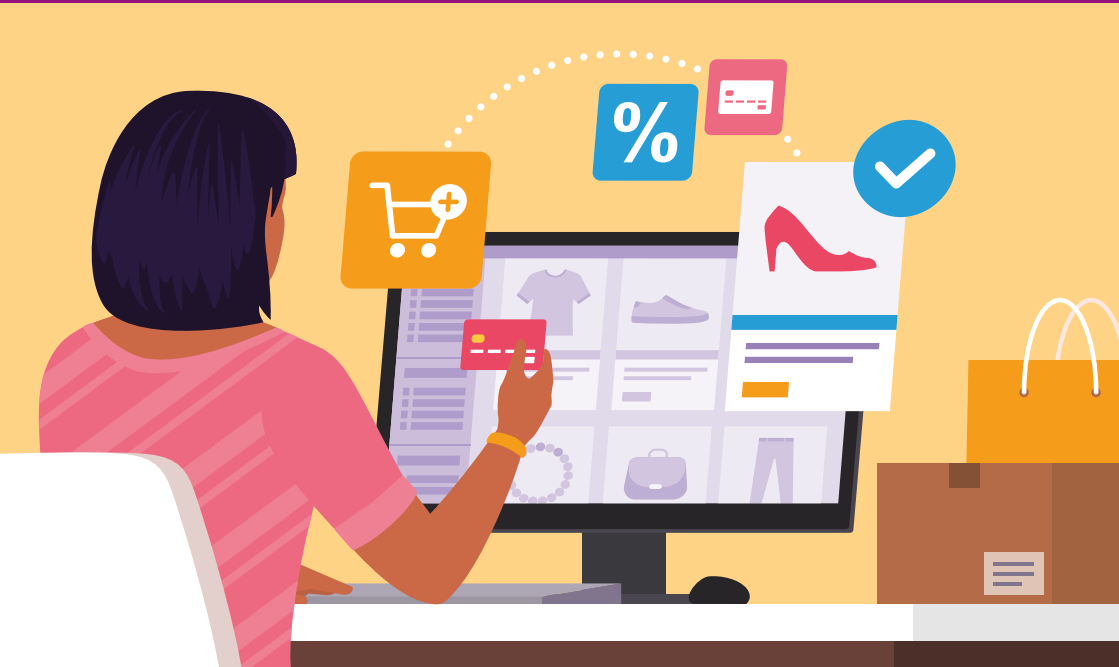


Every year, hundreds of thousands of people in the UK fall victim to fraud when buying something online.



Don't become another one.



www.getsafeonline.org

We all know or have heard about someone who's bought clothes, tech or even a car on the internet ... only for it to never arrive. Sometimes it's because of an admin error, but *more often than not, they've been manipulated by a fraudster*. Maybe it's even happened to you.

Buying online is convenient and often cheaper — but it's also one of the biggest hunting grounds for fraudsters. Criminals set up convincing fake sites, run ads on social media and trick people into paying for things that will never arrive.



#PurchaseScams

How to avoid being caught out

Be careful how you pay

If you're asked to transfer money straight into someone's bank account, stop! That's the riskiest way to pay online because if it's a scam, your money is almost impossible to get back. Use a credit card whenever possible, as it gives you stronger protection.



Check websites properly

Scammers put serious effort into creating fake online shops and social media profiles that look just like the real deal. Don't click on links from emails, texts, or posts — type the web address into your browser yourself. Check the spelling carefully: even a tiny difference can mean a bogus site. Tools like www.getsafeonline.org/checkawebsite can help you confirm if a site is genuine.

Watch out for suspicious adverts

Just because something is advertised online, it doesn't mean it's safe. Unrealistically low prices are a classic red flag, but fraudsters also list items at normal prices to avoid suspicion. Never send money upfront for goods you haven't physically seen.

Don't click blindly

Unexpected links or attachments in emails, texts, or social media messages are one of the most common ways criminals trick people. If you're unsure, you can upload suspicious messages and sites via www.getsafeonline.org/asksilver

Look for secure payment pages

A legitimate checkout page should begin with **https://** and show a padlock icon in the address bar. This means your data is encrypted — but remember, encryption doesn't guarantee the site itself is genuine. Scammers can still create secure websites.

Avoid counterfeits

Cheap knock-off goods don't just hurt the original brands — they can be of poor quality and sometimes dangerous. Always buy from trusted retailers if you want the real thing.

Be wary of 'free trials'

Those 'try it for free' or 'just pay postage' offers can hide expensive subscriptions. These recurring charges can be difficult to cancel, especially with products like slimming pills or unlicensed health remedies. Always read reviews and terms before signing up.

Delivery scam alerts

Fraudsters posing as delivery companies send fake texts and emails, saying you owe a small fee before your parcel can be released or re-delivered. Keep track of what you've bought, and which courier is actually being used, so you can spot fakes.

Don't get fooled by fake discounts

Especially around sales events like Black Friday and Christmas, sellers may inflate prices before offering a 'discount'. Compare prices with other retailers to make sure you're really getting a great deal.

Report fraud fast

If you think you've been scammed, contact your bank straight away — it improves your chances of recovering the money. In England, Wales and Northern Ireland, report the crime to Action Fraud at www.actionfraud.police.uk or by calling **0300 123 2040**. In Scotland, call Police Scotland on **101**.



For more information on buying safely online, visit www.getsafeonline.org

Get Safe Online

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses. It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit www.getsafeonline.org

If you think you have been a victim of fraud, report it to **Action Fraud** at actionfraud.police.uk or by calling **0300 123 2040**. If you are in Scotland, contact **Police Scotland** on **101**.



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