

Simple steps to staying safe online

1 - Change default passwords

New devices often come with default passwords, such as Password or 123456, installed on them. It is essential that these are immediately changed to something much more secure. Ideally, a separate password should be used for email accounts than for your other accounts e.g. social media.

2 - Switch on password protection

The majority of devices offer some form of password protection. But frequently this is not enabled when the device is delivered. Ensure this option is enabled – it may be a PIN, a screenlock password, a face or fingerprint recognition, but any of these will offer significant security benefits.

3 - Software Updates and Anti-Virus

Anti-virus software should be enabled on all machines. Most of the time it comes already loaded onto the device. But you must make sure the option to use it is turned on. Make sure that all your devices have enabled 'auto-update' for the software updates (aka patches) provided by the software developers.

4 – Do not click on suspicious links in messages or emails.

If you receive an unexpected email or an invitation to click on a link you have not requested or seen before, always consider if it could be fake and therefore potentially damaging to your cyber security. If it is offering something that is 'too good to be true' then it probably isn't genuine and should be deleted.

5 – Backing Up

Backing Up your data means making a regular digital copy of all your electronic files. This could be financial records, personal photos, important documentation etc. Backing Up is a pretty simple process that means you can recover quickly in the event of your data being compromised, you can do this using any kind of external storage drive such as a USB stick, or to the Cloud.

6 – Multi-Factor Authentication

IT service providers are increasingly offering something called Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA), also known as 2-Factor Authentication (2FA). Basically, it means that you will need to take (normally) two separate actions in order to access your accounts. This sounds complicated and time-consuming, but it need not be, and it does add a very significant level of security.

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