

## Alerts

### *Warning: Correspondence and calls misusing the name of Hausfeld & Co LLP*

31 March 2021

Correspondence and calls from Austria, falsely claiming to be from Hausfeld & Co LLP.

#### *What is the scam?*

The SRA has been informed that correspondence and telephone calls have been received by members of the public, from people falsely claiming to be writing or calling on behalf of Hausfeld & Co LLP from an address in Vienna, Austria.

We understand that in one example the initial contact was by telephone call, followed by an invoice claiming to be from a 'William Scott' of the firm. In another case, we understand a member of the public received an email from someone claiming to be 'Michael Storm' of the firm. We understand that other names used have included 'David O'Connor', 'William Storm' and 'Emma Anderson'. The genuine firm have confirmed they have no office in Austria or genuine link to this correspondence (see below).

The SRA has also been informed that email addresses used have included: 'Hausfeldaustria@gmail.com', 'williamstorm.at@gmail.com', 'michael.storm.au@gmail.com', and 'david.oconnor.au@gmail.com'. Any business or transactions through these email addresses are not undertaken by a solicitor's practice authorised and regulated by the SRA, or by an individual authorised and regulated by the SRA.

#### *Is there a genuine firm or person?*

Hausfeld & Co LLP is a genuine law firm authorised and regulated by the SRA, whose head office is based in London.

The genuine firm have confirmed that do not have any connection to the correspondence or email addresses referred to in the above alert. They have confirmed that they do not have an office based in Austria and have no current association with individuals by the name William Scott, Michael Storm, David O'Connor, William Storm, or Emma Anderson.

The SRA does authorise and regulate several genuine solicitors called William Scott, David O'Connor and Emma Anderson, none of whom are believed to be connected to matters 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.