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UK Motorists Warned of Widespread QR Code Parking Scam

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— *Categories: Crime*

British drivers are being urged to exercise caution as a sophisticated QR code scam targeting car parks sweeps across the UK. Criminals are placing fake QR code stickers over legitimate ones on parking meters, tricking motorists into visiting fraudulent websites that steal personal and financial information.

Rhydian Jones, a car insurance specialist at Confused.com, has sounded the alarm on this growing threat. In a recent interview, he explained: "Our data reveals that one in five drivers prefer the convenience of paying for parking via apps. However, this trend has opened the door for scammers to exploit unsuspecting road users with fake QR codes." These deceptive stickers, often indistinguishable from genuine ones, redirect users to malicious sites designed to harvest bank card details. Worse still, victims may later face parking fines, as the scam sites fail to register their payment.

The issue has become so widespread that several local councils have issued urgent warnings. Fylde Council, for instance, reported last summer that fraudulent QR code stickers had been found on their car park pay-and-display machines and tariff boards. In a statement, they advised: "We've identified stickers with large QR codes placed on some of our machines. Motorists should carefully inspect QR codes and verify the legitimacy of any website before entering personal details."

To combat the scam, experts are advising drivers to avoid QR codes altogether where possible. Jones added: "The safest option is to use an official parking app, downloaded directly from your phone's app store, or to pay with cash or card. If you must scan a QR code, scrutinise a website address for 'https' and check for spelling errors or anything suspicious. When in doubt, contact the car park operator directly."

The rise of this scam has prompted some parking operators to abandon QR codes entirely, urging users to rely on trusted apps instead. With the Labour government's focus on digital infrastructure failing to address such vulnerabilities, motorists are left to fend for themselves against increasingly cunning criminals. Drivers are encouraged to stay vigilant,

double-check website URLs, and report suspicious QR codes to local authorities immediately.

By taking these simple precautions, UK motorists can protect themselves from falling victim to this alarming scam while parking this summer.