Don’t become prey for a fraudster

People are reminded to **think twice** before they act, following the launch of a Get Safe Online campaign this week.

Every year millions of people are affected by fraud committed via links in unexpected emails, posts or texts or email attachments. Phone calls from strangers claiming to be from banks, credit card companies or the police are also becoming more commonplace, with the aim to steal your money, your identity or both.

Get Safe Online's Think Twice campaign warns of the dangers of scams and offers help and advice to safeguard people against becoming a victim of fraud. See their top tips below.

Don’t become a victim: read these simple tips

- Never give out personal or financial data including usernames, passwords, PINs, ID numbers or memorable phrases.
- Be very careful that people or organisations who you are supplying payment card or other confidential information to are genuine, and even then, never reveal passwords. A bank, HMRC, retailer or other reputable organisation will never ask you for your password, PIN or memorable information via email, phone call or any other means.
- If you are asked by a caller to cut off the call and phone your bank or card provider, call the provider on the number you know to be correct. However, be sure to use another phone from the one you received the call on or leave it for five minutes before you make the call, in case the sender’s number has been spoofed or the line left open.
- Never click on email attachments from unknown sources. Delete them, and take the details to report if appropriate.
- Do not click on links in emails from senders you do not know.
- Even if you get an email that seems to come from someone you might know – but it seems irregular or out of character – the sender may be a fraudster who has hacked into their email or spoofed their address. If in doubt, call (but do not email) the sender.
- Do not attach external storage devices like USB sticks or hard drives – or insert CD-ROMs/DVD-ROMs into your computer – if uncertain of the source.

Report it

Report fraud to Action Fraud by calling 0300 123 20 40 or at www.actionfraud.police.uk or get advice on fraud by calling the Consumer Helpline on 03454 04 05 06.

If a fraudster has attempted to carry out a scam through a Durham County Council email also report it to ICT Services on 03000 261 100.

To find out more about the campaign and online safety visit www.getsafeonline.org