



HMRC give warning of the latest tax scams

HMRC have warned that University students are the latest target for the tax scammers. Fake emails are being sent using a seemingly legitimate university address (for example '@uc.ac.uk'). It then lures them on to a website which steals their information. For clarification HMRC will never tell you about a tax refund by email, text or voicemail so please be aware.

There are many scams which involve fraudsters impersonating HMRC. There is also expected to be a surge in January due to the self-assessment period and also in July due to tax credit renewals.

There are many ways that the scammers target tax payers. These include HMRC-related phishing or bogus emails, text messages, cold calls, voicemails and also social media. The number one piece of advice is to never disclose personal and private information in response to a communication that you are not 100 per cent is genuine. If it doesn't seem 'right' notify HMRC. Phishing emails can be reported to phishing@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk.

There is a current list of digital and other means of contact issued from HMRC. Visit www.GOV.uk and search 'genuine HMRC contact'. It also advises how to recognise phishing emails and texts. For example it lists that a letter from HMRC Debt Enforcement ADT titled 'Immediate action required – please pay' is genuine. Should you require any more information speak to a HMRC advisor about the details in the letter to make sure it is genuine. This advice applies to any correspondence from HMRC which you are unsure about.

A HMRC spokesperson stated that:

"HMRC will never notify you of a tax rebate, offer you repayment, or ask you to disclose personal or financial details by email or by text, and we recommend that if you cannot verify the identity of a caller that you do not speak to them.

"We continue our work with law enforcement agencies around the world to bring down the criminals behind these scams. Last year HMRC closed more than 14,000 fake websites and continues to protect customers by constantly searching for these types of activity."

Scams can come in many different disguises, so it's important to know the warning signs of look out for and what to do if you think you have been targeted. Visit www.moneyadvice.org.uk and search 'scam' for helpful advice on the subject. If a

scam has resulted in financial loss contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or use their online fraud reporting tool.

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