

Alerts

Warning: Emails misusing the name of Eaton Smith LLP

24 June 2022

Emails have been sent misusing the name of 'Eaton Smith LLP', in respect of supposedly unclaimed inheritance money.

What is the scam?

A member of the public has received emails from individuals using the names 'Mark Rowlands' and 'Eaton Smith', in relation to the supposedly large inheritance of an individual who shares the same surname as the recipient of the emails.

We understand that the email purporting to be from 'Mark Rowlands' was sent from the email address: 'markrowlands.lawfirm@gmail.com' (see below for details of a genuine solicitor). The email claims that the recipient is the beneficiary to a large estate, and requests that they make contact. We understand that this was followed up by another email, also relating to the supposed inheritance, purporting to be from 'Eaton Smith' and using the address 'Eatonnsmith@outlook.com'.

The email from 'Eaton Smith' falsely claimed the writer is a lawyer at "the London firm" of 'Eaton Smith LLP' (see below for details of a genuine firm of this name). The email claimed that 'Mr Eaton Smith' was the "personal attorney" for the supposed deceased. The SRA does not authorise or regulate any individual solicitor called 'Mr Eaton Smith'.

Any business or transaction through the email addresses 'markrowlands.lawfirm@gmail.com' or 'Eatonnsmith@outlook.com' is not undertaken by a solicitors' practice or by an individual authorised and regulated by the SRA.

Is there a genuine firm or person?

The SRA authorises and regulates a genuine firm called Eaton Smith LLP. The head office for the firm is at 14 High Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2HA. The firm has confirmed that they do not have any other branch offices in London, have not employed anyone called Mark Rowlands and have no connection to the emails referred to in the above alert.

The SRA also authorises and regulates a genuine solicitor called Mark Rowlands. Mr Rowlands is currently employed at a firm of solicitors called Thompson Smith and Puxon in Colchester and his genuine email address

is mark.rowlands@tsplegal.com. The genuine Mark Rowlands has no connection to the emails referred to in the above alert.

What should I do?

When a firm's or individual's identity has been copied exactly (or cloned), due diligence is necessary. If you receive correspondence claiming to be from the above firm(s) or individual(s), or information of a similar nature to that described, you should conduct your own due diligence by checking the authenticity of the correspondence by contacting the law firm directly by reliable and established means. You can contact the SRA to find out if individuals or firms are regulated and authorised by the SRA and verify an individual's or firm's practising details. Other verification methods, such as checking public records (e.g. telephone directories and company records) may be required in other circumstances.