

Alerts

Warning: Communications misusing the name of James Inness and Latham & Watkins (London) LLP

19 June 2024

Three separate instances misusing the name James Inness and Latham & Watkins (London) LLP.

What is the scam?

The SRA has been advised that on three separate occasions, the identity of James Inness has been misused.

1. An individual purporting to be a company director of an energy company attempted to expedite a large payment for an alleged acquisition in Asia. James Inness was referred to as the lawyer dealing with the acquisition and the email address provided was 'james.innes@lw-merger.com'.
2. The genuine James Inness received a voicemail message from someone advising that his name, image, and company had been impersonated. The caller explained that a company CEO was being targeted in relation to a purchase in Asia. Communication was via WhatsApp and referred to the passing of 'codes'.
3. The receptionist at the genuine Latham & Watkins (London) LLP received a call from someone in Germany. He reported what he believed to be a scam in relation to an individual claiming to be James Inness, requesting payments over the phone. Communication was via WhatsApp and referred to the passing of 'codes'. The telephone number used by the individual pretending to be James Inness was +44 7867 121275.

Any business or transactions through the email address 'james.innes@lw-merger.com' or telephone number +44 7867 121275 is not undertaken by an individual or firm authorised and regulated by the SRA.

Is there a genuine firm or person?

The SRA authorises and regulates a genuine firm of solicitors called Latham & Watkins (London) LLP which has a head office in London.

The SRA also authorises and regulates James Dougal Mellor Inness, who is a Partner at the genuine firm of Latham & Watkins (London) LLP. Emails from the genuine firm use the domain @lw.com.

The genuine firm has confirmed that neither it, nor the genuine James Inness have any connection to the email 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.