

PRINTABLE GUIDE

Check messages and links without rushing

An unexpected message may claim a parcel is delayed, a bill is unpaid or your account is locked. You can check the claim without using its link. Familiar branding, a recognised sender name or a message in an existing thread is not proof.

Phone or computer | 2 min read | 5 steps

Before you start

- ☐ Keep genuine service apps or known website addresses available.
- ☐ Do not reply with passwords, payment information or security codes.

1. Pause before opening anything

Read the request without tapping its link or attachment. Ask whether you expected it and whether it pressures you to act, pay or reveal information immediately.

- ☐ Done this step

2. Use your own route to check

Open the relevant service's genuine app or type its known website address. Look for the claimed order, bill or account alert there. Contact the organisation through verified details if needed.

- ☐ Done this step

3. Handle links cautiously

A visible link can hide another destination, and shortened addresses conceal detail. Even a plausible address is not enough. If uncertain, keep using the independently opened app or website.

- ☐ Done this step

4. Report the message

In the UK, forward suspicious texts to 7726 and follow your network's prompts. Suspicious emails can be forwarded to report@phishing.gov.uk. Use the app's own spam reporting controls where appropriate.

☐ Done this step

5. Respond promptly if details were shared

Contact your bank if money or card details are involved. Change a disclosed password on the genuine service. Save relevant evidence before deleting the suspicious message.

☐ Done this step

Try it for yourself

Locate the genuine app for one service that often sends you messages.

☐ I tried the task.

My notes

Is opening a message the same as paying or entering details?

No, but avoid interacting with suspicious links or attachments. If something downloaded or you shared information, follow the service's official security guidance.

Official help and the online guide

NCSC scam-text reporting - <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/phishing-scams/report-scam-text-message>

NCSC phishing reporting routes - <https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/collection/phishing-scams>

Read online: <https://plaintech-guides.pages.dev/guides/check-messages-and-links-without-rushing/>