Buying and selling second-hand devices

 Prepared by Disability Equality Scotland

Disability Equality Scotland

How to get rid of personal information from your phone, tablet, and other devices

In this document, a **device** is something that can connect to the internet, like a smartphone, tablet, or laptop computer.

Second-hand means it is not new – someone else has owned it or used it before.

Our smartphones and other devices can have a lot of work, personal and financial information on them, like phone numbers, passwords and bank details.

If you are selling, giving away, or trading in your smartphone or other device, you should get rid of any personal information on it.

You may have personal information on other electronic devices like smart TVs, fitness trackers, speakers or games consoles.

If you are selling devices like this check the manufacturer's website or search online to find out how to get rid of your personal information.

This is often called a 'factory reset'.

What to do before you get rid of the personal information on your device

Make sure you have a backup copy of all the personal data that you want to keep.

The Cyber Aware guidance explains how to do this.

You can also put information on:

- a memory stick
- an external hard drive
- an SD card
- a DVD or CD-R disc

Keep a note of:

- the websites you use to get online services, especially banking, shopping, email or social media
- the logins and passwords for each of these accounts

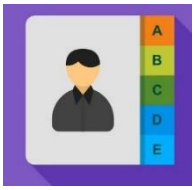
Make sure you have another device to:

- control any of your 'smart' devices around the house like security cameras or heating controls
- check and get into your online accounts - for example, if you are sent a security code.

Check these things work on another device before you get rid of the personal information on the device that you are selling or giving away.

How to get rid of the personal information on your device

The best way to do this is to use your phone's ‘Erase all Content and Settings’ or ‘Factory reset’ features.



Doing this will get rid of all your personal data from your device including:

- messages
- contacts
- photographs
- browsing history – things you have looked at on the internet
- Wi-Fi codes
- passwords
- any apps you have put on

You may have to check how to reset your device on the website of the company that made the phone.

Here are weblinks to the main phone and computer makes:

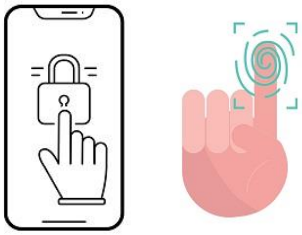
Reset your Android device to factory settings

Erase your iPhone, iPad or iPod touch

Reset your Chromebook to factory settings

Reset your PC in Windows 10

Restore your Mac to factory settings



Your phone may ask you to:

- switch on automatic updates
- set up a screenlock, password, fingerprint or PIN

You should also switch on automatic backups.

These things will help keep your phone and the information on it secure and safe.

You may be given the choice to keep your personal files when getting rid of your data.

Do not do this if you are selling, trading in, or giving your device away.

What to think about when choosing a second-hand device

If you are buying a second-hand device online, please read our guide to ‘shopping online securely’.

Do not buy phones that are no longer supported by the manufacturer or their support period will end soon.

If you buy a phone that is no longer supported:

- it will not get updates about new features and how it can work better
- it will not get security updates from the maker of the phone

Without these it is easier for online criminals to get into your phone.

You can check online to find if a device can still get updates from the manufacturer.

Here are weblinks for iPhone, Chrome and Pixel/Nexus devices.

Supported iPhone models

Chrome OS (e.g. Chromebooks)

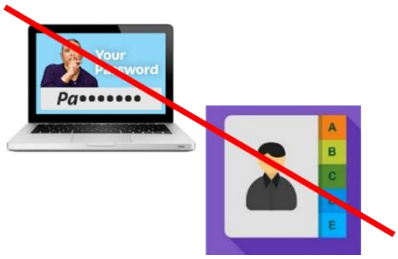
Pixel devices

If you have another type of Android device like ones made by Samsung or Huawei, you will have to check with the maker.

What to do before using your second-hand device

When you get a second-hand device, it is a good idea to get rid of all the personal data on it or do a ‘factory reset' on it.

This reset will:



- get rid of the personal information of the person who owned the phone before

- make sure your device is working as well as it can before you start using it

Follow the links on page 5 of this document to find out how to do a reset.

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