5 Scam Smart

According to the National Trading Standards (NTS) an estimated 40 million people were targeted by scams in 2022 with approximately 19 million falling victim. However, only a third of people actually report the crime as many victims blame themselves and more than half don't tell their family they have lost money.

Investment scams are designed to look genuine. The costs of living crisis and the rise of technology has led to more opportunity for scammers, since they trick savers by making them believe they can make quick money. Although we are not aware of ISA Ltd clients being affected, we have been contacted by several individuals where they have given money to the scammers and have not been able to get their money out. At ISA Ltd, we are always on hand to assist to help identify a scam. Remember, if there is a deadline for the scheme or guaranteed returns, it is probably too good to be true.

RED Flags

Below are the red flags you should look out for:

- Exceptionally high returns or promised returns, often without risk.
- Pressure to make quick decisions e.g., limited time offers.
- Difficulty in contacting the 'individual' and/or 'company'. Often the fraudster will say that they will call you.
- Predominant form of contact is made using mobile numbers, email and/or social media. The calls received will often be cold calls.
- Being directed to payment links when making payments.
- Requesting an additional payment be made to redeem your 'investment'.
- Misspelt communication on correspondence.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO NOTE THAT ISA LTD DO NOT CARRY OUT COLD CALLS TO SELL FUNDS OR ITS SERVICES BUT MAY CONTACT YOU WITH REGARDS YOUR ACCOUNT. ISA Ltd do not use social media and/or text message to communicate with clients or members of the public. If you are unsure about the legitimacy of the correspondence received, then please do not hesitate to contact us using the correct details on our website.

How to protect yourself

STOP

Taking a moment to stop and think before parting with your money or information could keep you safe.

CHALLENGE

Could it be fake?

It's ok to reject, refuse or ignore any requests. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

PROTECT

Contact your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

You can:

Check the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) Warning List **(https://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/warning-list-unauthorised-firms)** to see if the firm that has contacted you is authorised.

Check the FCA Register **(https://www.fca.org.uk/firms/financial-services-register)** to ensure that this is not a 'clone' firm. A 'clone' firm is a common scam where fraudsters pretend to be a genuine authorised firm.

Conduct your own research or seek independent financial advice before investing.

Check email addresses to ensure these are received from legitimate firms and employees.

What to do if you've been targeted

Report this to Action Fraud either online **(www.actionfraud.police.uk)** or by calling **0300 123 2040.**

Report this to the FCA on their website **(www.fca.org.uk/consumers/report-scam-us)** or by calling **0800 111 6768.**

If you have made a transaction or given out any bank details, contact your bank immediately.

Useful Links

www.fca.org.uk/scamsmart

www.fca.org.uk/consumers/unauthorised-firms-individuals

www.takefive-stopfraud.org.uk

Types of scams on the rise

Cryptocurrency

Members of the public are increasingly being targeted by cryptocurrency related investment scams. These scams are primarily advertised on social media and often falsely use the names of celebrities or other influential people to endorse the scheme. ISA Ltd does not currently recommend cryptocurrencies and does not directly engage with cryptocurrency platforms.

Social media

Fraudsters are increasingly using social media such as FACEBOOK to ask individuals to invest a small amount of money in order to make a larger income. To make these scams seem genuine, posts often have a genuine firm's brand logo as well as the FCA and Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) brand logos.