

IS IT REAL?

STAYING ALERT IN AN AGE OF DISINFORMATION

We are exposed to large amounts of information every day; online, on social media, in group chats, and through word of mouth. Not all of it is accurate...

False or misleading information can spread quickly and influence opinions, behaviour, and trust.



Understanding the difference between **misinformation**, **disinformation**, and **misrepresentation** and knowing how to respond helps individuals, communities, and organisations make informed decisions and prevent harm.

DID IT REALLY HAPPEN?

TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE?

FREE 



...probably not true!

I KNEW IT!



BEWARE... posts that confirm your beliefs!

OUTRAGE!

GRRRRRRRRRR!!



EMOTIONAL OR EXTREME LANGUAGE

"outrageous", "shocking", "cover-up"

DO IT NOW!

TIK
TIK
TIK



BEWARE... Pressure to act or share quickly

DEFIES REALITY!



AI IMAGERY AND VIDEO CAN SEEM REAL BUT IS OFTEN A BIT OFF!

HOW IS THIS NOT ON THE NEWS?

CATS HAVE TAKEN OVER!



No clear source or unnamed "experts"
Screenshots instead of original links
Content that only appears in one place

TACKLE FALSE INFORMATION!

PAUSE BEFORE YOU SHARE

- Stop and ask: Is this accurate?
- Avoid sharing information you haven't checked.

CHECK THE SOURCE

- Is it from a trusted organisation or official website?
- Look for named authors, dates, and references.

CROSS-CHECK THE FACTS

- Search for the same information on reliable news sites or official sources.
- If it's true, it should be confirmed elsewhere.

ASK SIMPLE QUESTIONS

- Where did this come from?
- Is anything missing or taken out of context?

CHALLENGE RESPECTFULLY

- Correct misinformation calmly and politely.
- Focus on facts, not blame or argument.

WHAT COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS CAN DO

- Share clear, consistent, and accessible information
- Address misinformation early before it spreads
- Be open, honest, and transparent in communications
- Use plain language and avoid jargon
- Provide trusted sources and signposting

REPORTING MISINFORMATION

- If content is harmful or misleading:
- Use social media reporting tools
- Report concerns to the relevant organisation
- Encourage others to rely on verified information

KEY MESSAGES TO REMEMBER

- Not everything online is accurate
- Intent matters, but impact matters more
- Everyone has a role in slowing the spread
- Checking information protects individuals and communities

REMEMBER

AI can be used to impersonate anyone! Videos and audio are not to be trusted unless you know where they came from, who made them? Why did they make them?

Don't give away your information in return for a cute video or image - what are they doing with your information?

FINAL THOUGHT

Sharing responsibly is as important as staying informed.

PAUSE. CHECK. VERIFY. THEN SHARE.

WHO CAN YOU REPORT IT TO?

If misinformation, disinformation, or misrepresentation is causing harm, distress, or confusion, there are official bodies you can report it to. The right place depends on what the information is about and the impact it is having.

1. SOCIAL MEDIA AND ONLINE PLATFORMS

Most platforms have reporting options for:

- False information
- Scams and impersonation
- Harassment or harmful content

Reporting helps platforms review, label, reduce the spread of, or remove content.

2. SCAMS OR FINANCIAL HARM

Report to: Action Fraud (the UK's national fraud reporting service)

This helps identify patterns and prevent further harm.

3. IMMEDIATE RISK, ENCOURAGEMENT OF VIOLENCE OR SERIOUS HARM

- 999 in an emergency
- 101 for non-emergency concerns

4. TV, RADIO, VIDEO - ONLINE SAFETY & HARMFUL CONTENT

Ofcom regulates broadcasters and has responsibilities around harmful online content.

5. MISUSE OF PERSONAL DATA, FALSE CLAIMS AND DATA PROTECTION

Report to: ICO (Information Commissioner's Office)

6. FALSE OR MISLEADING BUSINESS CLAIMS

- Your local council's Trading Standards service

7. INVESTMENT, BANKING AND FAKE FINANCIAL FIRMS

Report to: Financial Conduct Authority (FCA)

8. EMPLOYERS, SCHOOLS, OR ORGANISATIONS

If misinformation affects:

- Staff, service users, or volunteers
- Workplace or school environments
- Community services or partnerships

Report internally so organisations can:

- Correct false claims
- Communicate accurate information
- Support those affected

Important Tips When Reporting

- Keep screenshots, links, and dates where possible
- Don't engage aggressively or share further
- Use clear, factual language when reporting
- Encourage others to rely on verified information

REMEMBER

If misinformation causes harm, confusion, fear, or financial loss — it can and should be reported. Early reporting helps protect individuals and communities.