



# CYBERCRIMINALS AND OTHER COVID-19 SCAMS

**Cybercriminals unleash a wave of attacks on businesses. We have been advised that within 24 hours of the government's Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, online fraudsters have been targeting unsuspecting businesses claiming to be from HMRC.**

## **Emails**

Please be reminded that HMRC will never send notifications by email about tax rebates, refunds or coronavirus related payments.

You should never click on a link on these e-mails as you may be directed to a site that will attempt to gather your personal details.

If you are unsure about any possible tax refund, please get in touch. We will be able to confirm if this is genuine or not.

## **Telephone calls**

Please be careful if you receive any calls claiming to be from HMRC. They are contacting those who have made claims under the job retention scheme. Please don't be tricked into giving away your bank details or other information that criminals may use. HMRC will never ask for bank details over the phone.

## **IT security**

Most offices have high level IT security systems to protect against cyber attacks and viruses. Many of us have been forced to work from home and are using home computers. Do your home computers have the same level of security as those in the office? If not, you may be exposing yourself to risk.

We recommend you install appropriate security software on your home computers, run regular virus scans and make sure that all the latest updates to your software and operating systems are performed.

## **Other scams**

Fake online shops have been set up claiming to sell items in either short supply or fake products. (e.g. hand sanitisers, protective masks, coronavirus testing kits.) We recommend you only purchase on-line items from reputable and established companies.

Fake e-mails that appear from reputable companies (e.g. Netflix, mobile phone companies) containing links to update payment details. They often use the threat of your service being suspended.

Many are suffering serious financial difficulty as a result of this crisis. Non-mainstream lenders are looking to cash in by offering loans with exorbitant interest rates. Please be wary of these lenders and always read the small print with any financial agreement.

Thieves have started knocking on doors claiming to be from the NHS, Red Cross or local surgeries in order to gain access to homes with a view of stealing or extorting money. The vulnerable are often targeted. We should remain vigilant and do what we can to inform and protect ourselves.

If you have been targeted, or can offer any additional advice that you would like us to share, please get in touch at [info@hrharris.co.uk](mailto:info@hrharris.co.uk)

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