

## Alerts

### *Warning: Correspondence misusing the name of Solicitors Direct Limited*

1 December 2021

Emails have been sent falsely claiming to be from Solicitors Direct Limited, offering assistance in recouping funds lost via a trading platform.

#### *What is the scam?*

A legal attorney in Azerbaijan reported their client was contacted by persons claiming to be from Solicitors Direct Limited, advising they could assist in recouping money he lost. A contract in Russian was sent to the client, bearing a logo for Solicitors Direct Limited (see below) and name of Giuseppe A-S Bellavia (see below), and using the email address support@solicitors-direct.ltd.

The client was also asked to open a Bitcoin wallet to enable the 'regulator' to transfer the lost funds to. A registration fee of USD\$599 was requested to be transferred.

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

The SRA authorises and regulates a genuine solicitor called Giuseppe Antonio Stefano Bellavia (SRA ID: 133738), who is a Member at Bellavia & Associates LLP (SRA ID: 652648).

The genuine Giuseppe Antonio Stefano Bellavia has confirmed that he does not have any genuine or intended connection to the correspondence referred to in the above alert, and does not use that email address.

The SRA does not regulate any entity called Solicitors Direct Limited; it is a dormant company where Giuseppe Antonio Stefano Bellavia is the sole Director.

#### *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.