

HMRC tips on avoiding Self Assessment tax scams

HM Revenue and Customs is warning millions of Self Assessment customers to be aware of fraudsters in the run up to the 31 January deadline.

Over the last year, HMRC received nearly 900,000 reports from the public about suspicious HMRC contact – phone calls, texts or emails. More than 100,000 of these were phone scams, while over 620,000 reports from the public were about bogus tax rebates.

Some of the most common techniques fraudsters use include phoning taxpayers offering a fake tax refund, or pretending to be HMRC by texting or emailing a link which will take customers to a false page, where their bank details and money will be stolen. Fraudsters are also known to threaten victims with arrest or imprisonment if a bogus tax bill is not paid immediately.

HMRC operates a dedicated Customer Protection team to identify and close down scams but is advising customers to recognise the signs to avoid becoming victims themselves. Genuine organisations like HMRC and banks will never contact customers asking for their PIN, password or bank details. Customers should never give out private information, reply to text messages, download attachments or click on links in texts or emails which they are not expecting.

Customers are urged to take action by forwarding details of suspicious calls or emails claiming to be from HMRC to phishing@hmrc.gov.uk and texts to 60599. Customers who have suffered financial loss should contact Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040, or use their [online fraud reporting tool](#).

Customers can find out [more information on GOV.UK](#) on how to avoid and report scams and recognise genuine HMRC contact. If customers think they have received an HMRC-related phishing email or text message, they can check it against examples on GOV.UK.

Tax is automatically deducted from most UK taxpayers' wages, pensions or savings. Where tax is not automatically deducted, or when people or businesses have earned additional untaxed income, they are required to complete a Self Assessment tax return each year.

People need to complete a tax return if they:

- earned more than £2,500 from renting out property
- or their partner received Child Benefit and either of them had an annual income of more than £50,000
- received more than £2,500 in other untaxed income, for example from tips or commission
- are self-employed sole traders

- are employees claiming expenses in excess of £2,500
- have an annual income over £100,000
- earned income from abroad that they need to pay tax on

Further information

- [Self Assessment guidance is available on GOV.UK](#)
- If customers are completing their Self Assessment online for the first time, they need to register for Self Assessment Online. It can take a few days for the registration to arrive in the post, so it's important that customers do it as soon as possible. They should contact HMRC for support if they're concerned about missing the deadline.
- Be aware of copycat websites and phishing scams – always type in the full online address www.gov.uk/hmrc to obtain the correct link to file your Self Assessment return online securely and free of charge.
- Customers can also [register for HMRC's help and support email service online](#) or by going to GOV.UK and searching 'HMRC videos, webinars and email alerts'.