

### **Monmouthshire resident caught in computer scam**

Monmouthshire County Council's trading standards officers are warning that organised criminal gangs are exploiting security-conscious internet users by tricking them into downloading and paying for anti-virus protection which is actually malicious software. These gangs target victims through direct telephone calls. Victims are left out-of-pocket, their bank details stolen and their computers seriously compromised. One Abergavenny resident had a call last week from someone purporting to be from Microsoft who gave her a list of virus problems on her computer. Unfortunately she allowed access to her computer, but hung up when asked for bank details. She still has had to get her computer checked and there is no guarantee that the access allowed won't cause problems in future.

Research indicates that 80% of UK internet users have never heard of these scams and yet one in four online users has been approached by someone claiming to be from an IT helpdesk. While it's encouraging to see that UK web users are today more security-aware, criminals are often one step ahead and will use increasingly sophisticated methods to take advantage. However, equipped with the right information, there's no need for anyone to be deterred from going online or from protecting their computers with the right security software. This week is "Get Safe Online Week" and everyone is encouraged to take just five minutes to visit [www.getsafeonline.org/](http://www.getsafeonline.org/)

Get Safe Online encourages web users to learn more about internet safety and to make sure that their computers are properly protected. Some very simple steps people can take include protecting PCs by keeping anti-virus and anti-spyware software up to date, making regular back-ups of files containing sensitive or personal information, securing wireless networks and, most importantly, protecting financial and personal details whilst online.