



ONLINE FRAUDSTERS TARGET UK INVESTORS

Social media influencers, internet searches and AI chatbots are increasingly shaping how people seek money guidance. A growing number of UK investors are turning to unregulated, and often unreliable, sources for financial advice. Regulators and tech platforms are responding, but sophisticated scams still catch people out.

Why this matters now

Recent research shows 40% of UK investors used social media to inform financial decisions in the last two years, with 12% specifically turning to 'finfluencers'. To curb misleading content, the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) suspended, removed or blocked more than 1,600 websites suspected of promoting financial services without permission. Working with Google and Apple, the FCA also helped remove over 50 financial scam apps.

FCA action extends to authorised firms

The crackdown isn't limited to unregulated content. Nearly 20,000 non-compliant financial promotions were amended or withdrawn in 2024. The message is clear: marketing must be fair, clear and not misleading, whether it appears on websites, social channels or in apps.

New twist: scammers impersonating the FCA

In the first half of 2025, the FCA received 4,465 reports of imposters pretending to be the regulator.

At least 480 victims lost money. Treat unsolicited calls, texts, emails or social messages with caution. The FCA will never ask you to send money, share bank details, passwords or PINs, and it does not use WhatsApp, other messaging services or automated calls to contact people.

Practical ways to protect yourself

Pause before you act; urgency is a classic red flag.

- Verify firms and contact details on the FCA Register and only use the details listed there to make contact.
- Be wary of guaranteed returns, exclusive offers or pressure to move money to new or overseas accounts.
- Check web addresses carefully; cloned sites often change a letter, add a hyphen or use a different suffix.
- Do not download unknown apps or screen-sharing tools at someone else's request.
- Ask a regulated adviser or your bank to sense-check anything that feels unusual.

Stay safe, stay informed

With so much unregulated content and increasingly sophisticated scams, even experienced investors can be caught out. If something doesn't feel right, stop and verify. We can help you assess what you've seen and make confident, professionally advised decisions.

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