Scams research 2021 – questionnaire

Introduction

This survey is being conducted on behalf of Ofcom, the UK regulator for providers of mobile phone, broadband, landline and pay-tv services. Ofcom has a duty to ensure that customers of these service providers are treated fairly and are protected from harm. We would like to hear about your experience of receiving suspicious calls and texts. Your input will help us understand the extent to which people are receiving these and the actions they take.

By 'suspicious calls and texts' we are referring to:

- Text messages sent to your mobile
- Live voice calls (when you answer your mobile or landline phone and there is a live person on the end of the line who you can have a conversation with)
- Recorded messages (when you answer your mobile or landline phone and you hear a recorded message rather than a person on the end of the line)

Examples of recent suspicious text messages are:

ROYALMAIL: Your parcel has a £1.09 unpaid fee. Visit: https://rylml-l70kredelivery.com/royalmail/ to make payment to avoid a return to sender.

LLOYDS BANK: You set up a NEW device on 11/08 at 17:59:04. If this WASN'T you please: https://securityunregisterdevicessl.com/lloyds

Examples of recent suspicious recorded and live voice messages are:

"I am calling from your bank to inform you that £600 has been paid out of your account. If this was not you, please press 1"

"This is your broadband supplier, your broadband account has been compromised and will be suspended. If you do not think this is the case, please press 1"

Section 1: Incidence of suspicious calls and texts and responses

Q1 Thinking about the last three months, have you received any of the following types of suspicious texts or calls on your mobile or landline phone?

Some examples of such suspicious texts or calls could include:

- A message about coronavirus from someone pretending to be from HMRC or the World Health Organisation (WHO)
- A message from someone pretending to be a brand (e.g., Amazon) telling you an item (e.g., an iPhone) has been purchased on your account
- A message from someone pretending to be HMRC telling you that you are eligible to receive a tax refund
- A message from someone pretending to be your bank, asking you to call a number or visit a website to verify your details
- A message from someone pretending to be a parcel delivery company requesting a postage fee

MULTI CODE APART FROM CODE 1 [CLOSE IF CODE 1]

	Text on your mobile	Call on your mobile	Call on your landline
N/A, I do not have this type of phone (s/c)	1	1	1
N/A, I am not aware I have received any type of suspicious text or call	2	2	2
Text message, e.g., from a courier company/Royal Mail about a parcel	3	n/a	n/a
Recorded message, e.g., a message telling you that money has been taken from your Amazon account	n/a	4	4
Live voice call, e.g., telling you there is a problem with your internet service	n/a	5	5

Q2a ASK FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED TEXT MESSAGES (CODE 3 AT Q1) Thinking about suspicious text messages, how often have you received these types of messages in the last three months?

	Text
At least several times a day	1
At least once a day	2
At least a few times a week	3
At least once a week	4
At least once a month	5
Less often	6

Q2b ASK FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED RECORDED MESSAGES (CODE 4 AT Q1)

Thinking about suspicious **recorded** messages, how often have you received these types of message in the last three months?

By **recorded messages**, we mean when you answer your mobile or landline phone and you hear a recorded message rather than a person on the end of the line.

	Recorded message on mobile	Recorded message on landline
At least several times a day	1	1
At least once a day	2	2
At least a few times a week	3	3
At least once a week	4	4
At least once a month	5	5
Less often	6	6

Q2c ASK FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED LIVE VOICE CALLS (CODE 5 AT Q1)

Thinking about suspicious **live voice calls**, how often have you received these types of calls in the last three months?

By **live voice calls**, we mean when you answer your mobile or landline phone and there is a live person on the end of the line who you can have a conversation with.

	Live voice call on mobile	Live voice call on landline
At least several times a day	1	1
At least once a day	2	2
At least a few times a week	3	3
At least once a week	4	4
At least once a month	5	5
Less often	6	6

Q2d ASK FOR THOSE WHO HAVE RECEIVED LIVE VOICE CALLS OR RECORDED MESSAGES (CODE 4 OR 5 AT Q1)

Thinking about the last three months, have any of these types of suspicious messages come through to your mobile voicemail or landline answerphone?

	Mobile voicemail	Landline answerphone /answering service
Yes	1	1
No	2	2
Not sure	3	3

Q3 ASK ALL WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED A RECORDED MESSAGE OR LIVE VOICE CALL ON THEIR MOBILE AND/OR LANDLINE [CODE 4 OR 5 AT Q1]

What do you usually do when you receive a suspicious recorded message or live voice call like this?

By **recorded messages**, we mean when you answer your mobile or landline phone and you hear a recorded message rather than a person on the end of the line.

By **live voice calls**, we mean when you answer your mobile or landline phone and there is a live person on the end of the line who you can have a conversation with.

SINGLE CODE FOR EACH MESSAGE TYPE

	Recorded	Live voice	Recorded	Live voice
	message	call on	message	call on
	on mobile	mobile	on landline	landline
Don't answer (e.g. because the	1	1	1	1
number looks suspicious / is				
not from someone I know)				
Hang up immediately, as soon	2	2	2	2
as I realise it is a suspicious				
message				
Listen to some of the message	3	3	3	3
before hanging up				
Listen to the full message	4	4	4	4
before hanging up				
Listen to some of what they	n/a	5	n/a	5
have to say and ask them				
questions to decide if it is a				
suspicious message				
Ask them not to call me again	n/a	6	n/a	6
Something else	7	7	7	7

	Q4	ASK ALL WHO RECEIVE THESE TYPES OF SUSPICIOUS MESSAGES [Concept of the property of the propert	•
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Did as instructed by the message/person	1	1	1
(e.g., clicked on a link or provided bank			
details over the phone)			
Just ignored it	2	2	2
Reported it	3	3	3
Blocked the number	4	4	4
Told friends or family about it	5	5	5
Checked to see if the number is real (e.g.,	6	6	6
Google search / elsewhere)			
Deleted it	7	n/a	n/a
Something else	8	8	8

Q5a	ASK ALL WHO REPORTED IT FOR EACH TYPE OF SUSPICIOUS MESSAGE [CODE 3 AT Q4]	
	How did you report the suspicious message/call?	
	Reported it to a special number for reporting suspicious messages/calls	
	Reported it to my landline or mobile provider	1
	Reported it to Action Fraud	2
	Reported it to Citizens' Advice	3
	Reported it to the police	4
	Reported it to Ofcom	5
	Reported to another organisation	6
	Did something else	7
	Can't remember	8
		9

Q5b	ASK ALL WHO REPORTED IT FOR EACH TYPE OF SUSPICIOUS MESSAGE [CODE 3 AT Q4] How did you know where to report the suspicious message/call?	
	Fallen victim to a scam before	
	From friends / family	1
	Searched for where to report it (e.g., Google search online)	1
	From the media (e.g., TV/ radio/ magazine/ newspaper	2
	From social media	3

From information from my landline or mobile provider	4
From information from another organisation	5
From somewhere else	6
Don't know / can't remember	7
	8
	9

Q5c	ASK ALL WHO REPORTED A SUSPICIOUS MESSAGE [CODE 3 AT Q4] Why did you decide to report the suspicious message/call?	
	To stop the messages coming through	
	Didn't want the same to happen to others	1
	To feel like I am helping to tackle scams	2
	Encouraged to do so by family / friends	3
	Encouraged to do so by a campaign	4
	Something else	5
	Prefer not to say	6
		7

Q6a	ASK ALL WHO DID AS INSTRUCTED [CODE 1 AT Q4] Have you done any of the following as a result of receiving one of these types of suspicious messages/calls?	
	Clicked on the link	
	Paid money in order to receive a parcel/other service	
	Transferred money to a new account	1
	Given your debit or credit card to someone who came to collect it	2
	Taken money out of your account and given it to someone who came to collect it	3
	Something else	5
	Prefer not to say	
	Not done any of the above	6

	7
	8

Q6b	ASK ALL WHO DID AS INSTRUCTED [CODE 1 AT Q4]	
	Have you experienced/done any of the following as a result of following the instructions	
	on one of these types of suspicious messages/calls?	
	Felt embarrassed / lost your self-belief	
	Felt alone/isolated	1
	Felt angry/ frustrated	2
	Changed your behaviour (e.g., changing the way you pay for things / not buying from websites)	3
	Taken steps to reduce future exposure (e.g., not picking up the phone, not	4
	answering calls from unknown numbers)	
	None of these	
	Prefer not to say	5
		6
		7

Q7	ASK ALL WHO RECEIVE THESE TYPES OF MESSAGES [CODE 3, 4 OR 5 AT Q1] How, if anything, does receiving these suspicious messages/calls make you feel?
	OPEN END [Must be answered by all who receive these types of suspicious messages]

Q8	ASK ALL	
	Have any of your friends or family ever talked to you about being worried about a possible suspicious call/message or actually fallen victim to one?	
	Yes, they were worried about a message or call they had received	1
	Yes, they had started to follow the scammer's instructions	2
	Yes, they had been scammed and had lost money	3
	No	4

Section 2: Screening services for landlines and mobiles

ASK ALL WITH A LANDLINE [CODE ALL WITH LANDLINE AT Q1]	
Do you have a service on your landline to help you screen incoming calls?	
[single code except multi-code possible with code 3]	
Yes, I have a specialist call screening service but do not use it	1
Yes, I have a specialist call screening service and use it	2
Yes, I have caller display so I can see the caller's number before deciding whether to answer the call	3
I am aware there are services, but I do not have one set up	4
I am aware there are services but I'm not sure if I have one set up	5
I was not previously aware of any screening services	6
Specialist call screening services that help you screen incoming calls can be provided by your landline provider e.g. BT Call Protect, Sky Shield, TalkTalk Call Safe and third party services that you can connect to your phone line e.g. TrueCall.	
	Do you have a service on your landline to help you screen incoming calls? [single code except multi-code possible with code 3] Yes, I have a specialist call screening service but do not use it Yes, I have a specialist call screening service and use it Yes, I have caller display so I can see the caller's number before deciding whether to answer the call I am aware there are services, but I do not have one set up I am aware there are services but I'm not sure if I have one set up I was not previously aware of any screening services Specialist call screening services that help you screen incoming calls can be provided by your landline provider e.g. BT Call Protect, Sky Shield, TalkTalk Call Safe and third

Q9b	ASK ALL WHO HAVE A LANDLINE SCREENING SERVICE BUT DO NOT USE [CODE 1 AT	
	Q9a]	
	Why do you not use a screening service?	
	I'm confident in recognising suspicious calls without using a screening service	1
	I don't receive suspicious_calls to make it worth having screening service	2
	I can't be bothered to switch the service on	3
	It's too complicated to use	4
	Something else	5
	Don't know	6

Q9c	ASK ALL WITH A LANDLINE [CODE ALL WITH LANDLINE AT Q1]	
	Are you registered with the Telephone Preference Service (TPS)?	
	TPS is the UK register of telephone numbers of people who have indicated they do not	
	want to receive sales and marketing telephone calls.	
	Yes	1
	No	2
	Don't know	3
		3

Q10	ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE [ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE AT Q1]				
	Are you aware of any services you can install on your mobile phone to help you identify whether texts/calls you receive are possibly suspicious?				
	By services, we mean any apps/software/screening tools you can add to your mobile phone help you identify potential suspicious calls/messages.				
	Text messages Calls				

Yes, I am aware	1	1
these services exist	l	
No, I was not	2	2
previously aware	l	
these services exist		
Not sure	3	3
	No, I was not previously aware these services exist	these services exist No, I was not previously aware these services exist

Q11a	ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE [ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE AT Q1]	
	Do you have a service on your mobile that helps you identify whether texts you receive are possibly suspicious?	
	Yes, I installed the app myself	1
	Yes, the software was installed on my mobile when I bought it	2
	Not sure	3
	No	4

ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE [ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE AT Q1]	
Do you have a service on your mobile that helps you identify whether incoming calls are possibly suspicious?	
Yes, I installed the app myself	1
Yes, the software was installed on my mobile when I bought it	2
Not sure	3
No	4
	Do you have a service on your mobile that helps you identify whether incoming calls are possibly suspicious? Yes, I installed the app myself Yes, the software was installed on my mobile when I bought it Not sure

ASK ALL WHO HAVE A MOBILE SCREENING SERVICE [CODE 1 OR 2 AT Q11b]	
What do you usually do when you see that an incoming call may be suspicious?	
Reject the call without answering it	1
Answer it and listen to it until I decide it is a suspicious call	2
	What do you usually do when you see that an incoming call may be suspicious? Reject the call without answering it

	Listen to the message all the way through	3
	Something else	4
Q13a	ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE PHONE [ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE AT Q1]	
Q_00	Do you know how to report a text message or call to your mobile that you suspect is	
	suspicious?	
	No	
		1
	Yes, report it to your mobile network operator (e.g., Vodafone, O2)	2
	Yes, report it to a special text number	3
	Yes, report it somewhere else	4
Q13b	ASK ALL WHO WOULD REPORT TO A SPECIAL TEXT NUMBER [CODE 3 AT Q13A]	
	Which text number would you report it to?	
	The state of the s	
	WRITE IN	1
	Not sure	2
Q14a	ASK ALL WHO HAVE NOT SAID THEY WOULD REPORT IT TO 7726	
	[CODE 1, 2 OR 4 AT Q13a, OR CODE 2 OR NON-7726 NUMBER AT Q13B]	
	Have you heard of the special text number [7726] that you can use to report a suspected suspicious text or call?	
	Yes, have heard of 7726	1
	I knew there was a number but was not aware that it was 7726	2
	No	3

Q14b	ASK ALL WHO ARE AWARE OF 7726	
	[CODE 1 AT Q14a AND INCLUDING THOSE WHO NAME 7726 AT Q13b]	
	Have you ever reported a text or call using the 7726 number?	
	Yes	1
	No	2
	Not sure	3

Q14c	ASK ALL WHO HAVE REPORTED A TEXT/CALL USING 7726 [CODE 1 AT Q14b]	
	How easy did you find the process of reporting the suspicious text/call using the 7726 number?	
	10 point sliding scale (1 – not at all easy, 10 – very easy) with don't know as a separate option	

Q14d	ASK ALL PREVIOUSLY UNAWARE OF 7726 REPORTING NUMBER [CODE 2 OR 3 AT Q14a]	
	Now that you know about the reporting number, how likely do you think you will be to use it the next time you receive a suspicious text or call?	
	10 point sliding scale (1 – not at all likely, 10 – very likely) with don't know as a separate option	

Q15a	ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE PHONE [ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE AT Q1]	
	To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement:	
	'Reporting possible suspicious texts/calls to a special number (e.g., 7726) is helpful in preventing people being scammed in future.'	
	Strongly agree	1
	Slightly agree	2

Neither agree nor disagree	3
Slightly disagree	4
Strongly disagree	5

Q15b	ASK ALL WHO DISAGREE REPORTING TO 7726 IS/WOULD BE HELPFUL [CODE 4 OR 5 AT Q15a]	
	Why do you think that reporting suspicious texts and calls would not be helpful?	
	WRITE IN	

Section 3: Sources for information about scams and close

Q16	ASK ALL	
	Where would you look for advice about suspicious messages/calls, for example to	
	check whether a message you suspected to be suspicious was genuine or not or to find	
	out what to do if you suspected you had been scammed?	
	The company that it looked like the message had come from (e.g. Royal Mail, DHL)	1
	Friends, family or colleagues	2
	Citizens Advice	3
	Your bank or building society	
	The police	4
	Action Fraud	5
	Ofcom	6
	Your landline/mobile/broadband provider's website	7
	The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)	8
	The Consumers Association/Which?	9
	·	10
	The Government / a Government site or source	11
	The media (e.g. BBC, Channel 4, news outlets)	12
	Somewhere else	13
	Don't know	

	14

Q17	ASK ALL	
	In what format would you like to see advice about suspicious messages/calls and how to avoid them?	
	Printed leaflets	1
	Posters in bus shelters and on billboards etc.	2
	Advertisements in magazines	3
	Advertisements in newspapers	4
	Articles in magazines	5
	Articles in newspapers	6
	Online, when you specifically search for such information	7
	Social media posts e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram	8
	Online video advice e.g. YouTube and social media platforms	9
	On television documentaries / factual programmes e.g. Rip-off Britain	10
	Texts from your bank	11
	Emails from your bank	12
	Texts from your landline/mobile/broadband provider	13
	Emails from your landline/mobile/broadband provider	14
	Something else	15

Q18	ASK ALL	
	Have you signed up to any of the following organisations or groups that may provide warnings of suspicious messages/calls?	
	Neighbourhood Watch/OWL	1
	Police commissioner	2
	Which?	3
	Action Fraud	

4	Citizens' Advice	
5	Local/county council	
6	Local online community group (e.g. Next Door)	
7	Local Facebook group	
8	Other social media profiles	
9	Somewhere else	
10	Not sure	
12	Not signed up to any	
13		
		1

Q19	ASK ALL					
	To what extent to you agree or disagree with the following statements?					
		Strongly agree	Slightly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Slightly disagree	Strongly disagree
	I believe that if more people report suspicious calls/messages then more can be done to prevent them	1	2	3	4	5
	There is already plenty of information about how to identify and avoid suspicious calls/messages	1	2	3	4	5
	It is easy to report suspicious calls/messages	1	2	3	4	5
	I am confident that I will not fall victim to a suspicious message sent by text	1	2	3	4	5
	I am confident that I will not fall victim to a suspicious live voice call or recorded message	1	2	3	4	5

Q20a	ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE PHONE		
	Thinking of your personal mobile phone, which network are you on?		
		EE/BT Mobile	1
		Giff-Gaff	2
		iD Mobile	3
		Lycamobile	4
		02	5
		Sky Mobile	6
		Tesco Mobile	7
		Three	8
		Virgin Mobile	9
		Vodafone	10
		Other	11
		Don't know	12

Q20b	ASK ALL WITH A MOBILE PHONE	
	What type of mobile phone do you have?	
	Apple / iPhone	1
	Other	2
	Don't know	3

Q21	ASK ALL WITH A LANDLINE	
	Which company do you/ your household use for its landline telephone service?	
	ВТ	1
	EE	2
	Now/Now Broadband	3
	Plusnet	4

Post Office	5
Sky	6
TalkTalk	7
Virgin Media	8
Vodafone	9
Other	10
Don't know	11

	Case-study request	
Q22a	ASK ALL WHO HAVE FOLLOWED SCAM INSTRUCTIONS [CODE 1-6 AT Q6]	
	Ofcom is in the process of designing new advice for the public to help people identify possible scam messages and calls and educate them on how report such messages. In order to show other people that anyone can fall victim to a scam, Ofcom is looking for real-life case-studies. You said earlier that you had followed the instructions in a scam message, would you be willing for Ofcom to contact you to talk further about this as it would help them with designing advice to make sure other people are able to recognise and report these types of message?	
	You would be able to choose whether you remain anonymous or would be willing to be identified in the campaign materials. Ofcom would be very grateful to you if you choose to contribute, as this will help them design their campaign messages to ensure that they will have the most impact and help prevent other people falling victim.	
	I would like to help Ofcom and talk to them about my experience I would not be willing to help Ofcom	
		1
		2

Q22b	IF WILLING TO HELP OFCOM	
	Please can you provide your contact details so Ofcom can call or email you if they	
	decide they would like to include you in their campaign?	
	Email address	
	Mobile/landline number	
	THANK AND CLOSE	