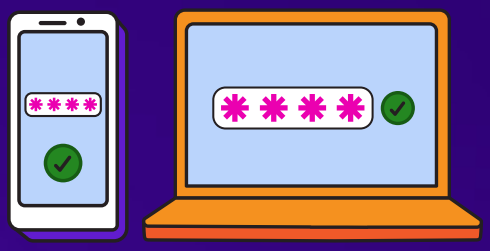
# Use 2-step verification (2SV) to protect your online accounts

National Cyber Security Centre
a part of GCHQ

Cyber Aware



## What is 2SV?

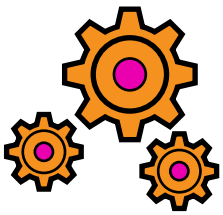
2SV adds an extra security step when you log into online services, to double-check that it really is you. A common method of 2SV is to receive a code that you add separately once you've entered your password.

## Why should I do it?

Even if you have a strong password, a cyber criminal could still get access to your account if they steal it from an organisation that holds your data, or through a successful phishing attempt. And if you use the same password for many accounts, one stolen password can be used to access all of them. But using 2SV helps prevent this because it helps stop cyber criminals accessing your account, even if they know your password.

**It only takes a couple of minutes to set up 2SV and once you've done it, you're instantly safer online.**

## How do I set up 2SV?



Some online services, such as banking, may already have 2SV switched on. But most don't, so you will need to switch it on yourself to give extra protection. The option to switch on 2SV is usually in the security settings of your account.

**Find out more about setting up 2SV on our website ncsc.gov.uk/2sv**

## Which accounts do I need to protect with 2SV?

You should set up 2SV on all your 'high value' accounts that protect the things you really care about and would cause the most harm to you if these accounts were compromised or you lost access:

- Your main email – this is really important because criminals with access to your inbox can use it to reset passwords on other accounts.
- Your social media accounts, like Facebook, Instagram or X (Twitter)
- Any other accounts you use for storing important things (such as photos), communicating or shopping – for example PayPal, WhatsApp, Amazon or cloud storage services.

**Your bank has probably set it up for you automatically for your online banking – check if you're not sure.**

## What are the different types of 2SV?

2SV usually works by sending you a security code to enter after the password to prove it is really you. There are different ways you can receive this code:

- A service may send it to your mobile as an SMS, and some may even offer an automated phone call if that's easier for you to access.
- **You can install an authenticator app on your phone**, such as Google Authenticator or Microsoft Authenticator, which once you've set it up, will generate a code every time you want to log on. You can then use the same app to generate codes for different accounts.
- Some services will allow you to use biometrics, such as using Face ID or your fingerprint on your device to verify it is you.