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BRITS MORE LIKELY TO REVEAL SALARY THAN ADMIT TO GETTING SCAMMED

HSBC UK partners with criminologist to help end the culture of secrecy around online shopping scams

- Almost one in ten (8%) of online shopping scam victims admitted keeping it secret from friends and families
- Almost two thirds (65%) of the public who've never been a victim of online shopping fraud don't think it's likely that they would be a victim, despite £13.5 millionⁱ being lost over the Christmas period last year
- 18-24-year olds are more likely to think they will fall victim to an online scam at any point in the future, than older generationsⁱⁱ

Brits are more likely to reveal how much they earn (27%) than admit to losing money in an online shopping scam (26%). New research released today from HSBC UK reveals, with almost one in ten (8%) victims of online shopping scams reported deliberately withholding their experience from friends and family.

£13.5 million was lost by victims of online shopping fraud last Christmas - and 73,000ⁱⁱⁱ people fell victim to online shopping scams in 2019. With nearly two thirds (64%) of Brits planning to buy most of their Christmas presents online this year, and over a quarter (27%) of these people doing so for the first time, HSBC UK is calling for people to be vigilant to the risk of scams and alongside this research. The bank has created a guide to help consumers set up the ultimate scam safe shopping environment in their home and will also be hosting scam survival bootcamps for the public.

The research also revealed that men proved to be the most secretive sex, with the research showing they are more likely to keep being a victim of an online shopping a secret from friends or family (9%), compared to women (6%).

The bank has partnered with criminologist and fraud expert Dr Elisabeth Carter to break down the secrecy surrounding online shopping scams and lift the lid on the secrets fraudsters are using to trick the UK out of their hard-earned cash, with the launch of a Scam Safe Guide and Scam Survival Bootcamp. The bootcamp will give

the public the opportunity to speak directly with financial experts and fraud specialists, who will share methods to avoid shopping scams and what to look out for when shopping online this year.

Dr Elisabeth Carter, criminologist says: “Online fraudsters are active all year round, however in the run up to the festive season and with more people shopping online this year than ever before, they are all the more prevalent. It’s vital to stay alert when online shopping, as signs of a scam can be subtle, yet research shows that 70% of Brits multi-task whilst online shopping, with one in ten revealing they have shopped whilst in a Zoom meeting. Limiting distractions whilst online shopping lets you concentrate on spotting the key tricks of fraudsters and as such is one of the simplest ways to reduce the risk of becoming a scam victim. If you have been a victim of a scam, do not be ashamed, make sure you report it to Action Fraud.”

Ian Mason, Customer Experience Fraud Specialist at HSBC UK, said: “Fraudsters are increasingly sophisticated in their tactics, so we want people to understand there’s no shame if they become a victim of a scam. Instead we want to encourage people to share their personal stories with friends and families and help spread the word of what to look out for, so that we can work together to defeat the criminals who will go to extreme lengths to prise our hard-earned cash from us.”

Top 5 tips to be Scam Safe :

1. **Feeling the pressure?** - Scammers will make you feel like you need to make a quick decision to purchase an item. Slow down and check whether you can feel a sense of urgency to avoid being caught out.
2. **Read backwards!** Anything can be added to the beginning of a URL, with genuine details always included at the end. So make sure you read URLs from the right, not the left.
3. **Don’t forget to wear your glasses** - Always check the small print and check you understand everything you’re agreeing to. Be especially careful when it comes to tick boxes by checking if the box means yes or no.
4. **Use home WIFI where possible** - Public WIFI is often unsecured making it more likely for scammers to strike. Save your online shopping for when you’re back at home.
5. **Keep a credit card to hand** – To keep your purchases protected this Christmas, use a credit card for purchases over £100 so you get added consumer protection.

To register your interest for the Scam Survival Bootcamp, use the link below: [Scam Survival Bootcamp](#)

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<https://www.about.hsbc.co.uk/news-and-media>

*Survey commissioned by YouGovTotal sample size was 2015 adults ranging from 18-55+. Fieldwork was undertaken between 19th - 20th November 2020. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+).

Additional research findings:

- Fashion (28%), Technology (17%) and household (14%) products top the list of products which led to a shopper being scammed
- The research found that over half (58%) of UK scam victims were deceived by genuine looking websites, whilst nearly a quarter (23%) were lured in by heavily discounted items
- Students are just as likely to admit to breaking lockdown rules as to losing money in an online scam^v
- Two thirds (65%) of people in the UK thinking it's unlikely that they would be tricked by online scammers, with the older generation being more complacent than their younger counterparts^v

Dr Elisabeth Carter biography

Dr Elisabeth Carter is a Senior Lecturer in Criminology and forensic linguist specialising in fraud. She teaches undergraduate and postgraduate students at the University of Roehampton on modules including Cybercrime, Victims of Crime, and Policing and Criminal Justice.

Her research explores the use and abuse of power through talk, and the grooming process involved in the use of language to manipulate and exploit. She uses her research insights to help create methods to disrupt the power of fraudulent communications, drive down the stigma associated with becoming a victim of fraud, and help protect individuals from becoming victims of this type of crime.

She has contributed her expertise to an ITV News report on romance fraud, the BBC One daytime and primetime series For Love or Money, has provided interviews for several regional radio stations, and her expertise on the language of manipulation and persuasion has been used to inform police operations, national fraud prevention and awareness campaigns and NHS England Safeguarding literature.

HSBC UK

HSBC UK serves around 14.5 million customers across the UK, supported by 32,000 colleagues. HSBC UK offers a complete range of retail banking and wealth management to personal and private banking customers, as well as commercial banking for small to medium businesses and large corporates.

HSBC Holdings plc

HSBC Holdings plc, the parent company of HSBC, is headquartered in London. HSBC serves customers worldwide from offices in 64 countries and territories in its geographical regions: Europe, Asia, North America, Latin America, and Middle East and North Africa. With assets of \$2,956bn at 30 September 2020, HSBC is one of the world's largest banking and financial services organisations.

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ⁱ Action fraud data 2020 <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/campaign/action-fraud-launches-new-campaign-to-fight-back-against-fraud-this-christmas>

ⁱⁱ 22% vs 12%

ⁱⁱⁱ Source - UK Finance, Fraud the Facts 2020 <https://www.ukfinance.org.uk/policy-and-guidance/reports-publications/fraud-facts-2020>

^{iv} 29%

^v 12% vs 22%