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HMRC is warning iPhone users about a new wave of scam text messages claiming to be about tax refunds. Unlike most spam texts, these reportedly cannot be blocked by iPhones or reported to the usual Ofcom anti-spam number.

The scam messages are targeted solely at the owners of Apple devices and claim that the recipient is entitled to a tax refund. Scam messages can also be sent through an email, other messaging services or social media. QR codes are also used. Unwary users will end up being directed to a fake link.

HMRC has said that 79,000 fake tax refund scams were reported in the year to January 2024, which is nearly 40% up on the preceding year. Real figures are almost certainly much higher.

### **Spotting a scam message**

What is the advice to worried iPhone users who do not want to be scammed? HMRC point out that they will never contact taxpayers by text message or email in relation to a tax refund. Instead, the taxpayer would receive an official letter. Nor will HMRC ask for personal details or payment information to be disclosed in a text or email.

While scammers may be able to find out your name – for example, if your email address is [PeterSmith@gmail.com](mailto:PeterSmith@gmail.com) – they should not have access to your unique tax reference (UTR) or NI number. Warning bells should be ringing if a text or email includes these details.

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## Tax refund scams

Although the prime time for tax refund scams – February – has passed, taxpayers still need to be on alert the year round:

- A scam message will typically link to a fake HMRC website. These fake websites will have been copied from the genuine HMRC website, so can be quite convincing.
- The taxpayer will then be asked to enter debit or credit card details.

Tax refund scams are designed to access a taxpayer's bank account, or to obtain personal details which can then be sold on the web.

HMRC's guidance on identifying tax scam phone calls, emails and text messages can be found [here](#).

## We can help

Please call us on **01753 888 211** or email [info@nhllp.com](mailto:info@nhllp.com) if you need guidance with any of the issues raised in this Broadcast. We would be happy to help.