



# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM BANKING AND HMRC SCAMS

Unfortunately, financial fraud is a growing problem which everyone needs to take seriously

**It's not uncommon for your bank to try and contact you. But sometimes those emails and phone calls are just scammers using the trust you have in your bank to con you out of your money.**

Many of us will have experienced a phone call claiming to be from your bank alerting you to a problem with your account. This will normally be something security related, such as telling you someone is accessing your account illegally, or has stolen your identity.

You can also be the target of an HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) scam by email or phone, which attempts to obtain your personal and banking details by masquerading as official HMRC documentation, offering tax rebates and refunds.

## The golden rule

*The golden rule when protecting your personal financial information is: **never disclose private information in response to communication that you're not sure is genuine.***

## Don't transfer money into a so-called 'safe account'

Fraudsters can be very convincing. They may ask you to transfer all the money from an account into a 'safe account' until a problem is solved.

The real problem is, nobody is trying to access your account, and you're transferring money directly to the scammers. The money is then transferred very quickly to other accounts around the world.

Worst of all, because you agreed to transfer the money and it's been moved on again so fast, it can be very difficult to get the money back. In fact, according to UK Finance, in 2017 three quarters of the money could not be returned to the victims.

## Spotting and avoiding scams

**Unfortunately, it can be difficult to spot such scams, but there are some really important things you should know which will help you to protect yourself:**

- » Banks will never ask you to transfer money into a 'safe account'. It just doesn't happen;
- » Banks will never ask you to reveal personal information including your PIN, or passwords for online accounts

**Similarly, HMRC provides advice on their website including:**

- » HMRC never uses emails or text messages to notify taxpayers of tax rebates or penalties, or to request personal or payment information
- » HMRC phone call scams often target the vulnerable and elderly, with taxpayers being requested to provide bank details under the threat of police involvement if they refuse. If you are unsure of the identity of the individual, do not engage with the call, and never disclose your personal details

## How to report bank and HMRC scams

**There are two things you need to do if you've been targeted by a scam, or worse, fallen victim to one:**

- » Contact your bank. Even if you've spotted it is a scam you should let them know because this will give them the chance to inform other customers to be on the lookout
- » If you've become a victim, or have handed over personal information, it's even more important, since your bank will be able to stop any payments or transfers, cancel cards and make sure your account is secure

**HMRC** asks taxpayers to forward any suspected scam emails, text messages or social media messages to [phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk) and then delete the original email. Text message scams can be forwarded to 60599 (these messages are subject to network charges).

You can also get in touch with **Action Fraud** by either calling 0300 123 2040 or by visiting their website. - [www.actionfraud.police.uk](http://www.actionfraud.police.uk).

We all hope we won't fall victim to fraud but, more than ever, it pays to be vigilant.