

Online Shopping Safety Guide

Using the Internet to purchase products or services can be easier and more convenient, and a great way to compare prices, find bargains and save money. However, there are specific risks related to buying products and services online. The following advice will help make your online shopping experience safer and more secure.

Online shopping advice

- Avoid clicking on sponsored links or adverts in search results
- Type and check the web address carefully to ensure you visit the genuine website
- Check with friends/followers for their experiences before using an unfamiliar store
- Do not entirely rely on product and online store reviews as these could be faked
- Avoid social media posts offering vouchers, coupons and discounts unless verified
- Use a different strong password for each account
- A great way of making a strong password is by combining three random words
- Never share account credentials with anyone no matter who they claim to be
- Consider using a reputable password manager if you have multiple accounts
- Minimise the personal information you supply when setting-up a store account
- Use a credit card or trusted payment provider when making online purchases
- Never accept requests to pay by bank transfer, vouchers or PayPal Friends & Family
- Always remember to sign out of the account when finished
- Close old or dormant online accounts that you no longer use

Problems with your order

- Contact the store/site or their official customer support on social media
- Credit card provider – Contact your own provider (phone number on card)
- PayPal Buyer protection – [paypal.com/uk/smarthelp](https://www.paypal.com/uk/smarthelp)
- Citizens Advice – Tel: 0800 144 8848
- Trading Standards – [tradingstandards.uk](https://www.tradingstandards.uk)
- Action Fraud – Tel: 0300 123 2040 [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk)

For further cyber safety resources and advice contact:

CyberProtect@northants.police.uk



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Scam Support Calls

- Criminals may phone you purporting to be a technical support service or your computer, phone, app or Internet provider (ISP).
- They will claim that they have identified problems with your computer, phone or tablet or issues with your Internet, which need fixing immediately.
- They can be extremely convincing and manipulative and may try to entice, scare or bully you into acting quickly without taking the time to consider your actions.
- You may be asked to change settings, press certain keys or download an app or other software. Doing so will help criminals gain access to your device or data.
- They will often direct you to fake technical information, logs or errors on your screen to try and convince you to follow the instructions they give.
- No genuine company or organisation will call you unexpectedly about technical faults they have identified or ask for access to your computer or online accounts.
- Never give any caller your password, PIN or other on-screen codes or details.
- Pop-up messages or alerts may appear on your device, claiming to have detected viruses or other security issues with instructions to call a fake technical service line for support or to purchase unnecessary subscriptions or software. Always speak to a reputable computer support service or someone you trust, if in doubt.

What should I do if I receive a scam support call?

- If you receive one of these calls – hang up immediately.
- Notify your card provider or bank if you've shared or submitted payment details.
- Report it to Action Fraud – Tel: 0300 123 2040 [actionfraud.police.uk](https://www.actionfraud.police.uk)
- If you have made any changes to your device or downloaded an app or other software as a result of a call or pop-up, contact a reputable computer support service or talk to someone you trust, to check the device fully before reusing it.

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