Wilsons
Solicitors

Cyber-crime

Fraudsters have become increasingly experienced in tricking law firm clients into transferring funds to them rather than to the genuine bank account of the law firm.

Often the client will receive an email which appears to come from the lawyer requesting funds to be transferred to a specified bank account, which is in fact the fraudster's account. In most circumstances the funds requested will be consistent with amounts the client is expecting to have to transfer to their lawyer.

Whilst we do everything possible to make our systems secure, the nature of electronic communication is that it has weaknesses and cyber criminals are increasingly sophisticated in exploiting these weaknesses.

Caution is always required where requests for funds are received through electronic media.

The following are some warning flags that can assist you in detecting a fraudulent request.

- The email address provided by the fraudster does not exactly match the email address of the lawyer here. Check the email address from beginning to end for any differences.
- The request to transfer funds is stated as urgent. Anything that does not accord with the timescales you expect should be treated with caution.
- You are advised that our bank account has changed at short notice. It is highly unlikely that we would change our bank details within the timeframe of a transaction. Any communication indicating a change of banking facilities should be treated with considerable scepticism.
- Any emails requesting funds you receive out of normal office hours should be treated with caution.

In any of the above situations or if you receive electronic requests for funds from us (or purporting to be from us), please telephone the relevant lawyer using the telephone number provided in the Engagement Letter to confirm the details verbally prior to transferring any funds and to minimise the risk of fraud.

September 2023