

Alerts

Warning: Emails from 'Barrister Watson F. Williams' misusing the name 'Watson, Farley & Williams LLP'

10 September 2021

Emails from 'Barrister Watson F. Williams' regarding a supposed inheritance, that misuse the name of Watson Farley & Williams LLP.

What is the scam?

We understand that emails have been sent to members of the public, supposedly from 'Barrister Watson F. Williams' and claiming to relate to a large, purported inheritance.

In the email seen by the SRA the recipient is informed that they are being contacted as they have the same surname as the supposed deceased, as a purported beneficiary to US\$50,000,000 Dollars. The recipient is asked to provide various personal contact details to supposedly enable the processing of the matter.

The email is signed off as being from 'Barrister Watson F. Williams' who falsely claims to be a 'Principal Partner' in a genuine firm (see below).

The email is sent from the address 'wangpeng@guoxin.cn' and also provides and misuses a genuine office address of the genuine firm (see below). The reply-to email address provided is 'Williamwilbert2@yandex.com'

The SRA does not authorise or regulate an individual solicitor called 'Watson F Williams'. Any business or transaction through 'Barrister Watson F. Williams', or the email addresses referred to above, 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 Watson Farley & Williams LLP (SRA ID: 420646). Its London office address is 15 Appold Street, London, EC2A 2HB.

The genuine firm has confirmed that it has no genuine connection with 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.