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# Business Watch

## Police Scotland Business Advice

**8 December 2020**

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Should this email be sent to one of your colleagues as well as you? If you are 'moving on' please let us know a new contact within your company to send the bulletin to

Do you have any sister companies or businesses you work closely with who you think would benefit from this email (check with them first) then please let us know

If you no longer wish to receive this email then please let us know at [NorthEastCrimeReduction@Scotland.pnn.police.uk](mailto:NorthEastCrimeReduction@Scotland.pnn.police.uk)

**URGENT MESSAGES THEY WILL BE SENT OUT AS APPROPRIATE**

### Sign Up for Neighbourhood Alert for free

A great way in which Police can share information is via the Neighbourhood Alert system, which is delivered by Neighbourhood Watch Scotland. This enables us to send out e-mail messages relating to local crime trends and share crime prevention advice quickly and effectively to a wide audience. The information can also be targeted to particular groups, streets, or communities as required.

Anyone can sign-up to receive these e-mail messages, either individually or as a community group. The sign-up process allows you to specify the type of information you are interested in and from what source. This is co-ordinated by our partners in Neighbourhood Watch Scotland, who work with a range of partners in the public sector to provide information not only on crime, but also about community safety and resilience. We only send out messages which contribute to keeping you informed and safe.

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In these uncertain times, Neighbourhood Alert is recognised as a trusted source of information. Please consider taking a moment to sign-up for Neighbourhood Alert e-mail messages, and encourage family, friends and neighbours to do the same. Over 23,000 people across Scotland have joined so far, with more joining every day. You can join too, without setting up a Neighbourhood Watch.

Simply visit

[www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk](http://www.neighbourhoodwatchscotland.co.uk)

## Scottish Business Resilience Centre launches Cyber Triage Service

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The Scottish Business Resilience Centre (SBRC) has recently launched the UK's first cyber incident response [helpline](#) for the small-medium enterprise (SME) community, and the third sector, for victims of cybercrime.

The service will assist organisations to confirm whether they have been the victim of an attack and, if so, provide expert guidance to get them back to secure operations.

SBRC's newly appointed Cyber Incident Response Manager, and former Police Scotland employee, Mark Cunningham-Dickie manages the helpline, serving as callers' first point of contact, and referring calls to other security experts, as required.

Deputy Chief Constable Malcolm Graham said: "The online space has become a much more significant aspect of frontline policing in recent years, as we increasingly live our lives, operate businesses, and shop through the internet.

"Criminals will seek to exploit people or organisations for their own financial gain, by whatever means possible, and the virtual world is in no way exempt from those risks. We work hard to keep people safe in public and private spaces, online and offline.

"We regularly work with a range of partners, including the Scottish Business Resilience Centre, to promote cyber security while also tackling cybercrime. The secondment of Police Scotland officers to SBRC strengthens the link between the two organisations, and provides a valuable resource to businesses as well as the police service. I would encourage officers to familiarise themselves with the services available through SBRC, and the support it can offer to victims of crime, as well as policing."

Any organisation with concerns about IT security is advised to contact SBRC, and if there is suspicion criminal activity may have occurred, to report the incident to Police Scotland via 1010.

Organisations with queries about information/electronic security in general can also get in touch to confirm they have the right processes in place.

The helpline is run by SBRC in collaboration with Scottish Government and Police Scotland. SBRC will also work with several trusted external companies around the country who can help in situations where an onsite expert is needed.

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### **Did you know?**

There are five Police Scotland officers currently seconded to the Scottish Business Resilience Centre. Led by Inspector Ian Stephen, the team provide input, advice and training to Scottish businesses on a range of subjects designed to help prevent them becoming victims of crime. More information ([hyperlink](#)) is available on the SBRC website.

You can also find [further details of the services and support provided by SBRC](#) online.

Inspector Stephen said: "The work we do with, and for, Scottish businesses is designed to reduce the chances of them becoming victims of crime, and by extension reduce the impact on the frontline of policing. I would urge officers to view and share our information booklet and wherever they encounter a business, of any size, that they feel could benefit from our range of inputs, to get in touch with my team.

"SBRC has inputs on a range of topics, including, but not limited to: Lone Working, Conflict Management, Human Trafficking, Counter Terrorism and Protest Activity, which can be delivered in accordance with current COVID-19 guidance."

The Seconded Team can be contacted via [Enquiries@sbrcentre.co.uk](mailto:Enquiries@sbrcentre.co.uk) or on 01786 447 441.

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## **Doorstep Crime & Scams**

▪ There have been reports of doorstep callers offering roofing and guttering work in the Laurencekirk area.

▪ A report has been received of a doorstep caller in the Fraserburgh area canvassing support for a well-known charity. Whilst many charities raise funds in this manner a reputable canvasser will not put pressure on you to donate or provide bank details for a direct debit. Residents should request the canvasser show their ID/ credentials before they engage with caller and follow these up with the charity if they are still concerned, alternatively consider donating via the charities' official website.

Residents should be cautious if engaging with doorstep callers and report any concerns to Trading Standards or Police Scotland. When reporting doorstep crime or concerns about doorstep callers, try to remember key details about the trader such as business names, addresses, names, age, accents, descriptions, vehicle type, registrations and signage. Keep all original paperwork, leaflets and brochures.

▪ A further resident has reported receiving an email purporting to be from HM Courts & Tribunals Service which requested payment for a misdemeanour.

Residents are reminded that it is the Scottish Courts that operate in Scotland and not HM Courts and Tribunals Service and if you have not visited England or Wales then the correspondence should be treated with suspicion. A genuine pursual of payment by the courts will not be done via email, regardless of country.

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▪A local business has reported being targeted by a publishing scam. An invoice was received requesting payment for the supply of books designed to prevent bullying. The invoice was paid but the business is now being targeted by other scammers.  
From mountain to sea

If a scammer is successful in obtaining personal/ bank details or monetary payment, this can signify to them that further attempts may succeed. This will often be followed up by further attempts by the scammer or the victim's details passed to other scammers.

## Top Phone Scams in Scotland

Scottish consumers continue to be hassled by a variety of nuisance calls.

The most commonly reported phone scams in Scotland between July-September 2020 were:



1. Misleading sales of **insurance for white goods, appliances or SKY equipment** (find examples [here](#))
2. Misleading sales of **boiler, plumbing or drainage cover**
3. **Amazon Prime scams** (find examples [here](#))
4. Offers to **reduce nuisance calls** for a fee by signing you up to the Telephone Preference Service
5. **Bank fraud** - e.g. recorded messages saying that there has been a potential fraudulent transaction on your account and asking you to press 1 to discuss with an advisor (find more examples [here](#))
6. Attempts to gain **remote access** to your computer

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7. Misleading calls related to **Green Deal funding** (find out more about energy marketing scams [here](#))
8. **Accident claims**- e.g. saying that you are due compensation after a recent accident
9. Cold callers carrying out **surveys** in order to gather your personal information which can be passed on to other companies
10. Calls advising that you have **won a competition or prize draw** and asking for personal and bank details or trying to encourage you to subscribe to further competitions or publications

### General Advice for Avoiding Phone Scams

- Do not press 1 or follow any other instructions given in an automated message
- If you are speaking to a person, don't give them any personal information, don't agree to make any payments and never allow them to access your computer remotely
- Contact your bank immediately if you think you may have made a payment to a scammer or if you are worried that a fraudulent transaction has been made from your account. Use the phone number on your bank statement or a publicly listed number (don't use a number given to you by a cold caller). To ensure that you are disconnected from the cold caller, phone another number such as 123 before phoning your bank or call them from another phone.
- Never agree to make a payment for goods or services on the spot – get at least two other quotes from trusted companies.
- **Report scam calls to Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6000 or via their [ScamWatch](#) tool. If you have been the victim of fraud, report it to Police Scotland on 101**

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### HMRC Scam: Tax Returns

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HMRC [have this week warned](#) people filing Self-Assessment tax returns to be wary of copycat websites and phishing scams. In the last year, they have received over **500,000** complaints from the public about scam calls, texts and emails offering bogus tax rebates.

They are urging the public to be aware that criminals may take advantage of Self-Assessment deadlines to panic consumers so that they will share their personal and financial details or even make payments.

There have also been [reports](#) from the North of England about scam calls saying that you have received a tax rebate of around £80 and asking you to provide your bank details in order to secure the refund.

Just last week, HMRC warned about a similar scam text saying "due to the current COVID-19 pandemic you have a pending tax rebate".

**HMRC never send notifications of a tax rebate or ask you to disclose personal or payment information by email or text.**

### What to Do

- HMRC advise that you should be suspicious if you receive an unexpected phone call, text or email purportedly from them asking for money or offering financial help. You should not click on links, provide any details or make any payments to a cold caller;
- If you are unsure whether a message from HMRC is genuine, [check their website](#) before clicking on any links or providing any details. Links in any genuine letters or emails from them will lead to the 'www.gov.uk' website. If a link includes the word 'gov' but ends in **.co.uk** it is likely to be fake;
- Forward details of suspicious emails to [phishing@hmrc.gov.uk](mailto:phishing@hmrc.gov.uk), forward suspicious text messages to **60599** or report suspicious phone calls [on their website](#).

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HMRC regularly update their [list of genuine communications](#) to help you avoid scams. Find out more about [avoiding HMRC scams](#) and [avoiding council tax scams](#) on our website.

Report similar scams to [Advice Direct Scotland](#) and if you have been the victim of fraud, report this to Police Scotland on 101. You can also forward scam emails to the [National Cyber Security Centre](#).

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## Parcel Delivery Scam



A user of the [Neighbourhood Watch Scotland ALERT](#) system has reported a scam email saying that "your parcel has been return [sic] to our warehouse because the courier could not find your address." You are asked to click on a link to schedule a new delivery - the link leads to a scam website which asks for contact and payment details.

These phishing emails may become more common over the festive period as more consumers turn to online shopping during lockdowns.

The Royal Mail have also warned about scam emails this week after several consumers received messages saying that a recent delivery had been unsuccessful. The consumers were asked to enter their bank details and pay a fee of £1.99 in order to redeliver the item. The emails used Royal Mail logos and colour schemes in order to appear legitimate.

Find an up to date list of recently reported scam emails and texts on the [Royal Mail's website](#).

Throughout the pandemic, there has been an increase in the number of Scottish consumers complaining about late or delayed deliveries. Find out more about your consumer rights in relation to deliveries from online retailers [on Advice Direct](#)

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[Scotland's website.](#)

Report scam emails to **Advice Direct Scotland** on **0808 164 6000** or via their [ScamWatch](#) tool. If you have been the victim of online fraud, report this to **Police Scotland on 101**.

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### Home Safety

Keep your home secure, lock all windows and doors, set your house alarm and switch on your timer lights unlit houses are an indication that no one is at home. Don't leave car keys, ID cards or valuables near windows, doors or letterboxes, where burglars can reach through to steal them.

Lock your garden gates and side entrances. Don't leave tools lying around in the garden which could be used to break into your home. Keep your shed and outbuildings securely locked with good quality locks. Keep hedges and shrubs in your front garden maintained so as not to provide cover to potential intruders.

Don't leave gifts in view of the windows and keep cash at home to a minimum. Consider dusk to dawn security lighting to illuminate your home during the hours of darkness.

If you are going away for Christmas, do not advertise it on social media. Announcing your holiday on any social media platform also invalidates many home insurance policies, so victims cannot claim compensation. Remember 78% of burglars have admitted to using Facebook, Twitter or Four Square to find out if a house is empty. If you are having a house party with lots of guests make sure you know who everyone is. Don't leave any money or valuables lying around, better to completely remove temptation from any unfavourable guests.

### Shopping Safety

Stay alert while using cash machines, don't leave shopping bags unattended and park in busy well-lit areas. Christmas markets can be cold so wrap up warm and look after each other.

When in pubs and restaurants, look after your bags, mobile phones, wallets, purses and jackets and don't leave them unattended, keep pockets and bags fastened.

If you do a lot of online shopping make sure your web browser and internet security is up to date. Be cautious of emails advertising a win or large discounts.

### Online Shopping

If paying for goods online this Christmas ensure that the site is secure by checking for the padlock in the address bar of your web browser. Ensure the page starts with 'https' (s is for secure, although fraudsters can still operate these type of sites. Always ensure the websites are authentic, confirm the address is spelled correctly. Ideally type it rather than clicking on a link.

If you are buying mobile devices for children this Christmas make sure you have installed security software and Parental Control Software.

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Make sure you have adequate anti-virus protection on your computer and keep the software updated. Be careful of clicking on links or web pages especially links of unsolicited emails.

However desperate you are to buy that late or special gift, don't pay for anything by transferring money directly to other people or companies you do not know.

Be wary of cold callers, if in doubt just hang up and never give out personal or financial information. Never let someone you don't know into your house. If you are not sure, don't answer the door.

Christmas is a favourite time for scammers to send fraudulent emails, texts or DM's or even post fraudulent offers on social media. Don't click on links in emails, texts or posts that you are not expecting and don't open unexpected email attachments.

### **Party Safe**

Plan your Christmas night out and stick with friends. Make sure your mobile is fully charged when you go out and remember to take it with you.

**Try and keep within a group** – Keeping with a number of people won't leave you vulnerable to the types of crimes that are aimed towards individuals and will mean that other people can also keep an eye on you and vice versa.

**Drink in moderation** – It is easier said than done however when you drink more alcohol than usual you can lose your inhibitions and act out of character which in itself could present you with a dangerous situation. Keeping your wits about you will decrease the risk of crime. Always take your drink wherever you go to prevent the chances of it being spiked and keep an eye on anybody offering to buy you a drink to ensure it is not tampered with. Don't do drugs as there is no safe way to do drugs, even 'legal highs' – legal doesn't mean safe.

**Book a Taxi or a lift** – Think about how you'll get home. Pre-book a taxi from a licensed company or arrange for a friend or family member to pick you up. Organising a lift home or booking a taxi before going out over Christmas will ensure that you get home safely and are not putting yourself in a position where you do not recognise the hire company, driver or area, especially if you are out-of-town. Always try and share transport with others.

**Keep in the spotlight** – If you cannot stay in a group for the whole night or day always try to stick to public areas so that people are aware of you and don't walk down unlit areas that can leave you susceptible to danger.

Avoid confrontation, just walk away. Be aware that 'one punch can ruin two lives'. We want you to get home safely.

If you believe someone has been a victim of drink spiking report it as soon as possible to police via 101

## Road Safety

Ensure your car is winter ready - are your tyres, brakes, windscreens, wiper blades and windows free from defects and clean.

Be aware of changing road conditions, drive to the conditions of the road and be prepared for unexpected changes. In severe weather, increase stopping distances, drive too fast and you'll put yourself and others at risk.

Don't risk your life and others by drink driving or taking drugs and driving and don't use a mobile phone or any device which could distract you whilst driving.

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## Purchasing Puppies

Consumers continue to report instances where they have purchased puppies that have not been supplied or have been supplied in poor health or with a life-threatening condition. Demand has increased during the pandemic, as has the price and this is unfortunately being met by puppies bred on puppy farms. Residents considering purchasing a puppy should –

- only buy from a licensed breeder
  - ask lots of questions about the breeder, the puppy and its parents
  - view the puppy at its home, with its mother and check the condition of both and their accommodation
  - ensure you are provided with paperwork relating to breeding, vaccinations and microchipping and follow these up
  - treat the puppy's back story with caution, especially if the story is a sad one
  - avoid purchasing a puppy advertised on social media or small ad sites as these are often used by unlicensed breeders
  - do a Google reverse image/search on any photos and phone numbers displayed in adverts/ websites to see if they have been used before
  - don't pay with cash, but use a cheque, credit card or other traceable means
- Most illegally bred puppies are sold online through social media or small ad sites, and 1 in 4 of those pups bought online die before their fifth birthday whilst 1 in 5 get sick or die in the first year - <https://www.buyapuppysafely.org/>

- If you feel threatened or unsafe, contact [Police Scotland](#) on **101** or **999** in an emergency.
- Report scams to [Advice Direct Scotland](#) on **0808 164 6000**.
- Sign up to the [Neighbourhood Watch Alert](#) system to receive localised information and updates.

Get genuine information and updates about the COVID-19 pandemic from official websites:

- [Scottish Government](#) - Coronavirus in Scotland
- [NHS Scotland](#) - Coronavirus information and advice

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- [UK Government](#) - Response to Coronavirus
- [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#) - Technical Guidance

For up-to-date information on scams and cyber-related crimes and crime prevention tips, check out the following monthly bulletin: <https://cyberscotlandweek.com/news> or sign up to receive updates at <https://scot.us3.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=95521127d4a8eebda241ca1b6&iid=243ff3773b>

**CRIMESTOPPERS** - <https://crimestoppers-uk.org/>

Tel. 0800 555 111

SPEAK UP. STAY SAFE - CRIMESTOPPERS are an independent charity that gives people the power to speak up to stop crime 100% anonymously.

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**ARE YOU READY FOR A LIFE CHANGING CAREER? -**

<http://www.scotland.police.uk/recruitment/police-officers/>



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As always please share the above information with your colleagues.

Regards

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**Crime Reduction Unit  
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Facebook: [www.facebook.com/NorthEastPoliceDivision](https://www.facebook.com/NorthEastPoliceDivision)

*Police Scotland's North East Division covers rural and urban areas in Moray, Aberdeenshire and Aberdeen City. The division has five territorial command areas which have their own dedicated Area Commander, who is responsible for the daily policing function. Each command area is served by a number of community policing teams whose activities are built around the needs of the local community. These teams respond to local calls and look for long term solutions to key issues. They are assisted by the division's Crime Reduction Unit who deliver against Force and local priorities in a number of areas, including physical and social crime prevention, supporting and enhancing community engagement and creating and sustaining strong and effective partnership working.*

**Police Scotland would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone in our communities a very safe and Merry Christmas and a Happy New year.**

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