

Lottery scams

Lottery scams are designed to persuade people they have won a huge prize that does not exist.

How it works

The fraudster will contact people—by post or email—and claim they have been allocated winning numbers.

If the individual contacts the fraudster, they will be asked to send a "fee" to cover administration costs before their winnings are released. They may be asked to give details about their identity. The winnings do not exist, and their identity may be hi-jacked.

To convince people, reference is made to recognised lotteries, such as,

- the UK National Lottery,
- European or International Lottery,
- Canadian Lottery,
- Toyota or BMW Lottery,
- Royal Heritage Mega Jackpot Lottery, or
- Yahoo/MSN Lottery Incorporation.

In some cases, names of lawyers or those working with them are used to make the claim more credible. The firms identified may be genuine law firms that have no idea their name is being used.

The scams tell people they have won, even if they have not entered a competition. The fraudster may send a foreign cheque to convince the victim of their win. Banks in the UK are likely to accept the cheque. Under the impression they have banked their winnings, the victim is then asked to send fees to the fraudster, for example, to cover taxes. They will then discover that the cheque is not genuine and that it will not be honoured at its destination overseas.

Learn more by reading examples of lottery scams (PDF 27K)

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/globalassets/documents/consumers/scams/lottery-scams-examples.pdf?version=49098d>] .

What you should do

If you believe you are a victim of a lottery scam, or your name has been used in a lottery scam, report it to your local police.

If you are regulated by us and have information that may implicate a regulated person or firm, report it to us using our Red Alert line

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/solicitors/resources/fraud-dishonesty/>] .

If you are a consumer or a member of the public, please follow the reporting instructions provided in Recognising fraud and dishonesty

[<https://www.sra.org.uk/consumers/problems/fraud-dishonesty/>] .