



# HAMPSHIRE CYBERWATCH

SCAM AND FRAUD WARNING



## QR Code Scam

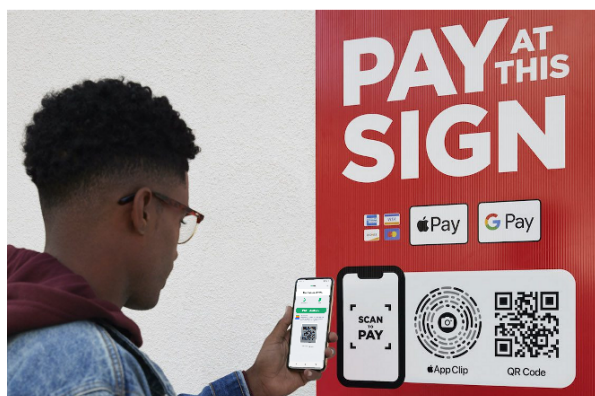
Scammers often look to the latest trends for new cybercrime tactics. A QR code (Quick Response code) is two-dimensional code that can be scanned using a smartphone camera with a suitable app. QR codes can be used to store and share various types of information such as text, URLs, and contact information.

Although QR codes have numerous useful applications, they can also be used for malicious purposes. Cybercriminals can easily embed malicious code or phishing URL into the QR code. The pixelated dots can

be modified through numerous free tools that are widely available on the internet.

In this way, the QR code can direct victims to malicious websites used to extract consumer identity and personal information or even money.

QR codes can also be used as a delivery method to download malicious code and compromise your device. Once you have downloaded the malicious file many other outcomes are automatic and stealthy and do not require further actions after scanning the code.



An example is where a fake QR code machine, disguised as a "quick pay" option is stuck to a parking payment machine. Motorists have had money stolen from their bank accounts after trying to pay for parking using fake QR codes.

### How to keep safe from this fraud:

- **Be careful what you scan** - never just assume the QR code will take you where it says it will. If in doubt use another means of communication.
- **If possible, go to the source:** If you see a QR code you want to use, try instead to access the website directly by putting the address into your browser.
- **If not, check there is no sticker over the QR code:** Make sure that you know who has produced the code and someone has not tampered or put their own sticker over the original QR code.

If you think you are the victim of fraud or scam, you should report this to **Action Fraud** (look for the Action Fraud website).

If you are worried or want help with any communication, our Cyber Champions are available to offer free advice. Just go to the **Hampshire Cyber Watch** Home page and hit the red button:

[Request Support](#)

Our Champs also give free talks to groups on cybercrime awareness and how to avoid being a victim - to arrange one, contact us via the same home page.