

Beware of share fraud

Fraudsters use persuasive and high-pressure tactics to lure investors into scams.

They may offer to sell shares that turn out to be worthless or non-existent, or to buy shares at an inflated price in return for an upfront payment.

While high profits are promised, if you buy or sell shares in this way you will probably lose your money.

How to avoid share fraud

- 1** Keep in mind that firms authorised by the FCA are unlikely to contact you out of the blue with an offer to buy or sell shares.
- 2** Do not get into a conversation, note the name of the person and firm contacting you and then end the call.
- 3** Check the Financial Services Register from **www.fca.org.uk** to see if the person and firm contacting you is authorised by the FCA.
- 4** Beware of fraudsters claiming to be from an authorised firm, copying its website or giving you false contact details.
- 5** Use the firm's contact details listed on the Register if you want to call it back.
- 6** Call the FCA on **0800 111 6768** if the firm does not have contact details on the Register or you are told they are out of date.
- 7** Search the list of unauthorised firms to avoid at **www.fca.org.uk/scams**.
- 8** Consider that if you buy or sell shares from an unauthorised firm you will not have access to the Financial Ombudsman Service or Financial Services Compensation Scheme.

9 Think about getting independent financial and professional advice before you hand over any money.

10 Remember: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

5,000 people contact the Financial Conduct Authority about share fraud each year, with victims losing an average of £20,000

Report a scam

If you are approached by fraudsters please tell the FCA using the share fraud reporting form at **www.fca.org.uk/scams**, where you can find out more about investment scams.

You can also call the FCA Consumer Helpline on **0800 111 6768**.

If you have already paid money to share fraudsters you should contact Action Fraud on **0300 123 2040**.

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