



Protect yourself from fraudsters while shopping online



Online shoppers lost over £10 million pounds over the period between November 2022 and January 2023 to cyber criminals. Wiltshire Police want to remind our communities to stay vigilant when it comes to buying online and what can be done to limit the risks of cyber threats ahead of this year's busy shopping period.

As the Black Friday hype ramps up, advertising of sales and discounts is everywhere you look and it's easy to get duped if you don't keep your wits about you.

The best way to keep your information and accounts safe is to focus on your email account, as that is the gateway to access all your other information:

- Ensure you have a strong email password using 3 random words and is different to other account passwords. By combining 3 random words that can each mean something to you so easily remembered but is much harder to guess.
- Turn on 2-step verification (2SV) for your email which gives you twice the protection. This means you provide more information to prove your identity, like being sent an access code to your phone, which means even if your password is compromised criminals can't get access to your email.

Even the most cyber-savvy could be caught out, as criminals use more convincing and legitimate looking emails, adverts and websites. They know we're all looking for a good deal and might be tempted to click on a suspicious link or share personal information when you might be feeling the festive pressure or not want to miss out on a bargain. But always remember that if an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is.

Wiltshire Police Fraud Protect Officer Rachel Davies, said: "Criminals are always looking for new ways of scamming people out of money, so we need to stay one step ahead. By having the basic prevention in place and securing your email will keep you much better protected. Also making sure websites you're on are legitimate, be aware of potential phishing emails and text messages with direct links and be extra wary of sites you haven't used before.

"With the cost-of-living crisis effecting so many, there are more people than ever looking for more affordable ways to make the festive period special. Just don't be rushed or pressured into make a costly mistake when shopping online."

Having regular conversations with less internet aware, often older people who could be more vulnerable to cyber-crime, will help prevent someone you know becoming a victim of these fraudsters. Prevention is always our preferred strategy - let's curtail these scams and help ensure we do all we can to shop online safely this festive season.

If you've been a victim of fraud, please report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040, or via their website at www.actionfraud.police.uk.



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