

Scams & online safety | Medium | 2 min read

WhatsApp scams: 'Hi Mum' and account takeover

WhatsApp is a handy way to keep in touch, which is why scammers use it too. Two tricks are very common, and both are easy to defend against.

The 'Hi Mum' message

A message arrives from an unknown number saying "Hi Mum, I've lost my phone, this is my new number." After a little chat, they say they need money urgently, perhaps to pay a bill they cannot sort out on the new phone.

What to do:

1. **Do not send money.**
2. Ring your child, or the person they claim to be, on the number you already have saved.
3. Ask a question only they would know, or ask them to send a voice note.
4. Block and report the number in WhatsApp.

Account takeover

Here, a criminal tries to get into your WhatsApp. You receive a text with a six-digit code you did not request. Then a "friend" messages saying they sent the code to you by mistake and asks you to send it on. If you do, they take over your account and message your contacts asking for money.

Never share a WhatsApp code with anyone, even a friend.

Protect your account

1. Open WhatsApp, tap **Settings**, then **Account**, then **Two-step verification**.
2. Choose **Turn on** and set a six-digit PIN that you will remember. Add an email address in case you forget it.
3. Do not tell anyone the PIN.

If your account has been taken

Try to sign in again with your phone number. If you can, use **Settings** and **Linked devices** to remove anything you do not recognise. Tell your friends and family that messages from your number may not be from you. WhatsApp support can also help from their website.

You can report scams to Report Fraud (formerly Action Fraud) at reportfraud.police.uk or on 0300 123 2040, or Police Scotland on 101.

When to get more help

Contact us if you are locked out of WhatsApp, or would like help turning on two-step verification.

Still stuck? Email admin@visiontech336.com and tell us what you can see on the screen. Menus and button names can differ slightly between versions and makes. If something does not match, stop and ask rather than guess. Please never send passwords or card details.