



Online Marketplace Fraudster: Targeting Jobseekers

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How do Online Marketplace Fraudsters Operate and how are they targeting Jobseekers?

Fraudsters typically offer bogus goods for sale online via an online marketplace account set up with fraudulent details. Once a victim has committed to purchasing the goods from the fake account, the fraudster sends a bogus email purporting to be from an established escrow* provider. After convincing the victim to transfer their money to the escrow for safekeeping, the fraudsters sever all contact and either delete or abandon the fraudulent account.

Action Fraud has received intelligence suggesting that rather than setting up fraudulent accounts, fraudsters are advertising bogus online sales roles on job vacancy websites in the hope of attracting unsuspecting jobseekers. Once a jobseeker has shown interest, the fraudsters tell them they will be selling goods on the company's behalf; often the goods are cars or machinery but they could be anything. Jobseekers are also instructed that they must use their own personal pre-existing bank accounts and payment methods, as well as their own online marketplace accounts. The fraudsters usually give a vague excuse as to why a business account or login is not available. Jobseekers are then sent photos and information of the products they will be selling (which do not exist) in order to create an attractive advert to entice the primary victim; the buyer of the goods. Once the victim has transferred their money to a bogus escrow provider, no goods are ever received and all contact is severed. This leads to a financial loss for the buyer of the goods as nothing is ever received. Likewise, the recruited jobseeker receives none of the promised payment for their work as originally stipulated in the bogus advert.

*Escrow – An escrow is a type of agreement where a third party becomes involved in a financial transaction; an escrow provider will hold a sum whilst the transfer of goods or services is facilitated between two other parties. Upon transfer, the escrow provider will then release the funds as appropriate. Genuine escrow providers can be useful, however fraudsters frequently impersonate them for their own financial gain.

Protect Yourself

Buyers

- When making a large purchase such as a new car or machinery, always meet the seller face to face first and ask to see the goods before transferring any money.
- False adverts often offer goods for sale well below market value to entice potential victims; always be cautious.
- Exercise caution when sellers state that they are selling on behalf of a friend, colleague or business.

Jobseekers

- Don't assume advertised vacancies have been verified by the website or classified advertisement sites upon which they feature. If you suspect a job vacancy to be fraudulent, be sure to notify the website via their reporting/flag functions. Doing so prevents others from becoming victims of fraud and helps organisations and law enforcement tackle and disrupt fraudulent activity.
- Although many legitimate job vacancies are internet based sales roles, those which are vague about the business, product type, sales method or sales platform to be used should be approached with caution. It is always good practice to conduct further enquiries about an advertised role.
- Genuine businesses would never ask you to use your personal bank or online payment accounts to facilitate business transactions, nor would they ask to utilise your personal online marketplace account in order to sell their products. If someone claiming to represent the organisation suggests you do this or asks for your personal details so they can use your account(s) themselves, sever contact.

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