

8 steps to protect yourself from **identity theft** and **scams**

Misuse of our personal data is a serious problem but there are some practical things we can all do to reduce the likelihood of it happening to us:

1. Always remember that **your personal data is valuable**.
2. Scam emails – if you receive an email asking for your personal details or to click on a link, **always err on the side of caution**. Legitimate organisations will never pressure you into divulging your personal data. If in any doubt, do not reply and do not click on the link.
3. Shred documents – fraud does not only happen online. Make sure you **shred personal data you may have in paper form**, such as bank statements, before you throw them away.
4. Be careful what personal data you make public – information you choose to make public, such as on social media, can be a rich source of data for fraudsters. **Do not share information that may help others** guess your passwords or answer your security questions.
5. Check bank statements – review your bank and card statements regularly and be on the look out for suspicious transactions. If you see anything that doesn't look right, **report it to your bank** straight away.
6. Use strong passwords - we rely on passwords for so much of our routine activities these days so it can be hard to be disciplined about using **strong passwords and changing them often** but it is definitely worth it.
7. **Never share or write down** passwords, account details or PINs.
8. Never be embarrassed about being suspicious or asking for **advice from someone you trust**.