

Alerts

Warning: WhatsApp messages misusing the name of Joanne Mclvor of Edwin Coe LLP

2 December 2021

A member of the public has received a WhatsApp message giving contact details of someone falsely purporting to be the solicitor Joanne Mclvor.

What is the scam?

A member of the public has received a WhatsApp message giving contact details of someone falsely purporting to be the solicitor Joanne Mclvor (see below for details of the genuine solicitor).

We understand that the scam involves a message to a company's finance manager (or another manager) from someone falsely claiming to be their senior manager or CEO. The message asks the recipient to contact 'Joanne Mclvor' in relation to a supposedly confidential business transaction.

We understand that the recipient is advised to call the supposed 'Joanne Mclvor' directly on WhatsApp due to confidentiality, and if they then speak with 'Joanne Mclvor' they are provided with bank details to make a payment. The bank details provided are not connected to the genuine solicitor or her firm.

Is there a genuine firm or person?

The SRA authorises and regulates a genuine practising solicitor called Joanne Mclvor (SRA ID: 612284), who is a solicitor at the genuine firm of Edwin Coe LLP (SRA ID: 462112), which has its office at 2 Stone Buildings, Lincoln's Inn, London, WC2A 3TH.

The genuine Joanne Mclvor and Edwin Coe LLP have confirmed that they have no genuine connection to the messages referred to in the above alert, with Edwin Coe LLP confirming that their lawyers do not correspond with clients over WhatsApp.

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.