical companies and research centres in Great Britain. We can say one thing – Russia has nothing at all to do with these attempts,” said Dmitry Peskov, a spokesman for President Putin, according to the Tass news agency.

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The UK, US and Canadian agencies said the hackers had exploited software flaws to get access to vulnerable computer systems, and had used malware called WellMess and WellMail to upload and download files from infected machines.

They are also said to have tricked individuals into handing over login credentials with spear-phishing attacks.

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UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said: “It is completely unacceptable that the Russian intelligence services are targeting those working to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

“While others pursue their selfish interests with reckless behaviour, the UK and its allies are getting on with the hard work of finding a vaccine and protecting global health.”

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