

Beware of the scammers

It's a sad fact of life that scammers love to take advantage of vulnerable people, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself. Making yourself and your loved ones aware of the tactics used by criminals is the first step to staying safe.



Consumer champions Which? have put together a guide to the leading five banking scams to look out for.

1. Money mule requests

These scammers try to use unwitting victims to help them launder stolen money by using legitimate bank accounts. They will pay you for passing the money through your account.

They offer easy investment opportunities with the promise of big rewards. It may seem tempting, especially in the current economic climate, but if you're caught and charged, you could end up with a 14-year stretch in prison.

2. Shoulder surfing and card identity theft

This has been around for years, but it is still catching people out. Take extra care when you are at the cashpoint and make sure no-one is hovering behind you to take note of your PIN. Many ATMs have small mirrors to help you see behind without making it obvious that you are looking.

Card identity theft is still a major issue. Don't forget to keep a close eye on your card statements and report any activity you don't recognise to your bank as soon as possible.

3. Fake apps

If you like to download apps, go through official stores rather than clicking links in emails or ads.

4. Is it really your bank calling?

Be on your guard. If you have the slightest doubt that things are not what they seem, put the phone down and call your bank using the number from its website.

5. Online purchase scams

An offer that looks too good to be true probably is. Trust your gut. Use Google to see if anyone has already raised concerns about the company you are considering buying from. If you do decide to make a purchase, pay with a method that will offer you protection, like PayPal Buyer Protection.

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