

# ANTIVIRUS PROGRAMS

## AVG AntiVirus FREE

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# The Kaspersky situation

The Kaspersky anti-virus program is produced by a Russian company. It has always been well reviewed by Which? magazine and is currently top of their list of anti-virus programs, based on performance, but they have withdrawn their “Best Buy” recommendation.

The UK’s official cybersecurity body has updated its advice on the implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, specifically around the use of Kaspersky antivirus. The key thing for UK consumers to know is that the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) believes it’s highly unlikely that individuals who use Kaspersky antivirus will be targeted directly. However, there are some exceptions for those who do activities specifically against the interests of the Russian state. So whether you use Kaspersky antivirus products on your own computer is really down to your own personal view and assessments of your own risks.

The official advice from NCSC about Kaspersky was previously for specific government departments working in security to not use such products. The NCSC has now said the situation has ‘materially changed’. The main concern is around the way in which Russian companies are obliged to assist the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB), ‘and the pressure to do so may increase in a time of war’.

While it says there is no evidence that Russia has exercised this so far during the conflict to specifically target UK companies or individuals, it also says that ‘absence of evidence is not evidence of absence’. You can find more information on the NCSC website. It’s worth a look.

<https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/blog-post/use-of-russian-technology-products-services-following-invasion-ukraine>

In addition to the comments above the NCSC advises that that the main risk for users is that, should sanctions be extended to Russian brands operating in the UK, the software could simply stop working or updating. However, that hasn’t yet been mooted so isn’t a current concern.

Which? have decided that it wouldn’t be right to unequivocally recommend Kaspersky software, in light of the situation in Ukraine and the worsening relations between Russia and the West. Like the NCSC, they aren’t currently recommending that existing Kaspersky customers should stop using its software. They also aren’t advising that people don’t buy Kaspersky products. Their stance is that, at this present time, they are happier to recommend other equally good options instead. They will continue to review that decision. If you currently have a Kaspersky subscription that you’re no longer sure about but don’t want to pay for another antivirus suite, choose a free program instead.

# FREE ANTIVIRUS PROGRAMS

Product	Score	Live protection	Anti phishing
Kaspersky Security Cloud	80%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Avast Free Antivirus	77%	★★★★★	★★★★★
AVG AntiVirus Free	76%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Avira Free Security	72%	★★★★★	★★★★★

# PAID FOR PROGRAMS

Product	Score	Live protection	Anti phishing
Bitdefender Internet Security	83%	★★★★★	★★★★★
ESET Internet Security	82%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Kaspersky Internet Security	81%	★★★★★	★★★★★
F-Secure SAFE	79%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Norton 360 Deluxe	79%	★★★★★	★★★★☆
G Data Internet Security	78%	★★★★★	★★★★★
McAfee Total Protection	78%	★★★★★	★★★★★
AVG Internet Security	77%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Trend Micro Internet Security	77%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Avast Premium Security	76%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Malwarebytes Premium	74%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Avira Antivirus Pro	72%	★★★★★	★★★★★
Sophos Home Premium	72%	★★★★★	★★★★★
TotalAV Internet Security	72%	★★★★★	★★★★☆

# MEMBERS' EXPERIENCE

- David Bryant
  - Doubts about Kaspersky; uses Bullguard
- Richard Martin
  - Rejected McAfee; Chose AVG (paid for)
- Jim Flett
  - Uses Windows Defender (Microsoft)  
and Norton (free with BT Broadband)