You, Coronavirus and keeping safe online

Read our expert online safety advice about avoiding online Coronavirus-related scams and working safely from home during the outbreak.

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#covidonlinesafety

Right now, safeguarding ourselves, our loved ones, friends and colleagues from COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is uppermost in people's minds in the UK and around the world. After all, this is an unprecedented situation which warrants unprecedented precautions.

Also of great importance, however, is making sure we also *remain safe in the virtual world* during restrictions on travel, socialising, office life and other things we normally take for granted.

Why is online safety even more important than usual?

Invariably, a crisis affecting large numbers of people triggers a huge volume of fraudulent activity. With Coronavirus, expect fake ads for anything from vaccines to facemasks, links to sensational news and video, bogus charity appeals, and phishing emails claiming to be from travel, compensation and insurance companies or event/tournament organisers. Fraudsters know that at times like these, we may be too concerned or preoccupied to spot that something isn't right.

Business owners with employees not accustomed to working from home also need to take simple precautions additional to those we normally exercise in regular workplaces.

And if we're using the extra time on our hands to relax, there's also more chance that we could be letting our online guard down, whether we're social networking, gaming, dating, downloading or the many other things we take for granted.

However Coronavirus is affecting your online life, please read our top tips to help you protect yourself, your family, finances, devices and organisation. And as always, make sure you check out our advice including passwords, payments, safe buying and updating your software and apps.

Find comprehensive information from keeping yourself protected online at www.getsafeonline.org

Coronavirus-related scams

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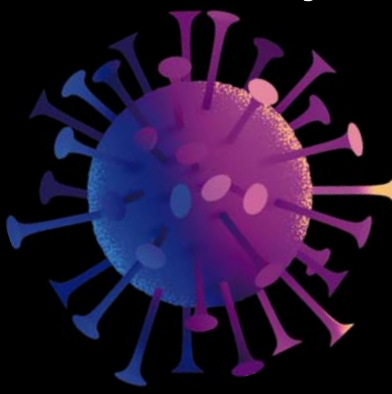

Reported Coronavirus scams cost victims in the UK over £800,000 in a single month, according to Action Fraud. Here's how to help avoid them:

- Be wary of approaches from supposed travel agents, tour operators, airlines, cruise companies, insurance companies or compensation firms promising to arrange travel, accommodation or event entry refunds: they may well be fraudulent. If in doubt, call the company you have been dealing with, on the phone number you know to be correct. These approaches can take the form of emails, texts, social media posts, direct messages, online advertisements and phone calls.

- Be wary of ads for products such as facemasks, hand sanitiser, vaccines, cures and hard-to-get goods, as they could be for non-existent products. Never pay by bank transfer, and where possible pay by credit card as doing so provides additional protection.

- As always, don't click on unknown links in emails, texts or posts, or email attachments. They could link to websites that capture your passwords and other confidential details or cause a malware infection, both of which can result in financial or identity fraud. They could also link to adult, hate, extremist or other content.

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Working from home

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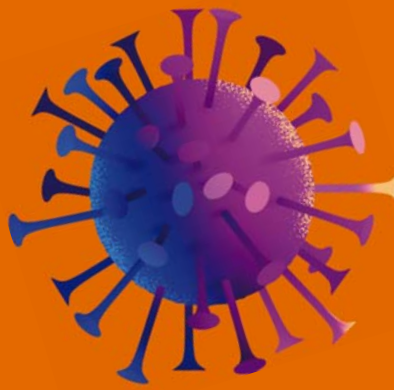

- Ensure that cloud-based collaborative services such as file sharing and conferencing are secured with **strong passwords and two-factor authentication (2FA)**.
- **Set strong passwords** for new accounts or remote accesses and impose rules about password usage, such as not sharing, using a password manager and not using passwords for more than one account. For information about strong passwords, visit: www.getsafeonline.org/online-safety-and-security/password-protocol-and-control
- Consider whether it is safe and/or sensible to enable employees to use their **own computers and mobile devices** for work purposes ('bring your own device')
- If employees need access to your company's network, files and email, set them up a **virtual private network (VPN)**. Beforehand, read reviews for VPN security levels. Existing VPNs should be fully patched.
- Emphasise the importance of **protecting company-issued devices** in case of loss, theft or damage. Ensure they can be locked down in the event of loss or theft. Devices should be kept out of harm's way, for example from family members and visitors to the home.
- Employees should ensure that their **broadband routers are secured** to avoid unwanted intrusion, and if they are out and about, **avoid using Wi-Fi hotspots** whilst doing anything confidential.
- **If work conversations are confidential**, make sure they are out of earshot of any smart speakers that may be in the home.
- **Maintain your normal checks and controls**, including for data breaches, which could be more likely under the current conditions. It may also be worth notifying your insurance provider that staff are home working.
- **Report actual or attempted fraud** immediately to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040. If you're in Scotland, call Police Scotland on 101.
- **Report data breaches** which may compromise individuals' rights and freedoms to the Information Commissioner's Office at www.ico.org.uk

For comprehensive, practical, impartial advice on home working, visit www.getsafeonline.org/ways-you-work/mobile-and-home-access

Get Safe Online

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Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses.
It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by a number of government departments, law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit **www.getsafeonline.org**

If you think you have been a victim of fraud, report it to Action Fraud at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling 0300 123 2040. If you are in Scotland, contact Police Scotland on 101.

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