

Warning about share fraud

Share fraud includes scams where investors are called out of the blue and offered shares that often turn out to be worthless or non-existent, or an inflated price for shares they own. These calls come from fraudsters operating in 'boiler rooms' that are mostly based abroad.

While high profits are promised, those who buy or sell shares in this way usually lose their money.

The Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) and Prudential Regulatory Authority (PRA), which replaced the Financial Services Authority on 1 April 2013, have found most share fraud victims are experienced investors who lose an average of £20,000, with around £200m lost in the UK each year.

How to avoid share fraud

If you are offered unsolicited investment advice, discounted shares, a premium price for shares you own, or free company or research reports, you should take these steps before handing over any money:

1. Get the name of the person and organisation contacting you.
2. Check the FCA Register at www.fca.org.uk/register to ensure they are authorised.
3. Use the details on the FCA Register to contact the firm.
4. Call the FCA Consumer Helpline on 0800 111 6768 (freephone) or +44 20 7066 1000 from overseas if there are no contact details on the Register or you are told they are out of date.
5. Search the FCA's list of unauthorised firms and individuals to avoid doing business with.
6. REMEMBER: if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is!

If you use an unauthorised firm to buy or sell shares or other investments, you will not have access to the Financial Ombudsman Service or Financial Services Compensation Scheme (FSCS) if things go wrong.

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, or call the FCA Consumer Helpline on 0800 111 6768.

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

*Lines are open 8:30 am to 5:30 pm, UK time Monday to Friday excluding English public holidays.

Dividends and Financial Calendar

Final dividend ex-dividend date	27 April 2017
Final dividend record date	28 April 2017
Annual General Meeting	10 May 2017
Final dividend payment date	19 May 2017
Half Year Results announced	27 July 2017
Interim dividend ex-dividend date	31 August 2017
Interim dividend record date	1 September 2017
Interim dividend payment date	22 September 2017