



Monthly Threat in Focus August - Scams



SCAMS



1

**DEFINITIONS /
THE LAW**

2

**WHAT, WHO,
HOW**

3

STATISTICS

4

EXAMPLES

5

CASE STUDIES

6

GUIDANCE

7

**PROTECT
YOURSELF**

8

DISCUSSION

SCAMS - Definitions and The Law ^{1.}



A SCAM IS A DISHONEST SCHEME THAT AIMS TO OBTAIN MONEY, OR SOMETHING ELSE OF VALUE, FROM ITS VICTIMS

Many well-known scams are targeted at private individuals or consumers, but there is also a range of scams that target businesses. All sizes and types of businesses can be vulnerable to scams. The losses to individual victims range from tens of pounds up to millions.

LAWS - The related laws regarding SCAMS fall in to two areas, firstly the fraud itself, misrepresenting yourself to conduct your illegal scam. The second is the Law surrounding companies' compliance, if the company becomes aware of a compromise that could make their clients vulnerable, they have a legal responsibility to let their clients know.

[SRA Authorisation of firms' rules](#)

[Authorisation of Individuals Regulations](#)

[Indemnity Rules 2012](#)

[Indemnity Insurance Rules](#)

[SRA Transparency Rules](#)

[PII Minimum terms and conditions](#)

[The SRA Participating Insurer's Agreement](#)

Read this Wilson James **Threat in Focus Monthly**, to find out more how to proactively manage and keep your site safe and secure.

SCAMS – What, Who, How 2. 3.

WHAT

A scam is a dishonest scheme that aims to get money, or something else of value, from its victims.

If it sounds too good to be true, it usually is.

Scams make themselves relevant and enticing to engage their victims.

Legitimate companies who call you won't mind if you hang up and call them back later.

Scammers don't want you to have time to think about it.

Scammers often will carry out detailed research on business websites, at Companies House, and on professional registers and social media. This in turn enables them to target their scam emails (known as "spear" phishing), instant messages or text messages to specific recipients.

Targeted messages includes information about a plausible client or transaction which will encourage the recipient to think the proposal more plausible.

WHO

Scam artists will attempt to disguise themselves in order to conduct their con.

They are an unsolicited contact attempting to conduct unsolicited business with you.

The most common types of scams reported included the following disguises:

- Deliveries, postal or courier services (55%)
- Someone pretending to be from the government or HMRC (41%)
- Someone offering a fake investment or financial 'get rich quick' schemes (29%)
- Rebates and refunds (28%)
- Banking (27%)
- Online shopping (24%)
- Health or medical (13%)
- Energy (12%)

HOW

The tactics used by scammers and fraudsters can vary from someone knocking on your door to an unexpected email, phone call or text.

The internet and advances in digital communications have opened other ways for scammers to target you and steal information.

You may have come across the most common type of scams – the spam email from a Nigerian prince, or fake HMRC or email masking as your bank.

SCAMS – STATISTICS 4. 5. 6.

UK Finance figures show a near-40% rise in push payment scams (criminals pretend to be a trusted contact) (Jun 2022)

45 million people targeted by scam calls and texts in the Summer of 2021 (OFCOM)

£1.3bn was stolen by con artists (2021), figures reveal, with authorised push payment fraud (APP)



In 2020 £78million was lost by victims of investment and pension scams.

The amount lost to romance scams, (a criminal befriending the victim on an online dating site before asking for money) soared by 73% during 2021.

There was a 400% increase in coronavirus-themed phishing emails in March 2020 alone according to UK Action Fraud

SCAMS – EXAMPLES 7.

Parcel delivery scams

- A message pertaining to be from a parcel giant often the Post Office or Royal Mail asking you to make a payment in order they can deliver. Royal Mail and others will not request a payment via text or email
- Taking the SCAM further – Once a payment has been made, criminals may then call you pretending to be from your bank as the scammers have a lot of your data from the previous call, sounding very convincing, quoting your card details and may ask you to transfer funds into new accounts.
- SCAM is more prevalent at Christmas when individuals are expecting parcels.

Hey Mum WhatsApp scam

- Criminals often claim to be family, such as a child texting from a new mobile number. They state their phone has been lost or damaged and then ask for emergency financial help.
- **Action Fraud**, on average, victims had lost £3,000 to the scam.
- Be suspicious if they do not speak and do not address themselves using their name. Do not make the payment until you have verified they are.

Energy price cap fraud

- Criminals claiming to be energy companies including well recognised reputable firms such as Eon or British Gas.
- These scams often offer extra financial support, including grants that are in exchange for signing up to them as a provider.
- Energy companies can detect when they have not received correct payment for the energy used and will still charge resulting in victims paying more.

Pensions

- Pension fraud has increased significantly since the introduction to pension freedoms (2015), allowing individuals over the age of 55 to be able to access their retirement funds.
- According to the Financial Conduct Authority's the two most common are:
 - **Bogus investment opportunities**
Scammers harass those aged 55 and over with fake investment opportunities to try to get hold of their pension savings.
 - **Pension liberation scams**
Targeting the financially vulnerable, promising them an early release to their pension before the age of 55. It is only in extreme cases where you can access your pension before the age of 55, otherwise you could pay out huge sums to the taxman. Find out more in [Times pensions guide](#).

SCAMS - CASE STUDY

Parking SCAM at Manchester Airport (Aug 2022)

- Individuals sign up to have a company park their vehicle in what they believed to be a Manchester airport affiliated car park managed by a legitimate firm.
- In some cases individuals were unable to retrieve their cars, on other occasions the car was park in a field some way from the airport, some received their vehicle back with miles on the mileometer while the individuals had been holiday.
- Other [parking scams](#) encourage individuals to sign up to an App, share their financial data and instead of paying a one off fee, have several transactions remove funds from their accounts. A woman, from Manchester, posted on [Facebook](#), saying she had lost a total of £230 in the scam.
- Police advise individuals to check who they are buying the parking services from and not to risk companies just because the price is attractive.

WHAT CAN ADVISORY SERVICES DO FOR YOU

1. Perform a Bespoke Site Specific Threat Assessment

Advisory Services can conduct a Survey to:

- Proactively assess the threat specific to your site / industry.
 - If required, review a previous Scam incident to identify vulnerabilities and lessons learnt

2. Facilitating changes by

- Building security staff's awareness and confidence in managing the threat and recognising vulnerable areas on site or within your industry and risks specific to content/location.

**For Bespoke site Specific Threat Assessments providing practical mitigation where it counts most,
please contact Wilson James Advisory Services: advisoryservices@wilsonjames.co.uk**

SCAMS – GUIDANCE [8.](#) [9.](#) [10.](#)

BEFORE

BE CAUTIOUS AND AWARE

- Never automatically click on a link in an unexpected email or text.
- Not all Wi-Fi is secure, don't use public Wi-Fi to access banking or personal data.
- Use a VPN.
- Monitor your bank statements regularly.
- Use three random words to improve the security of your passwords and set up two-factor authentication.
- Back up your data on an external device
- Update privacy settings and anti-virus software on your operating systems.

DURING

STOP AND THINK IF....

- It seems too good to be true – for example, scammers pretending to be energy companies to lure people into “too good to be true” deals
- You suspect you're not dealing with a real company, organisation or a genuine person – take a moment to step back and double-check
- You've been pressured to transfer money quickly, particularly to a 'holding account'.
- You've been asked to pay in an unusual way – like by an iTunes vouchers or a transfer service
- You've been asked to give away personal information such as passwords, PINs or other verification codes.
- If you are receiving post from an organisation you don't recognise, investigate.

AFTER

IF YOU'VE BEEN SCAMMED:

- Talk to your bank or card company immediately if you've handed over any financial and sensitive information or made a payment
- Report the scam to Citizens Advice.
 - **Offline scams**, like telephone, post and doorstep, to the Citizens Advice [website](#) or by calling 0808 223 1133.
 - **Online scams** to the dedicated Scams Action service either [online](#) or on 0808 250 5050
- Text scams can be reported to your mobile phone provider by forwarding it to 7726
- Also report the scam to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040.
- Call police on 999 or 101 if:
 - A crime is in progress
 - The suspect is known or easily identified
 - The crime involves a vulnerable person.
- Advice Direct Scotland on 0808 164 6400

SCAMS – PROTECT YOURSELF 11. 12.

- **ROYAL MAIL opt SERVICE**
 - Stops unaddressed mail being delivered to your home.
 - optout@royalmail.com
- **SAFERjobs**
 - MET Police charity offering free advice to jobseekers ensuring they don't apply to a fraudulent company or those engaging in illegal practices.
 - www.safer-jobs.com
- **SECURE TICKETS FROM AUTHROISED RETAILERS (STAR)**
 - Self-regulating body for entertainment ticketing industry in UK.
 - Offers general advice and information on ticket buying.
 - www.star.org.uk
- **STAY SAFE ONLINE**
 - National Cyber Security Alliance
 - Help to keep you safe online
 - www.staysafeonline.org
- **THE SILVER LINE**
 - Free and confidential helpline for older people (24/7).
 - www.thesilverline.org.uk
 - 0800 470 8090
- **THINK JESSICA**
 - Charity to protect elderly and vulnerable people from scams.
 - Offering advice and support for fraud.
 - Provides assistance to families of victims
 - www.thinkjessica.com
- **CREDIT RATING AGENCY**
 - Sign up to a reputable credit rating agency with alerts with a credit check is conducted using your details.
- **CALL BLOCKING SERVICE**
 - Sign up to a call blocking service
 - [Telephone Preference Service](#)

Monthly Themes for 2022

1

**Event Security-
Crowd
Management
(January)**

2

**Insider
Threat
(February)**

3

**Social
Media
Auditors
(March)**

4

**Activism
(April)**

5

**Trespassing
(May)**

6

**Fly-tipping
(June)**

7

**Violence in the
Workplace
(July)**

8

**Scams
(August)**

9

(September)

10

(October)

11

(November)

12

(December)

A decorative white dotted line that starts on the left, curves upwards, then downwards, then upwards again, and finally curves to the right where it ends with a small airplane icon flying away.

Advisoryservices@wilsonjames.co.uk

