

Neighbourhood Watch Alert: Self Assessment Tax Scams

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Overview

HMRC is warning of a rise in Self Assessment scams ahead of the January 31st filing deadline. Scammers will often target taxpayers around peak filing periods, using persuasive or threatening tactics to obtain personal information or try and get the individual to make a payment to them.

HMRC will never ask for bank account details or personal information via text message or email, and will never leave voicemails threatening legal action or arrest.

Examples:

- Emails or texts offering a tax rebate if you verify your details or provide bank details.
- Texts or phone calls stating there's a warrant out for your arrest because you owe HMRC money.

How these scams operate:

- Fake tax demands or offers of refunds are sent via email, text or phone calls.
- Sense of urgency or pressure to respond ("You must act today").
- Threats of legal action or arrest if you do not take action.
- Using official logos and branding on communications.
- Number spoofing or email spoofing to make it appear as if the message has been sent from 'HMRC'.
- Directing victims to fake websites that mimic real ones, to harvest personal information or spread malware.
- Attempting to steal banking passcodes or one-time verification codes.

How to protect yourself:

- Never click unexpected links or open attachments in texts or emails.
- Do not share personal details, bank details or security codes.
- Check sender addresses carefully.
- If you feel uncomfortable or suspect a phone call could be a scam, hang up.
- Only contact organisations using official numbers that you've researched yourself.
- Enable multi-factor authentication.
- Delete suspicious messages immediately after reporting them.
- Do not share your HMRC sign in details with anyone.
- Use strong and different passwords on all your accounts.

How to report scams:

- Forward scam HMRC texts to: 60599 (charged at network rate)
- Forward any other phishing/smishing texts to: 7726
- Forward phishing emails to: phishing@hmrc.gov.uk
- Report suspicious phone calls: [Report the call online](#)
- Report fraud: www.reportfraud.police.uk/
- Citizens Advice – Advice on Scams: [Citizens Advice advice on scams](#)
- Citizens Advice Scams Helpline: 0808 223 1133
- NCSC Cybercrime guidance: www.ncsc.gov.uk

