Stay safe online

Using the internet, from a mobile phone, tablet, laptop or personal computer helps us to stay in touch with family and friends and access information, online shopping and entertainment. The internet is a valuable and ever-changing resource but it also has the potential to be a place where you may be at risk of illegal activity such as bullying or fraud.

Just as you take precautions in day to day life, such as locking the door of your house and being careful in public places, so it is important to take safety measures to safeguard yourself online.

Top Tips for Staying Safe Online

1. Lock your devices such as your phone or laptop with a strong password, just as you would lock the door to your house. This can help to protect your information if your device is lost or stolen.

2. Use strong passwords, not something personal to you and never share them with anyone. Use a different password for your device and your email account.

3. Write your passwords down (anyone can forget) and keep them in a secure and safe place away from your computer.

4. Don't open emails or attachments from someone you don't know; this is a way that criminals can use to bypass your security systems.

5. Avoid clicking on a link in an email which looks strange, even if you know the person who sent it. If it looks strange it's best to delete it.

6. Ignore emails or other communications which create a sense of urgency, urging you to respond immediately to a crisis such as an issue with your bank account or TV licence. This type of message is often a scam. Think before you act.

7. Always question requests for personal information; criminals can impersonate your bank or the police or anyone you trust so that they can steal your information or money. Always take time to check up on the request through a trusted source; do not phone back on the number the caller has given you.

8. Don't become online 'friends' with someone you don't know.

9. Never arrange to meet up with anyone you have met online.

10. If you see or read anything online which worries you report it online at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by phone on 0300 123 2040.

There is lots of detailed information and support to help you to stay safe online.

Age UK has produced a really helpful guide which looks at some common internet and computer scams, and how to protect your mobile phone, computer and yourself online. https://www.ageuk.org.uk/globalassets/age-uk/documents/information-guides/ageukil4_internet_security_inf.pdf?dtrk=true

Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cybercrime if you have been scammed, defrauded or experienced cybercrime in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/

For Scotland contact https://www.scotland.police.uk/contact-us/report-cybercrime

A useful resource is **The Little Leaflet of Cyber Advice** from the Metropolitan Police which can be found at https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/central/advice/fraud/met/the-little-leaflet-of-cyber-advice.pdf