

# Alerts

## *Warning: Emails misusing the names of Hogan Lovells and two of its partners*

8 January 2020

Emails misusing the names of "Hogan Lovells" and two of its partners (John Allison and Nick Atkins), in separate attempted scams.

### *What is the scam?*

Two separate issues / scams have been reported to the SRA:

1. Emails have been sent, falsely claiming to be from "John Allison" of "Hogan Lovells". We understand that the emails arise in the context of someone impersonating a Chief Executive (or Chief Financial Officer) of a company and directing a subsidiary company to make a payment in connection with a supposedly confidential purchase of another overseas company. In the emails seen by the SRA, the "Chief Executive" directs that "John Allison" would provide bank account details for payment and then subsequently forwards a (spoofed) email from "John Allison" with the claimed banking details.
2. Emails have been sent to members of the public in relation to a purported unclaimed inheritance, falsely claiming to be from "Nick Atkins" of "Hogan Lovells LLP". In all emails seen by the SRA, the recipient has the same surname as the supposedly deceased client and in at least one instance false supporting documentation (supposed photographic identification and a "Certificate Of Call To Bar") was provided. Emails seen by the SRA regarding this matter were sent from multiple different "Gmail" email addresses.

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

The SRA authorises and regulates a genuine law firm called Hogan Lovells International LLP, whose head office address is Atlantic House, Holborn Viaduct, London, EC1A 2FG. This firm, together with associated international legal practices, trades as Hogan Lovells.

The SRA authorises and regulates a genuine solicitor called John Allison. Mr Allison is a partner at Hogan Lovells International LLP.

The SRA also authorises and regulates two genuine solicitors called Nicholas (Nick) Atkins, one of whom is also a partner at Hogan Lovells International LLP.

The genuine firm of Hogan Lovells International LLP and the genuine Mr John Allison and Mr Nicholas Atkins of that firm have confirmed they are not connected to the emails referred to in the above alert, and no genuine business emails are sent from "Gmail" style email accounts.

The other genuine solicitor called Nicholas (Nick) Atkins works as a partner in a different firm of solicitors and is not believed to be connected to these matters in any way.

### *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.