



# Don't Be a Money Mule

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## DON'T BE A MONEY MULE

The purpose of this alert is to provide knowledge and prevention advice to help individuals protect themselves from becoming inadvertently involved in fraud.

### ALERT CONTENT

Research conducted by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) has identified a number of bank accounts that are operated by “money mules” and are being used for the purposes of laundering illegitimate money. It is understood that students are being recruited, sometimes unwittingly, as “mules” by criminals to transfer illegally obtained money between different bank accounts.

#### What is a money mule?

A money mule is someone who is recruited by those needing to launder money obtained illegally.

Criminals advertise fake jobs in newspapers and on the internet, in a number of ways; usually offering opportunities to make money quickly, in order to lure potential money mule recruits. These include:

- Social media posts
- Copying genuine company’s websites to create impression of legitimacy
- Sending mass emails offering employment
- Targeting individuals that have posted their CVs on employment websites

Students are particularly susceptible to adverts of this nature. For someone in full-time education, the opportunity for making money quickly can understandably be an attractive one.

The mule will accept money into their bank account, before following further instructions on what to do with the funds. Instructions could include transferring the money into a separate specified account or withdrawing the cash and forwarding it on via money transfer service companies like Western Union or MoneyGram.

The mule is generally paid a small percentage of the funds as they pass through their account.

Money Laundering is a criminal offence which can lead to prosecution and a custodial sentence. Furthermore, it can lead to the mule being unable to obtain credit in the UK and prevented from holding a bank account.

### PROTECTION / PREVENTION ADVICE

- **Be aware that the offence of money laundering carries a maximum prison sentence, in the UK, of 14 years.**
- **Never give the details of your bank account to anyone that you do not trust.**
- **No legitimate company will ever ask you to use your own bank account to transfer their money. Don't accept any job offers that ask you to do this.**
- **Be wary of unsolicited emails or social media posts promising ways of earning easy money. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.**
- **Don't be afraid to question the legitimacy of any businesses that make you a job offer, especially if the recruitment procedure strays from the conventional.**

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