

Sextortion Email Scams

Sextortion scams are a type of phishing attack whereby people are coerced to pay a Bitcoin ransom because they have been threatened with sharing video of themselves visiting adult websites. These scams are made to appear all the more credible because they provide seemingly plausible technical details about how this was achieved, and the phish **can sometimes also include the individual's password**.

For more information please go here <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/sextortion>

If you or someone you know receives/has received a sextortion email **you can report the offending email here** <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report-phishing>

Phishes are designed to play on people's emotions so that they will behave in a way which is out of character, and scams such as this are no different.

The phisher is gambling that enough people will respond so that their scam is profitable; they do not know if you have a webcam, have been visiting adult websites, or the means by which you communicate with people – in short, they are guessing.

The phisher hopes to emotionally trigger people so that they will 'take the bait' and pay the ransom.

What to do

- As with other phishes, our advice is **do not engage** with the phisher, and **report it to Action Fraud**: <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/report-phishing> (then mark as spam/junk & delete it)
- **Do not pay** the Bitcoin ransom. Doing so will likely encourage more scams as the phisher will know they have a 'willing' customer.
- **Do not worry if the phish includes your password**; in all likelihood this has been obtained from historic breaches of personal data.
You can check if your account has been compromised and get future notifications by visiting: <https://haveibeenpwned.com/>
- **If the phish includes a password you still use then change it immediately**, advice on how to create suitable passwords and enable other factors of authentication is available from Cyber Aware: <https://www.cyberaware.gov.uk/passwords>
- If you have been a victim of a sextortion scam and have paid the BitCoin ransom, then **report it to your local police force** by calling 101.
- If you need emotional support this is available from charities such as Victim Support by calling 0808 168 9111 or visiting: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/>