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## Warning on identity theft

By James Dean

A solicitor whose firm has been the victim of identity theft has warned lawyers not to be caught out by a scam in which a bogus conveyancer has been using her firm's name to carry out property transactions.

Saydia Iqbal, a partner at Bolton firm SK Solicitors, said a group or individual has been fraudulently using her name and her firm's name and correspondence address to conduct property transactions. The fraudsters have changed the email, telephone and fax details on the letters they have sent out.

She said: 'If firms have received any correspondence in relation to conveyancing matters that purports to be from SK Solicitors in Bolton, they should be aware that it is not genuine. We do not do conveyancing.

'I suspect this is being done to facilitate fraud or money laun-

dering. We have reported the matter to the police and the Solicitors Regulation Authority, but we want to warn solicitors.

'Firms need to be vigilant. This type of offence seems to be on the rise and it's easy to do because fraudsters can easily get a firm's details from the internet.'

Law Society chief executive Desmond Hudson urged solicitors to ensure that they check the identity of a firm with the Solicitors Regulation Authority if they have concerns. 'It is extremely important that firms, where they do not know a particular firm with which they are being asked to become involved in some way, should be vigilant to confirm the status of that firm'

An SRA spokesman said the regulator, which has the power to prosecute people holding themselves out as solicitors, is aware of the case and investigating it.

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